

3.9 Site 8. Gunton Road, Loddon

Photos



Key Facts:

- Size of the Site: 2.10ha
- Habitats present: **Modified Grassland, Blackthorn Scrub, Bramble Scrub, Mixed Scrub, Ruderal/Ephemeral, Developed land; sealed surface, Introduced Shrub, Other Woodland; Broadleaved, Native Hedgerow and Individual Trees.**
- 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

- 3.9.1 The Site comprised a large crescent shaped area of public access amenity space between an area of residential housing in Loddon and the A146 single carriageway. The space contained a small playground along with walking routes across grassland and through small, wooded copses.
- 3.9.2 The main habitat on the Site was modified grassland in **poor condition** due to its low botanical diversity. The grassland was dominated by perennial ryegrass with abundant common wildflowers including ribwort plantain and white clover, frequent daisy, dovesfoot cranesbill, field bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis* and occasional yarrow, Yorkshire fog, creeping buttercup and autumn hawkbit *Scorzoneroides autumnalis*. The grass was uniformly mown short across varying topographies.

- 3.9.3 A small, grassed bank in the very north-west of the Site has slightly higher botanical diversity with common fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, selfheal, mouse ear hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum* and germander speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*.
- 3.9.4 Scrub was also found to be a large component of the habitat on Site, particularly on the western boundary bordering the A146. Different scrub habitats were recorded including bramble scrub, blackthorn scrub in **poor condition** and mixed scrub in **moderate condition**. Blackthorn scrub was assessed to be in poor condition because of its uniform young age structure, lack of well-developed edges consisting of scattered scrub and long grass and the absence of glades, rides or clearings within the scrub.
- 3.9.5 Other woodland; broadleaved in **poor condition** was present on the Site, particularly in the north-west. Two different woodland communities were identified on Site. The first and largest was comprised of an ash, oak and field maple overstorey with an understorey of frequent hazel, hawthorn and abundant bramble. Non-natives including snowberry and *Cotoneaster sp.* were recorded within the woodland. The field layer was difficult to record given the density of the understorey but was noted where possible to be dominated by ivy with occasional herb Robert *Geranium robertianum* and rarely lords and ladies *Arum maculatum*.
- 3.9.6 The second woodland community was comprised of predominantly non-native Italian alder *Alnus cordata* and rarely non-native red oak *Quercus rubra*. The understorey was dominated by non-native snowberry, frequent non-native *Cotoneaster sp.* and bramble as well as dog rose and Swedish whitebeam *Sorbus intermedia*.
- 3.9.7 A small amount of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation dominated by stinging nettle was recorded next to an area of scrub.
- 3.9.8 A total of nine individual trees in **moderate and good condition** were recorded. These were predominantly semi and early mature specimens of Norway maple *Acer platanoides*, apple *Malus sp.*, cherry plum *Prunus cerasifera* and willow *Salix sp.*
- 3.9.9 It was noted that several lines of mostly orchard trees had been planted at the Site. These trees were not recorded as they were below the threshold for inclusion within the BNG metric (i.e. below 7.5cm in stem diameter measured at 1.5 height).
- 3.9.10 Developed land; sealed surface was also present in the form of a small hard-surfaced path to the playground. A very small amount of introduced shrub was recorded which had abundant non-native *Cotoneaster sp.*, frequent non-native dogwood *Cornus sp.* as well as frequent snowberry.
- 3.9.11 A small 15m section of beech hedgerow in **moderate condition** was recorded in the east of the Site.
- 3.9.12 In total, the habitats on Site represent **8.07 Habitat Units and 0.06 Hedgerow Units** as shown in Tables 11 and 12 below.

Table 11. Baseline BNG Calculation of Habitats

Habitat	Area (hectares)	Ecological Distinctiveness	Condition	Habitat Units (HU)
Modified grassland	0.946	Low	Poor	1.89
Blackthorn scrub	0.1485	Medium	Poor	0.59
Bramble scrub	0.0837	Medium	N/A	0.33
Mixed scrub	0.2896	Medium	Moderate	2.32
Ruderal/Ephemeral	0.0063	Low	Poor	0.01
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0022	Very low	N/A	0.00
Introduced shrub	0.008	Low	N/A	0.02
Other woodland; broadleaved	0.5145	Medium	Poor	2.06
Urban tree	0.0163	Medium	Good	0.20
Urban tree	0.0814	Medium	Moderate	0.65
Total	2.00 (excluding trees)			8.07

Table 12. Baseline BNG Calculation of Hedgerows

Habitat	Length (kilometres)	Ecological Distinctiveness	Condition	Hedgerow Units (HeU)
Native hedgerow	0.015	Low	Moderate	0.06
Total	0.015			0.06

3.9.13 A map of the baseline habitats is provided in Figure 8, Appendix 1.

Proposed Biodiversity Enhancements

- Enhance woodlands by removing non-native snowberry, creating deadwood piles and coppicing shrub species to create a more open woodland profile;
- Manage scrub by scalloping edges to create crescent shaped glades on the outer edge of the scrub which provide sheltered microclimates for invertebrates;
- Manage a section of grass as long grass to provide enhanced microclimates for invertebrates and greater wildflower availability for pollinators and birds; and

- Install five bird boxes and five bat boxes on suitable trees.

Specification of Management Actions

3.9.14 Other broadleaved woodland:

- All non-native snowberry will be removed from the woodlands through felling from September to mid-February inclusive to avoid the bird nesting season. Stump treatment will likely be required to prevent snowberry regrowth in the following growing season.
- Coppicing will be undertaken across the woodlands of small diameter young and semi mature shrubs in order to create a more open woodland profile. Coppicing can be undertaken to oak, hazel and field maple. It is advised that at least 20% of shrubs within the woodland are coppiced. Some bramble may require removal in order to carry out coppicing activities and access the woodland, a reduction in bramble would be beneficial given its abundance and blocking of light to ground flora. All coppicing work should be undertaken during September to mid-February to avoid the bird nesting season.
- At least 10 woodpiles will be created within all the woodland areas from coppiced wood. Each woodpile should be a minimum of 2m length x 2m width x 1m height and located in both cool shaded areas in the woodland and at the woodland edge to create a variety of microclimates. A variety of large, medium and small diameter logs in the pile should be used as well as bark, dead leaves and twigs to create a 'holey' but closely interwoven structure that can be left in perpetuity to rot down.

3.9.15 Scrub:

- Create 5-6 crescent shaped scalloped edges to all bramble, blackthorn and mixed scrub habitats on the western boundary of the Site in order to create sheltered microclimates for invertebrates. Crescents should be at least 5m in length and 2m deep, facing the grassed areas within the Site. Scrub will need to be removed to create the crescents, with removal occurring between September to mid-February inclusive in order to avoid the bird nesting season.

3.9.16 Long grass:

- Keep grass long by reducing mowing frequency in the area shown in Figure 8, Appendix 2.
- The grass in this area 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.

3.9.17 **Bird and bat boxes:**

- Install five bird boxes and five bat boxes on suitable trees as suggested in as shown in Figure 8, Appendix 2. Guidance on suitable boxes for trees is provided in Appendix 3 along with specifications for installation heights and aspects.

Five Year Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

3.9.18 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
Other woodland; broadleaved	Remove all snowberry from woodland areas.	Undertake coppicing of minimum 20% of shrubs in winter. Create 10 woodpiles across the woodland areas.	Check snowberry and treat any regrowth.	N/A	N/A
Scrub	N/A	Create scalloped edges to scrub.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Long grass	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 and bat boxes	Install bird and bat boxes on trees	Check boxes remain securely attached.	Check boxes remain securely attached.	Check boxes remain securely attached.	Check boxes remain securely attached.

Annual Monitoring Checklist

- 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 Gunton Road, Loddon

Habitat	Management Action	Tick relevant column if completed				
		2025/2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Other woodland; broadleaved	Snowberry removed?					
	Woodpiles created (minimum 10)?					
	Coppicing undertaken?					
Scrub	A minimum of 5-6 scalloped edges created?					
Long grass	First cut undertaken?					
	Second cut undertaken?					
	Winter mowing undertaken?					
Bird and bat boxes	Installed?					
	Annually checked to make sure still safely secured to tree?					

Post-enhancement BNG Calculation

- 3.9.21 The proposed enhancements will generate a BNG uplift of Habitat Units of **30.60%** over **15 years**. No uplift in Hedgerow Units will be delivered as no enhancements or hedgerow planting is proposed.
- 3.9.22 The uplift in Habitat Units derives from the enhancement of the long grass area of modified grassland from poor to good condition, the enhancement of the blackthorn scrub from poor to moderate condition and the uplift in other woodland; broadleaved from poor to moderate condition.