

Thompson Woodland Creation Scheme, Norfolk



Project Overview and Scope

The Thompson Woodland Creation Scheme is a 63-hectare initiative in Thompson village, Norfolk, developed in partnership between the Woodland Trust and Maydencroft. The project involves the planting of more than 115,000 trees over a three-year planting programme.

Maydencroft is responsible for the full delivery of the woodland, including project logistics, three structured planting phases, and a six-year maintenance programme. This phased approach, beginning in 2025, ensures effective coordination of materials, workforce, and site operations across the diverse landscape.

Core Objectives

✓ **Tree Cover:** To increase overall woodland cover within the Norfolk landscape.

✓ **Community:** To enhance amenity spaces for public use and wellbeing.

✓ **Carbon Sequestration:** To create and sell carbon units to support long-term environmental sustainability.

✓ **Biodiversity:** To improve local biodiversity and strengthen habitat connectivity between Thetford Forest and the local Pingos (small, crater-like depressions formed by melting underground ice (see image 1)

✓ **Resources:** To provide a sustainable timber resource in the long term.

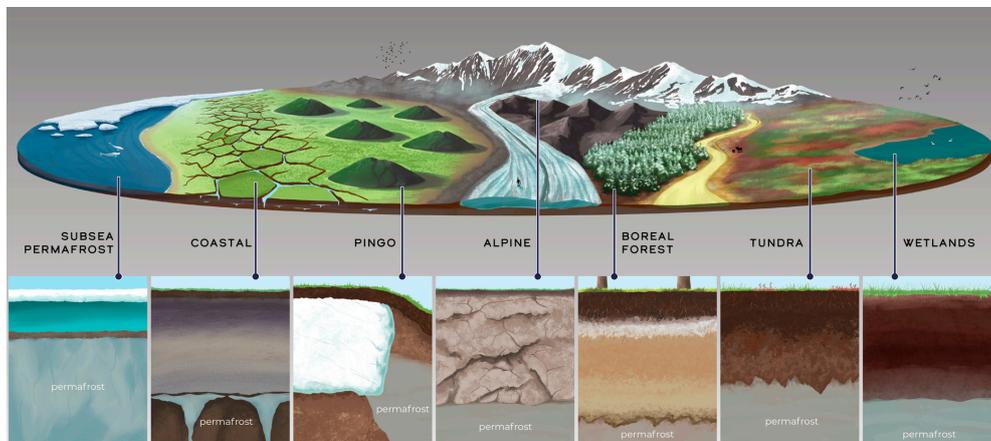


Image 1: permafrost environments, illustration

Planting Specifications and Phasing

The project is divided into two distinct typologies: **Broadleaf Woodland** and **Wood Pasture**. Total planting figures are phased as follows:

Phase / Year	Type	Area (ha)	Density (stems/ha)	Total Stems
Phase 1 (2025)	Broadleaf Woodland	11.02	2,250	24,795
	Wood Pasture	4.60	400	1,840
Phase 2 (2026)	Broadleaf Woodland	19.46	2,250	43,785
	Wood Pasture	8.28	400	3,312
Phase 3 (2027)	Broadleaf Woodland	17.50	2,250	39,375
	Wood Pasture	2.40	400	960



All stock is **UK-grown** and sourced from a **local nursery** to ensure biosecurity and local provenance. The species mix for Phase 1 includes:

Primary Species	Pedunculate Oak (20%), Silver Birch (18%), Downy Birch (8%), and Hawthorn (8%).
Diverse Mix	Hazel, Aspen, Common Alder, Rowan, Field Maple, and Goat Willow.
Minority/Shrub Species	Small Leaved Lime, White Willow, Common Beech, Crab Apple, Dog Rose, Blackthorn, and Alder Buckthorn.

The selection is tailored to local soil conditions and designed to create a multi-structured system that is resilient to future pests, diseases, and climate pressures.

Technical Specification and UKFS Compliance

The design adheres strictly to the **UK Forestry Standard** (UKFS). To avoid monocultures and encourage structural diversity, trees are planted in clusters of **15–25 stems**. This prevents faster-growing species from out-competing others and creates varied niches for flora and fauna

Historic Environment and Pingo Conservation



A critical element of the design is the protection of **Pingos**, rare relict periglacial landforms found on and adjacent to the site. The woodland layout incorporates intentional open ground buffers around these features. This preserves their hydrology, form, and visibility, ensuring the historic and geomorphological interest of the site is safeguarded in accordance with UKFS heritage requirements.

Water and Soil Protection

By transitioning the land from arable use to woodland, the project reduces surface water runoff and soil erosion. This protects the water quality of the pingos by lowering the risk of nutrient enrichment and sediment mobilisation.

Tree Protection and Sustainable Establishment

To manage deer and rabbit pressure while minimising plastic use, Maydencroft implemented a tiered protection strategy:

- **Woodland Areas:** Utilise perimeter deer fencing and rabbit netting combined with individual vole guards. This approach negates the need for 1.2m plastic tree tubes.
- **Wood Pasture:** Trees are planted in roundels and protected with **1.8m biodegradable tree guards** to withstand future grazing pressure.



Maintenance Programme

Maydencroft is responsible for 6 years of Maintenance.

In accordance with Woodland Trust policy, **no glyphosate** is used for weed control. Instead, establishment is supported through:

- **Inter-row Mowing:** Conducted annually in May and August for three years post-planting for woodland phases.
- **Manual Strimming:** Used for wood pasture areas where curved layouts preclude mechanical mowing.

Beat-up and Restock: Annual surveys and replanting during Autumn/Winter for the two seasons following initial planting to ensure target stocking densities are met.

Social Benefit and Quality Assurance

The delivery includes the creation of **5km of permissive paths** that link to the wider public rights of way network, including the **Pingo Way**. This facilitates community access for recreation and wellbeing, responding to the increased public demand for managed outdoor spaces.



Contract Management

To maintain high standards, a **Forestry Works Manager** provided consistent on-site supervision during the planting phases. This ensured precision in planting lines, spacing, and the correct specification of wood pasture roundels. Project success is measured through rigorous beat-up surveys and ongoing health monitoring to ensure the woodland achieves its long-term environmental and social objectives.