

Ganges Wood

(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

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
 - 4.1 f1 Informal Public Access
 - 4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Ganges Wood

Location:	Shotley Gate Grid reference: TM243341 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 169
Area:	2.23 hectares (5.51 acres)
External Designations:	Tree Preservation Order
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Ganges Wood was originally a flat area of open grassland surrounded by residential housing within the village of Shotley Gate, Suffolk. The site is split into two sections and divided by a residential link road. The wood was planted in 1997 as a native broadleaved woodland with rides and a central small open glade. The southern and western boundaries have mature hedges whilst the northern boundary borders gardens. The wood's name, Ganges Wood, was chosen by the local community to reflect the village's connection with HMS Ganges, a naval training base. Compartment 1a was planted entirely as woodland, whilst in compartment 2b the centre of the compartment was retained as an open grassland area, with the existing mature trees around the boundary edge being buffered with more planting, creating a belt of trees around the perimeter. Since planting the trees have grown well and have now reached closed canopy throughout, whilst the glades and meadow continue to provide areas of important open space. The area as a whole will now mature through the next phase of woodland development.

Key features

F1 Informal public Access

F2 Secondary Woodland

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Ganges wood will be allowed to develop naturally and become a resilient high forest through limited intervention. The woods will develop greater structural diversity and increased deadwood habitat through natural wastage. Ash dieback will slowly reduce the population of common ash within the wood leaving oak as the main canopy species, alongside other species such as cherry and field maple to fill in the gaps. As the ash trees die, natural regeneration will occur in the spaces left by the ash, creating a multi aged and layered woodland as well as increasing the amount of deadwood habitat.

The long-term intention for public access is to maintain a sustainable level of use by keeping paths mown and free from obstacles, alongside maintaining access points and internal infrastructure appropriately. The long-term management will concentrate on maintaining, and where appropriate, improving the current standard of paths present. Public safety will be maintained and led by routine tree inspections, with gradual and sympathetic removal of ash as the decline progresses across the site, particularly around footpaths and common boundaries.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
The site is situated in the village of Shotley gate, Suffolk. Ganges wood is encompassed by residential housing and is a valuable area of open space for the local community. It also serves to form a link from the housing estate to the adjacent green spaces of Shotley Heritage park and outstanding views over the Stour Estuary. There are 3 pedestrian access points allowing visitors to walk through the network of unsurfaced grass paths that wind through the trees and open glades habitat.
Significance
To increase public enjoyment of woodland and provide an area of open space.
Opportunities & Constraints
The wood is situated within a urban area and provides a valuable area of recreation for the local community. It's proximity to housing can lead to occasional misuse.
Factors Causing Change
Other - Misuse of Site, Other - Vandalism
Long term Objective (50 years+)
To maintain Ganges wood as an area of public access for the local community with well maintained, welcoming access points and furniture. Paths will be free of obstacles and the open glades presenting glimpses of the surrounding area and landscape.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
To maintain the site as an area of public open access, with the paths and rides cut to a minimum of 2m to allow unhindered access for the public. Some of the rides would benefit from a more open canopy by selective coppicing or thinning of trees, allowing more light through, targeting ash as it declines. The open glade is to be maintained and kept clear of any natural regeneration. Entrances/furniture to be welcoming and maintained in a good condition. Annual safety inspections will be undertaken ensuring structures are fit for purpose, actioning any remedial works required.

4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland

Description

<p>The woodland was planted in 1997 with a native broadleaved species mix including approximately ash 50%, oak 18%, cherry 18%, lime 8% and other shrub species . The trees have become established woodland and has reached canopy closure.</p>
<p>Significance</p>
<p>Establishment of native woodland and creation of a significant conservation feature within an urban area.</p>
<p>Opportunities & Constraints</p>
<p>Natural regeneration not developing.</p>
<p>Factors Causing Change</p>
<p>Ash Die back will change the structure of the woodland by causing the resident ash to die or be heavily suppressed. This will cause a significant increase in the deadwood habitat within the site, and may kick start natural regeneration of scrubby species.</p>
<p>Long term Objective (50 years+)</p>
<p>To have a mature native mixed broadleaved woodland with developing natural regeneration and abundant deadwood habitat. Due to decline of the ash, it is expected that the long term dominant canopy species will be oak, with cherry and lime supporting the mix. Shrub layers will include hazel, field maple and hawthorn, which will add to the structural diversity of the habitat and age structure. Whilst the main emphasis of the site will be management through minimal intervention, it is anticipated that the edges of footpaths will be worked periodically through coppicing and feathering back, to maintain the structural and age composition. There should be opportunity for natural regeneration to develop as well as gaps to allow light in, and browsing problems anticipated to be minimal.</p>
<p>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</p>
<p>In the short term as the ash begins to decline they will be feathered back from path edges and common boundaries to maintain safety. As the plantation canopy becomes fragmented, natural regeneration will occur in the gaps created through ash dying and selective removal. The removal of the ash will be gradual over the next five years until 2028, and sympathetic to the size and nature of the site. The aim being to maintain visitor and neighbour safety, whilst retaining deadwood where safe to, and avoiding the need to continually deal with failing ash around these areas.</p> <p>Tree safety. Ash along the garden boundaries and playing field should be monitored and removed if within falling range of the boundaries. To monitor trees along the boundaries to reduce future issues with tree safety and severe shading of the neighbouring residents' gardens.</p>

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2023	AW - Management Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of management access infrastructure and tracks Such as repairs to vehicle entrance points, maintaining vehicle bridges and repairing / reinstating surfaced management access routes.	April
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,	June
2024	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	December

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	1.8	Mixed native broadleaves	1997	Min-intervention		Tree Preservation Order
<p>Broadleaved woodland planted in 1997 with public support. 50% ash, 18% oak, 18% cherry, 8% lime, with shrub species of field maple, hazel and hawthorn. Rides cross the site and meet at a central open glade where a bench has been placed as the millennium feature for the site. The only existing mature trees are a few Scot's Pine on the boundary with Tudor Close and a few oaks on the southern boundary.</p>						
2a	0.6	Mixed native broadleaves	1997	Min-intervention		Tree Preservation Order
<p>An area of open grassland bordered on two sides by mature hedgerows. A scattering of existing trees (oak, silver birch, small-leaved lime and wild cherry) give this compartment a 'Park like' feel which has been encouraged with further tree planting around the edges to create an woodland shelter belt around the boundary of this compartment.</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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