

# Meridian 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](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

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
  - 4.1 f2 Informal Public Access
  - 4.2 f2 New Native Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### Meridian Wood

Location:	Bluntisham Grid reference: TL361749 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 142
Area:	1.00 hectares (2.47 acres)
External Designations:	N/A
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Meridian wood is a narrow, native broadleaved woodland situated on a low hill in Bluntisham village on the edge of the Cambridgeshire fens. It is surrounded by arable fields on 3 sides, with an apple orchard over the road to the north. The tree species in the wood include Ash, Oak, Wild Service tree, Field Maple, Crab Apple, Willow, Silver Birch, Hornbeam, Yew, Wild plum and a variety of orchard trees . the shrub component of the wood includes species such as Hazel, Guelder rose, Buckthorn, Wayfaring tree, Dogwood, Hawthorn, Elder, and Dog-rose

Although small, the wood is popular and well used, with a volunteer Woodland Warden who has been involved with the development of the site. A circular walk around the wood links to a footpath in the southern end of the site. There are two benches, one in the orchard and one at the southern end which has views towards the Great Ouse valley.

Meridian wood, so called because of its proximity to the meridian line and the local community helped with planting the wood, for the millennium in 2000 as part of the Woodland Trust's Woods on Your Doorstep program. The Millennium feature is a human sundial at the southern end of the site. The wide ride running the length of the site has been left unplanted due to underground and overhead services, which also account for the high proportion of low growing trees and shrubs in the planting mix. A small orchard has been created at the northern end of the site, and is planted with local varieties of fruit trees, including Cambridge Gage.

The key features are:

- New native woodland
- Informal public access.

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

Meridian Wood will be allowed to develop naturally into a well-structured and resilient native broadleaved woodland.

The woods dominant tree species will become Oak with a supporting species mix of Wild Service tree, Field Maple, Crab Apple, Willow, Silver Birch, Hornbeam, Yew, Wild plum. The orchard trees at the northern end of the site will, where possible, provide species of local varieties such as Cambridge Gage.

Ash will still be a component of the site, but will provide the important feature of, standing and fallen deadwood habitat within the wood due to Ash Dieback. The areas where the Ash have died and opened up the canopy, will provide areas for ground flora and natural regeneration to flourish, and provide an understorey layer.

The shrub component of the site will include species such as Hazel, Guelder rose, Buckthorn, Wayfaring tree, Dogwood, Hawthorn, Elder, and Dog Rose

The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity. Low key public access will be maintained at the site and the paths, signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public will be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Bluntisham Parish and the other immediately neighbouring parishes. The glade and human sundial will continue to be a key part of the site and will help to maintain the linkages to the nearby Greenwich Meridian Line.

The wood will continue to link to the local public footpath networks and will be part of the much wider access provision in the area.

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 f2 Informal Public Access

<b>Description</b>
There are two entrances to the wood and the circular path links with a public footpath. Good views across the Great Ouse valley can be enjoyed from the sunny glade in the southern end. The Southern end of the site also hosts a bench and human sun dial, which is the millennium feature of the site.
<b>Significance</b>
An oasis of accessible green space in an area of intensive arable farmland.
<b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>
Constraints  -Small and narrow site with only one entrance.  Opportunities  -Potential for expansion of wood -Community involvement
<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
- increase in housing provision in the local area - vandalism & misuse (low risk)
<b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>
The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity. Low key public access will be maintained at the site and the paths , signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public will be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Bluntisham Parish and the other immediately neighbouring parishes. The glade and human sundial will continue to be a key part of the site and will help to maintain the linkages to the nearby Greenwich Meridian Line.  The wood will continue to link to the local public footpath networks and will be part of the much wider access provision in the area.
<b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>



The 680m of Paths and rides are to 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.

Manage site safety through safety observations and inspections.

-Associated signage (Site name/welcome signs) to be kept in good condition and regularly maintained as detailed in EMC Spec 1.01 , with a five yearly review of access facilities by the Site Manager.

Access inspection - July 2027

Tree Safety surveys

-Zone B Tree Safety Inspections to be carried out every 48 months

#### 4.2 f2 New Native Woodland

##### Description

Meridian wood consists of a mix of native broadleaved species of mainly lower growing shrubs and a smaller proportion of trees. It is surrounded by arable fields on 3 sides, with an apple orchard over the road to the north. The tree species in the wood include Ash, Oak, Wild Service tree, Field Maple, Crab Apple, Willow, Silver Birch, Hornbeam, Yew, Wild plum and a variety of orchard trees. The shrub component of the wood includes species such as Hazel, Guelder rose, Buckthorn, Wayfaring tree, Dogwood, Hawthorn, Elder, and Dog-rose

##### Significance

Cambridgeshire is the least wooded county in England (2015) and local land use is dominated by intensively managed arable farmland. Meridian provides a small island refuge for a wildlife and people alike.

##### Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

- to create further native broadleaved woodland with open public access close to Bluntisham.
- Hedgerows provide connectivity for wildlife.

Constraints:

- very small island of woodland.
- Overhead power lines and underground services limiting the extent of woodland on site and species choice.

##### Factors Causing Change

-Climate change  
-Ash Dieback  
-alterations in surrounding land use/ farming practice

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

Meridian Wood will be allowed to develop naturally into a well-structured and resilient native broadleaved woodland through natural regeneration and good silvicultural practices.

The woods dominant tree species will become Oak with a supporting species mix of Wild Service tree, Field Maple, Crab Apple, Willow, Silver Birch, Hornbeam, Yew, Wild plum. The orchard trees at the northern end of the site will, where possible, provide species of local varieties such as Cambridge Gage.

Ash will still be a component of the site, but will provide the important feature of, standing and fallen deadwood habitat within the wood due to Ash Dieback. The areas where the Ash have died and opened up the canopy, will provide areas for ground flora and natural regeneration to flourish, and provide an understorey layer.

The shrub component of the site will include species such as Hazel, Guelder rose, Buckthorn, Wayfaring tree, Dogwood, Hawthorn, Elder, and Dog Rose

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

Undertake assessments of woodland health every five years, Works to be ordered through observation actions as required.

Woodland Health Monitoring visit - August 2027

Woodland Management

Coppicing

-Undertake coppicing of the hazel in the southern end of the wood as ,well as coppicing selected shrubs along the edge of the footpaths and the glade at the southern end of the site . This management regime will diversify the structure, age and habitats of the wood. The coppicing will be done on a 12 year rotation with the lower section of the wood split into two coppice coupes to further diversify the structure. Coppice coup two will be coppiced six years after coup one and then coppiced every 12 years after this first coppice cut

-Coppice management- Winter 2027/28 - Coup 1 & ride-side coppice  
- winter 2033/34- Coup 2

Hedge Laying

-The height of the eastern boundary hedge should be reduced by topping or laying – particularly where the wood borders the gardens. Any gaps to be filled with hedging such as field maple, hawthorn or blackthorn - this will allow the maintenance of a continuous and manageable boundary for the future.

-Hedge Laying - Winter 2027

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## 5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2024	PE - Interpretation & Signage	Works associated with the provision of visitor signage, waymarking, interpretation features and leaflets	October
2027	WMM - Coppice Management	Works associated with the management of coppice areas – such as coppicing, maintenance of protective fencing, etc	January
2027	WMM - Ride Management	Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works	January

## APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	0.88	Oak (pedunculate)	2000	High forest	Services & wayleaves	
<p>Narrow strip of planting dominated by native broadleaved shrubs (guelder rose, hazel, buckthorn, Wayfaring tree, field maple, dog wood, Crab apple, but with small proportion of mixed broadleaved trees - Ash, oak, wild service, silver birch, towards the western boundary of the wood. Criss-crossed by underground water mains and one overhead power line. A strip of land down the eastern boundary has been left as open ground. In the southern end a human sundial has been constructed</p>						
1b	0.14	Mixed native broadleaves	2000	Non-wood habitat		
<p>Small area at the northern end of the site planted as a small orchard of locally occurring fruit trees including Cambridge Gage Plum. Hedged on its western edge.</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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