



Runnydown Copse

Management Plan 2018-2023

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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 (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. 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:	Runnydown Copse
Location:	Dundridge
Grid reference:	SU568181, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 185
Area:	3.72 hectares (9.19 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Runnydown Copse is a small, narrow strip of ancient semi-natural woodland half a kilometre north of Bishop's Waltham in south Hampshire. It is situated within a largely agricultural landscape of patchwork fields and pasture connected with hedgerows and the occasional copses and woodlands. To the north is more rural, whereas there are multiple towns and villages to the south, east and west.

The copse lies on part of a scarp slope on the northern edge of a chalk spur, at the frontier between dry chalk and wet clays to the south. The site forms part of a locally prominent belt of ancient woodland running east to west, and provides a through-route for visitors. Immediately adjoining the copse at the western end is Hampshire County Councils Dundry LNR, an open chalk grassland site with an abundance of specialist calcareous grassland species and scrub. The copse is also part of a valuable ecological corridor providing a link between the Hamble and Meon Valleys and to other land of wildlife value in the area such as Galley Down, a relict piece of chalk downland.

Much of Runnydown Copse lies on thin chalky soils but the upper southern edge reaches the ridge top where there is residual clay with flints. It has no springs but it does have seepage bands making it markedly wetter at the base. The archaeological interest is unknown. Lynchets (ledges formed by historic ploughing) may be present but alternatively these may be the remains of field banks or tracks incised into the slope.

The copse is likely to have changed in size over time with the edges being gradually eaten into by fields. However, its present extent is similar to that of 1790, when Enclosure Awards were made for the Parish. Despite its small size, 25 ancient woodland indicator species have been identified, suggesting, along with other evidence, that Runnydown Copse is likely to be ancient semi-natural woodland. However, the flora does not produce a magnificent display in spring as the diversity of species and flowering times mean that a dense carpet is not formed at any one time.

Ash and beech currently dominate the canopy, with hazel the most prominent understorey species. There is reason to assume that ash was the oldest coppice used here, since ash stools are the largest in the copse. Other species include oak, sycamore, field maple, wild cherry, holly and yew. Scots pine also appears to have been planted in the late 18th century. The majority of trees with any timber value were removed from much of the copse around the time of World War 2, with the exception of trees on boundaries and at the western end. It is likely that coppicing of hazel also ceased at this time. No evidence of further management works can be found until acquisition by the Woodland Trust in 1988.

Public access is limited by the lack of nearby parking facilities but a simple infrastructure of public and permissive footpaths provide pedestrian access to the majority of the site, although some paths are challenging by the nature of the steep terrain.

2.2 Extended Description

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3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Runnydown Copse is located just north-west of Bishop's Waltham off Dundridge Lane. There is very limited parking on the lane.

The wood can be approached from the west end by an unclassified public road from where access can be gained via two stiles into the wood. A maintained permissive footpath runs the whole length of the wood and exits onto Hampshire County Council owned conservation land at the east end. A public footpath crosses Runnydown Copse in the west and intersects the central permissive footpath. The paths are muddy and steep in places. The footpath has steps for part of its length.

Nearest Bus Stop : Bishop's Waltham Square. Accessible from Eastleigh by Solent Blue Line Service No. 2 to Fair Oak, then Stagecoach Service No. 69 to Bishop's Waltham. From there walk north through the town and north-east along a footpath to the west end of the wood.

Nearest Station : Eastleigh 8 miles

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Runnydown Copse is functional as a component of a wider wooded corridor and connection to the landscape beyond. It does not need to provide a diversity of habitats, only a diversity of woodland species, which it currently has.

Due to its abundant and diverse woodland structure (canopy, understorey, shrub, field and ground layers) and prolific natural regeneration, the copse will be sustained by natural processes, with minimum intervention required to keep the site safe, secure and accessible.

Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) will affect the ash present within the copse and surrounding landscape and trees with significant canopy dieback within falling distance of footpaths and property will require felling to maintain safety. Ash trees that do not present a hazard to footpaths or neighbouring property will be retained, which will allow a proportion of this species to go through natural processes and more gradual change. The effect of the disease will alter the structure and composition of the copse, creating open areas where ash diminishes naturally or is felled in tree safety operations, giving opportunity for the natural regeneration of species such as sycamore and beech to establish in their place. There is likely to be an increase in dead wood as a result of the disease and a small proportion of this will be retained in-situ where possible, in places where it does not present a hazard to neighbours or visitors. In instances where significant quantities of ash are felled to maintain safety, timber will be extracted to prevent smothering of the woodland floor.

Frequent mature trees of a variety of species (mainly beech, sycamore and oak) will be present, developing veteran characteristics, while the occasional true veterans persist.

Understorey and ground flora will remain abundant and diverse, with ancient woodland species (e.g. Solomon's seal, wood anemone and bluebell) well-represented, through dappled light levels and temporary open space created from dynamic changes in the canopy such as the loss of trees from senescence, disease (e.g. ash dieback) and occasional windthrow.

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

Description
Significance
Opportunities & Constraints
Factors Causing Change
Long term Objective (50 years+)
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

5.2
Description
Significance
Opportunities & Constraints
Factors Causing Change
Long term Objective (50 years+)
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
2019	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone B	Site visit to investigate reported fallen tree and clear fallen branches from footpath and provide report on completed tree works.	30/11/19
2020	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone B	Priority tree works to clear fallen and hung-up trees over footpath as per specification provided.	04/07/20

APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	3.72	Ash	1970	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Despite its small size, the copse is diverse with a wide range of species due to the variety of soils and light levels. As it is on a NNE to NNW facing slope which ranges from flat to 45 degrees, much of the wood is shaded from early morning and late afternoon sunshine.

Species include: Ash, beech, sycamore, field maple, oak, yew, Scots pine, hazel, dogwood, hawthorn, elder, holly, dog rose, clematis, whitebeam, cherry, wild privet, elm, dogs mercury, Solomon's seal, bluebell, nettle, bellflower, ferns and bramble.

Many of the species show a full range of age classes. Ash and beech are the dominant canopy species, whilst hazel is the most abundant understorey species. The oldest trees are 3m diameter coppice stools and over 2m diameter beech pollards. Many of the woodland ground flora species also indicate the dominant calcareous nature of the soil. Clematis (old man's beard) is locally abundant and reaches into the canopy.

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.