3.8 Site 7. Malsters Drive, Hingham

Photos

Key Facts:

- Size of the Site: 0.46ha
- Habitats present: **Modified Grassland, Developed land; sealed surface, Individual Trees, Native Hedgerow, Native Hedgerow with Trees.**
- Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas, County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Roadside Nature Reserves, Priority Habitats, Statutory Designated Sites present on site? **TPO at northern end of the Site protecting oaks.**
- Recommended habitat measures in LNRS: **None.**

Baseline Habitat Description and BNG Calculation

3.8.1 The Site comprised a fenced playground area in the west of the Site and a long linear area of grassland in the east that borders an agricultural hedgerow with trees. A walking route through the grassland was present along the eastern boundary.

3.8.2 The main habitat on Site was mown modified grassland in **poor condition** due to its limited botanical diversity. There were less than six vascular plant species per square metre in the grassland which had abundant perennial ryegrass, frequent ribwort plantain and occasional white clover, cocksfoot, broad leaved plantain and daisy.

3.8.3 There were 11 trees within the grassland in **moderate condition**. These were all newly planted young trees including lime *Tilia sp*., hornbeam, oak, cherry, copper beech *Fagus sylvatica 'purpurea'*, silver birch, and cotoneaster.

3.8.4 The eastern boundary was delineated by a native hedgerow with trees in **good condition**. It was approximately 4m in height and 2m in width and looked to be fairly recent in origin with a gap in bushy growth at the base of the hedgerow. Species include hawthorn, field maple, hazel, ash, bramble and oak. The grass was cut short next to the hedgerow.

3.8.5 There was a second native hedgerow around the play area which was in **poor condition**. It was approximately 1m in height and 0.5m in width, recently planted, and gappy due to some dead whips. Species included hornbeam and privet and it requires formative pruning following establishment to encourage bushy growth as well as replacement of dead to whips to form a less gappy hedgerow.

3.8.6 In total, the habitats on Site represent **1.26 Habitat Units and 3.14 Hedgerow Units** as shown in Tables 10 and 11 below.

Table 10. Baseline BNG Calculation of Habitats

Habitat	Area (hectares)	Ecological Distinctiveness	Condition	Habitat Units (HU)
Modified grassland	0.4517	Low	Poor	0.90
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0097	Very low	N/A	0.00
Individual trees	0.0447	Medium	Moderate	0.36
Total	**0.46 (excluding trees)**			**1.26**

Table 11. Baseline BNG Calculation of Hedgerows

Habitat	Length (kilometres)	Ecological Distinctiveness	Condition	Hedgerow Units (HeU)
Native hedgerow	0.246	Low	Poor	0.49
Native hedgerow with trees	0.221	Medium	Good	2.65
Total	**0.47**			**3.14**

3.8.7 A map of the baseline habitats is provided in Figure 7, Appendix 1.

Proposed Biodiversity Enhancements

- Scarify and oversow native wildflowers in the modified grassland to the east of the playground to create other neutral grassland;
- Plant three new native trees; and

- Enhance native hedgerow around the play area to a species-rich native hedgerow by replacing dead whips with a diverse native shrub mix and undertaking formative pruning to promote bushy growth.

Specification of Management Actions

3.8.8 Scarification and over-sowing of wildflower mix:

- Scarify the area shown as 'other neutral grassland' in the east of the Site (annotation – enhanced grassland) in Figure 7, Appendix 2 to create a minimum of 50% bare ground. Once scarified a locally sourced, British origin, native wildflower seed mix will be oversown into the scarified area at the density advised by the manufacturer (an example of a suitable seed mix would be Emorsgate General Purpose Meadow Mixture EM1[14]).
- 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/strimmer/mower to a height of 50mm. Remove arising offsite or to a dedicated compost heap.
- Keep grass short over the winter with regular mowing as required.
- In the second year and subsequent years, manage the grassland using the two-cut system (first cut late February/early March and second cut late August/early September) as described for Site 1: Knyvett Green, Ashwellthorpe.
- No fertiliser, herbicide or commercial grass mix will be applied at any time.

3.8.9 Tree planting:

- Three native trees will be planted to the east of the playground. 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

[14] https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/general-purpose-meadow-mixtures/basic-general-purpose-meadow-mixture/

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 10m 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.

3.8.10 Hedgerow:

- Remove any dead whips and infill hedgerow gaps with at least four native shrub species.
- Replant 60-90cm height bare root whips of at least four mixed native hedgerow species at 2m centers in the location shown in Figure 7, Appendix 2. Plant in existing gaps and where dead whips have been removed. Whips to be notch planted in double staggered rows with five plants per linear metre from November-March inclusive and not in frozen ground. 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

3.8.11 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**
Scarification and oversowing	Scarify and oversow with wildflower seed mix. Cut and collect arisings in late August/early September 2026.	First cut and collect in late February/ early March. Second cut in late August/early September. Remove arisings offsite.	Same as 2027.	Same as 2027.	Same as 2027.

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
Hedgerow	Replace dead whips and infill any gaps with at least four species of native hedgerow whips in 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

3.8.12 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 Malsters Drive, Hingham

Habitat	Management Action	Tick relevant column if completed				
		2025/2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Scarify and oversow area	Scarification and oversowing undertaken?					
	First year management undertaken					
	First and second cuts undertaken from Year 2027 onwards?					
Trees	Trees planted?					
	Tree watered and mulch topped up?					
	Tree stakes/ties/guards adjusted or removed?					
Hedgerow	Whips planted, mulched and protected?					
	Annually checked to water and top up mulch?					

Habitat	Management Action	Tick relevant column if completed				
		2025/2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
	Cut back in 2030 to encourage bushy growth?					

Post-enhancement BNG Calculation

3.8.15 The proposed enhancements will generate a BNG uplift of Habitat Units of **102.13%** and an uplift of **5.64 Hedgerow Units** over **27 years**.

3.8.16 The uplift in Habitat Units derives from the enhancement of the modified grassland to other neutral grassland in moderate condition and planting of three trees. The uplift in Hedgerow Units derives from the enhancement of the native hedgerow to a species-rich native hedgerow. The hedgerow is likely to remain in poor condition despite being species-rich due to the likely height and width of the final hedgerow being less than 1.5m.