

Polyphemus

(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

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
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5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Polyphemus

Location:	Darwen, Lancs Grid reference: SD696235 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 103
Area:	15.43 hectares (38.13 acres)
External Designations:	Other
Internal Designations:	Trafalgar Wood commemorative site, Tree For All Site

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Polyphemus Wood is situated approximately 3km south of Blackburn town centre and 1km to the north east of the town of Darwen. The site occupies a prominent position in the landscape, being an area of former pastureland highly visible from the M65 forming part of a green wedge between two populations centres. The site is a 16ha gently sloping, mostly north facing area of former improved grassland, bounded on all sides by agricultural land, rising from 130m in the north to 210m at the highest point in the south. A small seasonal pond can be found on site and the soil type is slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soil which is common in North West England.

Polyphemus was planted with approximately 15,000 trees and consists of 12.35 hectares of young mixed native broadleaved trees. Species such as oak, ash, alder, birch, rowan, hazel, hawthorn and holly were planted. The site also has approximately 2.5 hectares of open ground consisting of footpaths, meadow areas and a small pond which the trust restored in 2005. A small section of the North West corner of the site was left unplanted as records courtesy of Lancashire Wildlife Trust showed this small area to have some limited floristic value. New Native Woodland is a Key Feature of the site.

The land was a gift from a local farmer who generously left the site to the Trust in his will. Funding for planting and managing the site came from The Forestry Commission, Elwoods, SITA, Blackburn and Darwen MBC and private individuals. The site was planted as part of the Trafalgar Woods Project which celebrated the bicentenary of the battle of Trafalgar in 2005 by planting 27 woodlands named after ships in Nelsons celebrated fleet, one of which was HMS Polyphemus. The name Polyphemus seems to originate from Greek Mythology, Polyphemus was a Cyclops in Homers Odyssey. The Trafalgar Woods Project was part of Tree for all, a project which aimed to involve one million school children planting 12 million trees, and many of the trees at Polyphemus have been planted by children. In fact the planting of the site was phased over three years to maximize the potential for as many local school children as possible to be involved in the planting.

A public footpath runs along the full extent of the sites southern boundary, there is also a network of permissive footpaths on site and in total there is around 1000 meters of mown grass footpaths. The site is well used by local people and it is within easy reach of local housing. Informal Public Access is a Key Feature of the site.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Polyphemus 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. Gaps will be created in the canopy due to trees naturally reaching senescence and tree safety operations.

The present network of open access for pedestrian use which consists of 800 metres of permissive unsurfaced path, 200 metres of unsurfaced Public Right of Way and 3 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 & Public Right Of Way network.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
The site has four public access points in total. A squeeze gap is located on the south west boundary of the site at the end of Knowle Lane and 3 pedestrian stiles are located on the eastern, south eastern and north eastern boundaries respectively. The site contains a network of around 1000 meters of mown, level grass paths, the paths are not surfaced and can get slippery and muddy when wet. Three benches can also be found on site and excellent views are afforded to the east towards the Pennines.
Significance
In accordance with the Woodland Trusts general aims the site is open to the public for quiet informal pedestrian activities. The site links into the wider public footpath network and provides recreational opportunities for people living in the heavily populated towns such as Darwen and Blackburn.
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.
Factors Causing Change
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 3 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. 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 approximately 12.35Ha of native broadleaved planting. There is also approximately 2.5Ha of open ground in the form of meadow, footpaths 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 provide a important new area of native woodland, which may encourage further planting in the local area.

Opportunities & Constraints

Initial tree growth has been rapid and the basic structure of the woodland will develop quite quickly. The surrounding land use is predominantly agricultural which does isolate the site from other semi natural habitats.

Factors Causing Change

Ash die back

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. Regeneration of both natives and non-native species will be accepted.

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

Undertake tree safety inspections as part of the site risk assessment regime for public safety in high risk zones (i.e. by buildings, footpaths and roads) and carry out any remedial work identified. remove accumulations of litter & fly tipping as necessary - to be done via the Estates Maintenance Contract 3 visits per calendar year.

Carry out a Woodland Condition Assessment towards the end of the current plan period to assess the health and resilience of the woodland including the mix of species and natural regeneration, to monitor threats from tree disease, pests, non-native invasive species and to take appropriate action where necessary.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2022	SL - Routine Safety Work	Works associated with undertaking planned visitor and structure safety orientated actions, such as erection/creation or maintenance of safety features such as fencing, rails, re-pointing of retaining walls etc	June
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,	August
2023	SL - Routine Safety Work	Works associated with undertaking planned visitor and structure safety orientated actions, such as erection/creation or maintenance of safety features such as fencing, rails, re-pointing of retaining walls etc	June
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
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,	July
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,	September
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	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
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,	September

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	16	Ash	2005	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	
<p>The site is approximately 16ha and consists of broadleaf trees planted on former pastureland. The land is gently sloping, mostly north facing and is bounded by agricultural land on all sides. The site was planted in three phases, phase 1 November 2005, phase 2 November 2006 and phase 3 November 2007. The site was planted with native trees and shrubs of regional provenance. Planting density varies across the site but averages out at 1100 trees/ha. A mixture of 1.2 metre tubes and 0.6 metre spirals were used to protect the trees from predation from deer, hares and rabbits, removed in 2011. Species planted on site were Alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>), Silver Birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>), Downy Birch (<i>Betula pubescens</i>), Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>), Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>), Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), Holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>), Cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>), English oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), White willow (<i>Salix alba</i>), Goat willow (<i>Salix caprea</i>) and Rowan (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>). The site also has 20% of open ground which is mainly concentrated on the easements for overhead services, footpaths and a pond. This site can be accessed from the pedestrian entrance point located on the south western boundary at the bottom of Knowle Lane, the south eastern boundary and the north eastern boundary. On site there is a public footpath and several permissive paths which create a circular route. At the highest point on site there are good views of the surrounding area including local landmark Darwen Tower. Three seats provide resting points around the site. Parking is available on local roads but may be limited. The wood is used mainly by local people who arrive on foot, for quite informal recreation.</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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