Forestry Commission England

Woodland Management Plan

To be completed by the plan author:		
Woodland or Property name	**Birch Wood**	
Woodland Management Plan case reference	**899219**	
The landowner agrees this plan as a statement of intent for the woodland		**Yes**
Plan author name	**Petra Billings**	

For FC Use only:				
Plan Period *(dd/mm/yyyy - Ten years)*	**Approval Date:**	**04/06/2020**	**Approved until:**	**03/06/2030**
Five Year Review Date				

Revision No.	Date	Status (draft/final)	Reason for Revision

Template user support:

The functionality in this version of the management plan template has been downgraded to ensure compatibility with Word 2003. This document is not protected and as such rows can be added & deleted or copied and pasted from tables where needed.

Forestry Commission England

UK Forestry Standard management planning criteria

Approval of this plan will be considered against the following UKFS criteria.
Prior to submission review your plan against the criteria using the check list below.

	UKFS management plan criteria	Minimum approval requirements	Author check ☑
1	**Plan Objectives:** Forest management plans should state the objectives of management and set out how an appropriate balance between social, economic, and environmental objectives will be achieved.	• Management plan objectives are stated. • Consideration is given to environmental, economic and social objectives relevant to the vision for the woodland.	Yes
2	**Forest context and important features in management strategy:** Forest management plans should address the forest context and the forest potential and demonstrate how the relevant interests and issues have been considered and addressed.	Management intentions communicated in ***Sect. 6*** of the management plan are in line with stated objective(s) ***Sect. 2***. Management intentions should take account of: • Relevant features and issues identified within the woodland survey (***Sect. 4***) • Any potential threats to and opportunities for the woodland, as identified under woodland protection (***Sect. 5***). • Relevant comments received from stakeholder engagement and documented in ***Sect. 7***.	Yes
3	**Identification of designations within and surrounding the site:** For designated areas, e.g. National Parks or SSSI, particular account should be taken of landscape and other sensitivities in the design of forests and forest infrastructure.	• Survey information (***Sect. 4***) identifies any designations that impact on woodland management. • Management intentions (***Sect. 6***) have taken account of any designations.	Yes
4	**Felling and restocking to improve forest structure and diversity:** When planning felling and restocking, the design of existing forests should be re-assessed and any necessary changes made so that they meet UKFS requirements. Forests should be designed to achieve a diverse structure of habitat, species and ages of trees, appropriate to the scale and context. Forests characterised by a lack of diversity, due to extensive areas of even-aged trees, should be progressively restructured to achieve age class range.	• Felling and restocking proposals are consistent with UKFS design principles (for example scale and adjacency). • Current diversity (structure, species, age structure) of the woodland has been identified through the survey (***Sect. 4***). • Management intentions aim to improve / maintain current diversity (structure, species, and ages of trees).	Yes
5	**Consultation:** Consultation on forest management plans and proposals should be carried out according to forestry authority procedures and, where required, the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.	• Stakeholder engagement is in line with current FC guidance and recorded in ***Sect. 7***. The minimum requirement is for statutory consultation to take place, and this will be carried out by the Forestry Commission. • Plan authors undertake stakeholder engagement (ref FC Ops Note 35) relevant to the context and setting of the woodland.	Yes
6	**Plan Update and Review:** Management of the forest should conform to the plan, and the plan should be updated to ensure it is current and relevant.	• A 5 year review period is stated on the 1st page of the plan. • ***Sect. 8*** is completed with 1 indicator of success per management objective.	Yes

Section 1: Property Details

Woodland Property Name		Birch Wood	
Name	Bidborough Parish Council	Owner √	Tenant
Email	Petmar.riley@btinternet.com	Contact Number	01892 529569
Agent Name (if applicable)		Petra Billings	
Email	petra@sussexwoodlands.co.uk	Contact Number	07505 280155
County	Kent	Local Authority	Tunbridge Wells BC
Grid Reference	TQ 569 432	Single Business Identifier	107228169
What is the total area of this woodland management plan? (In hectares)		9.69 ha	
You have included an Inventory and Plan of Operations with this woodland management plan?		Yes	
You have listed the maps associated with this woodland management plan?		Yes	
Do you intend to use the information within this woodland management plan and associated Inventory and Plan of Operations to apply for the following?		Felling Licence	Yes
		Thinning Licence	Yes
		Woodland Regeneration Grant	Yes
You declare that there is management control of the woodland detailed within the woodland management plan?		Yes	
You agree to make the woodland management plan publicly available?		Yes	

Section 2: Vision and Objectives

To develop your long term vision, you need to express as clearly as possible the overall direction of management for the woodland(s) and how you envisage it will be in the future. This covers the duration of the plan and beyond.

2.1 Vision

Describe your long term vision for the woodland(s). (*Suggest 300 words max*)

Birch Wood is a diverse ancient woodland with a mix of woodland types including beech/yew woodland, birch woodland, sweet chestnut coppice and wet woodland. It suffered severe storm damage in 1987 and subsequent issues include squirrel damage to replanting and non-native invasive species such as rhododendron and cherry laurel. There is a poor age structure, mainly due to extensive stands of even-aged birch regeneration.

The vision is to manage Birch Wood as an amenity for local people, maintaining access around the wood including the paths, bridges and steps. Wildlife conservation is a priority and work will focus on conserving and improving the quality and extent of wildlife habitat, including the lake habitats. Ancient woodland features will be restored and conserved by controlling invasive species, pests and diseases; opening up the tree canopy to improve the ground flora and encourage natural regeneration, and conserving the woodland archaeology.

2.2 Management Objectives

State the objectives of management demonstrating how sustainable forest management is to be achieved. Objectives are a set of specific, quantifiable statements that represent what needs to happen to achieve the long term vision.

No.	Objectives (include environmental, economic and social considerations)
1	Manage the wood for public amenity, maintaining tree safety and access around the wood
2	Manage the wood for biodiversity by improving the quality and extent of wildlife habitat
3	Maintain and enhance ancient woodland features such as the woodland archaeology, the ground flora and the dead wood resource
4	Manage the lake for biodiversity
5	Manage the wood to be economically sustainable so that the cost of non-economic activities is met where possible by revenue from timber extraction and grants

Section 3: Plan Review – Achievements

Use this section to identify achievements made against previous plan objectives. This section should be completed at the 5 year review and could be informed through monitoring activities undertaken.

Objectives	Achievement
Manage the wood for public amenity, maintaining tree safety and access around the wood	
Manage the wood for biodiversity by improving the quality and extent of wildlife habitat	
Maintain and enhance ancient woodland features such as the woodland archaeology, the ground flora and the dead wood resource	
Manage the lake for biodiversity	
Manage the wood to be economically sustainable so that the cost of non-economic activities is met where possible by revenue from timber extraction and grants	

Section 4: Woodland Survey

This section is about collecting information relating to your woodland and its location, including any statutory constraints i.e. designations.

4.1 Description

Brief description of the woodland property:
<u>Location, Designations and Ownership</u> Birch Wood is located in the parish of Bidborough, Kent, in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), approximately 3km northwest of Tunbridge Wells. It sits within a well wooded landscape including nearby Southborough Common. Apart from the northern section, the woodland is designated Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) with two parcels of Plantation on an Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS). It is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site (TW26). Birch Wood has a long history. It was originally part of the Great Bounds Estate and the lake was built in the middle ages as a fishpond for the estate. The estate was broken up before WWII during which the site was used as a military camp. The lake was enlarged by Canadian troops who built a dam on the south side. After the war,

the wood fell into neglect; the dam was breached; the lake dried out and was used as a rubbish dump. In response to the concerns of the local community, Birch Wood was first leased then, in 1979, purchased by Bidborough Parish Council. It is managed by The Birch Wood Association which was formed in 1967 with the aim of conserving the wood for the benefit of the community. C1 and C6 are privately owned.

Geology/Soils/Hydrology

The underlying geology is mudstone of the Wadhurst Clay Formation, except for the extreme north of the wood (C12) and the extreme south (south margin of C5) which lie on Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation. Correspondingly, the soils are mostly 'slightly acid, loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage and moderate to high fertility'.[1]

Springs arise in the middle of the wood and immediately north of the wood, feeding into the lake.

Description and Past Management

Birch Wood lies in a natural valley with steep slopes in places. Woodland types vary within the wood between beech/yew woodland, mixed deciduous woodland dominated by birch and, around the springs, alder woodland. Hazel and holly form the main understorey, with willow in wetter areas. The two areas designated as PAWS were replanted historically with sweet chestnut and managed as coppice, however the chestnut stools are now relatively sparse except in one area in the southeast of the wood near the Birchwood Avenue entrance. Occasional conifers such as western red cedar occur, particularly in the north of the wood.

Birch Wood suffered extensive storm damage in the 1987 storm, following which there was a programme of replanting with a species mix of beech with oak, wild cherry and ash. A mix of sweet chestnut, beech and oak was planted in a parcel in the north. In the 2009 Management Plan, Birch Wood was divided into 13 compartments, reflecting the restock areas and other areas designated for non-intervention. However, some of the planting has failed and/or suffered severe squirrel damage and birch has regenerated extensively. The compartment boundaries are no longer evident on the ground and for the purposes of this plan, they have been redrawn in line with the right of way, streams, internal fencing (of C6) and the ancient woodland inventory.

Despite the failure of some post-storm replanting, Birch Wood is relatively diverse. Tree and shrub species include birch, beech, sweet chestnut, oak, yew, alder, ash, wild cherry, sycamore, hazel, holly and willow as well as some remnant conifers such as pine and western red cedar. The diversity is greater in the south while the north part is mainly birch, beech and yew. The sweet chestnut is limited to the designated PAWS areas (see map 1). There is a rich ground flora with carpets of bluebell in spring.

[1] From Soilscape, an online resource provided by Cranfield Soils and Agrifood Institute, accessed 2 March 2020

Open space includes two glades in C5. There is a good number of veteran trees scattered throughout, including oak, beech and a couple of particularly notable old chestnut stools by the larger glade. There is also a good dead wood resource, standing and fallen.

Much of the birch is relatively even-aged leading to a closed canopy which has limited natural regeneration to shade-tolerant species such as beech and holly. As well as the squirrel damage, the wood suffers from non-native invasive species including rhododendron and cherry laurel, both of which are subject to an ongoing control programme by volunteer groups led by the Kent High Weald Partnership. Holly is also invasive in places, as is sycamore. Ash is relatively infrequent but where it occurs, mostly in the south part of the wood, it is in the late stages of ash dieback. Roe deer are present and, although there is evidence of their impacts on bramble, good regrowth of hazel coppice suggests that their impacts are relatively low, probably because of the high numbers of dog walkers using the woods.

Recent management is limited to the occasional task day by the conservation volunteers. Work has focused on control of rhododendron and cherry laurel; tree safety; thinning small areas of young overcrowded birch and coppicing the hazel to benefit the dormouse population.

Access

Birch Wood is surrounded on three sides by development. It has four principal access points in Darnley Drive, Birchwood Avenue, Brookhurst Field and St Lawrence Avenue. A public footpath leads from St Lawrence Avenue past the south end of the lake and over the dam to Birchwood Avenue. In addition, a network of informal paths run through the wood, forming a circular walk which is popular with local dog walkers.

4.2 Information

Use this section to identify features that are both present in your woodland(s) and where required, on land adjacent to your woodland. It may be useful to identify known features on an accompanying map. Woodland information for your property can be found on the Magic website or the Forestry Commission Land Information Search.

Feature	Within Woodland(s)	Cpts	Adjacent to Woodland(s)	Map No
Biodiversity- Designations				
Site of Special Scientific Interest	No		No	
Special Area of Conservation	No		No	
Tree Preservation Order	No		No	
Conservation Area	No		No	
Special Protection Area	No		No	
Ramsar Site	No		No	
National Nature Reserve	No		No	
Local Nature Reserve	No		No	
Other (please Specify): LWS	No		Yes	
Notes	Local Wildlife Site TW26			

Feature		Within Woodland(s)	Cpts	Map No	Notes
Biodiversity - European Protected Species					
Bat	Species (if known)	Yes			Good roost potential in veteran trees; Bechsteins, noctule, brown long-eared, soprano pipistrelle occur locally (Woodland Wildlife Toolkit)
Dormouse		Yes			Recent records
Great Crested Newt		Yes			
Otter		No			
Sand Lizard		No			
Smooth Snake		No			
Natterjack Toad		No			
Biodiversity – Priority Species					
Schedule 1 Birds	Species:	Yes			Garden warbler, lesser redpoll, marsh tit, willow warbler, hawfinch, lesser spotted

					woodpecker, woodcock occur locally (Woodland Wildlife Toolkit)
Mammals (Red Squirrel, Water Vole, Pine Marten etc)		No			
Reptiles (grass snake, adder, common lizard etc)		Yes			Grass snake
Plants		Yes			32 AWI have been recorded including population of orchids in C8
Fungi/Lichens		No			
Invertebrates (butterflies, moths, beetles etc)		Yes			Dingy skipper, white admiral occur locally (Woodland Wildlife Toolkit)
Amphibians (pool frog, common toad)		Yes			Common toad
Other (please Specify):		No			
Historic Environment					
Scheduled Monuments		No			
Unscheduled Monuments		Yes	5	2	Memorial stone
Registered Parks and Gardens		No			
Boundaries and Veteran Trees		Yes			Numerous veterans and woodbanks both on perimeter and within the wood
Listed Buildings		Yes			The Lady Catherine Stewart memorial
Other (please Specify):		No			
Landscape					
National Character Area (please Specify): High Weald					
National Park		No			
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty		Yes			High Weald
Other (please Specify):		No			
People					
CROW Access		No			
Public Rights of Way (any)		Yes	3, 7, 8		
Other Access Provision		Yes			Open access
Public Involvement		Yes			Birch Wood Association (>200 members); Kent & High Weald Partnership

				volunteer group
Visitor Information	No			Annual newsletter to the Birch Wood Association
Public Recreation Facilities	No			
Provision of Learning Opportunities	No			
Anti-social Behaviour	Yes	3, 4, 8		Some minor issues around the lake
Other (please Specify):	No			
Water				
Watercourses	Yes	2, 3, 8		Spring-fed ghyll streams
Lakes	Yes		1	
Ponds	No			
Other (please Specify):	No			

4.3 Habitat Types

This section is to consider the habitat types within your woodland(s) that might impact/inform your management decisions. Larger non-wooded areas within your woodland should be classified according to broad habitat type where relevant this information should also help inform your management decisions. Woodlands should be designed to achieve a diverse structure of habitat, species and ages of trees, appropriate to the scale and context of the woodland.

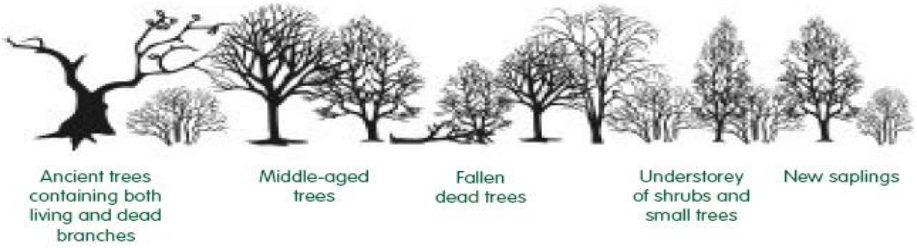
Feature	Within Woodland(s)	Cpts	Map No	Notes
Woodland Habitat Types				
Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland	Yes	2,3,4 5,7,8		
Planted Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS)	Yes	3,5,6	1	Sweet chestnut
Semi-natural features in PAWS	Yes			Sparse chestnut stools remain; extensive birch regeneration
Lowland beech and yew woodland	Yes	1,2	2	
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Yes	3,4,5 6,7,8	2	
Upland mixed ash woods	No			
Upland Oakwood	No			
Wet woodland	Yes	4	2	
Wood-pasture and parkland	No			
Other (please Specify):	No			
Non Woodland Habitat Types				
Blanket bog	No			
Fenland	No			
Lowland calcareous grassland	No			
Lowland dry acid grassland	No			
Lowland heath land	No			
Lowland meadows	No			
Lowland raised bog	No			
Rush pasture	No			
Reed bed	No			
Wood pasture	No			
Upland hay meadows	No			
Upland heath land	No			
Unimproved grassland	Yes	4	2	Glades
Peat lands	No			
Wetland habitats	No			

4.4 Structure

This section should provide a snapshot of the current structure of your woodland as a whole. A full inventory for your woodland(s) can be included in the separate Plan of Operations spreadsheet. Ensuring woodland has a varied structure in terms of age, species, origin and open space will provide a range of benefits for the biodiversity of the woodland and its resilience. The diagrams below show an example of both uneven and even aged woodland.

Woodland Type (Broadleaf, Conifer, Coppice, Intimate Mix)	Percentage of Mgt Plan Area	Age Structure (even/uneven)	Notes (i.e. understory or natural regeneration present)
Broadleaf	100%	Variable	Patchy understorey. Holly invasive in some parts. Hazel coppice in south. Some beech and holly regeneration in north.

Uneven-aged woodland – many wildlife habitats because of high diversity



Even-aged woodland – tidy but of low diversity

Section 5: Woodland Protection

Woodlands in England face a range of threats; this section allows you to consider the potential threats that could be facing your woodland(s). Use the simple Risk Assessment process below to consider any potential threats to their woodland(s) and whether there is a need to take action to protect their woodlands.
Note: To add more tables, Copy the table and Paste below.

5.1 Risk Matrix

The matrix below provides a system for scoring risk. The matrix also indicates the advised level of action to take to help manage the threat.

Impact	High	Plan for Action	Action	Action
	Medium	Monitor	Plan for Action	Action
	Low	Monitor	Monitor	Plan for Action
		Low	Medium	High
		Likelihood of Presence		

5.2 Plant Health

Threat (e.g. Ash Dieback, *Phytophthora,* Needle Blight etc)	Ash dieback
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Low (localised)
Impact (high/medium/low)	Low (localised)
Response (inc protection measures)	The prime considerations are public safety and contractor safety. The FC recommends an individual-tree approach for older stands with infected trees. Where more than 50% of the crown is infected, and the trees are within such a distance of well-used paths that they could cause injury, felling should be considered. Where less than 50% of the crown is infected, trees should be regularly monitored. In all cases any apparently tolerant trees should be retained, as should a proportion of dying or dead trees where it is safe to do so.

Threat (e.g. Ash Dieback, *Phytophthora,* Needle Blight etc)	Chestnut blight
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Medium

Impact (high/medium/low)	Medium
Response (inc protection measures)	Chestnut blight is a fungal disease which attacks the bark of sweet chestnut and enters through fissures or wounds. It is usually fatal. In coppices, infections are often located at the base of the stem (collars or insertion points). The fungus can spread so rapidly in infected bark that stems or branches are soon girdled and the dead bark becomes visible as a sunken canker. The orange fruiting bodies which produce the spores are also visible on the bark. Above the girdling canker, leaves wilt and turn brown, but remain hanging on the tree. Spread of the disease is best prevented or minimised by destroying infected plants as soon as possible after detection, preferably on site; not moving infected plants, bark or wood; and practising high standards of biosecurity. Chestnut blight is a notifiable disease and suspected sightings should be reported immediately to Tree Alert at https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/tree-alert/ If the case is confirmed, the Forestry Commission will serve a Statutory Plant Health Notices (SPHNs) to uproot all sweet chestnut plants and burn them on site.

Threat (e.g. Ash Dieback, *Phytophthora,* Needle Blight etc)	Phytophthora disease of alder
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Low
Impact (high/medium/low)	Medium
Response (inc protection measures)	This disease is widespread, especially in south-east England. It is potentially lethal to alders. The symptoms are small, yellow, sparse leaves; thin, sparse crown; dead twigs and branches in the crown; heavy cone production; bleeding visible as tarry or rusty spots at the base of a tree. Monitor the alders and consider coppicing to regenerate any diseased trees.

Threat (e.g. Ash Dieback, *Phytophthora,* Needle Blight etc)	Oak processionary moth
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Low but increasing
Impact (high/medium/low)	Medium
Response (inc protection measures)	Monitor oaks for signs of infestation, particularly those that overhang the paths. Look for distinctive white, silken webbing nests on oak trunks and branches in early summer. OPM can defoliate, or strip bare, large parts of oak trees, leaving them vulnerable to attack by other pests and diseases, and less able to withstand stresses such as drought and flood. Manage OPM by manual removal of individual nests by trained operators where it is a public health issue. In case of severe risk to public health, consider treating affected trees with approved insecticide in spring to kill the caterpillars soon after they emerge but monitor for other lepidoptera, especially those that may be at the larval stage at the same. Explore alternative means of control such as pheromone traps.

5.3 Deer

Species - Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Medium (roe)
Impact (high/medium/low)	Low/Medium
Response (inc protection measures)	Monitor deer impacts. Protect new planting in tree shelters. Protect coppice regrowth by piling brash over newly cut coppice stools. If natural regeneration fails following forestry operations to open up the canopy, consider deer exclosure plots. Contact the High Weald unit for advice on cooperation with other local woodland owners to develop a landscape-scale approach to deer management.

5.4 Grey Squirrels

Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	High
Impact (high/medium/low)	High
Response (inc protection measures)	There is evidence of extensive historic damage to planted beech. Monitor squirrel activity and control as appropriate.

5.5 Livestock and Other Mammals

Threat (Sheep, Horse, Rabbit etc)	N/A
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	
Impact (high/medium/low)	
Response (inc protection measures)	

5.6 Water & Soil

Threat (Soil Erosion, Acidification of Water, Pollution incidents etc)	Point pollution from leaks from machinery and fuel/oil spills
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Low
Impact (high/medium/low)	Medium
Response (inc protection measures)	Minimise the risk of fuel/oil leaks or spills by following UKFS requirements to store oil and fuel in a way that minimises the risks of leakage and pollution, for example, using bunded fuel storage containers, refuelling in drip tray and having a spill kit available. Any fuel and/or oil storage on-site should be in secure bunded containers located >20m away from any water courses or ponds.

Threat (Soil Erosion, Acidification of Water, Pollution incidents etc)	Siltation of water bodies
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Low
Impact (high/medium/low)	Low/medium
Response (inc protection measures)	Reduce the risk of siltation of water bodies by timing operations to avoid working during, or following, periods of wet weather; only using machinery appropriate to the site; use of

	temporary culverts if it's necessary to cross water courses where there aren't any convenient permanent crossings. Maintain a 10m buffer along the streams and a 20m buffer around the lake, aiming for 50% dappled shade in the riparian zones.

5.7 Environmental

Threat (Pollution, Fire, Flood, Wind, Invasive Species, etc)	Rhododendron and cherry laurel
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Low (scattered bushes)
Impact (high/medium/low)	Low
Response (inc protection measures)	Continue programme of rhododendron and laurel control by cutting and burning. Treat newly cut stumps and spray regrowth with approved herbicide. Follow UKFS best practice guidance for safe storage, use and disposal of pesticides and ensure that operators are suitably qualified. Minimise the number of burn sites, and select locations with care to avoid overhanging canopy or areas of sensitive ground flora. Build fires on metal sheeting to avoid damage to the woodland soils.

5.8 Social

Threat (Rights of Way, CROW, permissive access, events sporting rights, Anti-social Behaviour etc)	Public access
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	High
Impact (high/medium/low)	Low
Response (inc protection measures)	Undertake regular tree safety surveys along well-used paths and take prompt remedial action as required. Maintain path furniture including bridges, steps and seats. Maintain public liability insurance. Respond rapidly to any reports of anti-social behaviour eg fishing paraphernalia.

5.9 Economic

Threat (Timber forecasting, markets, products, operational costs etc)	Operational costs and local markets
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Medium
Impact (high/medium/low)	Medium
Response (inc protection measures)	Reduce operational costs by using volunteers where feasible. Explore local markets. Invite tenders from contractors and select the most cost-effective. Seek grant support where appropriate eg Sussex Lund. Aim for forestry operations to be at least cost-neutral.

5.10 Climate Change Resilience

Threat (Uniform Structure, Provenance, Lack of Diversity etc)	Poor age structure
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	High
Impact (high/medium/low)	High
Response (inc protection measures)	Encourage natural regeneration by opening up the tree canopy through thinning and selective felling overcrowded birch. Conserve veteran trees by halo-thinning.

Section 6: Management Strategy

This section requires a statement of intent, setting out how you intend to achieve your management objectives and manage important features identified within the previous sections of the plan. A detailed work programme by sub-compartment can be added to the Plan of Operations.

Management Objective / Feature	Management Intention
Manage the wood for public amenity, maintaining tree safety and access around the wood	Maintain the paths, bridges, steps and kissing gates to provide year-round visitor access. Mow the paths at least annually or more frequently if required. Inspect the ditches annually and dredge them if required to drain persistently wet parts of the path network. Carry out regular tree safety surveys, zoning the wood so that public rights of way, and well-used paths are surveyed more frequently than areas with limited public access. Record the surveys with photographic evidence of dangerous trees and take prompt remedial action as required. Deter anti-social behaviour by high site presence (Birch Wood Association members) and by providing a rapid response to such behaviour. Maintain current public liability insurance.
Manage the wood for biodiversity by improving the quality and extent of wildlife habitat	Continue the hazel coppice rotation to stimulate coppice regrowth and create a structurally diverse mosaic of coppice re-growth of different ages. This will improve the habitat quality for the dormouse population. It will also open up the canopy to increase light levels to the woodland floor and encourage the ground flora including natural regeneration of trees and shrubs. The hazel rotation should ideally be 8 to 10 years. Pile brash over the cut stools to deter deer browsing. Coppice the alder in C7. This will increase its resilience to Phytophthora disease and to windthrow as well as increasing light levels and encouraging the ground flora.

	Continue to thin the overcrowded and even-aged birch, retaining the best trees to grow on as well-spaced standards. Consider undertaking small parcels of regeneration felling, that is, clearing small areas (<0.2 ha) of birch and restocking with a mix of suitable trees including beech and oak, protected from deer damage in tree shelters. If natural regeneration fails due to deer browsing, the planting will ensure a continuity of young trees and improve the age structure. Consider opening up/widening paths where appropriate and where finances permit, to increase light levels and stimulate floristic diversity along the path margins. This will also help to dry out the paths in the wetter months. Some paths could be selected for improvement to two tier rides with graded edges. The grassy middle section of these rides should be cut annually and the margins cut/coppiced in rotation every 2 to 3 years, aiming for a total ride width of around 8 to 10 m. Retain pinch points along the rides to maintain arboreal connections across them for the dormice. Continue to cut the glades in late summer after flowering and seed set of meadow wildflowers. Vary the cutting time between late July and mid-September. Remove the cuttings to avoid nutrient enrichment. These measures will encourage floristic diversity and the provision of nectar, pollen and seed sources for bees, butterflies and other insects. Continue to monitor and control cherry laurel and rhododendron by cutting, burning and treating regrowth. Monitor sycamore invasion and control as required.
Maintain and enhance ancient woodland features such as the woodland archaeology, the ground flora and the dead wood resource	Identify, tag and map veteran and potential veteran trees and release them from competition by halo-thinning ie clearing woody vegetation from beneath the canopy at least as far as the drip-line. Where any of these trees are particularly hemmed in, the haloing should be undertaken in phases to avoid stress from sudden wind exposure.

	Maintain a network of dead wood, including both standing and fallen dead wood, across the woodland. Dead wood should be left in situ except where it blocks access or is a safety risk. Dead ash trees can be left to contribute to the dead wood resource and provide habitat for woodpeckers, bats and deadwood invertebrates, except where they pose a safety risk to woodland users. Protect the streams, the lake and woodland archaeological features such as woodbanks from damage by felling away from them. Avoid extraction routes across these features or, if this is unavoidable, use brash mats to protect them from damage. Use low pressure tyres on any forestry machinery. Retain fallen branches and other natural debris within the streams to act as 'leaky woody dams', diversifying the stream habitats and encouraging natural flood management, except where it poses a significant risk of damaging or blocking downstream structures. In planning thinning operations, maintain buffer zones of 10m alongside the streams with a least a partial cover of native tree and shrub species. To protect the woodland soils, avoid burning brash and harvesting residues unless it can be demonstrated that it is a management necessity, all the impacts have been considered, and the necessary approvals obtained.
Manage the lake for biodiversity	Protect the lake from siltation and from pollution by fertiliser/pesticide applications by maintaining a buffer of at least 20m around the lake and 10m alongside the feeder streams, including wet and boggy source areas. The aim should be to have a mix of shaded and lightly shaded habitat within the buffer zone, provided by around 50% canopy cover of locally native species. Within the buffer areas, exclude pesticide application, unless approved for use in or near water, subject to the consent of the water regulatory authority.

	Control invasive and non-native species such as rhododendron and cherry laurel in the buffer zone and favour locally native tree and shrub species for retention.
Manage the wood to be economically sustainable so that the cost of non-economic activities is met where possible by revenue from timber extraction and grants	Where appropriate, works should be undertaken by conservation volunteer groups such as the Kent and High Weald Partnership volunteers to minimise operational costs. Consider inviting tenders from local contractors to thin areas of overcrowded birch and fell unsafe ash. The revenue from timber sales will mitigate against the costs of non-economic works such as the conservation of veterans and path improvements. Explore opportunities for grant funding, for example, the Sussex Lund grant, to cover non-economic costs.

Section 7: Stakeholder Engagement

There can be a requirement on both the FC and the owner to undertake consultation/engagement. Please refer to Operations Note 35 for further information. Use this section to identify people or organisations with an interest in your woodland and also to record any engagement that you have undertaken, relative to activities identified within the plan.

Work Proposal	Individual/ Organisation	Date Contacted	Date feedback received	Response	Action
All	Christine Meadows, High Weald AONB Unit	6 April 2020	15 April 2020	Positive comments and approved the plan	No actions required
All	Ian Johnstone, Kent High Weald Partnership	6 April 2020	8 April 2020	Positive comments	No actions required
All	Birch Wood Association	6 April 2020	20 April 2020	Minor revisions requested	Plan updated

Section 8: Monitoring

Indicators of progress/success should be defined for each management objective and then checked at regular intervals. Other management activities could also be considered within this monitoring section. The data collected will help to evaluate progress.

Management Objective/Activities	Indicator of Progress/Success	Method of Assessment	Frequency of Assessment	Responsibility	Assessment Results
Maintaining tree safety around the path network	No avoidable injuries to woodland users from dangerous trees	Tree safety survey	Annual	Birch Wood Association	Prompt remedial action to make safe any dangerous trees
Manage the wood for biodiversity by improving the quality and extent of wildlife habitat	Increased abundance and diversity of woodland wildlife eg woodland birds	Breeding bird survey	Annual in spring	Birch Wood Association	
Maintain and enhance ancient woodland features	Year-on-year improvement in woodland condition	Visual survey	Ongoing	Birch Wood Association	
Manage the lake for biodiversity	Year on year improvement in quality and extent of lake habitats	Visual survey	Annual	Birch Wood Association	
Manage the wood to be economically sustainable	All forestry operations carried out within budget	Financial records	Annual	Birch Wood Association	
Minimise deer damage	Year on year increase in natural regeneration of trees and shrubs	Deer impact assessments	Annual	Birch Wood Association	Contact High Weald Unit for advice and support with development of a cooperative approach to der

					management with neighbouring woodland owners. Protect any new planting with tree shelters. Consider erecting deer exclosure plots.
Control non-native invasive species	Eradication of non-native species including cherry laurel and rhododendron within life of plan	Visual survey	Annual	Birch Wood Association	
Monitor trees for pests and diseases	Pests and diseases identified at early stage and reported if necessary, so that FC best practice control measures can be implemented as soon as possible	Visual survey	Annual	Birch Wood Association	

Forestry Commission England

UK Forestry Standard woodland plan assessment

For FC office use and approval only:

UKFS management plan criteria	Minimum approval requirements	Achieved	Review notes
Plan Objectives: Forest management plans should state the objectives of management and set out how an appropriate balance between social, economic, environmental objectives will be achieved.	• Management plan objectives are stated. • Consideration is given to environmental, economic and social objectives relevant to the vision for the woodland.	**Yes**	
Forest context and important features in management strategy: Forest management plans should address the forest context and the forest potential and demonstrate how the relevant interests and issues have been considered and addressed.	Management intentions communicated in ***Sect.6*** of the management plan are in line with stated objective(s) in ***Sect. 2***. Management intentions should take account of: • Relevant features and issues identified in the woodland survey (***Sect. 4***). • Any potential threats to and opportunities for the woodland, as identified under woodland protection (***Sect. 5***). • Relevant comments received from stakeholder engagement are documented in ***Sect. 7***.	**Yes**	
Identification of designations within and surrounding the woodland site: For designated areas, e.g. National Parks or SSSI, particular account is taken of landscape and other sensitivities in the design of forests and forest infrastructure.	• Survey information (***Sect. 4***) identifies any designations that impact on woodland management. • Management intentions (***Sect. 6***) have taken account of any designations.	**Yes**	
Felling and restocking to improve forest structure and diversity: When planning felling and restocking, the design of existing forests should be re-	• Felling and restocking proposals are consistent with UKFS design principles (for example scale and adjacency). • Current diversity (structure, species, age	**Yes**	

assessed and any necessary changes made to meet UKFS requirements. Forests should be designed to achieve a diverse structure of habitat, species and age range of trees, appropriate to the scale and context. Forests characterised by a lack of diversity, due to extensive areas of even-aged trees, should be progressively restructured to achieve age class range.	structure) of the woodland has been identified through the survey (***Sect. 4***). • Management intentions aim to improve / maintain current diversity (structure, species, and ages of trees).		
Consultation: Consultation on forest management plans and proposals should be carried out according to forestry authority procedures and, where required, the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) Regulations.	• Stakeholder consultation is in line with current FC guidance, and recorded in ***Sect. 7***. The minimum requirement is for statutory consultation to take place, and this will be carried out by the Forestry Commission. • Plan authors undertake stakeholder engagement (ref FC Ops Note 35) relevant to the context and setting of the woodland.	**Yes**	
Plan update and review: Management of the forest should conform to the plan, and the plan should be updated to ensure it is current and relevant.	• A 5 year review period is stated on the 1st page of the plan • ***Sect. 8*** is completed with 1 indicator of success identified per management objective	**Yes**	

Approved in Principle *This means the FC is happy with your plan; it meets UKFS requirements.* *a) You can use it to support a CS-HT or other grant application.* ***b) You do not yet have a licence to undertake any tree felling in the plan.***	**Name (WO or FM):** **Matthew Smith**	**Date:** **05/05/2020**
Approved *This means FC is happy with your plan; it meets UKFS requirements, and we have also approved a felling licence for any tree felling in the plan (where required).*	**Name (AO, WO or FM):** **Carla Williams**	**Date:** **04/06/2020**