

Porter's 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
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 - 4.2 f2 Natural Secondary Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Porter's Wood

Location:	Woodbridge Grid reference: TM264482 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 169
Area:	3.35 hectares (8.28 acres)
External Designations:	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Porter's Wood is a popular broadleaved wood in the Suffolk town of Woodbridge. It lies in a distinctive hollow and is possibly the site of an ancient woodland. There are a number of mature oak, beech, sweet chestnut, lime and sycamore trees, the most notable being an old veteran oak pollard situated on the western boundary. Within Porter's Wood there is a low-lying area of wet woodland, where the number of large common alder has reduced in recent years.

The wood was badly affected by the storms in 1987, and due to poor natural regeneration, further thinning, felling and replanting took place in 1989. Oak, beech, wild cherry, rowan and field maple were planted in order to diversify the range of species and age structure of the wood. The ground flora includes bluebell, ramsons, snowdrop, foxglove, winter aconite and wood anemone.

There is a well-used public footpath known as Pilot Way which runs along the western boundary. The footpath's name relates to how Woodbridge boat pilots would watch for vessels coming up the River Debdon from a vantage point near the woods. When a vessel was spotted they would then walk down through Porters Wood and past Kyson Point to meet the approaching boats. The walk down to the river is a pleasant one and goes past National Trust owned Kyson Hill, filtering out onto shoreline footpaths of the Suffolk heaths and coast AONB, allowing access to Martlesham Creek or towards Woodbridge and the boatyard. Martlesham Creek being an excellent location for watching estuarine wading bird species.

The majority of the woodland is surrounded by suburban houses with large gardens backing onto the wood. To the east there is a section of young sycamore dominated woodland not owned by the Woodland Trust. To the north are open fields and more large residential gardens, including a small rectangular parcel of grassland just outside the tree line that is within WT ownership. Vehicular access is via the Broomheath Road access point adjacent to Pilots Path.

Key Features: -

Informal Public Access

Natural Secondary Woodland

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Due to past management and environmental factors, Porter's Wood has a relatively diverse age structure, significant amounts of standing and fallen deadwood and abundant ground flora. The long-term intention is to maintain this diversity woodland species and woodland structure through minimal intervention in the main. Periodic intervention may be required to help form canopy gaps to aid natural regeneration and colonisation. The main threat to the woodland structure would be the increased dominance of sycamore at the expense of other broadleaved species.

In accordance with the Trust's objective of increasing public enjoyment of woodland, Porter's Wood will continue to be managed primarily for its amenity value. It is currently well used by the public and this will be encouraged by ensuring the paths are kept open, carrying out regular tree safety inspections and maintaining welcoming entrances. It is an important constituent of the local greenspace in the area and adjacent to the Suffolk heath and coast AONB, linking into Kyson's Point and down to the River Deben estuary and Martlesham Creek, all well used and appreciated places of wildlife interest.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
<p>The woodland is very well used by the local community of Woodbridge. There are three entrances to the wood along the western boundary - the northerly entrance by the pump house on Sandy Lane has steps running down into the wood, the other two have kissing gates and the southerly entrance also has a management gate.</p> <p>There is a public footpath known as Pilots Way that runs along the western boundary - although this is owned by the Trust it is separated from the wood by a stock proof fence. Within the boundary of the wood itself there is an unsurfaced footpath which is kept clear of encroaching vegetation. Four small sleeper bridges have been installed in the low-lying area of wet woodland to make it easier to follow the footpath across some of the wetter sections. One of the footpaths adjoins the neighbouring woodland and cuts through it.</p>
Significance
<p>Public access is an important feature at this site because the wood is in a residential area, meaning it's a local woodland resource for the people of Woodbridge. Pilot Way also allows a more pleasant alternative route than walking along the road on Sandy Road which lacks a footpath in places.</p>
Opportunities & Constraints
<p>There is an opportunity to maintain high quality access infrastructure at Porter's Wood to encourage its continued use as an important local resource. The site has a well established Forest School group which helps foster good community relationships.</p> <p>The topography of the site can be a constraint as the ground is steep and wet in places which limits access.</p>
Factors Causing Change
<p>Anti social behaviour</p>
Long term Objective (50 years+)
<p>Continue to review and upgrade site infrastructure to maintain appropriate access to the site and ensure its ongoing use by the public.</p>
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
<p>Maintain the site as an area of public open access, with all main internal paths being kept to a width of up to 2 metres, unhindered by ride-edge woody scrub and fallen trees. Internal structures such as steps and sleeper bridges will be maintained in a safe and usable condition.</p>

Work Programme: Cut paths May and August annually.
2024, minor upgrades to infrastructure access points and signage.

4.2 f2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

Porter's Wood currently supports several tree species of varying ages, an understorey, a significant amount of standing and fallen deadwood habitat and floristic diversity. It suffered significant damage in the 1987 storm and due to poor natural regeneration, further thinning, felling and replanting took place with oak, beech, wild cherry, rowan and field maple in 1989. More recent regeneration is dominated by sycamore and to a lesser extent holly. Where the canopy is dense, it is preventing new regeneration of other species from becoming established. The increasing dominance of sycamore within the woodland is also of concern and whilst sycamore could never be removed there should be some periodic interventions to aid the regeneration and colonisation of other tree species such as alder, sweet chestnut, beech and oak to assist these species to make it into the upper canopy for the future.

Significance

The woodland is an important feature in the urban landscape and well used by the local population. There are a number of very large mature trees, the most notable being a veteran oak pollard situated on the western boundary, as well as some impressive sweet chestnuts and beech trees.

Opportunities & Constraints

There is an opportunity to maintain the wood as a mixed broadleaved amenity woodland and to retain its diverse character and ecology.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback, Acute Oak Decline, sycamore dominance.

Whilst there is evidence of ash dieback in the wood, common ash trees make up a relatively small proportion of the trees in Porter's Wood. Although this ash will decline, it will not have a significant impact on the makeup of the wood. The spread of Acute Oak Decline is of greater concern due to the number of mature oaks present and the affect this will have on the success of natural regeneration.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term aim is to maintain Porter's Wood as amenity woodland with a diverse high forest structure. The woodland will be allowed to develop through natural processes and periods of some intervention. The levels of natural regeneration and ground flora will continue to be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the next generation of trees are becoming established and that conditions remain suitable for specialist woodland plants to thrive. The current deadwood habitat will be maintained across the site.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

There will be some intervention to increase the diversity of both species and age structure within the woodland. The canopy will be opened up to allow some of the natural regeneration and the newer planting to become established. This will be done by felling selected sycamore with the timber retained on site as deadwood. The area around the remaining alders will be cleared and the regeneration monitored, with new alder trees planted if necessary. Selective

clearing of sycamore regeneration will benefit other species. There are some patches of bamboo and dense holly which will be removed.

The hazel near the Sandy Lane entrance will be coppiced which will allow the sun to reach the woodland floor and be beneficial for insects – increasing the age and structural diversity of the wood.

The occurrence of Acute Oak Decline will be monitored to get a better picture of the progression of the disease.

Work programme: Annual cut boundary hedge along neighbouring pedestrian foot path.

Annual tree safety inspection in September.

2025 Silvicultural intervention of removal of sycamore and holly, alongside some coppicing of shrub species.

2027 Silvicultural maintenance of removal of sycamore seedlings.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2023	SL - Tree Safety Emergency Work	Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs	October
2023	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	November
2023	SL - Tree Safety Emergency Work	Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs	November
2023	SL - Tree Safety Emergency Work	Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs	November
2023	SL - Tree Safety Emergency Work	Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs	December
2023	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside areas such as car parks, roadsides and boundaries	December
2023	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	December
2024	SL - Tree Safety Emergency Work	Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs	February
2024	SL - Emergency Safety Works	Works associated with unplanned emergency safety works, other than tree safety, such as repairs/restoration works after damage caused by storms / floods /landslips	April
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,	August
2024	NWH - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the control of invasive plants within non-woodland habitats to maintain their conservation value and/or the necessary control of noxious weeds	August
2024	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	October
2024	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	December
2025	WMM - Secondary Silviculture	Works associated with silvicultural operations within secondary woods to meet our primary aims of conserving woodlands and encouraging	November

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
		public enjoyment– such as the removal of non-natives, thinning and promotion of native trees and shrubs, creating and managing view points and providing welcoming sites for visitors	
2027	WMM - Secondary Silviculture	Works associated with silvicultural operations within secondary woods to meet our primary aims of conserving woodlands and encouraging public enjoyment– such as the removal of non-natives, thinning and promotion of native trees and shrubs, creating and managing view points and providing welcoming sites for visitors	August

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	3.35	Beech	1800	Min-intervention	Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>The wood is made up of scattered mature oak, beech and sweet chestnut with sycamore. The low-lying wet area is dominated by alder. The wood was damaged by the storms of 1987 and after the site was cleared of storm damage a native woodland mix including oak, beech, wild cherry, rowan and field maple was underplanted. The ground flora species vary greatly due to the nature of the site but include, bramble, bluebell, ramson, snowdrop, foxglove, winter aconite and cuckoo-pint. Sycamore are close to becoming the dominant species.</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:

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