

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

Secure Dog Field

Site: Billingshurst Dog Field

Drawing reference: 0003-32-D01B - Site Layout Plan, Scale 1:1000 @ A3 (dated 29.05.26, Preliminary)

Document date: 9 June 2026

1. Introduction

This Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy accompanies the planning application for a secure dog exercise field at Billingshurst. It sets out the ecological enhancement measures across the site and explains how each contributes to biodiversity. The strategy should be read alongside Site Layout Plan 0003-32-D01B, on which all features described here are shown.

Most of these enhancements are already in place on site. The native hedgerow, specimen tree planting and managed grassland have been established, and the wildflower margin and bund have been seeded. The natural colonisation buffer, provided at the local authority's request, is being allowed to establish. The bat boxes, bird boxes and wildlife refuge remain proposed. The status of each feature is set out in the schedule in Section 3.

The scheme retains the open, rural character of the site while providing a range of habitat features that increase the diversity and abundance of wildlife. Enhancements focus on native planting, flower-rich habitat for pollinators, and the provision of refuges and boxes for birds, bats and other fauna.

2. Site Context

The site comprises a parcel of land laid out as a single secure dog field, bounded by Okehurst Road to the south. The main field surface is managed grassland, framed by native hedgerow around two boundaries, with wildflower habitat seeded along the margins and within a bund. Specimen trees have been planted within the dog field.

3. Schedule of Biodiversity Enhancements

The following enhancements form the strategy. The status column distinguishes features already created on site from those still proposed.

Feature	Status	Quantity / Extent	Biodiversity purpose
Native hedgerow	Existing	circa 200m	Native, mixed-species hedgerow providing nesting and foraging habitat, wildlife corridors and connectivity along site boundaries. Species mix detailed in Section 5.
Specimen trees	Existing	15 trees (6 species)	Native and ornamental specimen trees adding canopy, structure and long-term habitat. Species listed below.
Improved / modified grassland	Existing	circa 15,400 sqm	Managed grassland sward forming the main field surface, contributing structural diversity supporting insects and birds
Natural colonisation buffer	Establishing	circa 1,000 sqm	Area left to colonise naturally, allowing locally-adapted vegetation to establish and create rough/tussocky habitat. Provided at the local authority's request.
Wildflower margin (nectar-rich seed mix)	Seeded	circa 2,000 sqm	Nectar- and pollen-rich sward to support pollinators (bees, butterflies, hoverflies) and invertebrates through the season.
Wildflower bund	Seeded	NE Sector of plot	Raised earth bund sown with wildflowers, adding topographic variation, basking and refuge habitat and additional flowering resource.
Bat boxes	Proposed	As plan	Roosting opportunities for bats, supporting commuting and foraging populations.
Bird boxes	Proposed	As plan	Nesting opportunities for a range of bird species.
Wildlife refuges	Proposed	As plan	Log piles / refugia providing shelter and hibernation habitat for invertebrates, amphibians and small mammals.

4. Specimen Tree Planting

A total of 15 specimen trees across six species have been planted within the dog field, providing canopy, vertical structure and long-term habitat value. Semi-mature stock was used, giving immediate structure and habitat. The species were chosen in conjunction with a local nursery to be appropriate and resilient for this site, which has challenging soil conditions, helping to ensure the planting establishes successfully and is sustainable in the long term. The species mix is dominated by native birch, supplemented by Amelanchier and a red maple cultivar for additional spring blossom and autumn colour:

Species	Qty	Height & girth at planting
Amelanchier	3	Semi-mature
Acer rubrum 'October Glory'	3	Height 3.6-3.7m; girth 8-10cm
Betula pendula (Silver Birch)	3	Height 4.4-6m
Betula pubescens alba (Downy Birch)	3	Height 3.6-3.7m; girth 14-15cm
Betula utilis	1	Height 2.3-3.3m
Betula jacquemontii	2	Height 4-5m
Total	15	15 specimen trees

Height and girth as supplied (nursery specification, Architectural Plants Ltd). Amelanchier dimensions not specified.

5. Habitat Enhancements in Detail

Native hedgerow (circa 200m) - existing

Native hedgerow has been established along the western site boundary. Mixed native hedgerows provide nesting sites and foraging for birds, shelter and corridors for small mammals and invertebrates, and connectivity to the wider landscape. The hedgerow has been planted using the following native species mix:

Species	Proportion
Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)	40%
Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>)	20%
Bird cherry (<i>Prunus padus</i>)	10%
Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>)	10%
Dog rose (<i>Rosa canina</i>)	10%
Field maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>)	10%

This blossom- and berry-rich mix supports pollinators in spring and provides autumn fruit for birds and small mammals. The hedgerow has been planted as a dense, staggered double row; the planting layout is set out in Appendix A.

Wildflower margin and bund (circa 2,000 sqm) - seeded

A nectar-rich wildflower margin has been seeded, together with a wildflower bund on the western boundary. These flower-rich areas provide a sustained nectar and pollen resource for pollinators and support a broad invertebrate community. The bund adds topographic variation, creating warmer, drier microhabitats.

Improved / modified grassland (circa 15,400 sqm) - existing

The main field surface is managed grassland. Appropriate cutting regimes and avoidance of intensive inputs help maintain a varied sward that contributes structural diversity and foraging habitat alongside the field's primary use.

Natural colonisation buffer (circa 1,000 sqm) - establishing

An area has been set aside, at the local authority's request, to colonise naturally and is now establishing. Allowing locally-adapted plants to establish without sowing creates rough, tussocky vegetation that benefits invertebrates, small mammals and the birds that feed on them, while requiring minimal intervention.

Boxes and refuges for fauna - proposed

Bat boxes, bird boxes and wildlife refuges are proposed at the locations shown on the plan. Bat and bird boxes provide roosting and nesting opportunities where natural cavities are limited, and wildlife refuges (such as log piles) offer shelter and hibernation habitat for invertebrates, amphibians and small mammals.

6. Management and Maintenance

To secure the long-term value of these enhancements, the following management measures will be undertaken:

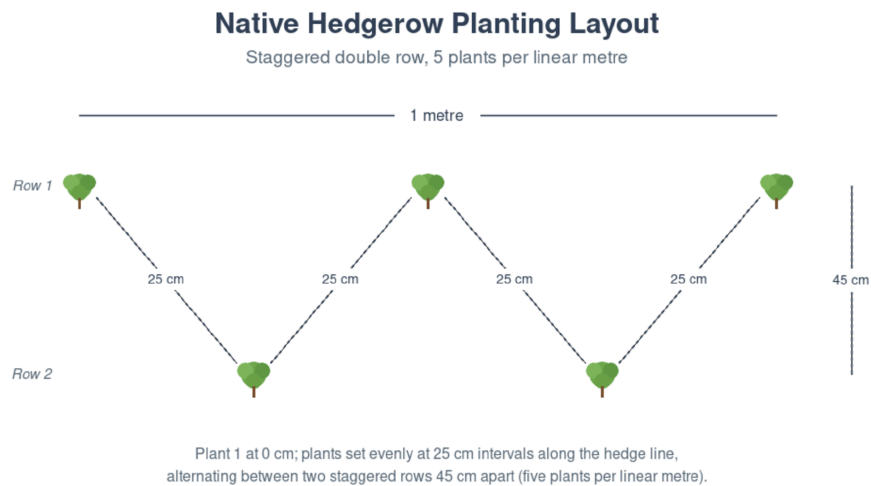
- The hedgerow will be cut more frequently during its first three years, following a more intensive maintenance cycle to encourage thickening, speed up the rate of habitat creation and promote habitat types that are not abundant in the immediate area.
- No fertilisers or pesticides will be used. Weeds will be removed manually and the fence line managed by hand.
- The wildflower margin and bund will be cut once or twice per year (late summer/autumn), with arisings removed to reduce soil fertility and favour wildflowers.
- The grassland sward will be maintained through appropriate mowing.
- The natural colonisation buffer will be left to establish, with only occasional intervention to prevent dominance by scrub if required.
- Bat boxes, bird boxes and wildlife refuges will be monitored from a distance to check they remain in good order, without disturbing any occupants.

7. Summary

The dog field delivers a coherent set of biodiversity enhancements. The native hedgerow, specimen tree planting and managed grassland are established, the wildflower margin and bund have been seeded, and the natural colonisation buffer is establishing. The bat boxes, bird boxes and wildlife refuge remain proposed. Together these measures increase habitat diversity and connectivity across the site and provide resources for pollinators, birds and small fauna, while remaining compatible with the field's day-to-day use.

Appendix A - Native Hedgerow Planting Layout

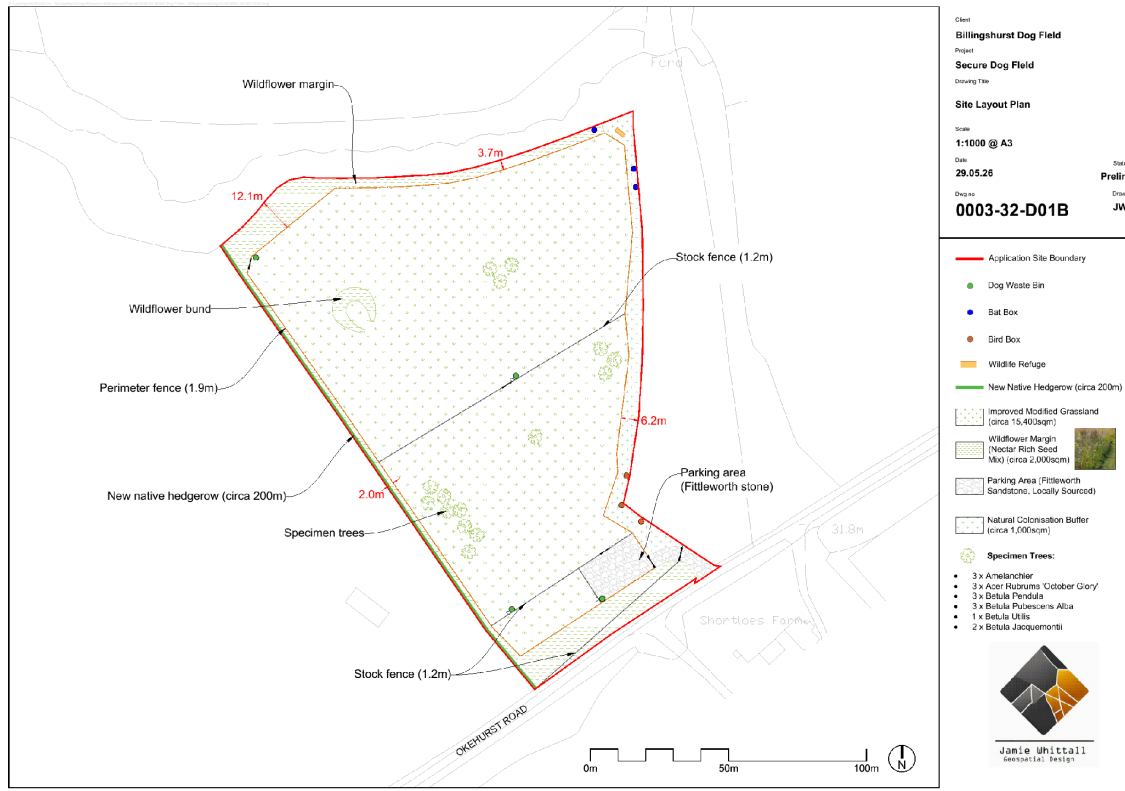
The native hedgerow has been planted as a staggered double row at a density of five plants per linear metre. Plants are set 50 cm apart within each row in a zigzag (staggered) arrangement across the two rows, as illustrated below. This produces a dense, stock-proof hedge that establishes quickly and provides early habitat value.



Species mix: Hawthorn 40%, Blackthorn 20%, Bird Cherry 10%, Hazel 10%, Dog Rose 10%, Field Maple 10% (see Section 5).

Appendix B - Annotated Site Layout Plan

The enhancement features described in this strategy are shown on Site Layout Plan 0003-32-D01B, reproduced below. Refer to the plan legend for feature symbols and the location of each enhancement.



Site Layout Plan 0003-32-D01B - Scale 1:1000 @ A3 (Preliminary, 29.05.26)