

Abbey Grove

(Plan period – 2023 to 2028)



WOODLAND
TRUST

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Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

The Woodland Trust owns and cares for well over 1,250 sites covering almost 30,000 hectares (ha) across the UK. This includes more than 4,000ha of ancient semi-natural woodland and almost 4,000ha of non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites and we have created over 5,000ha of new native woodland. We also manage other valuable habitats such as flower-rich grasslands, heaths, ponds/lakes and moorland.

Our Vision is:

“A UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife.”

To realise all the environmental, social and economic benefits woods and trees bring to society, we:

- **Create Woodland** – championing the need to hugely increase the UK’s native woodland and trees.
- **Protect Woodland** – fighting to defend native woodland, especially irreplaceable ancient woodland and veteran trees; there should be no loss of ancient woodland
- **Restore Woodland** – ensuring the sensitive restoration of all damaged ancient woodland and the re-creation of native wooded landscapes.

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

The following principles provide an overarching framework to guide the management of all our sites but we recognise that all woods are different and that their management also needs to reflect their local landscape, history and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives.

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene in our woods when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity, safety and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland for all the positive reasons set out in our Conservation Principles, preferably using natural regeneration but often by planting trees, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe. Where possible, we pro-actively engage with people to help them appreciate the value of woods and trees.
4. The long term vision for all our ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The natural and cultural heritage value of sites is taken into account in our management and in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Land and woods can generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We therefore consider the appropriateness of opportunities to generate income from our Estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we encourage our woods to be used for local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the Estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. We maintain a network of sites for long-term monitoring and trials leading to reductions in plastics and pesticides.
10. Any activities we undertake are in line with our wider Conservation Principles, conform to sustainable forest management practices, are appropriate for the site and balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

The Public Management Plan

This public management plan describes the site and sets out the long term aims for our management and lists the Key Features which drive our management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site – their significance is outlined together with our long, 50 years and beyond, and our short, the next 5 years, term objectives for the management and enhancement of these features. The short term objectives are complemented by an outline Work Programme for the period of this management plan aimed at delivering our management aims.

Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and we continually monitor our sites to assess the success of our management, therefore this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme.

Please either consult The Woodland Trust website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

or contact the Woodland Trust

operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk

to confirm details of the current management programme.

A short glossary of technical terms can be found at the end of the plan.

Location and Access

Location maps and directions for how to find and access our woods, including this site, can be found by using the following link to the Woodland Trust web-site which contains information on accessible woodlands across the UK

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/find-woods/>

In Scotland access to our sites is in accordance with the Land Reform Act (of Scotland) 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

In England, Wales and NI, with the exception of designated Public Rights of Ways, all routes across our sites are permissive in nature and where we have specific access provision for horse riders and/or cyclists this will be noted in the management plan.

The Management Plan

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GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Abbey Grove

Location:	Felixstowe Grid reference: TM301358 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 169
Area:	3.91 hectares (9.66 acres)
External Designations:	Environmentally Sensitive Area
Internal Designations:	Tree For All Site, Welcoming Sites Programme, Woods on Your Doorstep

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Abbey Grove was planted as a native broadleaved woodland by the local community in 1998 as part of the Woodland Trust's Woods on your Doorstep project. Within the four hectares of woodland, there is an area of hazel coppice and a small wildflower meadow. The site is now an established young woodland with closed canopy, forming a valuable asset to the local community.

Adjoining Abbey Grove to the north-east is 'The Grove', an area of secondary woodland with a large car park, which is well used by the public and owned by Suffolk Coastal District Council. To the west of the wood there are local allotments, and the southern edge of the woods abuts a busy road and a doctor's surgery. To the north of the wood, the land is being developed as part of the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood.

The site has two historical features in the form of a WWII pillbox (now converted to a bat hibernaculum), and anchor points for barrage balloons which reflect Felixstowe's importance for coastal defences in the past.

The key features for this site are:

Informal Public Access – Abbey Grove is open to the public

Secondary woodland - Planted native and naturalised tree species including oak, ash, sweet chestnut, field maple and Hazel.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Community

Abbey Grove is managed by a vibrant and active community group who undertake some of the current management. The long term intention is to maintain this close bond between the local community of Felixstowe and Abbey Grove.

Secondary Woodland

The long term intention is for Abbey Grove to become a resilient and well-structured high forest canopy dominated by oak, lime and cherry, with an understorey of shrub species including hazel, hornbeam and field maple. Thinning of the existing single storey plantation will help to open the canopy, allowing natural regeneration of trees and shrubs to create a resilient multi-aged canopy and understorey. Both standing and felled deadwood will diversify the woodland habitat for wildlife. The meadow will be maintained as an area of open ground and managed to promote wild flowers, creating further diversity within the site. The stand of pure hazel will continue to be coppiced on a 6-8 year rotation to provide poles for the local gardens, allotments and thatching.

Public access

The long-term intention is to maintain a sustainable level of use by maintaining the access features and internal infrastructure appropriately. The long-term management will concentrate on maintaining the current paths, entrances and benches to a safe useable standard. The new housing development to the northern boundary will undoubtedly increase visitor numbers as they transit through the woods.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
Formal entrances have been created from the highway and through the adjoining council owned woodland compartment called 'The Grove', connecting a well-used network of rides and paths that dissect the wood.
Significance
Created as part of the woods on your doorstep project, the local community have been involved from site creation and continue to do so through the Woodland Working Group (WWG). Public access is vital to ensure on-going support for the Trust's work.
Opportunities & Constraints
The site is adjacent to an existing secondary woodland known as 'The Grove' which is owned by Suffolk Coastal District Council. This provides the opportunity to link publicity, share the use of the large car park and help to relieve visitor pressure on The Grove. It is likely that there will be more visitors to Abbey Grove as the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood development is built.
Factors Causing Change
Increased visitor pressures, anti-social behaviour and vandalism are likely to be affected by the housing development adjacent to Abbey Grove.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
To maintain the public access infrastructure at a level where visitors to Abbey Grove will be able to enjoy a well maintained path network.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
<p>To maintain the site as an area of public open access with the ride system cut to a minimum of 2m width, allowing unhindered access for the public. There are a large number of paths and additional help may be needed in maintaining them from contractors to support the WWG.</p> <p>Maintain all public access structures in a safe usable condition and update signage as required.</p> <p>Retain the existing meadow as an area of public open space by cutting it annually after seeding; the grass cuttings to be removed and placed either in the woodland areas or removed from site.</p>

4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland

Description
<p>A native broadleaved woodland planted in 1998 with common ash, pedunculate oak, sweet chestnut, field maple, hornbeam, wild cherry, hazel, hawthorn and blackthorn. There is also a small area of hazel coppice and an area that has been allowed to regenerate naturally from existing trees adjacent to the site.</p> <p>The compartment is bisected by wayleaves for overhead powerlines which makes for an interesting transition to scrubby woodland.</p>
Significance
As a Woods on your Doorstep site the aim was to create a community led woodland that effectively expands the adjoining existing woodland habitat from 'The Grove'.
Opportunities & Constraints
Coppicing the hazel regularly will ensure habitat management continuity and structural diversity. However this is subject to the availability of labour and may be constrained by the market for the produce. There is a keen volunteer group on the site, which could perform a number of silvicultural operations.
Factors Causing Change
Ash Dieback – one of the main species planted was common ash. There are signs of ash dieback within the site which are gradually declining.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
A resilient woodland, where a diverse canopy and age structure with a good scrubby understorey develops through natural regeneration. The wildflower meadow, paths, rides, deadwood and the woodland edge structure contributing to a diverse range of habitats for wildlife.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
<p>The woodland will be thinned periodically to break up the current closed canopy, encouraging natural regeneration and the development of a multi-layered woodland with deadwood habitat. Some thinning will target ash showing signs of ash dieback.</p> <p>Continue coppicing the hazel wood on a 6-8 year rotation for use by the local community and for thatching/bean poles. Some hedge laying phased over the 5 year period on the boundary adjacent to the main road.</p>

4.3 f3 Community Woodland Group

Description
In 2001 the local community approached the woodland trust to create a volunteer group, which can aid the management of the site. This has developed in to a vibrant active Woodland Working Group (WWG) group which now undertakes some management of the habitats within the wood.

Significance
Created as part of the Woods on your Doorstep project, the local community have been involved from the onset, and continue to be involved in the ongoing management. Community involvement is vital to ensure ongoing support for the Trust's work.
Opportunities & Constraints
<p>The WWG carry out seasonal tasks managing the different habitats from coppicing to grass cutting. The site will also be supported by Estates Management Contractors where required, allowing the working woodland group to focus on more conservation type tasks.</p> <p>Promote the Woodland Trust within the area of Felixstowe.</p> <p>Supply local coppice products to other community groups and allotments.</p>
Factors Causing Change
Retirement of community group members and future recruitment of new members.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
For the community group to continue to evolve and recruit new members to manage and maintain Abbey Grove.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
<p>To maintain community involvement and management of Abbey Grove</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Hazel coppicing to provide poles to gardens, local allotments and for thatching. • Support the EMC with occasional path cutting to provide good access to pedestrians, whilst cutting alternate ride edges on final cut of year. • Meadow cut and rake after meadow flowers have seeded – August/Sept. • Create a bat hibernaculum in the WWII Pillbox. • Ride side coppicing – Coppice ride edge shrubs and coppice on a 5 year rotation. • Ensure volunteer Risk assessment are reviewed and agreed biannually and any actions agreed as necessary.

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 - 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
2023	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	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,	May
2024	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.	July
2024	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
2024	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	December
2024	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.	May
2025	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.	July
2025	AW - Management Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of management access infrastructure and tracks Such as repairs to vehicle entrance points,	September

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
		maintaining vehicle bridges and repairing / reinstating surfaced management access routes.	
2025	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.	May
2026	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.	July
2026	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
2026	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.	May
2027	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.	July
2027	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
2027	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.	May

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	3.2	Oak (pedunculate)	1999	High forest		Environmentally Sensitive Area
<p>The following species were planted as part of the woodland at your doorstep project between 1998 and 2001: Common ash, pedunculate oak, sweet chestnut, field maple, hornbeam, wild cherry, hazel, hawthorn and blackthorn. A small block of pure hazel coppice was planted as a site feature. A strip of land adjacent to the Grove (owned by Suffolk Coastal District Council) was left to natural regeneration and has been colonised by oak, common ash, aspen and turkey oak, with common hawthorn as an understorey species. A small meadow situated to the north of the wood provides a valuable area of open space, although of low biodiversity value it does provide another habitat</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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