

# Grappenhall Wood

(Plan period – 2026 to 2036)



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](http://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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

or contact the Woodland Trust

[operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk)

to confirm details of the current management programme.

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

## Location and Access

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

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

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

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

# The Management Plan

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2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
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5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### Grappenhall Wood

Location:	Warrington Grid reference: SJ641858 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 109
Area:	8.09 hectares (19.99 acres)
External Designations:	Community Forest, Woods on your Doorstep
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Grappenhall Wood is approximately 8 hectares of native broadleaved woodland near to the village of Grappenhall in Cheshire, about 4.5 miles to the south of Warrington and about 1 mile to the west of the M6 motorway near to junction 20.

The local landscape is predominantly arable farmland interspersed with hedgerows and small wooded copses, however the area is becoming increasingly urbanised with new housing developments being built nearby at Grappenhall Heys and Appleton Thorn and approximately 4500 new homes are planned to be built in the area over the next 20 years. The Woodland Trust owns several other woodlands within a two mile radius of the site including Grappenhall Heys Woodland and Lumb Brook Valley. The site lies between thirty to forty metres above sea level, and the terrain is flat at the southern end with a gentle slope towards the northern aspect. The soil is sandy-loam to sandy-clay-loam with a sandstone substrate.

The site was purchased by the Woodland Trust in 1997 and was planted with native broadleaves in 1998/99 as part of the Woodland Trust's millennium project "Woods on Your Doorstep" (WOYD) to create 200 new community woodlands for the millennium. Secondary woodland is a key feature of the site and approximately 6 hectares of the site was planted with oak, ash, silver birch, wild cherry, rowan, common alder and hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly and dog rose and the remaining 2 hectares were left as meadows and for path rides. An overhead high voltage electricity line passes through the middle of the site from SE to NW. There is a small pond located on the eastern boundary which is fed by rainfall and runoff from the neighbouring farmland. All the boundaries comprise native thorny hedgerows and approximately 800m of new native hedgerow was planted along the western boundary of the site, where there is a small stream, which is located outside of the Trust's ownership.

The site has Informal public access as a key feature. Visitor numbers are quite low at present, and the site is mainly used by local people for dog walking and a local forest school uses it for environmental education activities. There are two public access points located on Broad Lane and from Canal Side in Grappenhall village with a public footpath that runs through the site between the two entrances. In total there is approximately 1400 metres of grass permissive footpaths, including the public footpath. Parking is available at a small layby on Broad Lane with space for 3 cars and there is limited parking in Grappenhall village, although parking restrictions apply on the main street. There is a wooden sculpture called "The Wizard of The Woods" near the Broad Lane entrance which was designed by pupils from Grappenhall Hall Residential School and created by the artist Paul Noon as a Millennium feature for the wood. A Woodland Trust volunteer group carry out practical woodland management tasks on site including coppicing and Himalayan balsam removal.

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intention is to create and maintain a high forest of native broadleaves with a diverse woodland structure and a varied mix of species, age classes, shrub and ground layer. It will be managed as secondary woodland habitat for nature with informal public access for people.

Management operations will be guided by the Woodland Trust's woodland management principles, conservation and access policies, and will continue to seek a balance between conservation and public access. The key drivers for management will be for public access, tree safety and nature conservation. Woodland management operations will be undertaken for stand stability to restructure the species and age composition and for tree safety, in particular to deal with ash dieback. Natural regeneration will be promoted for the development of future trees in the woodland. Regular monitoring of the woodland condition and any threats to the woodland will be undertaken to guide future management operations with the long term aim to make the woodland more resilient to threats from climate change, pests and diseases.

The open ground areas will be managed to create a mosaic of open ground habitats, retaining some open areas as meadow and others will be left to naturally transition eventually into scrub habitat. The pond will be subject to minimal intervention.

The current level of public access will be maintained with 2 entrances and approximately 1400m of paths maintained through the annual Estates Maintenance Contract. The Trust's duty of care to visitors and neighbours will continue to be met through on-going tree safety inspections and site risk assessments.

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

<b>Description</b>
<p>Grappenhall Wood was created as a community woodland as part of the Woods on Your Doorstep (WOYD) project to provide new access to woodlands for the local communities in Grappenhall village and Grappenhall Heys. The site has approximately 1400 metres of permissive grass footpaths and two public access points. The main entrance on Broad Lane has a wooden pedestrian kissing gate and management access gate, and the second entrance has a metal kissing gate. A public footpath runs through the wood from Grappenhall Village to Broad Lane. New wooden gates and a new sign was fitted at the Broad Lane entrance in 2024 along with the creation of an area of hardstanding and surfacing approximately 200m of footpath from the entrance.</p> <p>Parking is available on Broad Lane where there is a small layby with space for three cars. The site is used mainly by local people for dog walking and currently has low numbers of visitors. It is also used on a regular basis by a local Forest School for environmental education activities.</p>
<b>Significance</b>
<p>In accordance with the Woodland Trusts general aims the site is open to the public for quiet informal pedestrian activities. It is part of the Mersey Forest, and close to the village of Grappenhall Wood. The planned future development of thousands of new houses in the areas around Grappenhall Heys and Appleton means that the site will become more popular as a location to provide opportunities for informal recreation for the growing population nearby.</p>
<b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>
<p>Car parking at the site is limited to the layby on Broad Lane which is a constraint to increasing visitor numbers from far away. The majority of visitors to site will likely be local people from Grappenhall village and nearby residential areas who either walk to site or have a short drive from their home.</p> <p>The site is often wet due to the underlying soil and the path network can become muddy especially during winter months, which is likely to limit visitor numbers. There may be opportunities to enhance public access through surfacing some of the path in the future, if there is funding available in conjunction with the new housing developments in the area or from other sources.</p> <p>The site already offers opportunities for engagement with local volunteers through the existing Woodland Working Group and there may be opportunities to expand this as the population of the local area grows.</p> <p>Given the limited parking at the site, this will always be a constraint to holding events and activities involving more than a handful of people.</p>
<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
<p>Further housing developments that are planned in the local area will more than likely lead to a significant increase in public use of the site and will result in greater wear and tear to footpaths and access infrastructure. It may also be likely</p>

to lead to more anti-social behaviour issues such as littering, dog fouling, fires and vandalism .  
 Scrub encroachment along path rides is an issue that needs regular maintenance to prevent this having a detrimental impact on public access and the visitor experience.

**Long term Objective (50 years+)**

The woodland will continue to provide an amenity for local people to enjoy nature with a network of well-maintained paths and entrances and signage will have a welcoming appearance. The site will be well maintained and made as safe as practicable for visitors through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones, site hazards and access infrastructure. Where opportunities arise to engage local communities, then small-scale low key activities will be encouraged such as volunteering to help maintain the woodland and environmental education activities.

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

Access provision will be in keeping with WT access guidelines and will be achieved by ensuring that:  
 The two entrances & signage are welcoming to visitors and well maintained (annually).  
 The network of 1400m of footpath is easy to use and clear of encroaching vegetation by cutting all paths 3 times a year during spring/ summer months.  
 The site is kept safe and welcoming by removing any litter/ fly tipping (as necessary), clearing any fallen or dangerous trees which affect public access and carrying out regular tree safety and site risk assessment inspections as per the SRA regime.  
 Public use and impacts on the site will be monitored once in the plan period, to assess whether the current quality of public access is adequate, to identify any issues or threats from public use of the wood, and take appropriate action to address them if necessary.  
 Volunteering activity will be supported to provide opportunities for people to get involved with helping to manage the site.

**4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland**

**Description**

Grappenhall Wood was planted in 1998/99 with a mix of native broadleaved trees comprising English oak, ash, silver birch, wild cherry, rowan, common alder. Woody shrubs (hazel, holly, hawthorn, blackthorn and dog rose) were planted on the margins of the blocks to create a graded woodland edge. Approximately 2.2ha of the site was left as open ground and wide grass rides between the new plantings. There are hedges along all the boundaries and the planting included 800m of gapping up and new hedgerow. Grasses are the dominant plant in the ground layer. Tree establishment has been successful with oak, birch and ash doing well across most of the site, but alder, cherry & rowan have struggled in some areas. Other habitats include a restored pond on the eastern boundary and a stream that runs along the western boundary (that is outside the Trusts ownership).

**Significance**

Cheshire is one of the least wooded counties in England with less than 5% woodland cover. This new community woodland has created a significant landscape feature which forms part of the local ecological network and is linked to other nearby semi-natural habitats in the local area by hedgerows and the stream that passes by the wood. The wood provides a valuable habitat, food source and nesting sites for a variety of birds and small mammals.

### **Opportunities & Constraints**

Silvicultural management will create opportunities to diversify the structure and species mix in the woodland which has developed stands of mostly even-aged, uniform species in straight planting rows.

Management access is restricted to the entrance from Broad Lane and there are no surfaced tracks on the site. During the autumn/ winter months, the ground conditions on site become very wet/ muddy in places which is a constraint for vehicle access.

There are opportunities to engage local people through carrying out woodland management and for people to volunteer and help with looking after the woodland.

### **Factors Causing Change**

Ash dieback is likely to lead to the loss of a significant proportion of Ash trees in the wood.

The canopy closure is limiting light levels for natural regen of tree and shrubs as well as development of ground flora.

Himalayan balsam is found along the western boundary of the site by the stream and needs controlling to stop it spreading further into the wood.

### **Long term Objective (50 years+)**

The aim is to create a high forest of mixed native broadleaves. The wood will be managed predominantly as a conservation and recreational feature which will involve maintaining the diverse mix of species, natural regeneration of both natives and non-native species will be accepted. Overtime the volume of deadwood will increase across the site.

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

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

Monitor the health and resilience of the woodland and identify any threats from tree diseases, pests, mammals or human impacts by carrying out a woodland condition assessment once in the plan period.

Carry out thinning operation to diversify the age and species structure and to encourage natural regeneration and ground flora growth. This work is planned for 2027/28.

WT volunteers are carrying out small scale thinning work annually (felling approx. 30-40 trees per year).

Control invasive Himalayan balsam to stop it becoming established and spreading further on site. This work is being done by WT volunteers annually.

## 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	5.14	Oak (pedunculate)	1999	High forest	Services & wayleaves	Community Forest
<p>The compartment is flat with a very slight northern aspect and occupies the area to the north east of the public footpath and overhead power line. It is 80% woodland and 20% open space including footpaths, rides and a pond on the eastern boundary. The planting mix comprises English oak 40%, ash 30%, silver birch 5%, wild cherry 5%, rowan 5%, common alder 5% and 10% woody shrubs (hazel, holly, hawthorn, blackthorn and dog rose) planted on the margins of the blocks to create a graded woodlands edge. Prior to planting the site was seeded with low vigour grasses. The north east and eastern boundaries are hedgerows abutting farmland. A public footpath from Grappenhall village enters the compartment in the north-west corner and continues into compartment 2a. The compartment will require trees thinning out to promote succession of the woodland and creating a mix of ages and encouraging natural regeneration of species, thus improving the diversity of the woodland, and increasing the variety of habitats available to the local flora and fauna.</p>						
2a	2.96	Oak (pedunculate)	1999	High forest	Services & wayleaves	Community Forest
<p>This compartment has a gently westward slope and occupies the area of the site to the south west of the public footpath and overhead power line. It is 62% new native woodland planted in three mixed stands and 38% open space including footpaths and rides. The planting mix comprises English oak 40%, ash 30%, silver birch 5%, wild cherry 5%, rowan 5%, common alder 5% and 10% woody shrubs (hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly and dog rose) planted on the margins of the blocks to create a graded woodlands edge. Prior to planting the compartment was seeded with low vigour grasses. The western boundary abuts a stream and is defined by a hedge and stock fence. The southern boundary abuts Broad Lane and is defined by a hedge. A public footpath passes through the compartment to Broad Lane where there is a management gate and pedestrian access point with kissing gate. The compartment will require trees thinning out to promote succession of the woodland and creating a mix of ages and encouraging natural regeneration of species, thus improving the diversity of the woodland, and increasing the variety of habitats available to the local flora and fauna.</p>						

### **Ancient Woodland**

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

### **Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland**

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

### **Ancient Woodland Site**

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

### **Beating Up**

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

### **Broadleaf**

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

### **Canopy**

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

### **Clearfell**

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

### **Compartment**

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

### **Conifer**

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

### **Continuous Cover forestry**

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

**Coppice**

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

**Exotic (non-native) Species**

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

**Field Layer**

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

**Group Fell**

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

**Long Term Retention**

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

**Minimum Intervention**

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

**Mixed Woodland**

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

**National vegetation classification (NVC)**

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

**Native Species**

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

**Natural Regeneration**

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

**Origin & Provenance**

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

**Re-Stocking**

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

**Shrub Layer**

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

**Silviculture**

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

**Stand**

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

**Sub-Compartment**

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

**Thinning**

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

**Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes**

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

**Weeding**

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

**Windblow/Windthrow**

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

**Registered Office:**

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

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