

# Twig & Bog Woods

(Plan period – 2020 to 2025)



WOODLAND  
TRUST

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## Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

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

Our Vision is:

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

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

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

# Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

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

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

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

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

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

## The Public Management Plan

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

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

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

Please either consult The Woodland Trust website

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

or contact the Woodland Trust

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

to confirm details of the current management programme.

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

## Location and Access

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

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

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

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

# The Management Plan

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2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
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  - 4.2 f2 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
5. Work Programme

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GLOSSARY

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### Twig & Bog Woods

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Location:              | Warrington Grid reference: SJ592898 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 108        |
| Area:                  | 2.93 hectares (7.24 acres)   |
| External Designations: | Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site |
| Internal Designations: | N/A  |

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Twig and Bog Woods are located in the residential suburbs of NW Warrington, approximately 3 miles to the north west of the town centre. The woods are within Sankey Valley Park which is a large area of public open space including woodlands, meadows, ponds, wetland habitat, streams and the disused Sankey (St. Helens) Canal. A stream Callands Brook flows through the wood from the northern boundary into a large pond on the southern boundary with several old drainage ditches flowing into it. The area including Twig and Bog Woods is well used and has a network of mostly surfaced footpaths that connect to nearby housing estates. The woods adjoin woodland owned by Gulliver's World theme park to the north and east; grassland meadows, streams and a large pond about the western and southern boundaries; and an old canal lock overflow channel abuts the eastern boundary. The site is low lying and mostly flat with some very slight slopes in places. It has predominantly clay subsoil and relatively heavy top soils which often results in the wood and paths becoming flooded during winter time.

The woods are designated as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) indicating there has been continuous woodland cover on the site since at least 1600. The trees are predominantly native broadleaves with mature beech, oak, sycamore, alder and willow being the main canopy species with some ash, horse chestnut. There is an understorey consisting mainly of holly, hazel, hawthorn and elder, which is in places sparse. The shrub layer was heavily dominated by rhododendron in the northern half of the wood, but this has been cleared in recent years, although some regrowth still occurs. The ground flora is indicative of ASNW indicator species including bluebells, marsh marigolds, flag iris and lords and ladies in the damper parts of the wood. In recent years the woodland has been invaded by Himalayan Balsam which has spread along the stream and is widespread in surrounding areas including the neighbouring woodlands and Sankey Canal and Brook.

The woodland was once part of the Bewsey Hall estate and then more recently RAF Burtonwood airbase which was the largest allied airbase in Europe in World War Two. The land was bought by Warrington Development Corporation in the early 1970's as part of the development of Warrington New Town. The New Town Development Corporation undertook work to construct footpaths through the wood and installed new wooden footbridges over Callands Brook. The site is part of a cluster of Woodland Trust sites in the area including Ladies Walk wood, Bewsey Farm wood, Twenty Acre Wood and Five Ponds Copse, all of which are within a mile of the wood. These sites were gifted by the New Town Corporation to the Woodland Trust in 1992.

Informal public access is available in the woods with approximately 600m of permissive footpath that runs through the woodland and 5 public access points to the woods from Sankey Valley Park and from the disused Sankey (St Helen's) Canal towpath. The wood is well used particularly for walking, dog walking and jogging.

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention for Twig and Bog Woods is to ensure the continuity of the ancient semi-natural woodland and maintain a varied mix of broadleaved species, woodland structure, age and size classes including mature and veteran trees. It will primarily be managed as a landscape feature providing an important habitat for wildlife and people to enjoy.

Guided by the Woodland Trust's woodland management principles, conservation and access policies, the long term management will seek a balance between conservation of the ancient semi-natural woodland and public access. The woodland will be subject to minimal management intervention and left to develop naturally to allow mature trees to develop into future veteran trees and dead wood will be retained as much as possible. Natural regeneration will be promoted and encouraged to develop future canopy trees. Himalayan balsam and rhododendron will be controlled to stop them spreading and out competing the ancient woodland ground flora. The main drivers for management intervention will be to maintain public access/ tree safety and to control invasive species.

Public access will be retained in perpetuity and the current level of access will be maintained through annual maintenance work to entrances, signage and access infrastructure. The Trust's duty of care to visitors and neighbours will be addressed through on-going tree safety and site risk assessment inspections. Monitoring will be undertaken on a regular basis to identify any threats to the woodland from tree disease, pests, invasive species, litter/ fly tipping and other human impacts.

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

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|---|
| <b>Description</b>  |
| <p>There is approximately 600m of permissive footpath through the wood with five pedestrian access points. Two entrances are from Sankey Valley Park on the western boundary, a permissive entrance leads into the wood from the car park at Gulliver's World (via a wooden kissing gate) and there is an entrance from the old canal towpath on the eastern side of the wood. There are three wooden bridges owned by the Woodland Trust, one that cross over Callands Brook, with an additional two bridges installed in 2026 to help alleviate the increased flooding pressure. Two additional pedestrian bridges are located at entrances to the wood at SJ 5915 8987 and SJ5922 8975, which are outside of WT ownership and are owned/ responsibility of The Land Trust. The site is well used by the public, mainly local dog walkers and families. There is a public car park (owned by Warrington Council) at Sankey Valley Park which can be used by visitors.</p> |
| <b>Significance</b>   |
| <p>Increasing access to and enjoyment of woodland is one of the Trust's key aims and the network of footpaths through these woods provide opportunities for local people to visit and enjoy woodlands in an area that is highly urbanised with housing estates near to the wood. The wood offers local people the opportunity to visit and enjoy ancient woodland which is a rare habitat within the UK. The site links into a wider network of paths Sankey Valley Park and the old Sankey Valley Canal and Sankey Brook. This is a popular area for recreation area attracting a significant number of visitors from the local area and further afield.</p>   |
| <b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>  |
| <p>The footpaths are well used all year around but can become muddy/ flooded in the winter requiring regular maintenance. This issue is becoming more pronounced in recent years and an additional two bridges have been installed in 2026 to redirect the permissive route and allow visitors a dry route through the woodland. Opportunities may arise to work with neighbouring landowners (Warrington BC, Gullivers World and the Land Trust) to work jointly to improve public access within the wider area.</p> <p>Vehicle access to the site is across other landowners land and is restricted by wooden bridges on site which makes access difficult for work requiring machinery / vehicles on site.</p> <p>The watercourses, ditches and ASNW trees and flora can be a constraint to undertaking work at certain times of the year or getting access on site.</p>   |
| <b>Factors Causing Change</b>   |
| <p>Changes in level of public use could lead to increased pressure and wear and tear on the site and paths.</p> <p>Vandalism, fires and litter are a regular issue on site.</p> <p>Local drainage pressure with increased flooding of the footpath occurring in recent years.</p>   |

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|--|
| <b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>   |
| <p>The long term objective is to maintain public access at current levels through annual maintenance of the 600m footpath, 5 public access points, access infrastructure and signage.</p> <p>The site will be made as safe as practicable for visitors and neighbours through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones and site hazards.</p> <p>Threats to the wood arising from public recreation or misuse will be monitored and appropriate measures taken where necessary.</p>   |
| <b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>  |
| <p>Carry out maintenance of 5 entrances, and 600m of footpaths, signage, 3 bridges, culverts, and access infrastructure and ensure that any vegetation encroaching on footpaths is cut back annually as part of an annual estate maintenance contract.</p> <p>Remove litter and fly tipping in the wood. as part of an annual estate maintenance contract</p> <p>Inspect trees in high risk zones (i.e. next to buildings, roads and footpaths) and site hazards (as per the SRA inspection regime) to ensure the safety of visitors and neighbours, and undertake any remedial safety work identified from the inspections.</p> <p>Monitor the current access provision and work programme maintenance to assess whether it is adequate for the level of public use, to identify if there are any people issues/ threats to the wood, and take appropriate action to address them if necessary.</p> |

#### 4.2 f2 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

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|---|
| <b>Description</b>  |
| <p>Twig and Bog Woods are Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland comprising predominantly beech, oak, sycamore, alder and willow with occasional ash, hornbeam and horse chestnut. It was under-planted in the 1980s with an understorey of mainly holly, hazel and elder. Ancient woodland ground flora indicator species are present throughout the wood including bluebells, with marsh marigolds, flag iris and lords and ladies in the wetter parts. Rhododendron covered much of the wood, although in recent years this mostly been cleared. Himalayan balsam is spreading within the wood, and is also widespread on the neighbouring land at Sankey Valley Park and Gulliver's World. Outside the eastern boundary of the wood there was planting of mixed broadleaves in the 1980's to buffer the ASNW. The wetter areas of the wood contain mature and semi-mature willow and alder, some of which have collapsed and there is a small volume of dead wood on site.</p> |
| <b>Significance</b>   |
| <p>Cheshire is one of the least wooded counties in England with less than 5% woodland cover. Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland is one of the rarest habitats in the UK (less than 2% woodland is ASNW) and it supports a large diversity of wildlife species. Twig and Bog Woods are therefore an extremely important remnant of this rare and valuable habitat, particularly given it's urban location. The site is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site because ancient woodland is a Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat for Cheshire.</p>   |
| <b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>  |
| <p>High public usage of the site makes the establishment of natural regeneration difficult due to trampling and antisocial behaviour. The main opportunity for regeneration comes from the existing patches of natural regeneration. Further</p>  |

opportunities will develop from canopy openings resulting from safety works or failures amongst the mature trees. Limited access to the site for vehicles and machinery is a constraint to management operations. Wet ground conditions, watercourses, ditches and the ancient woodland ground flora means that management operations need to be undertaken sensitively to avoid causing damage. Control of Himalayan balsam needs to be done jointly across landownership boundaries to be successful. Neighbouring land is owned by Warrington BC, The Land Trust, Gulliver's World. Mature trees provide valuable habitat and food sources for a wide range of wildlife species including birds, mammals and invertebrates, mature trees will be retained for as long as it is safe to do so.

#### **Factors Causing Change**

Rhododendron has been removed, but there is some regrowth which could spread further in the wood and needs to be controlled. Himalayan balsam is spreading within the wood, and is widespread on the neighbouring land at Sankey Valley Park and Gulliver's World. Inappropriate visitor use of the wood (bikes, camping, fires and vandalism) can cause damage to sensitive ground flora and trees.

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

To safeguard the ancient woodland habitat and flora and through appropriate management and to maintain a high forest canopy mixed broadleaved woodland with a variable structure in terms of age class and species distribution. Mature trees will be retained into senescence and standing columns of dead wood will be kept on site to provide important deadwood habitat where it is safe to do so. Management of natural regeneration and structural diversity will mainly be opportunistic taking advantage of tree failures or canopy gaps resulting from tree safety or boundary works. Invasive species in particular rhododendron and Himalayan balsam will be controlled to protect the ancient woodland flora.

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

Tree safety inspections will be undertaken on a regular basis and work carried out if necessary for public safety. A woodland condition assessments will be carried out to assess the general health of the woodland and identify any threats from tree diseases, pests, invasive species or human impacts. Invasive species will be monitored in particular the spread of Himalayan balsam and any rhododendron regrowth and will be controlled if necessary to prevent them spreading and impacting on the ancient flora, however doing so will be difficult due to the need for control on neighbouring land including The Land Trust and Guilvers World.

## 5. WORK PROGRAMME

| Year | Type Of Work | Description | Due Date |
|------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|------|--------------|-------------|----------|

## APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

| Cpt No.  | Area (ha) | Main Species      | Year | Management Regime | Major Management Constraints   | Designations   |
|--|-----------|-------------------|------|-------------------|--|--|
| 1a   | 1         | Mixed broadleaves | 1900 | High forest       | Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site | Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site |
| <p>This small compartment of ASNW forms the northern part of the wood with Callands Brook passing through the eastern edge. It is mostly mixed broadleaved species dominated by beech, oak, sycamore, willow and alder, with single specimens of ash, hornbeam and sweet chestnut. Hawthorn, elder, willow and elm regeneration make up the shrub layer with occasional red currant and broom bushes on the stream banks. The ground flora is dominated by Himalayan Balsam in the summer. Bluebells are found in places across the drier areas of the woodland with marsh marigold, yellow iris and lords and ladies thriving in the marshy areas.</p> <p>The compartment is bounded by the Gulliver's World theme park to the north, a ditch/ drain to the west and south, and a permissive path in the wood forms the eastern boundary next to compartment 2a.</p>  |           |                   |      |                   |  |  |
| 2a   | 1.96      | Mixed broadleaves | 1900 | High forest       | Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site | Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site |
| <p>This compartment forms the southern part of the wood and is mostly flat, low lying and in places marshy ground. It is mixed broadleaved ASNW with dominated by oak, beech, sycamore and alder with and horse chestnut. The shrub layer in the northern half of the compartment was dominated by rhododendron although much of this have been cleared in recent years but there is some rhododendron regenerating. Hawthorn, elder, willow and elm regeneration also make up the shrub layer in the compartment. Isolated patches of ASNW indicator species including bluebells carpet the drier areas of the woodland floor with marsh marigold, yellow iris, lords and ladies in the marshier areas. In recent years the ground flora has become dominated by invasive Himalayan Balsam which covers between 50-75% of the wood in summer.</p> <p>The compartment is bounded to the north by a fence alongside Gulliver's World theme park, to the west by a permissive footpath in the wood and compartment 1a. Callands Brook at this location is just outside the Trust's ownership. A large pond (outside of WT ownership) forms the south western boundary to the compartment with a feeder channel for the canal being the south eastern boundary. The main part of the eastern boundary is not easily visible since the land to the east (owned by Warrington Council) was planted with broadleaved trees and shrubs in the 1980s/early 1990s to create a woodland buffer which has merged into the wood.</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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