

Woodland Trust Management Plan

# Three Gates Farm

(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

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GLOSSARY

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### Three Gates Farm

Location:	Aldeby, Beccles Grid reference: TM455938 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 134
Area:	11.46 hectares (28.32 acres)
External Designations:	Area of Landscape Value, Environmentally Sensitive Area
Internal Designations:	Tree For All Site

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Three gates farm and St Mary's wood lies within the small South Norfolk village of Aldeby. The woodland lies within an 'Area of Landscape Value' and is situated just outside the Norfolk Broads National Park. Prior to being planted the site had a history of market gardening and fruit farming; of which remnants of the original orchard can be still visible today within Three Gates farm. The first phase of woodland planting took place in Three gates farm in 1987. Since then, further areas have been planted with predominantly native broadleaved species in 1990, 1994, 1995 and finally in 2005. The woodland was donated by the prior owner Yvonne Holmes . A remnant of the historical orchard boundaries can be seen in the mature hedgerows and remnant poplar/alder wind breaks surround and intersect the site. The remnant boundaries also include many mature and veteran trees including some fine veteran oaks.

Three gates farm is situated on the eastern edge of Aldeby village and can be accessed through an entrance off Rectory Road, or alternatively to the north off Church Road. There is no car park at the wood.

St, Mary's wood was donated by Yvonne Holmes in 1995 to the Woodland Trust, and originally small triangular field sitting next to the eastern edge of the village. The site was planted with native broadleaves in 1997 by the local community. St Mary's is located 400 metres to the west of Three Gates Farm and is directly adjacent to the village of Aldeby. Species planted mirrored those found naturally in the locality and at Three Gates Wood. Off-road parking for up to 4 vehicles was created and pedestrian entrances are available from the car park or to the north of the wood.

The key features are:

- Planted secondary woodland
- Informal public access

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

Three Gates farm and St Mary's wood will be managed to promote the development of natural regeneration whilst developing greater structural diversity and increased deadwood habitat concentrations through natural wastage. The wood will have an element of deadwood from the trees affected by Ash Dieback . As the dominance of Ash decreases, a combination of good forestry management practice and natural regeneration, will provide the wood with a species mix dominated by Oak and Field Maple, an element of Ash , and with shrub species consisting of Small-Leaved Lime, Wild Cherry, Hazel, Hawthorn Guelder rose, Dogwood, and Dog rose .

The remnant of the orchard will be retained where practicable as a historical feature, with either apple or pear trees local to Norfolk replacing ones that die. The rest of the orchard area in which the majority of trees have already died will be left as valuable open space and scrub habitat providing a diverse habitat for many species of flora and fauna.

The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity . Low key public access will be maintained to the site and the paths, signs and other furniture that allow safe access for the public are to be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use an enjoyment of the people of Aldeby and surrounding neighbouring parishes. The wood will also link into the local network of public footpaths.

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 F1 Informal Public Access

<b>Description</b>
<p>Three gates Farm is within easy walking distance of the village of Aldeby, and St Mary's is itself situated within the village of Aldeby. Both sites have a well-structured pathway/ride system. There are around 2600 metres of paths at Three Gates Wood and 340 metres at St Mary's Wood. There is a footpath alongside Rectory Road that joins Three Gates to the village of Burgh St Peter.</p> <p>St Mary's has a small purpose built car park that can fit about four cars.</p>
<b>Significance</b>
<p>The donor of the sites, Yvonne Holmes, who still lives at Three Gates Farm, is keen that the public are invited into the woodlands, increasing public enjoyment of woodland and other non-woodland habitats, providing a valuable source of open space.</p>
<b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- within easy access of Aldeby and Burgh St Peter villages.</li><li>- close links to the local path network</li></ul> <p>Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Limited Vehicle Access</li></ul>
<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Vandalism</li><li>- Bramble encroachment</li></ul>
<b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>
<p>The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity . Low key public access will be maintained to the site and the paths, signs and other furniture that allow safe access for the public are to be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Aldeby and surrounding neighbouring parishes. The wood will also link into the local network of public footpaths.</p>



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

The paths are to be managed annually , ensuring works are undertaken as necessary to keep the path network open and easy to use for informal public access , as detailed in EMC spec 2.01.

Associated signage ( site name/welcome signs) to be kept in good condition at all times.

Zone B Tree Safety inspections to be carried out every 24 months

## **4.2 F2 New Native Woodland**

### **Description**

Native broadleaved woodland has been planted at Three Gates Farm since 1987 in 4 phases finishing in 2005, whilst St Mary's Wood was planted in 1997.

The main species at both sites are Oak, Ash and Field Maple with Small-Leaved Lime, Wild Cherry, Hazel, Hawthorn Guelder rose, Dogwood, and Dog rose.

The woodlands are on fertile farmland and prior to ash dieback had developed well. Common ash in places consists of up to 30% of the tree species on site.

### **Significance**

The woods are an important addition to the woodland and semi natural habitat network in the Aldeby area, which is dominated by predominantly arable farmland.

### **Opportunities & Constraints**

#### Opportunities

- develop diverse woodland structure through silvicultural works
- deadwood creation from Ash Dieback

#### Constraints

- limited access

### **Factors Causing Change**

- Ash Die back
- Acute Oak Decline
- Rabbit damage
- Deer browsing

### **Long term Objective (50 years+)**

Three Gates farm and St Mary's wood will be managed to promote the development of natural regeneration whilst developing greater structural diversity and increased deadwood habitat concentrations through natural wastage.

The wood will have an element of deadwood from the trees affected by Ash Dieback . As the dominance of Ash decreases, a combination of good forestry management practice and natural regeneration will provide the wood with a species mix of Oak and Field Maple, with shrub species consisting of Small-Leaved Lime, Wild Cherry, Hazel, Hawthorn Guelder rose, Dogwood, and Dog rose .

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

The desired objectives within the plan period will be for the secondary woodland to continue to see the development of natural regeneration , supplemented by under planting, towards a multi age structured woodland. Ash will continue to decline within the plan period. Ash where feasible will be retained to develop deadwood habitat within the plantations. Ride edge feathering/thinning will benefit the woodlands edge structure, whilst helping to keep the ride network open and inviting to the public.

#### **Work Programme:**

-Ride edge coppice trees and shrubs to a depth of 1.5m either side of highlighted paths to open rides and develop edge structure (unless next to boundary edge then only coppice on side). All timber to be either removed from site or stacked neatly within the wood. All brash (branches) to be stacked neatly within the woodland away from pedestrian paths- 2025 ,2026 & 2027

-Undertake thinning operation within designated woodland areas.

25% thin favouring ash trees of poor form to improve ground light and promote natural regeneration and scrub development. All timber removed from site and brash scattered neatly within operational compartments.

Compartment 1a (Three Gates Farm) in three stages in the years- 2023/24, 2024/25, 2026/27, Compartment 2a (St Mary's) 2024 & 2025-.

-Replant and Install deer and rabbit proof fencing around thinned areas in Compartment 1a (Three Gates Farm) 2023/24

## **4.3 F3 Open Ground Habitat**

### **Description**

<p>The surviving area of orchard which consists of mainly commercial eating pears, and a small number of rapidly declining commercial apple varieties. There is also a small area of orchard that had a number of local varieties of apple and pear planted in 2005. The rest of this orchard area has now developed into a mixture of rough grass habitat and bramble dominated scrub.</p>
<p><b>Significance</b></p>
<p>The site has had a historical connection with orchards and is a Norfolk BAP habitat. The rough grass and scrub habitat adds biodiversity interest to the site.</p>
<p><b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b></p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To manage parts of the surviving area of orchard, rough grass and scrub habitats as an area of open non-intervention to diversify the amount of habitats within the wood.</li> </ul> <p>Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sourcing of local Norfolk varieties of Apple tree</li> </ul>
<p><b>Factors Causing Change</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Rabbit damage to the orchard trees.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b></p>
<p>The remnant of the orchard will be retained where practicable as a historical feature, with either apple or pear trees local to Norfolk replacing ones that die. The rest of the orchard area in which the majority of trees have already died will be left as valuable open space and scrub habitat providing a diverse habitat for many species of flora and fauna.</p>
<p><b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b></p>
<p>The paths are to be managed annually , ensuring works are undertaken as necessary to keep the path network open and easy to use for informal public access , as detailed in EMC spec 2.01.</p> <p>Associated signage ( site name/welcome signs) to be kept in good condition at all times.</p> <p>Zone B Tree Safety inspections to be carried out every 24 months</p>

## 5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2023	WC - Fencing	Works associated with fencing to protect planting areas	September
2023	SL - Legal Obligation Work	Works that have to be undertaken by Woodland Trust as part of with legal agreements made with third parties such as erection of boundary fencing, surfacing of joint access tracks, maintenance of drainage ditches. Also works associated with safeguarding the Woodland Trust legal position – such as erection of boundary markers on open boundaries, removal of illegal third party structures/vehicles/campsites	September
2023	WC - Tree Planting / Seeding	Works associated with tree planting / tree seeding for woodland creation sites	January
2023	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	February
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,	May
2024	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	June
2024	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	February
2025	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	February
2026	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	February
2027	WMM - Coppice Management	Works associated with the management of coppice areas – such as coppicing, maintenance of protective fencing, etc	December

## APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	8.5	Mixed broadleaves	1987	High forest		Area of Landscape Value, Environmentally Sensitive Area
Planted in two phases 1987 and 1990 in several blocks within the site. Consisting of predominately native broadleaved trees (oak, ash, wild cherry, field maple, small-leaved lime, hornbeam, silver birch) with a small percentage of horse chestnut interspersed. All areas of this sub compartment have now reached maturity, but has little understorey. Some areas of thick scrub and bramble present throughout the compartment.						
1b	1.06	Mixed broadleaves	1995	High forest		Area of Landscape Value, Environmentally Sensitive Area
Remnant of the commercial orchard and area new orchard trees. Small area replanted with traditional varieties of Norfolk apples and pears to continue the historical legacy o the site. Remaining old orchard stock now provide valuable deadwood habitat. Large areas of bramble and scrub within the northern part of the sub-compartment, whilst a small mature copse is situated to the east.						
1c	1.88	Mixed broadleaves	2005	High forest		Area of Landscape Value, Environmentally Sensitive Area
Area of new native planting in Winter 2005 (oak, ash, wild cherry, field maple, hazel and Hawthorn). Previously this was an area of redundant orchard, which had completely died. Dead orchard trees have been retained as deadwood habitat. There are small areas of natural regeneration present within the sub compartment. Ground flora within this area is a patchwork of open rough grass sward and mature bramble.						
2a	1	Mixed broadleaves	1995	High forest		Area of Landscape Value, Environmentally Sensitive Area
Known as St Mary's wood. An established new native broadleaved woodland in 1997 using the following species: oak, ash, hornbeam, field maple, wild cherry, small-leaved lime, hazel and other woody shrubs. The compartment is surrounded with mature hedges.						



### **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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