

Clough Wood

(Plan period – 2026 to 2036)



WOODLAND
TRUST

Management Plan Content Page

Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

The Public Management Plan

Location and Access

Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

The Woodland Trust owns and cares for well over 1,250 sites covering almost 30,000 hectares (ha) across the UK. This includes more than 4,000ha of ancient semi-natural woodland and almost 4,000ha of non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites and we have created over 5,000ha of new native woodland. We also manage other valuable habitats such as flower-rich grasslands, heaths, ponds/lakes and moorland.

Our Vision is:

“A UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife.”

To realise all the environmental, social and economic benefits woods and trees bring to society, we:

- **Create Woodland** – championing the need to hugely increase the UK’s native woodland and trees.
- **Protect Woodland** – fighting to defend native woodland, especially irreplaceable ancient woodland and veteran trees; there should be no loss of ancient woodland
- **Restore Woodland** – ensuring the sensitive restoration of all damaged ancient woodland and the re-creation of native wooded landscapes.

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

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

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

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

The Public Management Plan

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

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

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

Please either consult The Woodland Trust website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

or contact the Woodland Trust

operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk

to confirm details of the current management programme.

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

Location and Access

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

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

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

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

The Management Plan

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
 - 4.1 f1 Informal Public Access
 - 4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Clough Wood

Location:	Runcorn	Grid	reference:	SJ542799	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	108
Area:	2.72 hectares (6.72 acres)								
External Designations:	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site								
Internal Designations:	N/A								

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Clough Wood is a 2.72ha urban woodland in the Beechwood district of Runcorn, approximately 3 miles to the south-east of the town centre. The wood is bordered by a housing estate to the west; railway lines to the north and part of the eastern boundary; the M56 motorway to the south; and farmland to the east. The north-eastern section of the site occupies a small plateau then falls away into a shallow clough to the south-west. A small stream enters the site near the north-east corner then disappears underground re-emerging 100m to the south-west from where it flows down the centre of the site exiting via a culvert under the M56. The soils are predominantly sandy over areas of pure sand, capped with well decayed humus and leaf litter.

The wood was formerly farm woodland prior to the land being purchased by the Commission for the New Towns (CNT) in the late 1970's as part of the development of Runcorn New Town. It was gifted to the Woodland Trust along with several other urban woodlands in Runcorn in 1995. The Woodland Trust owns twenty one woods in the Runcorn area covering a total of over 100ha.

It is secondary broadleaved woodland which is a key feature of the site. The canopy comprises a mix of mature broadleaves including sycamore with ash, oak, beech and elm and a well developed understorey including under planting (from the 1980s) and natural regeneration of ash, beech, oak, sycamore, elm, wild cherry, hawthorn, hazel, elder and holly. There is extensive ground flora cover with large areas of bluebells and ramson in the spring. The wood is an important habitat for wildlife and has been designated as a Local Wildlife Site by Halton Borough Council.

Informal Public Access is a second key feature of the site with permissive footpaths through the wood from the western boundary to the eastern boundary. The wood is generally quiet with low levels of public usage mainly by local people. Due to the urban location of the wood it suffers from misuse from time to time including fly tipping, vandalism and fire damage to trees.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention for Clough Wood is to secure the regeneration and continuity of mixed broadleaved high forest and associated woodland edge habitat. It will be managed predominantly as a landscape and conservation feature to ensure the continuity of woodland habit and will continue to provide an amenity to the local population. Guided by the Woodland Trust's woodland management approach, the long term management will continue to seek a balance between conservation and public enjoyment. The woodland will be left to develop largely through natural processes, with mature and veteran trees retained and standing deadwood left on site where safe to do so.

Public safety and access will be the key drivers for woodland management operations with tree safety being a high priority in areas near to houses and footpaths. Tree safety and other silvicultural operations will aim to reduce long term tree safety liability and create gaps in the canopy to promote natural regeneration and improve the woodland structure. Regeneration of both natives and non-native species will be accepted. Coppicing along paths and boundaries will be undertaken periodically to maintain path sight lines and create a more graduated woodland edge.

Existing levels of public access provision will be maintained and the Trust's duty of care to neighbours and visitors will continue to be addressed through on-going tree safety and site risk assessment inspections. The woodland will be regularly monitored for long term threats from tree diseases, pests, invasive non-native species and human impacts (particularly fly tipping and vandalism) to ensure the long term sustainability of the woodland.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
The wood has approximately 550m of unsurfaced permissive footpaths and five entrances for public access. Three entrances are from the western boundary from the housing estate with kissing gates at two of these entrances. The other two entrances are on the eastern boundary from the adjacent farmland and have are open access with no gates. The paths have moderate usage, with an estimated 5-15 people using the wood per day, mainly for dog walking.
Significance
Increasing access and enjoyment of woodland and trees is one of the Woodland Trust's key outcomes. Clough Wood provides informal public access for local people to access woodland and enjoy nature close to where they live. The wood is a local landscape and amenity feature and is visible to people driving on the adjacent M56 motorway. It helps to act as a barrier from the motorway to screen nearby houses and residents from noise and air pollution.
Opportunities & Constraints
The woodland is small and surrounded by houses, railway lines and roads. The footpaths are not surfaced which may limit access for some visitors, however the current access provision is appropriate for the level of public usage of the site. Management access to the wood is poor which is a constraint to carrying out woodland management in the wood.
Factors Causing Change
The level of public use of the footpaths in the wood is currently low-moderate which is sustainable for the existing paths. There are no factors/ threats causing changes at the present time, although there is occasionally fly tipping of garden waste along the garden boundaries. The footpaths become quite boggy after heavy rainfall and in the winter.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The long-term objective is to maintain the current level of public access to the site to ensure it is welcoming and accessible for visitors all year round. Access infrastructure including 550m of footpath, 5 entrances, signage, fencing and gates will be maintained in good condition. The wood will be made as safe as practicable for visitors and neighbours through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones, site hazards and access infrastructure. Threats to the wood arising from public recreation or misuse will be monitored and appropriate measures taken to deal with them where it is practical and achievable.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

During the plan period the aim is to maintain the visitor infrastructure so that it is appropriate for the current level of public access in the wood. The short term objectives are to:

1. Carry out maintenance annually of the 550m of footpaths, five entrances, steps and other access infrastructure to ensure they are easy and safe to use. Vegetation encroaching on the paths will be cut back annually. Signage will be maintained to be clean and visible, and replaced if they deteriorate. Any accumulations of litter will be removed as part of the annual Estates Maintenance Contract.
2. Carry out regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (i.e. next to buildings, roads and footpaths) and site hazards as per the Trust's safety inspection regime to ensure safety of visitors and neighbours, and undertaking any remedial safety work identified.
3. Monitor public use of the site before the end of the current plan period to review the standard of access, identify any work required and assess if there are any issues/ threats to the wood from public usage, taking appropriate action to address them if necessary.
4. Carry out woodland edge and path edge coppicing to maintain/ improve sight lines during the current plan period.

4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Clough Wood is dominated by sycamore with other broadleaves including oak, ash, beech, elm and cherry. Approximately 65% (1.57 ha) of the woodland canopy is fully mature and 35% (1.03 ha) young or semi-mature about twenty years old. The understorey is variable across the site and is more diverse in the northern section of the wood where elder and bramble abound. The site has a reasonably rich ground layer including some dense areas of bluebells and ramson, and numerous clusters of lesser celandine, ramson, lords and ladies, ivy and honey suckle. A number of wet flushes occur on the site and a stream runs through the wood from the northeast to southwest.

Significance

The wood is a significant landscape and conservation feature within a very urban environment and provides an important habitat for a range of urban wildlife. The importance of the site for wildlife has been acknowledged by Halton Borough Council who have designated it as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (Local Wildlife Site). Along with other nearby Woodland Trust owned woodlands it is part of the local ecological landscape in the area; eight of these woods are within 2km of Clough wood and include 13ha of ASNW and a 5.3ha site of scientific importance (SSSI) at Floodbrook Clough.

Opportunities & Constraints

The close proximity of the woodland to housing (approximately 470m of the boundary backing onto domestic properties) gives rise to tree safety and other boundary related issues which need to be managed and has significant cost implications. This will require tree safety work, stand stability thinning and boundary coppicing periodically which will provide opportunities for natural regeneration and to diversify the woodland structure.

There is a significant amount of third party infrastructure that exists within the woodland from the railway tunnel, petro-chemical pipelines and waste water. On occasion these third parties are required to complete maintenance work that can impact the woodland (for example)selective felling and ditch digging) which can have both a positive and negative impact on the woodland condition.

Factors Causing Change

Tree disease, particularly Dutch elm disease and Ash dieback disease will impact on the canopy/ structure/ species mix in some areas.

Tree safety works in high risk zones will result in removal of some mature trees.

Fly tipping, fires and vandalism to trees.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long term objective is to maintain the continuity of mixed broadleaved high forest with a diverse structure, age classes and species mix. The wood will be left to develop largely through natural process with succession promoted through natural regeneration, mature trees retained into senescence and standing dead trees will be kept on site to provide important deadwood habitat where it does not compromise public safety. Woodland management will focus on maintaining stand stability and tree safety to reduce long term risks along boundaries and footpaths for public safety. This will create opportunistic gaps in the canopy promoting natural regeneration and structural diversification. Boundary coppicing will be undertaken periodically to maintain a graduated woodland edge structure and to reduce the tree safety/ encroachment liability at the same time as enhancing the biodiversity value of the woodland. Threats to the wood from pests, tree disease and invasive species will be monitored and appropriate action taken to control them where it is practical and achievable.

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

During the plan period the short term objectives will be to:

- inspect trees as part of the site risk assessment regime for public safety in high risk zones (i.e. by buildings, footpaths and roads) and carry out any remedial work identified.
- carry out a Woodland Condition Assessment towards the end of the current plan period to assess the health and resilience of the woodland including the mix of species and natural regeneration, to monitor threats from tree disease, pests, non-native invasive species and to take appropriate action where necessary.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
------	--------------	-------------	----------

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	2.68	Sycamore	1900	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, People issues (+tve & -tve), Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site

The wood is in a south facing clough valley with steep slopes particularly in the southern half of the compartment. It abuts domestic garden fences along the western boundary, a railway line along the northern boundary, farmland along the north eastern boundary and another railway line along the south eastern boundary. The southern boundary adjoins more woodland on an embankment leading to the M56 motorway.

The canopy is dominated by sycamore (approx. 65%) with other mixed broadleaves including oak, beech, ash, elm and cherry. The understorey is patchy in the southern half of the wood and more abundant in the northern section; it is dominated by elder and bramble with hawthorn, hazel, holly, and patchy regeneration of sycamore, rowan, elm, ash and beech. Under planting of ash, beech, elm, wild cherry, and lime was carried out in the 1980s. The wood has an abundant ground flora including bluebells, lesser celandine, nettle, honey suckle, wild garlic, lords and ladies, ivy, bramble, ferns and mosses.

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.

The Woodland Trust is a charity registered in England and Wales no. 294344 and in Scotland no. SC038885. A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no. 1982873. The Woodland Trust logo is a registered trademark.