

Cuttle Brook Wood

(Plan period – 2023 to 2028)



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 New Native Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Cuttle Brook Wood

Location:	Temple Balsall Grid reference: SP200759 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 139
Area:	6.85 hectares (16.93 acres)
External Designations:	Green Belt
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Cuttle Brook Wood was planted in February 2000 as part of the Woodland Trust's 'Woods On Your Doorstep' project, which created 200 new community woods nationally to mark the Millennium. The project was supported by the Millennium Commission with funds from the National Lottery and this wood was one of 20 sites also sponsored by Homebase Ltd., as part of the 'Homebase Woodlands for the Millennium' scheme.

The site is 7.12 ha in area and lies mid-way between Knowle and Basall Common on the B4101 Kenilworth Road. This forms part of the Meriden Gap and Kenilworth Cycleways. This secondary woodland is opposite Springfield House, presently a school and Environmental Study Centre for children with special educational needs. It also adjoins an existing secondary woodland to the east, once a Victorian pleasure garden and boating lake associated with Springfield House, now a nature reserve managed by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. The site was named by the community after the Cuttle Brook watercourse that runs along the sites eastern boundary.

The site was previously an arable field and was grass seeded prior to tree planting over 6.76ha and has slight south/south-east slope. A narrow strip of mature woodland extending to 0.1 ha exists along the western roadside boundary. The remaining 0.26ha of the site, which includes most of the northern roadside boundary, is owned by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council who purchased it in advance of a proposed road re-alignment scheme. This road improvement is currently on hold, and the Woodland Trust is therefore managing this area and the roadside hedge by agreement, as part of the wood.

The woodland was designed following consultation with the site neighbours, including the Environmental Study Centre and the Wildlife Trust, and local people who took part in a public planting event in February 2000.

The design for Cuttle Brook Wood is based on the site's relationship in the landscape to Springfield House, with the north-west corner comprising group plantings in an open setting, echoing those around the House. This fragmented edge to the wood, complemented by the open ground set aside for the road re-alignment, allows views into the wood for passing traffic, as well as retaining views out from Springfield House along the wide main ride towards a mature turkey oak on the southern boundary. This edge treatment also has the effect of disguising the linear corridor of the overhead powerline, which follows a second ride towards the south-eastern corner of the wood. The rides provide a variety of circular walks for visitors and views out over adjoining fields, into the neighbouring woodland and back towards the façade of Springfield House. These footpaths can be accessed via entrances located on the boundary with the B4101 Kenilworth Road and also via an access point on the eastern boundary, leading to the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserve. During wetter months the footpaths on the site can become quite soft and wet underfoot. The wood's Millennium Feature, a circular brick seat built from bricks salvaged from the byre that once stood in the field corner, is set at the intersection of the main rides, affording views in all directions, with the theme of looking backwards to the past and forwards to the future.

The main tree species are ash with oak, silver birch, field maple and rowan, giving way to alder and crack willow on slightly lower and wetter ground adjoining the existing secondary woodland to the east. Scots Pine and Corsican Pine are present in the group plantings opposite Springfield House to again strengthen the visual link with this dominant feature of the local landscape. Shrub species include hazel, blackthorn, hawthorn, dog rose, holly and purging buckthorn, planted predominantly at the ride edges. Due to the age of the woodland and previous land use the ground flora presently consists of grasses, which dominate areas, along with mosses and small pockets of

bramble.

The key features at this site are Informal Public Access and New Native Woodland.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The intention of this site is that Cuttle Brook Wood will be a structurally and species diverse native broadleaved woodland, with various open areas, rides and edge and scrub habitats. It will also serve to compliment the landscape associated with Springfield House, which is adjacent.

Now that the initial establishment period is over, the woodland will be allowed to develop naturally as far as possible, only intervening when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes in accordance with the Woodland Trusts Management Approach (such as through ride-side coppicing and silvicultural thins). The aim is to create a diverse mature woodland with a range of native species, age ranges, well structured rides and with deadwood, both standing and fallen, being retained where it is safe to do so. Gaps in the canopy will allow for floral colonisation and regeneration of all species. The main tree species are expected to be pedunculate oak, alder, willow, birch and potentially ash, with a variety of shrub species, including buckthorn, hazel, hawthorn and blackthorn.

Low-key public access will be maintained in perpetuity through a managed path network, entrances and regular safety checks. Infrastructure and facilities will be minimal and only essential signage used. Use of the site will be monitored and provisions for informal recreation reviewed accordingly. Ride edge coppice work in selected locations will be undertaken to enhance visitor enjoyment, as well as structural diversity. Public safety will be assessed regularly and tree safety inspections made. 0.26ha at the northern most part of the site has been purchased by the council for highway improvements. These are currently on hold but the Trust will continue to manage the grass and hedgerows as per the rest of the site until road works commence.

A close working relationship with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust will be encouraged to co-ordinate the management of the two woods where this might lead to the enhancement of the landscape, visitor enjoyment or the biodiversity of the sites.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
Cuttle Brook is situated between Knowle and Balsall Common on the B4101. Parking is difficult and great care should be taken on this busy road. Visitor access to the site is available from the two pedestrian squeeze gap entrances off the B4101, Kenilworth Road. This road forms a part of the Meriden Gap and Kenilworth Cycleways (route 52) and therefore cycle stands have been installed at the main entrance along with an information board. An additional entrance is also located between Cuttle Brook Wood and the adjoining Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserve to the east via a small culvert allowing passage over the brook. Within the site, a network of mown grass rides and areas of open space provide a series of circular walks and lead to the site's Millennium Feature, a circular seat built from bricks salvaged from the demolished byre that once stood in Cpt 1a.
Significance
Cuttle Brook Wood provides an important area for informal recreation for the local communities of Temple Balsall and Knowle, as well as a resource for the adjoining Springfield House School. The creation of new native woodlands that are open for public enjoyment cover core objectives of the Woodland Trust.
Opportunities & Constraints
With the recent addition of a new entrance allowing access in/from the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserve, further opportunities to work together to enhance visitor enjoyment and access to the both sites should be pursued. The proposed road re-alignment scheme, if undertaken in the future, will include new fencing and gating arrangements along the line of the legal boundary, as part of the accommodation works. The opportunity should be taken to seek enhanced vehicular access to the wood, including the provision of a pull-in or layby that might provide visitor parking.
Factors Causing Change
Proposed road re-alignment scheme. Partnership working with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.
Long term Objective (50 years+)

Low key public access will be retained in perpetuity. The 1050m of grass paths and entrances will be cut during the summer months to keep them clear and well defined. Welcome signs and an information board will be maintained for visitors use at the entrance. Regular inspections will be made to check the visitor facilities.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
To regularly inspect and maintain the three entrances to the site, with any repairs undertaken as necessary. To inspect and maintain the Millennium Feature seat, as well as other benches on site. To mow all paths (within rides, glades and open areas) to a minimum width of 2 metres (twice a year) and then on the last cut of the year to their full width (including all of the open areas). Ride side coppicing to benefit visitor access and enjoyment and habitat enhancement, comprising <0.1ha per year, over a 10 year cycle. Tree safety inspections will be regularly completed.

4.2 f2 New Native Woodland

Description
This is predominantly native broadleaf woodland planted as part of the 'Woods On Your Doorstep' initiative and adjoins an existing secondary woodland, a Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserve on the eastern boundary, as well as the parkland landscape around Springfield House to the north. Some Scots and corsican pines have been incorporated in groups within the woodland, to mirror the latter. Trees have been planted in species groups with shrubs and minor trees around the margins and ride sides. Trees are predominantly ash, oak and birch. Alder is naturally generating at the eastern end in the damper area near the Cuttle Brook. This could engulf planted trees and lead to a loss of diversity in this area.
Significance
Cuttle Brook Wood effectively extends the adjoining secondary wet woodland to the east, and has been designed to complement the Victorian plantings around Springfield House. As it matures, it will provide an increasingly important physical and visual link between these existing elements of the landscape. One of the core objectives of the Woodland Trust is to create new native woodlands.
Opportunities & Constraints
This woodland has the opportunity to both enhance and expand the wet woodland nature reserve to the east managed by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. The wider expanse of woodland should prove more attractive to wildlife and increase bio-diversity. Additionally, the new woodland will act as an important landscape contribution adjacent to the impressive Springfield House. Woodland rides capture and frame the house from within the wood and will provide views out through the wood from the House.
Factors Causing Change

Non-native turkey oak regeneration. Pests and diseases, such as chalara and/or deer pressure.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The aim is to create a diverse mature woodland with a range of native species, age ranges, well structured rides and with deadwood, both standing and fallen, being retained where it is safe to do so. Gaps in the canopy will allow for floral colonisation and regeneration of all species. The main tree species are expected to be pedunculate oak, alder, willow, birch and potentially ash, with a variety of shrub species, including buckthorn, hazel, hawthorn and blackthorn. This area is also to act as a visual and physical extension of the adjoining area of secondary woodland and the landscape surrounding Springfield House.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
During this plan period the aim is to begin adding more diversity and structure to the plantation, improving conditions for natural regeneration to occur and to address the threat posed by ash dieback. This will be achieved by: - Maintaining standing deadwood habitat at a safe distance from public access areas such as footpaths and entrances. - Thinning planted broadleaf trees across the site (2026/7). Approximately 20-25% thin to break up canopy and achieve greater structural diversity in the long term. Aim to remove declining ash within striking distance of paths, promote natural broadleaf regen within the stand where found and to create room for retained trees to develop. - Coppicing a selection of the ride-side shrubs (hazel, alder, willow and buckthorn) on a cyclical rotation to diversify the structure (particularly where alder is beginning to dominate - see management proposal map). <0.1ha per year, over a 10 year cycle. Leave some larger pieces from thinnings/coppicing as fallen deadwood and chip the brash arisings so they lay in a single layer on the floor. - Annually mow/flail between trees/shrubs in northern corner to keep as open habitat. - Annual trimming of roadside boundary hedge.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
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APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	0.1	Mixed broadleaves	1920	Min-intervention	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site	Green Belt
A narrow shelterbelt of mature trees, mainly turkey oak (<i>Quercus cerris</i>), adjoining the road at the north-western corner of the site. Holly forms the main under-story. An old barn was demolished when the Trust purchased the site for safety reasons. It stood at the western end of this Cpt.						
2a	6.76	Mixed native broadleaves	2000	Min-intervention		Green Belt
Cpt 2 forms the main body of the site. This was planted in Feb 2000 with ash, oak and birch forming the main canopy species. Willow was planted at the damper eastern end and this is now being complimented by an impressive quantity of alder natural regeneration. This is also growing within the path area.						

Ancient Woodland

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

Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland

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

Ancient Woodland Site

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

Beating Up

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

Broadleaf

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

Canopy

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

Clearfell

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

Compartment

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

Conifer

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

Continuous Cover forestry

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

Coppice

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

Exotic (non-native) Species

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

Field Layer

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

Group Fell

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

Long Term Retention

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

Minimum Intervention

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

Mixed Woodland

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

National vegetation classification (NVC)

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

Native Species

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

Natural Regeneration

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

Origin & Provenance

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

Re-Stocking

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

Shrub Layer

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

Stand

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

Sub-Compartment

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

Thinning

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

Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes

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

Weeding

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

Windblow/Windthrow

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

Registered Office:

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