

Hargate Forest

(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 Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin
 - 4.2 f2 Natural Secondary Woodland
 - 4.3 f3 Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat
 - 4.4 f4 Connecting People with woods & trees
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Hargate Forest

Location:

Tunbridge Wells Grid reference: TQ574370 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 188

Area:

61.72 hectares (152.51 acres)

External Designations:

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Internal Designations:

Ancient Woodland Restoration Project

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Hargate Forest is a large area of mixed coniferous and broadleaved woodland, immediately south of Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Apart from the main public and management entrance off Broadwater Down (in Tunbridge Wells, Kent), the wood lies within the Wealden District of East Sussex and is also within the High Weald National Landscape (NL) and Natural Character Area (NCA). The NCA is characterised by east-west sandstone ridges and valleys covered by a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways. The underlying geology is Cretaceous Ashdown Beds which give rise to very acid, often waterlogged podzol soils. The site is very prominent in the landscape particularly from the south.

The site was acquired by the Woodland Trust in October 1996, having previously been part of the nearby Nevill Estate. The purchase was assisted by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and a successful local fundraising campaign organised by the Friends of Hargate Forest. Two further extensions, known as the Bunker Area (subcompartment 1e), and the Old Scout Field (subcompartment 4d) were purchased in November 2025 from the Nevill Estate, again assisted by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the High Weald NL Partnership and a successful local fundraising campaign. These additions bring the total area to 70.84 hectares/175 acres. As these acquisitions have completed within the plan period, this plan has been amended in February 2026 to include these new subcompartments.

The site is well documented, being historically part of Eridge Park and the wider Waterdown Forest which was one of the four Forests of the Sussex Weald, along with Ashdown, Worth and St Leonards. Map and other evidence suggest a history of open heath enclosed piecemeal and 'improved' in the post-medieval period. The site was known as Hargate Forest and planted with conifers from the 1846 Tithe map onwards. 'The Old Carriageway', a route between Eridge Castle and St Mark's church, also dates from this time. The ride was originally lined by exotic conifers (some of which are still in place) and rhododendrons which were cleared in 2009. The Bunker Area is named after the Second World War underground army headquarters constructed in 1941/42, known then as The Wilderness. The structure was never used due to flooding issues. There are 3 above-ground entrance structures still visible.

The Forest contains a variety of woodland types and other habitats. There are areas of semi-mature conifers (Scots and Corsican pine, western hemlock, larch and Douglas fir) planted in 1950 and 1960. The north-east of the site has a large area of younger mixed conifers (Corsican pine, Scots pine, Norway spruce, Japanese larch) planted in 1986. The southern part of the wood south of Sprat's Brook is largely broadleaved, with part known as the Old Forest (subcompartment 4c). This area along with the gills containing Sprat's Brook and its tributaries, contain a number of ancient woodland indicator species such as wood anemone and bluebell as well as coppiced trees although none of the site is designated as ancient woodland. There are three areas of mixed broadleaved re-stocking planted in 1993 and 1995 (sub compartments 2b, 3e and 4a).

At the highest point of the site (c130m) is an area of open lowland heathland. This was created from areas of windblown and fire-damaged conifer plantations in 1998 and extended in 2009. The eastern part provides views across Broadwater Warren to Ashdown Forest. Ground flora includes heather (ling), cross-leaved heath, purple moor grass and dwarf gorse.

There are two entrance points for visitors from Broadwater Down with on-street parking only. The recently acquired

Bunker Area secures one of these entrances, previously under a licence. The site has a good network of wide rides and smaller paths which allow for high levels of public access. Some rides also have a high conservation value due to their ground flora and provide additional open habitat.

Since acquiring the site the Woodland Trust has undertaken extensive works including restoration conifer thinning, coppicing, ride management and extensive clearance of *Rhododendron ponticum*. The main access track and entrance from Broadwater Down was up-graded in 2022 and one of the main rides was regraded to improve public access.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

In 50 years' time Hargate Forest will be predominantly broadleaved woodland with areas of lowland heathland and acid grassland in the form of managed large clearings, glades and wide rides. Some mature conifers will be present across the site providing additional structural variety and aesthetic value as well as particular ecological niches.

In order to achieve this vision, a continuous-cover silvicultural approach will be continued to aid transformation of the areas that currently have a predominantly conifer canopy towards a predominantly broadleaved composition. Future canopy species are likely to be oak, birch, beech, rowan, yew and holly that are already present within the conifer stands. Mature specimens of Douglas fir, Scots pine and larch could make up 20% of the canopy.

The continuous-cover approach excludes clear-felling and uses targeted, selective thinning on a 5-10 year cycle to favour existing broadleaved trees and areas of natural regeneration as well as conifers that can be grown as a timber crop during the restoration phase and some that will make long-term retentions. Existing veteran trees (mainly beech) will be retained as long as possible and the next cohort of veterans will emerge from current semi-mature oak and beech, mainly in the southern half of the site.

As conifer stands are thinned the existing heathy ground flora will continue to develop and natural regeneration of desirable tree species will be recruited into the understorey initially and into the canopy in the long term. The site will be free of damaging invasive species such as rhododendron.

There will continue to be an area maintained as open heathland with associated plant species and extensive external and internal views. Areas of broadleaved trees surrounding the open heath and along major ride edges will be managed to provide a buffer to the surrounding high forest. Coppicing small sections on a regular basis will provide a succession from temporary open ground, through dense scrub, to semi-mature trees. The older broadleaved areas along the gills and in the Old Forest will be allowed to develop naturally with minimum intervention and will continue to be of high biodiversity value.

1.85ha along Sprat's Brook (part of subcpt 3f) has been designated as a minimum intervention 'Natural Reserve' in perpetuity (UKWAS requirement).

The extensive network of paths and rides will be maintained to cater for high visitor numbers while retaining the site's natural appeal and tranquillity as far as is possible. The entrances will be maintained in good condition to provide a welcoming aspect to visitors, both local and from further afield.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin

Description

This key feature covers the majority of the site which can be described as wooded heath. The site has an intermittent history of being wooded since at least the early 18th century (Roper, 2008) and with conifers being present since the mid-19th century (Bannister, 2011). It currently includes productive plantations of exotic and native conifers and younger plantations of native broadleaves. The ground flora is similar in composition throughout but varies greatly in quantity, influenced by the level of shading and previous invasion by *Rhododendron ponticum*. There is heather, bracken and bramble throughout with extensive areas of mosses, particularly in wet flushes and along stream-sides. The tributary gills are of very high biodiversity value containing extensive mosses, liverworts and ferns as well as native broadleaves. On the gill sides are occasional bluebells.

There are 2 distinct age-classes of conifer present. The central part of the wood, mainly between Broadview ride and Sprat's Brook gill, contains mature (P50) Douglas fir, Scots and Corsican pine. Within the conifers are broadleaves typical of the wet, acidic soils of this area: oak; birch; rowan; holly; yew. In the north-west of the site western hemlock, Japanese larch and Corsican pine (P60) dominate while again there are a few broadleaves including oak, beech, birch and rowan. The north-east section of the wood is largely younger mixed conifers (P86), mainly Corsican pine with some Scots pine and Japanese larch and Norway spruce.

The mature conifers have been thinned at intervals over the last 30 years, with the younger conifers having their first thin in 2013. All areas of rhododendron have been cut and an annual programme of control by herbicide application has been in place subsequently.

There are 3 main areas of broadleaved planting (Sub compartments 2d, 3e and 4a). These were established in 1993 and 1995 at 1100 trees/ha. There is now extensive natural regeneration of birch and goat willow in these areas. In areas where conifer crops have been removed or failed there are naturally regenerated birch stands, particularly along Broadview ride. Small sections of these birch stands have been coppiced periodically since 2012.

Significance

Long established secondary woodland can be a very biodiverse habitat, supporting a large range of species. Hargate Forest lies within the diverse landscape of the High Weald which includes extensive woodland, restored heathland and farmland, providing a habitat network beyond the boundaries of the site.

Its documented history suggests that it originated from 'waste', both heath and wood, and has had little if any agricultural improvement that has substantially altered the soils.

Within the plantations are areas of semi-natural habitat such as heathland and sphagnum bog. The wood currently contains a good range of tree species and age-classes and a varied ground flora for the soil types present. Regular

thinning of conifers has allowed continued growth of existing broadleaves, the development of natural regeneration and the re-emergence of the heathy ground flora.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:-

To realise the potential timber income from thinning to subsidise other habitat management within the site.

Constraints:-

Steep slopes, gills and soils prone to waterlogging limit access by harvesting machinery.

Factors Causing Change

Invasive rhododendron.

Natural regeneration of birch, Scots pine, oak, western hemlock, Douglas fir etc.

Changes in species composition due to tree pests and diseases eg Dothistroma needle blight on pine spp. and eight-toothed spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*).

Deer browsing on natural regeneration of desirable tree species.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Conifers will no longer dominate the canopy although scattered specimen trees including Douglas fir and Scots pine will be retained as part of the woodland matrix. The conifer canopy will be replaced by young and maturing native broadleaved trees with an associated wide range of flora and fauna typical of heathy High Weald woodland. Oak and birch will be the main canopy species alongside beech, rowan, holly, willow and yew.

In places the high forest woodland will grade into scrub, heathland and, in the wetter areas, bog. There will be a full range of age-classes from saplings to veteran trees and the proportion of standing and fallen deadwood will have increased. Invasive species such as rhododendron will not be a threat to any components of the habitat.

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

During the plan period 2023-28 thinning will continue in all conifer stands, rhododendron regrowth and seedlings will be controlled and structural diversity will be increased by managing stands of birch and ride edges. This will be achieved by the following:-

- Selective thinning of approx 12.5ha of mixed conifers (CP, SP, JL, NS) in Subcpts 2b and 3g in 2023. Removal of approx 25% conifers to favour broadleaved trees, ride-edges and patches of natural regeneration.
- Selective thinning of approx 4.5ha mixed conifers (WH, JL, CP) in Subcpt 1b in 2027. Removal of approx 25% conifers to favour broadleaved trees, ride-edges, mature SP and patches of natural regeneration.
- Coppice approx 1ha birch in total in Subcpts 2a and 3b over the period 2023-28. Subsequent regrowth should be a minimum of 1.5m in height before adjacent areas are coppiced.
- Annual control of rhododendron regrowth and seedlings by pulling and herbicide application only where necessary. Net area to control approx 0.1ha distributed across the site.
- Undertake herbivore impact assessment ('lite') winter 2023/24. Repeat HIA 25/26. Commence deer control to reduce impacts from high/medium to medium low.
- Undertake 5-yearly Woodland Ecological Assessment (WECA) of conifer areas across the site. Next due spring 2028.

4.2 f2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

This key feature relates to The Old Forest (subcpt 4c), the Sprat's Brook gill area (subcpt 3f) and the 2025 acquisitions of the Bunker Area (subcpt 1e) and the Old Scout Field (subcpt 4d). The total area is 18.8ha. As with the rest of the site, this area has an intermittent history of being woodland although the steep sides of the gill have probably always been wooded.

Over the last 100 years or so the Old Forest has developed into a 2-storey, semi-natural broadleaved woodland with a canopy dominated by circa P1900 pedunculate oak. The understorey contains much birch, planted oak (P95) and some sweet chestnut coppice. Towards the southern end the oak is replaced by more open, mature birch. The Old Forest also contains some of the largest and oldest trees on the site, mainly beeches approximately 200 years old. Ground flora is typical of long-established woodland on more base-poor soils in the High Weald. Woodland plants including bluebell, yellow pimpernel and lily of the valley are present although not in the abundance that would be expected in ancient woodland. Bramble becomes extensive where light levels are higher.

The Old Scout Field is shown as an open field outside of Hargate Forest on the OS 1st edition map (1830-1880) but by the 1974 OS Map it has become semi wooded. A small area to the west of the subcpt is still partially open, while the eastern section has a closed canopy containing birch, yew and oak. There is much rhododendron and cherry laurel in the understorey.

Sprat's Brook rises in the east of the site from a sphagnum bog and flows westwards, with the valley narrowing in places to form a typical Wealden gill. This has small cascades, waterfalls, sandstone exposures and much coarse woody debris. The warm and humid microclimate of the gill makes it a haven for mosses, liverworts and ferns. There is a man made pond at the western end of the gill but its wildlife value is compromised by visitors' dogs using it on a regular basis. The tributary streams flowing in from the north have similarly wildlife-rich valleys and gills associated with them although previous conifer planting and rhododendron compromised them for decades. Part of this area (subcpt 3f) is designated a Natural Reserve (under UKWAS conditions) and will receive no silvicultural interventions.

Tree species along the stream include mature oak and beech (with some large veteran trees), birch, alder, willow, aspen and yew. Like the rest of the Forest this area had a major invasion of *Rhododendron ponticum* which has now been removed.

The Bunker Area (subcpt 1e) to the north of the site contains a large WW2 bunker network with three brick entrance buildings above ground. Referred to sometimes as 'The Wilderness', the woodland is secondary, most likely all post WW2, consisting of willow, birch, yew and the occasional Scots pine. Understorey is cherry laurel, holly, rhododendron and bramble. Japanese knotweed is present in the SE corner of the plot near the entrance to Montacute Field (outside of WT ownership).

Significance

Both the woodland and gill habitats are important at a regional and national level. These areas also represent the most natural habitats on the site, having a long history as woodland and having predominantly native tree and ground flora

species.

Previous management has removed the threat from invasive rhododendron and Himalayan balsam that was present along the stream although there is much rhododendron and laurel in the 2025 extensions (subcpts 1e and 4d). The heavy shade and needle litter from conifers, in and close to the gill, has also been removed gradually over the last 30 years of the Trust's ownership.

The Sprat's Brook gill is typical of deeply-incised, small stream valleys in the High Weald with their distinct geology and microclimate which supports regionally and internationally important lower plant floras.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:-

To use these areas as minimum intervention zones, buffering more actively managed conifer stands.

Acquisition of the Bunker Area in 2025 has secured the busiest visitor access route into the site and can be brought up to a higher standard of management.

Constraints:-

Sensitive area for ground flora therefore any operations need careful planning and timing.

Steep slopes and soils prone to waterlogging restrict the use of machinery.

Use of herbicides needs to be restricted due to proximity of water courses and important ground flora.

The WW2 bunkers need to be secured against unauthorised access.

Factors Causing Change

Invasive non-native species: rhododendron present in the 2025 acquisitions (subcpts 1e and 4d).

Natural regeneration of non-native species such as Douglas fir.

Collapse of veteran trees and subsequent succession of gaps.

Deer browsing of regeneration of desirable tree species.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

In the long term these areas will be dominated by large, over-mature oaks which will begin to develop veteran characteristics. Another cohort of future veterans will begin to develop from species such as beech and yew. Shorter lived species such as birch and the current veteran beeches will collapse creating canopy gaps that will succeed through bramble and birch scrub to semi-mature mixed broadleaves. There will continue to be a range of other site-appropriate tree species present, in several age-classes, including rowan, alder, holly, yew, aspen and willow.

Ground flora will continue to include woodland specialist species such as bluebell and lily-of-the-valley in the Old Forest and a wide range of ferns, mosses and liverworts in the gills.

Invasive non-native species such as rhododendron will not pose a threat to the overall biodiversity of the area.

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

During the plan period 2023-2028 the Bunker Area and Old Scout Field will be cleared of invasive non-native species (INNS) such as rhododendron and cherry laurel. Other areas will have minimum intervention except for monitoring and any subsequent action needed to deal with INNS and herbivore impacts.

- Map and clear all invasive species from the Bunker area and Old Scout Field (subcpts. 4d & 1e). 2026

- Commission baseline survey of ground flora in subcpt 1e. 2026
- Monitor Sprats's Brook and The Old Forest (subcpts 3f and 4c) for presence of rhododendron, conifer regen and condition of veteran beeches. 2026.
- Undertake herbivore impact assessment ('lite') winter 2025/26 and commence deer management to agreed cull targets. Reduce impacts from high/medium to medium/low.
- 5-yearly Woodland Ecological Condition Assessment (WECA). Next due May 2028.

4.3 f3 Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat

Description

Hargate Forest lies entirely on the Cretaceous Ashdown Beds which naturally give rise to highly acidic podzol soils that support lowland heathland habitat when unimproved and not heavily shaded. Historical evidence suggests Hargate Forest has never been extensively cultivated but has had a long history as 'waste', both as heath and woodland. Heather grows extensively on the site wherever light levels permit. The first areas of open habitat (west section of Subcpt 1c and most Subcpt 2d) were cleared of burnt conifers and birch scrub following a spate of fires in 1997. Heather regenerated well and the areas were subsequently managed as open lowland heathland under a Countryside Steward Scheme agreement from 1998 to 2008. The section linking these two areas was clearfelled of young pine in 2009 and the eastern area extended, creating a total area of approx 4 hectares.

At the western end the area slopes steeply down to the west from a high point of approx 130m from where there are extensive views to the west and south-west. The rest of the area is relatively level and poorly drained in places.

The area now contains a mix of heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*), bracken, purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and bramble. There is also a single plant of royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*). Common and dwarf gorse also occur occasionally. Natural regeneration of birch is frequent, along with Scots pine, rowan, goat willow and western hemlock. This was previously controlled by mowing and more recently by pulling seedlings. There are small clumps of pine and birch in Subcpt 2d and a fringe of mixed broadleaves around the boundaries with adjoining Montacute Field, which is outside of WT ownership.

The heathland area connects with wide rides known as The Link to the east and Broadview to the south. Both of these rides have a healthy ground flora including heather and *Molinia*. There is a 20m-wide firebreak along the boundary with Strawberry Close (Subcpt 1a).

Significance

The area of lowland heath in southern England has declined drastically over the last 100 years due to lack of grazing, afforestation and development. It is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat and Sussex BAP habitat. It is also a man-made habitat that needs regular management to maintain its high biodiversity value. The area around Tunbridge Wells has many small scattered heathland fragments and to the south-west is the Ashdown Forest, the largest area of lowland heath in the country. The RSPB is also managing a significant area of heathland on their nearby Broadwater Warren reserve, 1.5km to the west.

Simple, regular management can now maintain this area of open habitat which supports locally important populations of heathland plants but is also subject to high levels of public access which have had a detrimental impact particularly on ground-nesting birds.

Opportunities & Constraints
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>To maintain an attractive, open area of internationally important lowland heathland within a large woodland.</p> <p>To maintain extensive external and internal views.</p> <p>To provide an area of priority habitat within a wider local network of similar habitat.</p> <p>Constraints.</p> <p>Steep slope in Subcpt 1c.</p> <p>High fire risk.</p> <p>High levels of public access exclude potential management by grazing and cause disturbance to ground-nesting birds.</p>
Factors Causing Change
<p>Natural regeneration of birch, willow, pine etc</p> <p>Spread of bracken.</p>
Long term Objective (50 years+)
<p>In the long term the extent of open habitats, comprising managed heathland and grassland, wide rides and glades will total approximately 15% of the site. Key ground flora species will include heather, cross-leaved heath and purple moor grass, with common and dwarf gorse. The heathland area will be buffered by birch and willow scrub of various age-classes, both within the 2 subcpts and also in adjoining stands.</p> <p>The main ride network will be maintained to a sufficient width to allow ground flora species to flourish and ride side trees will be coppiced on a short rotation to create a graded structure.</p>
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
<p>During the plan period 2023-2028 the open heathland area will be maintained at its current extent and the ride network will be managed, with a 2-zone system created where appropriate and possible. These objectives will be achieved through the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual bracken-rolling (May). Subcpts 1a, 1c, 2d. Approx 2ha. - Annual control of scrub on heathland by pulling tree seedlings (September). Subcpts 1c, 2d. Approx 1ha - Annual mowing of ride network (September). Approx 3250m. - Ride-edge coppicing (Sept-Nov). Approx 1000m in total over the plan period.

4.4 f4 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description
<p>Hargate Forest is a Woodland Trust Access Category A site with more than 20 visitors per day using one entrance. The site lies on the southern edge of Tunbridge Wells, Kent (pop 59,947 in 2016) with approx 4,500 people living within 1km of the site. With its mature conifers, open heathland and extensive views across the High Weald, it provides a rural, semi-natural amenity very close to the town centre. It complements other publicly-accessible open space nearby such as RSPB Broadwater and Tunbridge Wells, Rusthall and Southborough Commons. There are also 3 smaller Woodland Trust woods within the town: Friezland Wood, Hurst Wood and Nellington Wood.</p>

There are 2 entrances off Broadwater Down where there is on-street parking. The site provides a clear welcome with well-maintained entrances, signs, orientation panels and information posters. Both entrances have kissing gates suitable for disabled access with a RADAR key. At the western end of Broadwater Down the entrance leads onto a wide surfaced ride which runs south into the wood for approx 800m. A second access point 350m east along Broadwater Down through 'the Bunker Area' was secured by the Woodland Trust in 2025 with the acquisition of this area. From this entrance a surfaced path runs approx 200m.

The network of wide rides totals approx 3.5km and added to the narrower paths within the trees, allows for walks of various lengths and can take in a wide variety of woodland types and a selection of internal and external views. Other than the ride running south from the western entrance, no other rides are surfaced and conditions can be extremely wet underfoot in places. Site infrastructure includes footbridges over small streams, several benches and dog waste bins at both entrances.

Significance

Hargate Forest provides a large area of woodland and other habitats for informal recreation to a large local population. It is used by many people who arrive on foot and by car. It is a good example of woodland under active management for multiple objectives.

Although immediately adjacent to a large urban area the site has a very rural feel to it which is added to by extensive views over the surrounding heavily-wooded landscape, a designated National Landscape. The long period of use of the site by the public has led to an extensive knowledge of its history and wildlife.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

To maintain the ride network for the benefit of both public access and biodiversity.

Constraints

Lack of car parking.

Lack of links to the wider public rights of way network.

Geology and soils lead to extensive waterlogging during wet weather.

Potential conflict caused by high levels of public access (particularly dog-walkers) and nature conservation.

Factors Causing Change

Increasing development and population density in the immediate and wider urban and rural areas will put additional pressure on the site in terms of visitor numbers, increased anti-social behaviour and parking difficulties.

The RSPB now has a 'dogs on leads' policy at Broadwater Warren all year. This has caused a significant increase in dog-walkers to Hargate further adding to conflict with other users and wildlife.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To provide a safe, enjoyable and varied woodland experience for visitors, with a good network of maintained routes, entrances and infrastructure in line with the site's Category A status.

The site should be well-liked, used and respected by the local community who will play some part in its upkeep such as by litter-picking, recording wildlife or acting as 'ears and eyes' for the Trust.

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

Over the plan period 2023-2028 the entrances and ride and path network will be maintained annually. Visitor infrastructure and tree safety along maintained routes will be inspected and remedial work undertaken as necessary.

- Undertake tree safety and ride widening work on rides and footpaths in new extensions. 2026.
- Initial clearance of all hazardous waste and other rubbish from new extensions. 2026.
- Work to secure and repair WW2 bunker entrances. 2026.
- New interpretation and orientation boards to reflect at both entrances to reflect the new Hargate and explain the WW2 Bunkers. 2026-2027.
- Annual path maintenance programme (June and September) on approx. 4870m of wide ride + 2150m of minor rides and paths.
- Annual inspection of footbridges, culverts and benches.
- Undertake approx. 1000m of ride-side coppicing during the plan period – see semi-natural open ground habitat KF.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2023	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	August
2023	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	August
2023	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,	September
2023	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	September
2023	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	September
2023	WMM - Coppice Management	Works associated with the management of coppice areas – such as coppicing, maintenance of protective fencing, etc	November
2023	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	November
2023	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	November
2023	WMM - Ride Management	Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works	December
2023	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	December
2023	SL - Tree Safety Emergency Work	Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs	January
2024	SL - Tree Safety Emergency Work	Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs	January

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2024	CS - Ecological Survey & Assessment	Use of external consultants to support the provision of ecological surveys, assessment and biodiversity / species monitoring	March
2024	CS - Ecological Survey & Assessment	Use of external consultants to support the provision of ecological surveys, assessment and biodiversity / species monitoring	March
2024	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants – such a repeat cutting and control treatments	March
2024	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	March
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	May
2024	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,	June
2024	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	June
2024	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	June
2024	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone B	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside routes such as paths and rides within the woodland	July
2024	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	August
2024	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,	September
2024	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	September
2024	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	September

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
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	November
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	November
2024	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	December
2025	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	March
2025	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	March
2025	PE - Volunteer on site activity	Support for activities at the site of visiting volunteer groups, such as corporate partners, local groups. Support could include tools, external trainers or materials for work parties	May
2025	AW - Management Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of management access infrastructure and tracks Such as repairs to vehicle entrance points, maintaining vehicle bridges and repairing / reinstating surfaced management access routes.	May
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,	June
2025	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	June
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,	June
2025	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	June
2025	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside areas such as car parks, roadsides and boundaries	August
2025	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside areas such as car parks, roadsides and boundaries	August

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2025	AW - Management Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of management access infrastructure and tracks Such as repairs to vehicle entrance points, maintaining vehicle bridges and repairing / reinstating surfaced management access routes.	August
2025	AW - Management Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of management access infrastructure and tracks Such as repairs to vehicle entrance points, maintaining vehicle bridges and repairing / reinstating surfaced management access routes.	August
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,	September
2025	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	September
2025	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	September
2025	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	November
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,	November
2025	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	November
2025	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	December
2025	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
2025	CS - Ecological Survey & Assessment	Use of external consultants to support the provision of ecological surveys, assessment and biodiversity / species monitoring	December

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2025	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
2025	CS - Ecological Survey & Assessment	Use of external consultants to support the provision of ecological surveys, assessment and biodiversity / species monitoring	December
2025	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	December
2025	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	December
2026	SL - H&S Signage	Provision of on-site signage both temporary and permanent to alert visitor to safety risks or measures	February
2026	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	February
2026	CS - Historical Survey & Assessment	Use of external consultants to support the provision of historical and archaeological surveys and assessment	February
2026	CS - Historical Survey & Assessment	Use of external consultants to support the provision of historical and archaeological surveys and assessment	February
2026	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone B	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside routes such as paths and rides within the woodland	March
2026	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	March
2025	PE - Volunteer on site activity	Support for activities at the site of visiting volunteer groups, such as corporate partners, local groups. Support could include tools, external trainers or materials for work parties	March
2026	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	March
2026	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	March
2026	CS - Historical Survey & Assessment	Use of external consultants to support the provision of historical and archaeological surveys and assessment	April

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2026	PE - Interpretation & Signage	Works associated with the provision of visitor signage, waymarking, interpretation features and leaflets	April
2026	CS - Ecological Survey & Assessment	Use of external consultants to support the provision of ecological surveys, assessment and biodiversity / species monitoring	April
2026	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	May
2026	AW - Visitor Access Infrastructure	Works associated with the construction of a new or extension to existing car parking facilities.	May
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,	June
2026	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	June
2026	AW - Management Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of management access infrastructure and tracks Such as repairs to vehicle entrance points, maintaining vehicle bridges and repairing / reinstating surfaced management access routes.	June
2026	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	July
2026	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside areas such as car parks, roadsides and boundaries	July
2026	HF - Protection / Maintenance	Works associated with the on-going maintenance of an historical or cultural feature/building / area	August
2026	SL - Safety / Legal Obligation Work (SODS)	Works associated with specific Health and Safety legislation or associated legal requirements such as – safety fencing of quarries, safety requirements stipulated in planning consent for car parks or entrance points etc	September
2026	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	September
2026	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	September

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
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,	September
2026	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	September
2026	WMI - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the initial phase of invasive plant control – such as rhododendron felling and mulching	October
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	October
2026	PE - Volunteer on site activity	Support for activities at the site of visiting volunteer groups, such as corporate partners, local groups. Support could include tools, external trainers or materials for work parties	November
2026	WMM - Ride Management	Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works	November
2026	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	December
2026	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	December
2026	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside areas such as car parks, roadsides and boundaries	December
2025	PE - Volunteer on site activity	Support for activities at the site of visiting volunteer groups, such as corporate partners, local groups. Support could include tools, external trainers or materials for work parties	December
2027	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	March
2027	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	March
2027	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	March

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2027	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,	June
2027	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	June
2027	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	June
2027	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,	September
2027	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	September
2027	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,	September
2027	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	September
2027	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	September
2027	WMM - Ride Management	Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works	November
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	November
2027	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	December

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2027	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	December
2028	PC - Deer Control - Shooting	Works associated with deer management by shooting – such as stalker costs, high seats, signage, maintenance of tracks and open ground provided specifically for deer management etc	March
2028	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	March
2028	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	March
2028	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	March
2028	PE - Volunteer on site activity	Support for activities at the site of visiting volunteer groups, such as corporate partners, local groups. Support could include tools, external trainers or materials for work parties	May
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,	June
2028	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	June
2028	NWH - Maintenance Work	Works associated with the maintenance of non-woodland habitats – mechanical management, hay cutting, fence and wall maintenance etc	June

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	1.15	Birch (downy/silver)	1950	Min-intervention	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>Northern boundary of the wood adjoining houses in Strawberry Close. This area is partly open ground (felled 1998) with a ground flora including heather, bracken and bramble. Also NW finger of woodland leading to the main management and public entrance off Broadwater Down. WT ownership stops approx 20m from the management gate. This area is owned by Nevill Estate. Management track upgraded 2001. W of the track the wood slopes steeply to the boundary and consists of mature birch, rowan and occasional oak. This also extends upslope E of the track to the W end of the open ground.</p>						
1b	5.38	Western hemlock	1960	PAWS restoration	Landscape factors, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>Semi-mature mixed conifers (P60) and broadleaved tree regeneration. The west facing slope either side of the management track comprises approx 2ha western hemlock which was last thinned in 2016. Includes some hemlock and broadleaved regeneration (oak, birch, beech, rowan) in gaps and on edges. A small area (0.4ha) west of the track was restocked with WH and beech in 1995. The level area east of the hemlock comprises approx 1ha of Japanese larch with extensive bracken cover. East of the larch, to the boundary with Montacute field is approx 2ha Corsican pine. There are also occasional mature Scots pine within the Subcpt.</p>						
1c	2.69	Open ground		Non-wood habitat	Landscape factors, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>Formerly conifer plantation restored to lowland heathland. The conifers were cleared following fires in 1999 and additional felling in 2009. The area to the east is known as Mount Nod and enjoys views across the Weald Forest Ridge. A strip of mixed broadleaves (oak, birch etc) remains along the boundaries with Montacute Field. There are 2 small clumps of Scots pine in the W section. Ground flora includes extensive heather (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>) and purple moor grass (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>) with rare cross-leaved heath (<i>Erica tetralix</i>) and dwarf gorse (<i>Ulex minor</i>).</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1d	1.17	Scots pine	1950	High forest		Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>W section is P50 Scots pine, similar in structure and composition to Subcpts 3a (N half) and 3b. Within the open canopied pine stand there are mixed broadleaves including oak, birch rowan, holly and yew both as canopy trees and understorey, Ground flora is dominated by bracken with some heather where light levels are higher. The eastern half is dominated by birch arising from a previously failed SP plantation from the mid 1980s. The southern section of the birch along Broadview ride was coppiced in c2013.</p>						
1e	1.89	Mixed native broadleaves	1950	High forest		
<p>The subcpt sits at the northern end of Hargate Forest and provides the main public access route onto Broadwater Down, which forms its northern boundary. Half of the eastern boundary and the western boundary border gardens of houses of Strawberry Close, Broadwater Down and Hargate close. The southern boundary adjoins Montacute Field (outside WT ownership), and the rest of the eastern boundary adjoins the rest of Hargate forest. The site features a large WW2 (circa 7.000 sqm) underground bunker network with three brick build access points above ground. The woodland is secondary, most likely all post WW2, consisting of willow, birch, yew, the occasional Scots pine. Understorey is cherry laurel, holly, rhododendron and bramble. Japanese knotweed is present in the SE corner of the plot near the entrance to Montacute Field.</p>						
2a	11.1	Corsican pine	1986	PAWS restoration	Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>Predominantly P86 mixed conifers: Corsican pine (60%); Scots pine (30%); Norway spruce (5%); Japanese larch (5%). It also includes birch, oak, yew, willow and rowan regeneration and occasional semi-mature trees. The subcpt is surrounded by and bisected by wide rides often with extensive heather cover. The ride to the S is known as Broadview, to the E is The Old Carriageway and through the centre is The Link. There are also smaller rides within the area which have been enhanced by cleaning and brashing of the conifer crop for 5m on each side. First commercial thin in 2013. Heather, bramble and bracken ground flora developing.</p>						
2b	2.16	Oak (pedunculata)	1993	High forest		Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>P93 mixed broadleaves: oak, sweet chestnut, wild cherry. 3m spacing. Natural regeneration of birch, willow etc. Extensive bracken particularly in N of subcpt. Mature oak along S boundary.</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
2c	0.59	Scots pine	1930	High forest	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>P1930 Scots pine. There is an old quarry in the centre of the subcpt, up to 4m deep and with steep sides. The N and E boundaries are marked with a post and wire fence in poor condition. Previously heavily infested with rhododendron which was cleared in 2010 along with edges of Old Carriageway.</p>						
2d	2.9	Open ground		Non-wood habitat		Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>This Subcpt is a continuation of Subcpt 1c to the W. Cleared of conifers in 1998 following several fires and managed as lowland heath since. The area of extended to the E to join up with The Link ride in c2012. The area has extensive heather (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>), purple moor grass, bracken and one royal fern plant. Management has been by a mix of mowing, bracken rolling and more recently weedwiping scrub. There are 2 clumps of predominantly pine on the NW side and the boundary with Montacute field to the NW is multi-aged mixed broadleaves including oak and birch.</p>						
3a	1.73	Scots pine	1950	PAWS restoration		Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>P50 mixed conifers and broadleaves between main management ride and boundary to W with farmland. Scots pine in north of subcpt and Douglas fir in south with occasional oak, larch, birch, rowan. In the north of the subcpt is a small pond fed by a culvert under the main ride from the ditch along the edge of subcpt 1c. Ground flora is dominated by bracken and bramble.</p>						
3b	5.72	Scots pine	1950	PAWS restoration	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>Predominantly P50 Scots pine. Last thinned in 2007. Pine at the eastern end of the subcpt is of poor form and size due to the severity of the rhododendron invasion. Ground flora is now dominated by bracken with heather in more open areas. The stand also contains oak, birch, rowan, holly and yew of various age classes. A small stream with ferns and mosses alongside flows south out of the subcpt and under the main ride (Ridgeback) to the south. Along part of the northern boundary with Broadview ride is a strip of birch up to 40m wide, sections of which have been coppiced 2014-17.</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
3c	5.02	Douglas fir	1950	PAWS restoration	Archaeological features, Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>P50 Douglas fir with some P50 Sitka spruce in the ghylls, occasional semi-mature oak and frequent birch. Other species include rowan, holly, yew, Scots pine and larch. The subcpt contains a tributary stream to Sprats Brook in a ghyll with extensive mosses, ferns and bluebells under alder, birch, and willow. The stand is predominantly clear of ground and shrub layers due to shading however where light does penetrate ground flora includes mosses, ferns and occasionally bluebells.</p>						
3d	4.57	Scots pine	1950	PAWS restoration	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>Scots pine [P50] with 0.5ha of Corsican pine [P50] in the south west corner. Well thinned stand (last thinning 1998) with most of previous rhododendron invasion now removed and regrowth controlled. Ground flora dominated by bracken with some heather. Several wet flushes with spagnum moss. Tributary ghyll with seasonal stream with yew, oak, beech etc still containing rhododendron.</p>						
3e	1.58	Mixed native broadleaves	1995	High forest		Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>Mixed broadleaves [P95] - Oak 50%; Sweet chestnut 30%; wild cherry 10%; MB 10%. Also natural regeneration of birch, goat willow etc and extensive bracken. Originally established at 3m spacing.</p>						
3f	4.73	Mixed native broadleaves	1900	Min-intervention	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>Semi-natural ghyll woodland along a stream known as Sprat's brook. In the western part there are mature oak, beech and yew with understorey of alder, goat willow, birch, rowan and holly. In the east there are mature birch, oak and beech with occasional yew and rowan. Ground flora throughout includes many fern, moss and liverwort species. Other ground flora species include bluebell, yellow pimpernel, lesser celandine and wood sorrel. At the western end of the subcpt, south of the stream there is a small pond. The western half of the subcpt is crossed by several small informal paths with footbridges. Invasive Himalayan balsam has been present in the past and controlled by pulling. It is currently present in small quantities.</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1.85 ha of the sub compartment along Sprat's brook is designated as a 'natural reserve' of minimum intervention for perpetuity.						
3g	3.32	Corsican pine	1986	PAWS restoration		Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
P86 Corsican and Scots pine with occasional Japanese larch and Norway spruce. This is a continuation of the stand in Cpt 2a to the north of Broadview ride. There are some stands of coppiced birch along the ride and the occasional semi-mature oak. The main part of the subcpt has been cleaned and brashed but not thinned. There is extensive heather in most of the Subcpt and previous rhododendron invasion has been largely eradicated.						
4a	2.54	Mixed native broadleaves	1993	High forest	Archaeological features, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Oak & wild cherry planted in 1993 with abundant birch and goat willow natural regeneration. The subcpt contains old conifer stumps and appears to have been ploughed. Ground flora is dominated by bramble with some rushes and grasses. The western boundary has a fringe of mature birch, willow and oak along a boundary bank. The northern edge of the subcpt is the edge of the ghyll and in the north eastern corner is a notable colony of lily of the valley (<i>Convallaria majalis</i>). The eastern boundary is formed by a woodbank with some mature oak, beech and yew. An area of approx 0.4ha of the planting has been cleared in the north east and kept open by annual mowing. This is a damp ridge & furrow rushy grassland named West Rough which is particularly good for invertebrates.						
4b	1.27	Mixed broadleaves	1970	High forest	Archaeological features	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Secondary woodland with abundant birch, goat willow, frequent oak, occasional Norway spruce, western hemlock and sycamore (approx P70). No understorey present. Ground flora consists mainly of mosses, bramble and some ferns. The southern boundary is a woodbank running parallel to the road (Bunny Lane). In the south western corner there is a management gate although no legal management access at this point. Access is by permission from Nevill Estate, owners of 'ransom strip' along the road, south of the woodbank.						
4c	4.96	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	Min-intervention	Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
Semi-natural woodland known locally as The Old Forest. Two storied high forest with an open canopy of oak and occasional beech. Understorey of planted oak [P95] (0.9ha), abundant birch regeneration, occasional chestnut coppice, yew, rowan, beech and holly. There are 3 very large over-mature beech trees which are beginning to break up and decay. To the south the canopy is dominated more by mature birch. This southern area was extensively invaded by rhododendron until clearance during the winter of 01/02. The clearance revealed extensive windblow from 1987 along the southern edge. There is another large colony of lily of the valley in this area. Ground flora in the subcpt also includes bramble, bracken, bluebell, wood anemone and various sedges, rushes and mosses.						
4d	7.24	Mixed broadleaves	1900	Min-intervention		
Semi-natural recent woodland known as the Old Scout Field which contains some small relic open areas. Containing mixed broadleaves including mature beech and oak (along roadside), with younger oak (planted), birch, willow, yew, rowan, Scot pine, larch and holly. The eastern section in particular has extensive areas of rhododendron and cherry laurel. Southern boundary is along a busy minor road (Bunny Lane). The northern boundary is the gill of Sprat's Brook (subcpt 3f). To the west is the Old Forest (subcpt 4c) which is separated from this subcpt by a low bank.						

Ancient Woodland

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

Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland

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

Ancient Woodland Site

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

Beating Up

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

Broadleaf

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

Canopy

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

Clearfell

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

Compartment

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

Conifer

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

Continuous Cover forestry

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

Coppice

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

Exotic (non-native) Species

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

Field Layer

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

Group Fell

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

Long Term Retention

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

Minimum Intervention

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

Mixed Woodland

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

National vegetation classification (NVC)

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

Native Species

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

Natural Regeneration

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

Origin & Provenance

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

Re-Stocking

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

Shrub Layer

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

Stand

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

Sub-Compartment

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

Thinning

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

Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes

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

Weeding

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

Windblow/Windthrow

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

Registered Office:

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

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