



Invitation to Tender

For the Work of:

September 2025 “Mend the Gap” Tender A – South Moreton and Cholsey

Planting native trees and hedging on five sites in South Moreton and Cholsey, Didcot, South Oxfordshire

Issued: 19th September 2025

Return responses by: 12th October 2025 at 17.00

1 The Mend the Gap Project

The project is a rail corridor enhancement scheme, funded by Network Rail and now administered by the Chilterns Conservation Board. The objective of the planting being tendered is to soften the view of the electrification of the Great Western main line from Reading to Didcot. Planting hedges and trees will enhance the landscape and help to screen the railway infrastructure.

2 Overview of the work

Five landowners in the Mend the Gap project area require tree and hedgerow planting on five sites covered by this Invitation to Tender.

The Contract is to supply and plant mixed native hedgerow trees, in-field trees and hedgerow, with guards or shelters and canes/stakes. Works will also include ground preparations including mowing, strimming and mulching.

The successful contractor is also to be employed to attend the site one year later for maintenance which shall be to straighten up hedge plants, to replace failed plants, broken guards and canes/stakes.

The contractor will liaise with FWAG South East Advisers who have produced this specification and will oversee works.

3 Summary of the works

The work is summarised as:

Site number	Location	Works
Site 1	South Moreton	Plant 3 trees with suitable stakes, guards and mulch.
Site 2	South Moreton	Supply only: 16 trees with suitable stakes, guards and mulch.
Site 3	South Moreton	Plant 5 trees in triangular horse-proof guards with suitable stakes, guards and mulch.
Site 4	Cholsey	Plant 22 trees across the farm with suitable stakes, guards and mulch.
Site 5	Cholsey	Supply only: mixed native hedge plants for 200m of planting with suitable cane and spiral guard.

4 Timing of required works

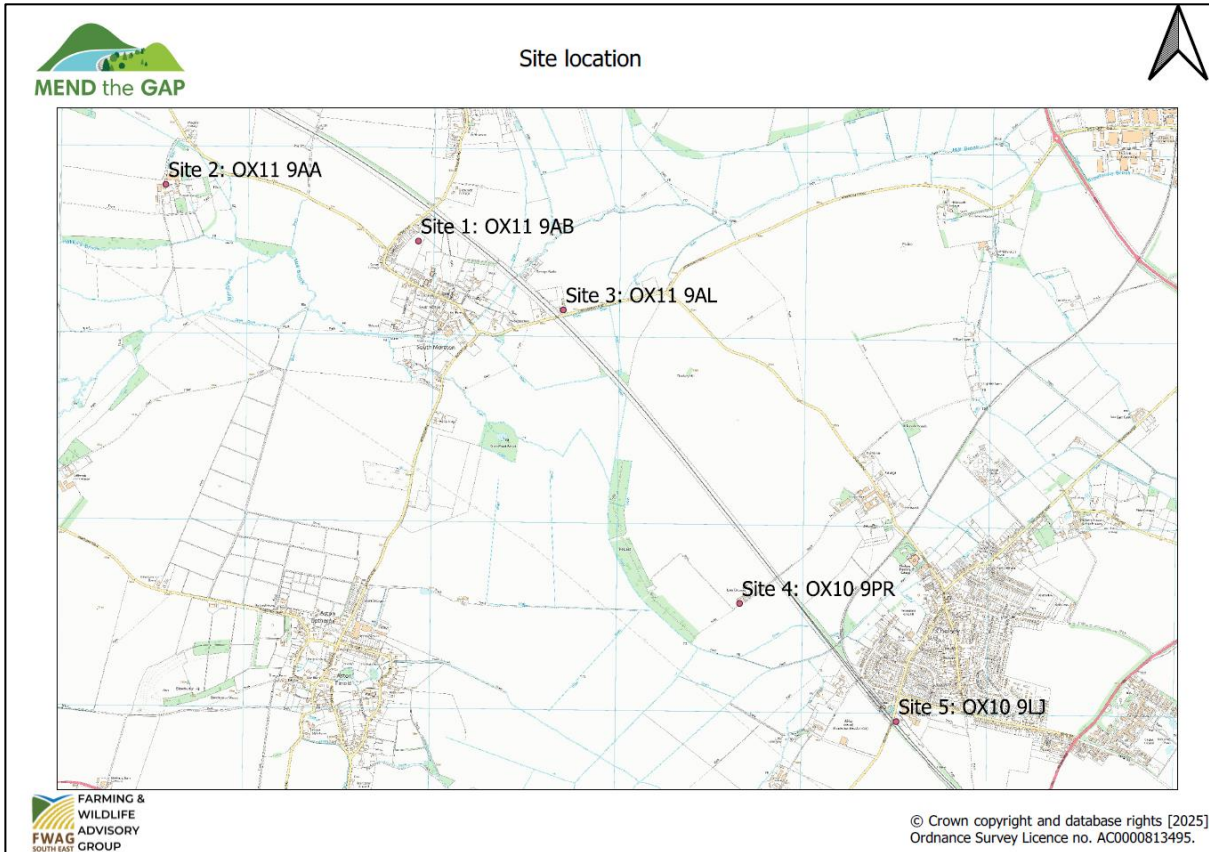
Site preparation and planting to be completed between 20th October 2025 to 31st January 2026 (contingency one month extension, for example due to weather or ground conditions).

Follow-up care and maintenance works to be completed between 1st November 2026 and 15th January 2027 (the season after planting).

5 The Sites

The 5 sites are as shown on Figure 1. They are in South Moreton and Cholsey, South Oxfordshire. Access will be via fields and tracks, with permission granted by each landowner.

Figure 1 - Map showing the sites



6 Details of the Works required

6.1 Site 1

Site description: Site is a grassland recreation ground with public access. On this site, particular care should be taken regarding public access and use, to ensure safety and courtesy to the local community.

Figure 2 - Map showing Site 1

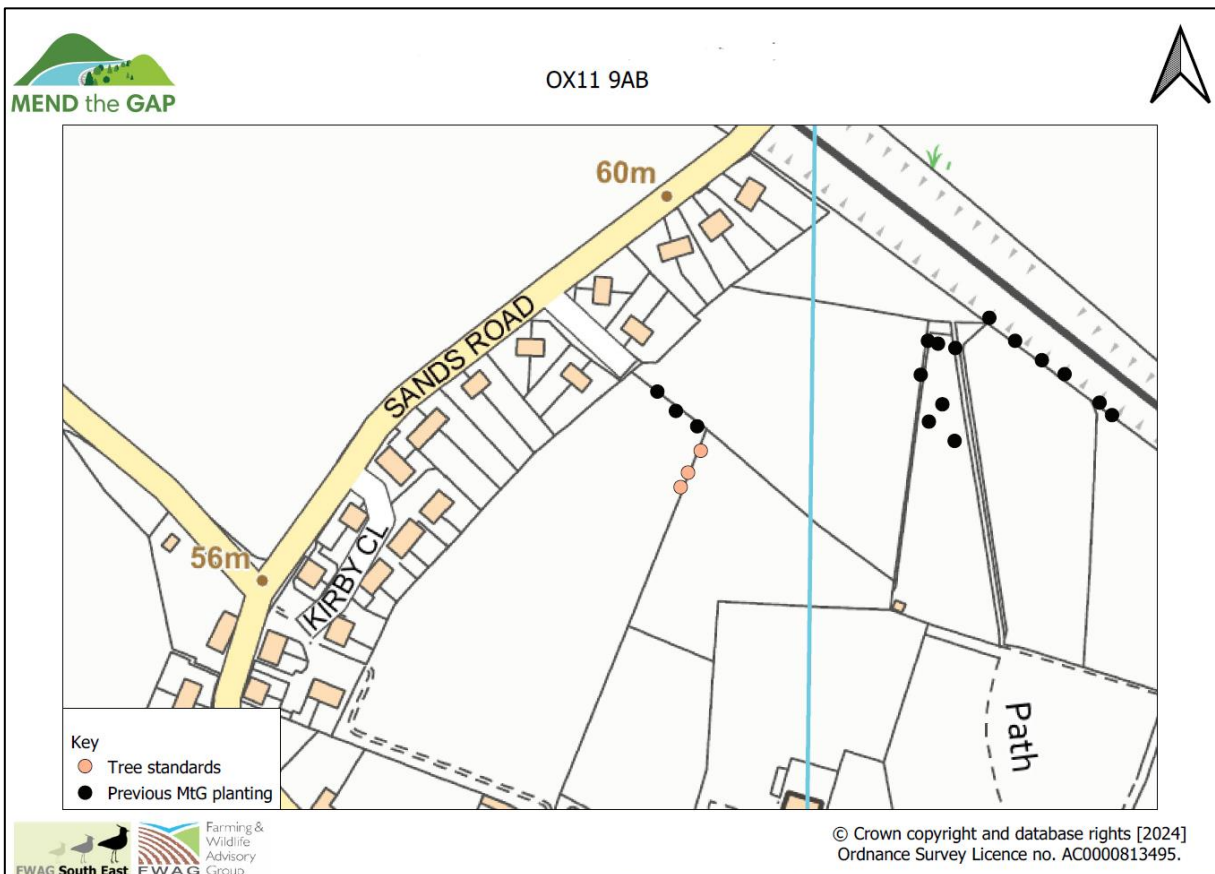


Photo 1 - Photo showing previous Mend the Gap planting at Site 1. Further planting should complement these works.



Required works:

Year 1: Installation works

Plant three trees around the north-eastern boundary of the recreation ground, where identified on the map (Figure 2). The shrub plants should be located between the two larger trees.

Ensure that after works are completed the site is clear of debris. Prior to planting the contractor may need to mow. Works to be undertaken between 20th October 2025 to 31st January 2026 (contingency one month extension, for example due to weather or ground conditions).

For details of the required trees:
See Appendix 1 – Parkland Trees Specification

Year 2: Maintenance & Aftercare

From 1st November 2026 to 15th January 2027, to replace dead, dying or damaged stock with the same species as soon as practicable in the first planting season. For the purposes of this tender, please factor a 100% failure rate for individual tree plantings. Should replacements not be required on inspection, the contractor will not invoice.

Check shelters and stakes are sound and secure, straighten, and replace any broken protection as necessary.

6.2 Site 2

This is to supply trees, guards and mulch mats only as the landowner will be planting the trees themselves.

Year 1: Installation works

Items to be supplied between 20th October 2025 to 20th December 2025: Pedunculate Oaks (*Quercus robur*)x2, 6 Black Poplar (*Populus nigra*) x6, Disease-resistant Elm trees (*Ulmus* 'Ademuz' or 'Lutece') x8 and corresponding 1.2m biodegradable shelters, stakes and 90x90cm biodegradable mulch mats to a single address in South Moreton. Black Poplar to include both male and female species.

- All proposed plants should be sourced from UK provenance seed – mostly southern area 405 where available.
- The chosen supplier of the trees and the species provenance is to be confirmed with the Project before delivery.
- Contractor to specify tree protection before delivery.

Appendix not needed – see above.

6.3 Site 3

Site 3 consists of two horse-grazed grassland fields. Works are to plant five trees within triangular horse-proof guards that should be built on site.

Figure 3 - Map showing Site 3

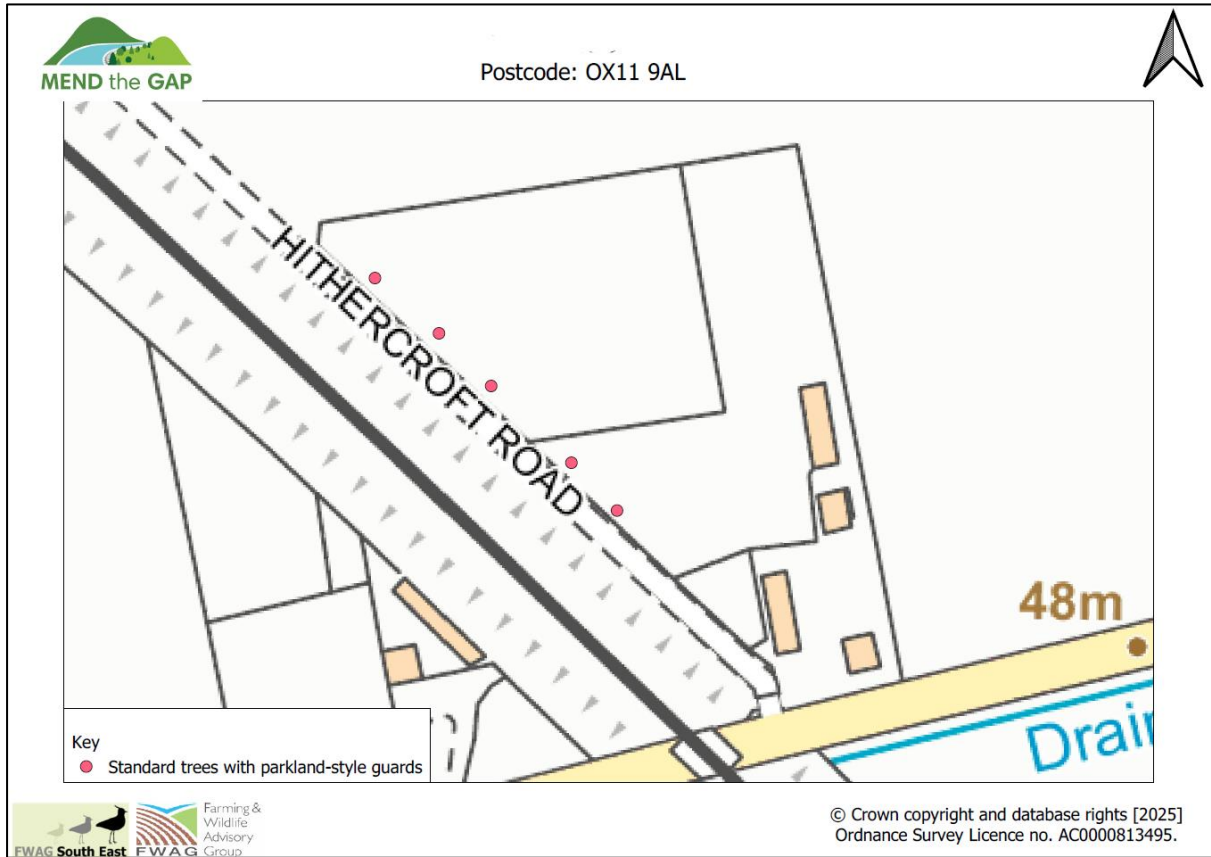


Photo 2 - Site 3, looking North-West with the field boundary fence on the left and planned planting area on the right



Required works:

Year 1: Installation works

In one field, plant three trees (Hazel x1 and Hawthorn x2). In the field adjacent, plant two trees (Hazel x1 and Hawthorn x1). Trees should have horse-proof, triangular guards (as per Appendix 2 Specification), appropriate shelters and mulch. Planting location map is above and trees should be at least 2m from the boundary fence and 3m from each other. Location should also be confirmed with the landowner.

Contractors should minimise damage to the grassland as much as possible. This could include using matting, not accessing the field during wet conditions or accessing from the southern track (parallel to the railway line) as much as possible.

Works to be undertaken between 20th October 2025 to 31st January 2026 (contingency one month extension, for example due to weather or ground conditions).

For details of the required trees:

See Appendix 2 – Tree Standards with Horse-proof Guards Specification

Year 2: Maintenance & Aftercare

From 1st November 2025 to 15th January 2026, to replace dead, dying or damaged stock with the same species as soon as practicable in the first planting season. For the purposes of this tender, please factor a 100% failure rate for individual tree plantings. Should replacements not be required on inspection, the contractor will not invoice.

Check shelters and stakes are sound and secure, straighten, and replace any broken protection as necessary.

6.4 Site 4

Site 4 is composed of arable fields. Works to comprise of tree planting within a hedgerow, tree planting along a ditch and as individual standard trees.

Figure 4 - Map showing Site 4

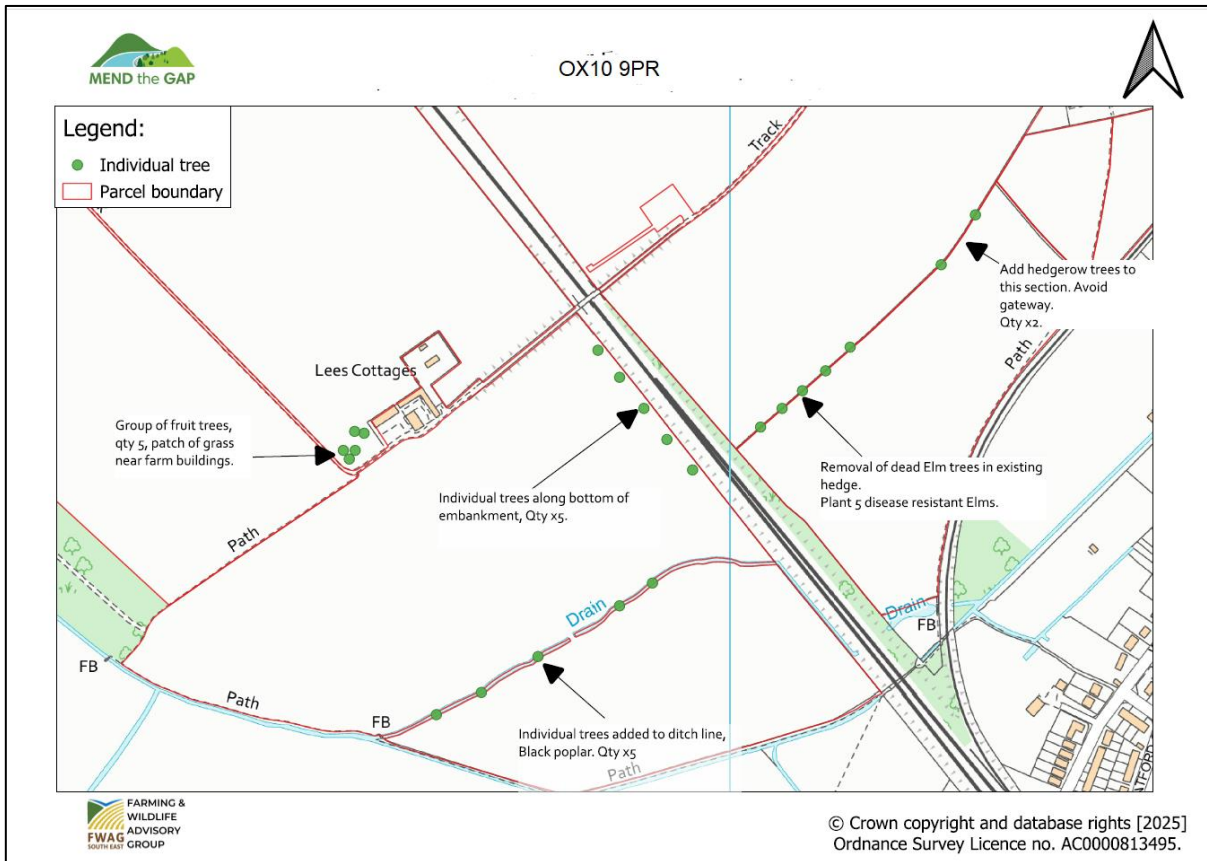


Photo 3 - Site 4, looking South towards northern-side of the railway line. Planned planting is in the hedge on the left hand side



Photo 4 - Site 4, looking North towards southern-side of the railway line. Planned planting is by the farm buildings on the right.



Required works:

Year 1: Installation works

To the north of the railway line:

- Remove sections of dead Elm within a hedgerow and replace with 5 Disease-resistant Elm.
- In the same hedgerow, plant two additional hedgerow trees. Location on map above (Figure 4) and final location to be confirmed with landowner.

To the south of the railway line:

- Plant 5 individual trees, with shelters, stakes and mulching, parallel to the railway line and as close to the field boundary as possible. Minimum of 30m gap between trees.
- Plant 5 orchard trees, with shelters, stakes and mulch on a grass margin next to farm buildings. Final location to be confirmed with landowner before planting. Minimum of 3m gap between trees.
- Plant 5 black poplar trees, with shelters, stakes and mulch, along the ditch in available gaps. Ensure both male and female species are planted. Minimum of 15m gap between trees.

Works to be undertaken between 20th October 2025 to 31st January 2026 (contingency one month extension, for example due to weather or ground conditions).

For details of the required trees:

See Appendix 3 – Individual Tree Standards

See Appendix 4 – Replacement of Elm Trees in Existing Hedge

See Appendix 5 – Tree Standards Along Ditch

Year 2: Maintenance & Aftercare

From 1st November 2025 to 15th January 2026, to replace dead, dying or damaged stock with the same species as soon as practicable in the first planting season. For the purposes of this tender, please factor a 100% failure rate for individual tree plantings. Should replacements not be required on inspection, the contractor will not invoice.

Check shelters and stakes are sound and secure, straighten, and replace any broken protection as necessary.

6.5 Site 5

This is for supply only, as the landowner will be planting the hedge themselves. Site 5 is located in an arable field adjacent to a main road. Supply of native mixed hedge plants for 200m length of hedge to include spiral guards.

Hedge supply only specification:

- Supply 40-60cm bare-rooted whips, quantity to allow for 5 plants/m in a double staggered row.
- Supply suitable Biodegradable 60cm Spiral guards, 38 mm diameter, with 90 cm bamboo canes.
- Species mix: 50% Hawthorn, 10% Blackthorn and remaining 40% to include at least five other native species, such as Hazel, Field maple, Dogwood, Dog Rose, Buckthorn, Wayfaring tree, spindle.
- All proposed plants should be sourced from UK provenance seed – mostly southern area 405 where available.
- The chosen supplier of the hedging and the species provenance is to be confirmed with the Project before commencement of works.

Appendix not needed – see above

Contractor Requirements

- The Contractor shall provide everything necessary for the proper execution of the works including all transport, plant, tackle, machinery, public liability insurance to £10 million, materials and labour of every kind.
- Vehicle movements will be kept to a minimum. Access routes will be agreed with the project manager before work.
- Some worksites are in public spaces. The contractor is to ensure that works are completed in a safe and courteous manner.
- To prevent damage to soil structure, no works shall be carried out when the site is wet, waterlogged or flooded.
- Contractors will check for any underground infrastructure before works begin on the construction of wooden tree guards and notify FWAG SE Advisors if identified.
- The Contractor is to make good any and all damage done to all existing items and features on the site unless with prior negotiation with the landowner, including buildings and all fixtures and fittings, fences, gates, drives, pavings, vegetation of all types, services of all types, land and any other articles in the course of these works at no cost to the contract.
- The Contractor shall remove all surplus materials and rubbish to their own place of deposit, including for haulage and any fees payable.
- All employees are to be competent and experienced in all aspects of work on which they are engaged.

7 Preparing to Respond

- The Contractor may visit the sites and surroundings so as to be thoroughly conversant with the position, conditions and extent of the proposed works and the means of access thereto.
- To discuss the tender or view the sites or photographs of the sites please contact Belinda Bown, FWAG South East, on 07388 203332 or belinda.bown@fwagsoutheast.co.uk
- Any enquiries relating to the tender should be discussed by 5pm on Friday 10th October 2025.

8 Responding to the Tender

- Tenders should be submitted by 5pm on Sunday 12th October 2025.
- Please email your Tender Response to Ruth Staples-Rolfe at rstaplesrolfe@chilterns.org.uk
- Format may be email, document or letter
- Must include:
 1. Price for the Works including labour and materials. Any assumptions made or deviation from specification.
 2. Price for the Maintenance Works including labour and materials. Any assumptions made or deviation from the specification.
 3. Confirmation of Insurance cover (level and provider)
 4. The names and contact numbers of two previous clients who can be contacted for a reference.
 5. Your company name and address, contact person and telephone number
 6. Proposed supplier for plants (we can supply contacts for Disease-resistant Elms, Wild Pear, Black Poplar and any others difficult to source).
 7. A paragraph to explain your company's experience in this work area and to show technical understanding of the works required.

This tender will be scored against the following criteria:

- Technical ability
- Proposed methodology
- Value for money
- Provision of Referees

Appendix 1 – Parkland Trees Specification

Site 1 only.

- Trees to be planted as at least 100cm tall whips and as indicated on the map.

Species:

- 1 x Dogwood (*Cornus sp.*), 1 x Crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*), 1 x Pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*)
- All proposed plants should be sourced from UK provenance seed – mostly southern area 405 where available.
- The chosen supplier of the trees and the species and provenance is to be confirmed with the Project before commencement of works.
- Labelled with a plastic tree tag to identify the species and ensure label longevity

Ground preparation:

- Prior to planting the sites should be prepared to minimise competition from other vegetation and provide good soil conditions.
- Ensure ground is not compacted, do not plant into frozen or waterlogged ground
- Mowing is advised.

Planting & Protection:

- Slot plant and heel in
- Use a mycorrhizal root treatment
- The trees should be mulched with woodchip or similar.
- Contractor to state type of preferred mulch product.
- Each tree will have a 1.5m tree stake, super soft tree tie and PG80 heavy duty tree guard (as shown in Photo 1) to match existing planting on the site.

Appendix 2 – Tree Standards with Horse-proof Guards Specification

Site 3 only.

- Trees to be planted, at least 100cm tall whips, approximately where indicated on the map.
- Trees to be staked, tied and guarded, and mulched.
- Exact location will be done in consultation with the landowner with a minimum of 3m spacing between trees.

Species:

- Trees to include: Hazel (2) and Hawthorn (3).
- All proposed plants should be sourced from UK provenance seed – mostly southern area 405 where available. The chosen supplier of the trees and the species and provenance is to be confirmed with the Project before commencement of works.
- Trees to be labelled using a method that will ensure longevity.

Ground preparation:

- Ground disturbance and erosion (including when accessing the field) will be limited as much as possible. Contractors should use matting and access from the south track where possible.
- Prior to planting the sites should be prepared to minimise competition from other vegetation and provide good soil conditions.
- Ensure ground is not compacted, do not plant into frozen or waterlogged ground.

Planting & Protection:

- Slot plant and heel in
- Use a mycorrhizal root treatment
- Contractor to state type of preferred mulch product.
- Use post and rail guards, 1.8m high and using including treated softwood or hardwood timber fence posts and high tensile wire net stock fence suited to horses, with gauge 3-125-7.5 e.g. [X Fence Equi-fence Supreme XHT13-125-7.5 \(mcveighparker.com\)](https://www.mcveighparker.com). This should be 0.5m from the tree plant to prevent grazing.
- Biodegradable 0.6m spiral or shelter for additional protection, with stake.
- Contractor to specify tree protection before delivery.

Photo 5 – Example of post and rail guard



Appendix 3 – Individual Tree Standards

Site 4 only in three locations:

Location	Species
2 hedgerow trees to be planted in existing gaps in hedgerow north of railway	Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) x1, Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) x1
5 trees to be planted south of railway embankment	Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>) x1, Wild service tree (<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>) x1, Holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>) x1, Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) x2
5 fruit trees to be planted to the west of farm buildings, in existing grassland next to track.	Wild pear (<i>Pyrus pyraster</i>) x2, Crab apple (<i>Malus sylvestris</i>) x2, Hazel/cobnut (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) x1

- Trees to be planted, as at least 100cm tall whips, approximately where indicated on the map.
- Trees to be staked, tied and guarded, and mulched.
- All proposed plants should be sourced from UK provenance seed, mostly southern area 405 where available. The chosen supplier of the trees and the species provenance is to be confirmed with the Project before commencement of works.
- Trees will be labelled to identify the species using a method that will ensure longevity

Ground preparation:

- Prior to planting the sites should be prepared to minimise competition from other vegetation and provide good soil conditions.
- Ensure ground is not compacted, do not plant into frozen or waterlogged ground

Planting & Protection:

- Slot plant and heel in
- Use a mycorrhizal root treatment
- Install 1.2-1.5m biodegradable shelters, stakes and ties. Contractor to state the type of shelter to be used.
- The plants should be mulched with woodchip or similar.
- Contractor to state type of preferred mulch product for all sites.

Appendix 4 – Replacement Of Elm Trees In Existing Hedge

Site 4 only.

- 5 Disease-resistant Elm trees to be planted as at least 100cm tall whips, where indicated on the maps. Trees will be staked, tied and guarded, and mulched.

Species:

- Species to be Disease-resistant Elm (*Ulmus* 'Ademuz' or 'Lutece')
- All proposed plants should be sourced from UK provenance seed – mostly southern area 405 where available.
- The chosen supplier of the trees and the species and provenance is to be confirmed with the Project before commencement of works.

- Label the trees to identify the species using a method that will ensure longevity

Ground preparation:

- Identify 5 sections along the existing hedge where Elm trees have died.
- Prior to planting, the existing hedge will have the dead Elm trees cut to ground level to create planting pockets for 5 Disease-resistant elms.
- The sites should be prepared to minimise competition from other vegetation, clearing 1m either side of new trees and provide good soil conditions.
- Disposal of the cut material from the dead Elm trees, this should be chipped on site and added back to the hedge line.
- Ensure ground is not compacted, do not plant into frozen or waterlogged ground

Planting & Protection:

- Slot plant and heel in
- Use a mycorrhizal root treatment
- Install 1.2-1.5m biodegradable tree shelters, stakes and ties. Contractor to state the type of shelter to be used.
- The hedging should be mulched with woodchip or similar.
- Contractor to state type of preferred mulch product for all sites.

Appendix 5 – Tree Standards Along Ditch

Site 4 only

- 5 trees to be planted as at least 100cm tall whips, where indicated on the map.
- Trees will be staked, tied and guarded, and mulched.
- Trees to be planted on the North side of the marked ditch/drain.

Species:

- Species to be Black poplar (*Populus nigra*) x5
- Black poplar should include both female (x3) and male (x2) species
- All proposed plants should be sourced from UK provenance seed – mostly southern area 405 where available.
- The chosen supplier of the trees and the species provenance is to be confirmed with the Project before commencement of works.
- Label the trees to identify the species using a method that will ensure longevity

Ground preparation:

- Prior to planting the sites should be prepared to minimise competition from other vegetation and provide good soil conditions.
- Ensure ground is not compacted, do not plant into frozen or waterlogged ground

Planting & Protection:

- Slot plant and heel in
- Use a mycorrhizal root treatment
- Install 1.2 - 1.5m biodegradable tree shelters, stakes and ties. Contractor to state the type of shelter to be used.
- Mulch with woodchip or similar.
- Contractor to state type of preferred mulch product for all sites.