

# Felicity's Wood

(Plan period – 2020 to 2025)



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

### **Felicity's Wood**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Location:              | Woodhouse Eaves Grid reference: SK504155 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 129 |
| Area:                  | 8.77 hectares (21.67 acres)  |
| External Designations: | National Forest  |
| Internal Designations: | N/A  |

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Felicity's wood was purchased by the Trust in 1996 and planting took place in 1997. Prior to purchase it was grazed agricultural land and the stone walls that enclosed it are still a feature of the site. It lies in the heart of the ancient hunting Forest of Charnwood and it is also within the boundary of the National Forest area. The surrounding landscape of Charnwood Forest is a mosaic of small agricultural fields and woodlands with one or two larger ancient woodlands. Felicity's wood has Beacon Hill Country Park, to the south; The Outwoods ancient woodland to the east and Charnwood Lodge NNR to the west as well as numerous copse' and spinneys in the surrounding farmland.

The site is on a north facing slope and from the main entrance there are spectacular views over Charnwood Forest and northward to the Trent valley. Beacon hill is one of the igneous rocky outcrops dotted throughout Leicestershire and the rock and soil type here is based upon this. The soil type is a sandy loam over mudstone or the igneous local stone, known as 'Forest Stone 'or 'Homstone'. There is an outcrop of this within the central copse. The site is reasonably free draining due to its steepness but at the foot of the slope there is a small stream, known as Woodbrook, and the lower paths can become quite wet and poorly drained.

Although the bulk of the woodland was planted by the Trust, there were some existing areas of woodland cover. The new wood is mainly oak, ash, some birch and field maple with willow nearer the stream, but some Scots pine was included in the planting to echo the surrounding shelter belts and copses. The pre-trust planting is within two walled enclosures and mainly consists of Scots pine but there are some more mature willow in the area by the stream. The new woodland is challenged by a high amount of squirrel damage and now ash die back has hit, there are more dead or badly damaged trees here than not. The even aged structure of the new woodland has meant that the canopy has closed and not much of an understorey or ground flora exists here, but the older copses have a more diverse range of plant species with Hare bell, Gorse, Figwort, Wood sage, Enchanters nightshade, Foxglove, Bluebell, Honey suckle all present and ready to colonise the new woodland.

The top of the slope was left unplanted in order to protect the views and this has led to the development of a large meadow area of 2.25ha. There is also a bank of hazel coppice to the east of the meadow. At the base of the slope is Woodbrook, which has a mention in the Leicestershire Biodiversity Action Plan for its good water quality and the presence of white clawed crayfish, grey wagtails, freshwater lamprey and stone loach.

The sites key features are new native woodland; informal public access and open ground.

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long term objective of the site is to have created and maintained a thriving mixed woodland, comprised of several native species and exhibiting a diverse age structure, from naturally regenerating seedlings through to old growth characteristics. Standing deadwood will be retained where its safe to do so. Diversity of wildlife will be well established, tying the site in with the other important habitats surrounding it. The site will continue to remain open to the public to enjoy quiet, informal recreation. The path network will be maintained and the open area in the south will continue to be cut allowing the views out over the surrounding landscape. Woodland management will only be undertaken when woodland condition assessments show that there is a need to encourage biodiversity or improve the structure of the woodland with interventions.

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 f1 New Native Woodland

|   |
|---|
| <b>Description</b>  |
| An oak ash woodland with a fairly wide range of other minor species in the mix and included in the two existing mature copses. It is continuous with other older planted woods on the steeper slopes of Woodbrook Valley but outside of the Woodland Trust ownership. Within the wood there are several other minor habitats also including dry stone walls, fast flowing stream, open grassland, dead wood. The wood is located on the lower slopes of Beacon hill.  |
| <b>Significance</b>   |
| As part of the national forest area Felicity's Wood helps to fulfil many of the original goals set out for the national forest, these were:-<br>To create a diverse landscape and enhance biodiversity.<br>To make a significant contribution to the UK's efforts to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide.<br>To create a major resource for tourism, recreation and education.<br>To provide a productive alternative use for farmland.<br>To make a contribution to the UK's timber needs.<br>To stimulate the economy and to create new jobs.<br>Despite the fact that Charnwood Forest is a well wooded area before the National Forest initiative got underway, woodland cover across the area as a whole accounted for just six per cent of land use, well below the national average. This particular wood is integrated within the special landscape character of Charnwood Forest that is one of scattered woods with meadows and heaths. |
| <b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>  |
| <b>Constraints</b><br>The views from the southern glade northwards over the rest of the wood and the valley of the Wood Brook must be maintained<br>The site is very steep so any subsequent management is difficult.<br><b>Opportunities</b><br>Expansion of common woodland species outwards from the two established copses into the planted woodland. The southern stream Wood Brook is very important to many wildlife species some of which are nationally notable  |
| <b>Factors Causing Change</b>   |
| Pests and diseases, most notable are grey squirrel and ash die back. The grey squirrel damage on this site is very pronounced and coupled with the effects of ADB, the woodland is facing a severe challenge.   |
| <b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>  |



|  |
|--|
| Oak-ash dominated woodland with a thriving wildlife community, deadwood habitat and public access.   |
| <b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>  |
| The planted woodland areas will require a first thinning operation in order to allow more light on to the woodland floor, which in turn will increase biodiversity and encourage a more diverse age structure. The rides will be widened to facilitate them drying-out and to allow the development of a multi-stage mowing regime to improve floral diversity. Ash trees close to the paths with severe ADB that will cause H&S issues in the future will be removed, and this work will tie in with the planned thinning operation to keep disturbance to a minimum. Management of the squirrel population will be undertaken prior to thinning to reduce the burden on the remaining trees post-thinning. Viewpoints from benches and footpaths will also require active management. The hazel coppice on the flanks of the upper slopes will be managed in order to improve biodiversity; produce a product and to maintain the view from Dean's Lane. |

#### 4.2 f2 Informal Public Access

|  |
|--|
| <b>Description</b>   |
| Felicity's Wood was planted up as part of the National Forest in association with the National Forest Company and with funding from FC and Charnwood Borough Council. Local people were consulted from the very earliest stages over the design. They were anxious to maintain the spectacular views across the Wood Brook Valley and to ensure that the site was properly integrated into the local landscape. As a consequence the new planting was concentrated on the lower, steeper slopes below the dominant sight-line from the upper parts of the site. The wood is well connected to the public footpath network directly off Dean's Lane and via the permissive paths through adjoining Martins Wood up to Beacon Hill country Park so although there are no villages very close, the site is a linking amenity for locals and visitors from further afield. There are 1150m of paths throughout the site and a large amount of open grassland on the upper slopes which dog walkers love. |
| <b>Significance</b>  |
| Fulfills a local requirement for recreational land and is an integral part of the larger landscape/recreation picture as part of the National Forest and Charnwood countryside character area and it is linked via Martins wood to Beacon Hill Country Park.   |
| <b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>   |
| <p>Constraints</p> <p>Very steep so most of the wood is unsuitable for some disabled visitors and the views from the glade at the southern end of the site must be maintained as a key part of the woodland design.</p> <p>Opportunities</p> <p>There is no definitive/ permissive access into the adjoining woodland to the east, which could provide additional access through another woodland habitat.</p>   |
| <b>Factors Causing Change</b>  |
| Ash die back and squirrel damage could lead to a dangerous woodland habitat if not managed correctly.  |
| <b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>   |

Maintain full permissive public access across the Woodland Trust ownership with a link over the Wood Brook to the north and links with the woodland to the east, if an understanding with the neighbouring landowner can be reached.

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

Maintain the current 1150 m of paths by mowing two or three times each year under a two-zone management system. That is the central zone at least twice annually and the sides alternate years. Carry out regular tree safety inspections and organise any required remedial works promptly. Maintain viewpoints from seats and specific sections of path. Maintenance of the seats, welcome signs and information board will be required at least once annually.

**4.3 F3 Continuity of Open Ground**

**Description**

This key feature is confined to the area covered by sub-compartment 1c which is the area of permanent grassland on the upper slopes of the site. The upper boundary is formed by Dean's Lane and the lower by the dry-stone wall at the break of slope with the planting below. To the east and west the boundaries are formed by the hazel coppices planted on acquisition.

**Significance**

During the initial public consultation powerful arguments were made to ensure both the spectacular views and the close integration of the site within the surrounding landscape which comprises of upland meadows, woodland, conifer enclosures and heathland. Consequently these aspects closely informed the initial design of the woodland.

**Opportunities & Constraints**

Constraints.  
Requires the assistance of a local farmer in order to cut and remove the grass, not always possible to arrange.

Opportunities.  
Provides the much valued open views across Woodbrook Valley, the Trent Vale and the Derbyshire Pennines in the far distance.  
Allows the proper integration of the site within the surrounding landscape.  
Could possibly be improved to improve floral diversity of the meadow area.

**Factors Causing Change**

Ruderal weeds. Natural succession to woodland if left un-cut.

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

Maintain the grassland habitat of 2.25 ha and the views to the north. Look to improve the diversity of the grassland habitat.

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

Establish an agreement with a local farmer, to cut and remove the grass. This will decrease the nitrogen reserves in the soil and help to suppress ruderal weeds, encouraging a more diverse ground flora. Enhance the species diversity by planting wildflower plugs and/or seeds.



## 5. WORK PROGRAMME

| Year | Type Of Work                          | Description  | Due Date |
|------|---------------------------------------|--|----------|
| 2020 | SL - Tree Safety<br>Emergency Work    | Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs                                       | June     |
| 2020 | WMM - General Site<br>Management      | Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,                            | June     |
| 2021 | LC - Fly Tipping                      | Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal  | June     |
| 2023 | SL - Tree Safety<br>Emergency Work    | Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs                                       | August   |
| 2024 | AW - Management<br>Access Capital     | Works associated with installing new or replacement management access infrastructure. Such as management access gates, vehicle bridges, fencing and surfacing works. | July     |
| 2024 | AW - Visitor Access<br>Infrastructure | Works associated with the construction of a new or extension to existing car parking facilities.   | July     |
| 2024 | WMM - Ride<br>Management              | Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works                        | December |

## APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

| Cpt No.  | Area (ha) | Main Species      | Year | Management Regime | Major Management Constraints   | Designations    |
|--|-----------|-------------------|------|-------------------|--|-----------------|
| 1a   | 4.89      | Ash               | 1997 | High forest       | No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc | National Forest |
| <p>Forming the majority of the woodland, this compartment was planted in 1997 under the National Forest tender scheme. The mix was oak and ash with small amounts of field maple, birch, Scots pine and willow as well as a proportion of woody shrubs on the ride edges. The Scots pine was included to reflect the surrounding established copses in the landscape, which are well stocked with conifer. The compartment is very steep, falling some 50m in the space of 360m; it is bounded by the lane to the south and the edge of an established wood to the west. The eastern boundary is a thorn hedgerow whilst the northern extremity is marked by the Wood Brook.</p> |           |                   |      |                   |  |                 |
| 1b   | 0.28      | Sitka spruce      | 1960 | High forest       | No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc | National Forest |
| <p>An established small copse with Sitka Spruce and Alder, estimated to have been re-planted in about 1960 but represented on a map of 1889. It is enclosed by dry-stone walls. There are areas of ash, alder, oak, rowan and willow, sparse areas of understorey of mainly elder with some holly and gorse. The ground flora is dominated by bramble but with small amounts of bluebell, honeysuckle, enchanters nightshade, fox glove, woundwort and figwort. This area was thinned in approximately 1993 and there is a significant amount of dead wood lying on the ground.</p>  |           |                   |      |                   |  |                 |
| 1c   | 0.23      | Scots pine        | 1960 | High forest       |  | National Forest |
| <p>An established small copse with Scots pine, Larch and some oak, estimated to have been re-planted in about 1960 but represented on a map of 1889. It is enclosed by dry-stone walls. There are areas of an elder/thorn shrub layer in places and has a very thin soil through which the local rock outcrops.</p>  |           |                   |      |                   |  |                 |
| 1d   | 0.13      | Oak (pedunculate) | 2023 | High forest       |  |                 |
| <p>A small area of mixed native broadleaf planting. Mainly oak and ash. It has a poor understorey and ground layer.</p>  |           |                   |      |                   |  |                 |
| 1e   | 3.21      | Open ground       | 1997 | Coppice           |  |                 |

| Cpt No.   | Area (ha) | Main Species | Year | Management Regime | Major Management Constraints | Designations |
|---|-----------|--------------|------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| <p>This sub-compartment is an area of former improved grassland which has been retained as open grassland to allow views across the Charnwood Forest landscape to the Trent Valley to the north. The meadow ensures the integration of the site within the local landscape. The views enabled by the meadow were a key component of the site design at the consultation meetings. The hay is removed either by license with a local farmer, or by contract with a contractor. Included in this subcompartment area small area of hazel coppice to the east and a small block of mixed native broadleaves to the west.</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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