

Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan

27/10/2025

This Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan sets out the 30-year strategy for enhancing and maintaining species-rich grassland, native woodland, priority habitat ponds, and mixed scrubland on land adjacent to the B5331 at Rudyard to secure a measurable Biodiversity Net Gain for the proposed development of 4, no dwellings.

Document Control Sheet

Status	Issued
Date:	31/10/2025
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Revision Status

Issue No	Issued to	Changes Made	Date
1	Client	First Issue	31/10/2025

Table of Contents

Document Control Sheet.....	1
1. Purpose and Scope.....	3
2. Objectives	3
3. Habitats Covered	3
4. Habitat Management Prescriptions.....	4
5. Monitoring and Reporting.....	5
6. Trigger Points and Corrective Actions	6
7. Governance and Funding.....	6
8. Exit Strategy	6
9. Conclusion.....	7

1. Purpose and Scope

This Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (HMMP) sets out the long-term management, maintenance, and monitoring measures required to achieve and sustain the +40% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculated for the proposed residential development at Land Adjacent to B5331, Rudyard.

The plan covers all soft-landscaped and semi-natural habitats within the site boundary and ensures compliance with the Environment Act 2021 and the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) Regulations 2024, which require habitat creation and enhancement measures to be secured for a minimum of 30 years.

2. Objectives

The key objectives of this HMMP are to:

1. Maintain the habitat quality and condition used in the BNG Metric v1.0.4 calculations.
2. Ensure that created and enhanced habitats establish successfully and reach target condition.
3. Provide appropriate long-term management that supports ecological function, landscape integration, and resilience.
4. Enable measurable monitoring and adaptive management through a structured 30-year programme.

3. Habitats Covered

Habitat Type	Baseline Area (m ²)	Post-Development Area (m ²)	Management Category	Target Condition
Other woodland – mixed	2,203	1,409 (retained & enhanced)	Retention / Enhancement	Moderate–Good
Mixed scrub	2,454	662 (retained & managed)	Retention	Moderate
Other neutral grassland	1,339	834 (created)	Creation / Enhancement	Moderate
Vegetated garden	–	1,137 (created)	Creation	Poor
Ponds (priority habitat)	–	46 (created)	Creation	Moderate
Artificial / developed land (sealed)	647	1,910	N/A (built)	N/A

Total managed habitat area: ≈ 4,088 m²

4. Habitat Management Prescriptions

4.1 Other Woodland – Mixed (1,409 m² retained and enhanced)

- **Objective:** Maintain woodland canopy and understorey diversity, allowing natural regeneration and providing long-term structural complexity.
- **Year 1–5 (Establishment):**
 - ❖ Remove litter, debris, and invasive species (bramble dominance, sycamore, snowberry).
 - ❖ Undertake light thinning where canopy density >80% to encourage understorey development.
 - ❖ Protect retained trees using Root Protection Areas (BS5837:2012).
- **Year 6–30 (Maintenance):**
 - ❖ Conduct low-intensity management: selective coppicing every 10 years; retention of standing and fallen deadwood.
 - ❖ Maintain native ground flora; no herbicide use except for targeted invasive control.
- **Target:** Maintain woodland in moderate-to-good condition with >60% native canopy cover and diverse age structure.

4.2 Mixed Scrub (662 m² retained)

- **Objective:** Sustain a structurally diverse scrub matrix beneficial to birds, invertebrates, and small mammals.
- **Year 1–5:**
 - ❖ Cut back over-mature scrub on rotation (1/3 area each year).
 - ❖ Replant gaps with native species: hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*).
 - ❖ Prevent encroachment into neutral grassland through annual cut along margins.
- **Year 6–30:**
 - ❖ Maintain rotational cutting (every 3–5 years) to create a mosaic of young, mid-aged, and mature scrub.
 - ❖ Leave uncut buffer zones adjacent to woodland edge for transition habitat.

4.3 Other Neutral Grassland (834 m² created / enhanced)

- **Objective:** Establish and maintain species-rich grassland using Emorsgate EM2 Standard Neutral Grassland Mix or equivalent.

- **Soil Preparation:**
 - Lightly scarify or cultivate to expose 30–50% bare ground; do not fertilise.
- **Sowing Rate:** 4 g/m² (autumn 2025).
- **Establishment (Year 1–2):**
 - Cut every 6–8 weeks to 75 mm to suppress annual weeds.
 - Remove arisings to reduce nutrient load.
- **Long-term (Year 3–30):**
 - Two cuts annually: July/August (main cut after seeding); September/October (tidy cut).
 - Remove arisings after each cut.
 - No fertiliser, pesticide, or reseedling with non-native species.
- **Target Condition:** Achieve “moderate” condition by Year 3 (≥5 indicator forbs per m²; sward height 50–400 mm).

4.4 Ponds (46 m² created)

- **Objective:** Establish and maintain two small ponds supporting aquatic flora and invertebrates.
- **Design:** Irregular margins with shelving depths 0–0.8 m; planted with native emergent and marginal species.
- **Management:**
 - ❖ Inspect monthly for first 12 months for erosion or pollution.
 - ❖ Remove excess vegetation every 3–5 years in autumn; retain ≤50% cover.
 - ❖ Maintain open water area of ≥30%.
- **Target Condition:** Moderate condition by Year 5 with diverse marginal/emergent species and absence of duckweed dominance.

5. Monitoring and Reporting

Year	Monitoring Frequency	Purpose / Deliverables
1–5	Annual	Confirm establishment success and control invasive species.
6–10	Biennial	Assess progress toward target conditions (species richness, cover, sward structure).
11–30	Biennial	Verify maintenance and adapt management where required.
Every 5 years	Full BNG review	Re-calculate habitat conditions in Metric if needed; verify that on-site net gain remains ≥10%.

All monitoring to be undertaken by a qualified ecologist or land manager trained in BNG condition assessment.

Reports (Years 1, 5, 10, 20, and 30) to be retained by the developer or management body and provided to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council on request.

6. Trigger Points and Corrective Actions

Indicator	Trigger Level	Corrective Measure
Grassland sward <5 indicator species	Year 3	Re-seed with EM2 mix and review cut regime.
Shrub or tree mortality >25%	Any year	Re-plant with native species same season.
Pond vegetation >80% cover	Any year	Desilt and remove vegetation in autumn.
Invasive non-native species present	Any year	Remove manually or treat under supervision.
Nutrient enrichment or dominance by coarse grasses	After Year 5	Increase cut frequency; remove arisings.

7. Governance and Funding

Responsibility for habitat maintenance will rest with the developer or management company established for the site.

Long-term funding will be secured through the site's service-charge or management agreement for a minimum 30-year period in accordance with the statutory BNG requirement.

Hewitt & Carr Services can provide periodic ecological monitoring, adaptive-management advice, and re-assessment updates to support compliance verification.

8. Exit Strategy

At the end of the 30-year period, the ecological performance of the habitats will be reviewed.

If the habitats remain in at least their target condition and continue to provide ecological function, standard grounds maintenance may continue without significant intervention.

If degradation is observed, restoration works (re-seeding, selective planting, or re-profiling) should be implemented before any management simplification occurs.

9. Conclusion

This HMMP provides a practical and proportionate strategy to deliver and sustain the habitats contributing to the +40% biodiversity net gain on the site.

Implementation of this plan will ensure that all created and retained habitats achieve their target condition and remain in suitable ecological status throughout the statutory 30-year maintenance period.