

Woodland Trust Internal Management Plan

Clough Wood (Plan period – 2026 to 2036)



WOODLAND
TRUST

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

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.

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1.0 Site Details

Clough Wood

Location:	Runcorn Grid reference: SJ542799 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 108
Area:	2.72 hectares (6.72 acres)
External Designations:	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site, NULL
Internal Designations:	N/A

2.0 Site Description

Clough Wood is a 2.72ha urban woodland in the Beechwood district of Runcorn, approximately 3 miles to the south-east of the town centre. The wood is bordered by a housing estate to the west; railway lines to the north and part of the eastern boundary; the M56 motorway to the south; and farmland to the east. The north-eastern section of the site occupies a small plateau then falls away into a shallow clough to the south-west. A small stream enters the site near the north-east corner then disappears underground re-emerging 100m to the south-west from where it flows down the centre of the site exiting via a culvert under the M56. The soils are predominantly sandy over areas of pure sand, capped with well decayed humus and leaf litter.

The wood was formerly farm woodland prior to the land being purchased by the Commission for the New Towns (CNT) in the late 1970's as part of the development of Runcorn New Town. It was gifted to the Woodland Trust along with several other urban woodlands in Runcorn in 1995. The Woodland Trust owns twenty one woods in the Runcorn area covering a total of over 100ha.

It is secondary broadleaved woodland which is a key feature of the site. The canopy comprises a mix of mature broadleaves including sycamore with ash, oak, beech and elm and a well developed understorey including under planting (from the 1980s) and natural regeneration of ash, beech, oak, sycamore, elm, wild cherry, hawthorn, hazel, elder and holly. There is extensive ground flora cover with large areas of bluebells and ramson in the spring. The wood is an important habitat for wildlife and has been designated as a Local Wildlife Site by Halton Borough Council.

Informal Public Access is a second key feature of the site with permissive footpaths through the wood from the western boundary to the eastern boundary. The wood is generally quiet with low levels of public usage mainly by local people. Due to the urban location of the wood it suffers from misuse from time to time including fly tipping, vandalism and fire damage to trees.

A Natural Reserve area (FSC/ Forest Stewardship Council designation) is located along the western corner south of the main footpath . Within this area, management interventions are limited and so any activity here must be within a permitted list as defined by FSC.

3.0 Long term policy

The long term intention for Clough Wood is to secure the regeneration and continuity of mixed broadleaved high forest and associated woodland edge habitat. It will be managed predominantly as a landscape and conservation feature to ensure the continuity of woodland habit and will continue to provide an amenity to the local population. Guided by the Woodland Trust's woodland management approach, the long term management will continue to seek a balance between conservation and public enjoyment. The woodland will be left to develop largely through natural processes, with mature and veteran trees retained and standing deadwood left on site where safe to do so.

Public safety and access will be the key drivers for woodland management operations with tree safety being a high priority in areas near to houses and footpaths. Tree safety and other silvicultural operations will aim to reduce long term tree safety liability and create gaps in the canopy to promote natural regeneration and improve the woodland structure. Regeneration of both natives and non-native species will be accepted. Coppicing along paths and boundaries will be undertaken periodically to maintain path sight lines and create a more graduated woodland edge.

Existing levels of public access provision will be maintained and the Trust's duty of care to neighbours and visitors will continue to be addressed through on-going tree safety and site risk assessment inspections. The woodland will be regularly monitored for long term threats from tree diseases, pests, invasive non-native species and human impacts (particularly fly tipping and vandalism) to ensure the long term sustainability of the woodland.

4.0 Key Features

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
The wood has approximately 550m of unsurfaced permissive footpaths and five entrances for public access. Three entrances are from the western boundary from the housing estate with kissing gates at two of these entrances. The other two entrances are on the eastern boundary from the adjacent farmland and have open access with no gates. The paths have moderate usage, with an estimated 5-15 people using the wood per day, mainly for dog walking.
Significance
Increasing access and enjoyment of woodland and trees is one of the Woodland Trust's key outcomes. Clough Wood provides informal public access for local people to access woodland and enjoy nature close to where they live. The wood is a local landscape and amenity feature and is visible to people driving on the adjacent M56 motorway. It helps to act as a barrier from the motorway to screen nearby houses and residents from noise and air pollution.
Opportunities & Constraints
The woodland is small and surrounded by houses, railway lines and roads. The footpaths are not surfaced which may limit access for some visitors, however the current access provision is appropriate for the level of public usage of the site. Management access to the wood is poor which is a constraint to carrying out woodland management in the wood.
Factors Causing Change
The level of public use of the footpaths in the wood is currently low-moderate which is sustainable for the existing paths. There are no factors/ threats causing changes at the present time, although there is occasionally fly tipping of garden waste along the garden boundaries. The footpaths become quite boggy after heavy rainfall and in the winter.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The long-term objective is to maintain the current level of public access to the site to ensure it is welcoming and accessible for visitors all year round. Access infrastructure including 550m of footpath, 5 entrances, signage, fencing and gates will be maintained in good condition. The wood will be made as safe as practicable for visitors and neighbours through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones, site hazards and access infrastructure. Threats to the wood arising from public recreation or misuse will be monitored and appropriate measures taken to deal with them where it is practical and achievable.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
During the plan period the aim is to maintain the visitor infrastructure so that it is appropriate for the current level of public access in the wood. The short term objectives are to: 1. Carry out maintenance annually of the 550m of footpaths, five entrances, steps and other access infrastructure to ensure they are easy and safe to use. Vegetation encroaching on the paths will be cut back annually. Signage will be maintained to be clean and visible, and replaced if they deteriorate. Any accumulations of litter will be removed as part of the annual Estates Maintenance Contract. 2. Carry out regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (i.e. next to buildings, roads and footpaths) and site hazards as per the Trust's safety inspection regime to ensure safety of visitors and neighbours, and undertaking any remedial safety work identified. 3. Monitor public use of the site before the end of the current plan period to review the standard of access, identify any work required and assess if there are any issues/ threats to the wood from public usage, taking appropriate action to address them if necessary. 4. Carry out woodland edge and path edge coppicing to maintain/ improve sight lines during the current plan period.

4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland

Description
Clough Wood is dominated by sycamore with other broadleaves including oak, ash, beech, elm and cherry. Approximately 65% (1.57 ha) of the woodland canopy is fully mature and 35% (1.03 ha) young or semi-mature about twenty years old. The understorey is variable across the site and is more diverse in the northern section of the wood where elder and bramble abound. The site has a reasonably rich

ground layer including some dense areas of bluebells and ramson, and numerous clusters of lesser celandine, ramson, lords and ladies, ivy and honey suckle. A number of wet flushes occur on the site and a stream runs through the wood from the northeast to southwest. A Natural Reserve area (FSC/ Forest Stewardship Council designation) is located along the western boundary with the railway line below the brook.. Within this area, management interventions are limited and so any activity here must be within a permitted list as defined by FSC.
Significance The wood is a significant landscape and conservation feature within a very urban environment and provides an important habitat for a range of urban wildlife. The importance of the site for wildlife has been acknowledged by Halton Borough Council who have designated it as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (Local Wildlife Site). Along with other nearby Woodland Trust owned woodlands it is part of the local ecological landscape in the area; eight of these woods are within 2km of Clough wood and include 13ha of ASNW and a 5.3ha site of scientific importance (SSSI) at Floodbrook Clough.
Opportunities & Constraints The close proximity of the woodland to housing (approximately 470m of the boundary backing onto domestic properties) gives rise to tree safety and other boundary related issues which need to be managed and has significant cost implications. This will require tree safety work, stand stability thinning and boundary coppicing periodically which will provide opportunities for natural regeneration and to diversify the woodland structure. There is a significant amount of third party infrastructure that exists within the woodland from the railway tunnel, petro-chemical pipelines and waste water. On occasion these third parties are required to complete maintenance work that can impact the woodland (for example)selective felling and ditch digging) which can have both a positive and negative impact on the woodland condition. A Natural Reserve area (FSC/ Forest Stewardship Council designation) is located along the western boundary with the railway line below the brook.. Within this area, management interventions are limited and so any activity here must be within a permitted list as defined by FSC.
Factors Causing Change Tree disease, particularly Dutch elm disease and Ash dieback disease will impact on the canopy/ structure/ species mix in some areas. Tree safety works in high risk zones will result in removal of some mature trees. Fly tipping, fires and vandalism to trees.
Long term Objective (50 years+) The long term objective is to maintain the continuity of mixed broadleaved high forest with a diverse structure, age classes and species mix. The wood will be left to develop largely through natural process with succession promoted through natural regeneration, mature trees retained into senescence and standing dead trees will be kept on site to provide important deadwood habitat where it does not compromise public safety. Woodland management will focus on maintaining stand stability and tree safety to reduce long term risks along boundaries and footpaths for public safety. This will create opportunistic gaps in the canopy promoting natural regeneration and structural diversification. Boundary coppicing will be undertaken periodically to maintain a graduated woodland edge structure and to reduce the tree safety/ encroachment liability at the same time as enhancing the biodiversity value of the woodland. Threats to the wood from pests, tree disease and invasive species will be monitored and appropriate action taken to control them where it is practical and achievable.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years) During the plan period the short term objectives will be to: - inspect trees as part of the site risk assessment regime for public safety in high risk zones (i.e. by buildings, footpaths and roads) and carry out any remedial work identified. - carry out a Woodland Condition Assessment towards the end of the current plan period to assess the health and resilience of the woodland including the mix of species and natural regeneration, to monitor threats from tree disease, pests, non-native invasive species and to take appropriate action where necessary.

5.0 Work Programme

Year	Generic Work Description	Detailed MP Work Programme	Exp/Inc	Due By
2026	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Path cutting and clearance of vegetation along all marked paths to pedestrian specification. Entrance maintenance including clean signs.	75.00	30/09/2026
2026	AW - Management Access Maintenance	Replace rotten wooden gate posts on the management access gate in NW entrance to the site.	300.00	31/12/2026
2027	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Path cutting and clearance of vegetation along all paths and entrance maintenance to WT specifications 2.1 and 1.1.	75.00	30/06/2027
2027	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Path cutting and clearance of vegetation along all paths and entrance maintenance to WT specifications 2.1 and 1.1.	75.00	31/08/2027
2027	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Boundary tree safety work along boundary with houses to remove ash with dieback and any other tree safety issues identified from survey. Chip all arisings on site.	2,000.00	31/12/2027
2028	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Litter clearance and site inspection. Report on any issues.	60.00	31/03/2028

6.0 Monitoring Key Features & Woodland Condition

6.1 Completed Observations

Observations for KF	Ref no	Actual Date	Planned observation	Actual observation	Suggestions / Actions
KF-Informal Public Access	f1	03/10/2003	Annual reports on by EMC contractor	Site inspection completed. EMC to update.	Update/amend emc 2004
KF-Informal Public Access	f1	02/12/2004	Annual reports on by EMC contractor	Access fixtures in good order. EMC let for 2005.	Reinspect in 2005
KF-Informal Public Access	f1	22/09/2005	Annual reports on by EMC contractor	All fixtures in good order.	Reinspect and reassess in three years time
KF-Informal Public Access	f1	08/04/2008	Following discussion with Mr McVey 58 Wenlock Road, ensure that his property is covered by the coppice come crown lift along the housing boundary in Feb 2008. Concerning shade and overgrowth issues.	Work carried out in Feb 2008	NA
KF-Informal Public Access	f1	12/05/2010	WO to check site for any necessary changes for the 2010 EMC	signage and fencing OK at entrances. Fencing along eastern boundary needs repairs. Path require some repair	contacted contractor about fencing. Visited site with path contractor and discussed repairs for 2010
KF-Informal Public Access	f1	29/05/2012	WO to check site for any necessary changes for the 2013 EMC	Paths are to continue to be maintained twice a year. However, the informal permissive paths for maintenance will be re routed so that path cuts do not cover all internal paths. See EMC map for changes. Entrance points, signage, fittings and fixtures will also continue to be maintained and repaired for any damage. Require remedial work on length of eastern boundary fence. Amend in 2013 EMC.	..
KF-Informal Public Access	f1	16/07/2015	Assess paths, boundaries, signage and any other fixtures on site. Note level of litter, fly	Entrances all have WT welcome signs. Access furniture (kissing gates and fences) at entrances all in good condition. No litter/ fly	none.

Observations for KF	Ref no	Actual Date	Planned observation	Actual observation	Suggestions / Actions
			tipping, fires and any vandalism.	tipping was noted on site or any signs of vandalism or fires. Condition of footpaths was good.	
KF-Informal Public Access	f1	22/05/2018	Formal inspection of the condition of footpaths, entrances, signs, other infrastructure and level of public usage, litter, fly tipping, fires and vandalism. Other periodic visits will be carried out by site manager and contractor along with reports from site visitors. Any work identified from those visits/ reports will be undertaken within appropriate time period. Check if EMC work is appropriate for the site and make any changes if necessary to the work programme.	All entrances have WT welcome signs in good condition. The paths surfaces were dry at the time of visiting and easy to use; there are several unofficial desire line paths through the wood which are not maintained. There was no litter or fly tipping seen on the visit although the ground cover was quite high and any items of litter/ rubbish could be hidden.	
KF-Informal Public Access	f1	26/07/2022	Formal inspection of the condition of footpaths, entrances, signs, other infrastructure and level of public usage, litter, fly tipping, fires and vandalism. Other periodic visits will be carried out by site manager and contractor along with reports from site visitors. Any work identified from those visits/ reports will be undertaken within appropriate time period. Check if EMC work is appropriate for the site and make any changes if necessary to the work programme.	All entrances & footpaths are in reasonable- good condition. Entrances have WT welcome signs in reasonable condition. No litter or other issues. Dumping of garden waste still a recurring problem in a couple of locations.	
KF-Secondary Woodland	f2	07/06/2007	Assessment of regeneration in the thinned areas and especially around the oak underplanting in the windblown blocks. Assess need to remove sycamore regeneration to favour ash, alder, birch, and oak.	This observation is now somewhat de-funct. There has been no major thinning operations and policy has changed so that SY is no longer selected against. The small amount of re-stocking that took place appears to be developing favourably.	

Observations for KF	Ref no	Actual Date	Planned observation	Actual observation	Suggestions / Actions
KF-Secondary Woodland	f2	05/06/2008	WO to mark up re-spacing operations	Completed by Chris mid May 08	Felling works by EMC
KF-Secondary Woodland	f2	29/05/2012	Woodland condition assessment - inc requirements for thinning or underplanting during next plan period.	No longer aligned to woodland management approach.	Monitor levels of natural regeneration.
KF-Secondary Woodland	f2	16/07/2015	Assess woodland boundaries and pathways in order to identify any pre-emptive tree safety and stand stability thinning work.	Trees (mainly sycamore, ash and oak) along boundary to gardens/ houses on Troutbeck Close are overhanging and require pruning back and small trees coppicing.	
KF-Secondary Woodland	f2	22/05/2018	Assess boundaries and pathways to identify if there is a need for proactive stand stability thinning for long term tree safety.	The western boundary by the back of houses/ gardens with mature trees growing within 4-5m of the boundary including approx. 30-40 medium sized Ash.	Assess need for future tree work along the boundary for long term tree safety and stand stability.
KF-Secondary Woodland	f2	04/09/2023	Inspect the site after completion of felling work to check all work has been carried out as per the work order and specification and that the site has been left tidy. Assess if any reinstatement of paths is required and whether any further tree work is required for the next year or two.	3no. Ash trees with dieback to be removed on boundary with houses - work to be carried out in winter 2023/24.	The trees marked have been felled and timber left in situ/ brash chipped and the site has been left tidy.
	F97	22/05/2018	The wood is located in the Beechwood area of Runcorn within an urban landscape. The site is bordered by housing, two railway lines and the M56 motorway.		
	F97	11/07/2023	The woodland is located in the Beechwood area of Runcorn within an urban landscape of housing estates. The site is bordered by houses, two railway lines, the M56 motorway and a field next to more houses at Sutton Weaver.		

Observations for KF	Ref no	Actual Date	Planned observation	Actual observation	Suggestions / Actions
	F97	14/04/2026	The woodland is located in the Beechwood area of Runcorn within an urban landscape of housing estates. The site is bordered by houses, two railway lines, the M56 motorway and a field next to more houses at Sutton Weaver.		
	F97	14/04/2026	The woodland is located in the Beechwood area of Runcorn within an urban landscape of housing estates. The site is bordered by houses, two railway lines, the M56 motorway and an arable field next to more houses at Sutton Weaver.		
Woodland Condition	F99	02/10/2001	General woodland condition assessment.	No sign of canopy dieback. Fly tipping from gardens ongoing.	Control access into site at the two main entrances. Install posters and send letters to neighbours.
Woodland Condition	F99	01/10/2002	General woodland condition assessment.	Access fixtures installed to control access of fly tippers. Less fly tipping now at entrances. Garden waste still being dumped over fences.	Letters to neighbours. Ongoing removal through the emc. Reinspect in 2003.
Woodland Condition	F99	30/09/2003	General woodland condition assessment.	Flytipping occurring behind property	Wrote letter to neighbour. Need to re-think approach towards locals particularly persistent offenders. Re-inspect 2004
Woodland Condition	F99	29/07/2004	General woodland condition assessment.	Woodland canopy in a good condition. Very minimal fly tipping noted, some disturbance by kids at one point where tree felling taken place i.e. small fires and digging (?) Rails missing off 1 section of wooden fencing where WT land borders railway land. Also found exposed structure in culvert in woodland. Looks like the top of a door, cut stone looks like a lintel. Unknown as to whether this is a drain or something else?	Remove platform built by kid in oak tree in wood. Is nailed into the branches. Keep an eye on exposed structure.

Observations for KF	Ref no	Actual Date	Planned observation	Actual observation	Suggestions / Actions
Woodland Condition	F99	20/07/2007	General woodland condition assessment.	Woodland canopy in a good condition. Some minor vandalism to trees.	Re-inspect in 3 yrs
Woodland Condition	F99	12/05/2010	General woodland condition assessment.	Woodland canopy in a good condition. Coppice along edge behind houses has allowed greater public safety	Re-inspect in 2 yrs
Woodland Condition	F99	29/05/2012	General woodland condition assessment.	Woodland in good condition understorey developing well.	..

6.2 Planned Observations

Observations for KF	Ref no	Planned Date	Planned Observation
KF-Informal Public Access	f1	31/08/2027	Formal inspection of the condition of footpaths, entrances, signs, other infrastructure and level of public usage, litter, fly tipping, fires and vandalism. Other periodic visits will be carried out by site manager and contractor along with reports from site visitors. Any work identified from those visits/ reports will be undertaken within appropriate time period. Check if EMC work is appropriate for the site and make any changes if necessary to the work programme.
KF-Secondary Woodland	f2	31/08/2027	Inspect the site after completion of clearance work planned by Ineos surrounding the pipelines that run across the North of the site. Check all work has been carried out as per the discussions and that the site has been left tidy.

Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	2.68	Sycamore	1900	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, People issues (+tve & - tve), Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site
The wood is in a south facing clough valley with steep slopes particularly in the southern half of the compartment. It abuts domestic garden fences along the western boundary, a railway line along the northern boundary, farmland along the north eastern boundary and another railway line along the south eastern boundary. The southern boundary adjoins more woodland on an embankment leading to the M56 motorway. The canopy is dominated by sycamore (approx. 65%) with other mixed broadleaves including oak, beech, ash, elm and cherry. The understorey is patchy in the southern half of the wood and more abundant in the northern section; it is dominated by elder and bramble with hawthorn, hazel, holly, and patchy regeneration of sycamore, rowan, elm, ash and beech. Under planting of ash, beech, elm, wild cherry, and lime was carried out in the 1980s. The wood has an abundant ground flora including bluebells, lesser celandine, nettle, honey suckle, wild garlic, lords and ladies, ivy, bramble, ferns and mosses.						

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Forecast Year	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated vol.	total
1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.25	2027	8		2

Appendix 3: Reference information and surveys

Evaluation Type	Type of Information	Details of Contents	Author / Recorder	Date of record
Management History	Past Management Plan	Old WT management plan..	WT	07/05/1995
Management History	Past WGS	WGS Ref. 010002729.	Forestry Commission	01/01/2002
Management History	Monitoring Results	Between 2003 and 2007 the main work on site has been tree safety operations. A small area of underplanting/ restocking has been completed where windblown gaps have allowed. The woodland canopy is in a good condition and there has been some natural regeneration. The site has been prone to some minor vandalism to trees and occasional motorbike use during this period. 2008 - in February 2008 work has taken place along the western boundary with the housing estate. This has involved some selected crown lifting and coppice - (0.37ha) has been completed. Further operations to enhance stand stability will be completed in Autumn 2008..	Simon Mageean	25/05/2010
Management History	Past WGS	EWGS Woodland Management Grant for all sites across Warrington and Runcorn from 2012-2017. Grant Reference: 26793. .	Forestry Commission	20/11/2011
Maps & Photographs	Historic maps	Site map with boundaries from CNT at time of hand over to the WT..	CNT	01/01/1995
Wildlife Conservation	Report	The site has been designated by Halton BC as a Local Wildlife Site which is a non-statutory designation for important local wildlife sites..	Halton BC	18/07/2013