

# Reach 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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) 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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

or contact the Woodland Trust

[operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto: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 Secondary Woodland
  - 4.3 f3 Open Ground Habitat
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### Reach Wood

Location:	Reach	Grid	reference:	TL565658	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	154
Area:	4.59 hectares (11.34 acres)								
External Designations:	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund								
Internal Designations:	N/A								

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Reach Wood was planted on an arable field in November 1994. The whole wood (3200 trees) was planted in a single day by volunteers from the nearby villages of Reach and Swafham Prior. It consists of two distinct areas- the northern wooded section planted on an undulating site which was once quarried for clunch, a type of chalk used as a building material locally, and the lower southern section which is a newly created chalk grassland surrounded by some small areas of planting and natural regeneration. The under-laying soil is thin and poor.

The planting was at a density of 1100 trees per hectare in a random mix of beach, ash, cherry, field maple, crab apple and yew with a variety of shrub species including hazel, dog rose, wayfaring tree and spindle on the path edges.

Beech is the dominant tree- there is an area of pure beech in a slight hollow in the centre and most of the ash was planted in the north western section.

An electricity powerline runs along the extreme north eastern boundary of the site.

The wood is linked into the public rights of way network and is only a 2 minute walk from the centre of Reach via Clunch Pit Lane. There are some chalk cliffs on the edges of the wood left over from the quarrying activity. There are some small areas of scrub associated with these. To the south west the ground falls away to form a steep chalk cliff with regenerating ash and thorn scrub. Very good views of the surrounding fens can be had from several vantage points

The southern most half of the site is chalk grassland, seeded on a previously arable field. The field was seeded with a mixture of chalk loving grass species and it is possible that other species have moved into the sward from the surrounding area. The poor soil is proving excellent for the meadow with many herbs now well established and orchids often found in the shaded areas bordering it.

The grassland is bounded to the east and west by a small amount of planting carried out in 1993/4 and to the south by a low chalk cliff which has a naturally seeded ash/thorn scrub habitat developing on it.

The trees have struggled since planting due to the poor, drought prone soil. However the site is now well established even though many trees are smaller than we would expect for woodland of this age.

The Key features of this site are:

- Informal public access
- New native woodland
- Open ground habitat

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long term vision for Reach Woodland is for the majority of the site to be managed as high forest consisting of primarily native broadleaved tree and shrub species, with an element of standing and fallen deadwood. The woods species mix will consist of primarily Beech, supported by species such as Cherry, Field Maple , Crab Apple and Yew. Ash will still be an important component to the site, but many trees will succumb to ash dieback disease providing important standing and fallen deadwood habitat within the wood. The areas where the Ash have died and opened up the canopy, will provide areas for ground flora and natural regeneration to flourish, and provide an understorey layer. Shrub species will be primarily Hazel and Dog Rose supported by species such as Spindle and Wayfaring tree.

In addition to the native broadleaved woodland , the site will continue to provide a botanical niche, in the form of an area of chalk grassland at the southern end of the site which is home to a diverse range of chalk grassland specialists. This area will be managed as open chalk grassland and will be maintained annually to conserve its quality. The chalk grassland flora may act as a seed disperser to the surrounding countryside providing additional biodiversity benefits adjacent to the site.

The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity. Low key public access will be maintained at the site and the paths , signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public will be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Reach Parish and the other immediately neighbouring parishes. The wood will continue to link to the local public footpath networks and will be part of the much wider access provision in the area.

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

<b>Description</b>
<p>Reach wood was planted up as part of the Trust's Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund project. Local people were involved in the fundraising, design, planting, and maintenance. There was a great deal of community involvement from the very start. Within easy walking distance of the village of Reach, it is accessible from the village square via an old green lane. There are 900m of paths throughout the site and a large area of open chalk grassland near the southern edge. The wood is well used for quiet enjoyment, being far enough away from the village to provide protection from vandalism yet close enough to be accessible to most people.</p> <p>The wood is also linked to nearby village of Swaffham Prior via the public right of way network. There is added interest in that the site of the wood was an old quarry from which clunch a special type of chalk was extracted. The old quarry working faces are still visible nearby.</p>
<b>Significance</b>
<p>The wood was very much a product of the local communities interest in creating local woodland. at the time, there was very little woodland of any kind in the locality, the nearest being approximately 4 miles away in Wicken Fen and no woodland open for free public access within 10km's other than another Trusts wood at Burwell. Since then the community have created other smaller woodland sites in and around the village with help from other conservation organisations, including Reach plantation (1998 - Cambs County Farms owned) and part of the Reach 24 site (2013 - purchased by the National Trust).</p>
<b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Links to public rights of way network to create circular walks.</li><li>- improved linkage to the local Friends of Reach Wood Group</li></ul> <p>Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-On site hazards - Cliffs/ steep slopes associated with Quarry activity</li><li>- no on site parking</li></ul>
<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Scrub encroachment</li></ul>
<b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>



The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity. Low key public access will be maintained to the site and the paths, signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public are to be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Reach Parish and the other immediately neighbouring parishes. The wood will continue to link to the local public footpath networks and will be part of the much wider access provision in the area.

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

The 900m of Paths and rides are to be managed annually, ensuring works are carried out as necessary to keep the path network open and easy to use for informal public access as detailed in EMC spec 2.01.

Path cut- June and September annually

Associated signage (site name/welcome signs) to be kept in good condition at all times.

Zone B Tree Safety Inspections to be carried out every 24 months

**4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland**

**Description**

Mixed broadleaved woodland dominated by beech and ash with a variety of shrubs and other trees including some yew. Growth is slow due to the poor chalk soils. The design also compliments the existing hedge and scrub areas adjacent to the site and includes wide paths and a large chalk grassland created in 1994.

**Significance**

Cambridgeshire is one of the least wooded counties in England and this part of Cambridgeshire is one of the least wooded districts in the county- the nearest ancient wood is 12km away to the south.

**Opportunities & Constraints**

**Opportunities**

- The cliffs and hedges which form boundaries already contained small populations of chalk loving plants and animals which could move into the new woodland.
- The very poor nature of the farmland adjacent to the wood may give opportunities for extending the wood

**Constraints**

- The soils are thin, very nutrient poor and prone to drying out

<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
- Ash Dieback - Deer - Rabbits
<b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>
The long term vision for Reach Woodland is for the majority of the site to be managed as high forest consisting of primarily native broadleaved tree and shrub species, with an element of standing and fallen deadwood. The woods species mix will consist of primarily Beech, supported by species such as Cherry, Field Maple , Crab Apple and Yew. Ash will still be an important component of the wood, but many trees will succumb to ash dieback disease providing important standing and fallen deadwood habitat. The areas where the Ash have died and opened up the canopy, will provide areas for ground flora and natural regeneration to flourish, and provide an understorey layer. Shrub species will be primarily Hazel and Dog Rose supported by species such as Spindle and Wayfaring tree
<b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>
Undertake assessments of woodland health every two years, Works to be ordered through observation actions as required.  In the areas of most dense Ash install 2 x 10m x 10m Deer exclusion plots to promote natural regeneration. Monitor the success of these plots three years after installation and every five years. - Install Exclosures - Winter 2025/26  Zone B Tree Inspections to be carried out every 24 months

### 4.3 f3 Open Ground Habitat

<b>Description</b>
Area of chalk grassland to the south of the site, planted in April 1994 with a mix of chalk loving grass species. A small extension to the chalk grassland habitat (to the north) was seeded and brought into management in 2021.
<b>Significance</b>
Native meadows of this quality are a much depleted natural resource across the UK. The meadow are a significant area of open space, providing diversity within the woodland and softening its impact on the landscape. Well used by locals for picnics, this much loved area provides a haven for wildlife, being one of very few open spaces in the vicinity not intensively managed for agriculture.
<b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>
Opportunities  -useful base for site based events -Community/volunteer engagement - removal of cuttings

Constraints:

- Access can be challenging
- specific type of cutting equipment required ( finger bar cutter)

**Factors Causing Change**

- Scrub encroachment
- colonisation of invasive weeds.
- Deer damage

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

In addition to the native broadleaved woodland , the site will continue to provide a botanical niche, in the form of an area of chalk grassland at the southern end of the site which is home to a diverse range of chalk grassland specialists. This area will be managed as open chalk grassland and will be maintained annually to conserve its quality. The chalk grassland flora may act as a seed disperser to the surrounding countryside providing additional biodiversity benefits adjacent to the site.

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

Chalk Grassland Management

- Mow annually August/September -once everything has seeded- using low impact finger/ bar cutter or similar (not flail) to prevent scrub encroachment but protect inhabiting wildlife. Arisings to be removed from chalk grassland to surrounding woodland or off site completely.

## 5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
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,	September
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,	September
2025	WC - Natural Regeneration Work	Physical Works undertaken to encourage/promote / protect natural regeneration – such as ground prep, fencing to protect natural regeneration , low intensity grazing	January
2026	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,	September
2027	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,	September

## APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	2.9	Beech	1994	Min-intervention		Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund
<p>This compartment consists of the northern wooded section of Reach wood, which was planted in 1994 on an undulating former clunch stone quarry (a hard chalk building stone). As a result the soil is thin and poor. The planting was at a density of 1100 trees per hectare in a random mix of Ash, Beech, Cherry, Field Maple, Crab Apple and Yew. Along the path edges a variety of shrub species were included, namely Hazel, Dog-rose, Wayfaring tree and Spindle. There is an area of pure beech in a slight hollow in the centre. However mostly ash was planted in the north western section. An electricity power line runs along the extreme north eastern boundary of the site.</p>						
1b	1.4	Other	1994	Non-wood habitat		Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund
<p>The southern most half of the site was seeded to form a chalk grassland in April of 1994. Previously an arable field, the field area was seeded with a combination of the following grass species:- Sheeps fescue, Red fescue, Common bent, Smooth meadow grass, Crested dogs tail, Yellow oat grass, Small leaved timothy. In the contract it also states that the grassland was to be further enhanced by the spreading of seed collected from nearby Devils Ditch SSSI, it is not known whether this was carried out. The grassland is bounded to the east and west by a small amount of planting carried out in 1993/4 and to the south by a chalk cliff which has a naturally seeded ash/thorn scrub habitat developing on it.</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.**

The Woodland Trust is a charity registered in England and Wales no. 294344 and in Scotland no. SC038885. A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no. 1982873. The Woodland Trust logo is a registered trademark.