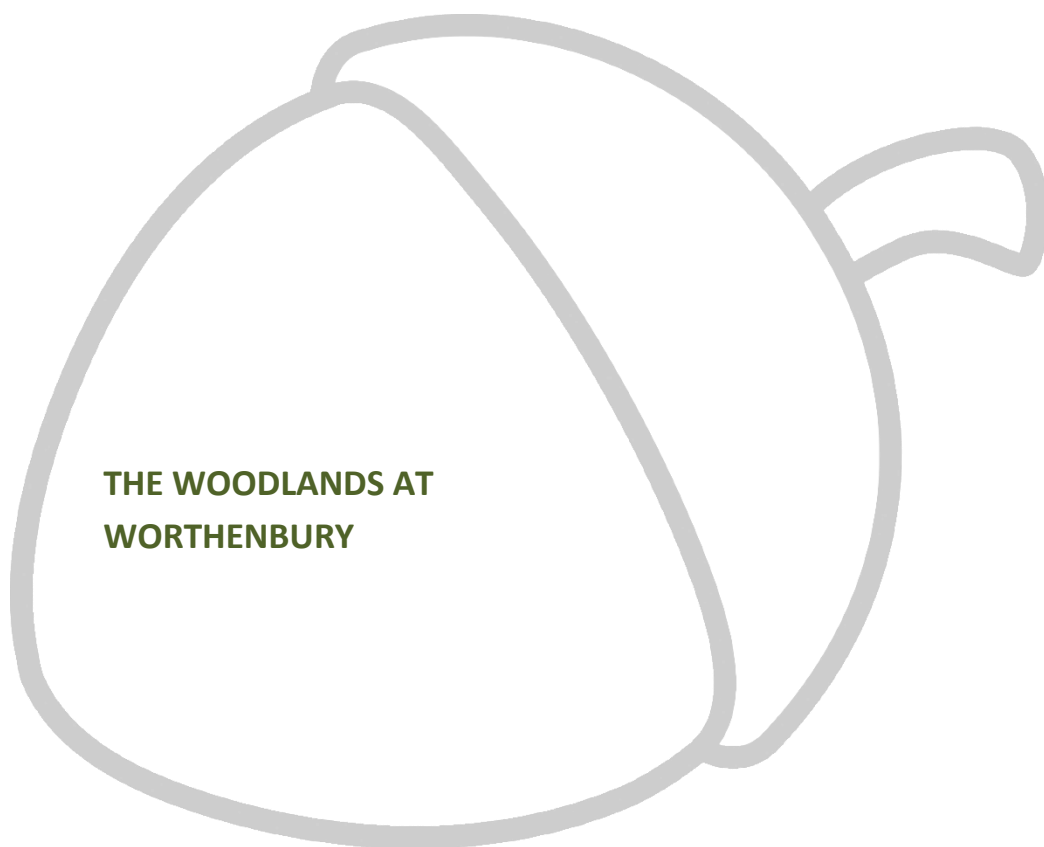




MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017 - 2022

OWNER: MR DORIAN HOPKINS

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INTRODUCTION

Thank-you for taking time to read this management plan and welcome to 'The Woodlands' – a most beautiful yet young woodland. Every woodland has to start somewhere and the journey for this special place started in 2006 when the area was planted in conjunction with the neighbouring 17 acres with approximately 20,000 trees. The 30 acres of woodland were primarily agricultural land, then moved into horse race breeding land, (notice the inner and outer gallops) before eventually becoming what it is today. Woodlands are not a natural phenomenon, they have all been planted and created in one way or another and with them comes a responsibility. This management plan aims to set out those points so that the natural habitats and biodiversity that the woodland has created is able to thrive.

REVIEW

The information presented in this Management plan will be held on a website (once created). It is a working document (see Appendices 1-4) which will be continuously amended and updated. Consequently this printed version may become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.

There will be a formal review of this plan every 5 years (2022) and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

TAKING OWNERSHIP

Our ancient and native woodlands are one of our oldest land uses and most diverse ecosystems. They have often taken hundreds if not thousands of years to develop, and, in the case of ancient woodland, are irreplaceable. For millennia they have been an essential source of timber, fuel, coppice products and other sustainable products. They are a vitally important component of the British landscape and we understand our role in ensuring their existence. We also have the responsibility of educating our children and our children's children so that the management of our woodland is carried on for the protection of the land, its habitats and the good of nature itself. Long term active management could also lead to a better contribution to the economy, to our quality of life and our carbon balance.

We understand the necessity in learning about the various procedures that come with woodland ownership. Understanding facts through reading, courses and other resources play an integral role. This way we can play a vital part in protecting and enhancing the environment and our heritage.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on private funding but is focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are as follows:

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.

2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.

3. The long term vision for our plantation is:

- to brash existing trees (this should arguably have been done 4 or 5 years ago) to improve tree growth whilst also ensuring the trees are not obstructing or becoming hazardous
- coppice trees where necessary. Many new shoots will emerge, and, after a number of years the coppiced tree is ready to be harvested, and the cycle begins again. Coppicing has the effect of providing a rich variety of habitats, as the woodland always has a range of different aged coppice growing in it, which is beneficial for biodiversity
- to thin some trees - the selective removal of live branches to reduce crown density
- remove some trees which may be diseased, damaged by animals or machinery /removal of some trees to allow the growth of trees behind that may be in the shade

4. Ensure the natural habitats for many animals are restored or enhanced. There have been frequent signs of badgers, hares and foxes on the site so our aim is to understand their habitat and ensure this is not compromised.

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 heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible. There are a few of these on the outer hedges such as oaks and sycamore.

7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and timber produce. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income in years to come from our estate to help support this.

8. We work with neighbours, local people and organisations in developing the management of our woods. Where appropriate we may consider allowing our woods to be used to support

local woodland, conservation, education, voluntary organisations such as the scouts 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.

10 Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name: The Plantation

Location: Worthenbury, Nr Wrexham, LL13 0AW

Grid reference: SJ4246 6101 / OS :

Area: 5.46 hectares (13.1 acres) plus an additional 3 hectares (7.5 acres) in March 2018

1.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

This grassy wood sits 500 yards out of the village of Worthenbury, a few kilometres south east of Wrexham. The first parcel incorporates 8 acres of recently planted broadleaf trees (planted 2006) and 5 acres of open pasture land giving us a total of 13.5 acres. The 2nd parcel of land comprises of a 1.5 acres paddock area, 4 acres of mixed planted/open space and a 2 acres site with stables and an adjoining barn. The original entrance has two 9 foot gates and is a shared access with neighbouring woodland (17 acre plot). The access then leads 150 metres up to the site via a 6 metre wide track with a further 6 metre right of way. The new inclusion and the one that is used primarily, is accessed by 2 separate entrances from Mulsford Lane.

On the site there is a small pond, a shared pond (with our neighbour) and a pond in the paddock area. Three sides of the original plot are hedged and the remaining side is due to be fenced along with a native hedgerow (planned 2019).

2.0 KEY FEATURES

The site has in the region of 7,000 newly planted trees - work that is carried out will be in conjunction with a count up of these so that a more precise number can be attained. Also it is important for the purposes of taking out a number of trees so that it stays within the limit of the requirement – no licence required to fell less than 5 cubic metres in a calendar quarter;

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-6dfkw6>

There are also 3 well developed hedgerows containing various species of shrubs, most notably hawthorn. There will be a requirement to cut back some of these for the purposes of safety and the impingement on the track that surrounds the acreage. This will be in line with the seasonal allowance (we are aware that at certain times of the year birds use these hedges to nest in).

The site also has a few well developed trees that may be in need of thinning as they pose a potential risk.

On the site are 3 ponds. Further details will be seen below.

2.1 TREES

The site has been divided into 24 working zones and are prioritised on a traffic light basis. Green are the higher priority, amber are scheduled work areas and red will be the last area we will get to work on.

The plantation consists of various types: oak, elder, crack willow, ash, hornbeam and there are various coniferous trees also. As a fairly new plantation, the trees were planted close together to encourage them to compete for light. There will be a natural requirement to thin some of these trees out to aid further growth on the stronger looking trees.

The plantation has been staged around areas of open spaces that could be utilised for tourist activities (see picture from 2006).



All works will be included as a working document and will appear in Appendix 1.

The peripheral trees will be left unless there is a danger of the occasional branch looking like it may pose injury (wildlife versus safety). All these will be photographed and evidenced in Appendix 2.

2.2 BIOSECURITY

- Visitors discouraged from bringing plant material on site
- Work tools for trimming, cutting & pruning site specific
- Record any introduced plant materials and sketch in Appendix 1 or 2
- Monthly site walk through for visual tree inspection for any trees failing

2.3 PONDS

There are 3 ponds on the site. We would like to keep these clear of bull rushes in order to help encourage biodiversity. We will not enlarge this area so as not to compromise the water retention levels. The site is predominantly clay based and it is this clay that acts like a bath.

The second pond is with our neighbour. There is a joint management appendix for this area (see Appendix 4a)

3.0 SCHEDULE OF WORKS PROGRAMME

Appendix 1 – 4 will be a working document. Please refer to this for scheduled or completed work.