

Planting and Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme

Site: Explore By Paw, Church Farm, Waltwood Road, Llanmartin, Newport NP18 2EB

Description: **Change of use of agricultural land to a dog walking area (sui generis) (Retrospective)**

Condition 6 requires submission and approval of the planting and biodiversity scheme within 3 months of the date of this decision, the submission of a planting scheme for the site (showing the number, species, heights on planting and positions of all trees and shrubs) and an associated scheme of biodiversity enhancements. Both schemes shall include an implementation timetable and a management schedule. Any approved scheme(s) shall be carried out in its entirety by a date not later than the end of the full planting season immediately following the approval of that scheme. Thereafter, the planting shall be maintained for a period of 5 years from the date of planting in accordance with the agreed management schedule that shall have been submitted with that planting scheme. Any trees or shrubs which die or are damaged shall be replaced and maintained until satisfactorily established. For the purposes of this condition, a full planting season shall mean the period from October to April inclusive. All agreed biodiversity measures shall be retained as agreed for the lifetime of the development and managed in accordance with any agreed management schedule relating to planning permission reference 24/0813 and planning appeal CAS-04703-L3C4W2.

Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Scheme

This Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of Condition 6 attached to planning permission 24/0813 and CAS-04703-L3C4W2. The measures described below shall be implemented in accordance with the timetable set out and thereafter managed for the lifetime of the development.

1. Pollinator and Farmland Bird Strip

A 4-metre-wide flowering field margin will be established along the eastern boundary of the dog exercise field as shown on the attached plan.

The margin will be sown with Phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*), either as a single species or as part of a nectar-rich annual cover crop mix containing a minimum of 40% phacelia together with other beneficial flowering species. The precise seed mix may be amended to reflect seasonal availability and current best practice, provided that it delivers an equivalent or greater biodiversity benefit.

Purpose

The flowering margin has been designed to:

- provide a valuable nectar and pollen source for bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects throughout the summer;
- provide seed for farmland birds during the autumn and winter months;
- provide seasonal cover and foraging habitat for small mammals, insects and birds;
- strengthen ecological connectivity along the eastern field boundary.

Establishment

The strip shall be established during the first suitable sowing season following approval of this scheme.

The ground shall be cultivated to produce a firm, fine seedbed to a depth of approximately 50 mm. Seed shall be sown at approximately 10 kg per hectare (1 g/m²) between April and September, once the risk of frost has passed.

Ongoing Management

The flowering strip shall be managed as follows:

- the crop shall remain uncut throughout the flowering period to maximise nectar availability;
- following flowering, the vegetation shall be retained over winter to provide seed and shelter for farmland birds and other wildlife;
- no cutting or cultivation shall take place during the main bird breeding season (March to August inclusive), unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority on ecological grounds;
- during late winter or early spring (February to March), the vegetation shall be cut and incorporated into the soil, or otherwise appropriately managed, prior to re-establishment;
- the strip shall be re-sown annually, or as necessary depending upon the selected seed mix, to maintain continuous biodiversity value;
- weed control shall be undertaken only where necessary to prevent the spread of injurious or invasive species whilst maintaining the ecological function of the habitat.

This habitat shall be retained and managed for the lifetime of the development.

2. Bird Nest Boxes

Two bird nest boxes shall be installed on the mature boundary trees located on the northern boundary of the site as indicated by ★ on the attached plan.

(a) Tawny Owl Nest Box

One open-fronted Tawny Owl nest box shall be installed beneath a substantial branch at a height of approximately 3–4 metres above ground level.

The entrance shall face away from the prevailing south-westerly wind where practicable. The box shall be secured using adjustable, non-invasive fixings such as polypropylene rope or ratchet straps to avoid damage to the host tree.



(b) Small Bird Nest Box

One 32 mm entrance hole WoodStone nest box, or equivalent, suitable for Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Tree Sparrow, House Sparrow, Nuthatch and Pied Flycatcher, shall be installed at a height of approximately 1.5–3 metres above ground level on a mature tree.

The box shall be positioned away from direct midday sun and prevailing winds where practicable.



Management

Both bird boxes shall:

- be installed prior to the end of the first planting season following approval of this scheme;
- be inspected annually outside the bird breeding season (September to January);
- be cleaned where necessary and maintained in good condition;
- be replaced with equivalent boxes should they become damaged beyond repair.

The bird boxes shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

3. Tree and hedgerow planting

Planting

The proposed hedgerow shall comprise native species whips measuring approximately 60 to 80 cm in height. Planting shall be undertaken as a double-staggered row, with rows spaced 400 mm apart and individual plants set at 400 mm centres, providing an average density of approximately five plants per linear metre.

Planting shall be carried out during the dormant planting season (typically between November and March), subject to suitable ground and weather conditions.

The proposed hedgerow species mix shall comprise:

- 40% *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn)
- 30% *Prunus spinosa* (Blackthorn)
- 20% *Corylus avellana* (Hazel)
- 10% *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly)

Tree planting is also proposed to the east of the proposed boundary to provide instant height and to help the site integrate with its surroundings which is characterised by scattered boundary trees and woodland.

Tree Species mix as follows:

- 2x *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam)
- 2x *Malus sylvestris* (Crab Apple)
- 2x *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan)

The trees will be supplied and planted as semi-mature specimens to provide an immediate landscape presence and visual screening benefit. Each tree will be planted in planting holes 1.2m x 1.2m x 900mm deep, with the topsoil mixed with a minimum of 20litres of suitable tree planting compost and replaced carefully around the roots and lightly compacted every 150mm layer. The trees will be supported with a treated timber stake and rubber ties and protected from both rabbit and stock damage.

Protection

The proposed hedgerows and trees will be protected from rodent damage using spiral tree guards. These guards shall be removed once the plants are well established, typically after three to five years.

Weed control shall be undertaken for a minimum period of three years following planting to ensure successful establishment. To minimise competition from grasses and other

vegetation, a continuous weed-free strip of approximately 1 metre in width shall be maintained along the length of the newly planted hedgerow.

Long term management

A long-term management regime will be implemented to ensure the continued health and effectiveness of all planting. Any failures will be replaced on a like-for-like basis.

An annual inspection of trees and shrubs shall be undertaken in September of each subsequent year after planting to assess the condition of stock and prepare a list of necessary remedial work and replacement planting. Replacement planting shall be implemented in accordance with the planning requirements for all areas of the site for the lifetime of the development.

All maintenance will be carried out in accordance with good horticultural practice and all debris arising from the works shall be removed from the site. Replacement shrub planting shall take place in the following November-February, dormant winter period during suitable weather conditions. All stocks shall be the same size and species as originally specified.

Although trimming will keep hedgerows in good condition for a number of years, occasional restoration work is necessary to prevent gaps developing of hedges turning into a line of trees. When required, hedgerow restoration will be performed in the winter by one of the following methods:

1. Coppicing (cutting the stems at ground level) is the best method of restoration if the hedge is too overgrown to be laid because the stems are too thick.
2. Laying (cutting stems part way through and interweaving them along the hedge line) has a less drastic effect on wildlife and maintains the character of the landscape but needs skilled labour.

All management and maintenance measures outlined in this plan shall be implemented for the lifetime of the development.

4. Existing hedgerow and Boundary Management

Existing hedgerows surrounding the site shall be retained and managed to maintain their ecological and landscape value.

Management shall comprise:

- retention of all existing native hedgerows;

- trimming on a two- to three-year rotational basis outside the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive);
- replacement of any failed shrubs with native species of local provenance during the next available planting season;
- prevention of unnecessary damage to hedgerows during maintenance activities.

Implementation Timetable

Measure	Timing
Submission of scheme	Within 3 months of the decision date
Installation of bird boxes	Before the end of the first planting season following approval
Establishment of flowering strip	First suitable sowing season following approval
Planting of trees	Between October and February
Planting of hedgerow	Between November and March
Ongoing management	Annually thereafter
Replacement of failed planting	During the next available planting season
Retention of biodiversity measures	For the lifetime of the development

All biodiversity enhancements shall be maintained in accordance with this management schedule for the lifetime of the development, thereby ensuring continued ecological benefit in accordance with the requirements of the planning condition.

