

# Primrose 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](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

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GLOSSARY

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### Primrose Wood

Location:	Boxford	Grid	reference:	TL950405	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	155
Area:	11.59 hectares (28.64 acres)								
External Designations:	N/A								
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep								

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Primrose Wood was purchased and planted through the Woodland Trust 'Woods on Your Doorstep' scheme in 1998, creating new woodland on previous agricultural land. The site is now a mosaic of habitats that have developed over the years reflecting the different ground conditions and hydrology found on site. The site is a long, thin site positioned on the western edge of the village of Boxford in southeast Suffolk. In the centre of the site is the original woodland creation planted in 1998, with a wet wildflower rich area of grassland to the north. To the east is further area of woodland creation extension created in 2019. To the west is a area of wet alder woodland and willow planting. The site slopes down from the southern boundary to the River Box, where the river bank extends along the entire northern boundary creating a lovely riverine wet woodland valley.

The soils and hydrology play a important part in the plant communities and habitat found on site. The whole site sits on loamy, fairly free draining soils with the surrounding soils of the River Box valley having higher clay content within the loam. The lower and western end of the site is particularly wet. The wet grazing meadows supports important plant communities associated with these types of habitats. Flora includes southern marsh orchids, marsh marigold and musk mallow. Tree species associated with these areas include alder and willow, found all along the riverine edge and in the western end. In the far west of the site English Cricket Bat Willows are planted and maintained by J.S Wrights and Sons as an example of agroforestry.

The woodland creation areas are found in the relatively drier free draining areas at the top of the slopes. The original planting from 1998 is now mostly closed canopy mixed broadleaf species including oak, ash, cherry and alder. Shrubby species of hazel and field maple can be found around footpath edges. The more recent area of planting from 2019 has a similar make up of mixed broadleaf species. The planting here incorporates a viewpoint over the landscape towards the village and church of Boxford.

The name Primrose Wood comes from the late wife of Fred Leeder (Tinker), a much loved local gentleman, who sold the land to the Woodland Trust on the conditions that the site was named after his wife, and that he be buried there when he died. Fred passed away in 2002 and was buried in one of the meadows. His grave is now marked by his old hay rake in a area known as Tinker's Corner. The site provides a valuable green space to the village of Boxford and allows visitors to enjoy the varied wildlife found here. Although not currently directly connected to the village, access is via a footpath along field edges.

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term aim for Primrose Wood is to maintain the diversity of habitats found on site. The original planting from 1998 which is now in parts closed canopy will be managed through minimal intervention except for ride widening, health and safety works and sporadic gap creation to encourage natural tree regeneration. Deadwood will be retained where safe to as habitat.

The new planting areas to the east and western ends will be maintained as woodland habitats with management interventions when required. These more recent areas of woodland creation from 2019 will continue to grow and eventually add another age structure to the woodland components of the site over time.

The alder carr will also be managed under minimum intervention, allowing the stools to collapse and re-grow. This option, as opposed to active management has been selected due to the small area of habitat involved and access restrictions to reduce disturbance and to develop more deadwood habitat.

The long-term management goals for the wildflower meadow areas will be to retain and improve as much as possible of the 6 hectares as a floristically rich habitat. The meadow quality in the long term will depend on both management, and the influence of outside factors such as hydrology and climate. Grazing this area with livestock will be key to halting the decline and eventually improving it. This threatened habitat is the most important habitat on site and should be treated as a priority management consideration.

The long-term intention for public access is to attempt to create a formal link directly to the village which will allow footpaths to be maintained to a sustainable level to allow visitors from Boxford village to enjoy the wildlife here. This is however currently dependent on external landowners and out of the control of the Woodland Trust,

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

<b>Description</b>
Access for the public is provided at one kissing gate entrance to the eastern end of the site with footpaths extending across the whole site. The network of footpaths allow for a walk of approximately 2 km. Access to the eastern boundary is currently via a informal path leading from Dakin Avenue, through another land holding. This path is not under Woodland Trust ownership or maintenance responsibility. Good views are attainable from the higher parts on the site, across the meadows and to Boxford Church.
<b>Significance</b>
The site is well used and appreciated by visitors from the village of Boxford for quiet enjoyment of the natural environment.
<b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>
<p>Opportunities.</p> <p>Public access should be improved with the proposed acquisition of a small parcel of land between Daking Avenue and the eastern access point. This is to be gifted to the Trust as part of a planning condition. This will allow a direct link to the site from the village.</p> <p>Constraints.</p> <p>Public access is constrained due to the walk required to reach the site through another land holding and with just one entrance/exit.</p> <p>The meadow areas may be subject to grazing, and may restrict access at these times.</p> <p>The central and western end of the site are seasonally very, very, wet due to the natural hydrology of the site and are often impassable.</p>
<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
Seasonal changes in hydrology and climate change. Ash dieback.
<b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>
Maintain the current public access provision so that visitors can access the site for quiet enjoyment of the natural environment. With the potential addition of the land link to the village it should be possible to improve direct access provisions over time.



<b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>
Maintain the site as an area of public open access with ride system cuts to a minimum of 2m to allow unhindered access for the public (unless the site is flooded). Maintain all public access structures in a safe usable condition. Work Programme: Path cutting – several times a year.

#### 4.2 f2 New Native Woodland

<b>Description</b>
The central compartment of the site is approximately 2.4ha and was part of the original planting scheme from 1998. Here the canopy has closed in some parts. A further 1.5ha was planted up in 2019 of mixed broadleaved woodland on the eastern end of the site.
<b>Significance</b>
The established young woodland and additions of new planting adds habitat diversity within this predominantly agricultural landscape. The riverine habitats merging into mixed broadleaves mirror existing woodland on both sides of the River Box valley and contribute to a more complex habitat along its length. The woodland will also provide ecosystem services by serving to slow surface water run off from surrounding agricultural land and slow flooding in the local area.
<b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>
Opportunities. The planting schemes are an opportunity to maintain a relatively significant area of riverside woodland within a predominantly arable area. Constraints. The site could be impacted by climate change with prolonged periods of waterlogging and flooding.
<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
High levels of deer browsing. Climate change in the form of prolonged waterlogging,.
<b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>
Maintain the areas of existing young P1998 and recently created woodland P2019 which links into the surrounding landscape. The original compartment will be maintained as high forest through minimum intervention, alongside rideside coppicing and sporadic intervention to create canopy gaps. The more recent planting compartment will follow suite and eventually be managed through minimal intervention after establishment. Deadwood in the form of standing and fallen should be retained, linking into stag beetle projects off and onsite.
<b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>

The majority of the woodland area shall continue to be managed under minimal intervention apart from where active management is required to open the canopy to allow the development of ground flora and understorey. Some ride side coppicing of shrubby species such as hazel and field maple would be beneficial to open up the rides. Ash suffering from ash dieback and within falling distance of rides could be removed if posing a threat to visitor safety.

### 4.3 f3 Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat

<b>Description</b>
The central proportion of the site approximately 2ha in size is important wet meadow, described as County Wildlife site standard. This was once fenced to provide two meadows and an open riverside area. The fencing has since fallen into disrepair and the management of the area is now through mechanical cut and collect means. Although the area is now dominated by rank grasses and sedges important plant species still exist in fair numbers. Among these are southern marsh orchids, marsh marigold and yellow flag iris.
<b>Significance</b>
Wet meadows, and the plant communities associated with them are a declining habitat nationally. Many of these wet grazing meadows in Suffolk have been converted to arable land so the retention of this small parcel is still of importance.
<b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>
<p>Opportunities.</p> <p>To maintain the wet meadows as important wildlife areas through conservation management grazing.</p> <p>Constraints.</p> <p>Access to get animals in and out is challenging as egress is difficult and off a main road.</p> <p>The fencing has fallen into disrepair and requires re-instating to allow grazing again.</p> <p>The area is increasing wet making it more and more difficult to even maintain this area through mechanical means to any standard that improves the quality of the habitat.</p>
<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
<p>Hydrology and climate change.</p> <p>Invasive herbaceous weeds and rank grass species.</p>
<b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>
To improve the floristically diverse areas of wet meadow and reduce the rank grass species/herbaceous weeds through reintroducing livestock grazing.
<b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>
<p>To maintain a species rich wetland meadow, through mechanical cutting with the removal of arisings.</p> <p>To re-instate the stock fencing to allow animals to graze the land again to reduce the amount of coarse and invasive vegetation..</p>

**Works Programme:**

Annually cut a minimum of 1 hectare of wetland meadow and remove arisings from site.  
2025-26; Removal of old defunct fencing and re-instate new stock fencing.

#### **4.4 f4 Wet Woodland**

##### **Description**

Prior to the original woodland creation scheme in 1998 there were small blocks of native mature alder and willow trees mostly in the central and western end of the site. This included approximately 1.5ha of alder carr and a almost unbroken strip along the river of mature alder and willow on the riverine northern boundary of the planting area. The wet woodland species have continued to expand in the far western end of the site as the site has become progressively wetter and less suitable for livestock grazing. This has been further enhanced with localised planting of cricket bat willows in 2022 as a agroforestry opportunity with J.S Wrights and Sons who plant, maintain and harvest the trees in the future. There are also a couple of black poplar trees planted as part of a project to reintroduce them back into woodlands. The wet woodland directly reflects the hydrology of the site in and around the wetter areas of the site.

##### **Significance**

This stretch of the River Box has some lovely sections of wet woodland in and around the valley area. The continued development and maturation of Primrose Wood and its associated habitats will add significant environmental benefits to the predominantly agricultural landscape. Over time it will merge and link in to neighbouring habitats forming a continuous stretch of riverine wet woodland ecology.

##### **Opportunities & Constraints**

**Opportunities.**

The expansion of native wet woodland will increase the resilience of the woodland structure and help potential reduce the impact of flooding by slowing down flood water to downstream. It will also help absorb nutrient run off from surrounding farmland.

The area of cricket bat willow will be a example of agroforestry and provide a source of income in the future.

**Constraints.**

If prolonged periods of flooding and waterlogging increase even further it may limit the opportunities to actively manage the site.

<b>Factors Causing Change</b>
Deer browsing. Climate and hydrology change.
<b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>
Areas of existing alder carr and riverine habitat should be managed through minimal intervention and allowing the natural collapse and regrowth of stools, intervening only when posing a threat to visitor safety. Allow the expansion of woodland into the wetter western end of the site. Harvest the cricket bat willows in approximately 2037-2042 to provide a source of sustainable agroforestry income for the future.
<b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>
Allow the native wet woodland and associated habitats to develop naturally with minimal intervention, with the exception of inter row mowing between cricket bat willows in the establishment years..

## 5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2025	AW - Management Access Capital	Works associated with installing new or replacement management access infrastructure. Such as management access gates, vehicle bridges, fencing and surfacing works.	April
2025	PE - Interpretation & Signage	Works associated with the provision of visitor signage, waymarking, interpretation features and leaflets	April
2025	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	August
2025	NWH - Initial Restoration Work	Works associated with the initial restoration or significant reinvestment works of existing non-woodland habitats to improve or protect their conservation value	August
2025	WMM - Ride Management	Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works	October
2026	PE - Interpretation & Signage	Works associated with the provision of visitor signage, waymarking, interpretation features and leaflets	April
2026	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	August
2026	WMM - Ride Management	Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works	October
2027	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	August
2028	WC - Tree Weeding / Fertilising	Works associated with tree weeding and fertilising operations to ensure the successful establishment of planted trees	August

## APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	2.54	Mixed native broadleaves	1998	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	
<p>Compartment 1 is located to the eastern end of Primrose wood. The northern boundary is the river Box, and other surrounding land is arable and meadowland. This compartment was planted in 1998 using native species as part of the Woods on Your Doorstep project. Many of the trees located to the eastern end of the site were grown by local people from seed of local provenance, and planted out. The northern boundary along the river box is dominated by mature Alder, with some hawthorn.</p> <p>A further area was planted up in 2019 to create more mixed broadleaved woodland on the far eastern end of the compartment. The design allows views towards the village and church.</p>						
2a	6.16	Alder species		Non-wood habitat	Management factors (eg grazing etc)	
<p>A mosaic of wetland habitats including wetland meadow and alder/willow carr.</p> <p>The species rich wet meadow is comprised of two fenced meadows and river edge habitat with areas of willow, alder and planted native black poplars. The meadow supports species such as southern marsh orchid, marsh marigold, golden saxifrage and musk mallow.</p> <p>There is also a small area of alder carr in the middle of the site. Alder stools, up to 40 ft high form a dense canopy. Soil remains wet throughout the year. Opposite leaved golden saxifrage is notable in this area. In the far western end of the site Salix Alba caerula have been planted for agroforestry by J.S Wrights and Sons as cricket bat willows in 2022. These are due to be harvested in approximately 15-20 years time dependant on growth so 2037-2042. Maintenance and harvesting to be carried out by J.S Wrights and Sons.</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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