

Whepstead Community Wildlife Group

Cages Wood Management Plan 2020-2022

1. Description

Cages Wood is a designated County Wildlife Site consisting of a broadleaved ancient semi-natural woodland of just under 3ha and. The wood is surrounded by a prominent woodbank and ditch, and there is a small pond midway along on the south western edge. A central ride can be detected that runs from the entrance in the northwest corner through the middle of the wood to emerge half way down the eastern edge. Cages Wood shows signs of being coppiced but probably not for over 70 years. The lower understorey has been largely lost due to very heavy deer grazing pressure, leaving virtually no shrub layer or signs of natural regeneration. The woodland floor is bare in places and is overstood by old ash and field maple coppice and oak standards, the latter being most prevalent in the northern half of the wood. Some of the ash stools are over 2 metres in diameter. Ash die back is evident and some of the ancient ash coppice stools are starting to collapse. The wood also contains some notable Wild crab trees, Midland hawthorn and a small group of Wild cherry on the eastern edge. In addition to common woodland flowers such as Bluebell, Herb bennet and Dogs mercury, there are also records for Oxlip, Goldilocks buttercup and Pendulous sedge. Work to exclude deer from the whole wood began late autumn 2019 using Heras fencing.

2. Management Objectives

2.1 To bring the woodland back into management in order to arrest its decline as a result of sever deer damage.

2.2 To enhance the wood's biodiversity value by allowing light back into the woodland and restoring the woodland structure.

2.3 To produce a sustainable source of firewood and generate funds to support the management of Cages Wood.

2.3 To encourage natural regeneration and succession to counter the impact of ash die-back.

2.4 To encourage educational visits, stimulate community involvement and celebrate the history of Cages Wood.

3. Management Operations 2020-2022 (see attached map)

- 3.1** Complete deer fencing by the end of March 2020. Fit badger gates as necessary.
- 3.2** Coppice and dead hedge all perimeter wood banks spreading brash over coppice stools outside the perimeter fence. (Compartments 1,3,4,5 & 8 average width 15 metres)
- 3.3** Coppice all trees except largest and oak, layer hazel. (Compartment 1)
- 3.4** Widen central ride to an average width of 10 metres, coppicing all smaller trees and shrubs (Compartment 2)
- 3.5** Create glade on south side of central ride as large Ash collapse. (Compartment 6)
- 3.6** Coppice all hazel and layer where necessary. (Compartment 4) Allow clumps of bramble to spread on the boundary with Compartment 3.
- 3.7** Coppice around the small group of Wild Cherry and spread tops over any sucker regrowth outside perimeter fence.
- 3.8** Non intervention areas for the duration of the plan (Compartments 7 & 9)
- 3.9** Carry out survey of ground flora (Spring 2020)
- 3.10** Identify and set up fixed point photography stations.
- 3.11** Monitor regrowth and natural regeneration. Consider restocking if necessary.

Compartment 2

Reinststate central ride to 10m av. width. Coppice all smaller trees and shrubs.

CAGE'S WOOD MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-2022

Compartment 9
Non intervention

Compartment 8
wood edge treatment as 1, 3, 4 + 5.

Compartment 7
Non intervention

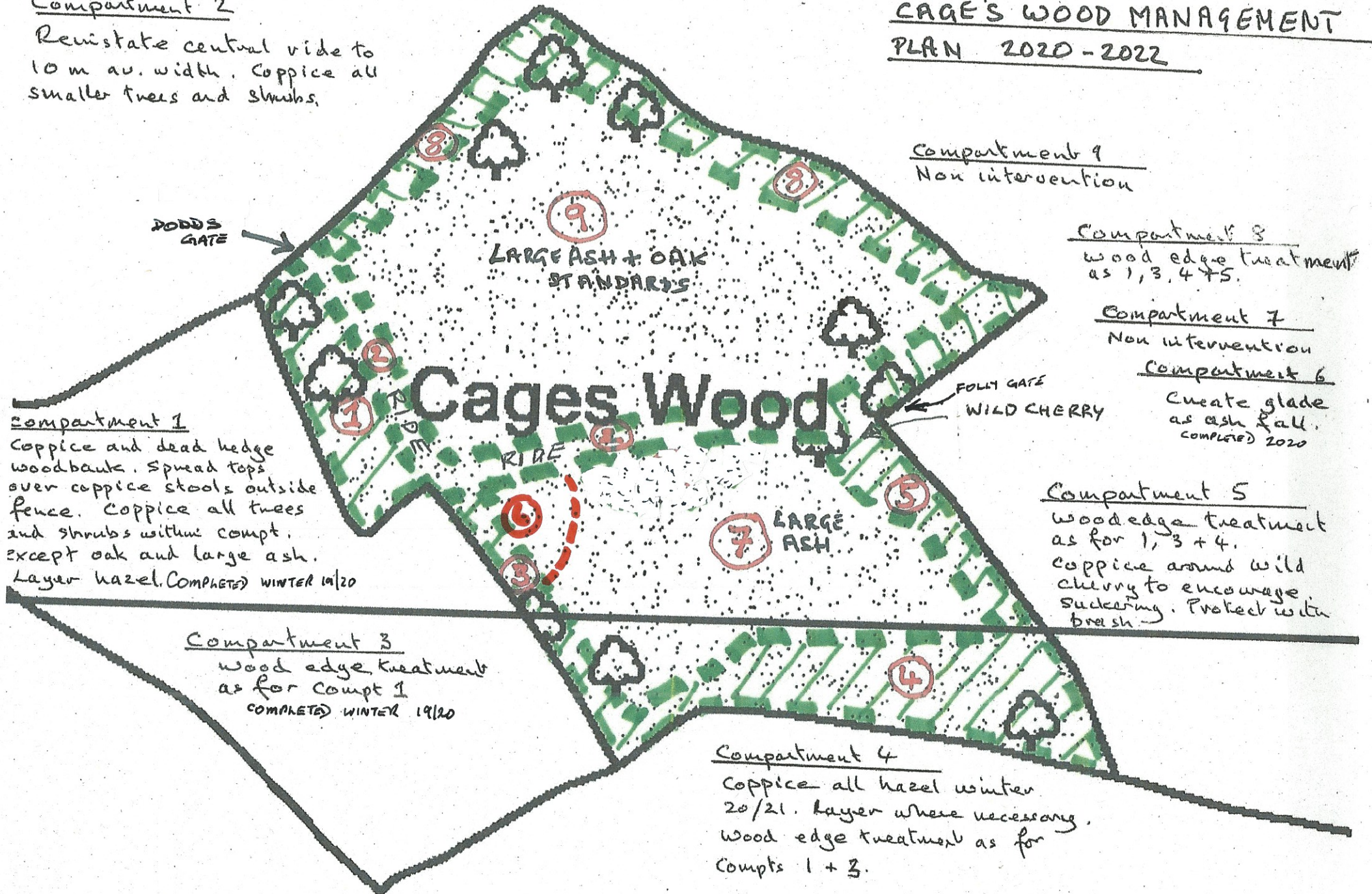
Compartment 6
Create glade as ash fall. COMPLETED 2020

Compartment 5
wood edge treatment as for 1, 3 + 4.
coppice around wild cherry to encourage suckering. Protect with brush.

Compartment 4
Coppice all hazel winter 20/21. Layer where necessary. Wood edge treatment as for Compts 1 + 3.

Compartment 3
wood edge treatment as for Compt 1
COMPLETED WINTER 19/20

Compartment 1
Coppice and dead hedge woodbanks. Spread tops over coppice stools outside fence. Coppice all trees and shrubs within compt. except oak and large ash. Layer hazel. COMPLETED WINTER 19/20



SCALE 1:1250 0 10 20 30 40 50M