Brow Field direct access

Overview
These works create direct access to Brow Field from Northlands Lane. This requires removal of approximately 4.5m of hedgerow to the south of an existing entrance to a neighbouring field (owned by another landowner), install a 14 ft metal farm gate, and replace dry ditch/ grass verge in front of the gate with additional hard-standing adjacent to the existing access to the neighbouring field. As a preliminary step, hedge removal consent (DC/25/0049) was sought. I was informed by the HDC Trees Officer (Andy Bush) that it has been approved.

A plan is shown at Figure 1.

Reasons for needing the new gate/ access and hedge removal
Access to Brow Field is currently via the adjacent field, through two field gates immediately to the North / North-East. We have a right of access via this field. However, using the existing field gates is difficult because there is limited room to manoeuvre tractors and trailers. This issue will become worse as the trees planted in the adjacent field grow and the land in the SW corner of this field turns to scrub.

Arboricultural and biodiversity implications
This section of hedge to be removed is coppiced hazel. It contains no mature trees, or rare species. Thus the arboricultural implications are minimal. DC/25/0049 has granted permission to remove the hedge to create a direct point of entry into Brow Field. This section has now been coppiced. This will facilitate removal of the hedge later in the year without disturbing nesting birds, if planning permission is granted.

Within Brow Field approximately 100m of mixed hedgerow has been planted to separate the south-east corner from the remainder of the field. A mixed orchard and wildflower meadow is being created in this 0.14 Ha section of the field. The wildflower meadow and hedge more than offsets the hedgerow / habitat loss caused by the removal of 4.5m of hedge and 24.3 m^2 of verge adjacent to Northlands Lane.

New access design
Figure 1 shows that the new access into Brow Field from Northlands Lane will extend the existing crushed stone access to the neighbouring field. This approach minimises loss of grass verge. The hedge that forms the boundary between the two fields will be retained.

Figure 2 (Revised) shows a cross-section of the access construction from field to the road. A number of measures have been introduced to address HDC Drainage's assessment that there's a "marginal risk" of surface water draining onto Northlands Lane from the cross-over. The dry ditch will be deepened in front of the new gate to increase its permeable capacity and filled with hard core. Standard farm track construction will be used. A geo-textile membrane will be laid to stabilise the new access track, with a base layer of crushed stone, then MOT Type 1 on top. The profile will be built up to create a slight valley running S-N above the ditch and the existing crossover. This valley will slope down to the north, facilitate drainage of any surface water on the crossover away from the road.

Northlands Lane has no kerbs, so none will be introduced here.

Figure 3 shows a Google Earth image to indicate the size of the proposed access. It is within the de minimis exemption provided for in the Biodiversity Net Gain regulations. In any event, significant biodiversity enhancement is taking place within Brow Field.

Highway and drainage
The hedge is set back from the road by about 6m at this part of the lane. Figure 4 shows the splays exceed 70m in both directions. This substantially exceeds the minimum requirements.

Brow Field drains into the hedgerow /trees and field to the north – shown by the contour lines and the blue slope line in the map below. The ditch immediately in front of the hedge where the proposed gate will be sited is dry. There is no culvert under the existing field to the north. Even after very heavy rain the ditch in front of the proposed gate contains minimal water (rarely more than 10cm depth). Thus, no drainage issues will be created by filling the section of ditch in front of the gate.



Site photo showing the existing field entrance to the neighbouring field, and the coppiced hedge section where direct access into brow field will be created.

