Small Woodland Management Plan

Woodland Property Name	Mersey Oaks	
Unique Reference		
Plan Period dd/mm/yyyy (ten years)	**Approval Date:**	**To:**
Five Year Review Date	September 2027	

Approval Criteria – FC Office Use Only

The UKFS states that a management plan should:

UKFS	Approval Criteria	FC Approval & Notes
State the objectives of management, and how sustainable forest management is to be achieved	Have objectives of management been stated? Consideration given to economic, environmental and social factors (Section 2.2)	
Provide a means to communicate forest proposals and engage interested parties	Have work proposals been communicated in the management strategy (section 6) and felling & restock table (section 8) and potential interested parties identified in Section 7	
Serve as an agreed statement of intent against which implementation can be checked and monitored	Has a five year review period been stated below and achievements recorded in section 3	
Approving Officer Name		Plan approved ☐

1. Property Details

Name	Nicholas Stanley	Owner ☒	Tenant ☒
Email	nick@handstand.f9.co.uk	Nicholas is part of a community group who own and/or manage these woodland areas	
		Contact Number	07778 660575
Address	TBC		
Agent Name (if applicable)		Charles Robinson MICFor	
Contact Number	07840 311454	Email	Charles@robinson-forestry.co.uk
County	Lancashire	Nearest Town	Liverpool
Grid Reference	SJ 382 855	Local Authority	Liverpool
Management Plan Area (Hectares)		3.40ha woodland 4.03ha parkland	
List the maps associated with this management plan		Plan 1 – Location Plan Plan 2 – Compartment Plan Plan 3 – Constraints Plan Plan 4 – Operations Plan	
Do you intend to apply for a felling licence with this management plan?		Yes ☒	No ☐

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 and how you envisage it will be in the future.

2.1 Vision

Describe your long term vision for the woodland(s).

For Mersey Oaks woodlands to be managed in order to enhance their local amenity and public use, whilst also allowing for benefits to wildlife, timber and the wider landscape. In addition, the woodlands will be managed to ensure they are as resilient as possible to future threats from climate change and pests and diseases.

2.2 Management Objectives

State the objectives of management, and 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 (including environmental, economic and social considerations)
1	To manage the woodlands through a sustainable felling, thinning and restocking programme using sound silvicultural practice.
2	To maintain, develop and enhance biodiversity and wildlife in the woodlands.
3	To maintain and enhance the woodlands landscape value into the future.
4	To maintain and enhance the amenity provision.
5	To work towards greater resilience within the woodlands.

Add Box

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.

Objective	Achievement
To manage the woodlands through a sustainable felling, thinning and restocking programme using sound silvicultural practice.	

To maintain, develop and enhance biodiversity and wildlife in the woodlands.	
To maintain and enhance the woodlands landscape value into the future.	
To maintain and enhance the amenity provision.	
To work towards greater resilience within the woodlands.	

4. Woodland Survey

This section is about collecting information relating to your woodland and its location, including any statutory constraints: designations, European Protected Species etc. Woodland information for your property can be found on the 'Magic' website or the Forestry Commission Land Information Search.

Brief description of the woodland property

Mersey Oaks Woodlands extend to 3.40ha (8.40acres) of mature and semi-mature broadleaved woodland. A further 4.03 hectares of grassland/informal parkland exists to the east and sits within the management control of this group. The woodlands are set within an urban context in Aigburth, Liverpool. Local residents are involved in the ownership and management of these woodlands and wish to enhance them as per the objectives set out in this plan.

The woodlands have seen little care in recent years and are in need of active management to fulfil their future potential. Recent work has included formation of a surfaced pathway through compartment 2a and 3a, although no meaningful work has been carried out to the woodland itself. The boundaries are mostly secured by third party fences/walls. Compartments 2a and 3a are open for public access. It is planned to open compartment 1a for access for local recreational users, particularly on horseback.

Compartment 2a is designated with an area TPO – TPO426. The woodland was designated in 2015 on account of unsavoury use of the site and excessive tree pruning by neighbouring properties. The TPO sought to protect this area of urban woodland from further decline, however limited positive work has taken place since.

The woodlands are predominantly formed of sycamore, silver birch, willow, wild cherry and thorn, with occasional oak, yew, poplar and other mixed species. There is a limited shrub

understorey beneath the thick canopy, but where this does exist, it is made up of thorn, briar, silver birch and willow regeneration. The woodlands range in age from c.10 through to 80 years.

Climate within the area is typical of the British midlands, although future climate change predictions will alter the norm we know today. Species selection for any future planting will need to look at climate predictions for 2050 to ensure site suitability.

The sites lie on relatively flat ground with some localised undulations within compartment 2a. These undulations could be used for future recreation opportunities e.g. a bike skills course.

Compartment 3a is currently an open grassland area with occasional copse planting. This area could see much improvement through the addition of individual tree planting, increasing the size of the existing woodland copses and diverse grassland management, leaving areas as wildlife refugia's through the summer.

5. Woodland Protection

This section allows you to consider the potential threats facing your woodland(s). Where relevant, under the following headings, describe any potential threats and as informed by both the likelihood of presence and potential impact, communicate any required management response. This could, for example, be providing information in relation to putting in place a plan, monitoring or direct action.

Plant Health

Ash Dieback Disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)
Ash Dieback Disease is now established in the UK and is thought to have arrived from Europe via air borne fungal spores travelling on wind currents, and from infected nursery plant material imported from Europe.

The disease is caused by a fungus and results in leaf loss and crown dieback which usually proves fatal within several years. Younger saplings appear to be highly susceptible with mature ash proving to be more resilient. Recent evidence from Europe suggests that some trees may have genetic resistance to the disease. Research is on-going to better understand the disease itself and to identify trees resistant to the disease so that these trees can be propagated and developed in the future.

Management responses include the routine thinning of uninfected stands, with consideration being given to heavier thinning and premature felling particularly where signs

of the disease are showing or where stands are heavily affected. Care must be taken when carrying out operations on affected ash, due to the structure of the tree being quickly compromised by the disease when in its advanced stages.

Ash forms a small component within these woodlands currently and any healthy trees should be retained. Due to the nature of public access within these sites any trees which are showing advanced signs of the disease e.g. >50% canopy dieback, should be considered for felling.

Others
Given the current risks, vigilance will be high, and stands monitored closely for any early signs of new pests or diseases. Where appropriate, the relevant authorities will be notified, and best practice guidance followed. Measures to control disease spread, including practising biosecurity measures, will be taken wherever possible. UK grown stock shall be used for any supplementary planting within the woodland, reducing the risk of importing new pests or disease from abroad.

Deer

Little deer activity or damage was seen within the woodland, although low population levels of Muntjac are expected.

Muntjac deer are non-native and prolific breeders who can bear offspring year-round. They can also have serious negative impacts on the native flora, including bluebells. There is no closed season for Muntjac so they can be controlled year-round.

Evidence of deer damage will need to be monitored year-round.
Tree tubes will be used to prevent damage from any deer on any future restocking.

Grey Squirrels

Grey squirrels can strip the bark of trees which can cause degradation of the timber and lead to branches and tops dying back. Damage is generally targeted on trees aged between 10 and 40 years old with the most vulnerable species being birch, hornbeam, beech, oak and sycamore.

Squirrel damage is found within the woodlands, with fresh damage evident. Historic bark stripping can be seen throughout the woodland and timber quality has been severely affected by this damage. Local grey squirrel populations are expected to be high, given the adjacent urban environment. Extensive damage to trees can cause a health and safety risk through branch weaking and failure.

Control will be considered, and populations should be sustained at levels where damage is kept at acceptable levels.

Livestock and Other Mammals

Horses are to be a focus of recreation within compartment 1a and the trees will need to be protected from grazing. The woodlands shall be used for riding activities only and horses shall not be allowed to graze the woodlands themselves. Horses may be used for grazing in compartment 3a, but this is yet to be determined, appropriate fencing or grazing techniques shall be used to protect the local tree resource.

Rabbits are prolific within the area and any new planting will need to be protected by use of fencing or appropriate individual tree tubes. New biodegradable or eco tree guards shall be considered to avoid use of plastic within the environment.

Water & Soil (soil erosion, acidification of water, pollution etc)

Soil erosion and compaction caused by operational works can lead to a general degradation of soil quality and hydrology. All operations will need to be thoroughly planned and monitored to avoid or minimise soil disturbance and damage.

Operations will comply with the UK Forestry Standard soil guidelines and felling plans designed sensitively to the landform to minimise the impact of operations.

Specific measures include:

- Minimising the impact on neighbours and consulting with them on work plans.
- The use of brash mats in areas of wet ground to prevent soil compaction, surface water run-off and pollution.
- Consideration to the most sensitive and appropriate harvesting system.
- Utilisation of small-scale harvesting equipment.

Diffuse Pollution

Where herbicide application is required near to any ditches or watercourses, buffer zones will be observed, and operations undertaken in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard water guidelines. Bunded storage trays and a spillage kit will always be brought on to site when using herbicides, and chemical usage records kept.

Chemicals

Chemical usage will be minimised wherever possible, but herbicides will be used to control vegetation around newly planted or regenerating trees to facilitate successful establishment. The appropriate chemical will be selected and applied as per guidance detailed in Forestry Commission Field Book 8 ‘The Use of Herbicides’. The type of chemical used will be decided on by its environmental impact, operational effectiveness and overall cost effectiveness. Bunded storage trays and a spillage kit will be brought on to site when using herbicides, and chemical usage records kept.

Environmental (flooding, wind damage, fire, invasive species etc)

Fire
Fire risk is considered low due to the dominance of broadleaves and the uneven structure of the woodland. The details of the local fire station are available to anyone working within any of the woodland compartments. The level of local anti-social behaviour does increase fire risk within the woodland and management response shall include routine litter picking, removal of fly-tipped waste and vigilance during hot and dry weather.

Wind
The risk of wind throw is low. Using the Forestry Commission's Forest Gales computer modelling software, the wind damage risk status is measured at 1 with a return period for wind snap or over-turn of 200 years. Critical wind speeds are given in excess of 120km/hr.

Invasive Species
Non-native invasive species may be present within the woodlands, although not seen on the woodland survey. If found, an appropriate action plan shall be drawn up to facilitate their control and potential eradication.

Pollution
Any contractors undertaking management works in the woodlands will ensure that waste disposal, spillage response and pollution control are all carried out in accordance with legal guidelines and best practice. Pollution control is normally a feature of a Company's Environmental Policy Statement. As a result, clarification will be sought from contractors prior to operational works.

The use of biodegradable oils in machines will be pursued. Spillage kits are to be carried during all chemical applications and for mechanised operations in those areas adjacent to or near to water features. Site safety rules for the woodland will highlight emergency procedures, access details and contact details in the event of a fire, accident, or pollution incident.

On-site fly-tipping shall be cleared and disposed on safely by local management and/or contractors/the council. Removal of hazardous waste will ensure the site remains safe for site users.

Climate Change Resilience (provenance, lack of diversity, uniform structure)

The woodlands are currently formed of an uneven structure, with trees present across all age classes. However, the high forest mature crop is of a similar age with a limited number of species throughout the woodlands. Where ground conditions and light levels allow, natural regeneration and understorey has developed.

Future harvesting will seek to encourage greater diversity in age structure and promote natural regeneration along with the development of understorey species, where possible.

Taking a continuous cover management approach to most of the woodland resource will help to preserve the woodlands in the landscape and spread the risk of potentially damaging impacts such as windstorms and susceptibility to pests and diseases.

Best practice guidance from the Forestry Commission and Forest Research advises that a wide range of species from a broad origin and provenance base are planted into the future. This should ensure that the most resilient and adaptable woodlands are developed before the greatest impacts from climate change are observed. Natural regeneration shall also be encouraged to further diversify the woodlands. Forest Research's Ecological Site Classification Decision Support System shall be used to determine and guide the most appropriate selection of tree species to plant.

Opportunities to diversify the species mix can result from different operations including:

- Use of natural regeneration
- Heavy thinnings and under-planting
- Replanting areas with a mix of species, provenances and origin
- Group felling and restocking

6. Strategy

This section requires a statement of intent, setting out how you intend to achieve your management objectives and manage important features and issues identified within the previous sections of the plan. The information provided should be succinct.

Mgt Objective/Feature	Outline Work Prescriptions/Operations	Year
To manage the woodlands through a sustainable felling, thinning and restocking programme using sound silvicultural practice.	To thin the woodland using an eclectic thinning regime to release the best stems across all species. To halo-thin around any trees of note or special importance to ensure their longevity within the woodland (e.g. central yew trees in cpt 2a). To generate a small amount of timber to offset costs of harvesting. Consider under-planting with desirable species, such as oak, to ensure longevity of the woodlands.	2022 - 2032
To maintain, develop and enhance biodiversity and wildlife in the woodlands.	Manage the competing sycamore understorey to manage light levels and encourage native flora and fauna to develop. Clear competing vegetation from around the trees and re-open and manage the ride network through annual mowing regimes.	2022 - 2032
To maintain and enhance the woodlands landscape value into the future.	To use a continuous cover approach to maintain woodland cover and the landscape value of the woodland. Encourage natural regeneration and undertake some supplementary native broadleaved planting to ensure the woodlands longevity.	2022 - 2032

To maintain and enhance the amenity provision.	Manage the ride and open ground network annually via an active mowing regime to allow quiet access and enjoyment of the woodland. Improve access paths throughout via annual maintenance to ensure a safe network for local users. Consider further development of e.g. bike tracks or horse riding routes to encourage use of the woodlands by local people. Undertake regular tree risk surveys to identify and combat any potentially dangerous trees.	2022 - 2032
To work towards greater resilience within the woodlands.	Manage existing pests and diseases such as ash dieback and grey squirrels to limit their potential impact on the woodland. Encourage species diversity through natural regeneration and underplanting of native species to ensure the woodland is resilient into the future.	2022 - 2032

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.

Work Proposal	Individual/ Organisation	Date Contacted	Date feedback received	Response	Action
Initial consultation on plan	Nicholas Stanley	August 2022	August 2022	Supportive of proposed operations within the woodland	Information and requests incorporated into the woodland management plan and future operations.
Initial consultation on plan	NBN Gateway	August 2022	August 2022	Species Records	No notable species records within the woodlands.
Initial consultation on plan	Heritage Gateway	August 2022	August 2022	Historic Environment Records	One record for The Beach, potentially an old property located in cpt 2a. No further information is available.
Initial consultation on plan	Liverpool City Council	August 2022	August 2022	TPO Check	TPO added to the constraints plan. Note permission required before any works are undertaken.

8. Felling & Restocking

Should you wish to associate a felling licence with your management plan please complete the table below. Set out your felling intentions by identifying individual species where they comprise more than 20% of the volume to be felled. Individual species at or below 20% need to be grouped as MB (mixed broadleaf) and/or MC (mixed conifer).

Cpt(s)	Sub Cpt	Fell-ing Type	Species	Area of Felling (ha)	Est Volume M^3 (Bdlv/Con)	Pref Fell Year	Restock Species	Restock Area (ha)	% of Total Restock Area	Map No	TPO	Designation
1	*1a, 1b*	*CF*	*BE, MB, JL, MC*	*1.3*	*100/200*	*16/17*	*OK/BI/BE/ WCH*	*1.3*	*100*	*1*	*No*	*No*
1	1a	T	SYC, MB	1.5	40	2023/ 24				3	Yes	No
2	2a	T	OK, SYC, MB	1.7	30	2023/ 24				3		

9. Monitoring

Indicators of success should be defined for each management objective and then checked at regular intervals. Use the below section to identify when and how monitoring is to be carried out. The data collected will help to evaluate progress.

Management Objective	Indicator of Success	Method of Assessment	Frequency of Assessment	Responsibility	Assessment Results
To manage the woodlands through a sustainable felling, thinning and restocking programme using sound silvicultural practice.	Full compliance with the woodland management plan and associated timings of delivery.	Marking and volume assessment of trees and stands of timber. Underplanting to be achieved at desired densities.	Annually	Management Company / Local residents	Feedback into thinning and felling forecasts.
To maintain, develop and enhance biodiversity and wildlife in the woodlands.	Increase in species and quality of habitats. Woodland which is sensitively managed resulting in a species-rich, diverse woodland structure which includes protected veteran trees. Ride management works. Enhancement of notable trees.	Visual assessment and maintenance of records where possible. Incorporate biodiversity gain works into contracts	5 years	Management Company / Local residents	Feedback and results will be used to plan future habitat management.

To maintain and enhance the woodlands landscape value into the future.	Prominence and appearance of woodlands in the landscape.	Use of fixed-point photography	Every 10 years	Management Company / Local residents	Photographs will assist in future design planning and restructuring
To maintain and enhance the amenity provision.	Well managed rides, with varied edge structure. New rides and access areas to include recreation facilities. Safe and accessible woodlands for all local residents.	Visual inspection	Annually	Management Company / Local residents	To feed back into the woodland management plan and future operations
To work towards greater resilience within the woodlands.	Well managed woodland compartments which contain a good mix of species of varying ages.	Areas felled and areas restocked	Every 5 years	Management Company / Local residents	To feed back into the woodland management plan and future operations