

Whittaker 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

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

Whittaker Wood

Location:	Littleborough Grid reference: SD946154 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 109
Area:	1.88 hectares (4.65 acres)
External Designations:	Area of Landscape Value, Community Forest, Green Belt
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Whittaker Wood can be found in Greater Manchester about 4 miles east of Rochdale, close to the town of Littleborough. The woodland is surrounded on all sides by pasture land which is used for grazing. Hollingworth Lake Country Park is located approximately 0.5km to the south west; it is a popular destination for local people and run by Rochdale Borough Council.

The wood is located on a relatively steep hillside which slopes down from east to west, a feeder stream which eventually joins the Rochdale canal runs through the centre of the site. Whittaker Wood is located on very acidic loamy upland soils with a wet peaty surface.

This broadleaf woodland consists of oak with some sycamore and beech, the woodland contains little under storey; however some excellent patches of regeneration in the form of oak and beech can be found. The ground flora is predominantly grass due to a combination of previous grazing and a relatively sparse canopy although some bluebells can now be found in the wood. The site was acquired by The Woodland Trust in 1994 and little is known about its history before that point. The site was stock fenced in 1998 on three sides to help protect natural regeneration from stray livestock. Secondary Woodland is a Key Feature of the site.

Vehicular access both to, and within the site is poor; this is due to the steep nature of the site, vehicular access points are also very narrow due to developments which have occurred in the past (a cess pit).

Two public rights of way pass through the site, these paths link into the surrounding countryside and path network. None of the paths within the wood are surfaced but the site is well used by local people for informal recreational purposes. Informal Public Access is a Key Feature of the site.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Whittaker Wood will be managed as mixed broadleaved, predominantly native high forest with a non intervention management regime. Regeneration of both native and non-native species will be accepted. It is expected that as trees gradually senesce or need to be felled for safety reasons natural regeneration will fill gaps in the canopy. Therefore the woodland should require little active management, apart from ensuring that natural regeneration is adequate. Throughout the wood, older trees of any species will be retained as long as safety allows. Currently non natives in the form of sycamore and beech account for 40% of total tree cover, it is anticipated that non natives will continue to make up a significant proportion of the canopy.

Public access should be maintained at its current level of 3 access points with Woodland Trust welcome signs, and approximately 500m of paths. These will need regular maintenance and if necessary upgrading to provide defined, safe, all year access for pedestrians.

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
The woodland has three main public access points, a permissive path enters the site on its northern boundary and runs in a southerly direction alongside the canal drain and leaves the site on its southern boundary. A public right of way enters the site on its north eastern boundary and heads in a southerly direction, also leaving the site at the southern access point. All three pedestrian access points consist of small pedestrian access gates. The paths within the wood are not surfaced. The woodland is close to a small area of housing, and also links into the public footpath network and the wider countryside, therefore the level of usage of the wood is fairly high.
Significance
Although the woodland is in a semi rural location, large towns and cities such as Littleborough, Rochdale, Manchester and Halifax are within easy reach. The woodland provides an open space for people to visit and walk in. The woodland is also part of wider network of recreational opportunities such as the Rochdale Way.
Opportunities & Constraints
Due to the steep nature of the site, the type of access that can be created is limited. However the woodland is in a semi rural area which is well served by a network of PROW, and other visitor attractions such as Hollingworth Lake. A circular walk leaflet which includes the wood as part of its route is also available from Hollingworth Lake Country Park. The Rochdale Way also runs through the site.
Factors Causing Change
The site suffers from occasional vandalism and litter.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The existing level/quality of access will be monitored and maintained. The Trust will be flexible and adapt to increases in recreational use.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
Maintain 3 entrances and approximately 420 metres of Public & Permissive footpaths by cutting back encroaching vegetation and trees; inspect signs, gates and fences; remove accumulations of litter & fly tipping as necessary - to be done biennially via the EMC. 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 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

The wood is 1.88 hectares in size and is a narrow elongated in shape. It is located on a steep hillside and is surrounded on all sides by farmland which is grazed by livestock. The mature trees are even aged and the predominant species are oak, beech and sycamore. There is little under storey and regeneration is patchy due to the fact that the woodland was grazed by livestock before the Trust acquired it. However small patches of regeneration mainly in the form of oak have thrived since the Trust began managing the site. Ground flora is again sparse and consists mainly of common grass species.

Significance

The wood is important as a landscape and conservation feature, and is used as a minor refuge for common woodland species.

Opportunities & Constraints

The wood is small and almost entirely surrounded by farmland, which limits its conservation value to robust, common, or mobile species. There appear to be very few opportunities to alter this, as the surrounding land is likely to be farmed for the foreseeable future.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Mature, stable broadleaved high forest, with a continuous canopy composed of a mixture of broadleaved species, with diverse age range and succession by natural regeneration. As trees gradually reach senescence or are removed for tree safety purposes the gaps left in the canopy will be colonised by natural regeneration of oak, ash, birch etc.

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.

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
2021	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	June
2021	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	August
2023	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	January
2023	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	May
2023	AW - Visitor Access Infrastructure	Works associated with the construction of a new or extension to existing car parking facilities.	June
2025	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	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,	May

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	1.88	other oak spp	1900	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Area of Landscape Value, Green Belt

1.8 Hectares (4.6 acres) of well established broadleaved secondary woodland, it is roughly rectangular in shape and stands on a fairly steep west facing slope. Located approximately 1 mile from the town of Littleborough the compartment has a public right of way and a permissive path running through it in a north-south direction. A ditch which is actually a feeder stream to the Rochdale canal runs through the centre of the compartment. To the north, west and south the woodland is bordered by grazed rough pasture, the south east of the woodland is bordered by broadleaved woodland. The woodland canopy is dominated by oak, sycamore and beech and an understory of holly, hazel, blackthorn and hawthorn can be found. The compartment was grazed prior to the Woodland Trusts ownership, however since the boundary was secured woodland flora including bluebell has begun to establish itself again.

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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