

# Blundells Copse

(Plan period – 2023 to 2028)



WOODLAND  
TRUST

# Management Plan Content Page

Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

The Public Management Plan

Location and Access

## 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 Natural Secondary Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### Blundells Copse

Location:	Charlton Grid reference: TL179281 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 166
Area:	0.22 hectares (0.54 acres)
External Designations:	Archeological Site, Area of Landscape Value, Conservation Area, Great Landscape Value, Green Belt
Internal Designations:	N/A

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Blundell's Copse is a tiny piece of seasonally wet woodland in the small village of Charlton just outside Hitchin. It is primarily alder carr, with ash and alder dominating the canopy. The wood is defined by fencing to the north where the woodland continues in private ownership, agricultural buildings (piggery) with stock fencing to the east, fencing along restricted byway Brick Kiln Lane to the south. The river Hiz forms the western boundary with a small shallow spring fed stream emerging in and running through the middle of the wood.

The topsoil sits to a depth of approx. 2ft on top of a gravel bed and is highly alluvial/silt based as would be expected on a low floodplain site.

The wood was left to the Trust by the late Eric Blundell who wanted the wood to remain a haven for wildlife. Respecting Mr. Blundell's wishes and those of local villagers who shared his view, the wood is not open to the public. The woodland has an untended feel to it. Left undisturbed, the wood is a haven for ducks, moorhens, flycatchers and even kingfishers have been seen using the river.

The river Hiz flows south-north along the western boundary and there is a smaller spring fed stream running through the middle of the wood which joins the Hiz 30 meters north of the Woodland Trust's northern boundary. There is a brick balancing chamber measuring about 2 meters by 1 meter wide and 4ft deep (though now silted to 2ft deep) built next to this smaller stream, part of the obsolete infrastructure supporting the water main to the south east of the site. The water level in the chamber is the same as the water level in the stream, which stands at about 1ft deep in winter and lower in summer. Because of the shallow nature of the chamber, the risk of accident is small and a metal barred cover is sufficient for safety at present.

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

The woodland is small and does not provide a good opportunity for informal public access but local residents can enjoy the woodland by observing wildlife from outside the wood. It also has a part to play in the wider landscape of the valley and village, sitting as it does within the conservation area. Long-term management is aimed at preserving the wood as a local landscape feature.

Tree safety will remain an important consideration and surveys will be carried out every year along the boundaries adjacent to houses and agricultural buildings and every two years along the remainder. The woodland is too small and difficult to access for regular intensive management. Management of the woodland will support natural processes, responding to any changes and threats imposed on them, for instance from tree diseases. Ash dieback will create space and light for other native trees and shrubs to regenerate. The local community wish to maintain the woodland as a haven for wildlife.

Fences will be checked to ensure they are functional and safe. The eastern fence will be maintained as a stock proof barrier if the current agricultural buildings are removed and once again provide access into the wood from the field adjacent.

The eastern bank of the river Hiz is the responsibility of the Trust and tree growth or operations that are likely to cause damage to the bank of watercourse should be avoided.

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 f1 Natural Secondary Woodland

<b>Description</b>
<p>A small alder carr extending to only 0.2 Ha. The wet woodland is home to ducks, moorhens, flycatchers and other birds. Kingfishers have been seen on the river. The woodland has a positive local landscape value.</p> <p>Ash and alder dominate the canopy, with sycamore and hornbeam present.</p> <p>Some clearing of elder and cutting nettle and bracken has been carried out to reduce dominance and assist/stimulate natural tree regeneration.</p> <p>The south-east corner has been restocked with approximately 10 hazel whips.</p>
<b>Significance</b>
<p>The woodland has a landscape value to the local community. It is in a local authority conservation area.</p>
<b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>
<p>Opportunities:</p> <p>To contribute to the conservation of wet woodland, one of the UK's rarest woodland habitats.</p> <p>No public access means a largely undisturbed riparian site which should benefit local wildlife and biodiversity.</p> <p>Constraints:</p> <p>Access is across a ford via a restricted byway (Brick Kiln Lane). This road is only wide enough for a car or small 4x4/tractor/quad.</p> <p>The only potential access/extraction routes for forestry/safety work which produce significant amounts of wood are across the road, through the hedge, and into the neighbouring farm yard or out into the field to the east if agricultural buildings are removed.</p> <p>Small size of site means any tree felling/copping would have a significant impact.</p> <p>Presence of water course within and adjacent to site restrict management options for use of spray or livestock to manage the coarse vegetation, and requires the use of bio-oils at all times.</p>
<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
<p>Ash dieback.</p> <p>Other tree pests and diseases / climate change.</p> <p>Closure of canopy and reduced light levels on the woodland floor with little/no natural regeneration.</p> <p>Changing land use around the wood.</p>



<b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>
The long term vision is for the woodland to remain as a wildlife habitat and a local landscape feature.
<b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>
No public access to continue. Safety inspections of trees, fences, and balancing chamber every one-two years, work undertaken as necessary. Continue to weed the planted hazel by hand each summer (too close to watersource for spray).

## 5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2023	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	August
2025	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	September
2026	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	September
2027	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	September

## APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	0.2	Alder species	1940	Min-intervention	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Landscape factors, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access within the site	Conservation Area, Great Landscape Value, Green Belt
<p>The woodland is seasonally wet with a stream and areas of standing water/saturated soil within. The main tree species are alder and ash established around 1940 with some signs of historical coppicing of the ash in particular. The topsoil supports a dense layer of nettle and bramble. Snowdrops and other bulbs are found along the boundary with Brick Kiln Lane but these are more likely to be cultivated rather than natural. Elder, hazel and hawthorn form an understory and the main canopy is closed and dominated by alder, though a large mature hornbeam tree and declining false acacia trees are found to the south of the site on drier ground and an element of sycamore has established on the northern and western edges of the wood.</p> <p>Management of the woodland will support natural processes, responding to any changes and threats imposed on them, for instance from tree diseases.</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.**

The Woodland Trust is a charity registered in England and Wales no. 294344 and in Scotland no. SC038885. A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no. 1982873. The Woodland Trust logo is a registered trademark.