

3.7 Site 6. Chaffinch Mews, Harleston

Photos



Key Facts:

- Size of the Site: 0.21ha
- Habitats present: **Modified Grassland, Bramble Scrub, Developed land; sealed surface, Introduced Shrub, Individual Trees and Non-native Ornamental Hedgerow.**
- 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

- 3.7.1 The Site comprised a play area within a residential housing area. There were hard surfaced footpaths from east to west and in the north, modified grassland, individual trees along the southern boundary and introduced shrub.
- 3.7.2 The modified grassland was in **poor condition** due to its low botanical diversity. The grassland was uniformly mown and had abundant bare ground due to high recreational usage. Perennial ryegrass was dominant along with abundant white clover, frequent dandelion, ribwort plantain, annual meadowgrass *Poa annua* and occasional broad leaved plantain *Plantago major*.

- 3.7.3 A total of 23 individual trees were present on the Site in **moderate and good condition**. Species were mostly native including hawthorn, willow, pear and cherry which were young or semi mature.
- 3.7.4 A non-native and ornamental hedgerow in **poor condition** was present on the southern boundary of the Site and was comprised of cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and garden privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium*. The hedgerow was kept low at a height of 1.5m and width of 1.5. Several individual trees were planted within the hedge.
- 3.7.5 In total, the habitats on Site represent **0.79 Habitat Units and 0.12 Hedgerow Units** as shown in Tables 8 and 9 below.

Table 8. Baseline BNG Calculation of Habitats

Habitat	Area (hectares)	Ecological Distinctiveness	Condition	Habitat Units (HU)
Modified Grassland	0.1813	Low	Poor	0.36
Bramble scrub	0.0023	Medium	N/A	0.01
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0234	Very low	N/A	0.00
Introduced shrub	0.0035	Low	N/A	0.01
Individual tree	0.0447	Medium	Moderate	0.36
Individual tree	0.0040	Medium	Good	0.05
Total	0.21 (excluding trees)			0.79

Table 9. Baseline BNG Calculation of Hedgerows

Habitat	Length (kilometres)	Ecological Distinctiveness	Condition	Hedgerow Units (HeU)
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.121	Very low	Poor	0.12
Total	0.121			0.12

- 3.7.6 A map of baseline habitats is provided in Figure 6, Appendix 1.

Proposed Biodiversity Enhancements

- North-west section of grassland to be seeded with a native wildflower seed mix to create other neutral grassland; and

- Planting of five new trees (three native and two non-native).

Specification of Management Actions

3.7.7

Wildflower grassland:

- The north-west section of the Site will be a wildflower meadow as shown by the other neutral grassland area in Figure 6, Appendix 2. To prepare the ground, the ground will be rotavated to create bare ground of a medium tilth. Do not rotavate within 3m of the hedgerow to avoid root disturbance. 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 EM1¹³).
- 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 tread in 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.

¹³ <https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/general-purpose-meadow-mixtures/basic-general-purpose-meadow-mixture/>



- No herbicides, fertilisers or commercially bought grass seed will be applied to the grassland at any time.

3.7.8 Tree planting:

- Five trees will be planted around the Site (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.

Five Year Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

3.7.9 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
Wildflower Grassland	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.
Trees	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

Annual Monitoring Checklist

3.7.10 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 Chaffinch Mews, Harleston

Habitat	Management Action	Tick relevant column if completed				
		2025/2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Wildflower grassland	Ground prepared and sown with wildflower seed?					
	First cut undertaken?					
	Second cut undertaken?					
	Winter cutting undertaken?					
Trees	Trees planted?					
	Tree watered and mulch topped up?					
	Tree stakes/ties/guards adjusted or removed?					

Post-enhancement BNG Calculation

3.7.14 The proposed enhancements to the grassland and hedgerow will generate a BNG uplift of Habitat Units of **34.17%** over **27 years**. No uplift in Hedgerow Units will be achieved as no new hedgerows or enhancement to existing hedgerows are proposed.

3.7.15 The uplift in Habitat Units derives from the creation of a wildflower area (other neutral grassland in moderate condition) and planting of five new trees.