



# Normanton Wood

## Management Plan 2020-2025

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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.

## 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>	Normanton Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Earl Shilton
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SP483981, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 140
<b>Area:</b>	6.78 hectares (16.75 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Normanton wood lies to the east of Earl Shilton and the south west of Leicester. It sits in a largely arable landscape with minimal woodland cover, also lacking in public access land. The site was acquired in 1999 as part of the "Woods on Your Doorstep " initiative, although the nearest habitation is 2km away. It is a predominantly flat site with clay soils. The design and initial planting were achieved with the involvement of the local community and the Leicestershire Girl Guides Association. There are two points of access, the northern one from Thurlaston Road and the southern from Huncote Road. Both access points are wooden kissing gates, not suitable for wheel chairs. Both have small pull-offs which accommodate two or three cars.

The planting is of native broadleaves, roughly 40% ash 40% oak with goat willow, field maple, silver birch and wild cherry making up the rest of the mix. These species have been drift planted across the site with two linear open areas that coincide with underground and overhead electricity power cables and a high pressure gas pipeline. The hedged boundary along Huncote Road has a number of mature standard trees within it. These being principally Oak. Adjoining the site in the SE corner is a small copse of Sycamore, Ash and Oak thought to have been planted in the 1930s and not in woodland trust ownership. The site is bounded by arable agricultural land to the east. The ground layer is predominantly grass and agricultural weeds although some woodland species such as wood sedge and fern are also present.

The key features of the site are Informal Public Access and New Native Woodland

## 2.2 Extended Description

Normanton wood lies to the east of Earl Shilton and the south west of Leicester. It sits in a largely arable landscape with minimal woodland cover, also lacking in public access land. The site was acquired in 1999 as part of the "Woods on Your Doorstep " initiative, although the nearest habitation is 2km away. It is a predominantly flat site with clay soils. The design and initial planting were achieved with the involvement of the local community and the Leicestershire Girl Guides Association. There are two points of access, the northern one from Thurlaston Road and the southern from Huncote Road. Both access points are wooden kissing gates, not suitable for wheel chairs. Both have small pull-offs which accommodate two or three cars.

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## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

Normanton Wood lies just over a kilometre from Earl Shilton which is itself 5 kms NE of Hinkley and 15 kms from Leicester on the A47. There is a formal pull-off which will accommodate three cars on the northern boundary and an informal pull-off on the Huncote Road on the south side of the site. Access from both entrances is via squeeze stiles and the grassed paths are not suitable for wheel-chairs although the site is virtually flat.

There are train stations at both Hinckley and Leicester and a bus service between Hinckley and Leicester (Eastgates) which stops at Wood Street, Earl Shilton which is the nearest stop to Normanton Wood. The walk down Church Street and Thurlaston Road is almost a mile. There are public toilets at Wood Street, Earl Shilton and Station Road, Hinckley.

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The wood will be allowed to reach maturity and will develop the characteristics of more naturally occurring woodland, as opposed to a plantation of single aged trees. For this reason silvicultural intervention will take place to ensure the wood is diverse in tree species and structure, to promote a good mixture of both young and mature trees. This will enable the wood to be more resilient to change in the future, and will ensure it supports the greatest range of wildlife.

Open habitats will also remain and be managed within the woodland matrix, including the linear areas but also sunny rides.

A good standard of access provision will be maintained at Normanton Wood. The entrance will be accessible and clearly signed as per WT Spec 1.1 It shall be clearly visible from approach routes, attractive and inviting, easy to use and safe to use. The existing path network will be kept open for use and any new desire line paths that are created and are sensible will become official paths and be maintained.

The wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors through regular tree safety inspections as per Woodland Trust Internal Guidance and best practice .



## 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 Informal Public Access

#### Description

There are two public access points, one off the larger Huncote Road and the other of the minor Thurlaston Road. They are both wooden kissing gates and are not suitable for wheel chairs. Both have small parking areas suitable for two or three cars. The site has a boundary footpath and wide grassed open areas which traverse the site NW-SE beneath the electricity transmission lines. There are one or two desire lines that have appeared within the woodland compartment.

#### Significance

Although not a large site, it is one of the only areas of publicly accessible woodland within a large area and therefore particularly well-used by dog-walkers.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

Aesthetically the major constraint is the high voltage transmission lines and pylons which dominate the site. Their dominance is reinforced by the fact that the ground beneath is unplanted and remains as open grassland. This situation imposes an un-natural angularity to the design of the site.

#### Factors Causing Change

Encroachment of shrubs and trees adjacent to paths which restrict access.

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

Maintain the open rides and pathways, entrances and information boards. The site will be maintained under terms and conditions laid out in the Woodland Trusts Estate Maintenance contract. It is not envisaged that additional paths will become necessary as the wood matures.

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

Cut all path/rides three times per year and the large open areas each Summer in line with Woodland Trust Specification 2-01. Check and maintain information board and WT welcome signs as well as both entrance points as per specification 1-01. Trim hedges and crown-lift planted trees where they might restrict the path width.

## 5.2 New Native Woodland

### Description

A native broadleaf woodland with four tree species. Oak, ash, field maple and hazel in four blocks separated by grass rides and footpaths. The trees are planted in drifts of 50 to 100 trees across the site. This reduces competition from faster growing species.

### Significance

Leicestershire is one of the least wooded counties in England and this area, being principally agricultural, is virtually devoid of any significant woodland. Therefore within a larger scale this small woodland contributes significantly to the biodiversity of the surrounding landscape.

### Opportunities & Constraints

As with most small-scale planting sites there is inevitably a homogeneity of structure and age class. In the early years of establishment, Oak roller moth and Powdery mildew did much to create structural diversity between the Oak and the more vigorous Ash. But now with the advent of chalara and squirrel damage to the oaks and field maple, the future health of any of the trees on this site is in question.

### Factors Causing Change

Pests and diseases to oak and ash. Chalara will be the main factor causing change in the years to come and this will need to be managed carefully. Squirrel damage to the oaks and field maples is extensive, and these two challenges must be addressed.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Native broadleaved woodland with some structural diversity despite narrow age class distribution.

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

A first thinning operation will be carried out across the site during this plan period, including the coppicing of the hazel coupes. This will create the open woodland habitat desired and bring about an increase in biodiversity. It will not focus on any species, despite the presence of Ash Die Back on site. The idea being to allow the ash to set seed for as long as possible and then to provide standing deadwood across the site. The exception to this will be ash removal along the roadside if ash die back is found to be present. Any ash that are close to footpaths will also be more intensively thinned in order to make tree safety works more economically viable.

The open meadow areas will be cut annually. If a possible candidate for baling and removal of the arisings can be found then this will be preferable, if not then it will simply be cut and left.

## 6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
2023	WMM - Secondary Silviculture	First thinning operation to be carried out across the site.	31/12/23

## APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	4.81	Mixed native broadleaves	1999	Min-intervention		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>Sub-compartment 1a is made up of the 4 separate blocks of planting which were undertaken in 2000 on former arable land. The tree species are principally Oak and Ash with Hazel providing the woody shrub element. A small number of Yews were planted in the northern section close to the entrance as a millennium feature.</p>							
2a	1.92	Mixed native broadleaves	1999	Min-intervention		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>Compartment 2a comprises of those areas of the site which remain un-planted with trees and have been left as open space. These areas include those broad expanses of grass beneath the electricity transmission lines and along the line of the buried gas main together with the grass rides/footpaths which encircle and traverse the site. Prior to planting the site was cultivated and sown with a non-aggressive grass seed mix consisting of creeping red fescue, hard fescue, chewing fescue, brown top bent and smooth stalk meadow grass applied at 20 kg's per acre.</p>							

## Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2023	1a	Thin	6.50	28	182
2033	1a	null	6.50	28	182

## 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.

**The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL.**

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