

# Ford & Keith Woods

(Plan period – 2026 to 2036)



WOODLAND  
TRUST

# Management Plan Content Page

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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

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
  - 4.1 f1 Secondary Woodland
  - 4.2 f2 Informal Public Access
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### Ford Wood

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Location:              | Bassingbourn, Bassingbourn Grid reference: TL334434 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 154<br>Grid reference: TL337427 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 154 |
| Area:                  | 2.34 hectares (5.78 acres) 1.67 hectares (4.13 acres)   |
| External Designations: | Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund   |
| Internal Designations: | N/A   |

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Both Ford Wood and Keith Wood lie near the village of Bassingbourn in South Cambridgeshire, with Ford Wood being immediately next to the village. Both woods are small, totalling 4.17 hectares together, and are positioned on chalky clay soils in an intensively managed arable landscape, where woodland cover is generally quite sparse and ancient woodland is almost absent. The nearest site of conservation importance is Therfield Heath SSSI, at Royston to the south, which is important for chalk grassland species.

Ford Wood is predominately an ash and field maple wood with other species including oak, cherry and hazel. It was planted on a grass field in February 1995 entirely by volunteers as part of the Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund project. The wood was financially supported by the county and district councils and by local contribution. Mrs Marriage donated the land and the wood is named after a well-known local family who once owned the field on which it now grows.

A public footpath runs through Ford wood linking South St and Spring Lane in the village. The wood is within easy walking distance for residents of Bassingbourn and is regularly used by the locals. There are over 800m of paths with interlinking small grassy glades.

Keith Wood is approximately 0.5km to the south of Ford Wood, and is accessed by following Spring Lane out of the village and then following the byway (part of the Ickneld Way) heading west. Keith Wood was also planted in 1995, as part of the same project, on the corner of a very large arable field, and the trees were planted by volunteers on the 4th of March that year. The woodland is quite mixed in species and includes ash, field maple, beech hazel, hornbeam and wild cherry. The wood is leased to the Trust on a 999-year lease from Bassingbourn Parish council. Keith wood is named after John Keith, a former clerk to the parish council. The wood has a managed path network but is less used by the public, being further out from the village.

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

Ford and Keith Woods will be allowed to develop through natural process and good silvicultural management, into a well structured and resilient native broadleaved woodland. Ford Wood's dominant tree species will be Oak and Field Maple with a supporting species mix of Ash and Cherry . Keith Woods dominant tree species will be Field Maple, Cherry & Beech with a supporting species mix of Ash and Hornbeam.

Ash will still be a component of both sites, but will provide the important feature of standing and fallen deadwood habitat within the wood due to Ash Dieback. The areas where the Ash have died and opened up the canopy, will provide areas for ground flora and natural regeneration to flourish, and provide an understorey layer.

The shrub component of both woods will include species such as Hazel, Hawthorn, and Blackthorn alongside other regenerating species.

The woods will be open to the public in perpetuity. Low key public access will be maintained at the sites and the paths, signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public will be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Bassingbourn and the other immediately neighbouring parishes. The wood will be part of the much wider access provision in the area.

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 f1 Secondary Woodland

|   |
|---|
| <b>Description</b>  |
| Ford Wood is predominately an ash and field maple wood with other species including oak, cherry and hazel. It was planted on a grass field in February 1995 entirely by volunteers as part of the Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund project. The wood was financially supported by the county and district councils and by local contribution. Mrs Marriage donated the land and the wood is named after a well-known local family who once owned the field on which it now grows. |
| <b>Significance</b>   |
| In a locality with little semi natural habitat, Ford and Keith woods provide valuable wildlife refuges and help to break up the intensively-managed arable landscape in the surrounding countryside.  |
| <b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>  |
| Opportunities<br><br>- To manage both woods as one management unit<br><br>Constraints<br><br>- The management access at Ford Wood is tight and adjacent to residential properties which is likely to conflict with operations involving timber extraction.<br>- Overall the small size of the woods and resulting low timber volumes are likely to make timber extraction uneconomical.   |
| <b>Factors Causing Change</b>   |
| - Ash Dieback<br>- Deer<br>- Human impacts  |
| <b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>  |
| Ford and Keith Woods will be allowed to develop through natural process and good silvicultural management, into a well structured and resilient native broadleaved woodland. Ford Wood's dominant tree species will be Oak and Field Maple with a supporting species mix of Ash and Cherry . Keith Woods dominant tree species will be Field Maple, Cherry & Beech with a supporting species mix of Ash and Hornbeam.   |

Ash will still be a component of both sites, but will provide the important feature of, standing and fallen deadwood habitat within the wood due to Ash Dieback. The areas where the Ash have died and opened up the canopy, will provide areas for ground flora and natural regeneration to flourish, and provide an understorey layer.

The shrub component of both woods will include species such as Hazel, Hawthorn, and Blackthorn alongside other regenerating species.

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

##### **Woodland Management**

To improve the structure and resilience of Ford and Keith Woods small scale, fell to waste thinning operations will be undertaken to improve light levels and improve structural diversity within the wood. This operation will primarily focus on Ash suffering from ash dieback particularly around the paths.

Thinning operation- Autumn 2030  
- Autumn 2035

##### **Woodland Condition Monitoring**

Undertake assessments of woodland condition every five years, Works to be ordered through observation actions as required

. -Woodland Ecological condition assessment - July 2031  
- July 2036

#### **4.2 f2 Informal Public Access**

##### **Description**

Ford & Keith woods were created as part of the Woodland Trust's Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund project in 1995. Local people were involved in the fundraising, design, planting and early maintenance. Both woods are within walking distance of the village of Bassingbourn, with Ford wood being immediately adjacent and therefore much more well-used. Keith wood is approximately 1km to the south of the village and accessed off a public byway. Ford wood has approx 800m of managed paths and Keith has 450m. Both sites are small and therefore mainly of interest to residents living close by. Both sites are flat and easy to walk around. Facilities are low key, with minimal public information and infrastructure, but all main entrances are signed to welcome visitors.

Both woods link to the public rights of way network, via Spring Lane and the long distance footpath/byway - The Icknield Way.

The Trust have given Ford Wood & Keith Wood a category B for access provision which equates to: regular usage, with 5 – 15 people using one entrance per day.

##### **Significance**

The woods are positioned within an intensively managed landscape, where woodland is generally quite sparse. There are no other woods open for public access within 10km's other than other small Woodland Trust Woods in the local

area. Hence these small woods make an invaluable contribution to providing people with accessible semi-natural places to enjoy, in locations which would otherwise lack this facility.

### **Opportunities & Constraints**

#### Opportunities

The woods are within walking distance of a nearby village (Bassingbourn). They are located on flat ground offering opportunities for access by the less-abled.

There is an opportunity for a local community organisation or group to take on the management of these woods, potentially adding value to them for local people.

#### Constraints

The small size of the woods is likely to limit their interest to people living very close by.

Nearby parking in the village is very limited,

The byway next to Keith Wood can suffer from misuse by motorcycles

### **Factors Causing Change**

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

Ford Wood & Keith Wood will be open to the public in perpetuity. Low key public access will be maintained at the sites and the paths, signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public will be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Bassingbourn and the other immediately neighbouring parishes. The wood will be part of the much wider access provision in the area.

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

The 1200m of Paths and rides are to be managed annually , ensuring works are carried out as necessary to keep the path network open and easy to use for informal public access as detailed in EMC spec 2.01.).

Manage site safety through safety observations and inspections. -Associated signage (Site name/welcome signs) to be kept in good condition and regularly maintained as detailed in EMC Spec 1.01 , with a five yearly review of access facilities by the Site Manager.

Access inspection - July 2031

- July 2036

Tree Safety surveys

-Zone A Tree Safety Inspections to be carried out every 36 months

-Zone B Tree Safety Inspections to be carried out every 36 months



## 5. WORK PROGRAMME

| Year | Type Of Work                 | Description  | Due Date |
|------|------------------------------|--|----------|
| 2030 | WMM - Secondary Silviculture | Works associated with silvicultural operations within secondary woods to meet our primary aims of conserving woodlands and encouraging public enjoyment– such as the removal of non-natives, thinning and promotion of native trees and shrubs, creating and managing view points and providing welcoming sites for visitors | December |
| 2035 | WMM - Secondary Silviculture | Works associated with silvicultural operations within secondary woods to meet our primary aims of conserving woodlands and encouraging public enjoyment– such as the removal of non-natives, thinning and promotion of native trees and shrubs, creating and managing view points and providing welcoming sites for visitors | December |

## APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

| Cpt No.   | Area (ha) | Main Species             | Year | Management Regime | Major Management Constraints | Designations |
|---|-----------|--------------------------|------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| 1a  | 2.33      | Mixed native broadleaves | 1995 | High forest       |                              |              |
| <p>Ford Wood. Plantation of native broadleaves with the approx species mix: 50% are ash, 20% field maple, 10% cherry, 10% alder, &amp; 10% shrubs (hazel, wayfaring tree, goat willow) as well as occasional oak, elm and rowan. The boundaries of the wood are dominated by outgrown hedges of mature blackthorn, hawthorn and bramble hedges. A small historic orchard which predates the planting is located in the northeast corner. The old fruit trees are now well out of productive rotation.</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.

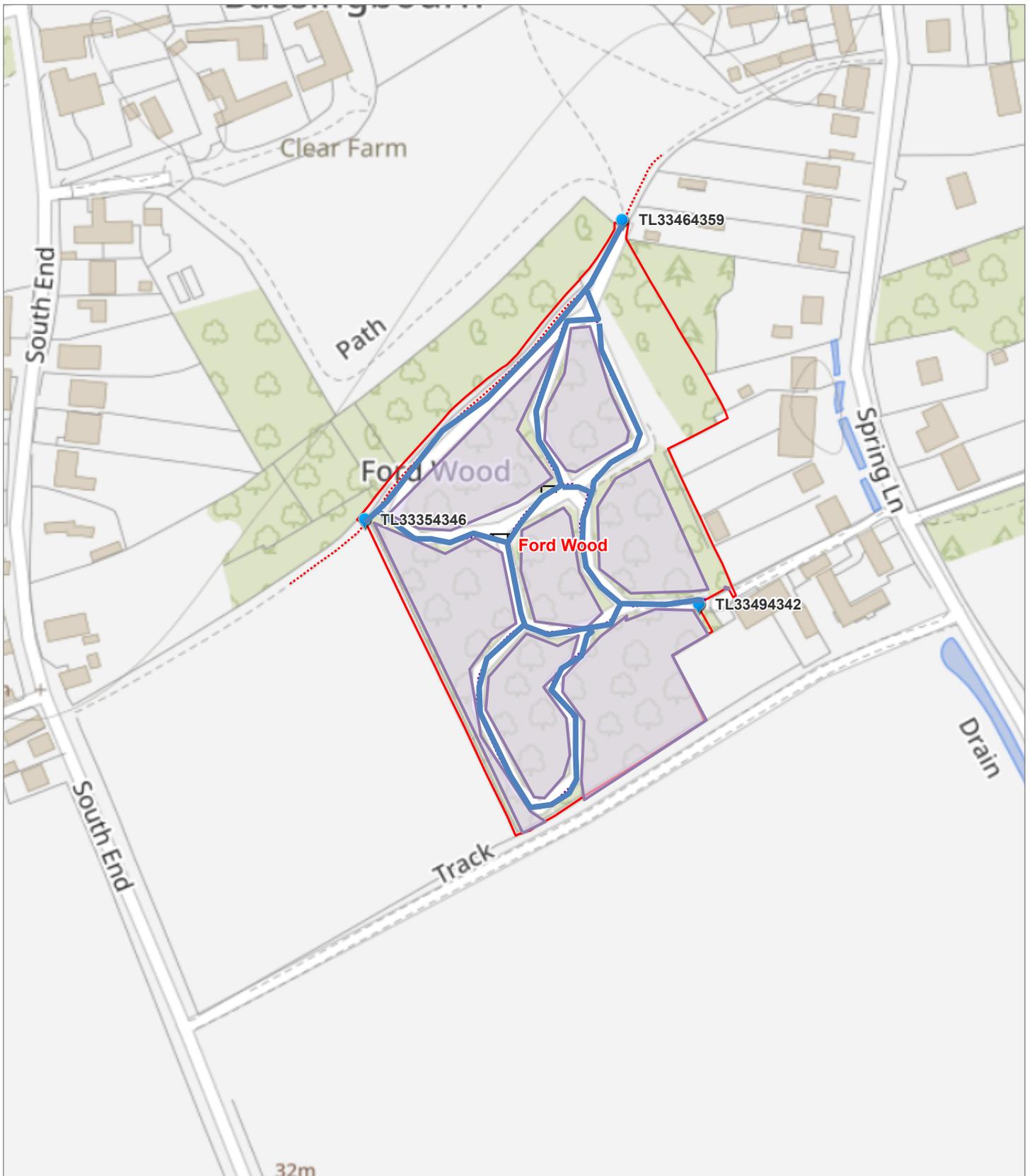
**Windblow/Windthrow**

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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Access Points

 Access points

Other Features

 Seat

Path Network

 Legal-Footpath

 Permissive-Footpath

 Woodland Trust Site Boundary

 Regular Path Mowing

 Thinning Works Autumn 2030  
Autumn 2035

**Ford Wood Management Works  
2026-2036**

0 40 80m 

Scale: 1:2,288 @A4

Date: 08 January 2026

Author:



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Access Points

 Access points

Path Network

 Permissive-Footpath

 BOAT

 Woodland Trust Site Boundary

 Regular Path Mowing

 Thinning Operation- Autumn 2030  
- Autumn 2035

**Keith Wood Management  
Works 2026-2036**

0 25 50 m 

Scale: 1:1,373 @A4

Date: 08 January 2026

Author:



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