

Percy Wakley Wood

(Plan period – 2020 to 2025)



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

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

or contact the Woodland Trust

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

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GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Percy Wakley Wood

Location:	Rockbeare Grid reference: SY 03598 95187 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 192
Area:	5.41 hectares (13.37 acres)
External Designations:	N/A
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Percy Wakley Wood has, historically, been a quiet rural secondary woodland located just off the old A30, 1 mile to the east of Rockbeare. The development of Cranbrook (a new town which will eventually be home to 20,000 people) has already, and will further impact on the wood through increased use. Percy Wakley Wood lies within the Devon Redlands National Character Area NCA 148. The wood is composed of two narrow diagonally opposed blocks, with a narrow corridor linking them at their southeast and northwest corners. The wood is generally flat, with a slight north west aspect. Originally rural in nature, Cranbrook will continue to develop and housing is planned to be built up to the northern boundaries of the wood, turning it into an urban fringe site.

In 2020 the wood is still tucked down a quiet country lane, with limited parking, and this limits use of the wood. However it appears to be well used by a core of local people. The wood has a secluded feel, as it is bounded by mature hedges, but it is clearly visible from the route of the old A30 to the north, and to those flying in and out of Exeter Airport to the west.

The woodland is predominantly native broadleaf of which approximately one third is mature high forest woodland with the remaining two thirds planted by the Woodland Trust in 1993/94 on semi-improved grassland. The predominant species are ash, oak, field maple and willow. The mature woodland sections consist of mainly drawn-up over stood ash coppice. Conservation values are added by the presence of a small pond between the two blocks and by a number of mature hedgerows. Although in parts the ground flora is dominated by rank vegetation it also contains species such as honeysuckle, common spotted orchid, enchanter's nightshade, wood woundwort, red campion and herb robert, and is potentially a source for these species to spread into the newer woodland in the longer term. The wood has generally established well however ash die back is now having a major impact on the ash, particularly in compartment 2a.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The wood will be predominantly native broadleaf woodland, with species affinities appropriate to the area. The wood as a whole will have been managed to ensure the effect of ash die back does not compromise the long term woodland habitat or public safety. Once restructuring and restocking has taken place, during this plan period, the wood will be managed as continuous cover woodland with natural regeneration the preferred approach for woodland regeneration. Its structure and management will take into account the habitats in Cranbrook Country Park so that the area as a whole is a cohesive wildlife habitat. It is likely that the rides in Compt 2a will be wide with a diverse shrub edge structure, whereas the paths in Compt 1a will be narrower winding through mature woodland. The hedgerow on Rewe Lane will be laid periodically.

The wood will be much more urban fringe in feel due to the development of Cranbrook. It will be safe and welcoming to visitors, path surfaces will be appropriate for use all year, with links to the country park. The majority of people using the wood will be accessing it on foot. Working in partnership with the country park to engage the local community will have been explored.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Local Woodland Habitat

Description

The wood is secondary native broadleaved woodland which has developed in two sections.

The first (Compt 1a) totaling 1.55ha is mature stored coppice thought to be 50-60 years old. Although, the compartment exhibits ancient semi-natural woodland characteristics, the 1890 First Edition Ordnance Survey shows the area as scrub/rough pasture. The current canopy is almost pure late pole stage ash, with an occasional oak thinned in 1997. The ash has die back but currently (2020) with only 30% canopy loss. The understory is developing, with occasional hawthorn, field maple, blackthorn, but mainly sycamore. A dense stand of cotoneaster occurs in the north east corner. The ground flora is typically of a wet woodland of this type, dominated by ivy, ferns, rushes and sedges, and stands of nettle; other species include honeysuckle, common spotted orchid, enchanter's nightshade, wood woundwort, red campion and herb robert. The compartment is generally damp and has many seasonally wet runnels.

The rest of the wood (Compt 2a) totaling 3.85ha, was planted in 1993/94 on two grazing fields. It is predominantly ash with oak and field maple as the other main species. While some shrubs were planted, the majority are creeping in from the edges and are mainly blackthorn. There are some mature oaks in the hedgerows. The ash is severely infected with ash die back and much of the canopy has been lost (2020). The ground flora was sparse as canopy closure was achieved, but now light floods into the woodland floor and there is a dense growth of grasses and nettles. Where natural regeneration is occurring the majority is ash with some field maple. Much of the regeneration is being browsed off by deer, rabbits and squirrels. There are spring lines creating wet areas.

The mature woodland in the adjoining compartment will provide opportunities for long established woodland ground flora to seed and migrate into the recently established woodland. A small (often seasonal) pond between compartments 1 & 2 also adds diversity.

The development of Cranbrook, which will eventually be home to 20,000 people, has already, and will further impact on the wood through increased use. Cranbrook will abut the northern and western boundary of the northern block of woodland. A section of Cranbrook Country Park will surround the rest of the wood apart from the lower eastern boundary which remains as a caravan site

Significance

The woodland contributes to the habitat action plans at local, regional and national level, - no BAP species are known to be on the site. It fulfils the Woodland Trust's objectives of creating new woodland and protecting native woodlands.

It is possible that the wood will be a part of the 'Sustainable Alternative Natural Green Space' (SANGS) provision for

Cranbrook, which aims at relieving increased pressure on areas of European importance for wildlife. In this case both the Pebblebed heaths and the Exe Estuary are close enough to the development to require mitigation. As of October 2020 the Woodland Trust is still in discussions with East Devon District Council over the use of Percy Wakley as SANGS.

It will also be part of the wider Clyst Valley Regional Park providing wildlife corridors and further habitat from the north at Killerton and Ashclyst Forest through to Bishop's Court parkland in the south.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

The wood will be directly connected to a section of Cranbrook Country Park and as such should become part of a larger ecological landscape, along with the other areas of country park and the towns developing green infrastructure.

Constraints:

The increase in visitor pressure means that the wood cannot safely be left to find its own equilibrium due to the severe effects of ash die back.

Increased visitor pressure could also limit the development of natural open space vegetation so limiting the diversity potential of the wood.

Factors Causing Change

Ash die back is having a fundamental impact on the wood and its natural processes. Compt 2a will in the near future lose approximately 90% of the tree canopy (90% of the trees will die) leaving small groups of oak and field maple. The rank grassy ground layer may limit the natural regeneration of replacement trees.

Storm events and windblow will have an increasing impact as the ash becomes brittle (Compt 1a already has a history of windblow).

Browsing of regeneration from deer, rabbits and squirrels will affect natural regeneration and structure.

Cotoneaster, a non-native plant, could spread further from the north east corner of the wood so decreasing the diversity of the ground flora. Greater littering and fly-tipping could occur due to greater use by the public, as well as garden waste when the new houses are built and the spread of garden plant escapees.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Manage the wood as continuous cover to create woodland of varying structure and habitat with established woodland ground flora. The wood will have a high degree of connectivity to the surrounding landscape through the country park and green infrastructure provided by Cranbrook.

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

Operational objective:

To considerably restructure the wood and diversify the range of native broadleaf woodland species in the wood. This will increase its resilience to tree diseases, such as ash die back, and improve its ecological diversity considerably.

Compartment 1a will be restructured focusing on removing the diseased ash from the north west edges of the wood and thinning the rest. It will be left to further restructure naturally. Compartment 2a will have all the dying planted ash removed, but leaving all the other species. In order to quickly re-establish a woodland canopy of species other than the predominantly ash mix likely from regeneration, the wood will be restocked with native broadleaf trees and shrubs (50:50 ratio) to form the basis of an oak, hazel type woodland. Natural regeneration will be recruited as and where possible to support this and help create a more irregular woodland structure.

Work Programme:

1. To thin compartment 1a focusing on diseased ash and those with the weakest basal structure.
2. To remove all the dying ash in compt 2a
3. Restock compartment 2a with native broadleaf trees and shrubs. The spring lines should be left unplanted as part of permitted open space allowances as these have the potential to develop into a diverse wet open habitat.
3. Maintain the pond as partially open.
4. Control the cotoneaster in compartment 1a.

4.2 f2 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

Public Access

The wood is currently in a secluded location with parking for two cars. A core group of local people come from the nearby villages of Rockbears, Strete Raleigh and Marsh Green. Permissive paths can be accessed from Rewe Lane, but permissive routes provide no direct link with public rights of way. In wet weather the woodland paths are wet and boggy underfoot.

In the near future the town of Cranbrook will abut the northern and western boundary of the northern block of woodland. A section of Cranbrook Country Park will surround the rest of the wood apart from the lower eastern boundary which remains as a caravan site. In 2020 it is unclear as to how people will access Percy Wakley Wood through the country park.

Significance

There are relatively few public rights of way, or small accessible woodlands (as measured by the Woodland Trust) in the surrounding areas, so the wood currently offers an opportunity for the local population to enjoy a peaceful woodland experience which contributes to the Woodland Trust objective to 'Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees'.

It is possible that the wood will be a part of the 'Sustainable Alternative Natural Green Space' (SANGS) provision for Cranbrook, which aims at relieving increased pressure on areas of European importance for wildlife, in this case both the Pebblebed heaths and the Exe Estuary. As of October 2020 the Woodland Trust is still in discussions with East Devon District Council over the use of Percy Wakley as SANGS.

It will also be part of the wider Clyst Valley Regional Park providing greater access corridors and recreational and

education opportunities from the north at Killerton and Ashclyst Forest through to Bishop's Court parkland in the south.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

1. Cranbrook is being developed and there is the potential for the wood to be a part of the wider country park and green infrastructure for the new town, creating new green ways into the wood from the town.
2. Along with the country park it could play a part in volunteering and education opportunities.
3. It could also potentially expand the Woodland Trust's visibility to a much wider range of people in the area and increase understanding of the benefits of woods and trees.

Constraints:

1. The car park has space for 2 cars – the entrance is tight and enclosed making it difficult for vehicles to see when pulling out.
2. The current size and accessibility of the wood may put people off revisiting the wood if it becomes too heavily used for its size due to the expansion of Cranbrook.
3. The Woodland Trust has limited resources to develop community engagement in the area so would have to work in partnership / license other organisations.

Factors Causing Change

Ash die back as mentioned in the Kf1 Local Woodland Habitat, is having a significant effect on the health of the trees and therefore on the safety of visitors, whose numbers will increase significantly as Cranbrook expands. The majority of ash are within falling distance of a path in the wood, creating the need to manage safety by closing or rerouting paths, felling trees or a mixture of both.

The already increasing use of the wood as Cranbrook expands is creating greater pressure on the paths and the car park area

Long term Objective (50 years+)

That the wood is welcoming and easy to visit, with facilities maintained appropriate to visitor numbers and linked sustainably using green infrastructure to Cranbrook.

Tree safety issues such as ash die back will be managed, in a positive way, to enhance engagement with nature and to provide a safe visitor environment.

Local people are engaged with the wood as part of the wider country park with volunteering and educational activities taking place as well as general relaxation.

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

Operational Objective:

To ensure that wood is safe and fit for purpose in the light of the increase in visitors to the wood. This will in part be through restructuring and restocking the wood, as highlighted in the Kf1 Local Woodland Habitat section of this management plan, to ensure that it safe to visit and as the wood grows becomes a more diverse wildlife habitat.

1. Maintain good levels of access all year round assessing the need for putting a stone surface on the paths. This would require additional external funding.
2. As the country park develops explore access links between the park and the wood, minimizing the need for visitors to drive to the wood. Increased visitors from the Cranbrook development may necessitate the need for more car parking provision and the current car park could be extended. However this would require additional external funding .
3. Install dog waste bins at entrances if there is a clear need and a third party agrees to empty them.
3. Manage tree safety issues particularly in compt 1a as necessary.
4. Explore new opportunities for volunteering, wellbeing and education and membership, working in partnership with the country park and /or other partner organisations.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
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APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	1.52	Ash	1950	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site	
<p>Stored coppice thought to be 50-60 years old. Although, the compartment exhibits some ASNW characteristics, the 1890 First Edition Ordnance Survey shows the area as scrub/rough pasture. The current canopy is almost pure late pole stage ash, with an occasional oak thinned in 1997. Understorey sparse, with occasional hawthorn, field maple, blackthorn and sycamore. A dense stand of privet occurs in the north east corner. Natural regeneration is evident and is almost exclusively ash. Ground flora is dominated by ivy, ferns, rushes and sedges, and stands of nettle, other species include honeysuckle, common spotted orchid, enchanter's nightshade, wood woundwort, red campion and herb robert. The compartment is generally damp and has a small spring fed pond on its southern boundary</p>						
2a	4	Ash	1993	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site	
<p>Planted in 1994 on two grazing fields with 50% ash, 15% oak, 15% field maple, 10% woody shrubs, 10% open space forming the ride network. Trees are established although some deer damage still occurs. The mature woodland in the adjoining compartment will provide opportunities for long established woodland ground flora to seed and migrate into the recently established woodland. The hedges, rides and glades supports a healthy population of butterflies, including marbled white, ringlet, small skipper & meadow brown.</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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