



Pentre Wood

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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 or contact the Woodland Trust (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.

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. 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.

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

Site name:	Pentre Wood
Location:	Bronygarth
Grid reference:	SJ272370, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 126
Area:	5.98 hectares (14.78 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Site of Special Scientific Interest, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Lying on a steep slope opposite Chirk castle, this wood is an important part of the local landscape. It is an Ancient semi-natural woodland and much of the area is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. There are a number of footpaths that run through the site. The site is quite steep in places and there are a number of wet areas and streams that criss-cross the site and can make the path boggy at times but this is more than compensated by the beautiful surroundings and views.

2.2 Extended Description

Pentre Wood lies on a steep north-east facing slope opposite Chirk castle in the scenic Ceiriog valley and forms an important part of the local landscape. It has a diverse ground flora, particularly along the rides and riparian (riverside) zones and was acquired by the Woodland Trust in 1987 following a clear fell of the western half of the site.

The site was identified as Ancient semi-natural woodland (SNAW) in the 1988 ancient woodland survey completed by the Nature Conservancy Council (English Nature) who at the time of the survey identified 64 different vascular plants here. The SNAW status is derived from the continuity of woodland usage at the site and its diversity of ground flora rather than the structure of the existing woodland blocks. The ecological importance of the river Ceiriog and its riparian zone has been highlighted by its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales. The Shropshire Wildlife Trust has also acknowledged the valleys importance and the site is incorporated in one of the Trusts Prime Sites for Conservation (Ref. No SJ 2309). Surrounding land use is mostly permanent pasture.

The wood is comprised of two mature stands, sub-compartments 1A & 1C and a regenerating clear fell site Sub-compartment 1B. Sub-compartment 1A is a small area of mixed broadleaves protected by a tree preservation order (TPO) comprising of sycamore, ash, elm and chestnut with an understory of elm and ash regeneration with holly and elder. Sub-compartment 1C is an almost pure stand of sycamore with a small number of mature ash and wych elm with a sparse understory of hawthorn, elder, rowan and field maple with sycamore, ash and wych elm regeneration. Sub-compartment 1B forms the main body of the wood and is a mixture of broadleaf natural regeneration from seed and coppice stumps, and supplementary planting carried out in 1988. It was thinned in 1998 to give an approximate spacing of 3m per stem.

A stream, with steep valley sides runs west to east into the river Ceiriog crossing the site and forming part of sub-compartment 1B's boundary. Drainage from land lying above Pentre Wood is discharged into a ditch running along part of the north-eastern boundary. The soils on site are variable and consist of the mixed derivatives from the sandstone substrate and glacial deposits with high clay content. This leads to poor draining on much of the site and the occurrence of numerous springs and wet flushes. The mixture of soil types, steep banks and heavy drainage across the site has led to numerous minor landslips in the past.

There are a number of permissive and also two public footpaths which run through the site. One along the north east boundary and the other from the extreme south west corner to the eastern boundary. The site is quite steep in places and there are a number of wet flushes and streams that criss-cross the site which often make paths boggy throughout the year, however, this is more than compensated by the beautiful surroundings and views.

The Key Features at this site are Semi-natural ancient woodland and Informal public access

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The wood lies on the edge of the village of Bronygarth. There are three main access points into the wood; one to the south-west of the site off a minor road where visitors go over a stile and down some steps; the second and third access points via a public footpath called the Maelor way which enters and exits the site over two stiles located on the eastern boundary and also at the north-western tip of the site. The wood is located on quite a steep slope overlooking the River Ceiriog. The paths are therefore also steep and wet in sections throughout the year due to the number of springs and streams that run through the site. Parking is difficult by the wood, there is none available by the south-west access point, however there is a small informal lay-by nearer the eastern entrance point by a telephone box that can take 1-2 vehicles. Visitors must then follow the footpath notices over a stile and across a field (not owned by the WT), following the footpath along the top edge of the river bank until you arrive at the Woodland Trusts stile that leads into Pentre Wood.

Nearest bus stop - At Castle Approx 1 mile away

Nearest railway station - Chirk Railway station 1.5 miles away

Nearest toilet - Colliery Road Car Park, Chirk, 1.5 miles away, Disabled Facilities, Open 9.00am - 6.00pm 7 days a week

You can also try www.transportdirect.info or www.traveline.org.uk on the internet for the most up to date details for public transport in the area.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In 50 years time, Pentre Wood will be a structurally and species diverse native woodland managed as high forest. There will be a well developed shrub and field layers representative of semi-natural ancient woodland. The woodland will be allowed to develop naturally in order to achieve the above wherever possible in accordance with the Trusts Woodland Management Approach. Ride edge coppicing will be carried out along selected lengths where appropriate to enhance visitor enjoyment.

Pentre Wood offers good public access opportunities with some very interesting, beautiful paths and some wonderful views from the site. Two Public Footpath run through the wood allowing visitors to extend their walk outside the site into the surrounding countryside very easily. In accordance with the Trust WMA, free public access will be provided for quiet, informal recreation and the woodland paths managed ensure the site is easily accessible, welcoming and safe with the wood remaining an asset providing both a pleasant and educational experience for visitors. Paths will be kept open and ride edge work in the form of coppiced and scalloped bays will continue to be undertaken to add to visitor interest.

Regular tree inspections will be undertaken by competent persons with any Tree safety works required undertaken in accordance with recommendations from inspection reports and in line with current best practice.

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 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Pentre Wood is the northwest third of a semi-natural ancient woodland (SNAW) that follows the banks of a tributary stream to the river Ceiriog. The woodland is secondary woodland and the SNAW status is derived from the historical continuity of the woodland at the site and the diversity of ground flora rather than an undisturbed natural woodland community. The site was purchased in accordance with the Trusts aim for no further loss of ancient woodland, at the time 4.23 ha had recently been clearfelled but much of the ground flora had survived the felling operation, and natural regeneration was occurring. Flora surveys taken in 1988 and 1998 recorded 64 different vascular plants at the site, many of which are ancient woodland indicators.

Significance

Pentre Wood was acquired in accordance with the Woodland Trusts general aims for no further loss of ancient woodland, and for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. The wood has a legacy of rich ground flora with many indicators of its SNAW status. It is an integral part in a mosaic of different and inter-related habitats that include a further area of SNAW to the south, and a stream with ponds and wet flushes along the western boundary of sub-compartment 1B, wet ground and drainage ditches along the north boundary of sub-compartment 1C, and the River Ceiriog along the northern boundary of sub-compartment 1B, the banks and riparian zone of which have been designated as part of the River Dee and tributaries SSSI by English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales. Shropshire Wildlife Trust have graded the wood as one of its primary sites for nature conservation (ref No SJ 2309) a recommendation that is taken up and acknowledged in the county councils structural plan.

Opportunities & Constraints

The opportunity exists to maintain and improve the biodiversity of Pentre Wood. Maintaining the continuity of this ancient semi-natural habitat will enable the widest range of species to survive and evolve within it.

Biodiversity can also be increased through the retention of deadwood habitat in the form of moribund and dead standing trees. Allowing mature trees to develop veteran attributes will provide important micro-habitats for specialist plants, animals and fungi.

Factors Causing Change

Himalyan Balsam and Japanese knotweed, deer browsing. Although not noted as part of site visits in recent years, Himalyan Balsam and Japanese knotweed have been noted in the past in the riparian boundary to the north of the site..

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain 23.78 hectares of Semi-Natural Woodland

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

To ensure the area of SNAW is maintained. The woodland should be monitored appropriately to note any changes or threats that may present a problem or an issue in this regard.

In addition in this plan period:

Ride edge coppice work along selected section where the paths are becoming closed in and narrow.

Path cutting and entrance maintenance twice annually.

Tree safety inspections for Zone A and B trees carried out in accordance with current Woodland Trust guidance and best practice with remedial work undertaken as required.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

In accordance with the Woodland Trusts general aims the site is open to the public for quiet informal pedestrian activities. Access to the woods 880m of public footpath can be gained from the north west, from Bronygarth off the highway to the South west and from Pont Faen in the west. The northern most path that follows the rivers edge is part of the Maelor Way long distance walk. A second path enters the wood near the eastern boundary with the river Ceiriog and passes south west to Bronygarth. No provision is made for horse riding.

Significance

The use of nearly all Woodland Trust owned sites for quiet, informal public recreation forms a core to the Woodland Trusts vision for the future. Chirk castle, Offas Dyke and the Ceiriog valley and its viaducts draw large numbers of day-trippers from the Midlands and Wales. Pentre Wood is an important part of the local landscape, and its use provides diversity of aesthetics and interest to both short and long distance walkers, and for people interested in observing a varied habitat and wildlife.

Opportunities & Constraints

Pentre Wood is easily accessible to local residents and visitors to Chirk and the surrounding area. The shape and size, wet flushes and steepness of the banks can reduce walking opportunities for those who visit, consequently most users pass through the wood. For conservation groups and individuals with like interest the mixture of riparian and woodland habitats, wet flushes and the legacy of a rich ground flora provide a wide range of opportunities to enjoy natural history observation and survey pursuits. The occurrence of self seeded sycamore, and slippage's and erosion along the paths give rise to opportunities for public or community involvement in hands on management. Chirk and the surrounding area has a number of archaeological and landscape features that make it a popular destination for walkers and weekend trippers from the Midlands and Wales, improved information and provision of seating would add value to the site as a place to visit.

Factors Causing Change

The national trend of increased usage of the countryside for recreation is likely to impact upon the site and surrounding area. Occasional slippage's effect the footpaths

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The site will remain open and free to use by the public. The existing level and quality of accessibility will be maintained and monitored, with improvements made where new opportunities are identified.

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

Maintain the permissive paths and entrance points to the site through visits and inspections carried out as part of the annual estate maintenance contract (x2 visits per year). Paths to be cut a minimum of 2 metre width.

Steps and revetments to be maintained and where necessary further structures installed to facilitate good access without compromising existing wet flush habitats.

Ride edge coppicing where appropriate in subcompartment 1b to enhance visitor enjoyment.

Regular tree inspections will be undertaken by competent people. Tree safety works will be implemented in accordance with recommendations from inspection reports and in line with current best practice

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	0.20	Sycamore	1945	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Tree Preservation Order
<p>Forming the woods extreme south west tip and protected by a tree preservation order this small block of mature trees survived the clear fell operation in the 1980s. It occupies the banks of a steep stream cut, with a generally northwest aspect. The canopy is made up of ash, sweet chestnut, sycamore and a wych elm, with an understory of elder and holly, with abundant ash and wych elm natural regeneration growing into gaps formed by tree safety works done in 1988. The ground flora is dominated by bramble, nettle, dog's mercury, and ramsons, with shield fern fairly common particularly towards the waterfalls and depths of the clough. The natural regeneration and ground flora are indicative of native oak/ash woodland as identified in national vegetation classification (NVC) plant communitiesW8d</p> <p>The compartment is bounded along its northern and southern facings by agricultural land and to the southwest by a public highway. A public footpath crosses from the highway northwest into compartment 1B. A septic tank belonging to an adjacent property is sited in the extreme southwest corner; the owner has an access right for maintenance works.</p>							
1b	4.23	Ash	1988	null	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Site of Special Scientific Interest

Compartment 1b was clear felled in 1987 and the present canopy has developed through a mixture of natural regeneration (mostly Ash, Wych Elm, Sweet Chestnut, Birch, Cherry and Sallow) and replanting in 1988 with Oak, Beech, Cherry, Sweet Chestnut, Ash, Sallow, Field Maple, Hazel, Rowan and Alder. The upper canopy is young at present (15-20m) and dominated by Ash, Wych Elm and Birch from natural regeneration. Below this there is a layer at approximately 10m reflecting the mix planted in 1988 which has established with great success such that by the mid 1990's, planting and regeneration reached a density of 10,000 per square hectare. Thinning in 1997 under a Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) reduced the stocking density to approximately 3m centres.

The ground flora is dominated by bramble, nettle and great horsetail. The ride sides and numerous wet flushes have a more diverse ground flora including: birds Foot trefoil, wall lettuce, yarrow, square stalked St John's wort, wild angelica, meadowsweet and wavy bittercress. The natural regeneration and ground flora are indicative of native oak/ash woodland as identified in national vegetation classification (NVC) plant communities W8

Ash dominates the canopy at the northern extremity of this compartment. The canopy is uniform at 20m and the shrub layer less well developed than elsewhere in this compartment. The steep banks of the River Ceiriog to the north of this compartment shows localised slippage which has resulted in an open canopy and more recent regeneration. The banks of the Ceiriog elsewhere are lined with coppiced Wych elm, Ash, Goat Willow, Sycamore and Alder. Over mature boundary Oak and Ash trees are present on the northern boundary (see conservation features map).

The main body of the compartment has a north to northwest aspect with steep slopes except for the central and extreme northern parts where more level ground gives rise to numerous large wet flushes. The south facing, the extreme north east facing and three quarters of the northern spur abut onto agricultural land, The northwest facing of the southern spur backs onto a stream with agricultural land beyond it. The river Ceiriog forms two hundred and fifty metres of the northern boundary.

1c	1.67	Sycamore	1945	null	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)
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Compartment 1C forms the sites eastern leg and is an almost pure stand of mature sycamore with an even-aged structure and a random scattering of ash and wych elm occupying approximately 4 to 5% of the canopy. As a result of the sites steep slope and northern aspect the sycamore population have grown tall and relatively clean stems and have the potential to generate a good yield timber crop. The under story consists of sparsely scattered elder, rowan, hawthorn and field maple with young ash, wych elm and cherry natural regeneration. The ground flora is sparse and includes dogs mercury, ground ivy, cuckoo pint, bramble, and nettle. Male fern is common.

The whole compartment has a steep gradient (in the region of 1 in 2) with a northern aspect. It abuts agricultural land to the north, south and east and compartment 1B to the west. The soils are loose and prone to slippage with numerous springs and wet flushes occurring along the banks length. The ground along the north boundary is wet and drains into a permanently wet drainage ditch that flows eastwards along the boundary.

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.