



Littlewood

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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 or contact the Woodland Trust (operations@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.

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

Site name:	Littlewood
Location:	Buxted
Grid reference:	TQ503237, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 199
Area:	2.05 hectares (5.07 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

Littlewood is a small 'Woods On Your Doorstep' site situated on the edge of the village of Buxted, near Uckfield, East Sussex. The site lies within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA) but just outside of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The landscape is characterised by its extensive woodland cover (26%) and small fields with ancient hedgerows. The High Weald is a hilly country of ridges and valleys with major ridges running east to west. These are deeply dissected by many tributaries of rivers which rise in the High Weald, producing a network of small, steep-sided ridges and valleys (gills). Littlewood sits at approximately 100m above sea level on end of a ridge, with the River Uck to the north and west.

The site was formerly part of the Buxted chicken farm and four chicken houses stood in the middle of the site. The Woodland Trust acquired the site in 1997 and the area previously occupied by the chicken sheds was planted with native broadleaved trees by the local community in November 1997. The community were also active in designing the site and fund-raising.

There are two blocks of mature Norway spruce at the eastern and western ends of the site which were planted in approximately 1970. They were planted to screen the chicken houses and now form an important part of the immediate landscape. They were lightly thinned in 2003 and 2010 and suffered significant windblow in the winter of 2013/14, 2016 (resulting in a small area of restocking) and again in 2020.

To celebrate the Millennium a sculpture bench was commissioned and erected within the woodland. A walnut and a horse chestnut were also planted as part of the commemoration. The site has a small but regular number of local visitors using the path network.

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In the long term (50 years +) Littlewood will develop into a small mixed woodland with native broadleaves dominating the site and an occasional large, mature spruce. There will be a simple network of rides with a small amount of open ground around the Millennium bench.

The most recently planted broadleaves (2017) will need some ongoing maintenance to ensure continued growth but little intervention once the canopy has closed. Any natural regeneration of desirable species (eg oak, birch etc) will be recruited to supplement the widely spaced planting and the loss of ash trees due to disease.

The remaining spruce will be reduced to favour any viable broadleaved trees within the stands. There may be a rapid removal of the spruce at the western end and north-eastern edge of the site to remove the danger of the trees being uprooted and falling onto the powerlines. This work will be specified and undertaken by UK Power Networks.

The site will continue to provide a low-key natural amenity for the local community to use for quiet informal recreation.

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 Secondary Woodland

Description

Approximately half the site is recent native broadleaved woodland planted in November 1998 by the local community as part of the Woodland Trust's Wood On Your Doorstep campaign. Species include oak, ash, wild cherry, field maple and woody shrubs such as Guelder rose and hazel. Two commemorative trees (walnut and horse chestnut) were also planted. A small area at the eastern end of the site was planted with oak in 2002. A mixed-species hedge was also planted at the same time along the fence in the SE corner. The planting was done by the local community.

Within the area of new planting is a sculpted wooden bench commissioned for the Millennium by the local community. It is made from a windblown oak tree from within the village.

The remainder of the site is mature Norway spruce (approx P70) planted to provide screening for the chicken houses that previously occupied the site. They were lightly thinned in 2003 and 2010. There was extensive windblow of the spruce in the eastern part of the site during the winter of 2013/14 and again in 2016 and 2020. The gap created was extended by felling additional spruce and then restocked with oak, hornbeam and hazel in 2017.

Ground flora is often absent under the planted trees and spruce but on the rides and wayleave is dominated by grasses and nettles.

Significance

The wood was designed and planted by the local community.

The area is now protected from development which has destroyed other open areas and wildlife habitat within the village.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: small size and narrow access limits machinery and haulage options so disposal of thinnings can be a problem.

Site size also limits management options and habitat creation opportunities.

Factors Causing Change

Rabbit damage.

Natural succession to high forest.

Natural regeneration of birch, willow, sycamore, elder etc.

Loss of ash due to disease.

Loss of spruce due to windblow.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A mixed woodland of predominantly broadleaved species with occasional specimen trees including Norway spruce. Ash is likely to be reduced to a very small component of the wood due to ash dieback. Successor species are likely to include sycamore, birch elder and goat willow. Occasional interventions will be necessary to maintain the ride network and a small percentage of open space (minimum 10%).

The site should be free of invasive species and developing the characteristics of natural woodland with some variation in age and structure although this will be limited due to the small size of the site.

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

Continued growth of planted broadleaved trees with appropriate maintenance as necessary. The retained Norway spruce to be wind-firm, healthy and not suppressing broadleaved trees in the canopy or gaps.

- Maintain P2017 planting (250 trees) by annual mechanical weeding until canopy closure. Remove tree shelters as necessary.
- Fell diseased ash from Zone B in response to biennial tree safety surveys.
- Work with UKPN to fell approx 40 mature Norway spruce at western end of site and along wayleave in north-east.

5.2 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

Littlewood is located on the edge of a housing development in the village of Buxted (population: 3,343), close to the A272 and within easy walking distance of most of the village. Although small the wood is used regularly by local people for dog walking. It is a WT access category C site: <5 visitors per day.

The site has a network of maintained rides and paths totally 600m in length, allowing access to all parts of the site. Within the small area of the site this includes being in mature, shady conifers, an open area of young planting and older planting that has now closed canopy.

There are 2 benches including the sculpted Millennium bench, now modified due to deterioration after 20 years on site. Close to this bench are 2 commemorative trees; a walnut and a horse chestnut planted by the community.

Significance

The site provides a low-key recreational green-space for the village of Buxted.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: the wood is not easily accessible to most of the village population without walking along a busy main road.

The site is too small to provide more than a very short walk.

Factors Causing Change

Ongoing development within the village may lead to an increase in visitor numbers.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The site will be a low-key, freely-accessible green space within the expanding village. Maintenance and infrastructure will be kept to a minimum, reflecting the natural environment and low numbers of visitors likely to use the site.

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

Maintain safe low-key access by appropriate annual maintenance.

- Upgrade entrance infrastructure and signage (2022).
- Annual maintenance of 600m of paths.
- Annual Zone A tree safety survey, alternating summer and autumn (next due October 2020 and August 2021).
- Zone B tree safety surveys at 2-yearly intervals (next due 2021).

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX I: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
Ia	2.05	Mixed broadleaves	1998	High forest	Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves	Connecting People with woods & trees, Secondary Woodland	
<p>P98 Mixed native broadleaves (1ha) planted at 1100 trees/ha. Species: pedunculate oak, ash, field maple, wild cherry, crab apple, woody shrubs.</p> <p>Approx P70 Norway spruce (1ha) in 2 groups to E and W of site. Formerly screening for chicken houses. Thinned 2003 and 2010. Extensive windblow in E in 2014, 2016 and 2020.</p> <p>Approx 0.1 ha P2017 planting at E end: pedunculate oak, hornbeam, hazel.</p>							

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.

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