

Woodland Trust Management Plan

# Runnydown Copse

(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](http://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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

or contact the Woodland Trust

[operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto: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
  - 4.2 F2
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### Runnydown Copse

Location:	Dundridge Grid reference: SU568181 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 185
Area:	3.72 hectares (9.19 acres)
External Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, National Park
Internal Designations:	N/A

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Runnydown Copse is a 3.72 hectare (9 acre) narrow strip of ancient semi-natural woodland, half a kilometre north of Bishop's Waltham in the South Downs National Park, Hampshire. It is situated within a largely agricultural landscape of fields and pasture connected with hedgerows and the occasional copses and woodlands to the north, with the contrasting towns and villages of Bishop's Waltham, Swanmore and Waltham Chase to the south.

The site forms part of a locally prominent belt of ancient woodland running east to west which provides a through-route for visitors and a valuable ecological corridor between the Hamble and Meon Valleys and to other land of wildlife value in the area. Examples include Galley Down Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI), a relict piece of chalk downland and hanger woodland, and Hampshire County Councils Dundridge Local Nature Reserve (LNR), an open chalk grassland site with an abundance of specialist calcareous grassland species and scrub adjoining the copse at its western end.

The copse is likely to have changed in size over time with the edges being gradually diminished by encroachment of agricultural land, however, its present extent is similar to that of 1790 when Enclosure Awards were made for the parish. It lies on a NNE to NNW facing scarp slope of thin chalk soils with flints (Newhaven chalk and Tarrant Chalk Member formations) on the northern edge of a chalk spur, with wet clays to the south. It has no springs, but it does have seepage bands, making it markedly wetter at the base. The archaeological interest is unknown. Lynchets (ledges formed by historic ploughing) may be present but alternatively these may be the remains of field banks or tracks incised into the slope.

Beech and sycamore are currently the most abundant tree species following the removal of the majority of ash across approximately 30% of the site in 2020/2021 due to ash dieback disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxinea*). Other species include oak, field maple, wild cherry, holly and yew, with hazel the most prominent understorey species. Scots pine also appears to have been planted in the late 18th century. The majority of trees with any timber value were removed from much of the copse around the time of World War 2, with the exception of trees on boundaries and at the western end. It is likely that coppicing of hazel also ceased at this time and no evidence of further management works can be found until acquisition by the Woodland Trust in 1988.

Despite its small size, 25 ancient woodland indicator species have been identified, however, the flora does not produce a magnificent display in spring as the diversity of species and flowering times mean that a dense carpet is not formed at any one time.

Visitor access is limited by the lack of nearby parking facilities. However, there is a 1km network of public and permissive footpaths and six entrances which provide pedestrian access to the majority of the site and connect to the wider public footpath network. Paths are natural and unsurfaced and some sections are moderate to steeply sloped, with steps built into the steepest section to facilitate access.

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

Runnydown Copse is functional as a component of a wider wooded corridor and connection to the landscape beyond. It does not need to provide a diversity of habitats, only a diversity of woodland species, which it currently has.

Due to its abundant and diverse woodland structure (canopy, understorey, shrub, field and ground layers) and prolific natural regeneration, the copse will be sustained by natural processes, with minimum intervention required to keep the site safe, secure and accessible.

Frequent mature trees of a variety of species (mainly beech, sycamore and oak) will be present, developing veteran characteristics, while the occasional true veterans persist. Ash is likely to remain a rare component of the copse (<5%) having formerly occupied approximately 1.2ha (30%) of the copse. In places where diseased ash do not present a hazard, trees will be retained to diminish naturally and provide standing and fallen dead wood. Where tree safety works are required, any felled timber will be left on site to add to the deadwood habitat. Re-stocking following any felling will be by natural regeneration, unless supplementary planting is a mandatory requirement for contractual or legal reasons (e.g. felling licence, grant, statutory plant health notice).

Understorey and ground flora will remain abundant and diverse, with ancient woodland species (e.g. Solomon's seal, wood anemone and bluebell) well-represented, through dappled light levels and temporary open space created from dynamic changes in the canopy such as the loss of trees from senescence, disease (e.g. ash dieback) and occasional windthrow.

Herbivore impact (e.g. deer browsing) will not be preventing succession and establishment of trees and understorey from natural regeneration, or resulting in significant losses of established trees (e.g. by ring-barking from squirrels) following appropriate assessment and management to prevent a detrimental impact, if required.

Open space will be at a minimum of 10% provided by managed paths and rides, and canopy gaps from natural processes.

This will remain a safe, accessible and tranquil site for quiet recreation activities via signed entrances and a network of maintained but natural paths.

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 F1

<b>Description</b>
<b>Significance</b>
<b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>
<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
<b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>
<b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>

### 4.2 F2

<b>Description</b>
<b>Significance</b>
<b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>
<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
<b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>



<b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>

## 5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2024	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	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
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,	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,	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,	June
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
2027	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
2027	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
2028	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing	June

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
		pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	
2028	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	3.72	Beech	1970	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
<p>Beech, sycamore, field maple, oak, yew, with rare Scots pine and ash (post 2020).                      Hazel understorey with dogwood, hawthorn, elder, holly, dog rose, clematis, whitebeam, cherry, wild privet, elm, dogs mercury, Solomon's seal, bluebell, nettle, bellflower, ferns and bramble.</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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