

BATCHELORS FARM NATURE RESERVE

FIVE-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-2025

Dolphin Ecological Surveys
on Behalf of Burgess Hill Town Council



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location & Summary Description

Batchelors Farm Nature Reserve is owned by Burgess Hill Town Council (BHTC) and covers approximately 33 acres on the southern edge of Burgess Hill, West Sussex at central grid reference TQ315175.

The Nature Reserve comprises mostly grassland that is managed as hay meadow. The meadows are surrounded by species-rich, mature hedgerows, some containing mature and veteran trees. A central, tree-lined stream valley has wetland vegetation on its banks and there are dense patches of scrub on the site margins (see site sketch map). Mature, open-grown “parkland” Oak trees are both attractive and ecologically important features of the site.

In 2018 eggs laid by Brown Hairstreak butterflies were discovered on the site. The presence of this uncommon butterfly which is a national conservation priority species has implications for the future management regime of hedgerows at Batchelors Farm.

The diverse mixture of semi-natural habitats and features are typical of a traditional Wealden pastoral landscape. It is potentially an important area for biodiversity and has very good ecological connectivity to surrounding semi-natural habitats but is also easily accessible to local residents.

Most of the management work is carried out in-house by BHTC staff and a farming contractor. The Monday Group of volunteers also carry out some tasks and have built gates, stiles and seats.

BHTC has made very good progress towards meeting the management objectives set out in previous management plans for Batchelors Farm. Routine management has been put in place for the grassland areas and the majority of the recommended management actions from the previous management plan have been implemented successfully.

1.2 Previous Management Plans

Sussex Wildlife Trust prepared the first conservation management plan for Batchelors Farm in September 1993.

Subsequent five-year management plans that were written by Kate Ryland of Dolphin Ecological Surveys covered the periods 2005-2010 and 2011-2015.

1.3 The 2020 Management Plan

In 2020 BHTC commissioned a review of progress at Batchelors Farm and a new five-year management plan.

The 2020-2025 management plan for Batchelors Farm Nature Reserve includes:

- A summary of progress towards meeting the site management objectives set out in previous plans
- Revised management aims, objectives and prescriptions
- A new 5 year action plan

An updated ecological assessment of Batchelors Farm based on a desk study, consultation with local naturalists and field work carried out in June 2020 is contained in a separate document.

1.3 Public Access

Batchelors Farm is very popular with local people who use it for informal recreation. It also forms an important part of the Burgess Hill Green Circle network.

In 2020 the exceptional circumstances brought about by the coronavirus pandemic have emphasised how important Batchelors Farm is as an accessible area of open space for local people.

Between 2020 and 2022 a new bridleway is due to be created between Burgess Hill and Keymer that will run along the western edge of Batchelors Farm. This will have the potential to increase the number of visitors to the site and its impact will need to be monitored over time.

As part of the new bridleway scheme BHTC will be given young oak and fruit trees to plant at Batchelors Farm and new signage will also be provided.

2.0 PROGRESS REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT SINCE 2010

2.1 Meadow Management

The meadows at Batchelors Farm are mown by a local farmer on behalf of BHTC. Under this agreement the hay is usually cut in August, which makes the hay of less commercial value but means the meadow habitats are of greater value to a range of wildlife.

Cutting the hay in August has been a very successful in helping the further recovery of the grassland sward from its impoverished state of 2005. In 2020 an increased number of wildflower species were found with a greater coverage of wildflowers across the site than previously (see biodiversity report). In addition most areas of grassland sward are generally shorter with a higher proportion of fine-leaved grasses and more wildflowers than was previously the case.

Leaving wide unmown margins around the meadows has been less successful to date and there remains considerable scope to increase the tall grass habitat retained adjacent to hedgerows and around the edges of all the fields.

Regular path mowing has proved to be unnecessary as visitor pressure is high enough to maintain trampled routes around the site. BHTC staff cut the grass around benches as necessary, which is usually approximately twice per year.

Creeping thistle does not seem to have spread significantly across the site under the new grassland management regime, although some patches still occur in the southern parts of the meadows and in the wetland area.

In the summer of 2020 the prolonged drought and warm temperatures reduced sward growth in grasslands across the southeast of England. Hay crops across the region were very poor and a winter shortage of animal fodder is expected. In this year only the farmer was allowed to take an earlier hay cut in first week of July on the strict condition that wider margins were left uncut.

Cutting the hay some weeks earlier in a single year is not likely to have an adverse impact on grassland wildlife. Any hay cut, taken at any time, will have an impact on grassland invertebrates but this can be mitigated by retaining substantial unmown areas on field margins where a proportion of the fauna will survive.

2.2 Hedgerow & Tree Management

The scrub and hedgerows around the site are in good condition and continue to provide excellent habitat for a range of wildlife. Some of the hedgerows have improved noticeably since 2010 and have been allowed to grow taller, wider and more dense under a more relaxed management regime.

In 2018 the eggs of Brown Hairstreak butterflies were discovered on Blackthorn in the hedges at Batchelors Farm. Neil Hulme of Butterfly Conservation Sussex set out a detailed 3-year rotational hedgerow management schedule for the site that is designed to optimise the scrub and hedgerow habitat for this species (see Hedgerow Management Rotation Map and Appendix 1).

Unfortunately in 2019 the prescribed hedge cutting rotation was not followed due to a misunderstanding with the contractor and too many of the hedges on the site were cut in their entirety rather than just the selected sections. This is unfortunate but unlikely to be catastrophic for the target species. However, no hedge cutting should be carried out in the winter of 2020/21 to allow as much suitable Brown Hairstreak egg-laying habitat as possible to recover. An egg search in February 2021 is recommended to assess the situation.

The young Oak trees that were planted in the western field to create an "Oak Avenue" continue to develop well.

Over the last decade hedgerow gaps have been re-planted, which has greatly improved woody habitat connectivity around the site and to adjoining areas.



A dense, wide hedgerow at Batchelors Farm

New mixed, native trees and shrubs have been planted around the water tower and this new habitat is developing well, though there are still some gaps that could be filled.

In 2010 planting a new hedgerow/shaw along a seepage line on the eastern slope was suggested but this action was not taken forward. The suggestion has been dropped from the 2020 management prescriptions because the seepage and consequent soil erosion has now stopped and at the same time the hedgerows surrounding the field below the water tower have become more dense and increased in value as habitats. In addition a new linear woody feature across this meadow could potentially reduce the landscape value of the open vistas within Batchelors Farm and outwards to the South Downs which are highly valued by visitors to the site.

2.3 Wetland Management

The upstream (northern) part of the wetland area which has had native Black Poplars and willows planted along the stream has developed into a structurally complex, diverse and sheltered habitat that is likely to be rich in invertebrates and valuable to breeding birds. Part of this area remains fenced and is thus largely undisturbed by people and dogs but there is open access to a small part of the wetland and a minor path crossing the stream.



The upstream wetland and Black Poplars

The Black Poplars have grown vigorously with few failures and the trees are now rather crowded. Coppicing or pollarding a selection of these trees would help to introduce variety to their height and growth forms.

The tall herb vegetation to the west of the stream has developed well into a rich fen-like wetland habitat with valuable nectar- and pollen-rich plants of value to a range of invertebrates. It has been cut in sections on rotation late in the season according to the 2010 prescription wherever possible but the proposed 3 year rotation has not always been followed. Wet ground conditions can be a constraint and in some years the cut vegetation has not been removed.

2.4 Access & Interpretation

Site access and signage has been greatly improved since 2010 and a new footpath route into the site from Keymer Road in the northeast has been formalised.

Interpretive boards have been installed at the main entrances. These provide information about the objectives of site management and Batchelors Farm's value for wildlife and people. Small wildlife trail signs are also scattered around the site.

2.5 Additional Management

Some extra management work at Batchelors Farm has been carried out that was not included in the 2010-2015 plan. The two main actions are:

- A new fence has been installed along southern boundary. This required substantial scrub clearance and revealed quite large gaps in the mature scrub on this edge of the site.
- Railway embankment safety work was carried out in late 2018. This was essential but did cause the loss of some mature oaks and scrubby edge habitat.

2.6 Management Progress Summary Table

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS IN 2010-2015 PLAN	PROGRESS/OUTCOME
Late season annual hay cut	Good. Hay is usually cut in August. The botanical diversity of the grassland has increased (see 2020 biodiversity review)
Leave wide unmown margins around meadows that are cut on 3 year rotation	Needs more work. Some margins and corners have been left uncut as per the management plan but they are not wide enough and not managed consistently
Cut tall herb wetland vegetation on 3 year rotation	Good. The rotational cutting has been carried out in some years but not always. In general the wetland habitat and the Black poplars planted near the old pond have thrived
Review coverage of Bulrush (aka Reedmace)	No control of this plant has yet been needed
Mow paths around the site regularly	Regular path mowing has not been needed
Trim hedges on rotation and only one side at a time	Good. Reduced trimming is showing benefits. Needs more work. A revised 3-year rotational hedge cutting regime that was set out in 2018 has not been entirely successful
Re-plant gaps in hedges	Good. Gaps have been filled, hedgerows are thriving
Plant new hedgerow/shaw along a line of subsidence	New shaw creation did not take place. The subsidence now appears to have stopped, probably due to work at the water tower. Planting a new shaw is no longer recommended
Replace dead trees in the southwest corner	Good. A community orchard was planted in this area by Friends of the Green Circle and grassland enhanced
Install interpretive boards	Good. Interpretive boards have been installed at main entrance points along with other infrastructure
Take fixed-point photographs	Needs more work. This may have been started but has not continued regularly
Commission wildlife surveys as resources allow	Resources were not available for paid surveys but volunteers have recorded butterflies
Commission dormouse survey of hedges and scrub	No survey on the site but a dormouse survey on adjacent land in 2018 found them to be present
Erect Barn Owl nest box in a mature oak	Not carried out but not essential
Review and update management plan	Plan reviewed and updated 2020

3.0 MANAGEMENT AIMS & OBJECTIVES

3.1 Management Aims

- To maintain and enhance biodiversity at Batchelors Farm through appropriate management
- To provide an area where local people can enjoy wildlife
- To provide a safe area for informal recreation
- To encourage more wildlife recording at Batchelors Farm

3.2 Objectives

- A continued increase in the species richness, habitat diversity and wildlife value of the meadows over the next 5 year period through sensitive management
- A hedgerow network that is well-managed and maintained in suitable condition to support robust populations of Brown Hairstreak butterflies
- An increase in the extent of structurally varied edge habitat around the meadows
- To increase the amount of information collected about wildlife present at Batchelors Farm and use the data to inform management decisions

4.0 MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Meadows

A key management action at Batchelors Farm is taking an annual hay crop from the fields with a cutting date no earlier than 15th July. The practice of taking hay in August seems to have been very successful on this site in allowing as many wildflowers and grasses as possible to set seed whilst also providing a viable hay crop.

When the grassland is cut for hay a continuous band of at least 4m wide uncut margins should be left around the field edges, corners and next to all hedgerows. This will provide a refuge for grassland fauna during hay mowing and create areas where later flowering wildflowers can set seed. The well-defined path around the edges of the site should serve to mark the extent of the long-grass margins.



Tall grass margin should be retained between hedgerows and paths

These tall sward margins should only be cut every 3 years on a rotation such that one third of the grassy margins are cut every year. As far as possible rotational mowing of the tall margins should be combined with cutting the adjacent hedgerows within their own 3 year rotation (see 4.3.1 below and Hedgerow Management Rotation Map).

The meadows generally have very low levels of coarse, problematic or weedy species. Some localised areas need to be monitored where coarse species were noted. These are the southeastern corner of the eastern slope where Hogweed is locally frequent with some Creeping Thistle. The southeastern corner of the western slope has an area of coarse sward with Tall Fescue and Creeping Thistle.

Since 2010 an area of grassland in southwest of the site has been successfully enhanced using wildflower seed when a community orchard was planted.



Flowerly grassland in the orchard

Large scale enhancement of the sward using wildflower seed or plant plugs is an expensive process which can have mixed results. However there is scope to carry out a small-scale trial enhancement project using green hay from the orchard area's flowerly grassland to promote spread of wildflowers into the main meadows (see 4.2 below).

4.2 Orchard Management & Creation

The fenced off, small orchard in the southwestern corner of Batchelors Farm is an undisturbed area that provides a contrasting habitat to the rest of the meadow grassland. It was enhanced with wildflower seed by volunteers when the fruit trees were planted and has developed a distinctly flowerly sward with a high proportion of tall, tussocky grasses. The western edge adjoins the railway line and there is a band of dense scrub along the fence.

The orchard supports a population of Marbled White butterflies and is likely to be a hotspot for other grassland invertebrates that favour taller swards. The lack of public access to this small corner of the site makes it a particularly valuable habitat for wildlife.

Limited management of the orchard has allowed numerous self-seeded Oak and other broadleaved trees to become established. These non-orchard trees should be selectively removed whilst retaining healthy fruit trees.



View of the orchard

The flowery grassland within the orchard fence should be cut annually in two halves i.e. on a two year rotation, later in the year than the main meadows. This will maintain some taller grassland areas and help to reduce the number of self-sown trees that become established.

Once cut the “hay” from the orchard should immediately be moved onto the adjoining meadow and spread out. This will speed up the transfer of wildflower seed from the more species-rich orchard into the meadow.

The dense, scrubby edges on the south and west sides of the orchard should be kept at their present extent by periodically cutting back sections of encroaching scrub and Bramble. This will maintain the valuable edge habitat that complements the flowery grassland. Rotational cutting in this area should be done as necessary rather than to a fixed schedule.

Rather than encourage more people into this quiet and wildlife-rich corner of the site, it is recommended that a new community orchard should be created which has easy access for visitors but ideally without dogs being encouraged into it. This would be a good use for the extra fruit trees that will be given to Batchelors Farm as part of the proposed new bridleway creation.

The new community orchard could be planted in grassland to the north of the water tower (see Site Sketch Map). An interpretive board should be installed in the new orchard and the area fenced to create an enclosed, dog-free zone. It is very important to make sure that newly planted fruit trees are watered regularly to help them establish successfully.

4.3. Hedges & Trees

4.3.1 Hedgerow Management

All the tree and hedgerow management should be carried out in the winter months to avoid the bird nesting season (March to August), to minimise harm to other fauna and whilst the plants are dormant. Ideally hedges should only be cut in January-February when birds and mammals have eaten all the fruits and berries.

The hedges at Batchelors Farm should be managed on rotation to maintain the dense, bushy habitats that provides such valuable wildlife habitat.

The discovery that the hedgerows of Batchelors Farm are used by breeding Brown Hairstreak butterflies makes it particularly important hedgerow management follows the management prescriptions designed to optimise habitat for this species.

The recommended 3-year hedge cutting rotation is shown on a map at the end of this report. In summary the east- and south-facing sides of hedges (which are most favoured for egg-laying by Brown Hairstreak) should be cut in sections with only one third of each hedge cut each year. The west- and north-facing sides of hedges should be cut in their entirety but only every third year.

Permanent marker posts have been installed along the hedgerows to indicate the sections that should be managed within the rotation. An annual cutting plan will be supplied to the contractor and the sections to cut each year will be marked out by BHTC.

No hedgerow management should be carried out in 2020 to allow recovery from the wholesale trimming in 2019. thereafter the 3 year rotation should be resumed in winter 2021.

The southern boundary of the western slope has had some scrub clearance done to allow new fencing to be erected. The scrub should be allowed to grow back to form a dense barrier and discourage access to adjoining land outside BHTC ownership across the fenceline.

4.3.2 Tree Management

Batchelors Farm has numerous veteran and mature trees which are likely to be of high ecological value and may support, for example, specialist fauna, lichens, mosses and fungi. They are also very important because mature trees have a much greater capacity to store carbon than newly planted and young trees.



One of the mature, veteran Oaks at Batchelors Farm

It would be very useful to compile an inventory of the veteran and mature trees at Batchelors Farm, a task that could potentially be carried out by volunteers. The Ancient Tree Forum provides excellent guidance on the identification, importance and management of veteran trees. Many useful resources are available at <https://www.ancienttreeforum.co.uk/>

Signs of Ash dieback disease are evident in several trees at Batchelors Farm. Ongoing monitoring is needed and dead/dying trees should be removed only if they pose a risk to safety. This is already part of BHTC routine tree management.

Wherever possible dead trees, deadwood in the crowns of trees and that which has fallen to the ground should be retained as wildlife habitat. Dead limbs in trees should only be removed if they pose a threat to the safety of visitors.

The Black Poplars that were planted in the wetland area have become quite crowded and uniform in size. It is recommended that approximately one third of these trees are either coppiced or pollarded to diversify their eventual growth forms. This exercise could be repeated with a further third of the trees 2-3 years later.

4.3.3 New Tree & Shrub Planting

There are some gaps in the young hedgerow around the water tower. These should be planted up to create a wider, more dense, woody habitat around the maturing canopy trees that form the core of the planting. Using locally appropriate shrub species that provide rich flower and fruit resources for fauna is recommended.

Where the new fence has been installed along the southern boundary of the western slope, a mixture of native shrub species should be planted to supplement the existing Blackthorn regrowth.

Recommended woody species appropriate to the site that are rich in nectar, pollen, fruit, seeds and nuts include Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel, Spindle, Guelder-rose, Honeysuckle and Holly.

In the western meadow there are young Oak saplings developing naturally around the remains of a fallen Oak on the upper slopes. A few of these young trees should be protected with tree guards so that they can grow into the next generation of parkland Oaks.

4.4 Wetland Area

The strip of mixed wetland and tall herb vegetation on the western side of the stream has been managed by cutting one third every year in late summer when the ground is sufficiently dry. This has been successful in creating a diverse vegetation structure and maintaining a varied wetland flora.

Ideally this type of vegetation should be cut as late as possible in the year to reduce the risk of harming fauna that may inhabit the wetland. However, ground conditions in this strip next to the stream quickly become too waterlogged to allow access for mowing.



Tall herb vegetation in the wetland area

The site managers will need to make a judgement on the optimum time of year to carry out vegetation management of this area but in dry years it should be delayed as long as possible into the autumn. A light touch and flexibility is needed to maintain the rich balance of open vegetation, tall herb and willow scrub that provides such good cover for wildlife.

The wetland flush at the northern end of the stream is already fenced and should remain so for the duration of this plan to keep human and dog access to the wetland and new trees to a minimum. There is no need to carry out any management of the wetland vegetation in the fenced area at present, but in future the amount of Bulrush may need to be reduced if it becomes excessively dominant.

4.5 Survey & Monitoring

The arrangement for grassland and hedgerow management between a local farmer and BHTC is beneficial to both parties and should be continued. However, the details of annual work carried out by the farming contractor should be monitored and recorded each year by BHTC to avoid any future misunderstandings. Basic information to collect include the date of hay cutting, which sections of hedges have been trimmed and how the tall grass margins have been managed. Any problems or modifications to the annual management tasks should also be recorded.

BHTC staff carry out regular site inspections at least every 2 weeks at Batchelors Farm Nature Reserve and respond to reports of particular problems reported by visitors.

Further surveys of the wildlife at Batchelors Farm would be very valuable and the results could help to refine future management decisions. Inevitably the type of survey work possible will depend on the resources available to pay for contractors or on recruiting skilled volunteer naturalists.

In the past Members of The Friends of the Burgess Hill Green Circle (FoBHGC) network have taken an active part in management and wildlife surveying at Batchelors Farm but more recently their efforts have been focused on other sites with less input at Batchelors Farm.

To encourage greater community involvement with the site a Friends of Batchelors Farm Group should be set up if possible, perhaps with the help of FoBHGC network. Members of such a group could potentially carry out some of the recommended wildlife surveys and monitoring.

All visitors to the site should be encouraged to report their wildlife sightings at Batchelors Farm via the iRecord website/app (<https://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/>).

The iNaturalist website (<https://www.inaturalist.org/>) is particularly helpful in promoting citizen science wildlife recording.

To help measure progress towards meeting the site management objectives over the next five years, key monitoring activities should focus on:

- Plant diversity in the meadows
- The egg-laying success of Brown Hairstreak butterflies
- The development of grassland/hedgerow edge habitat structure

A broad measure of plant species richness, habitat diversity and value to wildlife in the meadows could be made by repeating of the walkover surveys that have been carried out in 2005 and 2020. It would be advisable to standardise the recording areas so that in future species lists are more directly comparable. The resources available will dictate how much time can be spent on botanical monitoring of meadows.

Carrying out annual, standardised Brown Hairstreak egg counts in winter would help to ensure that the hedgerow management regime is being successful in meeting the management objective for this species.

Monitoring habitat structure and large-scale changes by taking annual fixed-point photographs of the site can be very effective. This would be a suitable way to generate a visual record of the development and structure of meadow margin/hedgerow zones and could be a suitable task for members of a Friends of Batchelors Farm Group.

Structured butterfly surveys and monitoring would also be very valuable at Batchelors Farm, which is clearly an important site for these insects. For example, if a volunteer could be found to walk a regular butterfly transect according to the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme methodology (<https://www.ukbms.org/>) this would provide more in depth data about the species that use the site.

If resources allow then fixed-point ground level photographic monitoring could be supplemented by occasional aerial photography. Aerial images help to capture gross changes in habitats and features, such as hedgerow width or gaps, spread of scrub and footpath route changes. Aerial surveys can be commissioned from licenced drone pilots or by using lower resolution images that can be obtained from publicly available satellite imagery.

The biodiversity assessment desk study results show that a considerable amount of biological survey work has been carried out on adjoining land in connection with a planning application. The European Protected Species (EPS) that were found nearby, which include Hazel Dormouse and several bat species, are also highly likely to be on Batchelors Farm. The management recommendations in this plan are based on the precautionary principle and assume that these EPS are also present on the site. Surveys for these EPS should only be conducted by licensed and suitably experienced ecologists, however if resources allow then investigation by suitably licenced people into dormouse and bat occurrence and their use of the site would be very informative.

With any management plan it is important to review progress and ensure that the management is meeting site objectives. This management plan should be reviewed and updated in 2025.

4.6 Local Nature Reserve Status

It is strongly recommended that BHTC should give Batchelors Farm formal recognition as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

LNRs are declared and managed for nature conservation and are intended to provide opportunities for people to have contact with nature, for education and for research. The requirement for a proposed LNR to have a conservation management plan would be met by this current document.

This is a statutory site designation and Local Authorities can declare LNRs under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. BHTC would be able to declare a LNR if this power has been delegated to them by Mid Sussex District Council.

The process to declare a LNR is quite simple and Defra guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/create-and-manage-local-nature-reserves>

5.0 FIVE YEAR WORK PLAN 2020-2025

MANAGEMENT TASK	TIMING	YEAR				
		2020	2021	2023	2024	2025
<p>Meadow Mowing Take hay crop annually leaving wide, unmown margins around field edges and corners outside the boundary path and next to hedges</p>	Not before 15 th July	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Meadow Margins Cut long grass margins on a 3-year rotation when the adjoining hedgerow sections are managed (<i>see hedgerow management rotation map</i>)</p>	January-February	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Coarse Meadow Plants Monitor the extent of thistle, dock and hogweed on the southern slopes and use targeted topping as a control measure if necessary</p>	June-July	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Orchard Grass Management Mow 50% of orchard grassland each year after main meadows are cut. Spread the hay onto less flowery areas of the adjoining meadow</p>	Late August-September	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Orchard Tree Management Remove self-seeded oaks and non-fruit trees</p>	Winter	✓		✓		✓
<p>Orchard Scrub Management Cut sections of scrub on the margins on rotation to maintain its current extent</p>	Winter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Orchard Creation Plant a new community orchard north of the water tower on the eastern slope. Fence the area, water trees as they establish and install an interpretive board</p>	Winter/early spring			✓		
<p>Hedge Cutting Cut one third of east- and south-facing sides of hedgerows each year on rotation Cut the whole length of each west- and north-facing hedgerows every third year</p>	January-February	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

MANAGEMENT TASK	TIMING	YEAR				
		2020	2021	2023	2024	2025
<p>Contractor Liaison Provide the hedging contractor with an annual hedge cutting plan showing which sections to manage. Ensure management section marker posts are clearly visible along hedgerows</p>	November	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Tree Management Compile an inventory of all veteran and mature trees on site</p>			✓			
<p>Tree Management Monitor Ash for signs of die-back but only remove affected trees when essential for safety</p>	As necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Tree Management Coppice or pollard ⅓ of Black Poplar trees</p>	Winter	✓			✓	
<p>Tree & Shrub Planting Fill gaps and widen the woody planting around the water tower fence</p>	Winter	✓				
<p>Tree & Shrub Planting Plant mixed native trees and shrubs along the southern boundary of the western meadow</p>	Winter		✓			
<p>New Parkland Trees Protect selected self-sown oaks in the western meadow with tree guards</p>	June			✓		
<p>Wetland Management Cut and remove ⅓ of the tall herb vegetation to the west of the stream each year on rotation</p>	Autumn (when ground conditions allow)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Wetland Management Leave the fenced wetland area as a minimal intervention zone</p>						
<p>Contract Work Recording & Monitoring Record the timing of work done and areas managed by contractors each year to avoid misunderstandings and to inform future management plans</p>	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

MANAGEMENT TASK	TIMING	YEAR				
		2020	2021	2023	2024	2025
Community Involvement Establish a Friends of Batchelors Farm Group	ASAP	✓				
Wildlife Recording Encourage visitors to record & submit wildlife sightings using iRecord and iNaturalist	All year round		✓	✓	✓	✓
Meadow Flora Monitoring Repeat botanical walkover survey of the meadows	June				✓	
Butterfly Monitoring Transect Set up and record a regular butterfly monitoring transect if possible	April-September		✓	✓	✓	✓
Brown Hairstreak Monitoring Carry out annual Brown Hairstreak egg counts if possible	February		✓	✓	✓	✓
Photographic Monitoring Take fixed point photographs of the site	At least annually and ideally more often		✓	✓	✓	✓
Aerial Photographic Monitoring Collect or commission aerial images of the site	Winter and summer if possible		✓			✓
Species Surveys Commission or arrange volunteer wildlife surveys of the site as time and resources allow. Consider surveys of dormouse, bats, butterflies and moths, dragonflies and damselflies, amphibians, reptiles and birds	As appropriate		✓	✓	✓	✓
Local Nature Reserve Status Declare Batchelors Farm a Local Nature Reserve	ASAP		✓			
Management Plan Review Review and update the management plan	Spring					✓

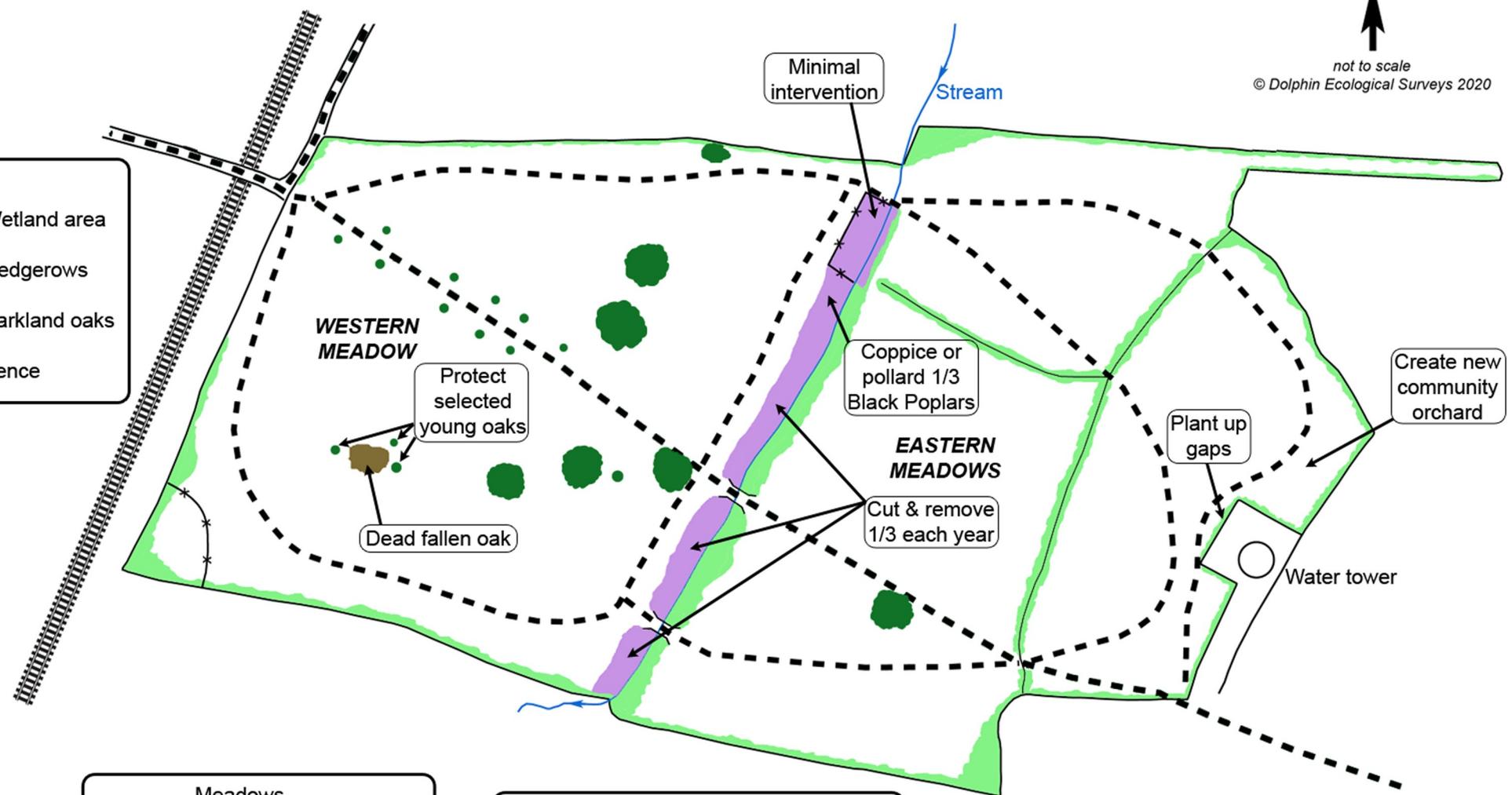
Batchelors Farm Sketch Map & Management Summary



not to scale
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KEY

-  Wetland area
-  Hedgerows
-  Parkland oaks
-  Fence



Meadows

- Cut hay annually
- Leave wide margins & cut on 3 year rotation
- Monitor coarse grassland plants

Orchard

- Cut 50% hay annually
- Spread green hay in western meadow
- Remove young non-fruit trees
- Cut scrubby edges on rotation

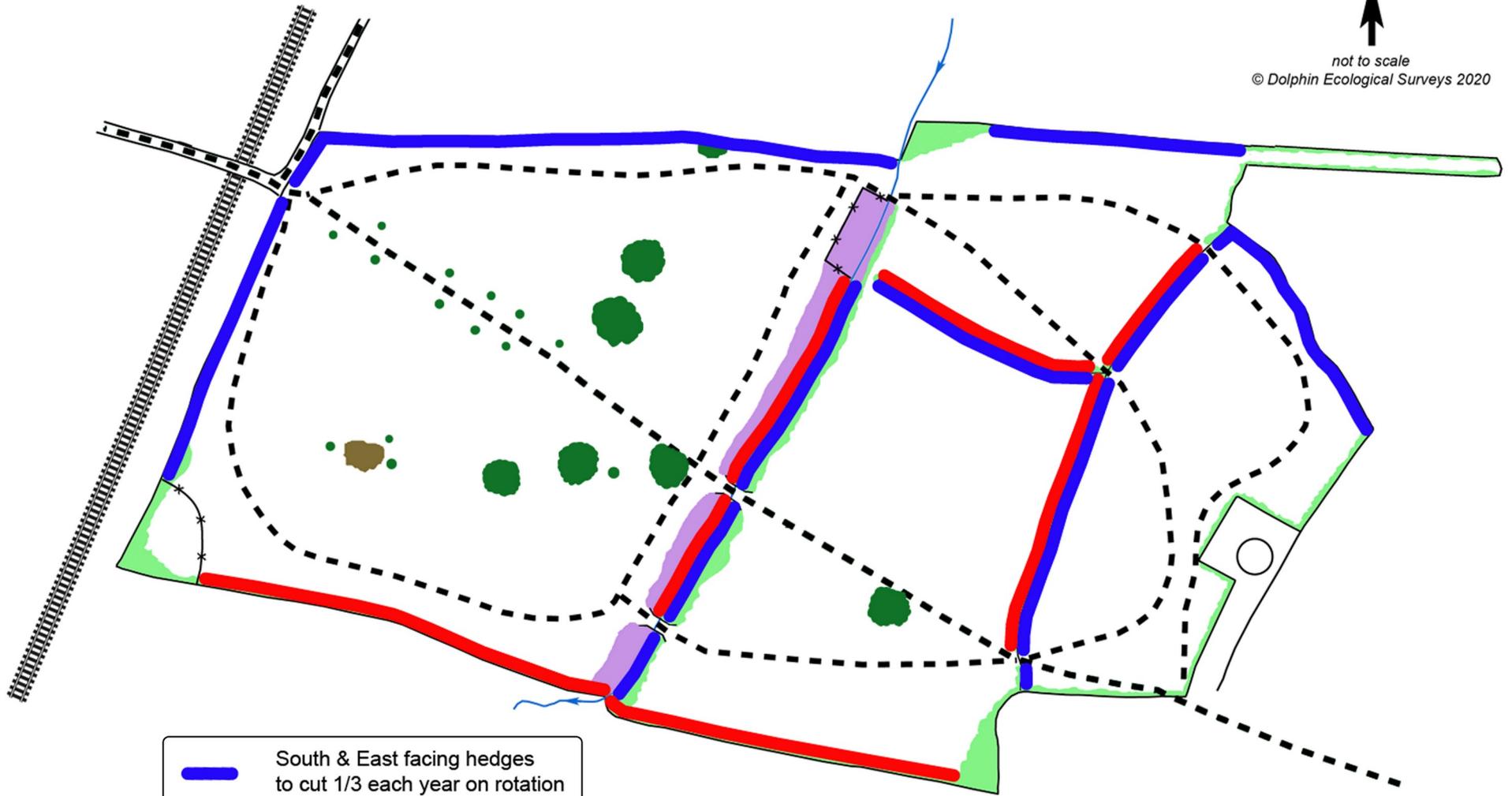
Hedgerows

- Cut on 3 year rotation (see separate map)

Batchelors Farm Hedgerow Management Rotation Map



not to scale
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-  South & East facing hedges to cut 1/3 each year on rotation
-  North & West facing hedges to cut once every 3 years

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