



# St. John's Woods

## Management Plan 2015-2020

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## THE WOODLAND TRUST

### INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

### PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust ([wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk)) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

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## WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

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) through independent audit. In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, 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.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on 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 heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential 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 allow our woods to be used to support 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. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
- 10 Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

## SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

## 1.0 SITE DETAILS

<b>Site name:</b>	St. John's Woods
<b>Location:</b>	St. John & Antony villages, nr Torpoint
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SX410539, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 201
<b>Area:</b>	1.32 hectares (3.26 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Landscape Value, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Great Landscape Value

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

St John's Woods consists of two small woodlands (Benskin's and Antony) both of which provide some local woodland habitat and public access with short 'circular' routes and seats to allow visitors to enjoy their surroundings. Benskin's offers superb views out over St John's Lake in the Tamar SSSI and is partly young woodland planted in the mid-1980s and partly Ancient semi-natural woodland. Antony was planted in the mid-1980s as with Benskin's. Access is management squeeze gap or hunter's gates and along level grass and naturally surfaced paths. Recreation values are limited due to their small size poor highway access, but both are used regularly by a small number of local residents and therefore provide good amenity for their respective communities and those interested in the lake and its wildlife. There are facilities in both the adjacent villages and public transport services travel close to both however it should be remembered that these are limited as would be expected within such a small and disparate rural community.

## 2.2 Extended Description

St John's Woods consists of two small woodlands (Benskin's and Antony) both of which provide some local woodland habitat and public access with short 'circular' routes and seats to allow visitors to enjoy their surroundings. Benskin's offers superb views out over St John's Lake in the Tamar SSSI and is partly young woodland planted in the mid-1980s and partly Ancient semi-natural woodland. Antony was planted in the mid-1980s as with Benskin's. Access is management squeeze gap or hunter's gates and along level grass and naturally surfaced paths. Recreation values are limited due to their small size poor highway access, but both are used regularly by a small number of local residents and therefore provide good amenity for their respective communities and those interested in the lake and its wildlife. There are facilities in both the adjacent villages and public transport services travel close to both however it should be remembered that these are limited as would be expected within such a small and disparate rural community.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

St John's Woods is located in the Torpoint 'peninsula' in south east Cornwall and consists of two small woods, with similar management requirements, brought together into one management unit. Antony Wood lies on the eastern edge of Antony village on the A374 approximately 2 miles from the town of Torpoint and Benskin's lies on the edge of St John's village along country lanes 2 miles to the south of Torpoint. Both woods are small but offer short 'circular' routes and seats to allow visitors and members of the local communities to enjoy their surroundings. Benskin's offers superb views out over St Johns Lake in the Tamar Valley SSSI. The paths around both are level and have grassy surfaces although sometimes worn to bare earth with heavy use. Access to Benskin's is via an a squeeze gap from the highway or up a low but steep rocky outcrop in the coastal 'cliff' from the adjoining 'ford' road and over a slate stile. Access to Antony wood is via two 3foot hunter's gates at either end of the wood one opening onto the wide grass verge of the A374 and the other into the track leading to the adjacent farm complex before exiting out onto the A374 verge. Recreation values are limited due to their small size and restricted access, but both are used regularly by a small number of locals and therefore provide good amenity for their respective communities and those interested in the adjacent 'lake' and its wildlife. Parking is available at Antony in a large layby near the entrance but is very limited at Benskin's. There is a small layby on the edge of the wood a short distance along the ford road, but this is affected by and can flood during high tides.

Bus services run along the A374 to Torpoint stopping at the 'Ring 'o Bells' pub in Antony leaving a level 200m walk to the wood along the verge of the main road. They also provide a service to St John and stop at the St John's Inn in the village leaving a walk of about 300m up a moderately steep but narrow country lane to the wood.

Public transport information obtained from [www.travelinesw.com.uk](http://www.travelinesw.com.uk) or via 0870 608 2 608.  
Information collected February 2015

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

St John's Woods is one of a number of small properties which together comprise the Trust's 'wild spaces'. These are largely left for nature to take its course with only minimal management input, usually to ensure public safety or to meet legal obligations. And currently it is felt that it does not offer any key features. The woodland will be allowed to develop towards mixed, predominantly native broadleaf high forest with a varied age and size structure, understory and ground flora providing attractive informal access to visitors predominantly from the adjacent small villages. The existing paths, tracks, viewpoints and entrance facilities will be managed annually as required to maintain safe levels of access already present and in line with its access category C (D) rating. This will help meet the Trusts aims of protecting native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future and inspiring everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees. It will also compliment the conservation values of the adjacent woodland and the amenity and aesthetic values of the wood in the landscape and to visitors.

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## 5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

### 5.1

Description
Significance
Opportunities & Constraints
Factors Causing Change
Long term Objective (50 years+)
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

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**5.2**

**Description**

**Significance**

**Opportunities & Constraints**

**Factors Causing Change**

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

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

## 6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
2015	WMM - Secondary Silviculture	Antony - light thin of woodland canopy by felling small number of individual trees to improve light, encourage coppice regrowth into shrub layer and improve appearance for visitors. Stack cordwood and brash in neat windrows by boundary hedges. Benskins - similar low level canopy thin but to improve light level for developing flora and nat regen. As wood bigger than Antony cordwood and brash can be stashed at stump, but not on regen or flora.	13/03/15
2015	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Benskins and Antony - Check entrances and repair, check paths clear of low branches and mow paths to 1.5m and around seats.	31/07/15
2015	SL - Legal Obligation Work	Benskins Flail hedges along lane and ford road to keep growth back from traffic. Ensure branches and hedge top growth is trimmed back to ensure a minimum clearance height of 5.2m throughout the year.	31/08/15
2016	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Benskin's and Antony - Check entrances and repair, check paths clear of low branches and mow paths to 1.5m and around seats.	31/07/16
2016	SL - Legal Obligation Work	Benskin's Flail hedges along lane and ford road to keep growth back from traffic. Ensure branches and hedge top growth is trimmed back to ensure a minimum clearance height of 5.2m throughout the year.	31/08/16
2017	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Benskin's and Antony - Check entrances and repair, check paths clear of low branches and mow paths to 1.5m and around seats.	31/07/17

2017	SL - Legal Obligation Work	Benskin's Flail hedges along lane and ford road to keep growth back from traffic. Ensure branches and hedge top growth is trimmed back to ensure a minimum clearance height of 5.2m throughout the year.	31/08/17
2018	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Benskin's and Antony - Check entrances and repair, check paths clear of low branches and mow paths to 1.5m and around seats.	31/07/18
2018	SL - Legal Obligation Work	Benskin's Flail hedges along lane and ford road to keep growth back from traffic. Ensure branches and hedge top growth is trimmed back to ensure a minimum clearance height of 5.2m throughout the year.	31/08/18
2018	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Gang day allowance to undertake tree safety works along the roadside boundaries of Benskin's wood. raise branches of stored coppice or individual maiden oaks, or remove any DED infected elms	31/10/18
2019	WMM - Secondary Silviculture	2 man day op to undertake light thinning of young woodland in Antony and Benskins to help generate crown development and increase light for flora and regen growth. Consider targeting few bigger/coarser trees like lime to release smaller oaks to retain greater species diversity	08/03/19
2019	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Renew all entrances like for like. Benskin's renew field gate and squeeze gap at main entrance into wood. Renew two kissing gate entrances into Antony Wood with any associated post and rail etc.	31/05/19
2019	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Benskin's and Antony - Check entrances and repair, check paths clear of low branches and mow paths to 1.5m and around seats.	31/07/19
2019	SL - Legal Obligation Work	Benskin's Flail hedges along lane and ford road to keep growth back from traffic. Ensure branches and hedge top growth is trimmed back to ensure a minimum clearance height of 5.2m throughout the year.	31/08/19

## APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	0.57	Mixed native broadleaves	1900	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Landscape Value, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Great Landscape Value
<p>Benskin's Wood - A small area of predominantly semi-mature native broadleaf woodland designated ASNW with occasional Holm Oaks. It is sparsely populated with a hazel and holly understory, the wood is however becoming populated with Sycamore from the few large seed trees present and in the adjacent land. Ground flora includes Greater wood-rush, Primrose, bluebell and wild madder. It overlooks St Johns Lake, an area of salt marsh and tidal mudflat and part of the Tamar Valley SSSI. Standing on quite heavy soils the ground surface can be very wet and slippery, but seldom become water logged because of its high shellat content. The wood's authorised path doesn't extend into this narrow area as it slopes steeply towards the adjacent 'cliff edge' around the lake however a narrow path through sub-Cpt 1a has been formed by local walkers and passed very close to the cliff edge in one place. The section was fenced for safety reasons and the path is not managed to discourage its use.</p>							
1b	0.51	Mixed native broadleaves	1979	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation		Area of Landscape Value, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Great Landscape Value

Benskin's Wood - An area of mixed broadleaved woodland directly overlooking St John's Lake. Planted into a small meadow in 1979 with native species - Oak, Ash, Birch, Small-leaved lime and Sweet chestnut with encroachments of thorn from the surrounding hedges it was intended that it would extend the ASNW in 1a. Some grassland spp remain but the flora following post thicket stage shading is succeeding to ivy, with dense patches of thorn, ash, field maple and oak regeneration where light levels permit.

2a	0.15	Mixed native broadleaves	1979	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site, Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation		
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Antony Wood - A small woodland creation site standing on level ground on the edge of Antony Village. It has a short circular path around it, with two seats for visitors to use and access is via a small hunter's gate at each end of the wood. It also lies adjacent to a large lay-by beside the main road to Torpoint which offers limited benefit for management and passing vehicles. It was planted in 1979 with Oak, Ash, Small Leaved lime and Hazel and has formed a small dense sheltered woodland. Two hedges form a boundary with an adjacent farm, one consisting of semi mature ash and sycamore stools and the other a row of Lawson cypress which provides a dense barrier, but also some shading. The third boundary adjacent to the lay-by and roadside verge is topped with dense elm suckers. There is little understory and the ground flora is predominantly of grassland species.

## GLOSSARY

### **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. Either by hand cutting or with carefully selected weed killers such as glyphosate.

## **Windblow/Windthrow**

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