

Theberton Woods Thinning Operations 2022.

Forestry England manages woodlands as a timber, recreation and conservation resource. This management is important for the economy, people's health and wellbeing and the natural and historic environment.

The 28ha Theberton Wood in Suffolk is a relatively small woodland, but with a significant timber resource that requires management, limited informal recreation and a range of locally important conservation features.

Forestry England intend to thin the woodland during 2022. This thinning work will involve the harvesting of approximately 1 in 5 to 1 in 8 (20 to 12.5%) trees throughout the wood. This work is important and necessary for the health of the woodland and the timber produced contributes to the local economy and enables Forestry England to pay for conservation and maintenance works within its woodlands.

Thinning will open up the tree canopy, allowing light to the woodland floor which will promote ground flora, understory regrowth and importantly allow a new generation of tree seedlings and saplings to establish. Thinning will create a more diverse woodland structure, better for wildlife, with more trees establishing for the future.

Forestry England recognises the importance of wildlife within its woodlands. Records for Theberton show that it is important for amphibians and reptiles, including great-crested newts. A large range of woodland butterfly species including purple emperor and white admiral are found in the wood. A good range of breeding birds such as nightingale and warblers and plants such as greater butterfly orchid are also to be found.

Along with the phased removal of conifers from the woodland, to restore its semi-ancient characteristics, Forestry England has installed bat boxes and carried out a dormouse survey jointly with Suffolk Wildlife Trust in 2018 and facilitated great-crested newt survey training with Suffolk Amphibian and Reptile Group in recognition of Theberton Woods importance for wildlife. It has also worked with Butterfly Conservation volunteers to maintain the purple emperor population during previous forestry operations.

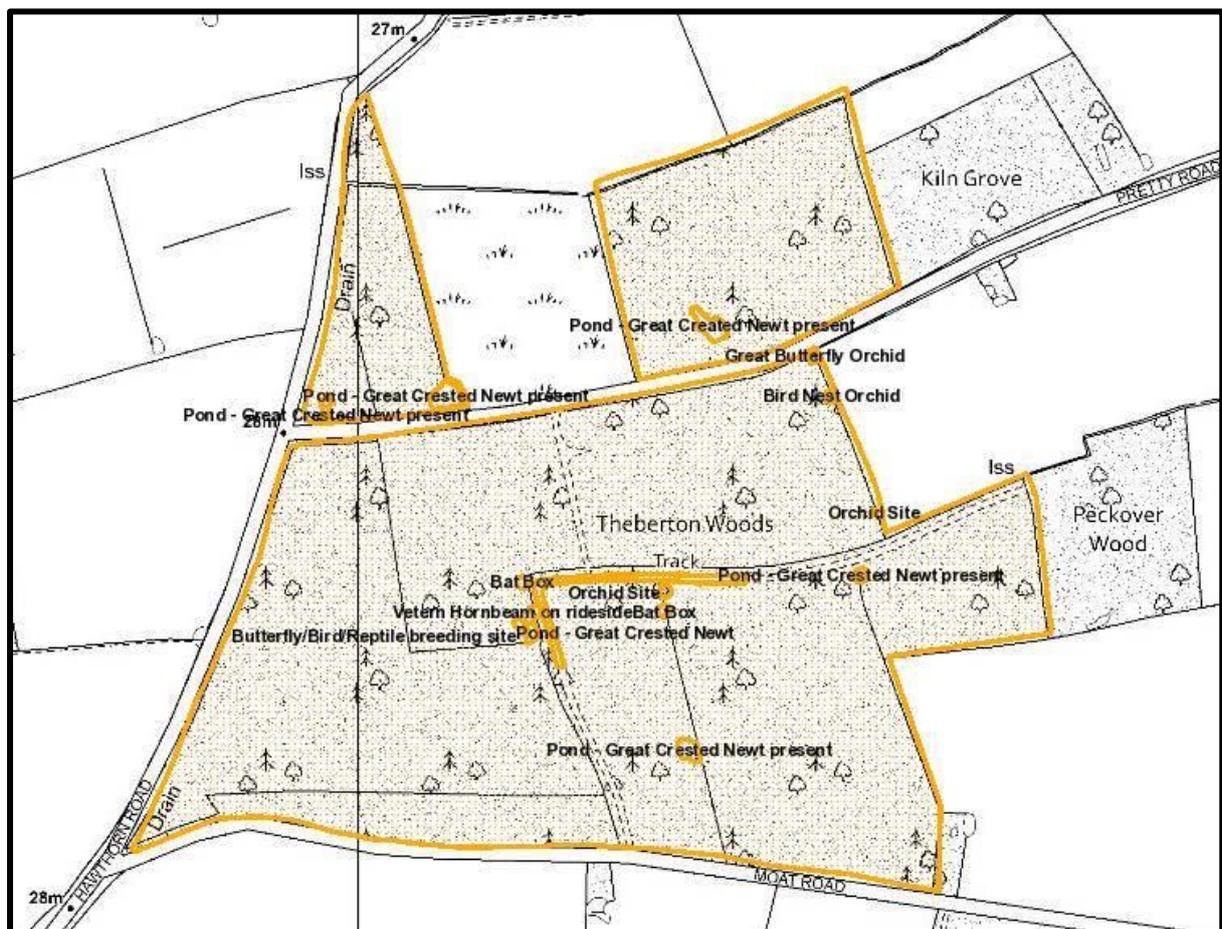
In advance of carrying out any forestry operations, Forestry England conducts an Operational Site Assessment to identify the constraints, opportunities and any other relevant information associated with the operation. Forestry England holds information on protected wildlife species and habitats on its GIS database. This information is gathered from a range of sources including county biological records centres, staff and third parties, where available and updated as required (see map).

In order to carry out the thinning operations successfully during 2022 several supporting operations are required, some of which will maintain and further enhance the wildlife value of the woodland.

This supporting work is to be phased to ensure it is carried out safely and at an appropriate time of year:

1. Widening of internal rides to enhance wildlife value, access and deer management.
Autumn 2021
2. Removal of intruding vegetation, including *Salix* species, from woodland roadway/stacking area/turnaround and surrounding ditches. This work is to be co-ordinated with Butterfly Conservation and volunteers (as previous) to ensure maintenance of purple emperor population.
Late-Spring/Early-Summer 2021

3. Maintenance and re-surfacing of roadway/stacking area/turnaround.
Autumn 2021-/ Summer 2022
4. Thinning Operation across woodland to include 'haloing' ponds and veteran trees and the creation of deadwood.
Late-Summer/Autumn 2022.
5. Follow-up survey of great crested newt by eDNA survey.
Spring 2023
6. Follow-up Salix management to maintain purple emperor population.
Autumn 2023
7. Follow-up ride and ditch vegetation cutting to maintain access and deer management and enhance ride wildlife value.
Annually in Autumn.



Map of Theberton Wood showing Forestry England GIS database conservation features, marked in orange (updated November 2020).

Future thinning work is proposed on an approximately ten-year cycle.

Please contact enquires.eastfd@forestryengland.uk for further information on forestry operations in Theberton Wood.