



MAGPIE WOOD

Proposed Management Plan - 5 year Program

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Version 1

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SUMMARY

The management plan is proposed without full benefit of a species inventory as best carried out by BBOWT (Berks Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust) and/or Wycombe Wildlife Group, however, as the plan is based on minimum intervention and a volunteer and CWPC workforce with sufficient relevant skills not to compromise the objective, work could commence during this interim period.

The wood was assessed visually as to its general condition and ability to regenerate. It is suggested that future primary threats could be the deposit of garden waste from adjoining properties, grey squirrels and unrestricted access, though at present these are not significant issues.

The wood is to be managed for its amenity value, for the benefit of wildlife, and for the general public. To create a more open structure within the wood and, in time, improve its age profile.

A fifth of woodland species depend on dead or dying wood for all or part of its life cycle. The Forestry Commission suggest 20 m³ per hectare of dead wood for good ecological value. Fallen timber is to be left where appropriate and standing dead wood retained, provided it doesn't compromise the safety of site users.

It is suggested that given the anticipated number of volunteers it may well take four years to complete one cycle of the five year program.

1. WOODLAND DESCRIPTION

Name - Magpie Wood

Owner - Chepping Wycombe Parish Council

Location - OS Explorer Map [172 Chiltern Hills East](#) [Map Reference 900915](#). The wood is situated a quarter of a kilometre north of the A40 and one kilometre North West of the centre of Loudwater. It is designated within the Wycombe District Local Plan as Green Belt.

It is an area of mixed broadleaf woodland roughly north/south linear in shape and 1.20 hectares (2.96 acres) in area. In terms of its topography, approximately half of its area is plateau with dominant tree species being sycamore, ash and Norway maple. The rest of site consists of an embankment with beech the most numerous species.

Access is by a pedestrian permissive footpath entering from Robinson Road to the south and linking up with the definitive bridleway in the north, believed to be CW22.

2. GOAL

- Maximise the habitat variety associated with Chiltern broadleaf woodland
- Encourage the natural re-establishment of ground flora
- Protect, manage and maintain its long term development for the benefit of wildlife and the pleasure of the general public.

3. OBJECTIVE

The objective for the management of Magpie Wood can be based on the following but with alteration and additions for the specific needs of the site.

- Maintain and where suitable restore the natural ecological diversity. Current native tree species will be maintained with beech, ash and lime as the climax species. Other existing native tree species will be retained to improve the biodiversity of the site.

- Maintain and improve its visual aspect. Magpie Wood is an important feature in the local landscape. The aesthetic value of its semi-natural appearance should be preserved.

4. INVENTORY

For conservation management this should be a full survey, possibly over a three year period so as to account for all seasonal changes.

To include:-

- Tree species
- Shrub layer
- Ground flora
- Fungi
- Birds
- Mammals
- Insects
- What rare, unusual or protected species are present
- Boundary fences, tracks, and access.

A quick walk through the wood has identified 17 tree species, by far the majority of which are less than 50 years of age. A great deal of natural regeneration is taking place which has been unmanaged for a number of years. This has resulted in overcrowding (through natural regeneration) of trees up to 10cm diameter. However, there are throughout the wood a dozen or so mature trees, notably a Lime with a girth at chest height of 190cm and an Oak with a girth of 157cm giving an approximate age of 150 years (1863) and 125 (1890) years respectively.

At time of writing no inventory has yet taken place. I would suggest that for species identification that contact be made with BBOWT and/or Wycombe Wildlife Group.

5. LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Magpie Wood is an important feature in the local landscape situated on the lower western slope of the valley and visible from numerous locations. It forms part of a corridor of woodland and open country between Loudwater and Penn and Tylers Green.

Roughly north/south linear in shape it's flanked by Robinson Road to its south and Rayners Avenue to its east. Private housing comes up to its entire western boundary whereas to the east it opens onto Wycombe Heights Golf Course.

6. HISTORY

There is no evidence as yet that Magpie Wood fits the definition of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland. The land on which the wood is located was once part of the Rayners Estate and there is reference to it in the book *The Rose Family* by Miles Green & Evelyn Clark of the memoir written by the Second Sir Philip in 1900. In it he recalls how the land looked at the time his father purchased it in 1845, "In those days.....the hillside from where Rayners now stands to Loudwater, was as bare as can be, except for a few coppices dotted here and there, none of the plantations which skirt the private road, nor indeed that road itself, existing".

The map of 1875 clearly shows the site as wooded. Unfortunately the map of 1812 is insufficiently clear.

7. COMPARTMENTS

For purposes of management the woodland plateau is divided into compartments 1 to 4. The division of the embankment should be decided at a future date and after the completion of an inventory. See Map (Appendix A).

8. PRELIMINARY APPRAISAL OF COMPARTMENTS & WORKS

Following a full survey of the site an appraisal of each compartment will be produced. The following is a brief overview.

Species: Sycamore, Norway maple, beech, ash and lime and a variety of other species emerging where the canopy opens. These include hawthorn, yew and field maple etc.

Age: Young to mature, dominant species long lived. The majority of species are less than fifty years of age.

Structure: Canopy height varies with an average of approximately 30/40ft. A limited number of trees, lime and oak, are reaching their mature height. There is considerable under story. Ground layer limited to areas of more open canopy, this is most evident in Compartment 4.

Regeneration: Considerable regeneration in all compartments.

Access: There are no restrictions to public access. As a result it is possible that other paths (additional to those mentioned above) will start to proliferate as future work produces a more open woodland structure. Being a small wood care will be required should it be decided to be tolerant of this as it could lead to the trampling of regeneration, ground flora and disturbance of wildlife. However, most people will out of preference use managed, well defined access routes.

Promote responsible dog owning by installing dog bins in appropriate areas to reduce fouling.

Historic Significance: None as yet identified.

Pests and Diseases: Some squirrel damage. Although no evidence seen, vigilance will be required for Chalara Ash Dieback symptoms.

Works:

- Inspection for hazardous trees
- Maintain boundary fences
- Install dog bin
- Footpath and bridleway maintenance
- Ivy control
- Litter clearance
- Manage regeneration through thinning
- Create small glades or scallops where appropriate
- Create deadwood habitat stacks

9. MANAGEMENT

The scope of this plan is that of a Five Year Program. The suggested short-term activities for a volunteer group using hand tools only during the months of November through to the end of February would be as follows:-

ACTIVITY	TIMING	LOCATION	WORK
Litter Picking	Any Time	Whole Site	Volunteers
Thinning Ivy Control Habitat Stacks Site Bird & Bat Boxes Bramble Management	2015/16	Compartment 4	Volunteers
As above	2016/17	Compartment 1	Volunteers
As above	2017/18	Compartment 3	Volunteers
As above	2018/19	Compartment 2	Volunteers
As above	2019/20	Compartment 4	Volunteers

It is expected that the activities described above will be carried out by volunteers guided by the CWPC, however, there will be other tasks as previously mentioned that will require CWPC workforce or contractors.

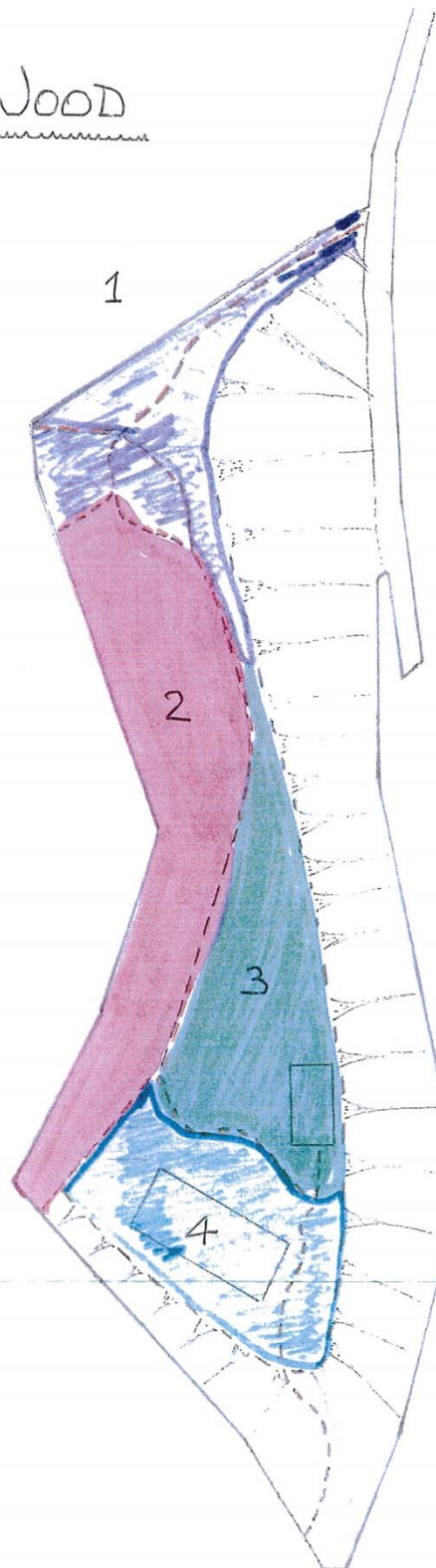
10. MONITORING "If you don't measure it you can't manage it"

Monitoring is essential to ensure that the management plan is being achieved and can be used to revise the plan should objectives not be met.

- An implementation review should take place after each year with the option to address non-implementation through a revision of the plan.
- A full progress review after five years. Thereafter the plan may then be used as reference on an ongoing basis.
- Monitoring of works. All works on site should be recorded for future reference. When it was done and who did it. Change in woodland structure is best assessed through fixed point photography taken from the same point at the same time of year.
- Species counts (flora & fauna). Continuing data collection through habitat updates.
- Ideally a single individual would be assigned to document the above.

APPENDIX A – Compartment Map

MAGPIE WOOD



COMPARTMENTS

PLATEAU 1 TO 4

EMBANKMENT TO BE
DECIDED AT A LATER DATE.

SEPT 2015
B. TORWOCK