

Laurel Farm 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
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5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Laurel Farm Wood

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------|----|----------|-------|-----|-----|
| Location: | Bagworth | Grid reference: | SK446079 | OS | 1:50,000 | Sheet | No. | 140 |
| Area: | 8.52 hectares (21.05 acres) | | | | | | | |
| External Designations: | National Forest | | | | | | | |
| Internal Designations: | Woods on Your Doorstep | | | | | | | |

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Laurel Farm was a working farm in Bagworth village until it was dismantled in 1998. The Woodland Trust, in conjunction with the National Forest Company, purchased the land for Laurel Farm Wood which was planted between 1997 and 2000. The site sits just outside the ancient Charnwood Forest boundary and contributes to the patchwork of woodlands in the area. The Woodland Trust's Centenary and Royal Tigers Wood lies just over the fields to the south. Beyond that is the LCC owned Bagworth Heath Woods and to the west lies the RFS Battram wood. These relatively young National Forest woodlands help to break up the agricultural landscape.

The wood lies on the southern edge of Bagworth with the western boundary running along Barleston Road. It is surrounded by arable land and is largely flat, with a gentle slope down to the south of the site. The wood was planted as part of the Woodland Trust's Woods On Your Doorstep initiative with a mix of native broadleaves, substantial numbers of which were planted by volunteers - including a very efficient team of Army Cadets!

Public Footpaths leading to Centenary and Royal Tigers Wood cross the site and link with the circular routes within the woodland. In recent years there has been some antisocial behaviour in the form of vehicular trespassing, damage to trees and aggression towards visitors, but this seems to have abated.

The woods Key Features are New Native Woodland and Informal Public Access.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Laurel Farm Wood will be allowed to develop naturally into a well-structured and resilient, native broadleaved woodland with a semi-natural open meadow and wide, sunny rides. The woodland was planted with a predominantly oak and ash mix; as ash dieback reduces the number of ash trees, oak is likely to become the dominant species.

The ash will be monitored with intervention where trees become unsafe. To improve the future resilience of the wood, the natural regeneration in the spaces left by the ash trees will be monitored to ensure the wood is diverse in tree species with the potential to support a range of wildlife.

The open habitats of the meadow and the wide sunny rides will be maintained, and the woodland edge habitat managed to diversify and encourage a variety of species.

A sustainable level of public access to be maintained through the management of the access features and internal structures, such as entrances and paths to a safe standard as per WT Spec 1.1.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Secondary Woodland

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| Description |
| A native broadleaf woodland, Laurel Farm was planted as part of the Woods On Your Doorstep initiative. Oak, ash, silver birch and field maple make up 90% of the planting and woody shrubs the remainder. |
| Significance |
| The National Forest has been created in an area in need of landscape improvement and regeneration. Laurel Farm Wood is at a key location, despoiled in the past by mining activity. Prior to the creation of the National Forest, there was little woodland in this essentially arable area and the planting of this site makes a significant difference in both landscape and ecological terms. |
| Opportunities & Constraints |
| Fly tipping, motorcycles, unauthorised grazing by Travelers' horses and vehicle trespass have been occasional issues resulting in the need for pole barriers, ditched entrances and additional roadside fencing to protect the site. |
| Factors Causing Change |
| Ash dieback is prevalent on site, with many trees displaying lesions due to both ash dieback and canker. Squirrel damage has also been an issue. |
| Long term Objective (50 years+) |
| A resilient woodland, where a diverse canopy and age structure with a good scrubby understory develops through natural regeneration. The meadow, paths, rides, deadwood and the woodland edge structure contributing to a diverse range of habitats for wildlife. |
| Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years) |
| Monitor and treat Japanese knotweed. The woodland will be thinned to break up the current closed canopy, encouraging natural regeneration and the development of a multi-layered woodland with deadwood habitat. Encourage woodland edge habitat through some small scale coppicing along the rides and meadow. Monitor ash dieback with tree safety work where necessary. Monitor natural regeneration in the meadow, consider allowing selected trees to grow to replace the Millenium Oak. |

4.2 f2 Informal Public Access

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| Description |
| Laurel Farm is on the southern edge of Bagworth with entrances and frontage onto Barlestone Road. Public Footpaths cross the site and link with circular paths within the woodland. |
| Significance |
| Laurel Farm provides a valuable resource for the people of Bagworth with public footpaths linking Laurel Farm wood with other new native woodlands within the area, Bagworth Heath and Centenary and Royal Tigers Wood. |
| Opportunities & Constraints |
| The wood lies within the National Forest, a highly successful initiative which is widely publicised. The visual appeal of the entrances have been compromised due to the need to secure the site against unauthorised access. |
| Factors Causing Change |
| Fly Tipping; Trespass; aggressive behaviour. |
| Long term Objective (50 years+) |
| Laure Farm Wood will remain open to the public and will continue to be managed in a way that secures and enhances the positive experience visitors have of the site. To respond to the development of the National Forest and visitors numbers. |
| Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years) |
| Monitor antisocial behaviour and be proactive in reducing its impact. Maintain access infrastructure such as entrances and paths to a safe standard. |

5. WORK PROGRAMME

| Year | Type Of Work | Description | Due Date |
|------|------------------------------|--|----------|
| 2023 | 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 | March |
| 2023 | LC - Routine Litter Picks | Planned/routine litter picks using contractors | May |

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

| Cpt No. | Area (ha) | Main Species | Year | Management Regime | Major Management Constraints | Designations |
|--|-----------|--------------------------|------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1a | 8.5 | Mixed native broadleaves | 1999 | High forest | People issues (+tve & -tve) | National Forest |
| <p>The whole of Laurel Farm makes up this compartment. The 8.5 ha area comprises 6.5 ha of tree planting and 2 ha of open ground. A conjoined area originally called "Reccy Wood" but now counted as part of the larger Laurel Farm woodland block was planted at 2.5 x 2.5 m spacing in 1997. Circular paths are maintained around Laurel Farm Wood. A water main runs adjacent to Barlestone Road and has open ground above it. Laurel Farm was planted at 2.1 x 2.1m spacing in two phases - western half in 1999 and eastern half in 2000. A feature oak tree was planted within an open area nearby to mark the Millennium. Tree species are oak 35%, ash 25%, birch 20% field maple 10% and shrubs 10% towards the outer edges and path sides.</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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