

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

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GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Kirkless Wood

Location:	Wigan	Grid	reference:	SD610069	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	109
Area:	7.37 hectares (18.21 acres)								
External Designations:	Community Forest								
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep								

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Kirkless Wood can be found North West of the village of Pennington Green near Wigan, Greater Manchester. The site was acquired and planted by the Woodland Trust in 1997. The woodland buffers and extends an existing secondary woodland Woodshaw Ruck, which lies to the north and east of the site and is owned by Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council. Other land use around the site is at present pastoral with some arable farmland to the west. The south of the site is bordered by a small reservoir, which is owned by a local angling club and a private house. Two other Woodland Trust sites Crawford's Wood and Lady Mabel's are located less than a mile to the north and can be accessed via the Public Right of Way network from Kirkless Wood.

The wood is planted on slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soils and is flat in nature. A small pond was also created when the site was first established.

The site was planted with 10,126 trees and consists of 4.0 hectares of young mixed native broadleaved trees. Species such as oak, ash, birch, cherry, hazel, rowan, willow, hawthorn, guelder rose and dog rose along with 0.5 hectares of conifer planting (scots pine) which is interspersed with the broadleaved planting. New native woodland is a key feature of the site. The site also has approximately 2.98 hectares of open ground consisting of rides and meadow areas.

The site was planted as part of the Woodlands On Your Doorstep project (WOYD), which created 200 new woodlands in England & Wales to mark the millennium. Local people were involved in the design of the site and asked to suggest a name for the site, Kirkless Wood was chosen as it was the most popular name with local people. Kirkless is the name of the district, which is well known for its iron works. All WOYD sites have a millennium feature, and a pond was chosen to be the millennium feature at this site. Funding for the acquisition and management of the site came from Manchester City of Trees (formerly Red Rose Forest), The Countryside Commission, Wigan MBC, The Forestry Commission and private individuals.

A public footpath runs along the full extent of the sites western boundary, however only the lower half is within our boundary. This footpath links directly into Woodshaw Ruck and the wider countryside. The site also contains a network of approximately 1000 meters of permissive, circular mowed footpaths. The site is well used by local people and is within easy reach of local housing. Informal public access is a key feature of Kirkless Wood.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Kirkless Wood will be allowed to grow and develop naturally, as a refuge for wildlife. The wood will be managed as high forest of mixed broadleaves, including non-native trees common to the local area. It will be managed predominantly as a landscape and conservation feature.

The development of natural secondary woodland will be promoted through the encouragement of any further areas of natural regeneration, on areas not designated as long-term open spaces. Active thinning work will take place over the next Management Plan Period (2020-2025) to help ensure a diverse mix and age range of tree species.

The present network of open access for pedestrian use which consists of 1000 metres of permissive unsurfaced paths and seven formal entrances will be maintained through a regular mowing regime in the summer months under the sites Estates Maintenance Contract. Our aim will be to increase public usage through the promotion of the site locally and regionally (for example through Manchester City of Tree's literature).

Statutory obligations will continue to be met with respect to managing tree safety and ensuring public access via the permissive path.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
There are 6 pedestrian access points available to the site from public footpath no. 21 which runs around the outside of the western half of the site, and one pedestrian access point on the south eastern boundary of the site. All the pedestrian access points consist of wooden pedestrian squeeze stiles. The site itself contains a network of around 1000 meters of mown, level permissive grass paths along with grassy ride edges and features of interest such as a pond. The site is well used by local people for informal recreation and links in well with adjoining woodland owned and managed by Wigan MBC known as Woodshaw Ruck, which itself has a number of paths. Other Woodland Trust sites are also located nearby such as Crawford's Wood and Lady Mabel's.
Significance
Kirkless Wood is adjacent to the village of Pennington Green, and links into other recreational areas and path networks such as Woodshaw Ruck and two other Woodland Trust sites. It is a pleasant and peaceful area to spend some time, and gives people the opportunity to easily get away from the urban environment.
Opportunities & Constraints
The site is relatively small and is most likely to be used by local people who live close to the site, however the site does link into a public footpath network. The site has suffered isolated incidence of vandalism, most notably many tree guards were removed from the trees soon after planting. Illegal access by motor bikes is also an on-going issue. Management access to the site is also challenging and the ground is permanently wet meaning accessing the site to carry out management works can be difficult.
Factors Causing Change
Damage caused to paths by motorbikes.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The existing level and quality of access will be monitored and maintained by the Trust. The Trust will endeavour to be flexible and adapt to any increase in recreational use.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
Maintain 6 pedestrian entrances and 1000 metres of Permissive Path and Public Right of Way by cutting back encroaching vegetation and trees; inspect signs, gates and fences; remove accumulations of litter & fly tipping as necessary - to be done via the Estates Maintenance Contract 3 visits per calendar year. We will continue to remain actively engaged with the Police to help manage illegal bike activities. Carry out regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (i.e. next to buildings, roads and footpaths) and site

hazards as per the Trust's safety inspection regime to ensure safety of visitors and neighbours, and undertaking any remedial safety work identified.

Monitor public use of the site before the end of the current plan period to review the standard of access, identify any work required and assess if there are any issues/ threats to the wood from public usage, taking appropriate action to address them if necessary.

4.2 f2 New Native Woodland

Description

The site consists of 4.5 ha of native broadleaved and conifer planting. The site also contains 2.98 ha of open ground in the form of rides, meadows and a pond.

Significance

This is a small native broadleaved wood in an area with very little woodland at all and certainly very little native woodland, and hence it will improve the habitat in the local area. The woodland also helps to extend Woodshaw Ruck which is a woodland owned and managed by the local authority.

Opportunities & Constraints

Initial tree growth has been rapid and the basic structure of the woodland will develop quite quickly. The site was a small arable field before planting, and its small size will limit its conservation value. However, it does link and extend Woodshaw Ruck, a woodland which lies to the east of the site.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The aim is to create a high forest of mixed predominantly native broadleaves. The wood will be managed predominantly as a recreational and landscape feature. This will involve maintaining the diverse mix of species, regeneration of both natives and non-native species will be accepted.

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

Active thinning work will be carried out during the current plan period (2020-2025) to ensure a diverse mix of trees in terms of both species and age structure of the woodland.

Selective felling/thinning work will be carried out in the current plan period (2020-2025 work likely carried out 2022) in response to ash die back focusing on path edges along the tree safety B Zone, to be repeated at 3-4 year intervals to ensure safety and the slow removal of ash from pedestrian zones

A Woodland Condition Assessment will be carried out in the final year of the current plan period. This will make recommendations as to the management of the site, key elements of which are likely to include open ground, the effects of ash disease and the development of natural regeneration.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2020	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	August
2020	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.	September
2021	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	May
2021	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
2022	SL - Emergency Safety Works	Works associated with unplanned emergency safety works, other than tree safety, such as repairs/restoration works after damage caused by storms / floods /landslips	March
2022	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	March
2022	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	April
2022	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	April
2022	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,	April
2022	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	April
2022	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone B	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside routes such as paths and rides within the woodland	July
2022	SL - Emergency Safety Works	Works associated with unplanned emergency safety works, other than tree safety, such as repairs/restoration works after damage caused by storms / floods /landslips	September

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2022	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	October
2022	SL - Emergency Safety Works	Works associated with unplanned emergency safety works, other than tree safety, such as repairs/restoration works after damage caused by storms / floods /landslips	December
2022	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	December
2022	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,	December
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,	March
2025	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	7.48	Ash	1997	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Community Forest
<p>4.5 hectares (11.1 acres) planted with a mixture of native broadleaves and native pine in December 1997 located near the village of Pennington Green near Wigan. The canopy is comprised of 20% oak, 20% ash, 10% Scots Pine, 10% birch, 20% willow, 20% woody shrubs. The site was sown with a low yielding grass seed mixture prior to tree planting, the planted trees are now well established and broadleaved regeneration is also occurring. The site links to Woodshaw Ruck which is an existing woodland owned by the local authority. The woodland has been created on former agricultural land, there is also evidence that the land could have been mined at some stage. A well used network of informal paths and a Public Right of Way can be found on 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.

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