

Woodland Trust Management Plan

Whitethorn 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

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3. Long Term Policy
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5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Whitethorn Wood

Location:	Litlington	Grid reference:	TL309415	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	153
Area:	1.33 hectares (3.29 acres)							
External Designations:	No designations for this site							
Internal Designations:	N/A							

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Whitethorn Wood is a small quiet wood of 3 acres in South Cambridgeshire near the village of Litlington. The wood was acquired by The Woodland Trust in July 1994 and planted in December of the same year with the support of Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund and the local community.

The wood was formerly an arable field that was reseeded with grass prior to planting. The wood has been planted with broadleaved trees of beech, ash, field maple, cherry and oak, and a component of woody shrubs including hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn and crab apple.

The wood sits just to the south of a public byway called Ashwell Street approx. 1km to the west of the village, and access to the wood is from this byway. The byway also forms part of a long distance footpath, the Icknield Way, and there is short circular path around the wood for visitors. The wood sits as an 'island' in the landscape being surrounded by intense arable farming, although the Icknield Way does support grassland species and hedgerows. The nearest site of conservation importance is 'The Clunch Pit' which is an ancient disused quarry once used by local parishioners, and now supporting a good collection of chalk grassland plants. Locally there are 4 other small woods owned by The Woodland Trust within a few miles of Whitethorn. The woods being Tween Towns Wood and White Ponds Wood near Steeple Morden, and Ford Wood and Keith Wood near Bassingbourn.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long term aim is to create a mature native wood which is diverse in species and age structure. In this way the wood will be resilient and robust to any changes imposed on it in future, especially from tree diseases. In the future some occasional silvicultural intervention may be necessary to maintain these conditions.

In the long term the main trees species are likely to be oak, field maple, beech and wild cherry with shrub species on the boundaries and ride edges. Most of the planted ash is unlikely to reach maturity because of ash dieback disease, and some replanting of the gaps created may be required if appropriate natural regeneration is not forthcoming.

Public access for pedestrians will be maintained at the wood in perpetuity. The wood will be welcoming, with appropriate signage at the main entrance and a managed circular path. Facilities on the whole will be very low key and appropriate to this small local interest wood.

The Trust will remain open to the possibility of the wood being managed by a sympathetic 3rd party should the opportunity arise.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Secondary Woodland

Description
Whitethorn Wood was first planted in 1994 with the assistance of the Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund, and the involvement of the local community. The wood is broadleaved plantation with the main species being beech, ash, field maple, cherry and oak, and a component of woody shrubs including hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn and crab apple. Because of the exposed situation, dry summers and thin chalk soils the trees struggled to establish during the first 10-15 years and there have been numerous replanting operations to replace dead and struggling trees. This situation was helped in 2000 when a new hedge was planted on the boundary to create a windbreak. Although the trees are now established the general height and development of them resembles a wood of much younger age.
Significance
Cambridgeshire is one of the least wooded counties in England, and in a locality with little semi natural habitat overall the wood provides a valuable refuge for wildlife in an intensively managed landscape.
Opportunities & Constraints
The small size of the wood and lack of connectivity are likely to limit the amount of species that this wood can support. However, as the wood matures it will support additional species, especially fauna associated with deadwood habitats. A number of gaps are present in the woodland, and natural regeneration has not been forthcoming, so there is an opportunity to restock these areas and ensure a wider diversity of species, by introducing other trees such as birch and hornbeam.
Factors Causing Change
Browsing by deer and squirrels
Long term Objective (50 years+)
<p>The long term aim is to create mature, native woodland which is diverse in species and age structure. In this way the wood will be resilient and robust to any changes imposed on it in future, especially from tree diseases. The development of the woodland habitat is likely to be slow given the experience so far.</p> <p>Periodic silvicultural intervention may be necessary to maintain these conditions. It is likely that ash dieback disease will have an impact on the wood, and ash will become a minor tree component in the next 10-20 years. Most of the planted ash is unlikely to reach maturity because of ash dieback disease. This process of change will be allowed to develop naturally as ash trees are lost, and it will introduce further gaps into the canopy and some replanting may be required if appropriate natural regeneration is not forthcoming. This loss of ash will beneficially add further diversity and structure to the wood.</p> <p>Ash will not be preferentially thinned from the wood, and ash regeneration will be welcomed so long as it is part of an overall mixture of other species. In the long term the major trees species are likely to be oak, beech, field maple and</p>

wild cherry, with the main shrub species being hazel, blackthorn and hawthorn. The woods will develop a healthy deadwood habitat over time, and ash loss through disease will supplement this. Standing dead trees will be retained wherever possible and where they do not pose a safety risk or conflict with management operations.

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

During this plan period intervention and management of the wood will be minimal, as the woodland habitat continues to develop.

The restocking of several small gaps (and any further gaps created by ash dieback) will be carried out towards the end of the plan period (2024) to ensure sufficient tree diversity as the woodland matures, and this will include additional species such as field maple and birch. An estimated 100 trees are likely to be required in total. No other silvicultural operations will be carried out during this plan period.

4.2 f2 Informal Public Access

Description

Whitethorn wood is a relatively small wood approximately 1km away from the nearest village (Litlington). Although it's not within quick walking distance of the village it does benefit from being located next to a well-used public byway (Ashwell Street) which is also part of a long distance footpath, the Icknield Way.

Facilities at the wood are low key, as befitting a small quiet wood. There are several hundred metres of managed footpath and two entrances into the wood, both off Ashwell Street, which are squeeze gaps. Hence, a short circular walk is possible. The main entrance is signed and the site is on flat ground, but the paths are unsurfaced. All paths are permissive, hence there are no public rights of way within the wood. A small glade has been left in the southeast corner to provide a view over the surrounding landscape, where there is also a seat.

Significance

There is very little woodland of any kind in the locality, making Whitethorn Wood an important resource for local people, and a good alternative to the footpath network across a heavily farmed landscape.

Opportunities & Constraints

The small size of the Whitethorn wood will limit its' appeal to a wider audience, and is likely to mean the wood will remain a resource for just those people living quite nearby.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Whitethorn Wood will remain open for public access in perpetuity. The Trust has given the wood a category C for access provision, which equates to a low usage site. Hence facilities at the wood will be very low key in recognition of this. There will be a managed path network and the main entrances will be signed and welcoming to visitors. Management access will also be maintained at the main entrance. The small glade will be maintained in the southeast corner as a viewing point. The wood will be made as safe as practical for the public to

enjoy. Hence, as the woodland ages and the trees reach maturity it will become necessary to conduct regular safety inspections.

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

The short term objective during this plan period is to maintain informal and low key public access. This will be achieved by the annual mowing of a short footpath network of several hundred metres, and ensuring the two entrances are accessible and welcoming. A small glade will be maintained in the southeast corner, as a viewing point.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2023	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,	July
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,	July
2024	WC - Tree / Seed Supply	The supply of trees/seeds for woodland creation sites	December
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,	July
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,	July
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,	July

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	1.3	Beech	1994	High forest		
<p>A plantation of native broadleaves first planted in 1994 and restocked several times due to difficulties in establishment. The main tree species are beech and ash, with minor components of oak, cherry and field maple.</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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