

Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw Woods

(Plan period - 2024 to 2029)



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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GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw Woods

Location:	Cudham Grid reference: TQ440593 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 187
Area:	27.13 hectares (67.04 acres)
External Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Green Belt, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Tree Preservation Order
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw are two adjacent woods, covering 27.15 hectares, situated in the east-facing slopes in the attractive Downe Valley, within the North Downs National Landscape Area. Approximately 0.5 miles west from the village of Cudham in the London Borough of Bromley, close to the county boundary of Kent and Surrey and the M25. Blackbush Shaw is immediately bounded to the west by Restavon Park home and private properties with long gardens of the hamlet of Berry's Green. To the north of Blackbush Shaw and west of Twenty Acre Shaw lies open grassland, grazed primarily for conservation. To the east and south of Blackbush Shaw rises a west-facing wooded slope up to Cudham. Surrounding land use is predominately pasture or arable with pockets of woodland and the nearby Cherry Lodge golf-course. The Downe Valley is a dry chalk valley with thin soils varying from clay-with-flint deposits in the valley bottom, supporting chalk grasslands, to thin chalk on the higher slopes, a defining feature of the North Downs, where pockets of semi-natural ancient woodland remains.

Blackbush Shaw is a mixture of habitats: ancient woodland dominated by mature beech and ash with a hazel coppice understorey, regenerating secondary woodland, dominated by hawthorn, young ash, dogwood and field maple and a small proportion of chalk grassland. Twenty Acre Shaw is a mix of ancient and secondary woodland, again dominated by ash and beech although has a greater diversity of secondary canopy species compared to Blackbush Shaw. Species include yew, sycamore, field maple, wild cherry and oak, in the spring the woodland floor is abundant in ancient woodland flora – including bluebells, dog's mercury, wood anemone and yellow archangel. Along the wood's boundary there are notable veteran pollarded beech and ash trees. The area of Twenty Acre Shaw is designated as ancient woodland is part of the Downe Bank and High Elms Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), majority of which is owned by Kent Wildlife Trust, designated for woodland and chalk grassland.

Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw was acquired by the Trust in 3 main phases. The original area known historically as Blackbush Shaw (compartment 2a) was acquired first in 1997 with financial help from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Bromley Borough Council and numerous local people. Twenty Acre Shaw (compartment 1a) was bequeathed to the Trust in 2002, and compartment 3a and most of 3b were acquired in 2006 with financial help from the Heritage Lottery Fund and donations from local people. A thin strip of land over part of the public footpath in compartment 2a was purchased in 2007 to make access through the site more consistent.

Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw provides a valuable area for public recreation and local wildlife whilst becoming an important feature in the local landscape for habitat and conservation value. Local residents make up the regular users for of Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw using the woodlands well connected footpaths and Pubic Rights of Way through the sites, walking from Cudham Village, Berry's Green and adjacent caravan park. Cudham Environmental Activities Centre adjacent to Blackbush Shaw often plan site visits to the site with groups of children which visit the centre, around 2000 children visit the centre annually both local and inner London groups.

Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw form an integral part of the Cudham Valley where Darwin carried out many studies on plants and animals as he investigated the driving force behind his theories of evolution and natural selection. These two woodlands form part of a wildlife corridor of woodland and grassland stretching from the southern fringe of Orpington, south to the Kent Downs National Landscape Area. The woodland features such as woodbanks, coppiced and pollard trees of Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw, would have been veteran in Darwin's time and part of the scenery with which he was familiar. It is a landscape which has changed with economic circumstances as arable or pastoral farming became more or less important. However, although the woodland, scrub, and grassland which

make up Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw have increased or decreased in size as circumstances have changed, they have remained constant features in the changing landscape which Darwin observed during the forty years he lived at Downe House.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intentions for Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw are focused on retaining and where possible improving woodland and grassland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland.

Over time, the mature trees will decline to form veteran trees or collapse opening up gaps in the canopy for other species (e.g. beech and sycamore) to fill and increase the decaying wood habitat. The impact of ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) will result in the overall decline and death of ash trees, which currently account for approximately 35% of the overall woodland canopy. Crown dieback, tree death and increased windblow, will create further gaps in the canopy for other species such as sycamore, beech and woody shrubs to take advantage of, increasing the structural diversity of the wood. The long established secondary woodland area in Twenty Acre Shaw (cpt 1a) will continue to develop and eventually be as rich as the adjoining ancient woodland area. The dieback of ash will lead to greater structural diversity in the area of Twenty Acre Shaw designated as a SSSI, which will enhance its favourability for biodiversity. The regenerating secondary woodland adjoining Blackbush Shaw (subcpt 3a) will evolve through the current hawthorn scrub habitat as it transitions and will gradually become less distinctive from the adjoining woodland as tree, shrub and ground flora species colonise. The grassland (subcpt 3b) will continue to be maintained as open space through appropriate scrub management, enhancing the chalk grassland community.

On-going monitoring and maintenance will ensure the wood remains a safe wood to visit, with infrastructure appropriate for the wood's relatively low visitor number i.e. those from neighbouring villages.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 F1 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Ancient woodland within Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw comprises all of compartment 2 (historic part of Blackbush Shaw) and half of compartment 1a (Twenty Acre Shaw), the remainder being long established secondary woodland and included under this Key Feature. Part of the ancient woodland in compartment 1a is within a SSSI, designated for its biodiversity value and character within the North Downs landscape. In 2008, when the SSSI unit was last surveyed, the woodland was classified as being in a recovering unfavourable condition due to its decrease in bird assemblage compared to when it was first designated. However, Natural England determines the overall woodland block to be in a favourable condition due to an increase in structural diversity immediately adjoining the SSSI.

Both woods are a mix of native broadleaf species, dominated primarily by mature beech and ash with occasional sycamore. Ash is most prevalent in the southern part to the wood accounting for approximately 35% of the overall canopy, and 50% of the canopy in Blackbush Shaw with a few Scots Pine (<1%) present in the southern part of 2a. Beech dominates the northern area of Blackbush Shaw and is the most frequent canopy tree in Twenty Acre Shaw despite the Shaw's increased diversity within the canopy and understorey. Secondary canopy species in Twenty Acre Shaw include Douglas fir (<1%), oak, wild cherry, whitebeam and wayfaring tree. Meanwhile hawthorn, field maple, holly, dogwood, hazel, spindle, yew, guelder rose and alder form a sub-canopy – most abundant in Twenty Acre Shaw, and woodland edge around the grassland areas in Blackbush Shaw. The wood approximates to National Vegetation Classification (NVC) W12a beech -dogs mercury. There are numerous veteran trees in both woods, particularly beech and ash pollards.

Ash dieback is prevalent throughout the wood and when initially surveyed in 2018 ash trees varied from showing no signs of the disease on a handful of trees to an increasing levels of advanced decline in the younger trees and those in the southern end of Blackbush Shaw around the open areas. Plan period 2019-2024 saw operations removing dangerous ash trees within tree safety zones especially along zone B. During this period, majority of the ash trees on site showed signs of ash dieback with a reduction in 70% of the ash trees overall canopy.

An Herbivore Impact Assessment was undertaken in May 2023 to determine the level of impact on the ground flora and tree regeneration from herbivores present on site. The report concluded overall habitat impact as high and very high due to a high population of resident Fallow Deer.

Due to the very high levels of herbivore impact within Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw the woodland has suffered greatly, impacting basal shoots, epicormic and lower shoot, seedlings and saplings, sward, preferentially browsed species, ground disturbance, bark stripping and stem breakage. During the report Fallow deer were encountered regularly and in significant numbers. Despite regular recreational use by visitors and dog walkers, they seemed relatively habituated to disturbance.

Herbivore impact has significantly changed the woodland structure and diversity within Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw.

This impact has happened within the last five years, it has been noted that the Fallow deer numbers on site undertook a huge population increase since 2019 and continues to grow. High levels of herbivore impact have resulted in low to non-existent levels of regeneration surviving for both tree and shrub species. The woodland has also suffered from ash dieback with previous operations targeting the removal of dead and dying ash from along path and boundary edges on site. The removal of individual ash trees and significant areas of ash woodland impacted by ash dieback with thinning crowns hasn't resulted in a developing understory due to the high herbivore impact of deer.

Woodland flora is dominated in this woodland type by bluebells and dog's mercury, alongside lords and ladies, garlic mustard, common dog violet, cleavers, herb Robert, cow parsley, ferns, nettle, primrose, slender St John's wort, lesser celandine, wood speedwell, wood spurge, creeping buttercup, yellow archangel, wood anemone and toothwort – many species typically associated with ancient woodland.

Invasive Non-Native Species such as small balsam and cherry laurel has been identified within compartment 1a.

Significance

Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw is situated in London's Green Belt within the North Downs National Landscape Area. London Borough of Bromley is London's largest, greenest and most heavily wooded Borough. Bromley is within the three Outer London Boroughs which contain more than half of the total area of Green Belt within Greater London. Over 97% of London's Ancient Woodland can be found in the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land. Bromley is also within the six Outer London Boroughs which 80% of London's Ancient Woodland can be found.

Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw is one of Bromley's 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation'. Blackbush Shaw lies within close proximity to Cudham Conservation Areas and Archaeological Priority Areas. Twenty Acre Shaw sits within the Downe Bank and High Elms Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which comprises ancient woodland and chalk grassland and connects part of the wider landscape of Hangrove, Rough Pell and Downe Bank nature reserve, where Charles Darwin carried out fundamental scientific studies. Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw connects part of a very fragmented landscape of ancient woodland within the wider landscape.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

- Poor management access
- Uneven Terrain
- Management access separate between woodlands

Factors Causing Change

Decline of ash due to ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)
High herbivore impact on the ground flora and understory from Fallow deer
Invasive non-native species, small balsam and cherry laurel

Long term Objective (50 years+)

In 50 years' time Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw will be managed to increase the wood's resilience to pests and diseases and to maximise the wood's biodiversity. Blackbush and Twenty Acre Shaw's understorey will fully develop, herbivore impact will be reduced to 'low' within the herbivore impact assessment and Invasive non-native species will be eradicated from site. The abundance of sycamore, semi-mature beech, wild cherry and oak may increase and the understorey will become more diverse with species such as hazel, blackthorn and hawthorn, as will the overall structure of the wood (enhancing the condition of the SSSI) as ash and mature beech trees decline. Much of the accumulated decaying wood from dying ash will have disappeared however opportunistic interventions to create decaying wood will provide an important habitat for invertebrates and fungi, which will in turn support the development of a healthy woodland ecosystem. The boundaries between the secondary woodland and the ancient woodland will become indistinguishable.

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

During the plan period (2024-2029), management will be undertaken to control invasive non-native species, small balsam, cherry laurel and box hedge honeysuckle. The decline of ash trees will be monitored and selectively felled where posing a risk to site visitors, neighbouring properties and roads. Deer control will be undertaken to mitigate the herbivore impact within Blackbush and Twenty Acre Shaw.

- Small Balsam will be cut and hand pulled, beginning 2024 with on-going monitoring and hand pulling.
- Laurel (less than 0.05ha) will be cut and uprooted where possible, beginning 2024 with on-going monitoring and hand pulling.
- Deer Management Plan for 2024 – 2029 will be implemented, by an annual cull taking place targeting Fallow does. High seat infrastructure to be positioned in 2024.
- Deer impacts will be monitored annually through a Herbivore Impact Assessment Lite assisted by drone thermal surveys when deemed necessary. In addition 2.no small fenced deer enclosure plots to be installed in 2024. The deer population should not be impacting on coppice regrowth, natural regeneration or ground flora as determined by a Herbivore Impact Assessment by the end of the plan period. A full HIA is next due 2029.
- Litter picking and waste removal from woodland floor 2024 and 2025.
- Alongside road and property boundaries (tree safety Zone A, approximately 570m) ash trees with canopy dieback greater than 50% will be felled. Work will begin in 2025 and be ongoing throughout the plan period.
- 5-yearly formal woodland condition assessment to be undertaken in 2028 to inform the next management plan review. Assessments will cover the range of threats outlined in factors causing change above.

4.2 F2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

The secondary woodland in compartment 3a (6ha) buffers the adjacent ancient woodland of Blackbush Shaw to the west, extending the core area of woodland and connecting Blackbush Shaw to woodland on the west-facing slide of the valley.

The area was acquired by the Woodland Trust in 2006, having been previously farmed for turf. The area has since been left to naturally colonise with trees and now shows visible distinctions between different areas of succession. The east

<p>side is predominantly hawthorn with some field maple and blackthorn and very young ash. Further west the area gradually becomes dominated by ash with an understory of hawthorn. Ground flora remains dominated by grass species with clover, mosses, hairy St John's wort, cow parsley, forget-me-not, vetch species, ground ivy, buttercup species and wild rose. The diversity of ground flora noticeably increases in clearings with overall canopy cover at approximately 80%.</p>
<p>Significance</p> <p>The naturally arising secondary woodland has increased the site's overall structure and resilience to threats such as ash dieback and climate change. It connects Blackbush Shaw to neighbouring woodland on the opposite side of the valley, increasing the core area of woodland as well as extending the habitat overall. The scrub element is a valuable woodland edge habitat providing a rich ecotone between the mature woodland and chalk grassland. Unlike planted secondary woodland, the natural secondary woodland has been allowed to colonise the former agricultural land with minimal input and management with all establishing species being native and adapted to the site.</p>
<p>Opportunities & Constraints</p> <p>Constraints: - poor management access</p>
<p>Factors Causing Change</p> <p>Decline of ash due to ash dieback (<i>Hymenoscyphus fraxineus</i>) High herbivore impact on ground flora and understory from Fallow deer</p>
<p>Long term Objective (50 years+)</p> <p>In 50 years' time this area of secondary woodland will be maintained and enhanced to increase the site's overall resilience to pests and diseases and maximise the site's biodiversity. Species abundance and structural diversity will increase with the development of an understory, sycamore, hazel and dogwood will regenerate within the woodland as ash trees decline and hawthorn is coppiced. Much of the accumulated decaying wood from dying ash will have disappeared however ongoing small scale thinning work of the secondary woodland plus opportunistic interventions to create decaying wood will provide an important habitat for invertebrates and fungi, which will in turn support the development of a healthy woodland ecosystem. Herbivore impact will be reduced to 'low' within the herbivore impact assessment and Invasive non-native species will be eradicated from site. Over time, tree species, such as beech and sycamore, colonising from the neighbouring ancient woodland, will form the canopy over a diverse understorey. Ancient woodland ground flora will also have the opportunity to colonise the woodland and in the very long term the boundaries between the secondary woodland and the ancient woodland will begin to become indistinguishable, as with Twenty Acre Shaw.</p>
<p>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</p> <p>The woodland will continue to develop naturally with small amounts of selective coppicing aimed at diversifying the monoculture hawthorn by encouraging natural regeneration of site native broadleaves which will be heavy protected from deer browsing by pilling up the arisings around each coupe.</p> <p>- Deer Management Plan for 2024 – 2029 will be implemented, by an annual cull taking place targeting Fallow does.</p>

High seat infrastructure to be positioned in 2024.

- Deer impacts will be monitored annually through a Herbivore Impact Assessment Lite assisted by drone thermal surveys when deemed necessary. In addition 2.no small fenced deer enclosure plots to be installed in 2024. The deer population should not be impacting on coppice regrowth, natural regeneration or ground flora as determined by a Herbivore Impact Assessment by the end of the plan period. A full HIA is next due 2029.
- Litter picking and waste removal from woodland floor 2024 and 2025.
- Selective coppicing of Hawthorn, three coppice coupes (<0.1) hectares average perimeter of 120 metres will be cut in consecutive years starting from 2027.
- Tree safety zones A & B will continue to be monitored, ash trees alongside paths and roadside will be selectively felled if canopy dieback greater than 50%.
- 5-yearly formal woodland condition assessment to be undertaken in 2028 to inform the next management plan review. Assessments will cover cover the range of threats outlined in factors causing change above.

4.3 F3 Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat

Description

There are two chalk grassland areas at this site (subcpts 2b and 3b). The smaller, more established area (subcpt 2b) is a 0.4ha clearing toward the top of the valley slope within Blackbush Shaw. The scrub surrounding this area has been managed by coppicing on a short rotation to increase structural diversity. The area is particularly species-rich and throughout the spring and summer there are stunning displays of wildflowers such as primrose and cowslip which are present in high numbers. There are also 6 species of orchid recorded, including over 40 bee orchids recorded in 2011.

Subcpt 3b (2.98ha) was acquired by the WT in 2006 and was previously managed for turf production. It is the northern section of the field that has succeeded to secondary woodland (see KF2). The area is still dominated by grass species, although some flowering plants such as common milkwort and fairy flax have been recorded on the higher slope. Other species include common vetch, bird's foot trefoil, common speedwell, common sedge and common ragwort. The habitat approximates to National Vegetation Classification (NVC) type of CG2/3, dominated by sheep's fescue (*Festuca ovina*) or upright/meadow brome (*Bromus erectus*). A further survey is needed to fully determine the community.

Both areas have been managed by a mix of sheep grazing, hay-cutting and scrub clearance since 2006.

Significance

Chalk grassland is a key habitat listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Chalk grassland supports an extremely diverse and unique range of plant and invertebrate species and is one of the richest habitats found in the UK. Besides its biological importance chalk grassland is also an important landscape feature as well as of cultural and historical importance, especially as Blackbush Shaw is located within the North Downs. The species rich grassland is an excellent educational resource for children from the Environmental Activities Centre next door to Blackbush Shaw, as well as others.

Kentish Milkwort (*Polygala amara* ssp *austriaca*) was once present within the upper meadow within Blackbush Shaw, it is one of Britain's rarest plants, it is a nationally rare Red Data Book species, with in 1997 only 100 plants known to exist. The plant has not been recorded on site for many years and is now extremely rare and can only be found in two

native sites within the country.
Opportunities & Constraints
<p>Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - poor management access - small area for grazing management - Limited / no access to water for grazing animals
Factors Causing Change
<p>Scrub encroachment Invasive species (e.g. ragwort) High herbivore impact on the ground flora by Fallow deer</p>
Long term Objective (50 years+)
<p>The chalk grassland will be maintained at its current size, approximately 3ha, including a scrub edge of up to 20% of total area around the grassland edge. Key indicator species for this habitat should be present including pyramidal orchid, wild marjoram, cowslip, chalk milkwort and yellow wort, dominated by sheep's fescue (<i>Festuca ovina</i>) or upright/meadow brome (<i>Bromus erectus</i>).</p> <p>Management options will include grazing, hay cutting in late summer after flowering and manual or mechanical scrub cutting.</p>
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
<p>To establish a grazing and a cut and collect regime in both grassland areas, maintaining approximately 20% scrub and 80% of grassland on all 3.31ha.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In subcpt 3b, a hay cut and collect in Aug/Sept will be undertaken annually. - In subcpt 3b, stock fencing will be repaired with grazing being re-introduced. Replacement of rotten posts with retention of wire to existing stock fencing. Stock Fencing will be modified slightly due to dying ash trees on the boundary which will damage the fence. Fence boundary will be moved in on the western border by 20 metres and moved out on the eastern boundary by 5 metres in 2025. - In subcpt 3b, grazing will occur annually periodically between September - March. - In subcpt 2b, a cut and collect in Aug/Sept will be undertaken annually. - In subcpt 2b, stock fencing will be renewed with grazing being re-introduced. Installation of 312 meters of stock fencing in 2025. - In subcpt 2b, small areas will be managed annually for bare ground through scarification taking place in autumn to develop the chalk grassland further, for the potential of returning wildflower species once present within the meadow such as Kentish Milkwort. - In subcpt 2b, grazing will occur annually periodically between September - March.

4.4 F4 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description
<p>Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw is a WT category B site (moderate usage site where paths are maintained). The site is situated close to the village of Cudham, the hamlets of Single Street and Berry's Green, the Cudham Environmental Activities Centre and a mobile home park. Twenty Acre Shaw is adjacent to Single Street and Berry's Green and also near the village of Downe and Down House, which is managed by English Heritage. The nearest town, Biggin Hill is 2 miles from the site and has a population of approximately 10,000.</p> <p>Two public rights of way (PROW) pass through the woods which link them to the surrounding countryside and to Cudham, where there is a public car park within Cudham Recreation ground. In addition to PROW, Blackbush Shaw is well serviced by internal permissive paths; these are more limited at Twenty Acre Shaw. The waymarked Cudham Circular Walk runs through Twenty Acre Shaw, a 7.5miles walk taking in the countryside between Cudham, Luxted, Downe and Hazelwood.</p> <p>A number of historical associations exist with Charles Darwin who lived locally at Downe House and is known to have visited the area of the wood. Cudham Environmental Activities Centre is adjacent to the southern boundary of Blackbush Shaw and school groups from there regularly use the site for educational purposes.</p>
Significance
<p>Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw provides an extensive area for quiet, informal recreation in an area of high scenic value which is appreciated by many visitors, especially given its proximity to the London and the M25, giving people the opportunity to visit ancient woodlands and open countryside in a busy part of the country.</p> <p>The area has been designated as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt and as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation for the London Borough of Bromley and within the North Downs National Landscape Area. Twenty Acre Shaw sits within the Downe Bank and High Elms Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which connects to the wider landscape of Hangrove, Rough Pell and Downe Bank nature reserve, where Charles Darwin carried out fundamental scientific studies.</p> <p>Blackbush Shaw and Twenty Acre Shaw are well connected to the wider landscape as both woodlands have Public Rights of Way which runs through the woodlands, running east to west. Due to this both woodlands are easily accessible from Cudham Village.</p> <p>The 12km waymarked Cudham Circular Walk runs through Twenty Acre Shaw and links to the wider landscape.</p> <p>Public access to Blackbush & Twenty Acre Shaw helps fulfil one of the Woodland Trust's key objectives; to inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees.</p>
Opportunities & Constraints
<p>Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- No availability for people to walk between the two woodlands, because of legal constraints surrounding ownership/management of the southern stretch of Twenty Acre Shaw

- Access. there is no car-parking at or next to the site. The nearest public car-park is located at Cudham Recreation Ground.
- The small size of these woodlands limits the expansion or development of further public access facilities or increased visitor numbers

Opportunities:

- The consistent level of regular visitors to this wood offers opportunity for positive community engagement.

Factors Causing Change

Antisocial behaviour
Fly-tipping and garden waste

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The site will continue to provide low key public access, mainly for visitors from the immediate surrounding area. There will be a safe, maintained network of paths throughout the site with appropriate entrance infrastructure. The site will continue to have regular daily visitors but with no anticipated major increase in numbers.

The site will continue to be an asset for the neighbouring Cudham Activities Centre

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

Low key public access will be maintained over the plan period by regular maintenance and safety inspections, appropriate for the numbers of visitors.

- Approximately 3.15km of path and entrances will be maintained annually to allow continued access across the site. This will include strimming path edges and entrances, and appropriate tree safety work identified by Zone B safety inspections.
- Entrance infrastructure and signage will be monitored and refreshed when appropriate .
- Broken fencing along the southern boundary with Restavon Park will be replaced with appropriate fencing in 2025.
- Interpretation panel will be replaced near the Restavon Park western entrance in 2025
- Pathway along the eastern edge which borders the grassland in cpt.3b will be modified. Stock fencing of the grassland will be extended to the woodland border, a kissing gate will be installed for access and the pathway will lead through the middle of the grassland connecting the two kissing gates along the PROW in 2025.
- 2 Ladder board/ Pedestrian arrival sign along Newbarn Lane, vehicle access point will be replaced 2026.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2024	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	October
2024	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2024	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	December
2025	LC - Initial Site Clearance	Works associated with the clearance/removal of site debris / rubbish	February
2024	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	March
2025	AW - Visitor Access Infrastructure	Works associated with the construction of a new or extension to existing car parking facilities.	June
2025	AW - Visitor Access Infrastructure	Works associated with the construction of a new or extension to existing car parking facilities.	July
2025	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	August
2025	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	August
2024	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	September
2025	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	September
2025	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone B	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside routes such as paths and rides within the woodland	September

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2025	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	October
2025	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	October
2025	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	October
2026	PE - Interpretation & Signage	Works associated with the provision of visitor signage, waymarking, interpretation features and leaflets	August
2026	PE - Interpretation & Signage	Works associated with the provision of visitor signage, waymarking, interpretation features and leaflets	August
2026	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	August
2026	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	August
2026	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone B	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside routes such as paths and rides within the woodland	September
2026	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	September
2026	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	October
2027	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	March
2027	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	August
2027	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	August

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2027	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	September
2027	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	October
2027	WMM - Coppice Management	Works associated with the management of coppice areas – such as coppicing, maintenance of protective fencing, etc	October
2027	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside areas such as car parks, roadsides and boundaries	November
2028	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	March
2028	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	August
2028	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	August
2028	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	September
2028	WMM - Coppice Management	Works associated with the management of coppice areas – such as coppicing, maintenance of protective fencing, etc	October
2028	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	October
2029	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	March
2029	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	August
2029	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	August

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2029	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	September

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	8.29	Oak (pedunculate)		Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Green Belt, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Tree Preservation Order
<p>This compartment is known as Twenty Acre Shaw. The upper, western section is a plateau supporting mixed broadleaf high forest comprising of ash, oak, sycamore, beech with the occasional conifer – yew and Douglas fir (5 trees). There are also a few small patches of laurel. The rest of the compartment runs along a valley side, where the upper slopes are ancient woodland with rich woodland specialist flora (dominated by dogs mercury and bluebells along with speedwell, anemone, toothwort, yellow archangel, dog violet, nettles, primrose, lords and ladies, wood spurge, cow parsley, butter cup and lesser celandine), overstood ash coppice, large veteran beech pollards with an understory of yew, ash, sycamore, field maple, and cherry. The lower slopes are dominated by ash and sycamore, with occasional beech and hawthorn, holly and spindle adding to the understorey. The north-east part of this compartment is part of the Downe Bank and High Elms SSSI, designated for woodland and chalk grassland.</p>						
2a	9.54	Ash		Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access to the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Green Belt, Tree Preservation Order
<p>Compartment 2a is ancient woodland and runs along the top of the western side of the valley with Berry's Hill to the north and Cudham Environmental Centre to the south. The canopy is dominated by ash in the south, with beech and sycamore becoming more common towards the northern end of the compartment, with the occasional Whitebeam, cherry and goat willow. The understory is hawthorn, hazel, field maple, wayfaring tree, dogwood, alder, holly, guelder rose and yew. There are a number of veteran beech trees throughout this compartment and a small patch of laurel. The ground flora is dominated by bluebells under beech and dogs mercury under ash. Other flora includes: lords and ladies, garlic mustard, dog violet, cleavers, herb Robert, cow parsley, fern, nettle, primroses john's wort spp, and lesser celandine. Standing and fallen dead wood is occasional across the compartment.</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
2b	0.33	Open ground		Non-wood habitat	No/poor vehicular access to the site	County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Green Belt
<p>Compartment 2 contains an established small area of chalk grassland, on an east facing slope, which is rich in specialist species. Species include milkwort, primrose, cowslips, surge, bindweed, common dog violet, mouse-ear, bird's foot trefoil, clover, hairy St John's wort and a number of orchids (bee, pyramid, common spotted).</p>						
3a	6.01	Hawthorn species	1998	Coppice		Green Belt
<p>Former agricultural land now reverting to woodland through natural regeneration. The area was last used for agriculture in 1998 when it was farmed for turf. The main species are ash and hawthorn but there is also field maple, dog wood, sycamore and some oak. Despite the history of land use the grassland still retains patches of floristic interest including pyramidal and common-spotted orchid, noticeably more diverse in the clearings.</p>						
3b	2.98	Open ground		Non-wood habitat		
<p>This large area of open space in the valley is developing into chalk grassland. It was acquired as part of the 2006 acquisition, and was previously cut for turf. Since it been managed as chalk grassland through sheep grazing and hay cuts and is still predominantly grassland, although some species such as common milkwort and fairy flax have been recorded on the higher slope. Other species include common vetch, bird's foot trefoil, common speedwell and common sedge.</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.

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