

Girton

(Plan period – 2023 to 2028)



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 New Native Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Girton

Location:	Girton	Grid reference:	TL426624	OS	1:50,000	Sheet No.	154
Area:	2.42 hectares (5.98 acres)						
External Designations:	Green Belt						
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep						

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Girton Wood was planted with a wide range of native broadleaved species in December 2000 as part of The Wood On Your Doorstep programme. Prior to Trust ownership the site was an uncultivated arable field. Mature hedgerows run along the southern, eastern and part of the western boundaries. The strip of land to the east of the wood (locally called the "Pan Handel") is believed to have been a green lane at one time and, although it is now a dead end.

Girton Wood has developed into a closed canopy woodland with some shrub cover along the path edges and patches of bramble scrub. The tree species in the wood are primarily Oak and Ash as well as species such as Hornbeam, Field Maple, Silver Birch and wetter species such as Alder and Willow.

The Shrub species consist of Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Guelder rose, Hazel, Buckthorn, spindle, Dogrose and Elder.

The soil is a chalky-clay loam and whilst slowly permeable it is prone to water logging in periods of heavy or prolonged rain and can take a long time drying out.

A network of grassy paths provide visitors with a choice of circular routes around the wood and there is a seat in the north east corner. A central glade with a seat was included in the design as the special Millennium feature. Car parking is available in the recreation ground car park with space for upwards of 40 cars.

The key features are:

- Informal Public Access
- New Native Woodland

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Girton Wood will be allowed to develop naturally into a well-structured and resilient native broadleaved woodland. The open habitats of the central glade and wide sunny rides will be maintained, and the woodland edge habitat managed to diversify the species and age structure of the wood. Some thinning and coppicing will be carried out to improve the woodland structure and encourage natural regeneration.

The woods dominant tree species will be Oak and Birch with a supporting species mix of Ash, Hornbeam, Field Maple, Crab Apple, Willow and Alder .Ash will still be a component of the site, but this is most likely to be providing the important feature of, standing and fallen deadwood habitat within the wood due to Ash Dieback. 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.

The shrub component of the site will include species such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Guelder Rose, Hazel, Buckthorn, Spindle, Dog Rose and Elder.

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 Girton 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

Description
The wood is well serviced with a network of grassy paths allowing free public access. Formal entrances have been created from the recreation ground where there is a car park. Underlying soils are slow draining making the paths seasonally quite muddy in places.
Significance
As part of the WOYD project it is important to maintain the site to a high standard for informal public access. Accessible woodland is at a premium in the local area, and the wood has become a significant facility for the village and is well supported by the parish council.
Opportunities & Constraints
Opportunities -To involve the local community in managing the wood -School very close by -Close ties to the parish council. Constraints: -Relatively small site. -Seasonally muddy
Factors Causing Change
Encroaching vegetation.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
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 Girton 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 1200m 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.

Manage site safety through safety observations and inspections.

Associated signage (Site name/welcome signs) to be kept in good condition and regularly maintained as detailed in EMC Spec 1.01 , with a five yearly review of access facilities by the Site Manager.

Access inspection - July 2026

Replace millennium bench - August 2024

Tree Safety surveys

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

4.2 f2 New Native Woodland

Description

Girton Wood was planted with a wide range of native broadleaved species in December 2000 as part of The Wood On Your Doorstep programme. Prior to Trust ownership the site was an uncultivated arable field. Mature hedgerows run along the southern, eastern and part of the western boundaries. The strip of land to the east of the wood (locally called the "Pan Handel") is believed to have been a green lane at one time and, although it is now a dead end.

Girton Wood has developed into a closed canopy woodland with some shrub cover along the path edges and patches of bramble scrub. The tree species in the wood are primarily Oak and Ash as well as species such as Hornbeam, Field Maple , Silver Birch and wetter species such as Alder and Willow .

The Shrub species consist of Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Guelder rose, Hazel, Buckthorn, spindle, Dogrose and Elder.

Significance

Cambridgeshire is one of the least wooded counties in the country - any increase in woodland, especially in the Green Belt, will benefit people, wildlife and the landscape.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

-Locally important habitat, linked to hedgerows

Constraints:

-Small island habitat

- difficult access for woodland management

Factors Causing Change

-Ash Dieback

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Girton Wood will be allowed to develop naturally into a well-structured and resilient native broadleaved woodland. The open habitats of the central glade and wide sunny rides will be maintained, and the woodland edge habitat managed to diversify the species and age structure of the wood. Some thinning and coppicing will be carried out to improve the woodland structure and encourage natural regeneration.

The woods dominant tree species will be Oak and Birch, with a supporting species mix of Ash, Hornbeam, Field Maple, Crab Apple, Willow and Alder . Ash will still be a component of the site, but this species will provide the important feature of, 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.

The shrub component of the site will include species such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Guelder Rose, Hazel, Buckthorn, Spindle, Dog Rose and Elder.

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

Undertake assessments of woodland health every five years, Works to be ordered through observation actions as required.

Woodland Health Monitoring visit - August 2026

Woodland Management

Selective thinning and coppicing :

-Selective thinning and coppicing of trees and shrubs where the planting is dense will open up the canopy, allowing light to reach the woodland floor and give selected trees room to develop and break through the canopy. This will promote resilience by encouraging variety of age and structure within the woodland.

Selective thinning operation - Autumn/Winter 2027/2028

Ride side management:

-Cutting back or coppicing the areas around the margins of the central glade will increase habitat and structural diversity and open up the paths and continue to maintain the Millennium feature of the woodland. This should be done on a 7 year rotation.

Central Glade Management - Autumn/Winter 2027/2028

Tree Shelter removal:

-The plastic tree shelters will be removed in the south west corner of the woodland before or during thinning . All plastic guards to be removed from trees and disposed of with a licensed waste carrier.

Tree shelter removal- Autumn/Winter 2027/2028

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
2027	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	February
2027	WMM - Secondary Silviculture	Works associated with silvicultural operations within secondary woods to meet our primary aims of conserving woodlands and encouraging public enjoyment– such as the removal of non-natives, thinning and promotion of native trees and shrubs, creating and managing view points and providing welcoming sites for visitors	February
2027	WMM - Coppice Management	Works associated with the management of coppice areas – such as coppicing, maintenance of protective fencing, etc	February

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	2.51	Oak (pedunculate)	2000	High forest		Green Belt

Prior to Trust ownership, this flat square field had been left uncultivated. Planted in December 2000 as native broadleaved woodland using the following species: oak, ash, field maple, hornbeam, silver birch, crab apple, willow, alder and woody shrubs (hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, buckthorn, guelder rose and spindle). Ash regeneration has been prolific in the western half of the wood, but is suffering from dieback (first noted 2014)

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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