



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WOODLAND CLOSURE

It is with deep regret, and with the benefit of the land in mind, that we will be closing Poulton Wood to the public from 1 October 2019 until 31 March 2020. Canterbury Oast Trust is well aware of what Poulton Wood means to so many people and that restricting access will be met with a mixture of emotions and possibly some resentment. However I am hopeful that our shared love of this ancient piece of land and an understanding of the Trust's responsibility for its careful management will enable people to accept our decision with a good heart.

Poulton Wood is classified as ancient semi-natural woodland. This means it has been a woodland site for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years and will once have been part of the huge forests that clothed the Old Saxon Shoreline. It now comprises 28 acres, neighboured by agricultural land and private gardens and boxed in by roads. To keep the integrity of the woodland we try to re-create through our management what would naturally occur in a much larger forest. We coppice to let in light, rejuvenate the trees and re-activate the seed bank, leave standing deadwood where it is safe to do so, remove non-native species that fly in from gardens and on people's boots and plant young trees, all the while observing and evaluating the woodland's health.

Every 5 years we submit a management plan to the Forestry Commission outlining our aims and the reasoning behind them. We completed our existing management plan in 2018 and are currently looking forward over the next 5 years. It is through liaison with the Forestry Commission regarding our concerns that has greatly helped us come to the decision we have.

OUR CONCERNS

Since being designated a local nature reserve and opened to the public in 2001 we have worked hard to keep access clear for our local and wider community. However, over the past several years visitor numbers have massively increased and the impact of this on the woodland cannot be ignored.

This increased footfall has resulted in a dramatic widening of our woodland paths and the subsequent loss of vast swathes of bluebells that once would have grown there.

Until now we have worked hard to recover the paths without the need to close the woodland and many of you will be aware of our dead hedging, no entry signs and notices explaining what we are doing and why. Sadly this has not been a success. To completely close throughout the winter will allow a time of rest and recovery for the whole of the woodland and its wildlife and enable the spring flowers an opportunity to emerge undisturbed.

Over time with this Management Strategy in place we should see balance return and the bluebells restored to their former glory. We ask for your full co-operation and understanding going forward to ensure that this beautiful corner of ancient woodland remains unspoilt for generations to come.

Anyone who would like more information please feel free to contact either Lynn Cooke or Jax Tanner on 01233 720163 – poultonwood@c-o-t.org.uk

**PLEASE NOTE THAT POULTON WOOD IS PRIVATELY OWNED BY
CANTERBURY OAST TRUST WITH NO PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY.**

