

Wakelyns – ‘Woodland’ Management Plan 2023-2033

Introduction

‘Woodland’ at Wakelyns means the tree lines within that agroforestry system and the mature hedges which surround and bisect it.

Wakelyns was planted as an [agroforestry](#) site from 1994 making it one of the oldest and most diverse agroforestry sites.

DEFRA describes agroforestry as follows:

“Through agroforestry, the full gamut of benefits trees provide can support a farm’s productive areas, such as improving soil health, providing shade and shelter for livestock, and creating new habitats for birds and insects. Together, these can support the overall resilience of a farming business.” DEFRA, UK, January 2023

Overall, at Wakelyns, that looks like this:

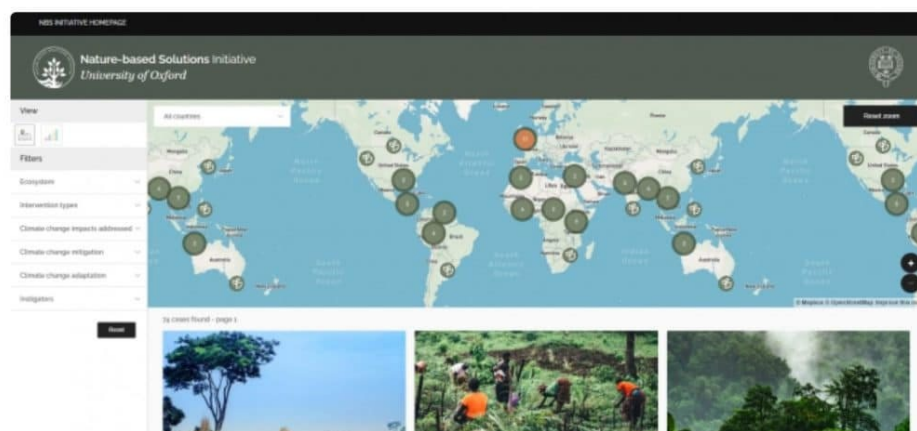




Long term/strategic objectives

The long-term objectives of the trees at Wakelyns includes:

- **Carbon sequestration to help combat climate change** including as part of the UK's commitment to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (as recognised [here](#) through our inclusion as one of only two UK farms in the Oxford University "Nature Based Solutions" global map):



- **Supporting and encouraging informal habitat production** helping to tackle the biodiversity crisis including as part of the UK's commitment to the Montreal Convention (as recognised [here](#)). We are particularly proud of our small but growing annual community of [turtle doves](#) and the support we provide to other vulnerable species such as yellowhammers, plus winter visitors like redwings and fieldfares, and various summer migrants such as probably whitethroats, blackcaps and other warblers; as well as forgetting owls and other birds of prey. Survey information is [here](#).



- Supporting formal opportunities for birds and other animals such as through [bird boxes](#):



- Providing fruit/nut and other food products for short food chain processing on site and retail within the local area (through the [Wakelyns Bakery](#))



- Providing timber for fencing and for [willow structures](#) (short term) and other timber uses (generally long term) for use at Wakelyns and within the local area. Beds (made locally for use at Wakelyns) included Wakelyns timber, as [here](#):



- Providing **biomass** for chipping for use in on-site boiler for on-site heating in an environmentally sustainable way, as seen [here](#).



- Providing **wood chip** for use as mulch/compost within on-site horticulture and related activities.



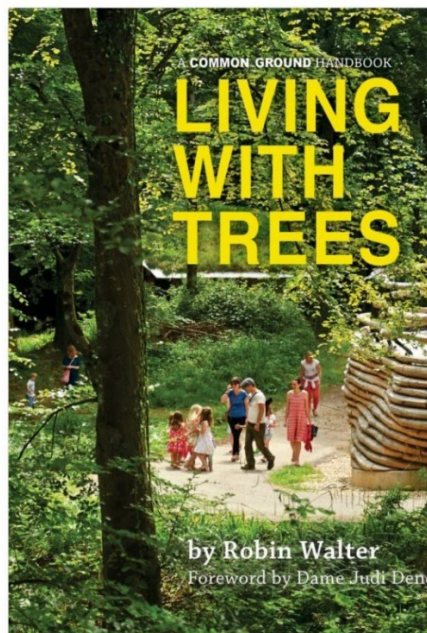
- Acting as **part of the agro-forestry system** including to provide shelter from the wind, to prevent the spread of air-borne agricultural diseases and assist with soil moisture retention.
- Providing a **source of saplings** for sharing with others in the area who wish to plant trees.
- Providing **research opportunities** for the study of agroforestry in the UK and across Europe as seen in general [here](#) (in collaboration with the [Organic Research Centre](#) as part of the [EU Agromix project](#)) and more specifically [here](#).
- Providing **educational opportunities** such as through our collaboration with the Regenerative Architecture team at Central St Martin's College in London.
- Providing on-site **tree related courses** such as in structural willow construction, as [here](#):



- Supporting the **wellbeing and mental health** of site workers and visitors through informal “forest bathing”.
- Hosting **guided tree walks** for educational and recreational processes, as seen [here](#) and as part of our programme of open days including [Agroforestry Open Weekend](#).



- Inspiring others through our collaborations with authors and others, such as [Robin Walters](#):



Agroforestry layout/design/planting

The Wakelyns tree lines run North-South ranging in length from 80m to 220m. Some are a single tree line wide, some are paired. They were established with planting from 1994.

Information about the original tree purchases is [here](#).

[Hazel field](#) comprises double hedges of hazels which are coppiced on a 7 year cycle to produce an annual crop of sticks for use in traditional Suffolk hedge laying and [biomass](#) for use in our biomass boiler to produce heat and hot water.

The trees in [Home Field](#) comprise a wide range of [apples](#) (including many old and unusual varieties) [pears](#), [plums](#), [cherries](#) and more, all managed for fruit by hand pruning and hand harvesting.

[Water Field and Far Field](#) are our oldest agroforestry planting, from 1994, with the narrowest tree line spacing, at 12m. The trees include a mixture of natives trees including hardwoods (oak, hornbeam, ash, small leaved lime, Italian alder, wild cherry, black walnut, ash-leaved maple, sycamore, field maple, hawthorn and blackthorn) and fruit trees (apples, cherries). One section is being allowed to 're-wild'. Here is a picture of some of the original planting from 1994:



The trees lines in [North Field](#) are more widely spaced with the trees more widely separated within the tree lines. Trees include plum, apple, pear and [walnut](#) trees. In 2023 we are planting 1000 vines (3 varieties of red grape, 3 of white) in the spaces between the trees with in those tree lines, to further enhance or agroforestry system.

[Willow field](#) comprises lines of willows coppiced on a 2/3 year cycle for fencing and for biomass, as above. Historically the coppicing cycle involved coppicing alternate tree lines each year. From 2022/2023 we have moved to coppicing the west and then the east halves of the field in alternate years (which better fits with the organic agroforestry rotation we now operate across Wakelyns).



Further tree planting (including of fruit trees) has been undertaken to infill gaps within the alleys since 2020.

Older trees and mature hedges

We also have well established hedges and other planting including two splendid old oak trees, supplemented by a new pair of oak trees in 2023:

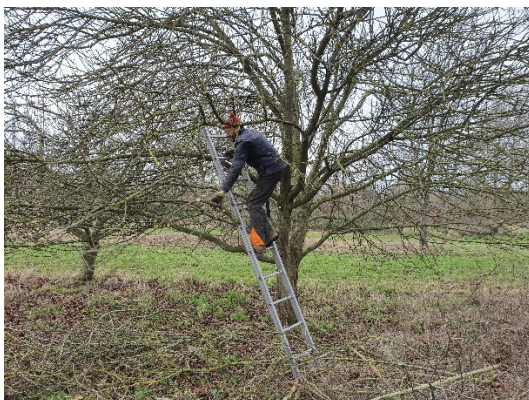


In 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, partly as part of compliance with the requirements of the section 106 agreement associated with our [planning permission](#) (and to reduce views in and out of Wakelyns) we have planted infill whips of traditional hedge varieties including Hawthorn, Spindle, Field Maple, Dogwood, Guelder Rose, Dog Rose, Hazel and Box.



Tree Management and Maintenance

Tree management and maintenance at Wakelyns is overseen by Paul Jackson with assistance from Jim Cooper and Grace Biggins. Management of short rotation coppiced hazel and willow is also assisted by Paul and Mark Ward. Planting of additional trees is sometimes undertaken with community/volunteer groups, as [here](#).



Fruit trees are **maintained** by pruning - as well as thinning out often vigorous branch and growth (and some diseased branches such as the inevitable apple canker), we remove some large lower branches and descending growth to facilitate apple picking in the autumn.

Our short rotation hazels and willows are coppiced on a 7 year and 2/3 year cycle respectively.

Larger trees are managed by pollarding to stimulate growth of biomass, particularly to assist with carbon sequestration, to keep crowns high (and therefore out of the way of the farm machinery used within the alleys), and to create a more diverse arboreal habitat for birds and other wildlife (we have noticed birds nesting in the new twig growth which follows pollarding in almost every pollarded tree).



10 Year Plan (as at April 2023)

In accordance with our strategic objectives as above, over the next 10 years we will:

- Continue tree maintenance/use and occasional infill planting as described above.
- Continue the programme (started in 2020 after a period of reduced tree maintenance) of bringing fruit and other trees back into good health by pruning/pollarding a proportion each year.
- Investigate the possibility of using Wakelyns as a base for a scheme of sapling harvesting and sharing akin to that described [here](#).

- Investigate and establish further collaborations.
- Provide for succession planning within our arborist team.

