3.6 Site 6. Dalbier Close, Thorpe St Andrew

Photographs

Key Facts

3.6.1 Size of the Site: 0.30ha

3.6.2 Habitats present: **Modified grassland, Individual trees and Developed land; sealed surface.**

3.6.3 Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas, County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Roadside Nature Reserves, Priority Habitats, Statutory Designated Sites present on site? **None**

3.6.4 Recommended habitat measures in LNRS: **None**

Baseline Habitat Description and BNG Calculation

3.6.5 The Site comprised an area of mown modified grassland with scattered trees and a basketball court at the edge of a residential housing area and beside a railway line.

3.6.6 The modified grassland on the Site was in **poor condition** due to its limited floral diversity. The sward was dominated by perennial ryegrass and common wildflowers such as white clover, ribwort plantain, dandelion, daisy and yarrow.

3.6.7 To the south of the basketball court, the modified grassland was kept longer in places and several additional plant species were present in this area including false oat grass, common knapweed, red fescue *Festuca rubra* and black medick *Medicago lupulina*.

3.6.8 A total of 17 trees were present in the grassland including cherry, oak, hawthorn and whitebeam. To the south of the basketball courts were fruit trees including plum, apple

and pear. The majority of trees are semi mature and in **moderate or good condition**. One hawthorn tree is almost dead.

3.6.9 Two rows of hedgerow whips were present next to the road however the majority of whips were found to be dead.

3.6.10 In total, the habitats on Site represent **1.60 Habitat Units** as shown in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Baseline BNG Calculation for Habitats

Habitat	Area (hectares)	Ecological Distinctiveness	Condition	Habitat Units (HU)
Developed land; sealed surface (basketball court)	0.1055	Very low	N/A	0.00
Modified grassland	0.197	Low	Poor	0.39
Individual trees	0.0163	Medium	Moderate	0.13
Individual trees	0.0896	Medium	Good	1.07
Total	**0.30 (excluding trees)**			**1.60**

3.6.11 A map of the baseline habitats is provided in Figure 6, Appendix 1.

Proposed Biodiversity Enhancements

3.6.12 A map of the proposed enhancements is shown in Figure 6, Appendix 2.

- Replace the one dead tree with large native species such as hornbeam, oak or lime. Plant three more orchard trees in the south of the site;
- Establish long grass around trees;
- Install three bird boxes on trees; and
- Replace dead hedgerow whips and re-establish a species-rich native hedgerow.

Specification of Management Actions

Tree planting:

- Four trees (three orchard trees and one native tree) will be planted. 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 50-100mm woodchip mulch layer 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 three, remove canes, guards and ties if trees are established. Remove and replace any dead trees.

Long Grass Around Trees:

- Keep grass long by reducing mowing frequency in the areas shown in Figure 6, Appendix 2.
- The grass in these areas will be left long and 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/strimmer/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.

Bird boxes:

- Three bird boxes will be installed on suitable trees as per the guidance in Appendix 3.

Remove dead whips and replant a species-rich native hedgerow:

- Remove all dead whips beside road.
- Replant 60-90cm height bare root whips of at least five mixed native hedgerow species at 2m centers in the location shown in Figure 6, 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 92m 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 three, remove canes, guards and ties if whips are established. Remove and replace any dead whips.
- At year five cut hedgerow back hard to encourage a proliferation of bushy growth.

Five Year Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

3.6.13 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**
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
Long grass area	First cut and collect in late February/ early March. Second cut in late August/early September. Remove arisings offsite.	Same as 2025/2026.	Same as 2025/2026.	Same as 2025/2026.	Same as 2025/2026.
Bird boxes	Install bird boxes on trees	Check boxes remain securely attached.	Check boxes remain securely attached.	Check boxes remain securely attached.	Check boxes remain securely attached.
Replant species-rich hedgerow	Remove dead whips. Replant 92m 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.

Annual Monitoring Checklist

3.6.14 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 Dalbier Close, Thorpe St Andrew

Habitat	Management Action	Tick relevant column if completed				
		2025/2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Trees	Trees planted					
	Tree watered and mulch topped up?					
	Tree stakes/ties/guards adjusted or removed?					
Long grass	First cut undertaken?					
	Second cut undertaken?					
	Winter mowing undertaken?					
Bird boxes	Installed?					
	Annually checked to make sure still safely secured to tree?					
Hedgerow	Dead whips removed?					
	92m of new hedgerow whips planted and mulched?					
	Whips watered and mulch topped up annually?					
	Canes/ties/guards removed?					
	First hard cut completed?					

Post-enhancement BNG Calculation and Map

3.6.17 The proposed enhancements will produce a BNG uplift of **3.11%** in Habitat Units over **27 years**. This is solely derived from the proposed tree planting. A further 0.62 Hedgerow Units will be delivered as a result of the species-rich native hedgerow planting. A percentage uplift for Hedgerow Units is not possible as no hedgerows were present in the baseline habitats.