

Heather Wood

(Plan period – 2025 to 2030)



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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Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Heather Wood

Location:	Hawkhurst Grid reference: TQ 76481 28883 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 0
Area:	38.07 hectares (94.07 acres)
External Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Tree Preservation Order
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The Woodland Trust acquired Heather Wood in September 2022, following generous support from major donors. At that time the site consisted of 34.03ha of intensively farmed arable fields and 4.01ha of fragmented ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) split in to eight small woodlands of varying sizes. Crossing the site were remnant mature hedgerows that partially linked areas of ASNW and subdivided arable fields.

The surrounding area is typical of the High Weald National Landscape in which Heather Wood is located – a patchwork of agricultural fields in rolling hills, with areas of ancient woodland, interconnecting hedgerows, waterways and ancient routeways. Prior to acquisition habitat connectivity at Heather Wood suffered as agricultural use intensified, with loss of hedgerows and some coverage of ASNW.

The eight areas of ASNW are situated on the wetter areas of the site, specifically around six ponds and alongside the stream that forms the south-eastern boundary. Some of this ASNW, towards the south of the site, has a special character typical of the gill woodland found in the High Weald, with steeply sided wooded valleys and a unique micro-climate and associated habitat.

The Woodland Trust carried out a design and consultation process by holding two public Pathfinder Events in March 2023 and February 2024 to form an agreed design for the site with key Stakeholder organisations and local members of the public. This management plan provides the detail for how the site will be developed.

The ex-arable fields will be developed into secondary woodland and open space habitat with the majority of the secondary woodland being situated in the southern or lower elevated part of the site, so blending in to the High Weald landscape and creating connectivity between currently fragmented areas of ASNW; the open space habitat is situated in the northern higher elevated part of the site. The secondary woodland will be established by a combination of natural colonisation and tree planting through public and corporate planting events in early 2025. Both Woodland Creation Planning Grant (WCPG) and English Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) were successfully applied for in 2024.

The site is accessed from three entrances off of Stream Lane and two further access points at either end of the Sussex Border Path, a restricted byway which crosses the site from north to south. Since acquisition a new network of permissive paths have been designed around the site linking up to these various entrance points enabling visitors to see the different habitats on site as they are developed.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

In fifty years' time, Heather Wood will be a diverse and resilient site that sits comfortably in the wider High Weald landscape. The secondary woodland areas, created by a mixture of planting and natural colonisation, will blend with and buffer existing ASNW. The new woodland will extend northwards up through the site, with connectivity re-established between the gill woodland of Hungershole Wood to the south and remnant areas of ASNW that survived through the central areas of Heather Wood. The secondary woodland will broadly reflect the composition of the ASNW, with the canopy dominated by oak and hornbeam, frequent shrubs that include hazel, field maple and hawthorn, and significant patches of open ground.

Management across ASNW compartments will have been reestablished, with a sensitive cyclical coppice regime in place. The intention will have been to periodically open the canopy, providing light to ground flora and improving structural diversity across the ASNW. Some ASNW areas will also have been left to natural processes. Light will have been periodically introduced to the six ponds as a result of the coppicing, improving health of aquatic life and the opportunity for the development of marginal vegetation on the pond edges. Mature standard trees will have been retained and future standards (oak and hornbeam) recruited and favoured. Secondary woodland will also be well managed, predominantly along ride edges with a cyclical coppice regime to maintain internal open space habitat within the woodland and benefit visitor access. We will also see the introduction of selective thinning, breaking up single species planting groups by re-spacing to create more open space, remove herbivore damaged trees and improve the form of retained trees. All management, across both ASNW and secondary areas, will seek to address a historic lack of deadwood habitat at Heather Wood with arisings stacked and retained in significant quantities.

Turkey oak will have been eliminated from the site, through the felling of mature specimens and the removal of any re-colonisation. It is expected that ash will not be a significant component of the woodland, having been removed from higher risk areas (roadsides, boundaries and path edges) as condition declined. Ash will have been retained where appropriate in ASNW areas and given the best possible hope of survival.

The open habitat fields on the northern side of the site will be diverse, with a combination of open ground, a variety of sward heights, scrub and in-field trees. Both existing hedgerows and newly planted hedges will provide connectivity across the site, acting as corridors for movement of wildlife and habitats in their own right for invertebrates, birds and small mammals. These fields will have established public access routes, with visitors enjoying the contrast of open space against secondary woodland areas. Management will be established, most likely by a combination of low intensity grazing and mechanical cutting, to maintain this diverse structure and prevent the undue dominance of any one habitat type or noxious weeds.

Heather Wood will be well visited by local people, providing an opportunity for informal recreation and to experience all that Heather Wood has to offer. Access will be on foot across a well established permissive path network, maintained by regular mowing of unsurfaced rides.

The monitoring of herbivore impact (deer, rabbits and squirrels) will be long established and effective control will be in place to prevent browsing and to favour natural colonisation in open areas. Features of archaeological or historic interest will be free of trees and periodically managed by mowing to retain as open space within secondary woodland.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description
<p>The ASNW that forms compartments 4a, 4b and 4c (4.01ha in total) are remnants of a previously more significant woodland area, that has been lost and fragmented over time due to agricultural intensification. A key driver of the acquisition and subsequent design has been to prevent further loss and buffer these remnants, restoring habitat connectivity across the site. Ponds and spring lines are a key feature of all ASNW compartments, giving rise to some distinctive wet woodland and species mix. The canopy is dominated by broadleaved standards of oak, hornbeam and ash, with a mainly coppice understory of hazel, field maple, hawthorn, willow and alder, along with holly and blackthorn. The coppice was last cut between 2010 and 2015 all at the same time in one operation. The ground flora is typical of this woodland type, with bluebell, wood anemone, ramsons, yellow archangel, dogs' mercury and pendulous sedge. Deadwood habitat is somewhat lacking, both on the ground and standing. Ash dieback (ADB) is evident in all ASNW areas, but is not a major component of the canopy or understory, except areas closer to the Stream Lane boundary.</p>
Significance
<p>ASNW is a priority for the Woodland Trust as it is one of our most diverse and irreplaceable habitats yet covers just 2.5% of the UK's land area. But, as a proportion of the total habitat at Heather Wood, they are under represented and fragmented due to agricultural practices. Around 10% of Heather Wood is ASNW, compared to 25% across the High Weald National Landscape. Therefore it is of particular importance to prevent any further loss, create connectivity between remnants and increase the overall footprint of woodland, which will act to buffer what remains.</p>
Opportunities & Constraints
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To link remaining areas of ASNW and connect and buffer them with new woodland.- To improve stores of both fallen and standing deadwood.- To benefit from the existing seed source to drive natural colonisation against ASNW edges.- To demonstrate sensitive continued management of ANSW areas, to periodically open the canopy and improve structural diversity, to benefit ground flora, birds, small mammals and emergent marginal pond vegetation. <p>Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Browsing by deer within ASNW may hinder natural regeneration.- Presence of badger setts within ASNW may limit options for management.
Factors Causing Change

- Public access. There is potential for visitor numbers to increase over time, with the possibility of increased footfall by people and dogs having an impact on ground flora and soils.
- Tree diseases and climate change. ADB will continue to have an impact (but will contribute to stores of deadwood); drought stress, and increased storm frequency and severity, has the potential to impact tree health and increase damage.
- Non-natives. Turkey oak, present both within and outside of ASNW areas, has the potential to negatively impact colonisation rates by pedunculate oak.
- Browsing by mammals. Deer (roe and muntjac), rabbits and squirrels all have an impact on site, with the potential to limit regeneration in ASNW. The creation of significant areas of new woodland adjacent to ASNW has the potential to draw in fallow deer from the wider High Weald landscape.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

- To have a healthy, resilient and structurally diverse woodland, sensitively managed by coppicing where appropriate, with a developing amount of both standing and fallen deadwood.
- Where intervention is minimal, to leave mature trees to decline and collapse, contributing to deadwood habitat and allowing natural regeneration to take place.
- Mature and veteran trees will be retained and HALO'd to prevent shading, with new standards identified and recruited to create the new generation of veterans.
- Regeneration, both from coppice stools and seed, is strong and browsing by mammals is limited.
- Ground flora will continue to be diverse and indicative of ancient woodland.

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

- Turkey oak growing either within or close to all ASNW areas identified and removed. Sixteen trees to be felled by winter 2025/26.
- Summertime surveys of ash, with the likelihood that all ash (0.55ha total) will be removed from Stream Lane roadside, around entrance points and from within vicinity of overhead power lines that cross the site by winter 2026/27.
- Sensitive coppice regime reinstated in compartments 4a and 4c. Up to 0.25ha annually across two compartments combined.
- Veteran trees will be surveyed, recorded and added to the ancient woodland inventory in 2027.
- Haloing of two mature or future standard trees within each of compartments 4a, 4b and 4c during winters of 2026/27 and 2027/28.
- Annual HIA lite surveys at established locations in ASNW areas to monitor impact of deer, rabbits and squirrels.
- 5-yearly formal woodland condition assessment to be undertaken in 2029 to inform next management plan review.

4.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

The secondary woodland at Heather Wood is due to be created during late winter 2024/25, through a combination of planting and natural colonisation. Planting is across compartments 1, 2 and 3, with a significant element of natural colonisation and scrub against hedgerows and existing ASNW, with the intention to link up fragmented and disconnected areas of habitat. The total secondary woodland area extends to approximately 14.6ha, around 20% of

which is natural colonisation. The species composition of the planting areas broadly reflects that of the surrounding ASNW as a native broadleaved and woody shrub mix, selected to be in keeping with these areas and the wider landscape so that they are suitable for local conditions, with mainly broadleaved canopy species of oak, hornbeam, and to a lesser extent cherry, downy birch, rowan, aspen and small leaved lime. The shrub layer is composed of hazel, field maple, hawthorn, willow (self-seeded in) and alder, along with holly and blackthorn. Total number of trees planted is approximately 18000.

Planting across canopy areas is at a density of 1600 stems per hectare in compartments 1 and 2, and at 2000 stems per hectare in compartment 3. The planting is along sinuous rows, at variable spacing, to both reduce visual impact and to facilitate any future mechanical weed control through inter-row mowing, and using straw mulch around each tree/shrub position to suppress and control weeds, and so helping to reduce pesticide usage. The planting is in single species groups of 15 – 30 stems for canopy species, with shrub species in smaller group sizes.

All secondary woodland areas, whether planting or natural colonisation, have a form of protection (or combination of methods) to prevent herbivore browsing. Compartments 1 and 2, which have high visibility in the landscape, are stock and rabbit fenced, with Trico (herbivore repellent) treatment planned on a biennial basis for years 1-4 post planting to deter browsing by deer. Compartment 3, which has the majority of the new natural colonisation areas at its periphery, is deer fenced (with rabbit net attached). The decision to deer fence this compartment was taken in conjunction with the Forestry Commission, as it is the largest new woodland area with most trees, and has the ability to better conceal deer fencing in the landscape. Following data and observations from herbivore impact assessments, there is control of deer numbers planned across secondary woodland areas in anticipation of increased browsing as trees are established. Within all three secondary woodland compartments are significant areas of open space: unplanted areas of historic interest in compartment 3, to be kept free of trees by periodic mowing; and, within all three compartments, approximately fifteen 25m² random areas unplanted within the matrix. The historic areas are individually fenced to define and buffer them. The largest, to the west of compartment 3, is believed to have been a bloomery site (iron production) and contains significant slag deposits. The two smaller historic areas in compartment 3 are deemed to have been the location of pre-historic round houses. In addition, the woodland design has allowed for significant open space at path edges, with a 10m wide grassy strip forming the public path network, alongside which will be three rows of planting by shrubs only before canopy planting begins. This path network will form part of the regular estate management contract (EMC), with the intention that it will be variable in height and mown on a rotation, to give a variety of sward heights along the path network.

Significance

'Create' is a core strand of the Woodland Trust strategy, with the intention of creating quality native woodlands. This 14.6ha of secondary woodland is a small but nonetheless significant contribution to our national strategy. More locally, this new woodland will address historic losses due to agricultural activity and will link and protect remaining ASNW, improving the resilience of what remains and creating habitat for a range of flora and fauna.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

- Contribute data regarding efficacy of Trico deer repellent as a method of protecting newly established trees, as part of WT trial area.
- To demonstrate how, through sensitive design, new woodland can deliver benefits for wildlife, ASNW and for visiting public in the High Weald protected landscape.

Constraints:

- Increasing deer numbers post-planting have the potential to impact longer term establishment.
- Natural colonisation areas could be dominated by Turkey oak regeneration if eradication of this non-native is unsuccessful.
- As a former, relatively fertile, arable site the weed competition is likely to be significant. Suppression of competition will need to be effective in order for young trees to successfully establish.

Factors Causing Change

- Potential, with longer hotter summers due to climate change, for drought stress to become an issue as young trees establish.
- Invasive plants such as ragwort and thistle establishing within both natural colonisation and planting areas, and competing with desired species.
- Herbivore pressure from squirrels, rabbits and deer.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

- In 50 years' time the secondary woodland will have blended seamlessly with the local High Weald landscape, as it extends northwards up through the site to connect fragmented ancient woodland areas.
- The site as a whole will be much more resilient, with a range of woodland structures (from open ground to high forest) and a broad species mix of trees and shrubs is present.
- Single species groups will have begun to be broken up and respaced, giving a more natural composition, as both natural processes and management interventions have taken place.
- Open space along path edges and within new woodland areas is well established and maintained where necessary.

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

- The overarching short term objective during this management plan period is to ensure that new native trees are successfully established and properly protected.
- Plant 18000 new trees as per English Woodland Creation Offer grant scheme, and erect protective measures (fencing), during winter 2024/25. 1.8km deer/rabbit fence combination and 2.5km stock fence rabbit combination (complete with 22 total access gates).
- By 2035, 60% of the areas of natural colonisation are under woody cover, with a stocking of tree species of at least 100 stems per hectare; supplement with planting if required as per grant agreement.
- Open space, totalling 1.47ha within planting areas and on the path network, is maintained through a cyclical mowing regime. Central 5m portion of 2.1km of path to be mown annually, with occasional scallops created and mown on a cyclical regime.
- Annual pulling of all Turkey oak seedlings within natural colonisation strips, particularly in southern areas of Compartment 3 against Hungershole Wood.
- Trico deer repellent to be reapplied to planted trees in compartments 1 and 2, on a biennial basis from 2025 until 2028.
- Weed competition effectively suppressed in planting areas through an annual summertime programme of inter row mowing, if required.

- An annual summer survey of losses in planting areas is carried out and 'beat up' replacement carried out as required in subsequent planting seasons.
- Annual HIA lite survey at established locations across both planting and natural colonisation areas, to monitor impact of deer, rabbits and squirrels.
- Full herbivore impact assessment and thermal drone survey to be carried out in early 2026, to supplement internal HIA lite surveys and to provide data and cull targets for ongoing deer control.

4.3 Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat

Description

The semi-natural designation across compartments 5a – 5c is a recognition of their previous arable use, prior to their current development as diverse open ground habitat with fewer interventions. These fields have been retained as open habitat in the site design due to their high visibility in the High Weald protected landscape and their proximity to residential neighbours, so it was deemed that the widespread development of woodland here would have a detrimental impact in terms of landscape character and impressive views both in to and out of the site. These five semi-natural open ground habitat compartments total 14.5ha. After the last harvest and shortly after acquisition in 2022, initial management in these compartments amounted to a one off cut and collect operation of the central portion of the fields, and the establishment and mowing of a permissive path network. At the start of this management plan period these open habitat compartments have a longer sward dominated by coarse grasses but is not species poor, which perhaps suggests that although previously arable, inputs of fertilizer during that time were limited. There is also an element of volunteer wheat and barley from previous land use, and noxious weeds such as ragwort and thistles that have developed since the last harvest. Against woodland edges and hedgerows there is a developing component of natural colonisation, mainly with pedunculate and Turkey oak seedlings but with other species such as hawthorn, field maple and hornbeam present.

All open habitat fields have hedgerows partially forming boundaries, both mature well established examples and newly planted ones, created during winter 2024/25 to replace those lost along historic lines. Species present in both types are hawthorn, field maple, blackthorn, ash, pedunculate oak, hornbeam and hazel. The hedgerow to the west of compartments 5d and 5e, that forms the site's western boundary, has nine Turkey oaks as hedgerow trees, which is inevitably driving some of the natural colonisation on this side of the site. The Sussex Border path bisects the open ground habitat fields, and is flanked by mature pedunculate oak, Turkey oak and ash. A small copse at the mid-way point of the border path contains the site's most mature and impressive pedunculate oak specimens.

Compartments 5b and 5c have newly created, narrow rabbit fenced natural colonisation strips that buffer adjacent ASNW areas. At the start of this plan period there is early evidence of natural colonisation by pedunculate oak, some Turkey oak, hawthorn, field maple and suckering of blackthorn.

There are some more botanically diverse areas and keynote species in the open habitat compartments, observed on former arable field margins that had been largely unmanaged during arable land use. Common rampion fumitory and early wintercress are of particular note.

Skylark territories have been evident in the open ground habitat to the west of the site at compartments 5d and 5e and should remain as the site develops.

Significance

The relative significance of this habitat type is reflected in its size – at 14.5ha total it is equivalent to the woodland creation areas at Heather Wood. This demonstrates High Weald landscape sensitivities but also the opportunity to create a diverse range of habitats at this site, not just woodland. Open ground habitat doesn't just mean short grass though – it will contain a variety of elements from bare ground, grass, wild flowers, scrub, in field trees and hedges. It is a rare opportunity in the High Weald to have this range of habitats within one holding, especially when the immediate local landscape is largely intensively managed arable fields.

The hedgerows surrounding open habitat fields are of particular significance, as given their mature status they are a valuable seed source for development of natural colonisation and scrub within the open ground habitat. They are also invaluable in connectivity terms, linking new secondary woodland, ASNW and open habitat areas, as well as being a valuable habitat in their own right for birds, insects and small mammals.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

- To develop a significant component of scrub (up to 20%) in conjunction with other habitats across non-woodland compartments. Scrub is a sadly lacking habitat across the High Weald and is important for a range of reptiles, small mammals, insects and birds of conservation concern e.g. yellow hammer, song thrush and turtle dove.
- Introduce and demonstrate sensitive low intensity conservation grazing, as a method of maintaining open ground habitat.
- Range of habitats all at one site, well connected and resilient.

Constraints:

- Securing a mains water supply for livestock.
- Finding and securing a reputable conservation grazer who would align with our site aims.
- Public access and livestock conflict where path network crosses fields, in particular regarding dog walkers.
- Spread of noxious weeds such as ragwort, thistle and dock, to the detriment of the wider sward and species diversity.

Factors Causing Change

- Browsing by deer, squirrels and rabbits, possibly leading to difficulty establishing in field trees and scrub.
- Dog walkers, in particular uncontrolled dogs off of leads, disturbing ground nesting birds such as skylarks.
- Scrub as a successional habitat. Scrub is desirable but requires periodic intervention to limit natural succession to woodland.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

- In 50 years' time the open ground habitat areas will be structurally diverse with rich mosaic of habitats, well managed by a combination of periodic grazing and mechanical cutting, a haven for a wide range of wildlife and with public access in most areas for visitor enjoyment. Scrub will occupy up to 20% of open habitat compartments, with the remainder represented by a mixture of sward heights that is managed by grazing and mechanical means.
- Important views in to Heather Wood and out across the High Weald will be maintained.
- Previously linear boundaries will have softened, with scrubby field margins, wide hedgerows and scalloped path

edges.

- Hedgerows will have widened significantly, tumbling out in to adjacent open habitat, essentially forming long woodland shaws that connect across the site.

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

- The overarching short term objective is for the open ground habitat to continue to diversify, whilst initial mechanical management control is carried out as options for grazing are explored.

- To plant 475m of new hedgerow on historic lines, where previously removed, during winter 2024/25. 2387 broad-leaved shrubs to be planted, to include twelve oaks to develop as future hedgerow trees.

- Annual late summer cut and collect of no more than 50% of open habitat fields, to be carried out on a rotation through each of the five fields 5a – 5e.

- Control of noxious weeds (ragwort, spear and creeping thistles) at northern residential and field boundaries at compartments 5b and 5d. 20m control strip to be mown before seed sets each summer.

- Explore opportunities for application of green hay or over-seeding to boost ground flora diversity.

- To create twenty small in-field tree enclosures each measuring up to 16m² and varying in shape (square, rectangular and L shaped), four each in compartments 5a – 5e, during summer 2025. To be individually fenced to protect trees from herbivores and any future livestock.

- During winter 2025/26 plant pedunculate oak and hornbeam within enclosures as future mature in-field trees, to be underplanted with hawthorn and blackthorn. Within each enclosure, four oak and hornbeam planted with the intention of future selection of strongest specimen. Up to ten shrub species to be under-planted per enclosure.

- Limited internal hedgerow management. To edge up approximately 1.3km of internal hedges on an annual basis, only at boundaries and path edges to facilitate access and delineate boundary lines.

- To stock fence boundaries of compartments 5a – 5e in summer 2026. 2.7km total fence length. To install combination management and public access gates, at established points (eight in total) where the permissive path network crosses new fence lines.

- To install livestock water supply during summer 2026 (pipework and troughs or by bowsers) in to five open ground habitat compartments to facilitate conservation grazing.

4.4 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

Heather Wood is located on Stream Lane, approximately 1.5km south of Hawkhurst, Kent which has a population of around 3600 people. The site is close (approximately 0.5km) to The Moor area of the town, a conservation area with village green and sports fields. On Stream Lane there are around forty residential properties, all within easy reach of Heather Wood. Prior to acquisition, there was informal access around arable headlands, mainly for people on foot and dog walkers. Entry in to Heather Wood was formalised shortly after acquisition, with the installation of three combination management/public access points on Stream Lane. A fourth access point exists to the south of the site, directly on to the definitive restricted byway that is the Sussex Border Path. A circular permissive path network was then created with subsequent mowing keeping it open and linking these access points. The line of these paths was subsequently built in to the site design, with the wide grassy path network totalling around 3.3km in length as it crosses through secondary woodland and open habitat areas, but excludes compartment 5d to be left undisturbed for skylark habitat and neighbour's privacy. At 38 ha, and within reach of local population, the site gives the opportunity for

decent walks away from local lanes and passing traffic. The nearest comparable site is the local wildlife site Collingwood, owned by Kent Wildlife Trust, which has a short public walking route. Most people arrive at Heather Wood on foot, having walked from properties on Stream Lane or from The Moor area of south Hawkhurst. At the start of the plan period Heather Wood is well used and popular with locals. The intention is that Heather Wood will be a place for quiet recreation, used mainly by local people on foot. Given the variety of habitats at Heather Wood there is much to interest visitors, not least the wide ranging views over the High Weald. Fences encompass many of the site compartments, with a combination of stock, deer and rabbit fencing present. As public access was a key component of the site design, the permissive path network flows through both secondary woodland and open habitat areas, with pedestrian kissing gates installed at key points. At the start of the plan period site signage is limited, with WT signs positioned at entrances on Stream Lane and low key messaging around dog control and waste collection.

Significance

Heather Wood is an important acquisition for the Woodland Trust. It has a number of key features that are typical of the High Weald, with a patchwork of fields, hedges and woodland; but it is clear that previous arable land use had led to loss of precious ancient woodland and hedges. Prior to acquisition, there were concerns that all or parts of the site could be used for development of housing, or other non-agricultural uses, that may have had a detrimental environmental and social impact. By acquiring the site, and sensitively buffering precious ASNW whilst expanding woodland cover, the site has been protected and public access both maintained and improved.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

- To provide a valuable recreational resource for local people to explore nature and exercise.
- To demonstrate sensitive woodland creation in the High Weald protected landscape.
- Opportunity for local people to get involved through volunteering. Woodland warden opportunities will give the chance for local people to have a sense of ownership and practically contribute to the ongoing care and upkeep of the site.

Constraints:

- Lack of car parking and narrow approach roads mean access is limited for those travelling from further afield. Clear messaging is required to limit visits by car.
- During the autumn and winter months, ground conditions can be particularly soft and muddy on the unsurfaced, grassy path network.

Factors Causing Change

- Currently litter on site is minimal, but has potential to worsen as the site develops. Dog waste is an issue currently, both bagged and uncollected, and also has the potential to worsen.
- Public access and livestock conflict where path network crosses fields, in particular regarding dog walkers. Potential for disturbance of ground nesting birds at key times of the year if dogs aren't under control.
- Increased visitor numbers has the potential to damage unsurfaced paths and encourage the creation of unauthorized

routes or 'desire lines'.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

In fifty years' time Heather Wood will be a valued recreation resource for local people, well cared for according to Woodland Trust standards and with an established path network that gives the opportunity for visitors to explore the wildlife and landscape views that the site has to offer.

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

- Biannual mowing of 3.3km path network (including Sussex border path) to keep open and safe for visitor access.
- The Estate Management Contract (EMC), in addition to mowing, will involve specific annual maintenance around all entrance points, pedestrian gates and site infrastructure, to include: strimming around benches and in the footprint of gates; refresh of stone within vehicle and pedestrian entrance points as required; removal of overhanging vegetation and low branches near paths.
- To establish a path mowing regime though the open habitat fields. Central 5m section of paths, linear measurement of 1.4km through open habitat areas, to be mown twice per year in June and September. At the time of the second cuts, scallops are to be cut at identified points along the path length to establish shorter path side sward areas and will be mown on a rotation in future years.
- Installation of three benches at viewpoints and resting points in summer 2026. To be located at higher ground compartments 5a, 5b and 5e, and one in secondary woodland compartment 3.
- Low key permanent signage installation. During this plan period, existing Woodland Trust branded signs will be maintained at current positions. In addition in 2025 the following signs will be installed: 'Dog Walking Code' signs installed near to four main site access points; 'No Parking' signs installed at key points on Stream Lane to prevent visitors driving to site.
- Temporary signage will be displayed at key times of the year: 'Dogs on leads' signs at entrances to open ground habitat fields during bird nesting season (skylarks) and when grazing livestock are present.
- Woodland warden volunteer roles offered to local people, to act as the Woodland Trust's 'eyes and ears' and to help with basic maintenance tasks.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2025	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	March
2025	WC - Tree Planting / Seeding	Works associated with tree planting / tree seeding for woodland creation sites	March
2025	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.	April
2025	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	June
2025	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	July
2025	PE - Interpretation & Signage	Works associated with the provision of visitor signage, waymarking, interpretation features and leaflets	July
2025	AW - Management Access Capital	Works associated with installing new or replacement management access infrastructure. Such as management access gates, vehicle bridges, fencing and surfacing works.	August
2025	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	August
2025	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.	August
2025	WC - Fencing	Works associated with fencing to protect planting areas	August
2025	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	August
2025	WMM - AWS silviculture	Works associated with silvicultural operations within ancient woodlands 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	October

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2025	WC - Tree Planting / Seeding	Works associated with tree planting / tree seeding for woodland creation sites	November
2025	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	November
2026	CS - Ecological Survey & Assessment	Use of external consultants to support the provision of ecological surveys, assessment and biodiversity / species monitoring	March
2025	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	May
2026	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	June
2026	AW - Visitor Access Infrastructure	Works associated with the construction of a new or extension to existing car parking facilities.	June
2026	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	July
2026	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	August
2026	NWH - Grazing Work	Works associated with the maintenance of grazing of a non-woodland habitat to protect and enhance its conservation value – grazier costs, fence repairs, water supply costs etc	August
2026	NWH - Grazing Work	Works associated with the maintenance of grazing of a non-woodland habitat to protect and enhance its conservation value – grazier costs, fence repairs, water supply costs etc	August
2026	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.	August
2026	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.	August
2026	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	August

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2026	CS - Ecological Survey & Assessment	Use of external consultants to support the provision of ecological surveys, assessment and biodiversity / species monitoring	September
2026	CS - Ecological Survey & Assessment	Use of external consultants to support the provision of ecological surveys, assessment and biodiversity / species monitoring	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	November
2027	WMM - Ancient / Veteran Tree Work	Works associated with the on-going management of ancient, veteran or culturally significant trees including the creation of next generation of such trees. Activities may include works to prolong the life of the tree, removal of competing trees, the creation of new pollards	January
2026	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	May
2027	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	June
2027	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	July
2027	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	August
2027	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.	August
2027	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	August
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	November

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2028	WMM - Ancient / Veteran Tree Work	Works associated with the on-going management of ancient, veteran or culturally significant trees including the creation of next generation of such trees. Activities may include works to prolong the life of the tree, removal of competing trees, the creation of new pollards	January
2027	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	May
2028	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	June
2028	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	July
2028	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.	August
2028	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	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	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	November
2028	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	May
2029	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	June
2029	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	July
2029	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.	August
2029	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	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
2029	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	November

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	3.48	Oak (pedunculate)	2024	Wood establishment		
<p>Secondary woodland, created in 2025 on a former arable field. This field slopes down to the stream at the southern site boundary, with occasional coppice alder and willow on the stream margins. Woodland is of mixed broadleaved species, dominated by pedunculate oak (40%) and hornbeam (20%) as canopy, with shrub layer dominated by hazel (30%) and hawthorn (30%). Other species planted are wild cherry, field maple, downy birch, rowan, holly, wild service tree, alder, small leaved lime, aspen, elder, blackthorn, crab apple, dog rose, alder buckthorn and guelder rose. Trees planted at a canopy density of 1600 stems/ha, in sinuous rows in single species groups varying from 15-30 stems, with three rows of shrubs on ride edges at 2500 stems/ha. This compartment has a 15m unplanted strip on its boundaries for natural colonisation to develop. The compartment has a combination stock/rabbit fence to protect from browsing by small herbivores, with biennial treatment with Trico herbivore (deer) repellent planned for years 1-3 post planting.</p>						
2a	3.31	Oak (pedunculate)	2024	Wood establishment		
<p>Secondary woodland, created in 2025 on a former arable field. This field slopes down to the stream at the southern site boundary, with occasional coppice alder and willow on the stream margins. The south east corner of this field contains a wet flush of some botanical interest, which historically has been free of agricultural activity and is unplanted. Species present include bullrush, hoary willowherb and meadowsweet. Woodland is of mixed broadleaved species, dominated by pedunculate oak (40%) and hornbeam (20%) as canopy, with shrub layer dominated by hazel (30%) and hawthorn (30%). Other species planted are wild cherry, field maple, downy birch, rowan, holly, wild service tree, alder, small leaved lime, aspen, elder, blackthorn, crab apple, dog rose, alder buckthorn and guelder rose. Trees planted at a canopy density of 1600 stems/ha, in sinuous rows in single species groups varying from 15-30 stems, with three rows of shrubs on ride edges at 2500 stems/ha. This compartment has a 15m unplanted strip on its boundaries for natural colonisation to develop. The compartment has a combination stock/rabbit fence to protect from browsing by small herbivores, with biennial treatment with Trico herbivore (deer) repellent planned for years 1-3 post planting.</p>						
3a	8.83	Oak (pedunculate)	2024	Wood establishment		
<p>The largest of the woodland creation compartments, on this former arable field. Created by a combination of planting and natural colonisation, this compartment abuts a thin strip of ASNW that borders the stream on our southern boundary and connects three significant outcrops of ASNW at compartments 4a, 4b and 4c. The natural colonisation edge strips here are wider than at other creation compartments, taking advantage of the opportunity to fill in old field corners against existing ASNW. Planted woodland is of mixed broadleaved species, dominated by pedunculate oak (40%) and hornbeam (20%) as canopy, with shrub layer dominated by hazel (30%) and hawthorn</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
<p>(30%). Other species planted are wild cherry, field maple, downy birch, rowan, holly, wild service tree, alder, small leaved lime, aspen, elder, blackthorn, crab apple, dog rose, alder buckthorn and guelder rose. Trees planted at a canopy density of 2000 stems/ha in sinuous rows in single species groups varying from 15-30 stems, with three rows of shrubs on ride edges at 2500 stems/ha. There are three unplanted archaeological areas in this compartment, kept free of trees and maintained as open space within the woodland. This compartment has a combination deer/rabbit fence to prevent browsing by herbivores.</p>						
4a	2.2	Oak (pedunculate)	1600	Coppice		
<p>Remnant ASNW that extends from the largest pond to the stream at the SE site boundary. This compartment also includes a linear strip of mature woodland (not designated ASNW) on the boundary of the Sussex border path, dominated by mature oak. This compartment was of particular note during the initial Phase 1 habitat survey, with ground flora that included wood anemone, bluebell, yellow archangel, dogs' mercury, primrose, pendulous sedge, white campion, ramsons and hemlock water-dropwort. The canopy is mainly oak, ash, alder, beech and hornbeam, with a diverse understory of hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, hazel, holly and willow. The pond in this is compartment is the only example with sufficient light to allow the presence of emergent vegetation, with bullrush recorded at the margins.</p>						
4b	1.33	Oak (pedunculate)	1600	Coppice		
<p>A peninsula of ASNW that contains a small pond at its north western tip. The woodland narrows to the south where it meets the stream at the site's southern boundary. This compartment includes a small area of ASNW at our eastern-most public entrance point on Stream Lane and a narrow strip of ash woodland on the south side of Stream Lane. This compartment of ASNW somewhat resembles the gill woodland that is characteristic of the High Weald, with a steep sided gully that flows from the pond down to the stream. The canopy is dominated by oak, ash, alder, beech and hornbeam, with a diverse understory of hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, hazel and holly. The ground flora is typical of this habitat with wood anemone, bluebell, yellow archangel, dogs' mercury, primrose, pendulous sedge, white campion and ramsons present.</p>						
4c	2.79	Oak (pedunculate)	1600	Coppice		
<p>An area of mature ASNW that extends through the central section of Heather Wood, and includes a short narrow section of woodland on the south side of Stream Lane that is dominated by ash. It seems likely there are spring lines throughout the main areas of this woodland where two geological formations meet, giving rise to four ponds. The canopy is mainly oak, ash, alder, beech and hornbeam, with a diverse understory of hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, hazel and holly. The understory here appears to have been coppiced around 15 years previously with strong stool regeneration. The ground flora is typical of this habitat with wood anemone, bluebell, yellow archangel, dogs' mercury, primrose, pendulous sedge, white campion and ramsons present. Since acquisition, the woodland edge</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
has become extensively scrubby, with margins tumbling in to the adjacent fields and dominated by bramble. The pond nearest to the gated entrance on Stream Lane recorded presence of great crested newt during early surveys.						
5a	1.29	NULL	2022	Non-wood habitat		
This open habitat compartment is former arable, last harvested in August 2022. Initial management has amounted to annual mowing of the central portion of the field, with natural colonisation allowed to occur along wooded boundaries. A dense grassy sward has developed, with occasional volunteer wheat and barley and occasional noxious weeds (mainly ragwort and thistle). A wide grassy footpath crosses this compartment, linking our management entrance and hard standing area off of Stream Lane with creation compartment 3 to the south. This compartment will be maintained as open habitat, with a diverse sward that also contains open ground, a developing scrub component and occasional in field trees. Management will be through a combination of occasional mowing, mechanical scrub control and in the long term low intensity grazing.						
5b	2.96	NULL	2022	Non-wood habitat		
This open habitat compartment is former arable, last harvested in August 2022. Initial management has amounted to annual mowing of the central portion of the field, with natural colonisation allowed to occur along wooded boundaries. A 20m wide control strip has also been maintained along the northern boundary to limit growth of noxious weeds near to a neighbouring horse paddock. The southern boundary of this field is formed by a wide, mature hedgerow that appears to be of some antiquity. A dense grassy sward has developed, with occasional volunteer wheat and barley and occasional noxious weeds (mainly ragwort and thistle). A wide grassy footpath crosses this compartment, linking from the footpath on our northern boundary to neighbouring compartment 5c. This compartment will be maintained as open habitat due to its high landscape visibility, with a diverse sward that also contains open ground, a developing scrub component and occasional in field trees. Management will be through a combination of occasional mowing, mechanical scrub control and in the long term low intensity grazing. The noxious weed control strip to the north will be maintained by annual mowing. On the eastern side of this field, against the ASNW of compartment 4c, is a thin rabbit fenced area (approximately 30m wide) reserved for natural colonisation, with the intention of broadening the woodland area and allowing the woodland edge to expand in to this open habitat compartment.						
5c	3.29	NULL	2022	Non-wood habitat		
This open habitat compartment is former arable, last harvested in August 2022. Initial management has amounted to annual mowing of the central portion of the field, with natural colonisation allowed to occur along wooded and hedgerow boundaries. A dense grassy sward has developed, with occasional volunteer wheat and barley and noxious weeds (mainly ragwort and thistle). The southern boundary of this field is formed by a wide, mature hedgerow that appears to be of some antiquity but which contains a very mature Turkey oak specimen. The western boundary compartment contains a thin strip of mature oak and ash that flank the Sussex border path,						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
<p>centered around a small copse which contains the sites largest and most impressive pedunculate oaks. A wide grassy footpath crosses this compartment, linking from the Sussex border path to neighbouring open habitat and woodland creation compartments. This compartment will be maintained as open habitat due to its high landscape visibility, with a diverse sward that also contains open ground, a developing scrub component and occasional in field trees. Management will be through a combination of occasional mowing, mechanical scrub control and in the long term low intensity grazing. In the northern part of this compartment is a rabbit fenced area, reserved for natural colonisation. This effectively fills in the corner of the field, linking up areas of ASNW at compartments 4c where historic arable use has eaten away at the woodland margins.</p>						
5d	3.29	NULL	2022	Non-wood habitat		
<p>This open habitat compartment is former arable, last harvested in August 2022 and contains residential boundaries to the north. It contains a species rich mature hedge to the south, dominated by hawthorn, field maple, blackthorn, hazel and hornbeam. There are occasional mature pedunculate oak as hedgerow trees. The western section of this hedgerow had been removed to enlarge this field (likely during the 20th century for ease of agricultural access). This western section is due to be replanted during the wider woodland creation works in early 2025, reinstating the lost boundary feature and creating connectivity across the site. The western compartment boundary has a hedgerow of similar composition, but with frequent Turkey oak developing in the boundary line. The eastern compartment boundary is flanked by mature oak and ash that stand on the Sussex border path. Initial management of this compartment has amounted to annual mowing of the central portion of the field, with natural colonisation allowed to occur along wooded and hedgerow boundaries. Skylark territories were identified in this compartment during early survey work. A dense grassy sward has developed, with occasional volunteer wheat and barley. Public access across this compartment is limited, partly for neighbour privacy reasons, with no paths included in the site design. This compartment will be maintained as open habitat, with a diverse sward that also contains open ground, a developing scrub component (especially against wooded boundaries and hedgerows) and occasional in field trees. Management will be through a combination of occasional mowing, mechanical scrub control and in the long term low intensity grazing.</p>						
5e	3.68	NULL	2022	Non-wood habitat		
<p>This open habitat compartment is former arable, last harvested in August 2022. It slopes to the south and meets two woodland creation compartments, at which point two new sections of east-west hedgerow have been replanted on historic lines. At the central point of these hedges is a small mature woodland copse (undesigned) that is dominated by mature ash. The western compartment boundary has a hedgerow with hazel, hawthorn, field maple and blackthorn, with frequent Turkey oak developing in the boundary line. The eastern compartment boundary is flanked by mature oak and ash that stand on the Sussex border path. Skylark territories were identified in this compartment during early survey work. Two sections of wide grassy path cross this compartment, forming part of a circular loop that also crosses through new woodland areas to the south. A dense grassy sward has developed, with occasional volunteer wheat and barley. This compartment will be maintained as open habitat, with a diverse sward that also contains open ground, a developing scrub component (especially against wooded boundaries and</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
<p>hedgerows) and occasional in field trees. Management will be through a combination of occasional mowing, mechanical scrub control and in the long term low intensity grazing.</p>						

Ancient Woodland

Ancient woods are defined as those where there has been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. In Scotland ancient woods are defined strictly as sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the 'Roy' maps (a military survey carried out in 1750 AD, which is the best source of historical map evidence) and as woodland all subsequent maps. However, they have been combined with long-established woods of semi-natural origin (originating from between 1750 and 1860) into a single category of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to take account of uncertainties in their identification. Ancient woods include Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (see below). May support many species that are only found in ancient woodland.

Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland

Stands in ancient woods defined as those consisting predominantly of native trees and shrubs that have not obviously been planted, which have arisen from natural regeneration or coppice regrowth.

Ancient Woodland Site

Stands in ancient woods that have been converted to plantations, of coniferous, broadleaved or mixed species, usually for timber production, including plantations of native species planted so closely together that any semi-natural elements of the understorey have been suppressed.

Beating Up

Replacing any newly planted trees that have died in the first few years after planting.

Broadleaf

A tree having broad leaves (such as oak) rather than needles found on conifers (such as Scots pine).

Canopy

The uppermost layer of vegetation in a woodland, or the upper foliage and branches of an individual tree.

Clearfell

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

Compartment

Permanent management division of a woodland, usually defined on site by permanent features such as roads. See Sub-compartments.

Conifer

A tree having needles, rather than broadleaves, and typically bearing cones.

Continuous Cover forestry

A term used for managing woods to ensure that there are groups or individual trees of different ages scattered over the whole wood and that some mature tree cover is always maintained. Management is by repeated thinning and no large areas are ever completely felled all at once.

Coppice

Trees which are cut back to ground levels at regular intervals (3-25 years).

Exotic (non-native) Species

Species originating from other countries (or other parts of the UK) that have been introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally.

Field Layer

Layer of small, non-woody herbaceous plants such as bluebells.

Group Fell

The felling of a small group of trees, often to promote natural regeneration or allow planting.

Long Term Retention

Discrete groups of trees (or in some cases single trees) that are retained significantly past their economic felling age. Operations may still be carried out within them and thinning is often necessary to maintain stability.

Minimum Intervention

Areas where no operations (such as thinning) will take place other than to protect public safety or possibly to control invasive exotic species.

Mixed Woodland

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

National vegetation classification (NVC)

A classification scheme that allows an area of vegetation to be assigned to the standardised type that best matches the combination of plant species that it contains. All woodlands in the UK can be described as being one of 18 main woodland types (W1 - W18), which principally reflect soil and climatic conditions. For example, Upland Oakwoods are type W11, and normally occur on well drained infertile soils in the cooler and wetter north and west of Britain. Each main type can be subdivided into numerous subtypes. Most real woods contain more than one type or sub-type and inevitably some woods are intermediate in character and can't be properly described by any sub type.

Native Species

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

Natural Regeneration

Naturally grown trees from seeds falling from mature trees. Also regeneration from coppicing and suckering.

Origin & Provenance

The provenance of a tree or seed is the place where seed was collected to grow the tree or plant. The origin is the geographical location within the natural range of a species from where seeds/tree originally derives. Thus an acorn collected from a Turkey oak in Edinburgh would have an Edinburgh provenance and a southern European origin.

Re-Stocking

Re-planting an area of woodland, after it has been felled.

Shrub Layer

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

Stand

Trees of one type or species, grouped together within a woodland.

Sub-Compartment

Temporary management division of a compartment, which may change between management plan periods.

Thinning

The felling of a proportion of individual trees within a given area. The remaining trees grow to fill in the space created.

Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes

Tubes placed over newly planted trees or natural regeneration that promote growth and provide protection from animals such as rabbits and deer.

Weeding

The control of vegetation immediately around newly planted trees or natural regeneration to promote tree growth until they become established.

Windblow/Windthrow

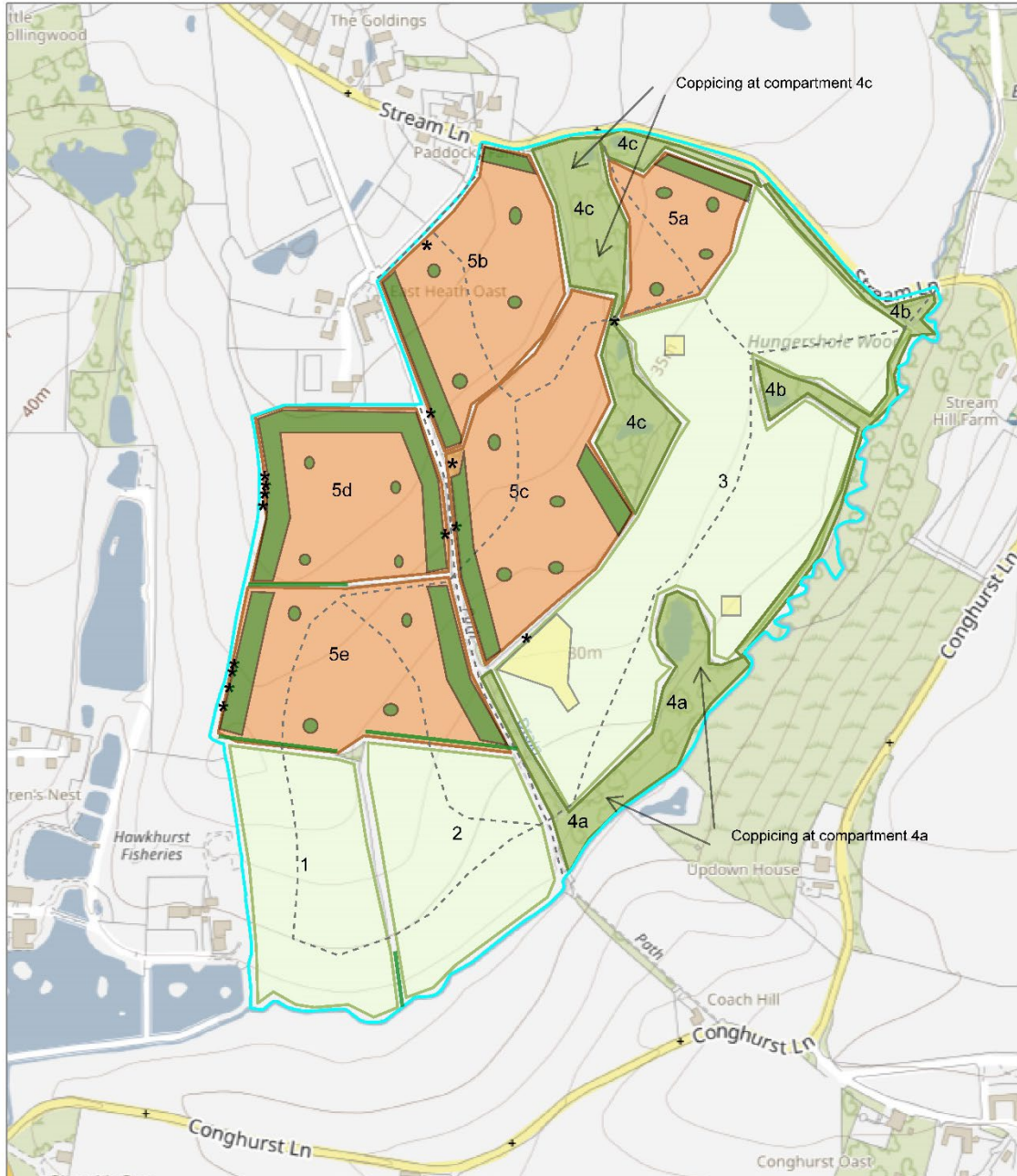
Trees or groups of trees blown over (usually uprooted) by strong winds and gales.

Registered Office:

The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL.

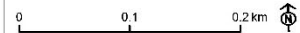
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Site Map



Key	
	Secondary woodland - planting compartments
	Ancient semi-natural woodland
	Semi-natural open ground habitat
	Unplanted areas of historic interest
	Scrub in open ground habitat areas
	Path network
	New hedge locations
	In-field tree group locations
1, 4a	Compartment designations
*	Turkey oak locations

Heather Wood Management Plan Map.



Scale: 1:5,291 @A4

Date: 29 January 2025

Author: Woodland Trust



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