

Snakeshill 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
 - 4.1 f1 Informal Public Access
 - 4.2 f2 Natural Secondary Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Snakeshill Wood

Location:	Old Costessey Grid reference: TG159119 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 133
Area:	6.33 hectares (15.64 acres)
External Designations:	N/A
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Snakeshill Wood is 6.34ha mature mixed broadleaf secondary woodland, situated on a steep ridge on the edge of semi-urban village Old Costessey and is consequently a prominent feature in the local landscape, and well used by the local public. The wood is situated on an unexcavated gravel pit, and a thin layer of light soil overlays the gravel ridge. Consequently, the wood is well drained, and the paths remain relatively dry throughout the year. Since the Trust acquired the site in 1995, the path network has been extended to allow visitors to take a circular route around the wood. The Eastern boundary of Snakeshill wood adjoins the village of Old Costessey, whilst the Western boundary links to a reinstated old gravel quarry, Queens Hill Country Park, which has been replanted as a woodland and now provides a significant area of permissive public access for the local communities within the area.

The main entrance is at the eastern end of the wood where there is a small car park (2 vehicles) where the woodland pathway begins. There is also an informal entrance linking Snakeshill wood to the newly planted young woodland on the Western boundary. There is also a pedestrian entrance off Brick Field Loke.

The woodland although secondary in nature, has in places a diverse variety of ancient woodland ground flora species with bluebell being the most dominant species. The South-eastern part of the wood is dominated by mature Laurel that has suppressed all other understorey species and ground flora and has become an indicative feature of the woodland. The mature woodland is high forest in nature but has areas of old coppice present. Sycamore has become the most dominant tree within the woodland, but ash, sweet chestnut, oak, birch, and cherry also are present in good numbers. The understorey away from the Laurel consists of Hazel and some Hawthorn but is patchy and sparse.

Key Features for this woodland include

1. Informal Public Access.
2. Natural Secondary Woodland

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term vision for Snakeshill Wood will be to manage the mature broadleaved woodland as high forest, with a diverse species and age composition, as well as a well-developed structure, with well-developed shrub and ground flora. This will be achieved through silvicultural management, and a phased eradication of non-native Laurel . The woodland will consist of Sycamore , Ash, Sweet Chestnut, Oak, Birch, and Cherry with shrub species such as Hawthorn and Hazel. The ground flora on site will be reminiscent of an Ancient Woodland and species such as Bluebell , Lesser Celandine and Dog's Mercury will be abundant. The site will also link biologically to the neighbouring Queens Hill Country Park managed by South Norfolk District Council, which is a newly planted area of woodland on old gravel workings. Snakeshill Wood with its mature woodland will complement the younger neighbouring site.

The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity . Public access will be maintained to the site and the paths , signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public are to be maintained in good order. The paths will also link to the neighbouring Queens Hill Country Park , this in turn will provide access across a much larger wooded area. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Costessey and will also link into other local public rights of way.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
Snakeshill wood was acquired by the Woodland Trust in 1995, and the path network was revised and extended to allow visitors to take a circular route around the wood. The main entrance is at the eastern end of the wood where steps have been constructed to prevent erosion and allow safe access up a 10m steep slope to the top of the ridge where the permissive pedestrian path starts. The 2 - 3m wide path then follows the top of the ridge through the wood to a small circular route. Management access is off Brickfield Loke which is a small private track and northern boundary of the woodland. There is an informal pedestrian entrance linking Queens Hill Country Park and Snakeshill Wood on the western boundary of the woodland, as well as a formal pedestrian entrance off Brickfield Loke. Visitor numbers have increased particularly since the Covid lock downs .
Significance
Being situated on the edge of the village, it is an important local amenity with public access, especially for dog walkers.
Opportunities & Constraints
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-A good area of open space for the local community.- further develop linkages to Queens Hill Country Park <p>Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Minor levels of vandalism has occurred within the site.-The steep slopes constrains potential less able users to the site.- the site is significantly busier than pre Covid and therefore public access infrastructure will be under increased pressure
Factors Causing Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- mountain bike damage- vandalism-increased visitor pressures
Long term Objective (50 years+)

The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity . Public access will be maintained to the site and the paths , signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public are to be maintained in good order. The paths will also link to the neighbouring Queens Hill Country Park , this in turn will provide access across a much larger wooded area. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Costessey and will also link into other local public rights of way.

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

The 1300m of paths will be managed annually , ensuring works are carried out 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 and maintained as detailed in EMC Spec 1.01 , with a five yearly review of access facilities by the Site Manager

-Access monitoring inspection- 2027

Zone A Tree Inspections to be carried out every 12 months

Zone B Tree Inspections to be carried out every 24 months

4.2 f2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

The broadleaved woodland is made up of oak, hornbeam, wild cherry, chestnut, beech, and sycamore with a hazel understorey. Across the north-facing slopes, the trees form an almost continuous unbroken canopy, and the understorey is made up of regenerating trees (oak, hornbeam, wild cherry, sycamore), occasional hazel and bramble. Around the northerly entrance point there is a block of sycamore (approx. 45 years old) and to the west of the sunken track which runs north - south across the site, the woodland is made up of mature and semi-mature trees (oak, chestnut, beech, silver birch) with little regeneration. On the slope adjacent to the grassland there is an area of approx. 1.2 ha of Laurel

The small area of rough grassland is surrounded on three sides by the woodland and is a seasonally wet and marshy area. Pigs are thought to have been kept on it prior to The Trust owning the land and is of little ecological importance.

Significance

This is a prominent secondary woodland of importance in the local context.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

- maintain important woodland habitat
- link woodland to neighbouring site

<p>Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -limited regeneration - sycamore dominant regeneration species
<p>Factors Causing Change</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wind damage on western slope. - Ash Dieback and Sooty bark disease (Sycamore) - invasive Laurel
<p>Long term Objective (50 years+)</p>
<p>The long-term vision for Snakeshill Wood will be to manage the mature broadleaved woodland as high forest with a diverse species and age composition as well as a well-developed structure with well-developed shrub and ground flora. This will be achieved through silvicultural management, and a phased eradication of non-native Laurel . The woodland will consist of Sycamore , ash, sweet chestnut, oak, birch, and cherry with shrub species such as Hawthorn and Hazel. The ground flora on site will be Ancient Woodland in nature and species such as Bluebell , Lesser Celandine and Dog's Mercury will be abundant. The site will also link biologically to the neighbouring Queens Hill Country Park managed by South Norfolk District Council, which is a newly planted area of woodland on old gravel workings. Snakeshill Wood with its mature woodland will complement the younger neighbouring site.</p>
<p>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</p>
<p>Maintain and promote diverse age structure and deadwood habitat within the mature secondary woodland.</p> <p>Thinning - Where the sycamore is dominant the canopy will be thinned to provide improved light levels, to promote natural regeneration and scrub habitat development.</p> <p>-2025 – September/October – Undertake small localised 25% thinning within western section of woodland. Either remove all timber from site or stack neatly within the wood away from the internal paths.</p> <p>Laurel Management -Remove the Laurel situated within the eastern part of the woodland and undertake targeted chemical control to remove regeneration of the invasive shrub. Once this has been undertaken install 4 x genguards within Woodland to promote regeneration</p> <p>-2023 , 2024,2025- Annually Cut designated area of Laurel to reduce area</p> <p>-2025 - Undertake chemical control applying targeted chemical application of glyphosate on Laurel regeneration.</p> <p>-2026 – November – Install 4 x Genguards to cleared Laurel areas</p> <p>Tree Safety</p> <p>-Zone A Tree Inspection to be undertaken every 12 Months</p> <p>-Zone B Tree Inspection to be undertaken every 24 months</p>

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2023	SL - Routine Safety Work	Works associated with undertaking planned visitor and structure safety orientated actions, such as erection/creation or maintenance of safety features such as fencing, rails, re-pointing of retaining walls etc	August
2023	WC - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with noxious or invasive weed control on woodland creation sites	December
2024	AW - Visitor Access Infrastructure	Works associated with the construction of a new or extension to existing car parking facilities.	October
2024	WC - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with noxious or invasive weed control on woodland creation sites	December
2025	WC - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with noxious or invasive weed control on woodland creation sites	December
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	WC - Natural Regeneration Work	Physical Works undertaken to encourage/promote / protect natural regeneration – such as ground prep, fencing to protect natural regeneration , low intensity grazing	December

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	6.34	Oak (pedunculate)	1850	High forest	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	
<p>This mixed broadleaf woodland is made up of oak, hornbeam, wild cherry, chestnut, beech and sycamore with a sparse hazel understorey. Across the north-facing slopes, the trees form an almost continuous unbroken canopy and the understorey is made up of regenerating trees (oak, hornbeam, wild cherry, sycamore), occasional hazel and bramble. There is also a rough area of grassland surrounded by shrubs with a seasonally wet marshy area in the middle of it. Adjacent to the area of grassland there is approx 0.35ha of Laurel.</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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