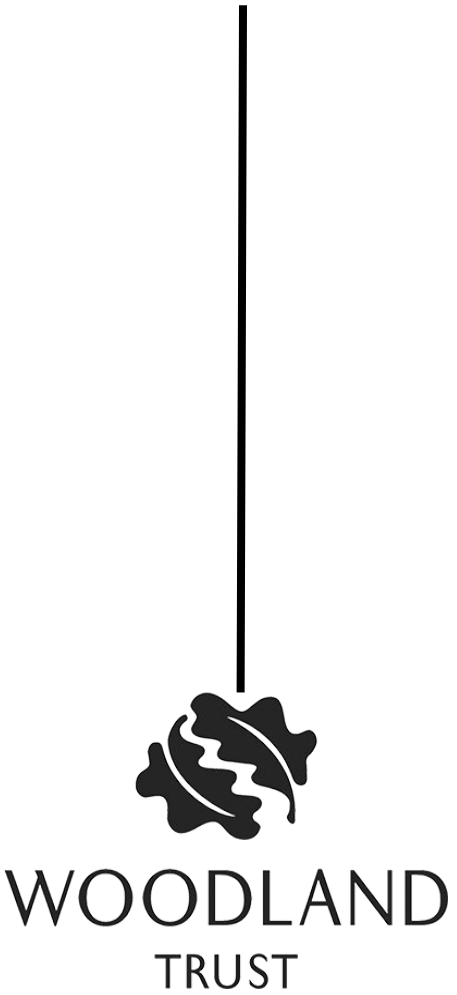
Elkin Wood

(Plan period – 2024 to 2029)



Management Plan Content Page

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

Elkin Wood

Location:	nr Corley Moor, Coventry Grid reference: SP281838 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 140
Area:	4.99 hectares (12.33 acres)
External Designations:	, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Special Landscape Area
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Elkin Wood is a 5-hectare woodland, classed as a Local Wildlife Site and situated within a designated Special Landscape Area to the south of Corley Moor near Coventry with one of the best bluebell displays in the area.

Elkin wood is a Planted Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) that was replanted during the 1970's with a high proportion of conifers (Corsican pine and Scots pine) in the central area. The Woodland Trust have begun the process of returning this ancient woodland site back to a native broadleaf forest. This is being achieved through selective thinning of the conifers and management to encourage natural regeneration from the surrounding trees.

The wood contains a variety of habitats and a wide range of trees and shrubs which includes both younger natural regeneration and mature trees along three of the boundary hedgerows. These hedgerows are varied with mature oaks and ash, dense blackthorn, and some larger hazel coppice stools. To the west and north of the wood there are areas of sycamore and beech, whilst the eastern area has a more varied mix of native broadleaves including birch, rowan, hazel, pedunculate oak, holly, and hawthorn with Douglas fir along the path. Willow, ash and alder are found around the seasonal pond.

Beneath the conifers there is a developing understory layer with established natural regeneration. Bracken and bramble have become quite dense under the lighter canopy, making conditions difficult for any new natural regeneration to become established, and also preventing bluebells from growing. Bluebells, wood sorrel and Yellow Archangel, all plants associated with ancient woodland, are found throughout the wood with honeysuckle concentrated in the east.

The site is predominantly flat and generally free-draining, with a gentle slope running down towards the northern boundary where there is a small ditch-fed pond. Bordered on two sides by a quiet road, Elkin Wood is surrounded by farmland, and although isolated from other woodland, the surrounding hedgerows provide some connectivity. Management access to the wood is via a double field gate from Clay Lane to the south which leads into a timber stacking/loading area. Pedestrian access is via three kissing gates, two along the southern boundary and one in the northern corner leading to a network of paths around the wood.

Key Features for this site include:
KF1 Connecting People with Woods & Trees
KF2 Planted Ancient Woodland Site

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Elkin Wood will continue to develop into a mature, predominantly broadleaved woodland. It will be diverse in tree species and structure with a good mixture of both young and mature trees, as well as understorey species. This will enable the wood to be more resilient to change in the future and will ensure it supports the greatest range of wildlife. Silvicultural management will take place when necessary to ensure these woodland conditions are present and to encourage natural regeneration to occur. Ancient woodland features, both historic and ecological, will be secured and enhanced across the site e.g. deadwood, trees and understorey shrubs, archaeological features and woodland plants. This will be achieved through a thinning programme over a number of decades reducing the proportion of non-native conifers and assisting the wood's development toward a predominantly native species mix. The seasonal pond (identified as an important humid microclimate in Coventry Wildlife Surveys 1982/83/91) will be retained and the area kept clear of any encroaching vegetation and overshading by adjacent trees. The ditch will be monitored and any debris cleared to ensure water flow. Public access will be maintained in perpetuity through a managed network of paths and entrances. Infrastructure such as entrances, gates and welcome signs will be maintained to a good standard and the wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors to use, through regular safety inspections.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description
Elkin Wood is in walking distance of Corley Moor, is well used by the local community, and particularly so when the bluebells are flowering. There are three entrances with kissing gates, two from Clay Lane in the south and one in the northern corner from Watery Lane. These lead to a network of around 1250m of unsurfaced permissive footpaths which can be wet, especially in the north. Woodland Trust welcome signage can be found at the entrance points to the site and there is a bench along the central footpath.
Significance
The wood provides a quiet and attractive area for informal recreation and dog walking, mainly enjoyed by the local community. A woodland with open public access within an agricultural landscape. The wood provides a short cut from Watery Lane to Clay Lane for pedestrians. The bluebell display in spring attracts many local visitors.
Opportunities & Constraints
Opportunities: Enhancing and diversifying the woodland leading to a more interesting and attractive wood for visitors. Ancient woodland site. Constraints: Access difficult in places due to terrain and unsurfaced footpaths. Very limited local parking, the wood is especially busy at bluebell time.
Factors Causing Change
Change in nature and volume of visitor use. Possible Watery Lane restrictions. Woodland management operations such as thinning/timber harvesting may impact publicly accessible areas in the short term. Ground conditions may also be affected after such operations. Path deterioration and encroachment to avoid wet ground. Paths encroaching on sensitive ground flora - especially bluebells.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
Elkin wood will remain open to the public in perpetuity. Facilities at the wood will be low key, with a managed path network, and the main entrances will be signed and welcoming to visitors. Regular safety inspections to trees and furniture will be conducted to ensure the site is kept safe for the enjoyment of visitors.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

The short-term objective during this plan period is to maintain informal and low-key public access. This will be achieved by mowing/cutting back vegetation along the footpath network to a minimum width of 2 meters and ensuring the three entrances are accessible and welcoming.
The dens and fire pits will be monitored and removed if necessary.
The bridges will be replaced crossing the streams that are feeding/exiting the pond or this path will be closed/redirected more suitably.

4.2 f2 Planted Ancient Woodland Site

Description

Elkin Wood is a Planted Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS). Thinning has begun in the central area, and although still dominated by Scots pine and Corsican pine, a variety of native tree and shrub species have established beneath. Dense bramble has also grown which is now reducing the opportunity for further natural regeneration and preventing the bluebells from flowering. To the west and north of the wood there are areas of sycamore and beech, whilst the eastern area has a more varied mix of native broadleaves including birch, rowan, hazel, pedunculate oak, holly, and hawthorn with Douglas fir along the path. Willow, ash and alder are found around the seasonal pond. Established hedgerows with mature oak and ash, dense blackthorn, and some larger hazel coppice stools form three of the boundaries. A small stream/ditch flows through the wood to an area of wetland and seasonal pond in the north of the site.

Significance

Ancient woodland is a dwindling and irreplaceable habitat which over centuries has developed a sensitive ecosystem. Elkin Wood has been woodland since at least 1600 and has an extensive bluebell ground flora which is associated with ancient woodlands. The restoration of PAWS such as Elkin Wood to native broadleaved woodland will begin to rebuild a resilient woodland ecosystem, provide diverse woodland habitats and ensure it supports the greatest range of wildlife.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities: -
To increase native broadleaves within the woodland by appropriate thinning of conifers and allowing natural regeneration of trees and shrubs of local provenance.
To increase the structural and age diversity of the single aged plantation.
To provide conditions for woodland flora and fauna to develop.
To enhance the pond habitat within the site.

Constraints
Difficult management access for harvesting and haulage purposes.
Damage to soil structure by heavy machinery.

Factors Causing Change

Windthrow
Disease or pathogenic infection affecting the mortality of tree species.
Shading from conifer
Increase in coarse vegetation after woodland operations
Increase in herbivore browsing levels

Invasive/non-native species (e.g. laurel)
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The ancient woodland characteristics of mature trees, bluebells and associated ground flora, coppice and wetland area will be maintained and enhanced through intervention and natural regeneration to create a resilient, attractive woodland with a varied age structure and diverse habitats.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
Some thinning of conifers will take place during the next management plan period to create areas for the natural regeneration of broadleaf species (2027/8). Management of bramble and bracken to reduce dominance, promote other ancient woodland flora and ensure that a range of species are able to establish. Some thinning and coppicing of the single age beech and sycamore areas will allow the retained trees to develop a good crown structure and diversify the age and structure of the area. Water features in ancient woodland sites are valuable habitat and the pond will be retained and managed to prevent it from drying up through clearing any encroaching vegetation and allowing sunlight into the pond area by clearing any overhanging trees and shrubs, particularly on the south side. Carry out PAWS assessment to inform next management plan review. Regular cutting of laurel (every 2 years) to restrict spread.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2025	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone B	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside routes such as paths and rides within the woodland	May
2025	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	September
2025	SL - Routine Safety Work	Works associated with undertaking planned visitor and structure safety orientated actions, such as erection/creation or maintenance of safety features such as fencing, rails, re-pointing of retaining walls etc	October
2025	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2026	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	September
2027	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	September
2027	WMM - Secondary Silviculture	Works associated with silvicultural operations within secondary woods 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	December
2028	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	September
2029	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	September

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	1.6	Scots pine	1970	PAWS restoration		Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Special Landscape Area
Broadly rectangular compartment dominated by Scots pine and Corsican pine (the latter less so), especially to the south and west. Rowan, Birch, (forming an understory) are also relatively common with a small proportion of Sycamore and Pedunculate oak (probably planted). In less shaded areas ground flora is dominated by bracken and bramble, although bluebell is present through most of the compartment. To the north-east of the compartment is a seasonal pond surrounded by Alder, Birch and Rowan. A dense carpet of locally scarce Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage occupies the pond bed. Standing and fallen Course Woody Debris (CWD) is present throughout. Conservation feature 'Pond' (CF1) found at the centre of the site within compartment 1a - A seasonal pond and wet woodland area found within sub-compartment 1a. A small drainage system feeds a marshy hollow at the woods centre which has been identified as an important humid microclimate (Coventry Wildlife Surveys 1982, 1983 and 1991). It is sheltered and shaded supporting a number of uncommon insect species and contains a dense carpet of locally scarce Opposite Leaved Golden Saxifrage.						
1b	2.2	Corsican pine	1970	PAWS restoration		Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Special Landscape Area
Sub-compartment 1B is an inverted 'L' shape occupying the north and east parts of the wood. An old bank and ditch forms the southern boundary. Scots and Corsican pine dominate and share canopy with Birch, Sycamore and oak. Canopy Beech is found to the north and east (mature examples along the north boundary). Understorey is shared by Oak, Rowan, Holly (some large examples) and Hazel, with regeneration profuse in clumps. Several individual Douglas fir are found along the path to the east. Blackthorn is found along the south edge. Ground flora is bracken and bramble with significant growth of Elder and Thorn alongside the above natural regeneration. Bluebell exists throughout. Honeysuckle is rampant through most of 1B and climbs pine particularly.						
2a	1.2	Sycamore	1965	Min-intervention		Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Special Landscape Area
Sub-compartment 2A is broadly rectangular and occupies the west portion of the wood. Sycamore (some evidence of historic coppice management) dominates the canopy, mixed intimately with Beech, Scots and Corsican pine with Birch and Pedunculate oak to a lesser degree. Understorey is sparse but Rowan, Holly, Birch and						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
Sycamore are found. Ground flora is also sparse with bracken and bramble occupying the less shaded areas. Bluebell is found throughout. CWD (Course Woody Debris) is found standing and fallen.						

GLOSSARY

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.