

### 3.3 Site 2. Whispering Oakes, Wymondham

#### Photos



#### Key Facts:

- Size of the Site: 0.15ha
- Habitats present: **Modified grassland; Individual trees; and Developed Land; Sealed Surface.**
- Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas, County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Roadside Nature Reserves, Priority Habitats, Statutory Designated Sites present on site? **None.**
- Recommended habitat measures in LNRS: **None**

#### Baseline Habitat Description and BNG Calculation

- 3.3.1 The Site comprised a fenced play area, footpath and mown modified grassland with two trees.
- 3.3.2 The modified grassland was mown short and was in **poor condition** due to its poor botanical diversity. The sward had abundant perennial ryegrass, daisy *Bellis perennis* and white clover *Trifolium repens*, frequent dandelion and occasional creeping buttercup, selfheal and cocksfoot grass. As it had less than six vascular plant species per square metre and limited diversity of sward height it is classified as in poor condition.
- 3.3.3 Two young trees in **moderate condition** were present, both common lime *Tilia x europaea*.

3.3.4 In total, the habitats on Site represent **0.34 Habitat Units** as shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3. Baseline BNG Calculation of Habitats**

Habitat	Area (hectares)	Ecological Distinctiveness	Condition	Habitat Units (HU)
Modified Grassland	0.1382	Low	Poor	0.28
Developed land; sealed surface (footpaths)	0.0087	Very Low	N/A	0.00
Individual trees	0.0081	Medium	Moderate	0.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.15 (excluding trees)</b>			<b>0.34*</b>

\*Please note that Habitat Units in each row have been rounded for reasons of brevity and the total Habitat Unit figure is taken from the Metric Calculation tool spreadsheet.

3.3.5 A map of the baseline habitats is provided in Figure 2, Appendix 1.

### Proposed Biodiversity Enhancements

- Wildflower areas in the south of the Site;
- New species-rich native hedgerow next to the play area fence line;
- Planting of five new trees; and
- Leave grass long around existing trees in the south-west corner of the Site.

### Specification of Management Actions

3.3.6 A map of the proposed enhancements is shown in Figure 2, Appendix 2.

3.3.7 Wildflower grassland:

- Two areas of wildflower grassland will be created in the south of the Site as shown by the other neutral grassland area in Figure 2, Appendix 2. To prepare the ground, the ground will be rotavated to create bare ground of a medium tilth. Once the ground has been prepared, a British origin, native wildflower seed mix will be oversown into the prepared ground (including the earth bund) at the density advised by the manufacturer (an example of a suitable seed mix would be Emorsgate General Purpose Meadow Mixture EM1<sup>9</sup>).
- The seed mix should be spread in the autumn or spring (when there is regular rain and the ground is not frozen). The seed can be broadcast by hand and treaded

<sup>9</sup> <https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/general-purpose-meadow-mixtures/basic-general-purpose-meadow-mixture/>

lightly by foot to ensure good contact between the seed and the soil. Do not cover the seed with new soil or compact heavily.

- In the first year after sowing, a flush of annual weeds may appear which can be retained to help shelter the emerging perennial wildflowers of the seed mix. Undertake the first cut in late August/early September with a scythe/trimmer/mower to a height of 50mm. Remove arisings offsite or to a dedicated compost heap.
- For the second cut, timing is very important. The second cut will be undertaken once wildflowers have flowered and set seed (it typically takes 6-8 weeks from flowering to seed set). Setting of the seed is crucial to encourage a greater abundance of wildflowers. The second cut timing will likely vary slightly from year to year but it should generally be undertaken in late August/early September when conditions are dry. The cut should be undertaken with a scythe, trimmer or other suitable mowing equipment that can cut vegetation to a height of 50mm. Cuttings must be left in situ for 1-7 days to allow seed to shed. The cuttings must then be removed offsite or to a designated compost heap.
- Small random areas of the long sward (10-20%) may be left long over winter to provide shelter for invertebrates.
- Following the second cut, the sward must be kept short throughout the winter, particularly given the milder winters and increased growing season lengths so further 'cut and collect' mowing is likely to be required from late September – November.
- No herbicides, fertilisers or commercially bought grass seed will be applied to the grassland at any time.

### 3.3.8 New species-rich hedgerow:

- Plant 60-90cm height bare root whips of at least five mixed native hedgerow species at 2m centres in the location shown in Figure 2, Appendix 2. Whips to be notch planted in double staggered rows with five plants per linear metre from November-March inclusive and not in frozen ground. A total of 29m of hedgerow will be planted. Whips will be protected with a suitable biodegradable guard to protect from vole and deer damage, bamboo cane and tie. The area around the whips should be cleared of vegetation and mulched generously with woodchip to a depth of 50-100mm, taking care not to bury the stems of the newly planted whips.
- Whips will need to be watered generously and regularly in hot dry summer spells for the first two years post planting.
- Check whips annually and top up mulch/clear weeds to limit competing vegetation.
- At Year 3, remove canes, guards and ties if whips are established. Remove and replace any dead whips.
- At Year 5 cut hedgerow back hard to encourage a proliferation of bushy growth.

### 3.3.9 Tree planting:

- Five trees will be planted in the south of the Site within the wildflower areas (three native and two non-native). Trees should be planted from November to March inclusive in non-frozen ground. Trees should be a minimum of standards (8-10cm stem girth) either as containerised or bare root individuals. A square planting pit the depth of the rootball and 75cm wider than the rootball must be excavated with the top-soil and sub-soil separated into discrete piles. The tree (with its rootball pre-watered) will be placed in the planting pit and the subsoil and topsoil replaced in the correct order, with regular 'healing in' of the layers of soil to ensure stability of the tree. The final layer of backfill will not be consolidated. A 50-100 woodchip mulch later will be applied at a minimum radius of 0.5m from the tree stem and not touching the tree stem. A double stake and tie support system and vole/deer guard will be installed and the tree watered generously. Trees will be spaced a minimum of 5m apart.
- Trees will need to be watered generously and regularly in hot dry summer spells for the first three years post planting.
- Check trees annually and top up mulch/clear weeds to limit competing vegetation.
- At Year 3, remove canes, guards and ties if trees are established. Remove and replace any dead trees.

### 3.3.10 Long Grassland in the South-West Around Existing Trees:

- The grass in the south-west of the Site as shown in Figure 2, Appendix 2 will be left long.
- The grass around the trees will be cut twice per year – once in late February/early March and again in late August/early September. The long grass will create enhanced microclimates for invertebrates and produce seed for birds and small mammals. The long grass will be cut with a scythe/trimmer/mower to 50mm height twice a year and kept short over the winter with regular mowing as required. All cuttings will be removed from the Site to avoid re-enrichment of the soil and encourage greater abundance and diversity of native wildflowers.
- No fertiliser, herbicide or commercial grass mix will be applied at any time.

### **Five Year Biodiversity Enhancement Plan**

3.3.11 Following the management specification and guidance above, the Table below provides the timing of management actions over five years.

Habitat	Management Action and Timing				
	2025/2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
<b>Wildflower Grassland</b>	Prepare ground and sow wildflower seed. Undertake first cut in late August/early September.	First cut and collect in late February/ early March. Second cut in late August/early September. Remove arising after 1-7 days. Mow over winter.	Same as 2027.	Same as 2027.	Same as 2027.
<b>Species rich native hedgerow</b>	Plant 29m of hedgerow from November-March.	Water regularly in hot dry spells. Keep mulch topped up.	Water regularly in hot dry spells. Keep mulch topped up.	Remove canes/guards/ties in the winter. Replace any dead/dying individuals.	Cut back hedgerow to encourage bushy growth.
<b>Trees</b>	Plant trees from November-March. Mulch and water.	Water regularly in hot dry spells. Keep mulch topped up.	Water regularly in hot dry spells. Keep mulch topped up.	Remove canes/guards/ties in the winter. Replace any dead/dying individuals.	N/A
<b>Long grass around trees</b>	First cut and collect in late February/ early March. Second cut in late August/early September. Keep short over winter. Remove arisings offsite.	Same as 2025/2026.	Same as 2025/2026.	Same as 2025/2026.	Same as 2025/2026.

### Annual Monitoring Checklist

3.3.12 The checklist below is devised as a quick annual check to be carried out and completed by the responsible Community Asset Manager, to ensure that the recommended enhancements measures above have taken place. The items in the checklist below have been replicated in a separate Annual Monitoring excel spreadsheet for ease of completion.



**Annual Monitoring Checklist for Whispering Oaks, Wymondham**

Habitat	Management Action	Tick relevant column if completed				
		2025/2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
<b>Wildflower grassland</b>	Ground prepared and sown with wildflower seed?					
	First cut undertaken?					
	Second cut undertaken?					
	Winter cutting undertaken?					
<b>Species-rich native hedgerow</b>	29m of new hedgerow whips planted and mulched?					
	Whips watered and mulch topped up annually?					
	Canes/ties/guards removed?					
	First hard cut completed?					
<b>Trees</b>	Five trees planted?					
	Tree watered and mulch topped up?					
	Tree stakes/ties/guards adjusted or removed?					
<b>Long grass around trees</b>	First cut undertaken?					
	Second cut undertaken?					
	Winter mowing undertaken?					

**Post-enhancement BNG Calculation**

- 3.3.16 The proposed enhancements to the grassland and hedgerow will generate a BNG uplift of Habitat Units of **48.12%** and a BNG uplift of Hedgerow Units of **0.11 Hedgerow Units** over **27 years**.
- 3.3.17 The uplift in Habitat Units derives from the creation of wildflower areas and planting of two new trees. The uplift in Hedgerow Units derives from planting a new species-rich native hedgerow. A percentage uplift in Hedgerow Units cannot be calculated as the baseline number of Hedgerow Units is zero.