

Theberton Wood

Draft Management Plan

2022 - 2026



Theberton Wood - Operations 2022 onwards

This plan outlines proposed thinning operations and the necessary response to Ash dieback at Theberton Wood from 2022 onwards.

Previously Outlined Operations

The following operations were outlined in the paper *Theberton Woods Thinning Operations 2022* distributed by Forestry England in 2021 following concerns regarding future operations.

1. Widening of internal rides to enhance wildlife value, access and deer management. Autumn 2021 (*completed*)

Further ride works are to be undertaken in Autumn 2022 including scrub management, coppicing, and pollarding.

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 (*completed without volunteers*)

3. Maintenance and re-surfacing of roadway/stacking area/turnaround. Autumn 2021-/Summer 2022 (*completed*)

4. Thinning Operation across woodland to include 'haloing' ponds and veteran trees and the creation of deadwood. Late-Summer/Autumn 2022. (*To be planned and undertaken*)

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.

Woodland Areas & Required Management

A walkover survey has identified three broad categories of woodland types at Theberton. See attached map.

1. Low Intervention Woodland

These are areas where little forest management is currently deemed necessary. These areas typically comprise mature trees, some veteran and future veteran stems, and a good amount of coppice and scrub regeneration in the understorey. Species include Oak, Ash and Aspen.

The woodland areas do not indicate they require work currently and serve a further function of dissuading unwanted public access into core areas of woodland.

The works which do need to be undertaken in parts of these areas include: -

- Ash Dieback Management (pollarding or felling of diseased Ash trees which could affect public/staff safety)
- Any other tree safety works
- Haloing of veteran or future veteran trees which would benefit from increased light.
- Deer management- potentially including development of discrete access routes for foot stalking.
- Management of Goat Willow

Future works in these areas may include: -

- Coppicing
- Thinning to favour coppice, veteran/future veteran trees and retention of trees of good form.
- Regeneration felling (felling of gaps greater than 15m x 15m in the woodland canopy) to promote natural regeneration or allow replanting of other tree species. This is not identified as a priority presently.

2. Regenerating Woodland

These are the areas of woodland where conifers have more recently been removed from, with young regeneration including Birch, Aspen, Goat Willow and Hazel developing in the understorey, and with an overstorey in places of mature Oak and Ash. These areas are dense, and it is a priority to maintain the diversity of species found within them. Access into such areas is important for their maintenance and for deer management.

The works which do need to be undertaken in parts of these areas include: -

- Ash Dieback Management (pollarding or felling of diseased Ash trees which could affect public/staff safety)
- Any other tree safety works
- Respacing/thinning of young regeneration

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- Coppicing
 - Deer management
 - Management of Goat Willow
 - Creation of a network of racks (access routes for forestry vehicles between trees) to facilitate management and potentially deer control. This is more likely to occur when trees are mature enough for removal.

3. Plantation Woodland

Such areas are easily identified by the uniform planting pattern and are typically formed of single species including Oak, Ash and Beech.

These areas often have good access through them following previous thinning operations. There is little tree species diversity except perhaps on the perimeters of these areas where a shrub layer develops, and regeneration is found.

The works which do need to be undertaken in parts of these areas include: -

- Ash Dieback Management (pollarding or felling of diseased Ash trees which could affect public/staff safety)
- Any other tree safety works
- High Pruning
- Thinning

Thinning is typically undertaken once every 8 years in a given area of broadleaved woodland and is licensed for the removal of up to 30% of the volume. A thinning operation in this situation however will focus on keeping the better stems for biodiversity interest as well as timber and such an operation would likely involve the felling of only 20-30% of stems. The emphasis is on the removal of trees which are smaller and more suppressed in form.

Deer Management is required for the benefit of all woodland types but will only be undertaken where deemed safe by the Wildlife Ranger.

Deadwood creation and retention is essential in all areas. This is likely to be delivered through the Ash dieback management work programme, whereby larger sections of felled or standing timber can be retained as habitat.

Outline Work Programme

2022

- Ash Dieback Management - All Areas*
- Any other tree safety works
- Phase 2 - Widening of internal rides to enhance wildlife value, access and deer management.
- Trees for removal around ponds to be marked. (Possibly felled - subject to manpower)
- Trees for removal around veteran/future veteran trees to be marked. (Possibly felled - subject to manpower)
- Annual ride cutting (cyclical cutting except where deer management is a priority).

***See Ash Dieback Work Requirements.**

2023

- Ash Dieback Monitoring and Management if Required - All Areas
- Any other tree safety works
- Trees marked for removal around ponds to be felled. (Possibly 2022 - subject to manpower)
- Trees marked for removal around veteran/future veteran trees to be felled. (Possibly 2022 - subject to manpower)
- Respace/Thin/Coppice approx.1 hectare in Regenerating Woodland Area. Includes management of Goat Willow.
- Review Plantation Woodlands for Thinning. Mark for removal and harvest if appropriate.
- Annual ride cutting (cyclical cutting except where deer management is a priority).

2024

- Ash Dieback Monitoring and Management if Required
- Any other tree safety works
- Respace/Thin/Coppice approx.1 hectare in Regenerating Woodland Area. Includes management of Goat Willow.
- Review Plantation Woodlands for Thinning. Mark for removal and harvest if appropriate.
Annual ride cutting (cyclical cutting except where deer management is a priority).

Outline Work Programme contd.

2025

- Ash Dieback Monitoring and Management if Required
- Any other tree safety works
- Respace/Thin/Coppice approx.1 hectare in Regenerating Woodland Area. Includes management of Goat Willow.
- Review Plantation Woodlands for Thinning. Mark for removal and harvest if appropriate.
- Annual ride cutting (cyclical cutting except where deer management is a priority).

2026

- Ash Dieback Monitoring and Management if Required
- Any other tree safety works
- Respace/Thin/Coppice approx.1 hectare in Regenerating Woodland Area. Includes management of Goat Willow.
- Review Plantation Woodlands for Thinning. Mark for removal and harvest if appropriate.
- Annual ride cutting (cyclical cutting except where deer management is a priority).

Ash Dieback Management

Following a baseline survey in 2021, significant numbers of diseased Ash growing at Theberton Woods were identified within falling distance of the adjacent roads (Hawthorn, Pretty & Moat Roads).

The results of this survey can be seen on the following pages in screenshots provided, giving detail of Urgent, High and Medium Priority locations.

Ash were grouped in terms of maturity and condition. Based on a median count of the assigned group sizes identified, the total number of trees is currently estimated to be 640 stems. Once the Ash trees have flushed in Spring 2022, the trees in these locations will have their condition reviewed. Those for removal will be marked with paint spots.

Trees identified as Urgent and High Priority are to be removed or to have confirmed contracts in place for their removal before the end of July 2022.

It is also essential that the work is undertaken economically and efficiently, and for this reason any Medium Priority Ash and potentially some Low Priority trees within falling distance of roads will also be removed at the same time.

A review of Ash within falling distance of the woodland rides will also be undertaken once the trees are in leaf. Ash trees in these locations will also be considered for felling or pollarding or felling depending on their condition.

It is currently planned that the Ash removal work will be undertaken in late summer/Autumn 2022. Traffic management or road closures will be put in place allowing harvesting machinery and tree surgeons to work efficiently and safely.