

Big Wood

(Plan period – 2021 to 2026)



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

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
 - 4.1 f1 Informal Public Access
 - 4.2 f2 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Big Wood

Location:	Hendre	Grid	reference:	SJ189672	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	116
Area:	8.24 hectares (20.36 acres)								
External Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland								
Internal Designations:	N/A								

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Big Wood is a small rural woodland, discretely located within and well connected to a well-wooded landscape heavily influenced by historic and modern mining and quarrying.

Close to the Tyddyn y Barcut and Alyn Valley Woodlands SSSIs, Big Wood is similarly rather typical of ancient semi-natural woodland on underlying limestone in the locality. The canopy comprises mature oak and ash, with wych elm, cherry, sycamore and scattered exotics. Rather even aged, some diversity is developing through natural processes of windblow and there are good levels of standing and fallen deadwood that should provide habitat for a range of species, from invertebrates to bats. The wood has a diverse limestone woodland ground flora. There is a rich shrub layer with abundant hazel, plus holly, hawthorn, willow and yew amongst ash and sycamore regeneration. There is little open ground within the site, although a small triangle of calcareous grassland/tall herb vegetation exists between the track and adjacent properties (cpt 1b) and the wood exists within a mosaic of woodlands, grasslands, scrub and old quarry workings, including a large abandoned quarry to the eastern edge of the wood.

The land slopes gently down to the north and is much marked by a history of industrial activity. Limestone outcrops are scattered throughout the site and there are remains of lead mining activity, numerous spoil heaps and a number of shafts.

A badger sett is present and the wider landscape is known to support dormice, which has led to past survey efforts including Big Wood led by the local Wildlife Trust.

Key features at the site are:

- Ancient semi-natural woodland: upland mixed ashwood.
- Informal public access- the site is not widely used but valued by local residents following the creation of a circular path.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The woodland will remain dominated by locally native species and support a range of flora and fauna typical of ancient woodland on limestone. The management regime will be one of limited intervention, with natural processes largely left to shape the development of the wood: mature trees will be retained to senescence, native species will replenish the canopy through natural regeneration and deadwood volumes will build over time. The current area of open ground will be maintained as part of the wayleave beneath the power lines and to preserve the open approach to adjacent property.

Intervention will be limited to maintenance of the current permissive footpath and rights of way and essential work required for visitor and neighbour safety.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
The site is accessible by a public bridleway which also provides access to adjacent properties from the minor public road. A ladderboard and wooden welcome sign denote WT ownership and mark the main entrance to an internal permissive path loop, a relatively level but unsurfaced short circular walk created upon acquisition. The wood is primarily used by local visitors from surrounding villages for walking/ dog walking, as there is no formal parking at the site. Visitors are therefore likely to be few in number and be semi-regular visitors familiar with the wood. There is no other formal visitor infrastructure, although safety fencing is used to deter access to some of the mining and quarrying features on site. There is some minor desire line access to the site from the footpath/ quarry to the east, and from neighbouring gardens.
Significance
The wood provides an attractive resource for quiet recreation accessible on foot by a small rural community.
Opportunities & Constraints
Lack of nearby parking means that visitors are likely to be locals / visit as part of a longer walk using the local footpath/bridleway network. The lack of signage from the public road would make it hard to find for visitors without local knowledge.
Factors Causing Change
Many woodlands have seen increasing demand from walkers and new visitors in recent years, however, pressures such as bike jumps and littering that have been a feature elsewhere are at present rarely an issue at Big Wood, due to its relatively remote location and the nature of the properties on its doorstep. Occasional tipping occurs where land is accessible from the bridleway.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The wood will continue to provide a resource for quiet recreation for the immediate local community. The existing right of way and circular path shall be maintained and the site will remain safe for visitors.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
Maintain circular walk and mine shaft fencing annually as part of the Estates Maintenance Contract. Undertake tree safety surveys and follow-up work as per WT policy.

4.2 f2 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description
The site is designated as Semi Natural Ancient Woodland, its historic species mix that characteristic of W8 Upland Mixed Ashwood (ash-field maple-dog's mercury sub-class) and now dominated by ash, oak and sycamore. The overall structure of the woodland is fairly uniform, although with increasing levels of standing and fallen deadwood. Despite the introduction of sycamore, beech, sessile oak and some conifers, much of the original ash canopy remains and ash regeneration is frequent, although ash dieback is starting to impact on many of the trees. Ground flora is diverse and typical of this habitat and there is a rich understorey of hazel and other shrub species.
Significance
Upland Mixed Ashwood is subject to a UK Habitat Action Plan. Site has a rich understorey and diverse ground flora. Ancient woodlands are biodiverse and irreplaceable habitats, covering just 2% of UK land area and therefore worthy of protection. Dormice are present nearby in the Nannerch area and the wood has suitable understorey habitat for the species.
Opportunities & Constraints
Natural processes are already driving an accumulation of standing and fallen deadwood. Dormice are protected, so if their presence were confirmed, particular mitigation measures may be required for any essential works. Badger setts are also protected.
Factors Causing Change
Ash dieback is likely to constrain the predominance of ash in the canopy and regeneration for the foreseeable future and require some safety intervention. Other pests, diseases or invasive species may in time come to impact on the wood, although at present squirrel or deer damage is not significant.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
An ancient woodland dominated by locally native species with a rich ground flora typical of ancient woodland on limestone. Natural processes are allowed to function, with windblow and natural senescence creating canopy gaps and deadwood, allowing natural regeneration of native species sufficient to maintain woodland condition.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
No habitat intervention is required during this plan period.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2021	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	August
2021	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside areas such as car parks, roadsides and boundaries	October
2022	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	August
2023	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	August
2024	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	August
2025	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	August

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	8.1	Oak (sessile)	1951	High forest	Archaeological features, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
<p>Gently sloping, north facing sub-compartment which comprises the majority of the site. The canopy is dominated by even-aged mature sessile oak, leading to the assumption that this was once a productive plantation. Younger Oak, Ash and Sycamore are also present in quantity in the canopy, along with several other broadleaf species and a small number of conifers, mostly situated near the western boundary. Sycamore is most abundant in the vicinity of the old lead mine workings. The sub-compartment has a rich understorey which consists of Hazel coppice and Ash regeneration, although Beech, Sycamore, Yew, Hawthorn and Holly are present in smaller quantities. Ground flora is rich throughout and species include bluebell, Sweet woodruff, Wood anemone, Early purple orchid, Dog's mercury, Ivy, Ferns, Mosses and Dog rose. Several piles of dead-wood are also present creating a valuable fungal habitat. Mine shafts present, fenced and noted in safety.</p>						
1b	0.14	Open ground		Min-intervention	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves	
<p>Small area of open ground calcareous grassland and tall herb communities on the SE edge of the site occupying an area between the track and garden boundaries of adjacent properties. Several large Norway spruce trees present. Area crossed by underground/overground services.</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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