

Burcote Wood

(Plan period – 2026 to 2036)



WOODLAND
TRUST

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Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

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

Our Vision is:

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

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

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

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

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

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

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
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5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Burcote Wood

Location:	Towcester	Grid	reference:	SP690466	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	152
Area:	3.80 hectares (9.39 acres)								
External Designations:	N/A								
Internal Designations:	N/A								

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Burcote Wood lies close to the village of Wood Burcote and is about 2km to the south of Towcester (north of the minor road which connects the southern outskirts of Towcester with the A43/A413 junction, some 800 metres to the southwest). Public access is from Burcote Road where there is a small pull in. This road has recently been closed between Wood Burcote and the site to make way for the new Towcester relief road and housing. There is a permissive circular footpath which follows the perimeter of the wood (approximately 0.7km in length).

Burcote Wood was formerly a gravel quarry. The site was reclaimed by landfill and planted between 1985 and 1987 with a mix of native broadleaved trees and shrubs (oak, ash, field maple, alder and cherry). Although the establishment of trees and shrubs was inconsistent due to the dry, shallow soil, it has now developed into a diverse, light canopy woodland with a small grassy glade. The unplanted hollow in the south-eastern corner has also scrubbed over. The wood is surrounded by farmland; hedges; an ancient field boundary with mature trees to the north-east, a hedged farm track to the west and an elm rich hedge along the road. The soils are mostly clayey (some lime-rich/loam) with impeded drainage.

Key Features are Informal Public Access and Secondary Woodland.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term aim is to allow Burcote Wood to develop naturally into a healthy, resilient, multi layered woodland with some open spaces and graded edges. The wood will have a range of native species (at least 3 canopy species), a mixture of age ranges and with deadwood, both standing and fallen, being retained where it is safe to do so. Open areas will be maintained with a woodland edge layer encouraged through coppicing, clearing and natural regeneration.

Low-key public access will be maintained in perpetuity through a managed path network, entrances and regular safety checks. Infrastructure and facilities will be minimal and only essential signage used. Use of the site will be monitored and provisions for informal recreation reviewed accordingly. Public safety will be assessed through infrastructure monitoring and tree safety inspections conducted regularly, as per internal policies.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
This rural site is less than 2 km from the southern suburbs of Towcester and is popular for dog walking. There is a circular footpath (~0.7km) within the site. The level of use may well change with the recent construction of the Towcester relief road and new housing. In the majority of the wood the trees are well established and have created a canopy. In other areas, where, for various reasons, establishment was patchy, glades with few scattered trees are developing naturally. This variation in woodland habitat will enhance the public enjoyment of the site.
Significance
Although there are several large woodlands around Silverstone (some 5 km to the southwest), this small wood is the most accessible from the southern edge of Towcester. The closest Woodland Trust woods are around 15km.
Opportunities & Constraints
Constraint Limited parking and no current official footpath from habitation. Relatively small site Opportunity Near to population centre. Attractive location and wood. Path network stands up well in wet weather
Factors Causing Change
New relief road and housing will probably affect visitor numbers. Pests and disease, such as Chalara and herbivores.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
Low-key public access will be maintained in perpetuity through a managed path network, entrances and regular safety checks. Infrastructure and facilities will be minimal and only essential signage used. Use of the site will be monitored and provisions for informal recreation reviewed accordingly. Public safety will be assessed through infrastructure monitoring and tree safety inspections conducted regularly, as per internal policies.

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

- The public access structures such as entrances, paths and gates will be monitored and maintained to standard WT specs.
- Where trees/shrubs/pathside vegetation restricts passage along the large circular path, this will also be cut back to allow at least 2m (twice annually).
- Litter and fly-tipping will be removed when required.
- The roadside hedge will be trimmed annually. Periodically dead elm stems will need to be removed where they are likely to create a hazard.

4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Burcote Wood has developed into a mixed broadleaf woodland with a good range of trees and shrubs and a light canopy. Species include wild cherry, pedunculate oak, birch, field maple and a few alder. Shrub species are mostly hawthorn and elder. Some areas have become closed canopy high-forest, some of the glades that had developed due to uneven establishment across the site have filled in and new openings have been created by ash dieback. The site was a former gravel quarry within an agricultural landscape and therefore by its very nature relatively sterile. The prior reclaiming of the pit and the subsequent planting by the Trust has increased the biodiversity of the site considerably.

Significance

The wood is surrounded by farmland; hedges; an ancient field boundary with mature trees to the north-east, a hedged farm track to the west and an elm rich hedge along the road. This small woodland provides an important haven for both resident and migratory wildlife. Although there are several large woodlands around Silverstone (some 5 km to the southwest), this small wood is the most accessible from the southern edge of Towcester. The closest Woodland Trust woods are around 15km.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint

Relatively small isolated woodland.

The reclamation was not that good in places and the soil is very shallow and generally dry, leading to poor tree growth in places

Opportunity

The poor soil conditions have led to a diverse structural habitat from dry grassy glades through to scrub and closed canopy woodland

Ash Dieback will increase the standing and fallen deadwood habitat and allow for natural regeneration in the spaces left, increasing the habitat diversity of the wood.
Factors Causing Change
Pest damage (rabbit, squirrel and deer predominantly). Possible increase in visitors with new housing development. Tree disease (E.g. Ash Dieback)
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The long-term aim is to allow Burcote Wood to develop naturally into a healthy, resilient, multi layered woodland with some open spaces and graded edges. The wood will have a range of native species (at least 3 canopy) and age ranges and with deadwood, both standing and fallen, being retained where it is safe to do so. Open areas will be maintained with a woodland edge layer encouraged through coppicing, clearing and natural regeneration.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
As ash declines, this will naturally open up areas of the canopy along the footpath, assisted through tree safety inspection and intervention as required for safety. Small-scale thinning, focussing on denser areas (whilst leaving a few as denser copses) and around good examples of mixed native broadleaf natural regeneration and individual trees will be mostly undertaken in 2027/8 (with small amounts also being done in 26/7 and 28/9, as per EMC) - allowing increased room and light levels for better individual tree and stand development. Material will be left to increase deadwood habitat. Glades will be monitored and cleared if becoming too enclosed (without others being created).

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2026	WC - Site Maintenance	Works associated with routine site management and maintenance works on Woodland Creation sites such as boundary ditches and fencing works , hedge trimming etc	December
2026	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2027	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2027	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2028	WC - Site Maintenance	Works associated with routine site management and maintenance works on Woodland Creation sites such as boundary ditches and fencing works , hedge trimming etc	December
2028	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2030	WC - Site Maintenance	Works associated with routine site management and maintenance works on Woodland Creation sites such as boundary ditches and fencing works , hedge trimming etc	December
2032	WC - Site Maintenance	Works associated with routine site management and maintenance works on Woodland Creation sites such as boundary ditches and fencing works , hedge trimming etc	December
2032	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2033	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2034	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2034	WC - Site Maintenance	Works associated with routine site management and maintenance works on Woodland Creation sites such as boundary ditches and fencing works , hedge trimming etc	December
2035	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	3.81	Ash		High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site	

For the purposes of this management plan the whole site is to be treated as one sub-compartment although there is some variation due to the initial establishment rate and species planted. The site was planted in three annual phases starting in 1985 on a reclaimed (land fill) gravel pit in an agricultural landscape of pasture and arable fields. The species planted to form a High Forest canopy included Alder, Ash, Oak (both Pedunculate and Sessile), Birch, Field maple and Common Lime. In addition Hawthorn and Blackthorn were planted in some locations to provide a sub-canopy and an edge profile. The ground layer is dominated by grasses but there are also some significant areas of bramble and bracken although these are under pressure due to the often high rabbit population. An area adjoining the agricultural grassland in the south was left unplanted and has developed as scrub and due to poor establishment and development clearings have developed naturally. A circular path was part of the initial design. A small area (0.19ha) in the centre of the site has been designated as a Natural Reserve.

Ancient Woodland

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

Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland

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

Ancient Woodland Site

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

Beating Up

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

Broadleaf

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

Canopy

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

Clearfell

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

Compartment

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

Conifer

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

Continuous Cover forestry

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

Coppice

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

Exotic (non-native) Species

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

Field Layer

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

Group Fell

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

Long Term Retention

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

Minimum Intervention

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

Mixed Woodland

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

National vegetation classification (NVC)

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

Native Species

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

Natural Regeneration

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

Origin & Provenance

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

Re-Stocking

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

Shrub Layer

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

Stand

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

Sub-Compartment

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

Thinning

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

Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes

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

Weeding

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

Windblow/Windthrow

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

Registered Office:

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