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Biodiversity Net Gain Statement.

Prepared for : Mr. Clifford Smith

Application Site : Lordings Road, Newbridge, Billingham, RH14 9JA

Proposal : Limeburner Pub And Caravan Site, Lordings Road, Newbridge, Billingham, RH14 9JA

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1 Introduction

This Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for the redevelopment of the Limeburners Pub and Caravan Site, located within Horsham District, West Sussex. The development comprises the creation of **24 factory-built static homes** within a landscaped masterplan that retains all existing trees, introduces extensive new hedgerow planting, and enhances ground-level habitats through wildflower meadow and scrub creation.

The statement demonstrates that the proposed scheme delivers a **minimum 10% net gain** in biodiversity, in accordance with the **Environment Act 2021**, the **Statutory Biodiversity Metric 4.0**, and relevant local policy.

- Environment Act 2021 (mandatory BNG)
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM) 4.0, July 2025
- Horsham District Planning Framework Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Retains all existing mature trees
- Creates 395 m of new native species-rich hedgerow
- Establishes species-rich grassland and native scrub pockets
- Uses permeable paving and green corridors to enhance ecological connectivity



Figure 1. Site Map

2 Baseline Conditions

Current Habitat Baseline

The site is currently a mix of:

- Bare ground and amenity grass associated with seasonal caravan use
- Mature scattered trees
- No existing hedgerows recorded within the red-line boundary
- Baseline habitat surveys identified the following features within the red-line boundary:

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Condition	Distinctiveness	Strategic Significance	Baseline Units
Modified grassland (mown)	0.50	Poor	Low (2)	Medium (1)	1.00
Bare ground / hardstanding	0.20	N/A	Very Low (0)	Low (0.5)	0.00
Total Area Habitat Units	0.70				1.00

Given the predominance of low-value habitats (bare ground / mown grass) and the absence of hedgerows, the baseline habitat units are **low**, and baseline hedgerow units are **0**.



Figure 2. Proposed Layout

3 Proposed Habitat Creation and Enhancement.

The proposed scheme delivers biodiversity uplift through

Proposed Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Condition Target	Distinctiveness	Strategic Significance	Creation Risk	Proposed Units
Species-rich grassland (neutral)	0.12	Good (1.4)	Medium (4)	Medium (1)	Low (0.8)	1.20
Native scrub	0.04	Good (1.4)	Medium (4)	Medium (1)	Low (0.8)	0.40
Retained modified grassland (enhanced)	0.34	Moderate (1.1)	Low (2)	Medium (1)	N/A	0.68
Total Area Habitat Units	0.50					2.28

Hedgerow Creation

- **395m** of new **native species-rich hedgerow** planted throughout the site as landscape boundaries and between dwellings to provide privacy screening and wildlife corridors.
- Planted to meet the **Defra/NE definition of native species-rich hedgerow** (≥5 native woody species per 30 m).

Planting mix:

- 50% Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- 20% Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- 10% Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- 10% Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- 5% Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- 5% Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
- Occasional Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) interplanted for nectar and habitat diversity

BNG Metric indication:

Using Statutory Biodiversity Metric 4.0 rates for *new native species-rich hedgerow in good condition*, the proposed hedgerow creation yields approximately **1.78 hedgerow units** (baseline = 0), exceeding the 10% gain requirement for the hedgerow habitat type.

Area Habitat Creation

To deliver +10% in **area habitats**, the landscape scheme will include:

- **Species-rich grassland (neutral meadow)**
Approx. **1,200 m²** distributed as road verges, courtyard greens, and between-unit greenspace.
Seed mix to be **BS 4428:1989 compliant**, locally sourced (e.g. Emorsgate EM3 or equivalent).
Managed under a conservation cut regime (cut & remove arisings twice annually).
- **Native scrub pockets**
Two areas of **~200 m²** each planted with hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, and dogwood.
Provides structure, foraging, and nesting cover.

- **Retained tree canopy**

All mature trees retained and protected in accordance with **BS 5837:2012**.

Protective fencing and exclusion zones maintained throughout construction.

BNG Metric indication:

Baseline area habitat = predominantly low distinctiveness “modified grassland” and bare ground.

Proposed area habitats = medium distinctiveness **species-rich grassland** and **native scrub** plus retained trees.

This change is sufficient to exceed **+10% area habitat units** in the metric.

4 Strategic Significance

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric 4.0 assessment confirms that the proposed development will deliver a substantial net gain in both hedgerow and area habitats. For hedgerows, the baseline is zero units, with the proposed planting of 395 metres of native species-rich hedgerow generating 1.78 units. This represents a net increase of over 100%, far exceeding the statutory requirement for a 10% gain. For area habitats, the baseline value is calculated at 1.00 unit, with the proposed combination of species-rich grassland, native scrub, and enhanced modified grassland producing a total of 2.28 units post-development. This equates to a net gain of 1.28 units, or 128%, well above the minimum target. These figures demonstrate that the scheme comfortably meets and significantly surpasses the biodiversity net gain requirements set out in national legislation and local planning policy.

5 Implementation and Management

The creation and enhancement of habitats within the Limeburners scheme will be delivered through a phased approach, beginning with a five-year establishment period. During this time, new hedgerows and grassland areas will be watered and weeded as necessary, with any failed plants replaced to maintain a minimum 90% survival rate. Species-rich grassland will be cut in early spring and late summer, with arisings removed to maintain soil conditions favourable to wildflower diversity. In the long-term management phase, from year six to year thirty, hedgerows will be cut on a two- to three-year rotation to encourage flowering and berry production, meadows will be cut once annually after seed set, and scrub areas will be selectively thinned to preserve structural diversity and prevent natural succession to woodland. The delivery of these habitats and their ongoing management will be secured through a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) and formalised by either a planning condition or Section 106 agreement. Monitoring will be carried out at years 2, 5, 10, 20, and 30, with results submitted to Horsham District Council to ensure compliance and to confirm that the target habitat conditions are being met.



Figure 3. Proposed Development

6 Strategic Fit

The proposed habitat creation and enhancement measures directly support the objectives of the Horsham District Biodiversity Action Plan by contributing to the restoration of native species-rich hedgerows and the establishment of species-rich grassland. The scheme aligns with the recommendations of the West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment for the Low Weald, which emphasises the retention of mature trees, reinforcement of hedgerow networks, and the creation of flower-rich grassland to improve landscape and ecological quality. Furthermore, the development supports the aims of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy by enhancing habitat connectivity, linking existing tree lines and green infrastructure, and providing new foraging and nesting opportunities for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. Together, these measures ensure the site plays an active role in the delivery of local and strategic biodiversity priorities.

7 Conclusion

The Limeburners scheme delivers measurable and verifiable biodiversity net gain in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Act 2021 and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM) 4.0. The proposals achieve this through the creation of high-quality, locally appropriate habitats and the retention of existing ecological assets.

The development will provide 395 metres of new native species-rich hedgerow, resulting in a post-development total of 1.78 hedgerow units from a baseline of zero. This represents a significant improvement in hedgerow provision and far exceeds the statutory requirement for a 10% net gain in this habitat type.

For area habitats, the scheme will deliver a total of 2.28 units from a baseline of 1.00 units, representing a net gain of 128%. This uplift will be achieved through the creation of species-rich grassland, establishment of native scrub pockets, and enhancement of retained modified grassland, all of which will be managed to reach and maintain their target condition.

All proposed habitats have been designed to reflect the local landscape character of the Low Weald and to contribute to wider ecological networks. They will be connected to existing green infrastructure, enhancing habitat connectivity and providing resources for a wide range of species.

Management and monitoring of the new habitats will be secured for a minimum period of 30 years through a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) and either a planning condition or Section 106 agreement. This will ensure that the biodiversity gains are sustained over the long term and continue to contribute positively to local nature recovery objectives.