



Woodland Management

Project

Barrow Woods, Bristol

Client

Bristol Workways

Background

Barrow Woods comprise 38 ha (95 acres) of mature broadleaf woodland surrounding an NHS Trust hospital. Bristol Workways, a charity which rehabilitates patients into work, had set up a woodland management unit with an emphasis on teaching woodland skills. Landmark was appointed, firstly to prepare an environmental assessment to satisfy Forestry Commission conditions for grant-aid to manage the Woods and, secondly, to write a management plan with the aim of restoring woodland productivity. Barrow Woods are largely of ancient character, so in order to exploit woodland productivity whilst maintaining the rich diversity of species, it was important first to assess the Woods' nature conservation value.

Description

A full ecological survey of the woods was undertaken and areas zoned according to their naturalness and ecological diversity. Those parts of the wood with features characteristic of ancient/semi-natural status were to be left unmanaged. Other areas, which had suffered from past mismanagement and neglect, were available for productive management. The strategy devised for conversion of the woodland for production of a range of forest products, whilst also enhancing nature conservation value, included drainage improvement, construction of new rides, selective felling, coppicing, new tree and shrub planting, and deer fencing. To avoid future damage to the fragile flora of the woodland floor, ditches, access routes and working methods were carefully detailed in the management plan.

Client benefits

Production of a comprehensive management plan based on sound scientific research met the disparate needs of the owner, the user and the grant awarding body, and offered a blue-print for management of similar woodlands.