

Dawkins Covert

(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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2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
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5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Dawkins Covert

Location:	Northwold, Downham Market Grid reference: TL758962 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 143
Area:	1.64 hectares (4.05 acres)
External Designations:	N/A
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Dawkins Covert is a small block of mature woodland thought to be of mature secondary in nature set within the Breckland agricultural landscape. The woodland resides just outside the Norfolk village of Northwold, although the access to the woodland is from a layby off the A134 by and visitors have to cross an arable field to reach the woodland.

Dawkins Covert has a mature structure with areas of pole stage maturing broadleaves which was a result of restocking undertaken in 1988/89 which covered over a quarter of the wood. When the woodland was purchased by the Woodland Trust the site was surrounded on three sides by intensive arable farmland, but this has now changed with the neighbouring field to the west being planted as a new woodland creating a greater patchwork of habitats. On a larger landscape scale, the woodland resides just north of Thetford Forest, so the woodlands locality has a high density of woodland cover.

Dawkins Covert is dominated by mature sycamore, oak, beech, ash, and some young elm. The understorey is fairly open and suppressed with scattered hazel and hawthorn, with little ground flora apart from some dense areas of nettle and patches of bramble.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intention for Dawkins Covert will be to maintain the site as a valuable mature broad leaved woodland, containing high levels of deadwood habitat that complements the younger adjacent private area of woodland creation.

The wood will maintain a diverse species mix including Oak, Beech, Cherry, Field Maple , Ash and Sycamore. Ash Dieback and Acute Oak Decline will likely have an impact on the woods species structure with Beech , Cherry, Field Maple and Sycamore becoming the more dominant species over time. However the impact of Ash Dieback and Acute Oak Decline will provide further deadwood habitat within the woodland ,as well as providing canopy openings , which will allow increased light to the woodland floor and provide opportunities for increased diversity of ground flora.

Access to the site will provide low level access for local residents on existing pathways through the wood.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Secondary Woodland

Description
Dawkins Covert is a small mature woodland copse thought to be secondary in nature. Roughly a quarter of the woodland was replanted in 1988/89 after the great storm. The main species within Dawkins Covert are Oak, Sycamore, Beech, Cherry, Field Maple, and Ash. With some Hawthorn and Hazel comprising the understorey species. There is a good deadwood structure, but little ground flora which is dominated by nettle.
Significance
Although a small area of mature secondary woodland Dawkins Covert is a valuable deadwood habitat within the local landscape.
Opportunities & Constraints
Opportunities - Dawkins Covert provides a complementary habitat to the newly developing woodland adjacent to the site Constraints There is no vehicle management access into the wood pedestrian access is also difficult to the site
Factors Causing Change
-Deer and Rabbit browsing, -Acute Oak decline and Agrilus biguttatus causing oak death -ash dieback.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The long-term intention for Dawkins Covert will be to maintain a diverse species mix including Oak, Beech, Cherry, Field Maple , Ash and Sycamore. Ash Dieback and Acute Oak Decline will likely have an impact on the woods species structure with Beech , Cherry, Field Maple and Sycamore becoming the more dominant species over time. However the

impact of Ash Dieback and Acute Oak Decline will provide further deadwood habitat within the woodland ,as well as providing canopy openings , which will allow increased light to the woodland floor and provide opportunities for increased diversity of ground flora and increased regeneration of tree and shrub species.

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

Due to the wood's small and isolated nature it will be left to undertake a natural process of development where intervention will be left to a minimum, apart from any health and safety works that could pose a threat to public safety.

Work Programme

Tree safety inspection – Undertake every 36 months zone b tree safety inspection.

4.2 f2 Informal Public Access

Description

There is limited public access to Dawkins Covert, from the A134 layby and visitors have to cross a field to access the site. There is a limited path that circles around the wood

Significance

In the context of the local area with Thetford Forest being within the locality the access at Dawkins Covert really provides for those visitors local to the wood as there are more varied opportunities in the vicinity

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

No vehicle access for management works
Limited access for public

Factors Causing Change

Acute Oak Decline, Ash Dieback

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Access to the site will provide low level access for local residents on existing pathways through the wood

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

Due to very low visitor numbers and difficult access into the site, management and facilities for the public will be maintained to a minimum standard. On the whole this will be limited to regular tree safety surveys along the main circular path network (every 3 years).

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
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APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	1.7	Sycamore	1900	null	No/poor vehicular access within the site	
<p>Dawkins Covert is a small block of mature woodland dominated by sycamore, oak, beech, ash and some elm. The understorey is fairly open with scattered hazel and hawthorn, brambles and nettles.</p> <p>The wood has a good age structure with mature and semi-mature oak, beech and sycamore. Some restocking of these species was undertaken in 1988/89 over approx 0.4ha of the wood (main block is by the entrance). Most of the natural regeneration is sycamore. Standing deadwood has been left where it does not compromise safety. A circular path goes round the wood.</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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