



Woodland Management Plan

**Bluebell Wood
Bashurst Copse
Itchingfield
West Sussex
RH13 0NZ**

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This woodland management plan has been prepared by
PJC Consultancy Ltd
on behalf of
Mr S Chamberlain, Mr N Fretwell and Mr G Wakely

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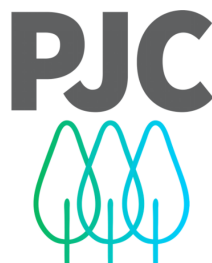
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arboriculture . ecology . landscape

SUMMARY

This report was commissioned to satisfy the requirements of future woodland management at Bluebell Wood for the woodland owners, Mr. S Chamberlain, Mr. N Fretwell and Mr. G Wakely.

PJC Consultancy's involvement in this project can be defined by the following objectives:

To produce a long term (10 year) woodland management plan.

To prescribe a woodland management regime that will enhance biodiversity within the woodland. Over a period of time, producing a diverse woodland habitat of healthy native tree species and mixed understory vegetation that is able to establish and grow sustainably to maturity, free from pest and disease.

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1.0 PROPERTY DETAILS

Property name (including woodland):	Bluebell Wood
Nearest property address:	Silver Trees Bashurst Copse Itchingfield West Sussex RH13 0NZ
Grid reference:	
Centre of woodland:	TQ128292
Woodland access:	TQ127293
Woodland size (approximately):	7.87 Acres
Woodland owner contact details:	Mr S Chamberlain Silver Trees Bashurst Copse Itchingfield West Sussex Mr N Fretwell Bluebells Bashurst Copse Itchingfield West Sussex Mr G Wakely Firwood House Bashurst Hill Itchingfield West Sussex

2.0 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Long Term Management Vision

The long-term vision for the woodland environment is to enhance biodiversity within the wood to produce a habitat of mixed native tree species and understory vegetation able to healthily establish and grow sustainably to maturity.

2.2 Management Objectives

1. Remove and control rhododendron.
2. Undertake an annual selective thin of sycamore to encourage other species to establish.
3. Undertake annual felling of dead and dying ash.
4. Small scale thinning to create glades within the woodland.
5. Remove windblown hung trees to create a safer woodland for the owners.
6. Select five matures trees to be monolithed to create standing deadwood.

3.0 WOODLAND SURVEY

3.1 Woodland Description

Bluebell Wood is located to the southeast of Bashurst Hill, approximately 2.5 miles from Broadbridge Heath. The surrounding land use comprises residential properties to east, north and west with pasture to the south. The location of the site within its environs is shown in figure 1.



Figure 1: Location of Site and Environs

The woodland is comprised of three different compartments under three owners. Species present are predominantly native broadleaf, with occasional Scots pine. Age class is generally restricted to semi mature and mature, with little understorey or juvenile trees. The topography is slightly sloping to the southwest. Access is restricted to the adjoining property owners and there is no ride network. Connectivity to other woodland is restricted to a small copse to the southeast.

3.2 Desk Study

No other designation is shown at the date of this report. The majority of the wood is classed as ancient woodland according to DEFRA's interactive mapping service, magic map. No other designation is shown at the date of this report. The entirety of the wood is protected by a tree preservation order entitled TPO/1566, enforced by Horsham District Council.

Public Rights of Way: There are no public rights of way within the woodland plot.

Existing management methods: The woodland is currently under no management plan.

3.3 Habitat Types

Habitat classification: Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.

The majority of the woodland comprises mixed native broad-leaved species, with occasional Scots pine.

Woodland character can be described as generally of moderate arboricultural value, but with potentially high landscape and ecological value.

Tree species present include Silver birch, (*Betula pendula*) Alder, (*Alnus glutinosa*) Goat willow, Sycamore, (*Acer pseudopaltanus*) Hornbeam, (*Carpinus betulus*) English oak, (*Quercus robur*), Ash, (*Fraxinus excelsior*) Wild service tree, (*Sorbus torminalis*) Holly, (*Ilex aquifolium*) Ash, (*Fraxinus excelsior*) Scots pine, (*Pinus sylvestris*) Cherry, (*Prunus avium*) and Field maple, (*Acer campestre*)

Shrub species include but are not limited to Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) and Bramble, (*Rubus fruticosus*).

3.4 Woodland Structure

The whole woodland is predominantly semi mature to mature with little in the way of juvenile trees, resulting in an even aged structure. There is some bramble growth in the northern section but elsewhere deer browsing has resulted in no herb or shrub layer being present. In the southern section there is significant sycamore seed stock that is starting to shoot but this will be likely browsed down before it can reach any height.

4.0 WOODLAND THREATS

4.1 Plant Health

There is significant ash dieback present within the woodland with many dead and dying trees. This is predominantly located in the northern section of the wood, and it would be wise to assume all the ash within the woodland will succumb to ash dieback due to the level of infection within the woodland. There are occasional dead sycamore within the southern section but this is believed to be due to natural causes. No other pest or disease was identified during the woodland survey.

4.2 Badgers

Badgers are believed to be present within woodland although no close inspection of potential setts was undertaken. If forestry works are to be undertaken within proximity to potential setts logs and topsoil should not be stacked over tunnel entrances.

4.3 Deer

Both roe and fallow deer are present in the local area, with occasional muntjac. Numerous deer prints were observed during the site visit, and the lack of herb and shrub layer is another indicator of a high population using the woodland.

4.4 Grey Squirrels

The woodland should be inspected regularly to ensure that tree health is maintained, including newly planted tree stock. The squirrel population is not thought to be high, however if population numbers are found to be increasing, it is advised that control methods are implemented in order to reduce future damage to the woodland.

4.5 Water and Soil

There is no watercourse within the woodland.

The woodland soil should be protected from compaction, removal or contamination at all times during woodland management works. The character and full potential of the woodland is held within its soil structure.

4.6 Environmental

The nature of the topography make the site unlikely to suffer flooding or prolonged waterlogging that can be detrimental to tree health. There are a number of windblown trees within the woodland which indicate that the woodland might be more prone to high wind events due to the local topography. However largescale windthrow is not thought likely to occur.

4.7 Woodland Resilience

The wood has a diverse mixture of species, which would limit the effects of pest or disease, although its age structure puts the woodland at risk of not producing saplings to replace tree loss through natural causes.

5.0 MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

5.1 Remove and control rhododendron.

The rhododendron should be removed to prevent the wood from being overwhelmed by the species, and preventing native species from establishing. This will have to be undertaken on an annual basis as it is present on neighbouring land and seed will blow back into woodland. Where rhododendron is retained as screening to the southern boundary it should not be allowed to spread to other areas of the wood. Once the main part of woodland is cleared it should be walked over throughout the year and any young plants or saplings of the species should be hand pulled or cut.

5.2 Undertake an annual selective thin of sycamore to encourage other species to establish

The southern section of the woodland is predominantly comprised of sycamore, and in order to allow other species to establish, it is recommended that a small number of sycamore are removed annually. If no other species establish themselves in the open areas then planting should occur, but this will need to be protected during establishment from browsing by deer. Trees shelters should be a minimum of 1.5 metres tall to protect against Fallow deer.

5.3 Undertake annual felling of dead and dying ash.

The northern part of the wood especially has a high rate of ash dieback, and requires annual felling of infected trees to maintain a safe woodland for the owners to enjoy. It is recommended that all trees with more than 30% dieback should be removed. This will in time create glades for other species to establish in.

5.4 Carry out small scale thinning to create glades within the woodland.

In order to give variation to the structure of the wood, small scaling thinning should be undertaking to create a more varied structure. Allowing more sunlight to reach the woodland floor may encourage the herb and shrub layer to return, and other species to establish. The thin should be restricted to the smaller trees present to retain the mature established nature of the wood.

5.5 Remove windblown hung-up trees to create a safer woodland for the owners.

All arisings should be stacked to create dead wood piles for insects and invertebrates.

5.6 Creation of standing deadwood

Standing dead wood is a valuable habitat that benefits a wide range of species, either directly by providing nesting or living space, or indirectly by providing food for foraging birds, bats and mammals. It is recommended that that 5 mature pine be ringbarked and reduced in height to provide a safe piece of standing dead wood.

5.13 Management Operations

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE	OPERATION REQUIRED (years)
Annual felling of dead and dying ash, and other windblown hung trees	Year 1
Removal of rhododendron	Year 1
Annual thinning of sycamore, small scale thin of other species	Year 1
Creation of deadwood habitat	Year 1
Annual felling of dead and dying ash, and other windblown hung trees	Year 2
Removal of rhododendron	Year 2
Annual thinning of sycamore, small scale thin of other species	Year 2
Annual felling of dead and dying ash, and other windblown hung trees	Year 3
Removal of rhododendron	Year 3
Annual thinning of sycamore, small scale thin of other species	Year 3
Annual felling of dead and dying ash, and other windblown hung trees	Year 4
Removal of rhododendron	Year 4
Annual thinning of sycamore, small scale thin of other species	Year 4
Annual felling of dead and dying ash, and other windblown hung trees	Year 5
Removal of rhododendron	Year 5
Annual thinning of sycamore, small scale thin of other species	Year 5
Annual felling of dead and dying ash, and other windblown hung trees	Year 6
Removal of rhododendron	Year 6
Annual thinning of sycamore, small scale thin of other species	Year 6
Annual felling of dead and dying ash, and other windblown hung trees	Year 7
Removal of rhododendron	Year 7
Annual thinning of sycamore, small scale thin of other species	Year 7

Annual felling of dead and dying ash, and other windblown hung trees	Year 8
Removal of rhododendron	Year 8
Annual thinning of sycamore	Year 8
Annual felling of dead and dying ash, and other windblown hung trees	Year 9
Removal of rhododendron	Year 9
Annual thinning of sycamore, small scale thin of other species	Year 9
Annual felling of dead and dying ash, and other windblown hung trees	Year 10
Removal of rhododendron	Year 10
Annual thinning of sycamore, small scale thin of other species	Year 10



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