



Mill Wood

Management Plan 2018-2023

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Mill Wood
Location:	Morton
Grid reference:	SK809921, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 112
Area:	0.99 hectares (2.45 acres)
Designations:	Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A small piece of woodland surrounded by arable land and developed areas. It is well used by local children as a play area. One local oddity is the old wind powered steam laundry that still stands next to the wood.

2.2 Extended Description

Mill Wood is small (0.99 hectares) maturing woodland comprising mixed broadleaves and a small area of scots pine. The dominant tree is silver birch, with frequent horse chestnut, rowan, larch, aspen and occasional common oak. Ash, sycamore, yew, elder and hawthorn are also present. The majority of the trees were planted in 1936 and since then there has been patchy natural regeneration throughout the woodland.

The site is located in the village of Morton approximately 1.5 miles north of Gainsborough. There is very little woodland near Mill Wood which is effectively an island in a sea of arable and developed land.

No botanical or faunal survey has been carried out on the site. The ground vegetation is dominated by bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) in many areas with patchy grassy swards (mainly *Holcus mollis*). There is a good uneven tree age structure which has created a variety of niches below the canopy. Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*), almost certainly planted, are a feature of the woodland in late winter.

Mill Wood is adjacent to an old wind powered steam laundry which is still standing. The history of the woodland may be in some way linked to the history of the laundry but this has not been researched.

Due to the nature of the site and its proximity to housing there have been high levels of tree safety work in recent years, particularly amongst the failing birch. The site is surrounded by houses on three sides, and is used as a play area by local children. There is an informal network of paths throughout the woodland, some of which are cut back by the Trust annually. Car parking for up to 6 cars is available on the road adjacent to the east boundary.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Public access is from Granary Close, off Mill Lane to point on eastern boundary, where there is a parking bay for a couple of cars and a pedestrian sized gap allows access at two points to a permissive circular route. This is fairly rough and is inclined to get muddy when wet.

Due to the tiny nature of the wood it is only likely to be used by locals.

Morton village (500m) is served by buses from Gainsborough and details can be found on Traveline - www.traveline.org.uk or alternatively 0871 200 2233. There are no known public facilities in the area.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Maintain the high forest structure of the woodland with natural regeneration ensuring the sustainability of the wood and increasing the age diversity.

The wood will continue to be composed of a diverse mixture of mainly broadleaved trees, including well-established non-natives such as the horse chestnut, and a strong component of Scots pine. Over time some may require felling for safety reasons due to the close nature of the highway and residential properties. This loss of large trees from the site, through natural collapse or safety felling, will continue to add significant gaps in the canopy for natural regeneration to occur, diversifying the age structure of the wood, deadwood habitat will also increase in quality as a result. The wood will be as safe as practical for visitors to enjoy, and routine safety inspections of trees within the high risk zone will continue to be undertaken.

Some pre-emptive felling of trees in high risk zones, such as those along the edge of the residential properties and roadside, will occur to ensure any trees of concern are removed at an earlier stage and prior to any health/safety problems. This will lower the overall safety risk on the site. It is unlikely that any additional silvicultural thinning will be required in the medium term to enable sufficient natural regeneration to occur. The proportion of young rowan, sycamore, birch and ash will increase across the site, as gaps are created and natural regeneration develops. Open access for the public will be retained at the wood in perpetuity ensuring the site feels welcoming and safe for visitors to enjoy. There will continue to be a good network of well-managed paths for people to use.

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 Informal Public Access

Description

The site is valued by local residents who are keen to protect the woodland as both an area where they can enjoy informal recreation and as a refuge for wildlife. There is an informal network of paths through the woodland which are cut back annually to allow easy access. The woodland enhances the local landscape considerably, adding character to the housing estate in which it lies. Access to the wood is provided via two entrance points off Granary close via a signed entrance, there are no further footpaths beyond the woodland however a figure of eight pathway has been created with a number of smaller desire lines having been created to access views to the north of the woodland. In itself Mill Wood is a small site to walk around, but it's real value lies in being part of the community a valuable asset to local residents. The Trust has given this wood a Category B for access provision, which equates to: a site with regular usage, with 5 - 15 people using the site per day.

Significance

The site is important in terms of both its landscape value and as a resource for local walkers and playing children. Although the primary value of the site is for people, the woodland is surprisingly diverse in age structure for such a small semi-urban site and may well hold some less common woodland species.

Opportunities & Constraints

The site is small and is not therefore suitable to promoting to people outwith the local area as it could not withstand heavy visitor pressure. The requirement to remove dangerous trees means that most of the standing dead wood cannot be retained for its nature conservation value. There are potential opportunities for getting the local community more involved in the annual upkeep of the woodland through litter picks and footpath maintenance.

Factors Causing Change

Increased public usage, vandalism, need to remove trees for safety given that all boundaries are alongside houses and roads.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Encourage continued public access within the woodland without exceeding current levels of use
Ensure trees are safe to walkers, vehicles and adjacent houses
Ensure the site retains its character and wildlife value by maintaining an uneven-aged high forest structure

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

Maintain access provision through cut back the permissive path (280m) to pedestrian width annually to maintain a viable route around the wood.

Carry out tree safety inspections and works within 24 months.

Inspect boundaries and entrances annually and replace fencing and stiles as necessary, undertake litter removal as necessary.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Mill wood is a small (0.99 ha) maturing woodland located between two residential roads, Granary close to the east, Orchard close to the west and Mill lane to the south. Open arable land is situated to the north with a large drainage ditch defining the boundary. The woodland has a flat feel to it with no notable features with exception to the ditches to the north and western edges; these were probably in place prior to the creation of the housing estates now to either side of the woodland. Mature horse chestnut, hawthorn, sycamore, birch, ash and aspen, dating from early/mid last century are situated predominantly to the southern end of the woodland although to a lesser degree can be found throughout, scots pine and birch with a small number of Larch can also be found throughout the remaining woodland. A number of mature oak and pine can be found around the boundaries which make notable feature trees. Natural regeneration of sycamore, ash, hawthorn, rowan and birch occurs throughout although notably in the canopy gaps beneath the scots pine

Significance

It is important as an island of woodland in a suburban location. The area does not have much other woodland.

Opportunities & Constraints

It's small size and location adjacent to new housing ensure that the wood is both valuable as a resource to local wildlife but also hasn't much scope for any further development, being hemmed in on three sides with development. A lot of local use means that the wood is regularly disturbed throughout the day. A relatively small area of woodland mean that silvicultural operations generating timber are likely to be uneconomic.

Factors Causing Change

Tree safety work, threats from tree diseases especially ash dieback.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Manage by minimum intervention to maintain the area as mixed high forest for the benefit of local wildlife and local people.

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

Minimum intervention approach for the current plan period with tree safety work being the main driver for activity. Tree safety inspections will be undertaken annually alternating between autumn and summer.

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	0.99	Mixed broadleaves	1936	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Tree Preservation Order

A plantation of native and non-native mixed woodland with the major species being ash, sycamore, birch, horse chestnut, scotts pine and larch. Minor components of rowan, hawthorn, aspen and yew. Natural regeneration is becoming well established throughout the woodland.

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.