

Gullivers Spinney

(Plan period – 2024 to 2029)



WOODLAND
TRUST

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Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

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

Our Vision is:

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

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

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

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

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

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

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

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

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

The Public Management Plan

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

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

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

Please either consult The Woodland Trust website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

or contact the Woodland Trust

operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk

to confirm details of the current management programme.

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

Location and Access

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

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

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

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

The Management Plan

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
 - 4.1 F1 Informal Public Access
 - 4.2 F2 Feature Trees
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Gullivers Spinney

Location:	Souldrop	Grid	reference:	SP983614	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	153
Area:	2.05 hectares (5.07 acres)								
External Designations:	Area of Landscape Value, Tree Preservation Order								
Internal Designations:	N/A								

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

This trowel-shaped wood of approximately 2 hectares straddles a shallow valley to the southwest of the village of Souldrop just south of Rushden, Beds. The western boundary is formed by Back Lane whereas the eastern boundary is formed by Church Farm, with the yard to the north and open fields (grazed) to the southeast. The southern boundary is separated from the mainline railway by a narrow meadow.

The wood is made up of two contrasting types. The narrow southern arm is mature mixed conifer and broadleaf high forest, planted initially in the nineteenth century, with a well developed understorey and field layer; whereas the northern section is a mixed conifer/broadleaf plantation of exotic and native species planted by the Gulliver brothers of Church Farm from 1977 onwards. The plantation, on former agricultural land and with low light levels, supports a minimal understorey and a dense field layer of nettle with occasional bramble and elder. Recently (early 2010's) there has been an increase in the levels of windthrow within the plantation sub-cmpts.

The canopy of the southern high forest is made up of large specimens of Austrian pine, European larch and ash which represent the initial planting, with sycamore, horse chestnut and poplar making up the subsequent planting from the mid twentieth century. The understorey is variable in both structure and composition. In some locations blackthorn thickets dominate whilst in others hawthorn and regenerating sycamore are more prevalent. There was an attempt to plant beech in the 1990s but these have largely failed to thrive. The ground flora is composed of grass species together with localised occurrences of herb robert, ground ivy, nettle and dogs mercury.

The woodland habitats are enhanced by two silted and semi-derelict ponds on the western edge of the plantation and by a stream/drainage ditch which emerges from Church Farm, goes through a culvert under the pedestrian path to Pear Tree Cottage and then emerges to the south and flows along the eastern boundary of the southern block of high forest. The loamy-clay soil makes the site prone to waterlogging in areas and this, as well as the sloped areas of the site and limited access to parts, means potential for extraction is limited. Steps and a bridge have been installed to improve public access over the ditch between cmpts 1a and 1b. Compartment 1a, the mature woodland, is covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

Within the plantation are a large number of exotic broadleaved and coniferous trees planted in single straight rows. This represented the desire of the Gulliver brothers to establish both a commercial plantation and a collection of interesting trees from all over the temperate world. *Northofagus* from southern hemisphere, western red cedar and grand fir from the Pacific coast, silver and ash leaved maple from the Atlantic coast of North America as well as cultivars derived from our native trees such as Dawych and cut-leaved beech. The wood was donated to the Trust by the Gulliver family in the hope that some aspects of the initial vision would be maintained. The Trust will manage the plantation in order to make the most of the 'collection' whilst at the same time fulfilling the WTs objectives of protecting native woodland and inspiring people to enjoy and value woods and trees.

Key features are informal public access and feature trees (the latter covering the collection of exotic broadleaved and coniferous trees of special interest).

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Aims are to create and maintain a resilient mature woodland, with a diverse species and age composition and well-developed structure, including shrub and field layers. Low key public access will be maintained in perpetuity and the site will contain a small network of well-maintained attractive paths and safe infrastructure. Entrances, facilities and path network will be appropriate for level and type of use and in line with the sites access category. Use of the site will be monitored and provisions for informal recreation reviewed accordingly. Management will ensure that the appreciation of a local cultural curio is maintained, at the same time as protecting native trees and woodland biodiversity. The species mix originally planted by the Gulliver brothers will be retained wherever possible.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 F1 Informal Public Access

Description
There are four pedestrian access points to the site, 3 along Back Lane and 1 in the southern corner. Within the plantation of mixed broadleaves and conifers which forms sub-compartments 1b and 1c, a permissive path has been established which links the pedestrian entrance by Church Farm in the north-east with the grassy track which runs the length of the mature high forest of sub-compartment 1a. Further pedestrian access is onto Back Lane adjacent to Rose Cottage, as well as further to the south-west. The PROW was diverted in 2018 by National Rail (to avoid directly crossing the railway) and now enters the site in the southern corner, heading north-east to exit the site onto Back Lane. There are approximately 500m of other permissive paths. All access points have standard WT welcome/exit signage.
Significance
The area around the village of Souldrop is well-provided with public footpaths but most of these cross agricultural land with the additional restrictions. Gulliver's Spinney, as well as providing an alternative amenity landscape, does not raise the same restrictions. Additionally, the woodland, which was planted somewhat idiosyncratically and subsequently donated by the Gulliver family (former occupiers of Church Farm) is valued by the village as part of their local heritage. A key objective of the Trust is to inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees and, by allowing free public access, Gulliver's Spinney can contribute to this.
Opportunities & Constraints
Opportunity to retain the involvement and interest of the local community by making the site interesting, attractive and easy to visit for relatively able bodied people. The footpath, which runs the length of sub-compartment 1a, does not provide a circular route. However it does follow a benched grassy track passable in all weathers and gives the public views of the brook, the mature woodland and the countryside beyond.
Factors Causing Change
Derelict and declining mature Ash ADB and other pests and diseases Maturing trees and windthrow risk Saturation of ground near ponds
Long term Objective (50 years+)

A woodland that contains a small network of well-maintained attractive paths and safe infrastructure. Entrances, facilities and path network will be appropriate for level and type of use and in line with access category C. The wood will remain open to the public for quiet informal recreation predominantly by local residents.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
Ensure paths are accessible and welcoming through cutting twice a year (including overhanging vegetation), litter picking and maintaining entrances and signs in good condition. Repair and replace as necessary furniture, bridges, and gates. Remove/coppice maple regeneration along paths and manage cyclically. Annually clear culvert. Carry out annual tree safety inspection along roadside/property boundaries and internal tree safety inspection along paths every 2 years. Carry out remedial work as dictated by the surveys and Woodland Trust policies. Potentially redirect the footpath in the east of the site to avoid high levels of ash and allow them to decline naturally and safely, continuing to offer ecological value. Assess ponds and drainage ditches and potentially clear and restore, should funding become available.

4.2 F2 Feature Trees

Description
A collection of exotic broadleaved and coniferous trees of special interest. The two sub-compartments, totalling 1.28 ha were planted from 1977 onwards by the Gulliver brothers of Church Farm and represent an idiosyncratic collection of largely exotic broadleaved and coniferous trees. The conifers comprise western red cedar, grand fir, Norway spruce and maritime pine. The broadleaves contain some unusual species and varieties such as ash-leaved acer, Dawych beech, cut-leaved beech, silver maple and southern beech. See Appendix A for full species list.
Significance
It is almost unique that such a variety of species should be planted with representative specimens from all over the temperate world and this novel situation provides the Trust with the opportunity to create something different which should appeal both to the public and as a memorial to the Gulliver family.
Opportunities & Constraints
The plantation has been largely unthinned and as a consequence many of the trees are heavily suppressed. This is particularly true of the native broadleaves such as pedunculate oak and common beech. Care should be taken on such a small site when selective thinning to produce a high forest with a great variety of native and exotic specimen trees. Despite the Trust's core aim of protecting native trees, there is scope to cater for non-natives at the site without impacting on the woodland biodiversity. The exotic species should enhance the public amenity of the site and may provide additional educational interest if the specimens were labelled.
Factors Causing Change
Natural succession to high forest Pests and diseases (current and forecast) with wide range of potential host tree species present
Long term Objective (50 years+)

Healthy, mature and attractive woodland with native and exotic species, varying structure and mixed habitats. A mixture of trees, woody shrubs and tall-herb communities. Well functioning streams and ponds with associated flora and fauna, fully integrating as part of the overall woodland habitat.

The essential elements of the collection of exotic and native trees will be identified and managed in such a way that individual trees will be a prominent feature of Gulliver's Spinney. This will have the effect of preserving the original vision of the Gulliver brothers, enhancing public and educational interest and protecting the biodiversity of the woodland.

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

With appropriate consents, thin and selective fell approximately 10% of the trees, favouring the best and most wind firm specimens within the woodland and helping develop the understorey by breaking up the closed canopy.

Cyclically coppice/cut the maple regeneration along path sides, back to around 2m from path.

Carry out annual tree safety inspection along roadside boundary and internal tree safety inspection along paths every 2 years. Carry out remedial work as dictated by the surveys and Woodland Trust policies.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2024	SL - Tree Safety Emergency Work	Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs	October
2024	SL - Emergency Safety Works	Works associated with unplanned emergency safety works, other than tree safety, such as repairs/restoration works after damage caused by storms / floods /landslips	December
2024	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	February
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	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2025	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	December
2025	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	December
2026	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	December
2026	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	December
2026	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
2027	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	December
2027	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing	December

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
		pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	
2028	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	December
2028	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Retrieving data. Wait a few seconds and try to cut or copy again.	December

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	0.8	Ash	1880	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Area of Landscape Value, Tree Preservation Order
This sub-compartment is bounded by Back Lane to the west and the south-flowing stream/drain to the east. The stream and steep associated banks at the northern end separate this sub-cpt from those to the north for management purposes. A management access gate is located at the northern end adjacent to the cottages. The sub-cpt is approximately 220m long and 40m wide. The largest trees, Austrian pine (<i>Pinus nigra</i> var. <i>nigra</i>) and ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) have dbhs of 81 and 66 respectively, 26m top height and were probably planted at the end of the C19th. There are also a number of mature larch (<i>Larix decidua</i>), poplar (<i>Populus</i> var.) and horse chestnut (<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>). There are a number of ash trees which form the eastern field boundary which may pre-date the bulk of the wood but some of these are increasingly decrepit and tumbled down. A number of beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>) were planted in small groups in 1990 but have struggled to establish. Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>), sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>) and hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) form the sub-canopy in those locations where it is present. The field layer is both varied and diverse being made up of dog's mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>), herb robert (<i>Geranium robertianum</i>), nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>) and ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>). The compartment is covered by a Tree Preservation Order.						
1b	0.75	Mixed broadleaves	1977	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, No/poor vehicular access to the site	Area of Landscape Value
The drainage ditch which emerges from under Pear Tree Cottage, along with the cottage itself, forms the physical western boundary of this sub-compartment which is roughly rectangular. To the north a remnant ditch forms the northern boundary, whilst the eastern and southern edges are defined by the surrounding agricultural pasture land. Tree planting runs down the slope towards the ditch/drain with a block of Norway spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>) in the centre. The planting, which was undertaken largely before the Trust's acquisition, can best be described as idiosyncratic. Subsequent small-scale planting of broadleaves by the Trust in the mid 1990s also conformed to the established pattern. The species list is lodged as Appendix A. A pond/wet hollow is located in the north-western corner of the sub-cpt, fed by the pond in sub-cpt 1c to the north. The pond overflows to the south with ground between it and the drainage ditch often saturated and sodden with a consequent increased risk of windthrow of vulnerable stems. A permissive footpath runs parallel to the eastern and southern boundaries.						
1c	0.5	Mixed conifers	1980	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Area of Landscape Value

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
This sub-compartment is roughly triangular with its apex to the north. It is bounded by Back Lane to the west and the outbuildings of Church Farm to the east. The planting structure is very similar to that of sub-compartment 1b being generally of one species in one row. The estimated planting year is 1980. The species selection of both broadleaves and coniferous is largely exotic and includes some interesting specimens such as cut-leaved beech, northofagus and ash leaved acer. A complete list is submitted as Appendix A. The area was thinned in 2005 and 2010. There is a derelict pond in the south-western corner which is encircled by a few coppiced poplars (last cut 2016) and horse chestnuts of a greater age than the rest of the plantation. The western edge of this sub-cpt adjacent Pear Tree Cottage and its outbuildings suffered some windthrow in 2017 (storm Doris) with all stems falling towards the east.						

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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