

Burcote Wood

(Plan period – 2023 to 2028)



WOODLAND
TRUST

Management Plan Content Page

Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

The Public Management Plan

Location and Access

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 New Native Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Burcote Wood

Location:	Towcester	Grid	reference:	SP690466	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	152
Area:	3.80 hectares (9.39 acres)								
External Designations:	N/A								
Internal Designations:	N/A								

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Burcote Wood lies close to Wood Burcote and about 2km to the south of Towcester (north of the minor road which connects the southern outskirts of Towcester with the A43/A413 junction, some 800 metres to the southwest). Public access is from Burcote Road where there is a small pull in. This road has recently been closed between Wood Burcote and the site to make way for the new Towcester relief road and housing. There is a permissive circular footpath which follows the perimeter of the wood.

Burcote Wood was formerly a gravel quarry. The site was reclaimed by landfill and planted between 1985 and 1987 with a mix of native broadleaved trees and shrubs (oak, ash, field maple, alder and cherry). Although the establishment of trees and shrubs was inconsistent due to the dry, shallow soil, it has now developed into a diverse, light canopy woodland with a small grassy glade. The unplanted hollow in the south-eastern corner has also scrubbed over. The wood is surrounded by farmland; hedges; an ancient field boundary with mature trees to the north-east, a hedged farm track to the west and an elm rich hedge along the road.

Key Features are informal public access and new native woodland.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term aim is to allow Burcote Wood to develop naturally into a healthy, resilient, multi layered woodland with intervention only to maintain open space and graded edges. The wood will have a diverse range of native tree and shrub species of varying age, as well as both standing and fallen deadwood habitat. Open areas will be maintained with a woodland edge layer encouraged through coppicing, clearing and natural regeneration. A sustainable level of public access will be encouraged, through the maintenance of access features such as entrances and paths.

Visitor Safety and Ash dieback will require monitoring and intervention where trees become unsafe and along footpaths.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
<p>This rural site is less than 2 km from the southern suburbs of Towcester and is popular for dog walking. The outer circular path is used but the inner route has grown over through lack of use. The level of use may well change with the building of the Towcester relief road and new housing.</p> <p>In the majority of the wood the trees are well established and have created a canopy. In other areas, where, for various reasons, establishment was patchy, glades with few scattered trees are developing naturally. This variation in woodland habitat will enhance the public enjoyment of the site.</p>
Significance
<p>Although there are several large woodlands around Silverstone some 5 km to the southwest, this small wood is the most accessible from the southern edge of Towcester.</p>
Opportunities & Constraints
<p>Constraint Limited parking and no footpath from habitation. Relatively small site</p> <p>Opportunity Near to population centre. Attractive location and wood. Path network stands up well in wet weather</p>
Factors Causing Change
<p>New relief road and housing will probably affect visitor numbers. Encroachment of vegetation impeding path network</p>
Long term Objective (50 years+)
<p>To maintain informal access and respond to changes in visitor numbers as Towcester expands. The present circular ride will continue to provide an open walkway.</p>
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
<p>-Following visual inspection by site manager, the public access structures such as entrances, paths and gates will be maintained to standard WT specs with welcome signage present, clean and visible. Where trees/shrubs/pathside vegetation restricts passage along the large circular path, this will also be cut back to allow at least 2m. Litter and fly-tipping will be removed when required.</p> <p>-The roadside hedge will be inspected annually and trimmed if necessary. Periodically dead elm stems will need to be removed where they are likely to create a hazard.</p>

4.2 f2 New Native Woodland

Description
<p>Burcote Wood has developed into a mixed broadleaf woodland with a good range of trees and shrubs and a light canopy. Some areas have become closed canopy high-forest, some of the glades that had developed due to uneven establishment across the site have filled in and new openings have been created by ash dieback.</p> <p>The site was a former gravel quarry within an agricultural landscape and therefore by its very nature relatively sterile. The prior reclaiming of the pit and the subsequent planting by the Trust has increased the biodiversity of the site considerably.</p>
Significance
<p>The surrounding area is dominated by commercial agriculture and all that implies in terms of biodiversity. This small woodland provides an important haven for both resident and migratory wildlife.</p>
Opportunities & Constraints
<p>Constraint Relatively small isolated woodland. The reclamation was not that good in places and the soil is very shallow and generally dry, leading to poor tree growth in places Ash dieback will reduce the number of ash trees</p> <p>Opportunity The poor soil conditions have led to a diverse structural habitat from dry grassy glades through to scrub and closed canopy woodland Ash Dieback will increase the standing and fallen deadwood habitat and allow for natural regeneration in the spaces left, increasing the habitat diversity of the wood.</p>
Factors Causing Change
<p>Rabbit damage. Possible increase in visitors with new housing development. Tree disease (ash Dieback) scrub encroachment of glade and other permanent open space.</p>
Long term Objective (50 years+)
<p>A resilient woodland, where a diverse canopy and age structure with a good shrubby understorey develops through natural regeneration and intervention to support natural processes. Maintain glades and woodland edge habitat within</p>

the woodland.

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

As ash declines, this will naturally open up areas of the canopy along the footpath, assisted through tree safety inspection and intervention as required for safety. From this areas may be identified up to 0.1ha for clearing small coupes and coppicing to create sunlit glades and woodland edge, which will diversify the woodland habitats. Elsewhere, where safe, leave ash as standing deadwood and allow natural regeneration to occur.

Maintain the open glade area through periodic removal of scrub identified following inspection by site manager.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2023	AW - Management Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of management access infrastructure and tracks Such as repairs to vehicle entrance points, maintaining vehicle bridges and repairing / reinstating surfaced management access routes.	April
2023	AW - Management Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of management access infrastructure and tracks Such as repairs to vehicle entrance points, maintaining vehicle bridges and repairing / reinstating surfaced management access routes.	April
2023	AW - Visitor Access Infrastructure	Works associated with the construction of a new or extension to existing car parking facilities.	July
2023	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2024	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2024	WC - Site Maintenance	Works associated with routine site management and maintenance works on Woodland Creation sites such as boundary ditches and fencing works , hedge trimming etc	December
2025	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2026	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December
2026	WC - Site Maintenance	Works associated with routine site management and maintenance works on Woodland Creation sites such as boundary ditches and fencing works , hedge trimming etc	December
2027	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	December

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	3.81	Ash		High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site	

For the purposes of this management plan the whole site is to be treated as one sub-compartment although there is some variation due to the initial establishment rate and species planted. The site was planted in three annual phases starting in 1985 on a reclaimed (land fill) gravel pit in an agricultural landscape of pasture and arable fields. The species planted to form a High Forest canopy included Alder, Ash, Oak (both Pedunculate and Sessile), Birch, Field maple and Common Lime. In addition Hawthorn and Blackthorn were planted in some locations to provide a sub-canopy and an edge profile. The ground layer is dominated by grasses but there are also some significant areas of bramble and bracken although these are under pressure due to the often high rabbit population. An area adjoining the agricultural grassland in the south was left unplanted and has developed as scrub and due to poor establishment and development clearings have developed naturally. A circular path was part of the initial design.

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:

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