



ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
WOODCROFT FARM RIGHT OF WAY
WOODCROFT LANE
WATERLOOVILLE
PO8 9QA

ON BEHALF OF
GRANIGER PLC

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	2
2.0 BASELINE INFORMATION	3
2.1 Habitats	3
2.2 Species	4
2.2.1 Reptiles	4
2.2.2 Badger	4
2.2.3 Bats	4
2.2.4 Nesting birds	5
3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	5
3.1 Rationale	5
3.2 Objectives	5
4.0 ENHANCEMENT AND MANAGEMENT.....	6
4.1 Woodland enhancement and management.....	6
4.2 Hedgerow management	7
4.3 Reptiles	7
4.4 Nesting birds	8
4.5 Bats	8
4.6 Bridleway maintenance.....	8
5.0 Timetable of works	9
6.0 REFERENCES	9
APPENDIX I: Current plans of site.....	11
APPENDIX II: Enhancement and mitigation measures	12

SUMMARY

1. Lindsay Carrington Ecological Services Limited were commissioned by Grainger PLC to prepare this ecological management and mitigation plan for Woodcroft Farm, Woodcroft Lane, Waterloooville, PO8 9QA (Grid reference: SU 684 121) to discharge condition 19 of planning consent for the construction of a bridleway at Woodcroft Farm
2. The site lies on the southern boundary of the James Copse SINC. The proposed bridleway will be installed within an area of broadleaved woodland and through a field of semi-improved grassland.
3. A series of management prescriptions to enhance the value of site have also been made.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Lindsay Carrington Ecological Services Limited were commissioned by Grainger PLC to prepare an ecological management and mitigation plan for Woodcroft Farm, Woodcroft Lane, Waterlooville, PO8 9QA (Grid reference: SU 684 121) in order to discharge condition 19 for the construction of a bridleway at Woodcroft Farm. Condition 19 states:

“Prior to commencement, an Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Scheme for the site shall be submitted for written approval to the Local Planning Authority. This Scheme should include (but not necessarily be restricted to): location, extent and timing of vegetation loss; protected species protection (including results of any updating surveys, details of lighting strategy methods to prevent harm or disturbance); location, extent and composition of habitat creation; location and ongoing management of mitigation features such as new habitat, ponds, bat and bird boxes. Development shall subsequently proceed in accordance with any such approved Plan, with all biodiversity mitigation enhancement features permanently retained in accordance with the approved Plan.”

Planning permission has been granted for the installation of a bridleway at Woodcraft farm. The bridleway will be approximately 400 metres in length and 3.4 metres in width. The bridleway will pass through broadleaved woodland and semi-improved grassland. The site will be enhanced for wildlife.

The management plan covers a period of 5 years, however, following the completion of prescriptions established in this plan the long-term vision is to continue low intensity practices here with nature conservation as the driving force in management.

Baseline ecological information for the site is provided in section 2 of this report, section 3 sets objectives and targets and section 4 details the proposed management prescriptions.

2.0 BASELINE INFORMATION

2.1 Habitats

The majority of the site at Woodcroft Farm comprises semi-improved grassland with broadleaved woodland and hedgerows. The proposed bridleway will extend through the woodland, adjacent to the hedgerow along the northern boundary, and will extend south along the western boundary through the semi-improved grassland.

Semi-improved grassland

The grassland on site is currently grazed by horses and comprises perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), smooth meadow-grass (*Poa pratensis*), creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), dandelion (*Taraxacum agg.*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*).

Broad-leaved woodland

A small area of woodland comprising semi-mature and young trees is located to the south east. Oak (*Quercus robur*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) are present.

Hedgerows

Three hedgerows are present where the bridleway is to be positioned and run along the boundary of the semi-improved grassland.

Hedgerow A runs along the northern boundary and is shrubby with a line of trees. It is currently untrimmed with outgrowth and comprises beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), hawthorn, holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), oak, rose (*Rosa* sp), and yew (*Taxus baccata*).

Hedgerow B runs along the north west boundary and is shrubby with a line of trees. It is currently untrimmed with outgrowth and is tall and leggy in places. The hedgerow comprises blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), hawthorn, hazel (*Corylus avellana*), oak and rose.

Hedgerow C runs along the western boundary and is shrubby with a line of trees which is currently intensively managed. Species present include blackthorn, hawthorn, oak, rose and yew.

2.2 Species

An ecological appraisal of the land was undertaken in May 2013 by WSPE with an update walkover survey undertaken on 17th February 2017 by Katie Ford of Lindsay Carrington Ecological Services Ltd.

2.2.1 Reptiles

The site contains very limited habitat for reptiles. The semi-improved grassland is well grazed by horses, and provides little coverage. The hedgerows and woodland edges provide suitable sheltering habitat for reptiles however this habitat is restricted in size due to the nature of the surrounding fields. Due to the limited habitat on site, a full reptile survey was considered unnecessary; however a precautionary method of habitat clearance will be undertaken.

Further recommendations have been made in section 4.3.

2.2.2 Badger

Despite a thorough search for signs of badgers including setts, latrines, snuffle holes and hairs; no evidence of badgers was present on site.

No further recommendations have been made.

2.2.3 Bats

Buildings

No buildings are present on site.

Trees

The trees that are due for removal, to make way for the bridleway were surveyed for their potential to support roosting bats. All the trees due to be removed were considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats. However suitable trees to support roosting bats are present on site and therefore recommendations to enhance the site for bats have been made.

Enhancements for bats have been noted in section 4.5.

2.2.4 Nesting birds

The broadleaved woodland and hedgerows provides suitable habitat for nesting birds.

Further recommendations have been made in section 4.4. Enhancements for birds have been noted in section 4.4.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Rationale

The rationale behind this plan is to formulate a management regime that is in the interest of protecting and enhancing the ecology of the site. The land will be enhanced for wildlife and management will be sustainable in terms of biodiversity.

Management will be based on an ‘*adaptive management*’ principle whereby the effectiveness of management is monitored, assessed and adapted if necessary. This management plan prescribes management for a period of five years.

3.2 Objectives

The following objectives have been set:

- 1) To enhance and maintain the area of broadleaved woodland which will benefit local wildlife including bats, birds and invertebrates.
- 2) To enhance and manage hedgerows within the site for the benefit of birds, small mammals (including bats) and invertebrates and to act as wildlife corridors.
- 3) To erect bat boxes and bird boxes on retained mature trees on the site to increase the roosting and nesting opportunities for bats and birds on the site.
- 4) To introduce log piles and hibernacula around the boundary of the site as habitat for invertebrates and reptiles.
- 5) To install signage around the bridleway to encourage people to stay on the pathway and keep dogs on leads, therefore minimising the impact on the local flora and fauna.

4.0 ENHANCEMENT AND MANAGEMENT

The site was generally considered to be of medium ecological value. A number of enhancement and management prescriptions will be implemented, including minimising impact to the site, and providing suitable habitat to support reptiles, bats, and nesting birds.

4.1 Woodland enhancement and management

Enhancement

The overall aim of the enhancement and management is to create a more diverse understorey, field layer and ground flora which will in turn provide improved habitats for a wider range of birds, small mammals and invertebrates, in particular butterflies. The following prescriptions will be followed.

1. Two log and brash piles will be created using the trees that will be removed to make way for the bridle path to create foraging, shelter and hibernation sites for reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates and small mammals.
2. The log piles will also create habitat for mosses and lichens to grow which in turn will provide food plants for moths and butterflies.
3. Although many of the mature trees provide opportunities for roosting bats and nesting birds the woodland can be enhanced further by the erection of four Schwegler 2F bat boxes and four Schwegler 1B bird boxes. These will be erected on mature trees as indicated in appendix II.

Management

Management of the woodland will aim to create a varied structure, age and botanical diversity thus providing a valuable habitat for birds, butterflies, and small mammals.

1. The dead wood on trees will be retained where possible and tree surgery works will only take place where there is an over-riding risk to public safety on the public rights of way.
2. Rabbits, deer and vermin will be controlled by the Applicants to prevent destructive grazing within the woodlands.

4.2 Hedgerow management

Hedgerows play an extremely important functional role within a local landscape, acting as wildlife corridors. They provide food and shelter for a wide range of mammals and birds, including badger, reptiles and amphibians.

Management aims to maintain the existing hedgerows and increase their value as foraging habitat. Maintenance of hedgerows is also crucial in maintaining flight paths for bats. The following prescriptions will be followed:

Management

1. The hedgerows will be cut on a rotational basis every two to three years, whereby sections of hedge are cut in different years to provide varied age and structure within the site. This will provide a thick nest cover and boost the berry crop for birds and mammals.
2. The hedgerows should be cut in January/ February to avoid nesting bird season and to allow birds to eat the berry crop.
3. Any shrubs which are left to become trees should be coppiced to prevent a tree line forming and to retain the hedgerow.
4. Grassland habitat adjacent to the hedgerows should not be strimmed right up to the base, ploughed or grazed too closely.
5. Any dead trees or shrubs should be replaced with native species. Where possible dead wood will be retained to provide habitat for invertebrates and lichens and mosses.

4.3 Reptiles

The habitat is considered to be sub-optimal habitat and due to the small area size of the habitat to be removed; it is considered that a full reptile survey is unnecessary. Instead a process of habitat degradation will be implemented.

Any clearance of vegetation will be undertaken using the following procedure:

- Works will be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist during suitable weather conditions, with temperatures above 10°C when the weather is dry.
- Hedgerow/ scrub vegetation will be cut by hand using a handheld strimmer / brush cutter. A 4 metres wide strip is required for removal.
- The vegetation will be cut to a minimum length of 10cm on the initial cut. This will allow reptiles to disperse into the wider site.

- Subsequent cutting to ground level can then be undertaken no sooner than an hour after the initial cut.
- Vegetation will then be cleared from the area and removed from site to ensure that reptiles do not colonise the cuttings.

4.4 *Nesting birds*

Nesting bird habitat is present within the hedgerows, scrub and woodland areas. Several small saplings and a 4 metre wide area of shrubs will be removed to facilitate the bridleway. The following will be implemented to negate risk of harming, injuring or contributing to the demise of nesting birds:

- Vegetation clearance, including hedgerows, shrubs, trees and scrub should be conducted outside of the bird nesting season which is considered to run from March to September.
- Where this is not possible a suitable qualified ecologist should check potential nesting habitat immediately prior to clearance. Where nesting birds are encountered clearance must be postponed until the chicks have fledged.

To enhance the site four Schwegler 1B bird boxes will be erected on trees. These will be positioned at least 2metres high and will be north to west facing.

4.5 *Bats*

Trees on site were considered to hold negligible potential to support roosting bats. The plan provided in appendix I illustrates a dead wood tree to be removed, however following the update site visit this tree will remain on site and as such no further work is required.

To enhance the site four Schwegler 2F bat boxes will be erected on trees. These will be positioned at least 3 metres high, away from over-hanging braches and will be south facing.

No proposed lighting will be installed for the bridleway, however all works will take place during working daylight hours to ensure lights are not used along foraging bat habitat.

4.6 *Bridleway maintenance*

In order to provide improved public access to the site in particular for the local community, the paths will be annually inspected in the winter months for any overhanging branches along the bridleways. If necessary these branches will be cut and removed during the winter months. Signage will be erected, persuading people to stick to the designated bridleway and keep dogs on leads, therefore minimising the impact on the

surrounding area. Additionally dog owners will be encouraged to pick up their dogs fouling.

5.0 Timetable of works

The proposed timetable of works is presented below in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Proposed timetable of works

Management	Prescription	Timing	Time limit
Woodland management	Creation of woodpiles and buried log	No timing restrictions	N/A. Ongoing.
	Cutting of dead wood	Only when posing a risk to public safety	N/A. Ongoing.
Bat roosting habitat	Bat boxes erected on mature trees	No timing restrictions	Completed by 1 st March 2018
	Annual cleaning	Annually October/November	N/A. Ongoing.
Bird nesting habitat	Bird boxes erected on mature trees	No timing restrictions	Completed by 1 st March 2018
	Annual cleaning	Annually October/November	N/A. Ongoing.
Footpaths and bridleways	Removal of overhanging branches along bridleways	No timing restrictions	2017
	Checking of overhanging branches along bridleways	Annually, during the winter months	N/A. Ongoing.
	Cutting of overhanging branches	When necessary, during the winter months	N/A. Ongoing.
Signage installation	Erection of signs encouraging responsible use of the bridleway	No timing restrictions	2017

6.0 REFERENCES

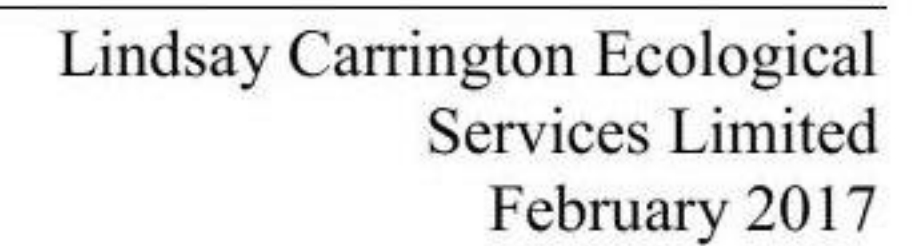
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APPENDIX II: Enhancement and mitigation measures

