

Pear Tree Wood

(Plan period - 2023 to 2028)



WOODLAND
TRUST

Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

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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
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4. Key Features
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5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Pear Tree Wood

Location:	Ratby	Grid	reference:	SK503065	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	140
Area:	18.45 hectares (45.59 acres)								
External Designations:	National Forest								
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep								

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Pear Tree Wood is an 18.4 ha woodland creation site west of Ratby village in Leicestershire on the eastern boundary of the National Forest area. Significantly it lies between two other Woodland Trust woodlands, Martinshaw Wood to the north; which is a 100HA Planted Ancient Woodland site (PAWs) and Burroughs Wood to the south-west; a 35HA mix of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland and new native woodland plantation. These Woodland Trust properties form part of a larger block of native woodland, predominantly new plantation planted on private property in the local area.

The site is gently undulating, comprising a shallow valley with a brook running through it. The soil is heavy clay, turning sticky in places in prolonged wet periods. There is open ground to either side of the stream, which is home to a variety of native plants, butterflies and dragonflies. To either side of the open ground, native broadleaves make up the majority of the planting, but there is a grove of 12 Coast Redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*), which were a favourite tree of the Woodland Trust's founder, Kenneth Watkins OBE and were planted in commemoration of him following his death in 1997. There is also an area dominated by Scots pine, planted on the site to reflect the nature of Martinshaw Wood, just over the road.

As it is a young woodland, the site has a low diversity of age ranges, dominated by the planted trees, now about 25yo. Native broadleaf trees present are oak, ash, silver birch, cherry and field maple. Shrubs include hawthorn, elder, hazel and dog rose, although these are not well represented within the woodland blocks. There is some natural regeneration taking place and some pre plantation hedgerow trees which buck this trend. The site has ash present, suffering from ash die back and some drawn up, squirrel damaged oak, but is generally developing well, with some woodland flora colonising throughout. As well as the open areas on either side of the brook, there is a further meadow area on site. This is left as open grassland.

The trust obtained the site with the help of the National Forest Company as a tender winner when the National Forest was in its infancy. Just over 8HA was created as a Woods On Your Doorstep (WOYD) site and local people helped with the planning and planting of the site. It was the public consultation that led to the selection of so many Scots Pine. The land was for many years permanent pasture but was ploughed and had a single crop of linseed prior to acquisition. Pear Tree Wood was named after Pear Tree Farm in Ratby Village, of which the land was part.

A permissive bridle / cycle path runs NE to SW through Pear Tree Wood. The route links into Pear Tree Wood from Martinshaw Wood to the north (crossing over Markfield Road) and then exits the site onto Burroughs Road and on. The surfaced route was created in Spring 2001 in conjunction with Leicestershire County Council. The path forms part of a long distance bridle / cycle way between Leicester and the National Forest. Further paths link these woods and public car parks exist at Burroughs and Martinshaw Woods also. Visitor access is via Markfield Road, Ratby via Martinshaw Wood or Burroughs Road, Ratby via Burroughs Wood respectively.

The Key Features for this site are Secondary Woodland and Connecting People with Woods and Trees.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The wood will be allowed to reach maturity and will develop the characteristics of more naturally occurring woodland, as opposed to a plantation of single aged trees. As the woodland was planted with a predominantly ash and oak mix and ADB has vastly reduced the long term survival and potential co-dominance of ash on site, the woodland is likely to evolve into an oak dominated wood, however cherry, birch, willow and other species will always be retained. For this reason silvicultural intervention will be considered as the wood develops to ensure the wood is diverse in tree species and structure, to promote a good mixture of both young and mature trees. This will enable the wood to be more resilient to change in the future, and will ensure it supports the greatest range of wildlife.

Open habitats will also remain and be managed within the woodland matrix, including the meadow areas but also sunny rides.

A good standard of access provision will be maintained at Pear Tree Wood. The entrances will be accessible and clearly signed as per WT Spec 1.1 It shall be clearly visible from approach routes, attractive and inviting, easy and safe to use. The existing path network will be kept open for use and any new desire line paths that are created and are sensible will become official paths and be maintained.

The wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors through regular tree safety inspections as per Woodland Trust Internal Guidance and best practice.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description
<p>Pear Tree Wood is located on the edge of the village of Ratby and is well connected by the local public access network into surrounding blocks of woodland and via Martinshaw Wood, the village of Groby. The main access point would be from Markfield Road via Martinshaw Wood and its associated car park or from Burroughs Road via Burroughs Wood and its associated car park. A series of internal paths link these three properties together and provide circular walks within the woodland linking also into neighbouring privately owned woodlands. Internal paths on the property add up to over 1.2km and on top of this Pear Tree Wood also hosts 800m of a surfaced Sustrans route for horses, bicycles and pedestrians which links Leicester to the National Forest area. Access into other areas of this woodland is via stiles and kissing gates, with just the main run along the Sustrans, connecting Martinshaw to Burroughs wood being surfaced and accessible via a metal kissing gate with a RADAR key to allow it to swing wide open.</p>
Significance
<p>The woodland is located in the National Forest area and links with other woodlands in the area and the wider rights of way network via its paths and rides. Open access to walkers remains throughout with the possibility of long woodland walks within the Forest having become a reality with the National Forest way passing through the wood along the route of the National Cycle Route 63 (Sustrans). Public access and its promotion is an important objective of the National Forest initiative, the access provided at Pear Tree Wood forms an important contribution to that wider goal and is symbolic of on-going successful partnership working between the Woodland Trust and The National Forest Company.</p>
Opportunities & Constraints
<p>The woodland is an important amenity resource for local people; sitting within the National Forest it fits nicely into the wider public rights of way network.</p> <p>There is the potential for future partnership working with the National Forest Company in terms of access promotion and linking the property into the wider National Forest area.</p> <p>The National Forest long distance surfaced cycle / bridleway (Sustrans route) that runs through the wood allows the Woodland Trust to promote itself to an array of visitors of all abilities. Less able visitors should be able to take advantage of this high quality track via disabled access kissing gates installed by Leicestershire County Council in 2010.</p> <p>A possible constraint brought on by the Sustrans route is the undesirable use of the wider property by horses, mountain bikes, motorbikes etc. However at the time of writing this does not appear to be a significant issue.</p>

Factors Causing Change
<p>Potentially the misuse of the wider path network within the woodland by horses, mountain bikes, motor bikes, quads etc.</p> <p>Ash die back means that there may be more exposure to falling dead branches along the path network until this is managed safely, so increased frequency and summer tree safety inspections</p>
Long term Objective (50 years+)
<p>A good standard of access provision will be maintained at Pear Tree Wood. The entrances will be accessible and clearly signed as per WT Spec 1.1</p> <p>It shall be clearly visible from approach routes, attractive and inviting, easy and safe to use.</p> <p>The existing path network will be kept open for use and any new desire line paths that are created and are sensible will become official paths and be maintained.</p>
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
<p>The priorities this plan period will be to keep the wood safe, accessible and welcoming by including the following actions in the Estate Maintenance Contract:</p> <p>To mow the paths five times a year in May, June, July, August and September.</p> <p>To maintain the Woodland Trust "Welcome" signage at the entrances, to be inspected and cleaned by the contractor annually in July.</p> <p>To maintain the existing pedestrian access points as part of the visits made by the contractor as described above.</p>

4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland

Description
<p>Pear Tree Wood is native broadleaf plantation planted in 1997 and consisting of ash, oak, silver birch, wild cherry and field maple. The shrub component consists of hawthorn, hazel, elder and dog rose. A significant difference at Pear Tree wood compared to other WT woods of the same age locally is the addition of an area of conifers, mainly Scots Pine but with a grove of 12 Giant redwoods. These were included after consultation with the public, to reflect the neighbouring Martinshaw wood. The woodland is largely dominated by a single age class of tree, roughly 25yo with limited natural regeneration happening and just a few older trees that would have been in pre-existing hedgerows across the site.</p>
Significance
<p>Pear Tree Wood is one of many new woodlands planted in and making up National Forest area. Locally Pear Tree Wood is one of a number of younger woodlands which occupy a significant area on the edge of Ratby village. The woodland contributes greatly to biodiversity in an area that consists predominantly of agricultural fields and urban conurbation being close to the edge of Leicester. Pear Tree Wood plays an important role in buffering and extending upon the adjacent Martinshaw ASNW / PAWS woodland.</p>

Opportunities & Constraints

Pear Tree Wood sits within a wider block of woodland creation in the local area in what is otherwise predominantly agricultural fields adjacent to Ratby village; there may be further opportunities in the future for joint partnership working with both the National Forest Company and other local landowners pertaining to a range of management and promotional activities.

Pear Tree Wood forms an important buffer, link and add on to adjacent Martinshaw Wood ASNW / PAWS.

The M1 motorway passes through Martinshaw Wood and Markfield Road runs between Pear Tree Wood forming barriers to species movement across the sites.

Ash die-back is present at Pear Tree Wood. Given that ash is the main species component at Pear Tree Wood and that species planting occurs in single species blocks its presence is a concern.

Squirrel and deer damage has been noted at the property, though not yet significant it should none the less be monitored via the Woodland Condition Assessments and control measures undertaken where and when appropriate.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback is present on the property and will lead to a large reduction in the number of healthy ash trees on the site.

Squirrel and deer damage has been noted at the property, though not yet significant it should none the less be monitored via the Woodland Condition Assessments and control measures undertaken where and when appropriate.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To allow the woodland to develop into native high-forest with trees and shrubs of varying age classes and species types. The woodland will be subject to occasional interventions, as informed by periodic WCA's, but allowing natural processes to shape the wood as much as possible. Woodland Condition Assessments will inform management going into the future, interventions only taking place if highlighted as necessary by these assessments; the aim being to ensure the long term resilience of the woodland in perpetuity.

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

Monitor the woodland regularly to assess its health and any threats to it via the Secondary Woodland Key Feature observation.

Once in the plan period, just prior to the next management plan review, carry out a Woodland Condition Assessment, the results of which will inform the next management plan.

Within this plan period we will begin to develop the structural diversity of the woodland. This has been recognised as a priority through our woodland condition assessment, which as well as the woodland being dominated by one age class of tree, also highlighted a lack of natural regeneration of young trees and limited ground flora. This will be achieved by conducting a thinning operation across the site, removing roughly 30% of the trees, in order to open up the canopy and allow more light to reach the woodland floor. This will also mean that the existing trees are free to develop. Where ash

trees are displaying the symptoms of ash die back and are adjacent to paths, they will be removed. This equates to somewhere in the region of 2ha of selective felling of ride side ash, to be tied in with the coppicing of ride side shrubs such as hazel and field maple. Not only will this mean the path network is safer from dead or dying trees, but it will act to open up the rides making them warmer, drier and more biodiverse. Trees selected for removal will be the damaged, suppressed and of the more common species, this way improving the quality of the tree stock and diversity of species found on site.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2024	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	August
2025	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	March
2025	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	August
2026	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	August
2027	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	August

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	18.4	Mixed native broadleaves	1997	High forest	People issues (+tve & -tve)	National Forest
<p>18.4 ha woodland creation site planted in 1997 with 17 ha of native broadleaf trees and 1.4 ha Scots pine to emulate Martinshaw Wood to the north. Up to 20% of this area remains unplanted, being a series of paths, including a long distance surfaced bridle path and a wet meadow area either side of a bisecting stream. Trees were planted at 2250 / ha with mainly oak, ash and birch, although cherry and field maple are also present together with woody shrubs such as hazel, elder, dog rose and hawthorn. 1350 Scots pine and 12 Coast redwoods in a grove at the highest point have also been included. A footbridge crosses the stream at the western end and a bridle bridge at the eastern.</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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