

Bideford Town Council

Town Hall Bridge Street Bideford EX39 2HS



FORD ANCIENT WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Bideford Town Council
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BIDEFORD
Devon
EX39 2HS

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October 2008
(Minute No 116)

Woodland Management Plan **for** **Ford Ancient Woodland, Bideford**

SECTION 1

Name of Wood: (*known as*) 'FORD HOUSE ANCIENT WOODLAND'

Ref: (*None known*)

Date of Plan Production: 10 June 2008

Contact Name & Address: Town Clerk; Bideford Town Council; Town Hall; Bridge Street;
Bideford; Devon EX39 2HS

Summary: The plan sets out the long-term aim and objectives for the woodland while prescribing management operations for the next five year period 2008 - 2012. These operations are designed to fulfil the overall aim of the Town Council (owner) through the objectives set out herein.

SECTION 2

Area: 7.6 Hectares (18.78 Acres)

Woodland Type: Predominantly W8 with a small area of W10/W11

Altitudinal Limits: 2m rising to 60m

Status: Ancient Woodland & County Wildlife Site

Legal Details: FREEHOLD

General Description: The woodland comprises of a large number of trees of considerable age; with some exceptional English Oaks. The canopy has become fragmented in parts since much of the woodland has suffered from unregulated development which has impacted upon water tables and contrived to create a stressed environment for many of the specimen trees in the woodland. As such many, particularly around the perimeter, are decaying and dying. The terrain consists of a valley with a central housing development; the woodland surrounds this area on opposing sides of the valley. There are two issues and a stream which in part has been buried in a culvert and/or diverted. At the lower end of the site there is a small area of valley floor which runs out to New Road at near Sea Level. The stream is not tidal.

Key Arboreal Features: The predominant species are Ash, Oak, Beech & Sycamore, with a wide range of secondary species including Horse-Chestnut, Elm, Wych Elm, Yew, Hazel, Field Maple, Spindle, Hornbeam, Blackthorn, Elder & Wild Cherry. There are additionally, some specimens of non-native trees evidently planted out during the last century. At shrub level there are predominance's of Laurel, Holly, and some Rhododendron & Hawthorn. Flora species number around ninety with at least twenty-six which classify the woodland as 'Ancient' in composition (over two and a half times the threshold required for this status). There is a small

area of Gorse to the western edge of the site; and the floor of the woodland is predominantly dressed with a substantial covering of leaf-litter. Fauna once included otters and dormice but there are no present signs of these animals. The badger sett on the south side is also vacant although badger signs are prevalent. There is evidence of foxes and several smaller mammals. Some species of as yet unidentified bat are still present and there is at least one species of Woodpecker and one Raptor (Buzzard) resident. Of the smaller bird population Goldcrest and Marsh Tit are highlights amongst a modest population of more common woodland birds.

Land Use: The land was once in private ownership and later became a Zoological park before being sold for development. The remaining woodland was rescued under the terms of a Section 106 Agreement.

Evaluation: The site is recorded in the Domesday Book and is by definition 'Ancient Woodland' and a County Wildlife Site. PPS9 will apply. However, the site has been much eroded by development and previous land use. What remains is fragmented but of high historical and environmental value. Its proximity to the Town makes it virtually unique in the UK but as a consequence, subject to immense pressure from urbanisation and public access issues. It is of paramount importance that the woodland be protected and allowed to regenerate and adapt to its changed environment. It's potential as a wildlife haven cannot be underestimated in what is a largely near sterile agricultural region.

SECTION 3

Management Aim:

- To perpetuate the woodland and associated habitats while providing for and encouraging an increase in flora and fauna appropriate to the area.
- To provide public access to the area in a manner that allows enjoyment of it but provides protection for the Woodland and its flora and fauna.

SECTION 4

Management Primary Objectives:

4.1.1> to fulfil all legal and contractual obligations committed to within the period defined in the plan.

4.1.2> to establish notice-boards detailing the woodland's flora and fauna, local rules, and a site map at the entrances to the woodland; one adjacent to No 19 Solomon Drive, and one at the main entrance from New Road.

4.1.3> to remove all Laurel, rubbish, and other dumped materials from the woodland and at least 75% of the Scrub Holly and Rhododendron.

4.1.4> to place 'kissing gate' entrance barriers and fencing around the main access points and to repair the parapet approx halfway along the existing tarmac access from New Road to adjacent to No 14 Rowe Close.

4.1.5> to place some restrictions on public access in order to ensure minimal disturbance to wildlife and aid woodland recovery. Dogs will be restricted to one path and kept on a lead.

4.1.6> to place a number of nesting and roosting boxes around the woodland so as to encourage wildlife.

4.1.7> to survey the 'Yellow' (Zone One) area of the woodland quarterly and take remedial safety work as necessary.

4.1.8> to establish an annual maintenance budget

Management Secondary Objectives:

4.2.1> to regularly survey the woodland in sufficient detail so as to establish the portfolio of trees, shrubs, flora and fauna present in support of the recovery plan.

4.2.2> to landscape the valley floor (Zone Three) so as to provide some small pond areas suitable for amphibian and insect habitat.

4.2.3> to provide appropriate dog litter bins and occasional benches at suitable points within the woodland.

4.2.4> to review boundaries to ensure that they are adequate to exclude public access were deemed necessary but of minimal hindrance to wildlife wherever practical.

4.2.5> to re-introduce species appropriate to the woodland type on a limited basis.

4.2.6> to engage with local groups with a view to encouraging education, environmental awareness and the protection of the woodland.

SECTION 5

Constraints: The Woodland is protected under the terms of a 'Woodland Preservation Order' administered by Torridge District Council and its status as a County Wildlife Site ensures the application of PPS9. There is one way-leave across the southern corner from New Road to Upcott Hill for a telephony cable. There are no sites of archaeological merit. Vehicle access to the site is impractical due to physical constraints. Parking bays are provided (by law) inside the entrance to the Mill House, No 29 Rowe Close; and opposite No 19 Rowe Close in the form of a single vehicle lay-by. It is also possible to park by the entrance from New Road but this is not officially designated as such.

Public access to the site is currently informal but needs reviewing. Bans on the use of 'BMX' and any other vehicle are to be imposed; and dogs will be banned from most areas. Financial provision is initially by means of a £35,000 set aside budget. An annual provision will need to be set and is subject to financial evaluation (*per item 4.1.8*).

SECTION 6

Prescriptive Primary Activities

- Notice boards (4.1.2) and repairs, gating and fencing (4.1.4) should be completed within six months of Plan approval.
- Remedial safety works (4.1.7) to complete within one month of the Plan approval and quarterly inspections to take place thereafter.

- Woodland clearance, public access restrictions, and the initial introduction of nesting and roosting boxes will be completed before February 2009.
- A three monthly inspection of the woodland shall take place to ensure that items 4.1.2 through 4.1.7 are maintained and conditions of use are being upheld.
- The annual budget shall be agreed for presentment to the Staffing, Finance & General Purpose Committee prior to the annual Precept meeting. (*Expectation: November each year*).

Prescriptive Secondary Activities

- All secondary activities (excepting 4.2.3 and 4.2.4) are to be based around community involvement and in co-ordination with environmental and local wildlife orientated groups. Schools are also to be encouraged on a controlled basis. To this end, Westcroft Junior and Pynes Lane Primary Schools as adjacent land occupiers are seen as principal sources for that engenderment.
- The provision of dog litter bins and “occasional” benches shall be determined by the Town Council and provisioned for accordingly.
- Boundary assessments will be subject to an annual inspection.
- General non-technical inspections will also occur monthly to ensure that there has been no fly-tipping or other impediment to wildlife and woodland regeneration taking place. Any such findings are to be acted upon immediately if representing a clear and present danger to the public or to wildlife; or; if of lesser concern, at an appropriate time as soon as reasonably practical thereafter. Wherever possible, corrective action of these “lesser concerns” should coincide with the activities at 4.1.3.

SECTION 7

Plan Review Period: The plan is to be reviewed annually at a meeting where the annual budget for presentment is agreed.

SECTION 8

Work Plan (*See Appendix One*)

SECTION 9

Maps (*See Appendix Two*)

SECTION 10

Additional Information or References (None at Present)

Item	2008				2009				2010				2011				2012			
	Spr	Sum	Aut	Win	Spr	Sum	Aut	Win	Spr	Sum	Aut	Win	Spr	Sum	Aut	Win	Spr	Sum	Aut	Win
Annual Tree Safety Inspection				✓				✓				✓				✓				✓
Six Monthly Tree Safety Inspections of 'Zone One'		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Notice Boards, Gating, Litter Bins and fencing			✓				✓				✓				✓				✓	
Woodland Maintenance			✓	✓				✓				✓				✓				✓
Nesting & Roosting Boxes			✓				✓				✓				✓				✓	
Quarterly General Inspections		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Annual Budget Setting			✓				✓				✓				✓				✓	
Boundary Inspection					✓				✓				✓				✓			
Woodland Planting					✓				✓				✓				✓			
New Ponds Project (Zone Three)						✓	✓				✓				✓				✓	

WORK PLAN