

Eagles Wood

(Plan period – 2024 to 2029)



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

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2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
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GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Eagles Wood

Location:	Greenhithe Grid reference: TQ587750 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 177
Area:	1.04 hectares (2.57 acres)
External Designations:	Conservation Area
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Eagles Wood is 1.1 hectares of secondary woodland situated in Greenhithe overlooking the River Thames within the Greenhithe Conservation Area. Eagles Wood was gifted to the Woodland Trust by Crest Homes in 1995 and is surrounded by a residential area built on an old chalk quarry site in the 1980's with Eagles Wood situated on a chalk spur on the rim of the old quarry.

The northern fringe of Eagles Wood formed part of the boundary screen of the old quarry and contains maturing sycamore coppice with some non-native specimens of horse chestnut and tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). The remainder of the site was planted by Crest Homes in 1990 with mixed broadleaved trees including ash, field maple, wild cherry, hawthorn and mix of shrub species; however some of this area is now covered in non-native buddleja (*Buddleja davidii*).

Pedestrian access is available in Eagles Wood on a simple path network, accessed via metal kissing gates located 20m from the council car park in the east, and next to the neighbouring children's play park in the central-west region of the site. There is one set of rustic steps in the northeast of the site where the topography slopes down to the northern boundary.

In 2015 there was a landslide of the cliff just outside of the southwestern boundary. The Trust leased the western half of Eagles Wood to Dartford Borough Council for three years during the regrading of the slope. This area came back under Trust management in August 2018, with the installation of a high metal mesh security fence along the Eagle Cliff edge and Woodland Trust boundary.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Eagles Wood will continue to be a small woodland greenspace for the local residents of Greenhithe. Intervention will be at a level suitable for the size and location of the site. The percentage of ash trees will likely be reduced due to ash dieback. Safety during this expected decline in ash will be ensured through annual tree safety inspections in high risk zones and follow-up tree work as and when required. Ash showing resilience to the disease will be retained. The gaps caused by the loss of ash will likely be filled by natural regeneration of sycamore and wild cherry, although the non-native tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) may also regenerate in these gaps. The deadwood habitat is expected to increase overtime as the ash die out and the mature sycamore are left to naturally age and collapse and the area of trees planted in the 1990s begins to thin itself.

The presence of the non-native species, tree of heaven, will continue to be monitored. Due to the small size and isolated location of Eagles Wood, action to remove it will only be taken if deemed necessary. The non-native shrub species, Buddleja (*Buddleja davidii*), can only be brought under control through a joint effort by the Woodland Trust and the local council which owns the land south and east of Eagles Wood. If this is not achieved, the Woodland Trust will continue limited control of the species via mechanical cutting along the walking paths.

Low key access provision for visitors will be maintained at a level suitable to the small size and infrequent use of the site. This includes annual management of entrances and paths and removal of any dangerous or fallen trees in these areas. The wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors and neighbours through regular tree safety inspections along the paths and boundary with housing.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1

Description
Significance
Opportunities & Constraints
Factors Causing Change
Long term Objective (50 years+)
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

4.2 f2

Description
Significance
Opportunities & Constraints
Factors Causing Change
Long term Objective (50 years+)

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

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
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,	July
2025	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	July
2026	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	May
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,	July
2027	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	May
2027	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	July
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,	July
2028	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	May
2028	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,	July
2029	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	May
2029	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,	July

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2029	WMM - General Site Management	Works associated with maintaining conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges,	July

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	1.09	Sycamore	1970	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site	

Eagles Wood is a secondary woodland of mixed broadleaf species (sycamore, ash, horse chestnut, tree of heaven, field maple, and wild cherry). The north part of the wood is dominated (90%) by mature multistemmed sycamore over 50 years old, with ash as the secondary species. Tree of heaven and horse chestnut are also present in this part of the wood. The south eastern block of the wood is more recent (planted 1990). The major species here are sycamore, field maple and ash around 30% within the canopy with a minor percentage of wild cherry, hawthorn and shrub species. Buddleja and clematis are prolific towards the southern boundary.

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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