

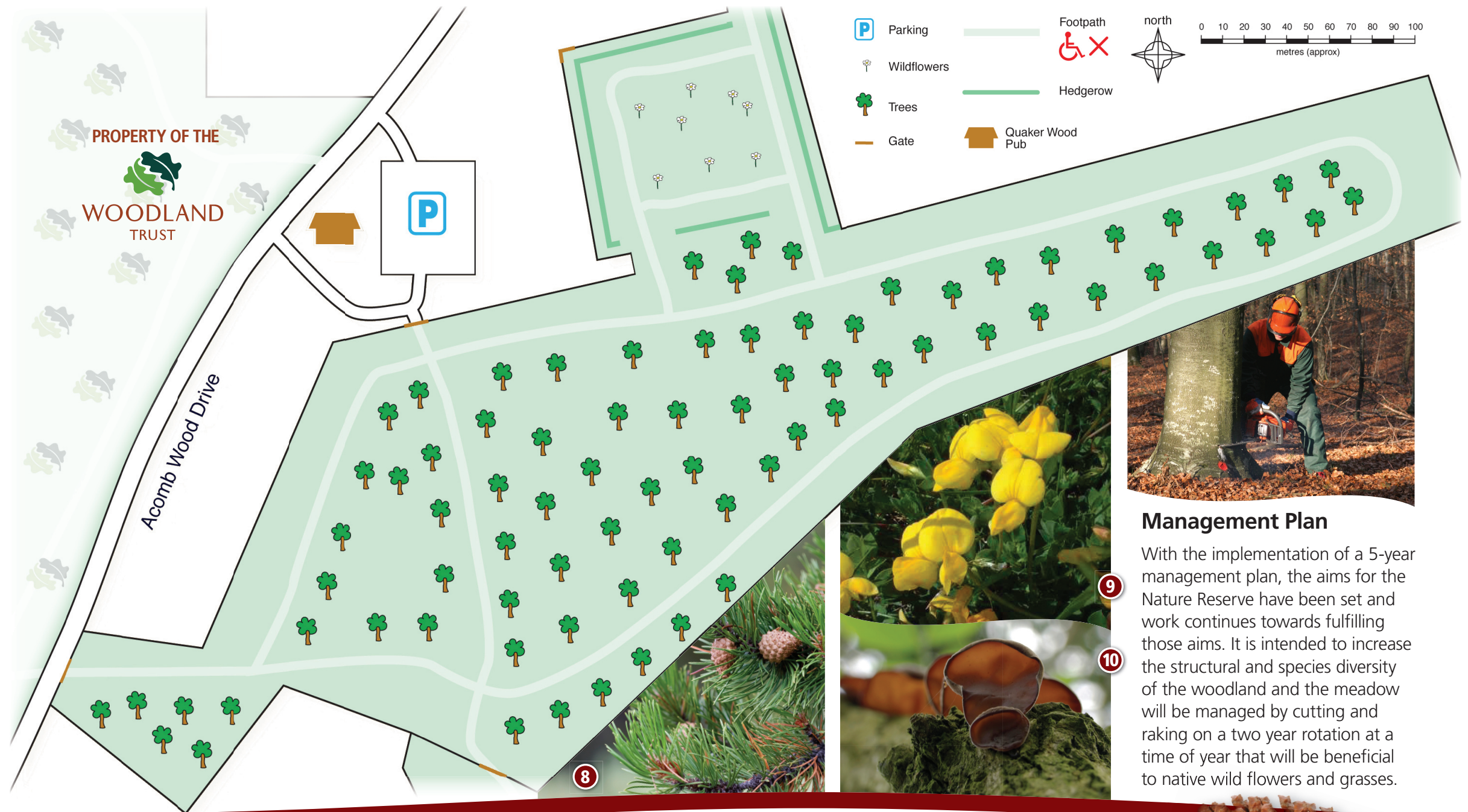
# Acomb Wood and Meadow Local Nature Reserve



Acomb Wood has become fragmented over time and is now split into two separate sites on either side of Acomb Wood Drive. The majority of the area to the west of the road is under the control of the Woodland Trust whilst the larger wood on this eastern side has been under the ownership of the City of York Council since 2002 when it purchased with financial assistance from Yorventure.

The purchase of the wood was viewed as being particularly important since woodland comprises just 3.3% of all land in York as opposed to the national average of 7.7%. Woodland is therefore a very limited and important resource in York, both for nature conservation and as a public amenity.

Acomb Wood is actually an old plantation dating from some point during the 1700's and the woodland floor shows evidence of broad ridge and furrow indicating that the land was once used for strip farming (pre- c.1700). The adjacent wet meadow also has evidence of ridge and furrow and therefore is likely to pre-date the woodland.



## Management Plan

With the implementation of a 5-year management plan, the aims for the Nature Reserve have been set and work continues towards fulfilling those aims. It is intended to increase the structural and species diversity of the woodland and the meadow will be managed by cutting and raking on a two year rotation at a time of year that will be beneficial to native wild flowers and grasses.



## The animals of the Reserve

Bird records and sightings vary annually but regular sightings can be made of common birds such as Robin, Great Tit, Blue Tit, House Sparrow and Wren. Other sightings include Tree Creeper, Black Cap, Tawny Owl, Sparrowhawk, Goldfinch and both Long Tailed and Coal Tits.

Great Spotted Woodpecker can often be heard and several holes from previous years are evident in Scots Pine trees at the western end of the wood.

Mammals include Wood Mouse, Common Shrew, Grey Squirrel and Fox. The meadow itself is especially valuable with good populations of Small Skipper, Common Blue, Small Copper, Gatekeeper, and Ringlet butterflies amongst others.



## The plants of Acomb Wood and Meadow

Acomb Wood is a mature, even-aged woodland dominated mainly by Oak but with a number of other species adding to the diversity. Silver Birch and Sycamore are common and occasional trees include mature Scots Pine with younger specimens of Beech, Hornbeam, Ash, Hawthorn, Crab Apple, Rowan and Yew. Field layer species include Wood Avens, Hogweed, Cow Parsley and Herb Robert.

Throughout the woodland there is a variety of bracket fungi with an abundance of Birch Polypore

on the standing dead and felled Silver Birch trees. Various puffballs are present along with other fungi such as Stinkhorn, Shaggy Ink Cap and Jew's Ear on rotting Elder.

Acomb Meadow is an example of an unimproved, neutral meadow and is the last remnant of its type in this area of York. For these reasons it is much more ecologically significant than the wood. Abundant wildflowers include Birdsfoot Trefoil, Meadow Vetchling, Meadowsweet, Meadow Buttercup, Tufted Vetch and Knapweed.



Self Heal, Lady's Smock, Mouse-Ear, and Creeping Thistle are also present. Grasses include Creeping Bent, Crested Dogstail, Meadow Foxtail and Timothy. All of these species are typical of such old meadows but of interest is the presence of False Fox Sedge.

The hedgerows around the boundaries provide a valuable woodland edge-type habitat and are one of the more diverse elements of the woodland.