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Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan

Site Name

Church Farm, Upper Beeding

Client

Fairfax Acquisitions Ltd

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Author

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About the Author

This report has been prepared by Louisa Philpott, an Assistant Ecologist at The Ecology Co-op. She has 35 years experience in masterplanning and architecture and is currently training for a Certificate in Conservation Management whilst working with the Ecology Co-op.

About the Reviewer

This report has been reviewed by Kate Priestman, who is a Principal Ecologist with over twenty years' experience. Kate has undertaken extensive survey work and reporting, encompassing a breadth of deliverables, and prepared European Protected Species licences for numerous schemes. As a Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv), she is bound by CIEEM's code of professional conduct.

Report Summary

Purpose	The Ecology Co-operation was commissioned by Fairfax Acquisitions Ltd to provide a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) with regards to a proposed project at Church Farm, Upper Beeding. This document outlines the proposed strategy to enhance the existing habitats identified on the site over a 30-year period. In accordance with the Biodiversity Impact Calculations for the site, carried out in December 2025 by Meerabai Kings, MSci, these enhanced habitats will generate biodiversity units for offsetting losses associated with a proposed development at Church Farm. This report should be read in combination with these calculations and their associated report which demonstrate the potential uplift in credits possible on the site in line with its existing baseline value.
Context	The site is located in the northwest of Upper Beeding at Church Farm. It sits north of residential housing and on the edge of rural agricultural fields within the River Adur Water Meadows and Wyckham Wood Local Wildlife Site. The existing site habitat comprises of a field of cleared bramble scrub with small areas of blackthorn and bracken that were assessed and mapped in August and September 2025 using UKHab methodology.
Habitat condition	New habitats to be created are mixed scrub 'moderate' condition (medium distinctiveness), other neutral grassland 'poor 'condition (medium distinctiveness), modified grassland 'poor' condition (low distinctiveness), native hedgerow 'poor condition (low distinctiveness), species-rich hedgerow 'poor' conition (medium distinctiveness) and rural trees 'moderate' condition (medium distinctiveness). Additionally, existing habitat (bramble and blackthorn scrub) will be enhanced to create new (medium distinctiveness) habitat of mixed scrub 'moderate' condition.
Habitat creation	The other neutral grassland area will be seeded with a combined grass and wildflower mix to meet the other neutral grassland condition criteria. The modified grassland area will be seeded with a grass mix to meet the modified grassland criteria. The existing scrub or bracken in the newly created areas will be eradicated through annual cutting, puling and if required, treatment with herbicides. New rural tree planting, native hedgerow, species-rich hedgerow and mixed scrub will be planted with native tree species. The existing bramble and blackthorn scrub will be enhanced with native trees species.
Management	The neutral grassland will be subject to annual late summer hay/silage cuts to diversify the sward. Modified grassland will be mowed regularly. Hedgerows will be manged once established though cutting and replacing of any failed trees. Rural trees to be protected by tree guards, autumn leaf fall is to be removed to allow the other neutral grassland to establish.

	Areas of the enhanced scrub will be fenced off from any accidental damage and deer browsing to encourage natural scrub regeneration and provide a diversity of available habitats for wildlife and be cut back to prevent encroachment onto other habitats and create a diversity of structure.
Monitoring	Regular botanical and habitat monitoring surveys will take place throughout the 30-year project period, caried out by a qualified ecologist with appropriate botanical survey experience. A plan for this is detailed in section 7.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

The Ecology Co-op was commissioned by Fairfax Acquisitions Ltd to produce a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for the development at Church Farm, Upper Beeding.

This document outlines the proposed strategy to create new habitats onsite and enhance the identified habitats offsite over a 30-year period at Church Farm, Upper Beeding, West Sussex (grid reference: TQ 19399 11179) in accordance with the Biodiversity Impact Calculation[1] for the site, carried out in December 2025 by Meerabai Kings, MSci from The Ecology Co-op.

New habitats (mixed scrub, other neutral grassland, modified grassland, native hedgerow, species-rich native hedgerow and individual rural trees) will be created onsite; existing habitat to be enhanced comprises mixed scrub.

These created and enhanced habitats will generate biodiversity net gain of 54.97%, exceeding the mandatory 10% required by Horsham District Council. The present report should be read in combination with these calculations[1] and their associated report[2] which demonstrate the potential uplift in credits possible on the site in line with its existing baseline value. Alongside habitat creation and enhancement, this report outlines the monitoring surveys planned for the site during the project lifespan to ensure that the habitat and condition assessment criteria of the Statutory Metric Tool[3] will be met by the end of the 30-year period.

Implementation of all habitat management and monitoring will be overseen by a suitable ecological consultancy, and the client will be given contact details for an ecologist so that any issues can be resolved promptly.

Whilst this HMMP details the best options to reach target habitats and habitat conditions currently, the management plan will evolve and can be adjusted as the project progresses through the 30-year period. All changes to the management plan will be carried out in consultation between the landowner, advising ecologist(s) and any other relevant bodies where necessary.

1.2 Background

The Church Farm site is located northwest of Upper Beeding. The site is immediately surrounded by residential housing to the east and south and bramble scrub (now cleared) to the north and west. A small parcel of deciduous woodland borders the southwestern corner of the site. The wider landscape contains the River Adur, drainage ditches and pasture. The site sits within the River Adur Water Meadows and Wyckham Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

The site is approximately 0.49 ha in area and is proposed for residential development, comprising the construction of four houses. The existing bramble *Rubus fruticosus* scrub onsite had been cleared in-between the two site

[1] The Ecology Co-op (2025). *Church Farm Statutory BIC – Issued.*
[2] The Ecology Co-op (2025). Biodiversity Impact Calculation – *Church Farm, Upper Beeding.*
[3] Natural England (2025). *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology.*

visits to the site in 2021.
shows the location of the site.

The site is situated within a wider ownership boundary measuring approximately 3ha, comprised of grassland and scrub. The offsite area has been earmarked for habitat creation/enhancement in order to achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG). The offsite locations are northwest of the development site, against the northwestern site boundary, and a small area is located northeast of the development site against the northeastern site corner. The existing habitats are shown in Figure 2 (section 4.1).

Figure 1. An aerial image showing the location of the site. The approximate onsite boundary is outlined in solid red, the offsite enhancement areas shown in red dotted outlines. Image produced courtesy of Google maps (map data ©2024 Google).

2 LEGAL PROTECTION

Legal protection applying to relevant bird, mammal and herpetofauna species is detailed in Appendix 1 of this report. This includes both national and European legislation that protects badgers *Meles meles*, bats, dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*, reptiles, and breeding birds.

3 METHODOLOGY

In order to inform this report and the Biodiversity Impact Calculations, a site walkover was undertaken on the 11th August 2025 and 11th September 2025 for the offsite habitats by Meerabai Kings, MSci and qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), to gather botanical and condition assessment data for the site. The full methodology for this is outlined in the associated Biodiversity Impact Calculation (Offsetting Scheme) report[2].

4 BASELINE CONDITIONS

4.1 Existing Habitats

The site comprises of the following habitats: bramble scrub and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* scrub. A UKHab map of the existing habitats is shown in Figure 2.

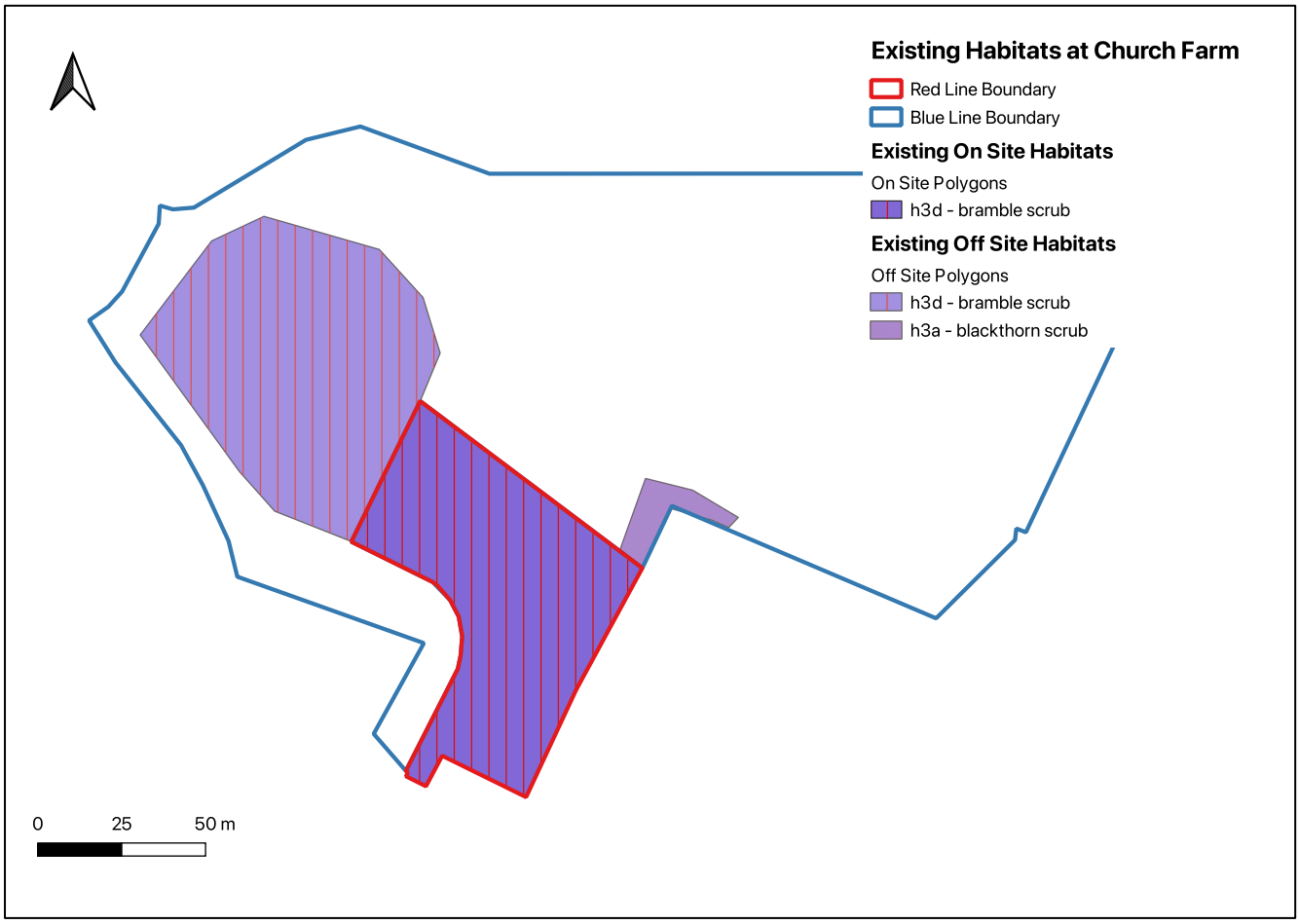

Figure 2. UKHAB map showing existing habitats in the offsite location. Produced using QGIS software, version 3.36 – Maindenhead

4.1.1 Scrub

There is a 0.49ha area of cleared bramble scrub (h3d) onsite (condition N/A) and 0.53ha of cleared bramble scrub (condition N/A) and 0.034ha of existing blackthorn scrub (poor condition) offsite on the northeastern boundary at Church Farm.


Photograph 1a & 1b. Cleared bramble scrub onsite


Photograph 2a & 2b. Cleared blackthorn scrub boundary close up and distant view looking east from the northwest corner, onsite

4.2 Existing Habitat Management

The existing bramble scrub and blackthorn scrub is infrequently managed, with an approximately annual cut back. It was subject to a full cut in 2021 due to the need for tree maintenance onsite. The current management is to be updated, and recommendations are included in section 5.1.

5 PROPOSED HABITATS

The key aims of the biodiversity net gain project offsite is to restore the majority of the removed bramble scrub (h3d) and blackthorn scrub (h3a) at the northeast corner, to mixed species scrub (h3h).

The habitats onsite form part of the development landscape proposals and form a mosaic of habitats created to meet the BNG requirements and also provide a varied landscape aesthetic onsite.

The created habitats onsite are: other neutral grassland (g3c) along the northern boundary and southern boundary landscaped zones, modified grassland (g4) along the southern boundary landscape edge to the new dwellings, mixed scrub (h3h) along the northern garden edge, native hedgerow (h2a) along the western boundary entrance area and species-rich hedgerow (h2a5) along the remainder of the western boundary and northern garden boundary edges. New rural trees are located along the northern and southern landscape zones in an informal arrangement.

A summary of the areas to be enhanced and created is detailed below and shown in Figure 3:

Enhanced offsite habitat:

- 0.28ha bramble scrub (h3d) condition N/A – enhanced to mixed scrub (h3h), moderate condition.
- 0.034ha blackthorn scrub (h3h) poor condition – enhanced to mixed scrub moderate condition.

New created habitat:

- 0.029ha mixed scrub (h3h) – poor condition
- 0.057ha other neutral grassland (g3c) – poor condition
- 0.019ha modified grassland (g4) – poor condition
- 0.08km native hedgerow (h2a)- – poor condition
- 0.114km species-rich native hedgerow (h2a5) – poor condition
- 0.1018ha rural tree – 25 small trees, moderate condition.

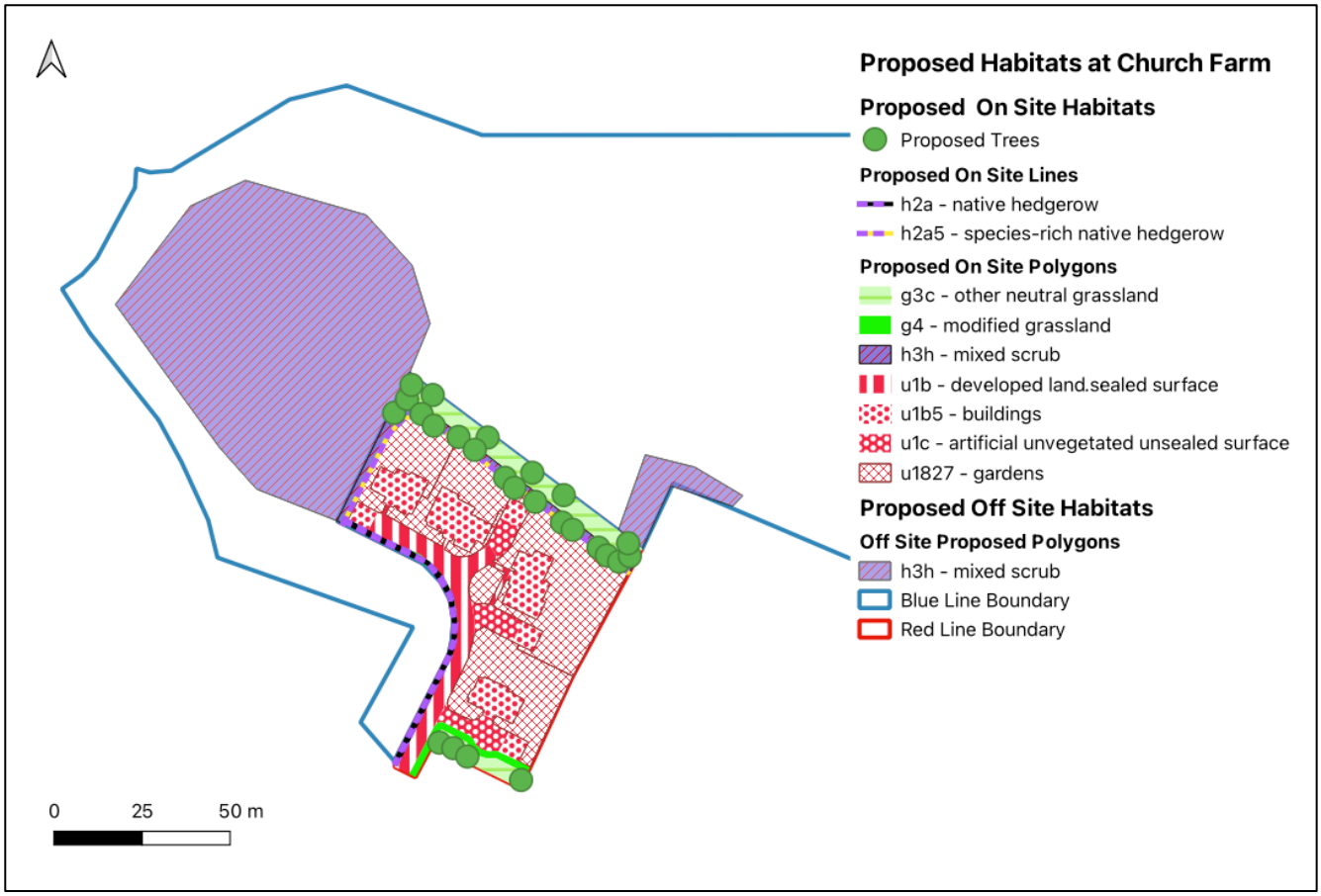

Figure 3. UKHab map showing proposed habitats within the on and off-site locations. Produced using QGIS software, version 3.36- Maindenhead

5.1 Construction Phase

The existing habitat onsite is cleared bramble scrub and has the potential to be affected by development construction activity. The areas within the proposed landscaped habitat zones are to be protected from pollution including dust, chemical and water-based pollution through fencing the landscape zones to protect the ground, existing vegetation and hydrology. Construction machinery and materials are to be stored away from the landscape zones and site edges on hard standing, and drip trays and spill kits are to be used. Full details of habitat protection are to be included in a CEMP report.

Machinery and materials are to be excluded from the offsite areas up to and including construction to allow the bramble, and any cut blackthorn, in the ground to regenerate in advance of the enhancement measures. The following enhancement approach assumes that the bramble and blackthorn scrub have had some time to recover.

5.2 Scrub Enhancement

5.2.1 Statutory Biodiversity Metric Aims

In order to enhance the 0.28ha of bramble scrub (h3d) to mixed scrub (h3h) in 'moderate' condition and 0.034ha blackthorn scrub (h3a) 'poor' condition to mixed scrub (h3h) 'moderate' condition offsite under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, a minimum of 3 condition assessment criteria shall need to be met at the end of the 30-year project.

In order create 0.29ha of new mixed scrub 'poor' condition onsite under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, a minimum of 2 condition assessment criteria shall need to be met at the end of the 30-year project.

The condition criteria are as follows:

Condition A: The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type it has been identified as, based on it UKHab description (where in its natural range). The appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches the characteristics of the specific scrub type. At least 80% of the scrub is native, there are at least three woody species, no single species comprises more than 75% of the cover (except hazel, *Corylus avellana*, common juniper *Juniperus communis,*or box *Buxus sempervirens* which can be up to 100% cover).

Condition B: Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran) shrubs are all present.

Condition C: there is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and species indicative of suboptimal condition make up less than 5% of ground cover.

Condition D: The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between scrub and adjacent habitat.

Condition E: There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.

5.2.2 Bramble and Blackthorn to Mixed Scrub

Native scrub will be planted around the bramble and blackthorn scrub areas, with an aim for a minimum of 35% coverage of other species. This will help to meet condition A. Areas of scrub will be concentrated in and around existing mature clumps and existing trees and hedgerows as well as field corners and boundaries.

New mixed scrub is to be planted along the northern edge of the new species hedgerow to form an ecotone between the new species-rich native hedgerow (section 5.5) and the other neural grassland (section 5.3) in accordance with the landscape proposals and UKHab plan in Figure 3.

All mixed scrub areas are to have a minimum of five species will be chosen from the recommended list below:

Table 3. Native scrub species

Scientific name	Common name
Rosa canina	Dog rose
Rosa arvensis	Field rose
Acer campestre	Field maple
Cornus sanguinea	Dogwood
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn
Corylus avellana	Hazel
Cratargus monogyna	Hawthorn
Sambucus nigra	Elder
Salix caprea	Goat willow

Planting will include whips planted in clumps with areas of bare ground in-between, and the recommended planting density is 1 shrub per 1 metre squared. All shrubs must be planted as bare root stock between late November and late February to avoid the need for watering, stress on the roots and an increased risk of failure.

5.3 Other Neutral Grassland

The following other neutral grassland parcel(s) will be created:

- other neutral grassland (g3c) – 0.057ha 'poor' condition.

5.3.1 Statutory Biodiversity Metric Aims

In order to create the other neutral grassland (g3c) – 0.057ha 'poor' condition under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric aims, the condition assessment passes 2 or fewer condition assessment criteria or passes a minimum of 3 criteria excluding criterion A and F at the end of the 30-year project period.

The condition criteria are as follows:
Condition A (essential): The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description).

Condition B: Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.

Condition C: Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.

Condition D: Cover of Bracken *Pteridium aquilnum* is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble *Rubus fruiticosus*.) is less than 5%.

Condition E: Combined cover of species indicative of sub-optimal condition and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.

Condition F: There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m^2 present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnotes 3 and 5 cannot contribute towards this count). Note this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.

5.3.2 Creation of Other Neutral Grassland

Ground preparation
Soil sampling has not been undertaken; however, the site sits adjacent to the flood plain of the River Adur and historically would have flooded with significant quantities of clays, sand and silts. It is assumed that the topsoils on the site have a clay base and this is used as the substrate guide for the new grassland areas.

To prepare a seed bed first remove weeds and any remaining bramble scrub or bracken using repeated cultivation, then plough or dig to bury the surface vegetation, harrow or rake to create a fine tilth and roll or tread to produce a firm surface. Loamy (clay) soils are easily worked and can usually be prepared in winter autumn or spring during dry weather conditions.

Seed mix and sowing

As the site is considered to have a loamy soil type, Mixture EM5 – Meadow Mixture for Loamy Soils is considered to be a suitable mix**.** The seed will be sown in autumn or spring but can be sown at other times of the year provided there is sufficient warmth and moisture. The seed must be surface sown and can be applied by machine or by hand, at a rate of 40kg/ha (2.28kg for 0.057ha). Divide the area into sections and overlap sow to gain and even coverage, do not cover the seed but firm in with a roll or by treading to give good soil to seed contact.

Table 2. Mixture EM5 – Meadow Mixture for Loamy Soils

Wildflowers 20%

Percentage	Scientific name	Common name
0.6	*Achillea Millefolium*	Yarrow
0.8	*Agrimonia eupatoria*	Agrimony
1.6	*Betonica officinalis*	Betony
2.4	*Centaurea nigra*	Common knapweed
0.6	*Daucus carota*	Wild carrot
0.6	*Galium verum*	Lady's bedstraw
0.6	*Geranium pratense*	Meadow crane's-bill
0.4	*Lathyrus pratensis*	Meadow vetchling
1.6	*Leucanthemum vulgare*	Oxeye daisy
0.4	*Lotus corniculatus*	Birdsfoot trefoil
1.0	*Malva moschata*	Musk mallow
1.6	*Plantago lanceolata*	Ribwort plantain
1.0	*Poterium sanguisorba*	Salad burnet
1.0	*Primula versis*	Cowslip
1.6	*Prunella vulgaris*	Selfheal
2.0	*Ranunculus acris*	Meadow buttercup
0.4	*Ranunculus bulbosus*	Bulbous buttercup
0.4	*Rhinanthus minor*	Yellow rattle
1.0	*Rumex acetosa*	Common sorrel
0.6	*Taraxacum officinale*	Dandelion

Grasses 80%

Percentage	Scientific name	Common name
6.0	*Agrostis capillaris*	Common bent
1.6	*Alopecurus pratensis*	Meadow foxtail (w)
0.8	*Anthoxanthum odoratum*	Sweet vernal-grass (w)
36.0	*Cynosurus cristatus*	Crested dogstail
4.0	*Festuca ovina*	Sheep's-fescue (w)
16.0	*Festuca rubra*	Red fescue
8.0	*Phleum bertolonii*	Smaller cat's-tail (w)
6.0	*Poa pratensis*	Smooth-stalked meadow-grass
1.6	*Schedonorus arundinaceus*	Tall fescue (w)

5.4 Modified Grassland

5.4.1 Statutory Biodiversity Metric Aims

The following modified grassland parcel will be created:

- modified grassland (g4) – 0.019ha 'poor' condition.

In order to create 0.019ha modified grassland 'poor' condition under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric aims, 3 or fewer condition assessment criteria or a minimum of 4 criteria (excluding condition A) shall need to be met at the end of the 30-year project period.

The condition criteria are as follows:

Condition A (essential): There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2 present including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note that this is an essential criterion for achieving moderate or good condition. Where the vascular present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m2 (excluding those in footnote 1), please review the full UKhab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.

Condition B: Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.

Condition C: Scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble *Rubus fruitcosus* may be present). Note- patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.

Condition Physical damage is evident is less than 5% of the total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.

Condition E: Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10% including localised area (for example a concentration of rabbit warrens)

Condition F: Cover of Bracken *Pteridium aquiilium* is less than 20%.

Condition G; There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).

5.4.2 Creation of Modified Grassland

Ground preparation

To prepare a seed bed first remove weeds and any remaining bramble scrub or bracken using repeated cultivation, then plough or dig to bury the surface vegetation, harrow or rake to create a fine tilth and roll or tread to produce a firm surface. Loamy (clay) soils are easily worked and can usually be prepared in winter autumn or

spring during dry weather conditions.

Seed mix and sowing

As the site is considered to have a loamy soil type, Mixture EG5 – Meadow Grass Mixture for Loamy Soils is considered to be a suitable mix**.** The seed will be sown in Autumn or Spring but can be sown at other times of the year provided there is sufficient warmth and moisture. The seed must be surface sown and can be applied by machine or by hand, at a rate of 50kg/ha (0.95kg for 0.019ha). Divide the area into sections and overlap sow to gain and even coverage, do not cover the seed but firm in with a roll or by treading to give good soil to seed contact.

Table 3. Mixture EG5 – Meadow Grass Mixture for Loamy Soils

Grasses 100%

Percentage	Scientific name	Common name
7.5	*Agrostis capillaris*	Common bent
2.0	*Alopecurus pratensis*	Meadow foxtail (w)
1.0	*Anthoxanthum odoratum*	Sweet vernal-grass (w)
45.0	*Cynosurus cristatus*	Crested dogstail
5.0	*Festuca ovina*	Sheep's-fescue (w)
20.0	*Festuca rubra*	Red fescue
10.0	*Phleum bertolonii*	Smaller cat's-tail (w)
7.5	*Poa pratensis*	Smooth-stalked meadow-grass
2.0	*Schedonorus arundinaceus*	Tall fescue (w)

5.5 Hedgerows

5.5.1 Statutory Biodiversity Metric Aims

- 0.08km native hedgerow (h2a)- poor condition
- 0.114km species-rich native hedgerow (h2a5) – poor condition.

In order to create 0.08km of new native hedgerow (h2a) habitat in 'poor' condition under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, it will have no more than 4 failures in the criteria and no more than one failure in each functional group at the end of the 30-year period.

In order to create 0.114km of species rich hedgerow (h2a5) in 'poor' condition under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, this will have no more than 4 failures in the criteria and no more than one failure in each functional group at the end of the 30-year period.

The condition criteria are as follows:

Condition A1: Height; >1.5m average along length, The average height of woody growth estimated from base to stem to the top of the hoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps, or isolate trees. Newly laid of coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass these criteria for up to a maximum of four years (if undertake accordance with good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >0.5m in height).

Condition A2: Width; >1.5m average along length; the average of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn Prunus spinosa suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5m In height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).

Condition B1: Gap- hedge base; gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5m for >90% of length, This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see pg 65 of the hedgerow survey handbook).

Condition B2: Gap- hedge canopy continuity, Gaps make up <10% of the total length; and No canopy gaps >5m. This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5m criterion (as this is typical of a gate).

Condition C1: Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation, >1.0m width of undisturbed ground, with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length, measured from outer edge of the hedgerow and is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least). This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc, can limit available habitat niches.

Condition C2: Nutrient enriched perennial vegetation; plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground, the indicator species used are nettles *Utrica*, cleavers *Gallum aparine* and docks *Rumex spp*. The presence either singly or together does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.

Condition D1: Invasive and neophyte species, >90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive plant species (including those listed on schedule 9 of WCA and recently introduced species; Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. Archaephytes count as natives.

Condition D2: Current damage, >90% of hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free from damage caused by human activities. This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration of other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble or inappropriate management practices (for example excessive hedgerow cutting).

5.5.2 Creation of Native Hedgerow

New native hedgerow (h2a) of 0.08km is to be planted along the western edge of the new access roadway. A minimum of 5 woody species per 30m length is to be used. The species are outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Native hedgerow species

Scientific name	Common Name
Cornus *sanguinea*	Dogwood
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn
Ilex aquifolium	Holly

Scientific name	Common Name
Ligustrum vulgare	Wild Privet
Viburnum opulus	Guelder rose
Corylus avellana	Hazel
Eunonymus europaea	Spindle
Lonicera periclymenum	Common honeysuckle
Rosa canina	Dog Rose

The trees will be planted from November to March before they come into leaf. Planting should be avoided during droughts, hard frosts (most likely in January and February) or particularly cold, windy periods. These will be planted as bare root whips with biodegradable tree guards (such as the Bio-Earth Biodegradable Plastic-Free Tree Shelter Guard[4]) to protect from browsing and accidental damage.

All grass and weeds will be removed in a 1m diameter circle around each tree station prior to planting, by physical stripping. Newly planted trees require watering when planted and regularly in the first weeks after, with the ground thoroughly wetted to ensure the water reaches the roots.

5.5.3 Creation of Native Species-rich Hedgerow

New native species rich hedgerow (h2a5) of 0.114km is to be planted along the western and northern edges of the new dwelling gardens. A minimum of 6 woody species per 30m length is to be used. The species are outlined in Table 4 above.

The trees will be planted from November to March before they come into leaf. Planting should be avoided during droughts, hard frosts (most likely in January and February) or particularly cold, windy periods. These will be planted as bare root whips with biodegradable tree guards (such as the Bio-Earth Biodegradable Plastic-Free Tree Shelter Guard[5]) to protect from browsing and accidental damage.

All grass and weeds will be removed in a 1m diameter circle around each tree station prior to planting, by physical stripping. Newly planted trees require watering when planted and regularly in the first weeks after, with the ground thoroughly wetted to ensure the water reaches the roots.

5.6 Rural Tree Planting

5.6.1 Statutory Biodiversity Metric Aims

In order to create 0.1018ha of small rural trees in 'moderate' condition under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, these trees will have to meet a minimum of 3 criteria at the end of the 30-year period.

The condition criteria are as follows:

[4] https://www.green-tech.co.uk/tree-planting-products/tree-protection-and-shelters/earthboard-biodegradable-plastic-free-tree-shelter-guard#:~:text=Earthboard%20Biodegradable%20Plastic%20Free%20Tree,recyclable%2C%20and%20100%25%20compostable.

[5] https://www.green-tech.co.uk/tree-planting-products/tree-protection-and-shelters/earthboard-biodegradable-plastic-free-tree-shelter-guard#:~:text=Earthboard%20Biodegradable%20Plastic%20Free%20Tree,recyclable%2C%20and%20100%25%20compostable.

Condition A: The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).

Condition B: The tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of the total area and individual gap being >5m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).

Condition C: The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).

Condition D: there is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so that trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.

Condition E: Natural ecological niches for vertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.

Condition F: more than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.

5.6.2 Rural Tree Establishment

The 25 small rural trees making up the 0.1018ha of rural trees will be planted as bare root whips across the site with an informal pattern within the new scrub and grassland areas to the north and south of the site in accordance with the UKHab map and landscape planting plans. With the aim to meet 'moderate 'condition.

Species have been chosen that complement the structure of the native deciduous woodland priority habitat in the surrounding landscape, and includes:

Table 5. Native species for rural tree planting

Scientific name	Common Name
Acer campestre	Field maple
Alnus glutinosa	Black alder
Castanea sativa	Sweet chestnut
Sorbus torminalis	Wild service tree
Tilla cordata	Small leaved lime
Prunus avium	Wild cherry
Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan
Quercus robur	English oak
Betula pendula	Silver birch
Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam
Fagus sylvatica	Beech

Saplings from a mixed-species native nursery stock will be planted in an informal arrangement (see plan Figure 3) of trees with a minimum of 2m between trees. These trees will be interspaced within the other neutral grassland and scrub planting.

These trees will preferably be sourced from local nurseries. It is best to plant bare root stock while the trees are dormant between November and March in the absence of heavy frost. Trees will be protected by a staked mesh guard with an area of bark and/or wood chip mulch present at least 1.2m around the tree trunks. Newly planted

trees require watering when planted and regularly in the first weeks after, with the ground thoroughly wetted to ensure the water reaches the roots.

6 ONGOING MANAGEMENT

6.1 Scrub

Natural regeneration will be encouraged by preventing deer and pedestrian access to particular areas using stock fencing.

Check for scrub composition annually. Where >75% of the scrub comprises a single species, this will need management. Use hand tools such as saws, chainsaws and brush cutters, to cut back scrub. At least 20% of the area should be removed during the management period to facilitate growth of new species and increase species diversity. Where feasible, arisings will be left to decay in deadwood piles to provide habitats for invertebrates. This will help to meet Criterion A.

Annually in summer a check for invasive shrubs and bracken should be carried out and if identified, immediate removal of these species will be scheduled and carried out. This will help to meet Criterion C.

Additionally, to prevent encroachment of scrub onto grassland and new trees the edges of the scrub will be cut to have scalloped edges, which lengthen the scrub and increase shelter points. Scrub to be prevented from encroaching onto the new hedgerow. Cutting in general will encourage re-growth, but it must be cut in rotation to maintain the age structure. As with hedgerows, this cutting must only be timed outside the bird nesting season (1st March to 31st August). Where possible shrubs shouldn't be cut until February, so that valuable winter food associated with fruiting shrubs/trees is retained for over-wintering birds. This will help to meet Criteria D and E.

If individual shrubs within the scrub must be cut back, the stump should remain in-situ to increase deadwood habitat

The scrub habitat (h3h) should include a variety of species and maintain different stages of growth at all times from bare ground, to vegetation and deadwood, to provide shelter in close proximity to available food sources and basking opportunities for reptiles.

6.2 Other Neutral Grassland

Most sown species are perennial and are slow to establish. Annual weeds are likely to arise from the seed bank and potentially scrub from residual root stock. Annual weeds can provide temporary shelter for invertebrates and are to be retained until mid to late summer. Then cut, remove and compost and then the grass can be cut until March the following year. Dig out any scrub, bracken or perennial weeds, for example docks.

The grassland (g3c) will be managed throughout the majority of the year in the first three years, with twice yearly hay and/or silage cuts to control sward growth where necessary in both spring (April/May) and late summer (August/Sept). A 'dial up/dial down' approach will be used where possible, involving close monitoring of sward height throughout the year by the landowner, in consultation with the supervising ecologist, and adjustment of cutting regimes where necessary.

Once grassland is established, it will be subject to a once yearly hay cut at the end of the growing season, once all grasses and wildflowers have set seed to a height 5cm in year one and 40cm in subsequent years.

Currently this should be carried out between late-August to mid-September, but this may be subject to change with an altering climate. Cuttings will be left in rows to dry and shed seed for between 3-5 days and then arisings will be removed to prevent soil nutrient uplift. If deemed necessary, the grass can be cut and gathered in spring, prior to the peak growing season, to between 2-10cm in order to avoid the build-up of rapidly establishing 'undesirable' species.

Uncut margins of grass will be left along the edges of trees and scrub to provide a natural ecotone for the adjacent scrub and hedgerow as well as provide refuge and foraging habitat for wildlife throughout the entire year. The longer margins will be cut on a rotational basis every other year to ensure that the grassland does not convert to a rank sward.

Particularly at the early stages of the project where soil nutrient levels are higher it may be necessary to control species that are potentially injurious (e.g. ragwort, St John's wort *Hypericum perfortum*, creeping thistle, broad-leaved dock, spear thistle and curled dock *Rumex crispus*) if they become over-dominant within the sward. This control will be very localised and use minimal chemical intervention possible, with cutting and hand pulling techniques utilised where possible. If larger patches of these species establish, localised application of herbicide will be used through hand-operated knapsack sprayers or weed wipers to eliminate individual plants. If possible, citronella-based sprays could be used, which is sometimes termed as a more 'environmentally friendly' option. These sprays are best applied when plants are at seedling or rosette stage using knapsack or weed wipers.

Monitoring of bare ground cover is to be undertaken during botanical surveys on an annual basis. Where invasive species have become dominant scalping of the sward through low cutting can be used to create bare patches of soil. Any areas of bare ground should be resown.

6.3 Modified Grassland

The growth and establishment of wild grasses may be slow initially especially at low sowing rates, there will be flush of annual weeds in the first growing season that can be easily controlled by topping and mowing. Any perennial weeds, scrub or bracken is to be dig out when they appear.

Mow all plant growth (sown grasses and weeds) regularly to 40-60mm throughout the first drawing season to prevent weed smothering the emerging grasses. Remove cuttings if dense, regular topping will reduce the quantity over time and these can be left to disperse.

The second and subsequent years can be managed through regular mowing to form a neat edge to the access route into the site.

Particularly at the early stages of the project, it may be necessary to control species that are potentially injurious (e.g. ragwort, St John's wort, creeping thistle, broad-leaved dock, spear thistle and curled dock) if they become over-dominant within the sward. This control will be very localised and use minimal chemical intervention possible, with cutting and hand pulling techniques utilised where possible. If larger patches of these species establish, localised application of herbicide will be used through hand-operated knapsack sprayers or weed wipers to eliminate individual plants. If possible, citronella-based sprays could be used, which is sometimes termed as a

more 'environmentally friendly' option. These sprays are best applied when plants are at seedling or rosette stage using knapsack or weed wipers.

Where invasive species have become dominant scalping of the sward through low cutting can be used to create bare patches of soil. Any areas of bare ground should be resown.

6.4 Native Hedgerow

Year 1 to 5
New trees in the native hedgerow (h2a) and new species rich hedgerow (h2a5) saplings must be kept well-watered during establishment. Weeds must be controlled at the base of the young trees.

Tree guards, to protect the new saplings from accidental damage and deer, to be inspected yearly for first five years and then removed if planting is well established.

Check for signs of disease. If disease is identified, advice should be sought from an arboriculturalist regarding the appropriate method of treatment.

Inspection for the presence of invasives. Invasives are more likely to colonise in the first five years after recent ground disturbance and bare ground cover.

Replacement planting will be required where any trees fail to establish and to close gaps within the hedgerow as it establishes.

Trimming hedgerows where required (unlikely when hedgerow initially establishes) should be carried out for the first five years annually to maintain healthy tree growth. Cutting should ideally take place in January/February to encourage fruiting an avoid nesting bird season.

Year 5 onwards
Cutting regime should be reduced from yearly to every three years after the first five years as flower buds often form on second-year growth. Hedges should be cut in rotation, cutting only a third of all hedgerows in one year. Flails should be avoided on branches/stems with a diameter over 2cm and ensure flail is kept sharp and clean for an effective cut. Alternatively, use a circular saw.

During cutting continue inspection for the presence of invasives and removal where necessary. The hedgerow can also be checked for any dead/dying individual plants and areas that require new planting can be identified. Any supplementary planting should use young, bare root whips and be planted in January/February. If disease is identified advice should be sought from an arboriculturalist regarding the appropriate method of treatment.

Aim to cut hedge in an 'A' shape, providing a wider, more sheltered base and narrower top. Where possible, allow some trees within the hedge to grow taller, as this provides 'perches' for birds.

Where hedgerows bound garden boundary edges these faces of the hedge are also subject to the management regime in this section.

6.5 Rural Trees

Tree saplings must be kept well-watered during establishment (the Arboricultural Association recommends 50 litres/week) in the summer months for their first three years. Weeds must be controlled at the base of the trees.

Tree guards, to protect the new saplings from accidental damage and deer, to be inspected twice annually to remove weeds and any soil build up inside the tubes for first three years and then remove when planting well established. Tree stakes and ties will be checked annually and after strong winds.

Check for signs of disease. If disease is identified advice should be sought from an arboriculturalist regarding the appropriate method of treatment. Replacement planting will be required where trees fail to establish.

Build-up of leaf litter from the proposed trees onto the other neutral grassland parcel will need to be prevented through the raking up of leaves in the autumn months.

Cutting of existing trees as required must only be timed outside the bird nesting season (avoiding 1st March to 31st August). Where possible shrubs shouldn't be cut until February, so that valuable winter food associated with fruiting shrubs/trees is retained for over-wintering birds.

7 BOTANICAL MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

Monitoring surveys will commence from Year 1.

Surveys from Years 1–3 will focus on establishment of the sward. The first year monitoring of grassland (g3c) and modified grassland (g4) will be essential to characterise the swards composition and apply effective management to control grass growth using measures such as increased cut and collect or yellow rattle applications moving forward.

Years 4 onwards will be focused on the botanical diversity of the grassland sward in each habitat to ensure that it meets the condition assessment criteria under the biodiversity metric. This will involve carrying out a repeat condition assessment and include a UKHab survey of each habitat to categorise the habitat criteria that they currently meet.

Quadrat sampling will be undertaken to identify the habitat type that is establishing and then number of species per m^2. The location of these quadrats will be recorded, and sampling will be carried out in the same location during each monitoring survey to ensure ease of comparison. Fixed-point contact photos will also be taken to measure the appearance and structure of the sward over time. Percentage of bare ground, scrub and bracken cover will be estimated. A botanical species list will be collected across the grassland through a general walkover to check against target species list.

All surveys will be carried out by a qualified ecologist with appropriate botanical survey experience.

Table 6. Schedule for botanical monitoring surveys at Church Farm.

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	10	15	20	25	30
June		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X

July								X		X		X	
August					X	X	X		X		X		X

8 GENERAL MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Mixed Scrub

Scrub (h3h) encroachment will be monitored twice annually. Scrub will be checked at the end of the growing season and at the beginning of the growing season at which point areas that have encroached or are likely to encroach can be cut back. In addition, checks for species present against the expected species list will be carried out.

Monitoring will take place twice a year for the first five years. Depending on the rate at which scrub needs cutting back, this can be adjusted after the first five years to be done annually in September if there is no management required in April/May. The species list of the scrub will then be assessed only once every five years, with cutting back and invasive checks built into the management plan rather than monitoring plan.

Monitoring checks for Years 25 and 30 will focus upon the condition assessment criteria to ensure that these align with the HMMP goals.

Table 7. *Schedule for scrub monitoring at Church Farm..*

Year	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**10**	**15**	**20**	**25**	**30**
April	X	X	X	X	X	X							
September	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

8.2 Hedgerows

Hedgerows (h2a) and (h2a5) will annually be checked for signs of disease and more frequently while new ones are establishing. If disease is identified advice will be sought from an arboriculturist regarding the appropriate method of treatment.

During the management of hedgerows, they will be inspected for the presence of invasives. This will follow the cutting/trimming schedule. Invasives are more likely to colonise in the first five years after recent ground disturbance and bare ground cover.

Monitoring checks for Years 25 and 30 will focus upon the condition assessment criteria to ensure that these align with the HMMP goals.

Table 8. S*chedule for monitoring surveys for hedgerows at Church Farm.*

Year	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**10**	**15**	**20**	**25**	**30**
January/February	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
August		X	X	X	X	X							

8.3 Rural Trees

Tree saplings must be kept well-watered during establishment in the summer months for their first three years.

Tree guards to be inspected twice annually to remove weeds and any soil build up. Tree stakes and ties will be checked annually and after strong winds.

Leaf litter from the proposed trees to be raked up in the autumn months within grassland areas.

Monitoring checks for Years 25 and 30 will focus upon the condition assessment criteria to ensure that these align with the HMMP goals.

Table 9. *Schedule for monitoring surveys for rural trees at Church Farm.*

Year	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**10**	**15**	**20**	**25**	**30**
January/February	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
June/ July/August	X	X	X	X									
September/ October		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

8.4 Adaptive Management

Yearly management/monitoring reports will drive annual management practices across the site.

The most important aspect to adaptive management is robust and regular monitoring by appropriately qualified practitioners who can identify emerging issues with the establishment of created habitats. Following annual reports written and reviewed by practitioners, management techniques and schedules can be reviewed and updated as necessary year on year. Monitoring reports can be bi-annually for habitats/parcels with a larger number of ecological constraints/ongoing issues. Changes in management/monitoring schedule will need to be recorded and this plan.

It is important that land managers are aware of potential issues and record anything during day-to-day management that can be fed back to project manager, the relevant authority and practitioners to ensure the relevant steps are taken before the annual monitoring checks.

Should you need any further advice on the information provided above, please do not hesitate to contact The Ecology Co-op.

APPENDIX 1 – Wildlife Legislation and National Planning Policy

Introduction

The following text is intended for general guidance only and does not constitute comprehensive professional legal advice. It provides a summary of the current legal protection afforded to wildlife in general and certain species. It includes current national planning policy relevant to nature conservation.

The 'Birds Directive', 'Habitats Directive' and 'Natura 2000 Sites'

The Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds ("the Birds Directive") sets a framework for the protection of wild birds. Under the Directive, several provisions are made including the designation and protection of 'Special Protection Areas' (SPAs) – areas which support important bird populations, and the legal protection of rare or vulnerable species.

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the "Habitats Directive") directs member states of the EU to take measures to maintain the favourable conservation status of important habitats and species. This requires the designation of a series of sites which contain important populations of species listed on Annex II of the Directive (for example Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, Barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus* and white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*. Together with 'Special Areas of Conservation' (SACs), SPAs form a network across Europe of protected areas known as the 'Natura 2000 sites'.

Annex IV lists species in need of more strict protection, these are known as "European Protected Species (EPS)". All bat species, common dormice *Muscardinus avellana*, otter *Lutra lutra* and great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* are examples of EPS that are regularly encountered during development projects.

The 'Habitats Regulations'

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended (the "Habitats Regulations") is the principle means of transposing the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, and updates the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 ("the 1994 regulations") in England and Wales.

'Natura 2000' sites, now known as National Site Network sites under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, receive the highest level of protection under the Regulations which requires that any activity within the zone of influence of these sites would be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) by the competent authority (e.g. planning authority), leading to an Appropriate Assessment (AA) in cases where 'likely significant effects' to the conservation oibjectives are identified.

For European Protected Species, Regulation 41 makes it a criminal offence to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal;
- deliberately disturb wild animals of such species;
- deliberately take or destroy their eggs (where relevant);
- damage or destroy a *breeding or resting place* of such an animal;
- possess, control, sell or exchange any live or dead animal or plant, of such species;
- deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy a wild plant of such species.

The Habitats Directive and Habitats Regulations provide for the derogation from these prohibitions for specific reasons provided certain conditions are met. An EPS licensing regime allows operations that would otherwise be unlawful acts to be carried out lawfully. Natural England is the licensing Authority and, in order to grant a license, ensures that three statutory conditions (sometimes referred to as the 'three derogation tests') are met:

- a licence can be granted for the purposes of "preserving public health or safety or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment" (Regulation 53 (2) (e);
- a licence can be granted if "there are no satisfactory alternatives" to the proposed action;
- a licence shall not be granted unless the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended

This remains one of the most important pieces of wildlife legislation in the UK. There are various schedules to the Act protecting birds (Schedule 1), other animals including insects (Schedule 5), plants (Schedule 8), and control of invasive non-native species (Schedule 9).

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, all wild birds (with the exception of those listed on Schedule 2), their eggs and nests are protected by law and it is an offence to:

- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- take or destroy the egg of any wild bird
- disturb any bird listed on Schedule 1, while it is nest building, or at a nest with eggs or young, or disturb the dependant young of any such bird.

Schedule 5 lists all non-avian animals receiving protection to a varied degree. At its strongest, the Act makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturb animals while occupying such places. Examples of species with *full protection* include all EPS, common reptile species, water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* and Roman snail *Helix pomatia*. Other species are protected from sale, barter or exchange only, such as white letter hairstreak *Satyrium w-album*.

The Act makes it an offence to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any plant or seed, and sell or possess any plant listed on Schedule 8. It is also an offence to intentionally uproot any wild plant not listed on Schedule 8 unless authorised [by the land owner]. Species on Schedules 5 and 8 are reviewed every 5 years when species can be added or removed.

Measures for the prevention of spreading non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife is included in the Act, which prohibits the release of animals or planting of plants into the wild of species listed on Schedule 9 (for example Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandifera*, New Zealand Pygmyweed *Crassula helmsii*).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) also prohibits certain inhumane methods of traps and devices for the capture or killing of wild animals and certain additional methods such as fixed trap, poisoning with gas or smoke, or spot-lighting with vehicles for killing species listed on Schedule 6 of the Act (this includes all bat species, badger, otter, polecat, dormice, hedgehog and red squirrel).

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)

The NERC Act (2006) created the statutory nature conservation body Natural England, and places a statutory duty on all public bodies, including planning authorities, under Section 40, to take, or promote the taking by others, steps to further the conservation of *habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity* in England (commonly referred to as the 'Biodiversity Duty'). This duty extends to all public bodies the biodiversity duty of Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, which placed a duty only on Government and Ministers. Section 41 of the NERC Act lists the habitats and species of principle importance.

This includes a wide range of species from mosses, vascular plants, invertebrates through to mammals and birds. It originates from the priority species listed under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) with some omissions and additions.

Environment Act (2021)

The Environment Act sets a target of halting the decline in species through the inclusion of a legally binding 2030 species abundance target. Aiming to restore natural habitats and enhance biodiversity, the Act requires new developments to improve or create habitats for nature (through mechanisms such as mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain), and tackle deforestation. Going forwards, UK businesses will need to look closely at their supply chains as amongst other measures they will be prohibited from using commodities associated with wide-scale deforestation. Woodland protection measures are also strengthened through the Act.

The Act enables the reform of the Habitats Regulations and further improves protection for nature through the establishment of Local Nature Recovery Strategies that support national Nature Recovery Networks. In addition, the Act provides for the production of Protected Site Strategies and Species Conservation Strategies, aimed at supporting the design and delivery of strategic approaches to deliver better outcomes for nature.

Protection of Badgers Act (1992)

The Badger *Meles meles* is afforded specific legal protection in Britain under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992), and Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (see above).

Under this legislation, it is a criminal offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure, take, possess, or cruelly ill-treat, a Badger, or to attempt to do so;
- interfere with a sett, by damaging or destroying it;
- to obstruct access to, or any entrance of, a badger sett; or
- to disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett.

A licence may be obtained from Natural England to permit certain prohibited actions for a number of defined reasons including interference of a sett for the purpose of development, provided that a certain number of conditions are met. Note that licenses are not normally granted for works affecting badgers between the end of November and the start of July.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024)[6] sets out the Government's view on how planners should balance nature conservation with development and helps ensure that Government meets its biodiversity commitments with regard to the operation of the planning system.

Paragraph 192b, states that council plans should "*promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity*."

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005, 2005)[7]. In accordance with the NPPF, it is important that developments should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

[6] HM Government (2024). National Planning Policy Framework. Department for Communities and Local Government. Available online at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

[7] HM Government (2005) ODPM Circular 06/05 Government Circular: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System*. Available online at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7692/147570.pdf.

- minimising impacts on existing biodiversity and habitats;
- providing net gains in biodiversity and habitats, wherever possible;
- establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP), first published in 1994, was the UK's response to the commitments of the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) until 2010, when the UK BAP was replaced by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. This framework covers the period 2011 to 2020 and forms the UK government's response to the new strategic plan of the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) published in 2010. This promotes a focus on individual countries delivering target for protection for biodiversity through their own strategies.

The most recent biodiversity strategy for England, 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' was published by Defra (2011), and a progress update was provided in July 2013 (Defra 2013).

'Biodiversity 2020' builds on the Natural Environment White Paper for England – 'The Natural Choice', published on 7 June 2011, and sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade.

Biodiversity 2020 deliberately avoids setting specific targets and actions for local areas and species because the Government believes that local people and organisations are best placed to decide how to implement the strategy in the most appropriate way for their local area or situation.

Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC)

In 1996, the UK's leading non-governmental bird conservation organisations listed the conservation status of all bird species in the UK against a series of criteria relating to their population size, trends and relative importance to global conservation. The lists, known as the 'Red', 'Amber' and 'Green' lists (in order of decreasing concern) are used to inform key conservation policy and decisions. The lists are reviewed every five years and are a useful reference for determining the current importance of a particular site for birds. The most recent review was undertaken in 2021 (Stanbury et al, 2021), which provides an up to date assessment of the conservation status of birds in the UK.

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