

Woodcote

(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

Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

The following principles provide an overarching framework to guide the management of all our sites but we recognise that all woods are different and that their management also needs to reflect their local landscape, history and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives.

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene in our woods when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity, safety and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland for all the positive reasons set out in our Conservation Principles, preferably using natural regeneration but often by planting trees, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe. Where possible, we pro-actively engage with people to help them appreciate the value of woods and trees.
4. The long term vision for all our ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The natural and cultural heritage value of sites is taken into account in our management and in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Land and woods can generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We therefore consider the appropriateness of opportunities to generate income from our Estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we encourage our woods to be used for local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the Estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. We maintain a network of sites for long-term monitoring and trials leading to reductions in plastics and pesticides.
10. Any activities we undertake are in line with our wider Conservation Principles, conform to sustainable forest management practices, are appropriate for the site and balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

The Public Management Plan

This public management plan describes the site and sets out the long term aims for our management and lists the Key Features which drive our management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site – their significance is outlined together with our long, 50 years and beyond, and our short, the next 5 years, term objectives for the management and enhancement of these features. The short term objectives are complemented by an outline Work Programme for the period of this management plan aimed at delivering our management aims.

Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and we continually monitor our sites to assess the success of our management, therefore this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme.

Please either consult The Woodland Trust website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

or contact the Woodland Trust

operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk

to confirm details of the current management programme.

A short glossary of technical terms can be found at the end of the plan.

Location and Access

Location maps and directions for how to find and access our woods, including this site, can be found by using the following link to the Woodland Trust web-site which contains information on accessible woodlands across the UK

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/find-woods/>

In Scotland access to our sites is in accordance with the Land Reform Act (of Scotland) 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

In England, Wales and NI, with the exception of designated Public Rights of Ways, all routes across our sites are permissive in nature and where we have specific access provision for horse riders and/or cyclists this will be noted in the management plan.

The Management Plan

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5. Work Programme

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GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Woodcote

Location:	Smisby	Grid	reference:	SK355186	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	128
Area:	9.44 hectares (23.33 acres)								
External Designations:	Green Belt, National Forest								
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep								

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located in an area of the National Forest known as the Heart of the Forest. Not only geographically towards the centre of the National Forest, but also an area that has a relatively higher tree cover than elsewhere. Woodcote itself sits within a large block of new woodland plantations that encompass a sizeable belt of land to the south of the village of Smisby. These young woodlands are planted largely on private property; encouraged and supported by the National Forest Company. The historical and now National Trust owned Calke Abbey is located a couple of miles to the north

Woodcote Wood takes its name from nearby Woodcote Farm from which the land was acquired by the Woodland Trust in 1997. The wood lies 1 mile north of Ashby de la Zouch, east of the B5006 to Smisby and is about 9.5 hectares in size. Old Park Lane upon which the main site entrance is located, divides the site into two halves, the lane roughly forms the county boundary, the north part of the site being in Derbyshire and the southern part in Leicestershire. The site is relatively flat, but does gently slope from its northern point, down to the south and east where a brook lies in the neighbours wood. The site becomes waterlogged in the winter along the eastern boundary.

It is a native broadleaved woodland composed of young trees planted in groups of 50-100 individuals. The woodland has been recently thinned so the trees are well spaced and developing nicely. Ash die back has become very apparent on site and the recent thinning operation took this into account, favouring oak over ash when a choice had to be made. Southern marsh orchid has made an appearance in one of the open areas and jays and other woodland birds are now a common sight here. There is a reasonable sized meadow area within the southern block as well as glades to be found at ride intersections.

The site was purchased with the help of the National Forest Companies "National Forest Tender Scheme" and is one of the Woodland Trusts "Woods On Your Doorstep". It was designed to take into account the view over Ashby de la Zouch, its castle and beyond. It has a number of circular paths leading from a car park constructed on site in a fairly central location. An information board can be found here and welcome signs at all other public entrances, of which there are 7. A large lump of granite from nearby Bardon Quarry forms the commemorative Millennium Feature. Local people were involved in the site design and a community tree planting event in November 1997. Unfortunately due to significant misuse the car park was closed to vehicles some years ago, though there is some limited parking in the site entrance.

The key features of the site are informal public access and new native woodland.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The wood will be allowed to reach maturity and will develop the characteristics of more naturally occurring woodland, as opposed to a plantation of single aged trees. As the woodland was planted with a predominantly ash and oak mix and ADB has vastly reduced the long term survival and potential co-dominance of ash on site, the woodland is likely to evolve into an oak dominated wood, however cherry, birch, willow and other species will always be retained. For this reason silvicultural intervention will be considered as the wood develops to ensure the wood is diverse in tree species and structure, to promote a good mixture of both young and mature trees. This will enable the wood to be more resilient to change in the future, and will ensure it supports the greatest range of wildlife.

Open habitats will also remain and be managed within the woodland matrix, including the meadow areas but also sunny rides.

A good standard of access provision will be maintained at Woodcote Wood. The entrances will be accessible and clearly signed as per WT Spec 1.1. It shall be clearly visible from approach routes, attractive and inviting, easy and safe to use. The existing path network will be kept open for use and any new desire line paths that are created and are sensible will become official paths and be maintained. The information board on site will be maintained for as long as it is deemed attractive and usable. If funding becomes available for new interpretation on the site then this will be pursued.

The wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors through regular tree safety inspections as per Woodland Trust Internal Guidance and best practice.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
Woodcote is located half a mile from Smisby and about 1 mile from the edge of Ashby de la Zouch. A car park was constructed off Old Park Lane at the time of planting sufficient for 6 cars, however due to regular excessive fly tipping and anti-social behavior the decision was made to close the car park some years ago. Though there is some limited unofficial parking space at the site entrance, most visitors are local and walk into the property. From the car park and the six other entrances into the wood, there are a series of circular paths amounting to some 1.9 km in length. An information board can be found near the car park and welcome signs are at each of the entrances. A large granite boulder commemorates the Millennium, suggested by local people who were involved in the design, planting and naming of the wood. This can be found in the open grassed area in the southern section of the woodland.
Significance
The paths at Woodcote are important in fulfilling the Woodland Trusts corporate objective associated with "People"; 1.9km of path open to the public free of charge, 24/7. The woodland is located in the National Forest area and links with other woodlands in the area and the wider rights of way network via its paths and rides. Open access to walkers remains throughout with the possibility of long woodland walks within the Forest having become a reality. Public access and its promotion is an important objective of the National Forest initiative, the access provided at Woodcote being an important contribution to that wider goal and symbolic of on-going successful partnership working between the Woodland Trust and The National Forest Company.
Opportunities & Constraints
<p>Fly tipping and car abandonment made the car park inaccessible at times and required costly time consuming clearance on a regular basis. Local people were also becoming upset about this on-going, difficult to resolve issue; this ultimately led to the decision being made to close the car park, fly tipping however remains a periodic issue in the car park entrance.</p> <p>The woodland remains an important amenity resource for local people; sitting within the National Forest and not far from it's "Heart", Woodcote links nicely into the wider public rights of way network.</p> <p>There is the potential for future partnership working with the National Forest Company in terms of access promotion and linking the property into the wider National Forest area.</p>
Factors Causing Change
Anti Social Behaviour in its many forms and mainly associated with the car park have led to a change in the form of abandoning our provision of car parking facilities. Should we ever feel that this issue has gone away then we will look at reopening the car park for public use.

Ash Die Back is prevalent in the woods and although lots of tree safety works have been tied in with the recent thinning operation on site, further change to public access may be necessary to ensure the safety of site visitors.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The site is deemed to be access category B, which translates to 5-15 people using one entrance per day. It is a regular place for people to visit and enjoy, and to that end we will provide a good standard of access with a well-maintained and safe path network, with regular safety monitoring. Entrances will be welcoming and clearly signed and there will be public information available on site.

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

To mow the 1.9km paths three times a year in May, July and September, this includes the open grassed area around the millennium feature.

To maintain the Woodland Trust "Welcome" signage at the main entrance, to be inspected and cleaned by the contractor three times annually.

To maintain the 5 existing pedestrian access points as part of the visits made by the contractor as described above.

All of the above to be included in the Estates Management Contract for the property.

Tree safety works will be carried out as and when necessary as highlighted by regular tree safety inspections.

4.2 f2 New Native Woodland

Description

Woodcote is native broadleaf plantation planted in 1997 and consisting of oak, ash and birch as the main tree species. Willow and alder are concentrated in wetter areas such as that north-west of the car park. The wood has recently been thinned so the trees are well spaced and the canopy is open with plenty of light hitting the woodland floor. As the thinning work has been carried out by a community woodland group, all of the brash has been stacked in habitat piles throughout the woodland and there is very little disturbance to the soils from machinery. The removal of ash trees has been prioritized over other species, but as a whole, ash have not been targeted for complete removal, allowing the trees that are left to set seed and hopefully produce more resilient ash of the future.

Significance

Woodcote is one of many new woodlands planted in and making up the National Forest area. Locally Woodcote is one of a number of woodland plantations which occupy a significant area to the south of Smisby village. The woodland contributes greatly to biodiversity in an area that consists predominantly of agricultural fields and which has seen and was scarred by significant mineral extraction in the past.

Opportunities & Constraints

Woodcote Wood forms an extension and buffer to small amounts of existing scrubby streamside woodland on Gilwiskaw Brook; Woodcote protects and extends on this wildlife corridor with the potential for colonization of both flora and fauna from this source. This is constrained to the south by the Ashby by-pass.

Woodcote sits within a wider block of woodland creation in the local area in what is otherwise predominantly agricultural fields to the south of Smisby; there may be further opportunities for partnership working with both the

National Forest Company and other local landowners pertaining to a range of management and promotional activities.

Factors Causing Change

Ash die back has severely affected the site as to be expected. As the ash grew faster than the oak, many of the oak became etiolated and mis-shapen. On top of that grey squirrels have damaged the leaders of a lot of the oak and birch on site. It is these badly shaped trees that the thinning has targeted but now that work is complete we will monitor the effects of squirrels on the woodland going forward.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To allow the woodland to develop into native high-forest with trees and shrubs of varying age classes and species types. The woodland will be subject to occasional interventions, as informed by periodic WCA's, but allowing natural processes to shape the wood as much as possible. Woodland Condition Assessments will inform management going into the future, interventions only taking place if highlighted as necessary by these assessments; the aim being to ensure the long term resilience of the woodland in perpetuity.

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

Monitor the woodland regularly to assess its health and well-being via the New-Native Woodland Key Feature observation. This should happen at least bi-annually tied in with an annual Grey Squirrel Activity and Impact Assessment in line with The National Forest Companys reccomendations. This will monitor the need for future control of this species should the need arise.

Silvicultural work on site will be limited to tree safety works along the path network and bisecting road.

Once in the plan period, just prior to the next management plan review, assess the woodland using a "Woodland Condition Assessment" the results of which will inform the next management plan review in 5 years' time.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2021	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	June
2021	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	August
2021	SL - Tree Safety Emergency Work	Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs	August
2021	AW - Management Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of management access infrastructure and tracks Such as repairs to vehicle entrance points, maintaining vehicle bridges and repairing / reinstating surfaced management access routes.	October
2022	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	August
2023	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	August
2024	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	August
2025	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	August

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	9.5	Ash	1997	Min-intervention		National Forest
<p>A 9.5 ha native woodland creation site planted in December 1997. Over 20% of this area remains unplanted and consists of a series of circular paths and a rough grassland area. A granite stone commemorating the Millennium is located within the grassland area alongside a bench. Trees were planted at 2250 stems per hectare with oak, ash, birch and cherry together with woody shrubs such as hazel and hawthorn. The paths were designed to provide circular routes within each part of the woodland, interlinking with each other, the entrances and the car park.</p> <p>The car park is prone to misuse, anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and the abandonment and burning out of stolen cars; because of these issues and the distress it was causing local people the car park was closed some years ago, though fly tipping in the car park entrance remains a periodic problem. The roadside hedge has also been reduced in height to allow clear views into the car park again to try and deter fly tipping and nuisance behaviour.</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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