

# Nine Hole Wood

(Plan period – 2022 to 2027)



WOODLAND  
TRUST

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## Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

The Woodland Trust owns and cares for well over 1,250 sites covering almost 30,000 hectares (ha) across the UK. This includes more than 4,000ha of ancient semi-natural woodland and almost 4,000ha of non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites and we have created over 5,000ha of new native woodland. We also manage other valuable habitats such as flower-rich grasslands, heaths, ponds/lakes and moorland.

Our Vision is:

“A UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife.”

To realise all the environmental, social and economic benefits woods and trees bring to society, we:

- **Create Woodland** – championing the need to hugely increase the UK’s native woodland and trees.
- **Protect Woodland** – fighting to defend native woodland, especially irreplaceable ancient woodland and veteran trees; there should be no loss of ancient woodland
- **Restore Woodland** – ensuring the sensitive restoration of all damaged ancient woodland and the re-creation of native wooded landscapes.

# Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

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.

The following principles provide an overarching framework to guide the management of all our sites but we recognise that all woods are different and that their management also needs to reflect their local landscape, history and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives.

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene in our woods when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity, safety and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland for all the positive reasons set out in our Conservation Principles, preferably using natural regeneration but often by planting trees, 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. Where possible, we pro-actively engage with people to help them appreciate the value of woods and trees.
4. The long term vision for all our 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 natural and cultural heritage value of sites is taken into account in our management and in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Land and woods can generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We therefore consider the appropriateness of opportunities 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 encourage our woods to be used for 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. We maintain a network of sites for long-term monitoring and trials leading to reductions in plastics and pesticides.
10. Any activities we undertake are in line with our wider Conservation Principles, conform to sustainable forest management practices, are appropriate for the site and balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

## The Public Management Plan

This public management plan describes the site and sets out the long term aims for our management and lists the Key Features which drive our management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site – their significance is outlined together with our long, 50 years and beyond, and our short, the next 5 years, term objectives for the management and enhancement of these features. The short term objectives are complemented by an outline Work Programme for the period of this management plan aimed at delivering our management aims.

Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and we continually monitor our sites to assess the success of our management, therefore this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme.

Please either consult The Woodland Trust website

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

or contact the Woodland Trust

[operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk)

to confirm details of the current management programme.

A short glossary of technical terms can be found at the end of the plan.

## Location and Access

Location maps and directions for how to find and access our woods, including this site, can be found by using the following link to the Woodland Trust web-site which contains information on accessible woodlands across the UK

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/find-woods/>

In Scotland access to our sites is in accordance with the Land Reform Act (of Scotland) 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

In England, Wales and NI, with the exception of designated Public Rights of Ways, all routes across our sites are permissive in nature and where we have specific access provision for horse riders and/or cyclists this will be noted in the management plan.

# The Management Plan

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
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5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### Nine Hole Wood

Location:	Eynsford Grid reference: TQ542662 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 177
Area:	3.02 hectares (7.46 acres)
External Designations:	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Nine Hole Wood was acquired in 1997 as one of the Woodland Trust's 'Woods on your Doorstep' (WOYD) scheme. The 3.02 hectare woodland is located in west Kent, between the villages of Farningham and Eynsford, and overlooks the Darent Valley within the North Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The site gently slopes downhill in an easterly direction, towards the River Darent, and is surrounded by agricultural land.

It sits within the National Character Area (NCA) 119 'North Downs'. Agriculture is an important component of the landscape in the NCA and around Nine Hole Wood where arable, livestock and horticulture have co-existed for centuries. Whilst this site is secondary woodland it forms part of an area where woodlands, many of which are ancient, are a prominent feature of the landscape, yet their ecological value has suffered in recent years due to a reduction in active management, particularly of mixed coppice, since the 1990s.

The land was gifted to The Woodland Trust and planted with mixed native broadleaved trees (ash, field maple, cherry, hazel, beech, oak and hawthorn) in 1998, with the aim of forming secondary woodland. This was achieved with assistance from the local community and sponsorship from The Post Office, The National Lottery (as part of the Millennium Project) and the Forestry Commission. The wood's name was chosen by the local community due to the previous land's use as a golf course. Prior to the golf course, it was used as an arable field. The site's calcareous soil appears to be limiting rank grasses allowing high species diversity of both grasses and flowers in open areas. species include cowslips, oxeye daisy, knapweed, forget-me-not, lesser trefoil, wild strawberry, germander speedwell, grass vetchling, common vetch and white helleborine and pyramidal orchids.

As part of our Millennium Feature for this wood, a small number of bluebell bulbs were planted in the northern corner. Other wildflower interest includes a variety of grassland species, healthy population of pyramidal orchids (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) which have naturally established in the grassy areas of the site, particularly the north-east boundary as well as white helleborine.

There is a circular grass path within the site for public use and the Darent Valley public footpath transects the site, adjacent to the north-west boundary.

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

There will be minimal active management of the secondary woodland, allowing the current one-storey structure to diversify via natural processes. This will promote understory vegetation and ground-flora as gaps arise in the canopy as a result of ash dieback, as well as increasing deadwood habitat. Tree disease will be monitored as the woodland matures with associated safety work taking place as required. As the canopy matures and closes over the paths and rides, ride edge coppicing will be explored as a management option to maintain a diverse age structure and preserve calcareous grassland ground flora along path edges.

Maintaining the path network, infrastructure and furniture on site will ensure continued public access and engagement. Selective thinning of trees along the permissive paths (for safety reasons), as and when is necessary, and maintaining the existing open areas will enhance the overall aesthetics for the visiting public.

The boundary hedge along Sparepenny Lane will be appropriately maintained to comply with Kent Highways regulations.

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 f1

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



## 5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2022	AW - Visitor Access Infrastructure	Works associated with the construction of a new or extension to existing car parking facilities.	August
2023	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	March
2024	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	March
2022	WC - Tree Planting / Seeding	Works associated with tree planting / tree seeding for woodland creation sites	April
2026	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	March
2027	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	March

## APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	2.96	Oak (pedunculate)	1998	Min-intervention		Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>The trees were planted in winter 1997/1998 using native broadleaves of local provenance. Namely oak, ash, field maple, hazel, and hawthorn. A wide ride network has been built into the planting design though this is now closed canopy in places. A mature hedgerow of mainly elm aligns the western boundary alongside Sparepenny Lane. A Millennium Feature of the wood is an area of bluebells planted in the north-west corner. A small quantity of bulbs were obtained from nearby Ashenbank Wood, on the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), and relocated to Nine Hole Wood in 2000. The areas of grassland on the fringes of the site display a variety of species.</p>						

### **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.

**Windblow/Windthrow**

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

**Registered Office:**

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