



# Saxten's & Cage's

## Management Plan 2019-2024

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## THE WOODLAND TRUST

### INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

### PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust ([wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk)) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

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## WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk). Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
10. Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

## SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

## 1.0 SITE DETAILS

<b>Site name:</b>	Saxten's & Cage's, Wilmay Copse
<b>Location:</b>	Fawkham Green, Fawkham Green
<b>Grid reference:</b>	TQ586649, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 177 TQ582654, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 177
<b>Area:</b>	22.96 hectares (56.74 acres) 4.71 hectares (11.64 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc) Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

This management plan covers Saxten's & Cage's Wood (22.96 ha) and Wilmay Copse (4.71ha) which is a small outlier of woodland located 0.5 km to the northwest of Saxten's & Cages. Wilmay Copse was acquired in 1986 and Saxten's & Cage's in 1993. Financial assistance to purchase these sites was received from the Countryside Commission, Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District Council and a substantial amount from a local fundraising appeal.

The woodlands are situated adjacent to the small village of Fawkham Green and occupy the plateau edges and sides of a dry valley within the North Downs Landscape Character Area (NCA 119) and the London Area Greenbelt. The woods are set within a mixed landscape of grazed fields (mainly horses), arable farming and other woodlands but are also within 1 km of Brands Hatch motor racing circuit. Both woods are classified as Local Wildlife Sites (formerly known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest). Administratively, the woods lie within the bounds of Sevenoaks District Council and the Parish of Fawkham.

The underlying geology is Cretaceous chalk and most of Saxten's Wood is underlain with slightly

acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage while Cages and Wilmay Copse tend to have more shallow lime-rich soils. These soil types have encouraged a wide diversity of woodland species to flourish.

Saxten's & Cages Wood is bounded by a triangle of narrow, quiet lanes comprising Fawkham Green Road, Rodger Wood Lane and Brands Hatch Road. Brand's Hatch Place Hotel & Spa and several properties back-on to the western boundary while the village of Fawkham Green and outlying properties are located to the north and east respectively. With the exception of a small area to the eastern side of Cages (subcpt 1a), Saxten's & Cage's and Wilmay Copse are predominately ancient woodland. Saxten's & Cage's were probably once managed as separate woods, but they are continuous with each other and have little obvious distinction between them although a Public Right of Way defines the boundary between the two. Much of Saxten's & Cages was formerly managed for its hazel and ash coppice products with beech and oak standards, but active coppice management had ceased by the early 1950's. During the Second World War, almost 4.5ha of Cage's Wood on the eastern edge was grubbed out and farmed. The area was returned back to woodland by the Trust in 1993 when it was re-planted with site native broadleaved trees.

The wood was badly damaged during the 1987 Great Storm which caused significant windblow but in the intervening years natural regeneration in the glades which were opened up and the large volume of dead wood generated have helped to add structural diversity to the wood. Over the last decade, the ash component has become heavily infected with Ash die back.

Wilmay Copse is a very quiet site due to its small size and fairly remote location. It is bordered on the north and east side by Sun Hill, a quiet narrow lane leading into Fawkham Green, the western side is bordered by some isolated houses and a dog rehoming centre, while the southern edge backs onto agricultural land. The wood supports over mature coppice of hornbeam with beech, cherry, ash, oak and field maple which has not been cut since the Second World War. A former paddock in the south-west of the property was planted by the Trust in 1986, with a mixture of native broadleaved trees. Historically this paddock had been wooded and is shown as PAWS on the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

Both woods have a rich ground flora throughout, dominated by drifts of bluebell, wood anemone and dog's mercury.

There are no designated archaeological sites within Saxten's & Cages or Wilmay Copse but there are a few recorded features typical of ancient woodlands such as earth banks and hollow tracks.

Public access is maintained throughout these woods with a good network of footpaths through the woods, including a public footpath along the northern boundary of Saxten's & Cages, although visitor numbers are generally low across both sites. Car parking on the adjacent lanes is extremely limited which tends to limit the use of the site to local people.

## 2.2 Extended Description

This management plan covers Saxten's & Cage's Wood (22.96 ha) and Wilmay Copse (4.71ha) which is a small outlier of woodland located 0.5 km to the northwest of Saxten's & Cages. Wilmay Copse was acquired in 1986 and Saxten's & Cage's in 1993. Financial assistance to purchase these sites was received from the Countryside Commission, Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District Council and a substantial amount from a local fundraising appeal.

The woodlands are situated adjacent to the small village of Fawkham Green and occupy the plateau

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edges and sides of a dry valley within the North Downs Landscape Character Area (NCA 119) and the London Area Greenbelt. The woods are set within a mixed landscape of grazed fields (mainly horses), arable farming and other woodlands but are also within 1 km of Brands Hatch motor racing circuit. Both woods are classified as Local Wildlife Sites (formerly known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest). Administratively, the woods lie within the bounds of Sevenoaks District Council and the Parish of Fawkham.

The underlying geology is Cretaceous chalk and most of Saxten's Wood is underlain with slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage while Cages and Wilmay Copse tend to have more shallow lime-rich soils. These soil types have encouraged a wide diversity of woodland species to flourish.

Saxten's & Cages Wood is bounded by a triangle of narrow, quiet lanes comprising Fawkham Green Road, Rodger Wood Lane and Brands Hatch Road. Brand's Hatch Place Hotel & Spa and several properties back-on to the western boundary while the village of Fawkham Green and outlying properties are located to the north and east respectively. With the exception of a small area to the eastern side of Cages (subcpt 1a), Saxten's & Cage's and Wilmay Copse are predominately ancient woodland. Saxten's & Cage's were probably once managed as separate woods, but they are continuous with each other and have little obvious distinction between them although a Public Right of Way defines the boundary between the two. Much of Saxten's & Cages was formerly managed for its hazel and ash coppice products with beech and oak standards, but active coppice management had ceased by the early 1950's. During the Second World War, almost 4.5ha of Cage's Wood on the eastern edge was grubbed out and farmed. The area was returned back to woodland by the Trust in 1993 when it was re-planted with site native broadleaved trees.

The wood was badly damaged during the 1987 Great Storm which caused significant windblow but in the intervening years natural regeneration in the glades which were opened up and the large volume of dead wood generated have helped to add structural diversity to the wood. Over the last decade, the ash component has become heavily infected with Ash die back.

Wilmay Copse is a very quiet site due to its small size and fairly remote location. It is bordered on the north and east side by Sun Hill, a quiet narrow lane leading into Fawkham Green, the western side is bordered by some isolated houses and a dog rehoming centre, while the southern edge backs onto agricultural land. The wood supports over mature coppice of hornbeam with beech, cherry, ash, oak and field maple which has not been cut since the Second World War. A former paddock in the south-west of the property was planted by the Trust in 1986, with a mixture of native broadleaved trees. Historically this paddock had been wooded and is shown as PAWS on the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

Both woods have a rich ground flora throughout, dominated by drifts of bluebell, wood anemone and dog's mercury.

There are no designated archaeological sites within Saxten's & Cages or Wilmay Copse but there are a few recorded features typical of ancient woodlands such as earth banks and hollow tracks.

Public access is maintained throughout these woods with a good network of footpaths through the woods, including a public footpath along the northern boundary of Saxten's & Cages, although visitor numbers are generally low across both sites. Car parking on the adjacent lanes is extremely limited which tends to limit the use of the site to local people.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

Saxten's & Cage's Wood is located within one mile of the village of Fawkham Green in NW Kent. To get to the wood from the centre of the village walk along Fawkham Green Road, a narrow lane with no pavement, to the northern entrance which is on the right. Additional to the northern entrance there are several entry points to the south of the wood along Rogers Wood Road. The entrances are generally through squeeze gaps between fencing. There is also one other entrance over a stile off Fawkham Green Road. There is a network of footpaths around the wood, none of which are surfaced. One official public footpath (SD261) runs north-south across the wood. There is no formal car-parking at the wood, but there is very limited roadside parking in the wider passing places along Rogers Wood Lane.

There is no bus-stop close to the wood. The nearest places to get buses to are New Ash Green and West Kingsdown, both of which are several miles away. The nearest public toilets are on Upper Street at New Ash Green, and there is a designated toilet for disabled people (using a RADAR key).

### 3.2 Access / Walks



## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Areas of ancient and secondary woodland within Saxten's & Cage's and Wilmay Copse will mostly be left to develop under the influences of natural processes, except where intervention is required to address issues caused by pests and diseases and to control invasive non-native species. The over-mature coppice which has not been worked for over 60 years has largely become integrated into the high forest canopy and will not be actively coppiced in a rotational coppice regime but left to mature and collapse allowing natural regeneration and the high forest life cycle to take over. The loss of ash from the canopy - caused by ash dieback - will temporarily increase deadwood across the site and open up gaps in an otherwise closed canopy. Species such as hornbeam, oak, beech, ash and birch are likely to fill these gaps.

Intervention to protect ancient woodland features such as woodland specialist ground flora, precursor and veteran trees, deadwood, and archaeological features may be required from time to time; particularly to control any incursion by invasive non-native species such as rhododendron and laurel. Currently invasive species are not causing a significant issue and only occur rarely in localised areas adjacent to property boundaries.

The wide ride habitat established in Saxten's and Cage's which supports calcareous loving grassland and shrub species will continue to be managed on a short rotation (8-10 years) that will create a woodland edge habitat and protect and enhance the biodiversity of this habitat.

Management of tree safety hazards and threats brought on by pests, diseases, windblow and natural aging processes will be required in high risk areas next to the roads and along property boundaries (Zone A) and along the path network (Zone B). Whilst trees showing tolerance to ash dieback will be retained as a seed source to create future resistant generations of ash, ride-side management will remove dangerous ash trees. Some thinning of collapsing, over-mature coppice adjacent to paths may also be required. This work will widen rides, enhancing the biodiversity and visual interest of the woods.

The Trust will ensure the public can continue to enjoy open access to Saxten's & Cage's and Wilmay Copse by maintaining the entrances and providing an appropriate level of signage. An annual path cut will help maintain the public and informal footpaths throughout the wood and annual inspections will check that paths and visitor infrastructure such as gates and stiles remain safe and enjoyable for all visitors to the site.

## 5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

### 5.1 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

#### Description

Saxten's & Cage's:

Saxten's & Cage's Wood is largely ancient woodland with the exception of the eastern side (Subcompartment 1a) which is secondary woodland planted by the Trust in 1993 but included in this key feature. The upper storey canopy comprises mature ash, beech and oak standards with rare to occasional veteran ash & beech pollards. Some old mature cherries are also present and small-leaved lime occurs sporadically. Hazel coppice along with hawthorn is dominant in the shrub layer although holly and yew are also present. Extensive drifts of bluebells, wood anemone and dog's mercury are spread throughout the wood especially where light levels are favourable. The wood can best be described as a lowland beech-ash wood, which can be classified further into 3 NVC stand types reflecting variations in soil types: W14 beech - bramble woodland, W12 beech - wood anemone woodland, and W8 ash - field maple - wood anemone woodland.

The 1987 storm caused considerable damage throughout Saxten's & Cage's Wood, (but little damage to Wilmay Copse). The fallen timber was not cleared and many of the fallen trees are still alive, or, if dead are providing valuable dead wood habitat. The glades opened up by the 1987 storm have now been restocked by prolific natural regeneration of ash, oak, birch, hazel, yew, beech, wild cherry, field maple and whitebeam which has contributed greatly to the structural and species diversity of the wood. This wood also contains a number of veteran beech trees which are now beginning to collapse, and together with the stumps of those which have already died, are providing valuable deadwood habitat for invertebrates and fungi.

The woodland re-creation area (subcompartment 1a) was planted in 1993 with a mixture of native broadleaves which are now well established. Ash and oak were the highest percentage of the planting mix, followed by wild cherry, beech, field maple, whitebeam and a variety of woody shrubs (hawthorn, dogwood, wayfaring tree, hazel, buckthorn, and spindle). The planted ash is now dying back at an exponential rate.

The ground flora throughout is dominated by bramble, with bluebell, wood anemone and wood spurge in the plateau areas. Where the soils are more calcareous, spurge laurel, stinking iris, and sweet woodruff occur. Primrose and moschatel are common on the damper rides, and dog's mercury dominates the lower ground. At least 22 ancient woodland indicator plant species are present.

The wood holds a reasonably good bryophyte flora, including both acid-loving and lime-loving species.

Archaeological features associated with ancient woodland are present and include a hollow track between flinty banks through the centre of compartment 2a, a wood bank along the north and western boundaries of compartment 2a and an earthwork associated with a small coppice enclosure

in the south-east corner of compartment 2a close to the Rogers Wood Lane.

#### Wilmary Copse:

This small woodland is very similar to Saxten's & Cage's being ancient woodland and a mixture of two NVC classifications: W12 and W8. The structure of the wood is mainly over mature coppice of beech, hornbeam, field maple and ash with some very tall, mature cherry present in the eastern end of the wood. The ancient beech coppice stools are especially large and contain interesting deadwood habitats. There is also a stand of almost pure hornbeam coppice which is resulting in heavy shading and restricting the development of the ground flora. Elsewhere bluebells, wood anemone and dog's mercury thrive. The stems of the over mature coppice are starting to collapse adding to the deadwood resource and encouraging natural regeneration but given the small size of the wood any collapse of tall stems poses a safety risk to the main footpath winding round the wood.

The western portion of this woodland (subcompartment 3a) was replanted with native broadleaf trees when the Woodland Trust acquired the site in 1986. Main species include wild cherry, oak, ash, hornbeam and beech in roughly equal proportions. Natural regeneration has supplemented this area well with elder, yew, guilder rose, wayfaring tree and hazel adding to the species mix.

No significant archaeological features have been recorded in the wood.

#### Significance

The amount of ancient woodland left in Britain has been drastically reduced over the last century. Approximately 40% of England's ancient woodland is found in the South East. Ancient woodland is very important due to the continuity of woodland cover over hundreds of years which allows for a diverse range of wildlife and vegetation to develop over time that cannot be found in new woodland creation sites. In a heavily wooded area where woodland has become fragmented, larger areas of woodland are able to withstand external pressures such as climate change much better. Ancient woodland is irreplaceable and the prevention of its loss is one of the main aims of the Trust.

Locally, the areas of ancient woodland within Saxten's & Cage's and Wilmary Copse provide beneficial habitat diversity and contribute to the overall ecological resilience of the site.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

##### Opportunities

-Improve the hedge along Fawkham Green Road by coppicing, laying and/or gapping. This will depend on the shade from the canopy trees above; however, the loss of ash trees may present an opportunity to improve the state of this hedge.

##### Constraints

-Poor access combined with safety issues from decline/death of ash trees along internal paths and around the woodland perimeter adjacent to properties due to ash dieback disease make any management beyond safety works very hazardous.

-Tree safety issues in Wilmary Copse from collapse of over mature coppice stems in a small woodland setting.

#### Factors Causing Change

- Rabbit & deer browsing on coppice cut within the wide ride habitats.
- Spread of coarse species such as bramble and bracken outcompeting woodland specialist species.
- Pest & diseases resulting in loss or damage to trees. Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) is likely to have a significant impact on the population of ash trees within Saxten's & Cages and Wilmay Copse over the next decade and the wood is also at risk from chronic & acute oak decline and spread of oak processionary moth (OPM).
- Climate change - greater increase in extreme events has the potential to cause woodland restructuring (i.e. windblow during storm events).
- Path creep and development of a network of unofficial trails and paths throughout the woodland compacting soil and damaging ground flora.
- Possible presence of wild boar wallows creating areas of bare ground and impacting ground flora (especially bluebells).
- Build-up of a rich deadwood resource, particularly large sized diameter pieces, is helping to enhance the biodiversity of the wood and increasing the invertebrate and fungi interest.
- Collapse of the over mature coppice and removal of trees due to tree safety issues are creating natural glades which are encouraging natural regeneration and spread of ancient woodland indicator species and helping to create a diverse woodland structure.
- Tree safety interventions will help create natural glades or open up rides to increase light levels and encourage the development and spread of ancient woodland species especially where bare ground is dominant due to low light levels in hornbeam dominated areas such as in Wilmay Copse.

#### **Long term Objective (50 years+)**

This ancient semi-natural woodland will largely be left to senesce and naturally regenerate to form semi-natural habitat by natural processes, although intervention will be required in parts of the wood to address tree safety issues caused by diseases such as ash dieback or over-mature coppice collapse adjacent to paths. The long-term objective will be to support structurally diverse robust ancient woodland, comprising predominately native broadleaf species such as oak, beech, birch, and hornbeam. Ancient woodland components will continue to be evident and lower storeys secured by natural regeneration. The understory will comprise of native shrubs with a ground layer of specialist woodland plants and ancient woodland indicator species including bluebell, dog's mercury, wood anemone and ramsons. The ash trees and collapsing coppice stems that are lost from the upper canopy will help encourage this diversification of the lower storeys. Good deadwood habitat will be present through standing and fallen dead trees and ancient living trees. Veteran trees of the future will be developing in character. Archaeological features such as earth banks will be preserved and protected as part of the general woodland monitoring programme.

The wide ride habitat totalling approximately 1.5km through Saxten's & Cage's Wood will be maintained under a 2-zone cutting regime for the benefit of calcareous grassland flora, invertebrates and ground nesting birds, with some thinning/singling of coppice either side of the rides to create stable and balanced crowns.

The woodland creation in Subcpts. 1a and 3a will develop into mature secondary woodland and through natural processes and will become a semi natural habitat.

#### **Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)**

In the next 5 years' the main objective for the ancient woodland areas is to retain the varied composition and structural diversity of the ancient woodland areas. In the body of the wood this can mostly be achieved through a programme of minimal intervention, but the following management activities will be required in targeted areas:

- Annual monitoring for tree safety in Zone A trees (all subcpts); address any concerns as required. Intervention will be focused on trees impacted by ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*), but surveys will look at all trees/species within Zone A and B. Over mature coppice stools beside Rogers Wood Lane and Sun Hill will continue to be monitored and stems singled/thinned to create balanced crowns as appropriate.
- The young ash (~20 years old) in the woodland creation area (Subcpt 1a) are badly affected by ash die back and many of the trees are dead or dying. This compartment (4.62ha) will be worked to remove the affected ash near to path edges (Zone B) and roadside (Zone A) and create large scallops. This tree safety activity will be carried out as part of a ride side coppicing/widening programme, which will result in 250-450m of ride edges being cut and scalloped on both sides every other year. This work will protect and enhance the calcareous rich grassland ride edges found in this subcpt, diversify the biodiversity interest and enhance the internal woodland structure.
- The diseased ash within subcpt 2a, which are generally of even age and size (~30-35cm x 25+m) will be addressed as part of an annual selective felling of trees showing advanced dieback within 30m of either side of the path network (Zone B). The total length of path to be worked in 5 years is ~ 2.4km and the estimated volume to be felled will decrease annually as the density of ash trees are thinned out.
- A small intervention to selectively thin ash and re-coppice mature coppice stems will be carried out within Wilmay Copse to proactively reduce tree safety issues but also to create small glades and help diversify the woodland structure and spread of ancient woodland indicator species which have been suppressed by shading.
- Monitor the woodland for evidence of wild boar and record any impact on ancient woodland indicators e.g. bluebells. Wild boar have been recorded within a few kilometres of Saxten's & Cages and a recent woodland condition assessment potentially picked up signs of wild boar visiting the wood.
- Carry out WCA in 2024. During this survey check coppice stools and natural regeneration along ride edge works for signs of rabbit or deer impact.

## 5.2 Connecting People with woods & trees

### Description

The whole of the Trust's holdings at Saxten's & Cage's (22.96 ha) and Wilmay Copse (4.71 ha) are open to the public for quiet informal recreation and are mainly enjoyed by local residents from Fawkham Green and the surrounding area. The woodlands are classified by the Woodland Trust as category B woodlands respectively. This implies that there is regular usage, 5 - 15 people using one entrance per day. The population in the surrounding parish of Fawkham is small totalling around 537 residents. At both sites, there is a good variety of paths and tracks. This combined with the diverse woodland structure, wildlife and views over the surrounding landscape offer an interesting experience for walkers. Access is purely for pedestrians. There is no formal car park and parking is extremely limited on the surrounding lanes which tends to restrict use to local people.

### Significance

Public access to this woodland is important because it provides a place where the local people close to Fawkham Green can enjoy the natural environment close to where they live. It is in a busy part of the country where opportunities to stray from public rights of way are limited.

### Opportunities & Constraints

#### Opportunities:

- The varied network of paths and peaceful surroundings allows people to enjoy and experience the seasonal characteristics of an ancient woodland setting.
- To recruit for a volunteer warden to be the local eyes and ears of the site.

#### Constraints:

- There is very limited, informal car-parking for along Rogers Wood Lane and Sun Hill and local transport links are poor. These factors mean that the woodland is unlikely to be visited by many people further away than Fawkham Green itself and restricts the opportunity to actively promote the wood for events.
- The proximity of the woods to Brands Hatch racing circuit means that the noise pollution does spoil quiet enjoyment of the wood during race days.

### Factors Causing Change

- Fly tipping around entrances.
- Litter and debris within the wood primarily from unauthorised camps and fly-tipping
- Horse & motorbike encroachment
- The boundary along Rogers Wood road, suffers occasional abuse from fly-tipping and vandalism which might spoil people's enjoyment of the wood.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Saxten's & Cages and Wilmay Copse (Category B sites) will continue to offer a low-key but high quality visitor experience in line with their respective categories. Free and open access will continue to provide the local community with a well-maintained site with a network of paths for walking and entrance infrastructure.

### Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

During this plan period the short-term objective is to provide a quality experience for visitors which is safe and enjoyable. To achieve this:

- Permissive and public routes and entrances points will be maintained in good and safe condition to allow access across the sites. This will include the annual strimming of path and ride edges twice a year and cleaning/repairing entrance signage and infrastructure as required at the 5 external entrances and 1 stile (Saxten's & Cages) and 3 external entrances (Wilmay Copse).
- Incursion by quads and motorbikes will be monitored and if necessary the Trust will liaise with Kent Police to try and prevent this from occurring at this site.
- Tree safety inspections to be carried out annually on Zone A - alternating between summer and autumn. Zone B inspections to be carried out every two years. Remedial work to be carried out as appropriate.
- Discarded fencing, scrap metal and debris from illegal camps and acts of flytipping (namely from litter being thrown out the windows of passing vehicles) will be cleared up and removed from Saxten's & Cages.

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## 6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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## APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	4.45	Ash	1993	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Connecting People with woods & trees	County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)
<p>Formerly woodland (part of Cages Wood) prior to the Second World War when it was grubbed out and farmed for arable crops. It was planted in December 1993 with 35% ash, 20% oak, 10% wild cherry, 10% beech 10% field maple, 5% whitebeam and 10% woody shrubs - hawthorn, dogwood, wayfaring tree, hazel, purging buckthorn and spindle. The planting matrix is now well supplemented by natural regeneration of ash, goat willow, birch and hawthorn. Open spaces are provided by very wide ride edges. Tall grasses and herb communities (hogweed, wild carrot, bramble, with some rose) grow in these ride edges. There is also occasional native down land species such as pyramidal orchid. A gas wayleave runs across the northern part of 1a. The ash component is suffering heavily from ash die back.</p>							
2a	19.43	Mixed native broadleaves	1940	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)
<p>This subcompartment includes Saxten's Wood and Cage's Wood. The main tree species comprise ash, beech and oak with birch and occasional field maple and cherry. Small-leaved lime and horse chestnut are present but rare. Hazel, hawthorn, holly and occasional yew make up the shrub layer. Much of the woodland is formed of a mixture of over mature coppice with standards of beech and oak, as well as a small area felled in the north-east corner in 2004 which has re-coppiced; There is significant natural regeneration in areas of windblow following the 1987 storm; There are some dramatic large beeches with blown out tops with fine wildlife niches and displaying fungal infections. Extremely tall ash of the same age, dominates the areas that suffered wind blow during the 1987 storm. Levels of deadwood are good. Ash dieback is affecting the ash trees. An historic woodbank exists along the western and northern boundary. A gas wayleave runs NW to E across the northern tip.</p>							

3a	0.74	Mixed native broadleaves	1986	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Connecting People with woods & trees	County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)
<p>Prior to 1986 this sub-compartment within Wilmay Copse was grazed, although it is designated as ancient woodland. It was replanted with site native trees in 1986. The main species are: wild cherry, oak, ash, hornbeam and beech in roughly equal proportions. The planting matrix is now well supplemented by natural regeneration of elder, ash, oak, yew, guelder rose, wayfaring tree and hazel. There are a few mature oaks along the northern boundary. A sprinkling of bluebells can be found throughout as well as occasional primroses but hornbeam is causing heavy shading resulting in significant areas of bare ground.</p>							
4a	2.54	Mixed native broadleaves	1950	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)
<p>This area forms the majority of Wilmay Copse and is a mixture of over mature coppice. There are areas of pure hornbeam in the north west of this sub compartment with field maple, ash and wild cherry. On the south west side are some outstanding ancient beech coppice stools, together with field maple and ash. The remainder is composed of hornbeam, ash and wild cherry with a minor component of beech. The ground flora contains several specialist woodland plants, indicative of ancient woodland, including bluebell, dog's mercury and spurge laurel. The ash is showing signs of ash die back.</p>							

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**Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)**

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	2a	Selective Fell	5.20	42	220
2021	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.90	39	35
2021	2a	Selective Fell	2.90	41	120
2021	4a	Selective Fell	1.00	42	42
2022	2a	Selective Fell	1.75	40	70
2023	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.40	37	15
2023	2a	Selective Fell	2.25	40	90
2024	2a	Selective Fell	1.60	41	65

## GLOSSARY

### **Ancient Woodland**

Ancient woods are defined as those where there has been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. In Scotland ancient woods are defined strictly as sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the 'Roy' maps (a military survey carried out in 1750 AD, which is the best source of historical map evidence) and as woodland all subsequent maps. However, they have been combined with long-established woods of semi-natural origin (originating from between 1750 and 1860) into a single category of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to take account of uncertainties in their identification. Ancient woods include Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (see below). May support many species that are only found in ancient woodland.

### **Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland**

Stands in ancient woods defined as those consisting predominantly of native trees and shrubs that have not obviously been planted, which have arisen from natural regeneration or coppice regrowth.

### **Ancient Woodland Site**

Stands in ancient woods that have been converted to plantations, of coniferous, broadleaved or mixed species, usually for timber production, including plantations of native species planted so closely together that any semi-natural elements of the understorey have been suppressed.

### **Beating Up**

Replacing any newly planted trees that have died in the first few years after planting.

### **Broadleaf**

A tree having broad leaves (such as oak) rather than needles found on conifers (such as Scots pine).

### **Canopy**

The uppermost layer of vegetation in a woodland, or the upper foliage and branches of an individual tree.

### **Clearfell**

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

### **Compartment**

Permanent management division of a woodland, usually defined on site by permanent features such as roads. See Sub-compartments.

### **Conifer**

A tree having needles, rather than broadleaves, and typically bearing cones.

### **Continuous Cover forestry**

A term used for managing woods to ensure that there are groups or individual trees of different ages scattered over the whole wood and that some mature tree cover is always maintained. Management is by repeated thinning and no large areas are ever completely felled all at once.

### **Coppice**

Trees which are cut back to ground levels at regular intervals (3-25 years).

### **Exotic (non-native) Species**

Species originating from other countries (or other parts of the UK) that have been introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally.

### **Field Layer**

Layer of small, non-woody herbaceous plants such as bluebells.

### **Group Fell**

The felling of a small group of trees, often to promote natural regeneration or allow planting.

### **Long Term Retention**

Discrete groups of trees (or in some cases single trees) that are retained significantly past their economic felling age. Operations may still be carried out within them and thinning is often necessary to maintain stability.

### **Minimum Intervention**

Areas where no operations (such as thinning) will take place other than to protect public safety or possibly to control invasive exotic species.

### **Mixed Woodland**

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

### **National vegetation classification (NVC)**

A classification scheme that allows an area of vegetation to be assigned to the standardised type that best matches the combination of plant species that it contains. All woodlands in the UK can be described as being one of 18 main woodland types (W1 - W18), which principally reflect soil and climatic conditions. For example, Upland Oakwoods are type W11, and normally occur on well drained infertile soils in the cooler and wetter north and west of Britain. Each main type can be subdivided into numerous subtypes. Most real woods contain more than one type or sub-type and inevitably some woods are intermediate in character and can't be properly described by any sub type.

### **Native Species**

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

### **Natural Regeneration**

Naturally grown trees from seeds falling from mature trees. Also regeneration from coppicing and suckering.

## **Origin & Provenance**

The provenance of a tree or seed is the place where seed was collected to grow the tree or plant. The origin is the geographical location within the natural range of a species from where seeds/tree originally derives. Thus an acorn collected from a Turkey oak in Edinburgh would have an Edinburgh provenance and a southern European origin.

## **Re-Stocking**

Re-planting an area of woodland, after it has been felled.

## **Shrub Layer**

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

## **Silviculture**

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

## **Stand**

Trees of one type or species, grouped together within a woodland.

## **Sub-Compartment**

Temporary management division of a compartment, which may change between management plan periods.

## **Thinning**

The felling of a proportion of individual trees within a given area. The remaining trees grow to fill in the space created.

## **Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes**

Tubes placed over newly planted trees or natural regeneration that promote growth and provide protection from animals such as rabbits and deer.

## **Weeding**

The control of vegetation immediately around newly planted trees or natural regeneration to promote tree growth until they become established. Either by hand cutting or with carefully selected weed killers such as glyphosate.

## **Windblow/Windthrow**

Trees or groups of trees blown over (usually uprooted) by strong winds and gales.