

Adcombe Wood and Woodram Copse

(Plan period – 2026 – 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

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GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Adcombe Wood and Woodram Copse

Location:	Blagdon Grid reference: ST 22538 17445 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 193
Area:	35.64 hectares (88.07 acres)
External Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Environmentally Sensitive Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Adcombe Wood and Woodram Copse is a steeply sloping, westerly facing woodland in the Blackdown Hills National Landscape. The wood is part of the scarp woodlands overlooking the Taunton Vale which form a distinctive landscape feature. The wood lies within the Blackdown Hills National Character Area (No. 147). There are excellent examples of several of the semi-natural broadleaved woodland types associated with the Blackdowns for which the wood has been designated as part of the larger Prior's Park and Adcombe Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is principally high forest with small areas of coppice and scrub woodland. A number of veteran trees survive in the wood including Small-leaf Lime, Oak and Wild Service.

The whole site is designated as Ancient Woodland. Part of the wood is ASNW, part was over planted with oak C1900 and part is abandoned common land dominated by dense stands of hawthorn with occasional mature open grown oak and ash. Additional interest lies in the unimproved grassland field at the southern end of the site (Compt 1b and not part of the SSSI) which was cleared of planted conifers in 1997-9, also rides and glades which have noteworthy plant and historically important butterfly populations. A range of bats have been recorded in the local area, including Bechstein's Bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*), although it is unknown, which species are present and how they use the wood. Historically the wood was an important area for butterflies as was the whole of the Blackdowns, with the nationally rare Duke of Burgundy and Wood White recorded (last in 1996) but not seen during the last plan period.

The area is greensand over White Lias limestone, which when it occurs on the surface creates patches with the potential for interesting flora. The soils are generally free draining, however there are many springs arising in the wood which have caused localised land slips. These conditions are typical of the Jurassic/Triassic ridges in Somerset. The wood is on a steep slope, with the upper parts being more exposed to strong winds. The lower sections of the wood seem more sheltered being situated at the bottom of the valley. Due to the presence of ash dieback in the wood, ash are frequently brought down during high winds and heavy rain.

Adcombe Wood is part of a wider landscape of woodland in the Blackdown Hills and an extensive ride network connects many of these nearby sites. A Restricted Byway runs along the eastern boundary and a footpath, crosses near the northern end. The wood is at least half a mile from the surrounding villages of Pitminster, Blagdon Hill, Felton and Corfe; however footpath links to make the wood accessible and popular for active walkers. The boundaries of the woodland are quite indistinct in places where it adjoins other woodland, but small historic earth banks demarcate the WT ownership.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Adcombe Wood and Woodram Copse will be a diverse and resilient ancient woodland. The wood will be managed as a mixed high forest with a diversity of age and structure, with a regenerating understory and ground flora and a mix of deadwood habitats. The SSSI will remain in favorable condition and will be managed through small interventions.

A variety of decaying wood habitats will be encouraged across the site with a minimum of 20m³ present per hectare of both standing and fallen deadwood.

Rides and glades will be managed as transitional open space and will be coppiced on a 3 zone rotation, providing a diverse and soft woodland edge and increasing the biodiversity value of the wood.

The grassland compartment will continue to be managed through grazing, providing a mosaic of grassland and scrub, which will compliment the rest of the woodland. This along with the extensive ride network and scattered glades, will deliver an aim of 20% permanent and transitional open space throughout the wood.

The ride and path network will continue to provide public access throughout the wood and ongoing tree safety inspections and infrastructure maintenance will provide a safe and enjoyable experience.

Remnant features of the ancient woodland will be retained and further mature trees will be highlighted as veterans of the future and will be given space through halo thinning.

Natural regeneration will be encouraged across the site, however, where the ash canopy is being lost to dieback and ash regeneration is dominant, supplementary planting of small-leaved lime, oak, wild service and other suitable ancient woodland species will be planted to ensure a diverse and resilient canopy for the future. The wood will continue to be absent of non-native invasive species.

Deer management will continue and will be evidence led using the latest figures from herbivore impact assessments to steer management.

Opportunity to monitor bat, butterfly and other wildlife populations will be investigated alongside continuing to map ancient and veteran trees across the site.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description
Adcombe Wood is part of a complex of ASNW, PAWS and planted secondary woodland. Approximately quarter of the wood is thought to be ASNW, the remainder of the site has been planted or regenerated naturally, despite the Ancient woodland inventory states that the majority is. The wood is dominated by ash, pedunculate oak and an understory of hazel and thorn. There are scattered small leaved lime, hornbeam and wild service throughout and typical calcicolous shrubs such as spindle, wayfaring tree and dogwood. The ground flora contains abundant bluebell, dog's mercury and stinking iris as well as Somerset notable species tutsan and herb paris. Rides, glades, ponds, springs and wet boggy areas add diversity. Ride side coppicing has taken place since 2005, further adding structure and diversity to the wood. There is an open glade towards the north end of the wood which can be seen from a distance and is locally known as the 'bald spot'. Aerial photographs suggest that the size and location of this area has shifted through time. It has a calcareous flora which historically included the rare early gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i> although this hasn't been recorded since 1992.
Significance
Adcombe Wood and Prior's Park SSSI is designated because the woods include excellent examples of several of the broadleaved semi-natural woodland types associated with the Blackdown Hills. Adcombe is Unit 1 'The Northern Spar of Woodland' and is viewed as in favourable condition. This is compartment 1a in this plan. Adcombe links these areas of ASNW, PAWS and other semi natural habitats thereby contributing to WT aim of protecting ancient woodland. The alder dominated boggy areas of the site have caused its inclusion in the UKBAP Priority Habitat under Wet Woodland.
Opportunities & Constraints
The steepness of the wood makes access difficult and working it problematic, this is particularly true of the 'bald spot' area.
Factors Causing Change
Deer Damage Ash dieback, other tree diseases Climate change and windblow, wildfire. Natural succession will affect the bald spot so losing some of the diversity of the woodland if not managed. Holly and other coarse vegetation such as bracken/bramble could spread further through the wood limiting natural regeneration and shading out the rich ancient woodland ground flora. Non-native invasives

Land slips/slumps
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The wood is maintained as predominately mixed native broadleaved woodland with varied native species and age structure. A diverse mix of woodland ground flora will be present throughout the wood. Some areas will be managed to allow notable trees to become veterans. Abundant dead and dying wood provide habitat for fungi and invertebrates. The bald spot will remain a part of the woodland but size and exact location may fluctuate over time.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
<p>The woodland will be managed through a series of small interventions exploring low impacts methods to protect the ancient woodland soils.</p> <p>Veteran trees will be managed into senescence through gradual halo thinning. These will also continue to be mapped and recorded following on from previous preliminary surveys. Future veterans will be identified and managed for accordingly.</p> <p>Deadwood habitats will be encouraged across the wood and fallen and standing deadwood will be left in situ where safe to do so.</p> <p>Deer management will continue based on findings from the herbivore impact assessments carried out every 5 years.</p> <p>Open space such as the 'bald spot' will continue to be managed, regularly coppicing new growth every 3-5 years.</p> <p>Tree safety work along paths and tracks will continue with the aim of pushing back the ash edge into the wood and further from falling distance of the track. A low impact method of extracting this timber will be investigated where this doesn't conflict with biodiversity aims.</p> <p>3 zone ride management will be carried out along the main rides in the wood. Zone 1 sections will be cut annually along the main ride, zone 2 sections will be coppiced every 2-3 years alternating ride sides, along with zone 3 scallops cut every 5-7 years. Alongside this, glades will be created and managed as permanent open space where multiple rides meet.</p> <p>Areas of dense holly will be thinned to allow more light to reach the woodland floor.</p> <p>Small coups of hazel will be coppiced to promote new growth to support the hazel dormouse population in the wood.</p> <p>Where ash has succumbed to ash die back, and large gaps develop in the canopy without new canopy species coming through – oak, small-leaved lime and wild service will be supplementary planted where appropriate.</p> <p>Continue to engage with the neighboring Wild Neroche project and other Blackdown Hills National Landscape projects where appropriate.</p>

4.2 f2 Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat

Description
A rough grassland field extending to 2.9ha. Historically planted with conifer, which were removed by the Woodland Trust since acquisition, the field contains a rich diversity of herbs and grasses, including orchids and cowslips. Wet flushes in the field support communities associated with unimproved marshy grassland. The field is a good butterfly habitat, and has historic records of the nationally rare Duke of Burgundy and Wood White, however population of these species have diminished locally. The large meadow has been summer grazed and this has helped to keep the ground flora becoming dominated by rushes. Scrub is not grazed and has been cut on a rotational basis to prevent it dominating.
Significance
The open space and scrub habitat found in the meadows provides a diverse edge habitat to the woodland and benefits a host of species including plants and invertebrates.
Opportunities & Constraints
Opportunity: Explore additional grazing such as cows, to help manage scrub in a natural way Improve perimeter fencing to support grazing. Constraints: Size of the areas limits management options. Access can be difficult in wet periods.
Factors Causing Change
A lack of, or too much grazing will change the composition of the grassland and potentially lead to succession to woodland. Poaching from grazing animals in wet weather Scrub and coarse vegetation encroaching into the meadow.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
To maintain the field as species rich unimproved grassland which complements the surrounding woodland. Scrub will be managed through grazing to recreate natural processes, alongside machinery where needed. Scattered trees and small clumps of scrub will be maintained for diversity, but covering only a small portion (to a maximum of 20% of the entire meadow at any given time).
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
The meadow will continue to be grazed over summer months to achieve a balance of desirable species, not dominated by coarse rushes. The edges will be cut on a five year rotation to ensure a transitional woodland edge habitat. This is known to be suitable

for the rare butterflies amongst many other species.

Scrub will be managed to not be more than 20% cover with no individual blocks greater than 20m x 20m.

4.3 f3 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

There are paths and rides throughout the wood which link into a wider footpath network. Due to springs and surface water a number of grips and stretches of boardwalk have been installed. The public footpath crossing the northern end of the wood is extremely steep. A Restricted Byway runs along the eastern boundary. A long flight of steps have been installed to create a circular route around the wood connecting up the bottom paths with the Restricted Byway towards the northern end of the wood. Several benches have been installed at viewpoints on the Restricted Byway through the Woodland Dedication scheme. There is a small pull-in at the road entrance allowing parking for 2-3 cars. A designated Parish Council Circular walk adjoins the western boundary.

The paths are steep in places and at times slippery; they are un-surfaced and as a consequence uneven in places. Horse riding is permitted along the Restricted Byway, however not permitted on the rest of the paths and rides in the wood.

Significance

The Woodland Trust believes everyone should have accessible woodland within walking distance from their homes and the ownership and management of Adcombe Wood goes to help further this aim. Adcombe Wood is a much valued woodland in the local area which is well connected to surrounding woodlands and green spaces through a number of footpaths, providing an accessible recreational space for many people in the nearby villages.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

Much of the site is steep and slippery especially at wet boggy areas.

Fly-tipping at the entrance of Old Combe Hill is an occasional nuisance.

Ash dieback affecting safety and access in the wood.

Factors Causing Change

Surface water from springs causing erosion of paths

Some unauthorized horse riding on the paths (not including the Restricted Byway) can affect the quality of surface.

Ash dieback affecting safety and access in the wood.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The site will be well used and highly valued by many local people who enjoy a more challenging walk up the slopes of this wood to be rewarded by the fine views from the top

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

The wood will be welcoming for quiet informal recreation. To achieve this path and rides cut twice a year, with maintenance as necessary on the boardwalk and grip. Annual checks will be made to ensure this keeps the paths in suitable condition to meet objective.

Management on the steps towards the north of the wood will be carried out in summer to repair dilapidated steps and add a stone layer to the top of each step to help with erosion and further deterioration.

Entrances will be maintained when paths cut with additional litter clearance as necessary to ensure that the gate does not become a fly-tip hotspot.

Tree safety surveys will be undertaken following Trust policy.

Continued engagement with the Adcombe Wood volunteer Woodland Working Group, supporting them to continue their regular management of the wood and meadow. As well as supporting the wildlife monitors to continue surveying for dormice.

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	32.8	Oak (pedunculate)	1860	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Environmentally Sensitive Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>Mixed high forest woodland, generally NVC W8 ash high forest with hazel understorey and occasional veteran small-leaved lime, hornbeam, and wild service tree. Part is ASNW, part was planted with oak in 19C and part is abandoned common land dominated by dense stands of hawthorn with occasional mature open grown oak and ash. A section was heavily thinned around 1990, the site now consisting of scattered standards of oak and ash with hazel understorey and young ash regeneration. An area near Curdleigh Farm was underplanted with mixed species which has generally failed but a few wild cherry survive.</p> <p>The ground flora is richest in the older parts of the wood, with bluebell, arum, dog's mercury, wood anemone, woodruff, moschatel, yellow archangel and Herb Paris. The more recently established woodland is dominated by ivy. Localised boggy areas and springs throughout cause the site to be listed as Wet Woodland under the UKBAP. There is a small glade in the wood which is notable for its calcareous grassland interest, this has the local name of the 'Green Patch'.</p> <p>The woodland is listed as a SSSI for the overall ancient woodland habitat.</p>						
1b	2.9	Other		Wood pasture	Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Environmentally Sensitive Area
<p>Unimproved calcareous rough grassland from which Norway spruce P1980 were removed under a WIG in 1997-9. Some small groups of native trees and scrub remain which are developing into individual parkland trees. Some felling under the powerlines in the winter of 2012-13 has pollarded some trees.</p> <p>Early Gentian was once recorded at this site, but has not been found for many years. Wood White and Duke of Burgundy Fritillaries have been recorded, although the poor summers of 2007 – 8 may have decimated these colonies as none have been recorded since then.</p> <p>Gentle north facing slopes dominated by grass but with rush and blackthorn regeneration abundant. Many interest wildflowers are to be found including orchids, moschatel, oxeye daisy and cowslips.</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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