

Shillbrook Wood

(Plan period – 2023 to 2028)



WOODLAND
TRUST

Management Plan Content Page

Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

The Public Management Plan

Location and Access

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

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
 - 4.1 f1 Secondary Woodland
 - 4.2 f2 Connecting People with woods & trees
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Shillbrook Wood

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Location: | Bampton, Witney Grid reference: SP319021 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 164 |
| Area: | 3.69 hectares (9.12 acres) |
| External Designations: | N/A |
| Internal Designations: | Woods on Your Doorstep |

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The majority of Shillbrook Wood was planted in November 2000 with a 0.6ha extension added to the south in February 2002. The creation of the wood was part of the Trust's Woods on Your Doorstep initiative (WOYD) with the local community involved in the initial planting. The site is situated in the west of Oxfordshire on the outskirts of the village of Bampton (1km / 0.6 miles) and south west of the town of Witney (10.1km / 6.3 miles).

Soils are described as loamy with naturally high groundwater, indeed Shillbrook is a low lying, wet site on Oxford Clay and historically was a water meadow before being drained in the 19th century and used to grow crops. The site is named after the stream, the Shillbrook, which runs through Bampton, the nearby village.

With considerable support from the local community, the site was planted with a mix of native trees and shrubs including ash, oak cherry, lime, alder, field maple and guelder rose as well as two pure blocks of osier and hazel. The site also contains a component of more uncommon species such as black poplar, walnut and disease resistant elm. There is a network of paths including a public footpath running north to south, whilst mature hedgerows run along most of the boundaries.

Shillbrook Wood can be accessed via several public rights of way in the surrounding area, one of which leading south from Bampton passes the council-owned playing fields off Buckland Road (where there is a car park), and continues through the site exiting on the southern boundary. There is good network of permissive paths linking the various planting which offer quiet, short walks in a scenic landscape. The Trust owns a management access track running east from the main woodland to Buckland Road, which is not available for public access. There is a pedestrian entrance over a culvert on the western boundary that links with a permissive path along the boundary of a neighbouring field.

The Woodland Trust has given the site a category C for access (low usage site where we do maintain paths).

3. LONG TERM POLICY

In the long term (50+ years) Shillbrook Wood is expected to continue developing into a native broadleaf woodland with a high forest structure. Dominant canopy species will be black polar, oak, alder and silver birch. Woodland understorey and scrub edges consisting blackthorn, hawthorn, spindle, dogwood and mixed age hazel, field maple and osier willow through rotational coppicing. There will be wide rides, glades and temporary open spaces adding structural and species diversity to the wooded element as ride-side coppiced trees and shrubs regrow.

Informal public access will therefore remain in perpetuity, through a managed path network. Entrances will be clearly signed and made welcoming, and the site will made as safe as practicable for visitors. As the site is mainly used by local people the information for visitors will be relatively low key.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Secondary Woodland

| |
|---|
| Description |
| <p>Secondary broadleaved woodland planted on arable farmland in two waves (the majority in 2000 and a 0.6ha southern block in 2002), which has developed a closed canopy across the majority of the site. Isolated from other rare woodland habitats in an arable/rough grazing farming landscape with hedgerows acting as additional habitat and wildlife corridors.</p> <p>Main species are oak (30%), ash (20%) with minor components of wild cherry, lime, willow, alder, field maple, black poplar, walnut and disease resistant elm. The wood also contains a good proportion of native woody shrubs such as guelder rose and hawthorn, especially on the woodland edges. There are 2 blocks of pure osier and pockets of hazel totalling 0.2ha. Paths accessible by the public measure 1.23 km in length and when combined with glades comprise approximately 10% of the site. The preexisting ditch network assists with the drainage of the woodland and surrounding farmland.</p> |
| Significance |
| <p>The creation of this woodland has helped increase the amount of new native woodland cover in an area where woodland cover is very low, as well as establishing an open access woodland near to where people live. Now the woodland has established, it is an important woodland habitat resource for wildlife locally.</p> <p>New woodlands help absorb CO2 from the atmosphere, protect soils from erosion, create future wood fuel supplies, improve health and well-being, encourage wildlife and build resilience against pests and diseases while improving biodiversity.</p> |
| Opportunities & Constraints |
| <p>Opportunities:</p> <p>Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The management access has an unimproved surface and is encroached on both sides by neighbouring trees.- Timber extraction is limited due to the management access, unimproved path surfaces that are soft in winter and southern section is not accessible to vehicles.- The ditch network which is part of a wider landscape system of drainage has become silted and has encroaching woody vegetation. |

- Deer are likely to use the site to shelter due to the infrequent shelter opportunities in the wider landscape.

Factors Causing Change

- Death of the ash trees due to colonisation of ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)
- Invasive Himalayan balsam.
- Herbivore impact both at ground and in canopy (deer, rabbits, squirrels)
- Wind-throw damage due to the nature of the surrounding open landscape and height of the mature trees.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

In the long term Shillbrook Wood will be allowed to develop naturally to achieve the establishment of high forest with a good level of resilience and varied native plant species. Silvicultural intervention will occur when necessary to vary the tree age and allow for canopy development within the retained tree species. Invasive Himalayan balsam will have been eradicated.

The colonisation by ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) will likely result in the loss of the majority the ash trees and will consequently change the species composition of the wood. Where necessary for visitor safety, ash trees will be felled and left as dead wood habitat. Natural regeneration will be favoured over replanting.

The paths will remain accessible to visitors and will also form the layout of the rides with scalloped edges and glades. Actively managed mature path side trees using silvicultural methods such as pollarding. Hazel, willow and maples will be at different stages of growth creating varied habitats and temporary open space for a greater range of associated species. A broad range of ground flora will be found throughout the permanent and temporary open spaces.

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

Shillbrook Wood requires the following short term tasks undertaken during this plan period to meet the long term objectives.

- Eradicate Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) along ditches and surrounding woodland by cutting and pulling annually.
- Remove trees marked with orange dot that have succumb to ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) within a tree length of the path network to maintain visitor safety - 2023
- Cut back hedge either side of 370 metres of maintenance access track to allow access to maintain pathways, bridge/culvert - 2024
- Monitor impacts of ash dieback on canopy composition and extent of any natural regeneration that will replace ash - 2025.

- Re pollard 10 mature willows, to ensure visitor safety and retain old growth features on site, winter - 2026.
- A full woodland condition assessment will be carried out in 2027 to inform the next management plan review.

4.2 f2 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

Shillbrook Wood is used by local residents as daily exercise and for walking dogs and allows visitors a woodland habitat to explore which is rare in the surrounding landscape.

The wood is located approximately 1.25km (0.75 miles) south of Bampton (population 3001 – 2020 census).

Buses originating from Oxford and Witney stop at the main square in Bampton Monday to Saturday.

Public footpath 119/6/10 runs through the parish council-owned playing fields to the north, where there is a car park, and continues to the northern entrance of Shillbrook Wood (kissing gate). The footpath continues through the wood for 330m exiting the southern tip where it becomes 119/6/20.

There is a permissive path across a neighbouring field that enters the western boundary. There is a 1km/ 1000m network of flat permissive paths within the wood that visitors can use to experience the different planted tree species.

A wooden bridge with a step is present which passes over a seasonally wet ditch.

The Trust owns a 370m management access track running east from the main woodland at the locked field gate to Buckland Road, which is not for public access.

There are two dedicated wooden benches which give suitable places to rest.

Significance

Shillbrook Wood offers a place of peace and tranquillity to local residents where woodland is a rarity in the local area. The wood is popular with dog walkers and is often used as part of longer countryside walks.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

Constraints:

- The unimproved woodland paths can become muddy in winter.

- Access restrictions in terms of a kissing gate at the northern entrance (and another kissing gate north upon the public footpath), stepped bridge will inhibit those with pushchairs or those who require all-terrain mobility scooters.

Factors Causing Change

- Visual changes as woodland matures.
- Tree canopy shading path network which increases bare muddy surfaces and shades out ground flora.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

- Informal public access will be provided at the wood in perpetuity.
- To provide accessible paths for visitors along the permissive routes and public rights of way.
- The site should be accessible and safe but not over-managed with excessive infrastructure and signage.
- There should be an appropriate level of resources available for the site to guide and inform all visitors.

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

Shillbrook Wood will be kept open and accessible for visitors.

- Maintain 1000m of path annually as required.
- Litter will be collected during site maintenance visits.
- Tree safety inspection of Zone B biennially.
- Work with OCC PROW team to replacement concrete culvert on the public footpath. 2023
- Work with OCC PROW team, to improve site access by removing kissing gate on PROW. 2023
- Entrance infrastructure will be inspected at the mid-point of the plan (2025) with any remedial work undertaken as necessary
- Replace wooden bridge with culvert on permissive path. Operation planned for 2025.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

| Year | Type Of Work | Description | Due Date |
|------|------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 2023 | AW - Visitor Access Maintenance | Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc, | July |
| 2023 | AW - Management Access Maintenance | Works associated with the maintenance of management access infrastructure and tracks Such as repairs to vehicle entrance points, maintaining vehicle bridges and repairing / reinstating surfaced management access routes. | November |
| 2024 | WMM - Invasive Plant Control | Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments | May |
| 2025 | WMM - Invasive Plant Control | Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments | May |
| 2025 | AW - Visitor Access Infrastructure | Works associated with the construction of a new or extension to existing car parking facilities. | September |
| 2026 | SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work | Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again. | January |
| 2026 | AW - Visitor Access Maintenance | Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc, | May |
| 2026 | WMM - Invasive Plant Control | Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments | May |
| 2027 | AW - Visitor Access Maintenance | Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc, | May |

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

| Cpt No. | Area (ha) | Main Species | Year | Management Regime | Major Management Constraints | Designations |
|---|-----------|--------------|------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| 1a | 3.64 | Ash | 2000 | Min-intervention | | |
| <p>Broadleaved woodland planted in 2 waves, the majority in 2000 and a 0.6ha southern block in 2002. Main species are ash (30%), oak (20%) with minor components of wild cherry, lime, willow, alder, field maple, black poplar, walnut and elm. Also contains a good proportion of native woody shrubs such as guelder rose and hawthorn, especially on the woodland edges. There are 2 blocks of pure osier and hazel totaling 0.2ha. Open space comprising of paths and open glades cover approximately 10% of the site. The woodland has developed a closed canopy across the majority of the site.</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:

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

The Woodland Trust is a charity registered in England and Wales no. 294344 and in Scotland no. SC038885. A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no. 1982873. The Woodland Trust logo is a registered trademark.