



Invitation to Tender

For the Work of:

September 2025 “Mend the Gap” Tender B – Goring-on-Thames, Whitchurch-on-Thames and Lower Basildon

Planting native hedging and trees on six sites at Goring-on-Thames, Whitchurch-on-Thames and Lower Basildon, 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

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

The Contract is to supply and plant mixed native hedgerow, hedgerow trees and in-field trees 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 hedging and to replace failed plants and 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	Location	Works
Site 1	Lower Basildon	Plant 250 m native hedging, including 6 hedgerow trees.
Site 2	Whitchurch-On-Thames	Supply only: 5 individual standard parkland trees, 2 trees for addition to existing hedge, with suitable stakes, guards and mulch.
Site 3	Goring-on-Thames	Plant 288 m native hedging, including 5 hedgerow trees. Install 232m of post and wire fencing.
Site 4	Goring-on-Thames	Plant 142m hedgerow planting with horse-proof fence and a gate.
Site 5	Goring-on-Thames	Remove 2 failed Beech trees and relocate metal tree guards.
Site 6	Goring-on-Thames	Plant 5 individual standard trees, with protection from livestock. Plant 30 tree whips. Install 415m of stock fence to enclose scrub plots. Plant 20m of hedge whips to gap fill existing hedges.

4 Timing of required works

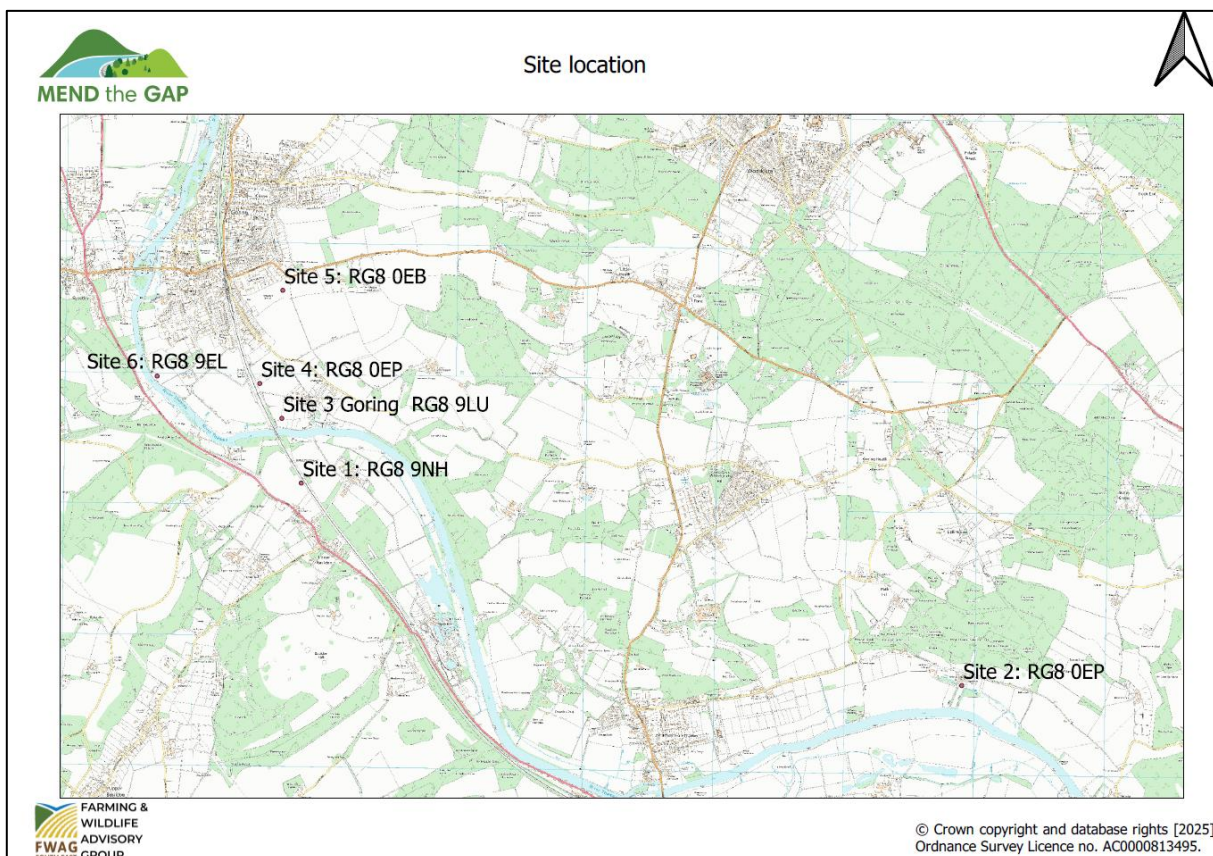
Site preparation and planting to be completed between 20th October 2025 to 31st January 2026 (contingency one month extension, for example due to weather or ground conditions).

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 6 sites are as shown on Figure 1. They are in Lower Basildon, Whitchurch-on-Thames and Goring-on-Thames. Access will be via fields and tracks, with permission granted by each landowner.

Figure 1 - Map showing the 6 sites



6 Details of the Works required Details of the Works required

6.1 Site 1

Site 1 is located within an arable field. Works comprise of 250m hedgerow planting with hedgerow trees (6). There is a Selected Heritage Inventory for England (SHINE) feature present so groundworks must be sensitive to this.

Figure 2 - Map showing Site 1

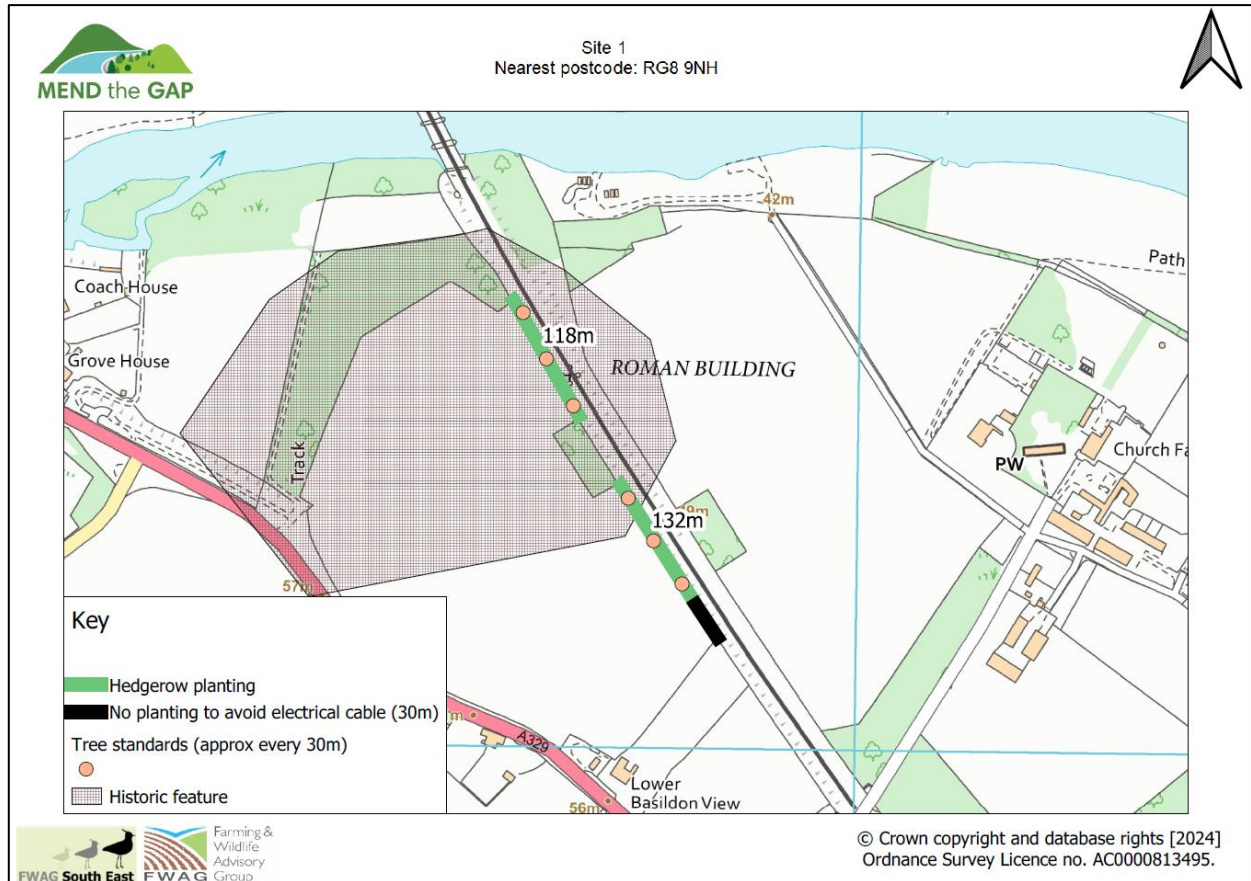


Photo 1 - Site 1, looking North, showing site for hedge and tree planting



Required works:

Year 1: Installation works

Along the railway line, plant 250m of hedgerow plants in 2 sections (118m and 132m) with 3 hedgerow trees in each section (total 6).

Ensure that after works are the completed that the site is clear of debris. Prior to planting the contractor may need to mow, strim and fill rabbit holes. 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 hedge and trees:

See Appendix 1 – Hedge Specification

See Appendix 2 – Tree Standards in Hedges 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 hedge planting, assume a 20% failure rate.

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, shelters and mulch mats only, as the landowner will be planting the trees themselves.

Required works:

Year 1: Installation works

Items to be supplied between 20th October 2025 to 20th December 2025: x5 Black poplar (*Populus nigra*) trees and x2 Wild pear (*Pyrus pyraster*). For Black poplar, both male and female species should be supplied. All supplied with corresponding 1.2m biodegradable shelters, stakes and mulch mats, delivered to a single address near Whitchurch-on-Thames.

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

Appendix not needed – see above

6.3 Site 3

Site 3 is located on horse-grazed grassland fields. The works comprise of 288m total hedgerow planting (in four sections) with hedgerow trees (7). Install a total fencing length of 232m in three sections.

Figure 3 - Map showing Site 3

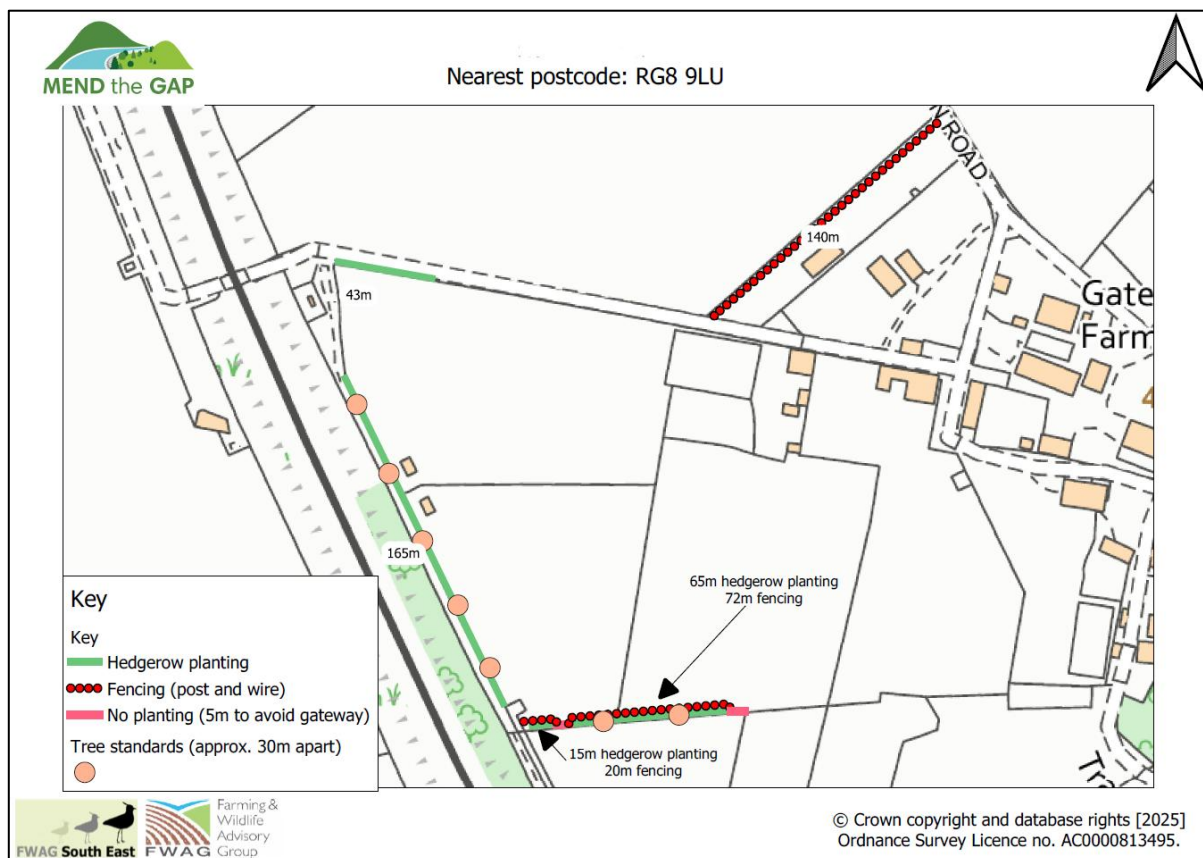


Photo 2 - Site 3, looking North to footpath, showing space between fences for hedgerow planting



Photo 3 - Site 3, looking West, showing planting and fencing location within horse paddocks



Required works:

Year 1: Installation works

Along the railway line, plant a total 288m hedgerow planting (in four sections) with hedgerow trees (7) and install a total fencing length of 232m in three sections. Three sub-sites:

- 1) Within the grazed paddocks, along a paddock boundary, plant total length of 80m hedgerow with 2 hedgerow trees. Leave gateways unplanted. Hedgerow should be 1m away from current fencing. Install a new post-and-wire fence 2m away from existing fencing and hedgerow plants should be planted centrally in this space.
- 2) Plant outside the paddock boundary and between existing fences (208m total) to continue existing hedgerow.
- 3) Against a recently planted hedgerow, install a post-and-wire fence of 140m long and 1.2m away from hedge plants.

Ensure that after works are completed that the site is clear of debris that might impact the horses. Prior to planting the contractor may need to mow, trim and fill rabbit holes. 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 hedge and trees:

See Appendix 1 – Hedge Specification

See Appendix 2 – Tree Standards in Hedges Specification

See Appendix 4 - Post and Wire Fence 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 hedge planting, assume a 20% failure rate.

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

6.4 Site 4

Site 4 is within a horse-grazed grassland field. Works comprise a total of 142m hedgerow planting (in two sections). Install a total fencing length of 142m in two sections and install a gate in one section.

Figure 4 - Map showing Site 4

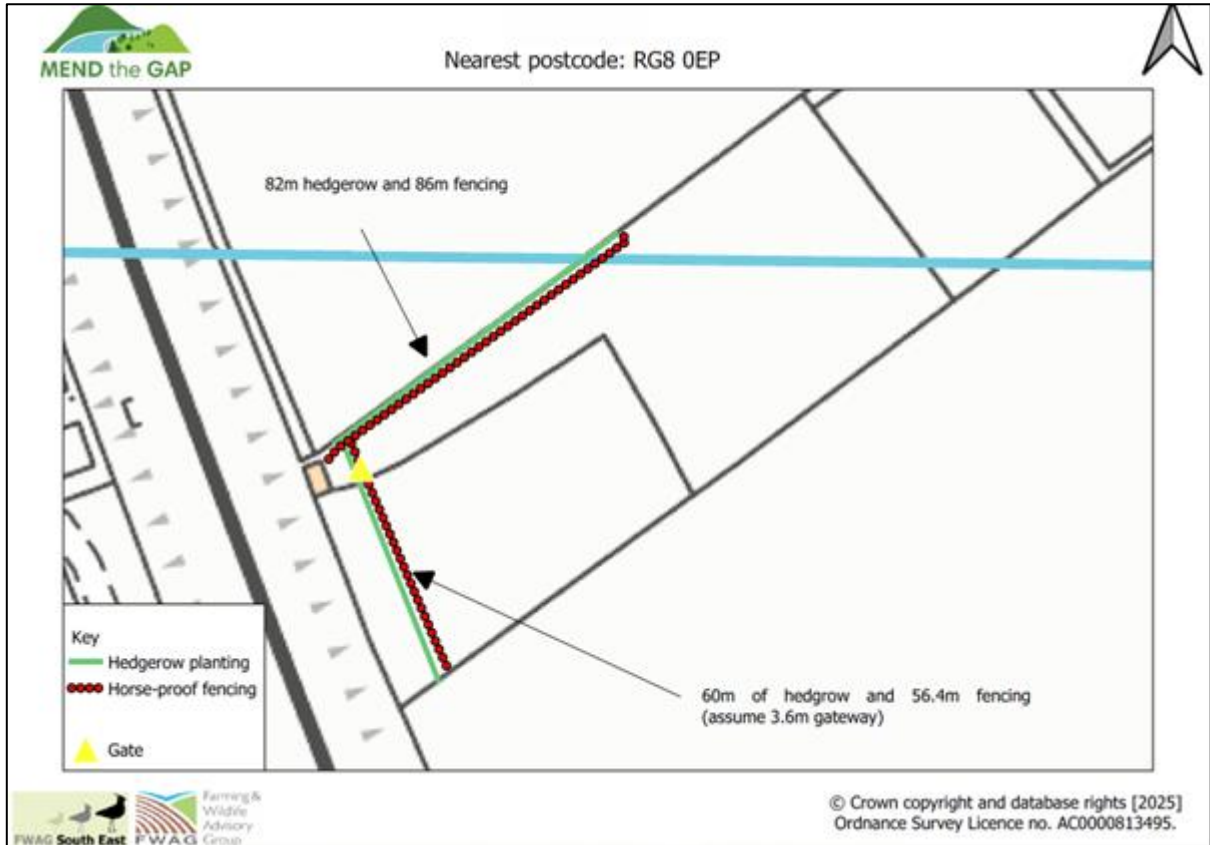


Photo 4 - Site 3, looking towards northern boundary. Fencing to begin at field shelter corner before running parallel to northern boundary.



Required works:

Year 1: Installation works

Plant a native species hedgerow to continue existing hedgerow along northern boundary (82m) and eastern boundary (56.4m, assuming 3.6m gateway).

- 1) Hedgerow along northern boundary (running SW-NE) will start 5.5m from railway fence boundary and extend to existing hedgerow, leaving existing mature plants in place. Planting will be as close as possible to existing northern boundary. Fencing will be 1.2 m away from the hedgerow plants and maximum of 1.5m from the existing boundary.
- 2) Hedgerow along the eastern boundary (running N-S) will be 6m from the railway fence boundary and fencing will be 1.2m away from the hedgerow plants. Fence will be on the eastern-side on the planting. Gate will be installed with landowner consultation.

Prior to planting the contractor may need to mow to prepare ground for planting. 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 hedge and trees:

See Appendix 1 – Hedge Specification

See Appendix 5 – Horse-proof Fence and Gate 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 hedge planting, assume a 20% failure rate.

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

6.5 Site 5

Site 5 is a recreation field with prior tree planting.

Photo 5 – Site 5, Two Beech trees and metal parkland guards (Beech now dead).



Required works (Year 1):

Remove 2 failed beech trees and 2 metal guards as planted in a previous year. Remove and dispose of the dead trees, leave the ground in a level condition. Remove the metal parkland tree guards and deliver to a different local address (as advised by FWAG SE Advisors).

6.6 Site 6

Site description: The site is an area of pasture and scrub adjacent to residential homes and the River Thames. The works require the supply and installation of 415m of stock-proof fencing. Supply and install 2 field gates for access to the scrub plots. Supply and plant 5 parkland trees and 30 tree whips.

Figure 5 – Map showing Site 6

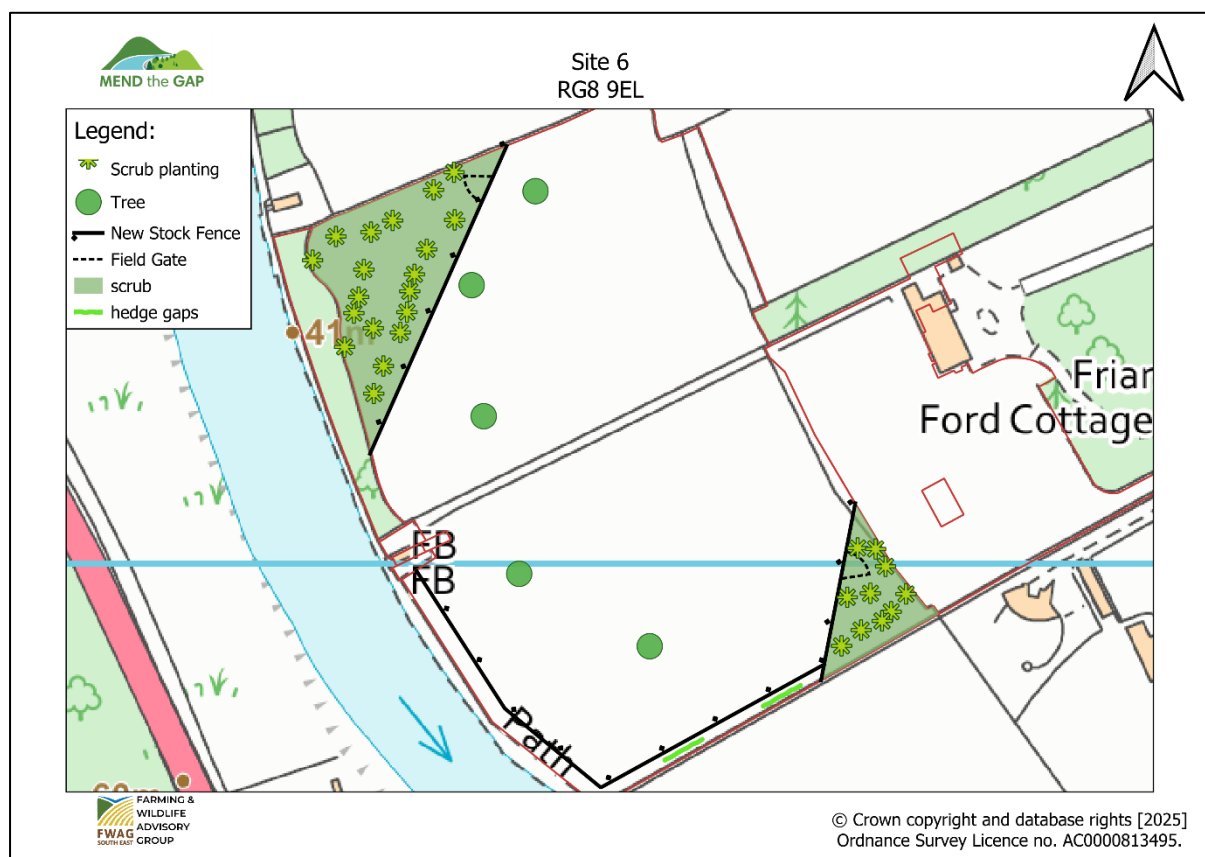


Photo 6 – Site 6, East corner of the field where scrub creation to be established.



Photo 7 – Site 6, West corner of field where scrub to be established, open parkland landscape.



Required works:

Year 1: Installation works

Supply and install a total of 415m of stock-proof fencing and 2 field gates, to create plots for scrub establishment. Suggested to use Chestnut posts due to wet ground conditions, providing longevity to the fence.

Supply and plant 30 tree whips in scrub enclosure plots of species to include a mix of hawthorn, blackthorn, buckthorn, wild pear, crab apple and dog rose (use Appendix 1 as for Hedge planting). To be distributed across the area.

Supply and plant 5 individual parkland standard trees, x3 Black poplar (both male and female species should be planted), x2 Beech trees. Supply and install post and rail livestock protection around the trees. Planting location as per plan (Figure 5), location should also be confirmed with the landowner before planting.

Existing young hedge with gaps. Supply and plant 20m of hedge to fill gaps where previous planting has failed to establish.

Works to be undertaken between 1st November 2025 to 31st December 2026 (contingency one month extension, for example due to weather or ground conditions). The site is prone to flooding, in previous years this has been between January and February.

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. For hedge planting assume a 20% failure rate.

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

For details of the required hedge and trees:

- See Appendix 1 – Hedge planting specification.
- See Appendix 3 – Parkland tree planting specification.
- See Appendix 6 - Post and Wire Fence and Gate Specification.

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 his 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
- 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 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 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 – Hedge Planting Specification

Species:

- 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 and provenance is to be confirmed with the Project before commencement of works.

Table 1: Species for hedgerow planting

Location	Species
Site 1	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
Site 2	N/A
Site 3	50% Hawthorn, 10% Blackthorn and remaining 40% to include at least 5 other native species, such as Hazel, Field maple, Dogwood, Beech, Holly, Dog Rose, Wayfaring tree. Not to include yew, elm, oak, spindle or sycamore due to horse grazing
Site 4	50% Hawthorn and remaining 50% to include Field maple, Hazel and Dogwood. Not to include yew, oak, spindle or sycamore due to horse grazing.
Site 5	N/A
Site 6	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

Ground preparation:

- Prior to planting the sites should be prepared to minimise competition from other vegetation and provide good soil conditions.
- Mowing is advised at all sites
- At site 1 there are some rabbit holes and nettles.
- Keep any mature standard trees.
- Ensure ground is not compacted, do not plant into frozen or waterlogged ground

Planting & Protection:

- Plant 40-60cm bare rooted whips, 5 plants/m in double staggered row, 40cm width
- Do not allow plants to dry out during planting – keep them in closed bags / soak in water
- Use a mycorrhizal root treatment
- Slot plant and heel in
- Use Biodegradable 60cm Spiral guards, 38 mm diameter, with 90 cm bamboo canes, to protect from rabbits, contractor to state type of preferred guard.

Mulching:

- The hedging should be mulched with woodchip or similar.
- Contractor to state type of preferred mulch product for all sites.

Appendix 2 – Tree Standards in Hedges Specification

- Trees to be planted, at least 100 cm whips, approximately every 30-40 metres in hedges where indicated on the maps, these will be allowed to grow into standard trees.
- Trees to be staked, tied and guarded, and mulched with the hedgerow.

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 label longevity

Table 2: Species for tree standards in hedgerow planting

Location	Species
Site 1	2 x Wild pear (<i>Pyrus pyraeaster</i>), 2 x Crab apple (<i>Malus sylvestris</i>) and 2 x Bird cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>)
Site 2	N/A
Site 3	2x Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>), 1x Wild pear (<i>Pyrus pyraeaster</i>), 1x Crab apple (<i>Malus sylvestris</i>) , 1x Wild service tree (<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>), 2x Disease-resistant elm (<i>Ulmus sp.</i>)
Site 4	N/A
Site 5	N/A
Site 6	N/A

Ground preparation:

- With hedge planting preparation

Planting & Protection:

- Slot plant and heel in
- Use biodegradable tree shelters for protection and to allow visibility during hedge cutting operations.
- Allow for 1.2-1.5 m tree shelters, stakes and ties. Contractor to state the type of shelter to be used.

Mulching:

- With hedge mulching

Appendix 3 – Parkland Tree Specification

Site 6 only.

- 5 Trees to be planted as at least 100cm tall whips, where indicated on the maps, these will be allowed to grow into standard trees.
- Trees will be staked, tied, guarded, and mulched.

Species:

- Species to be Black poplar (*Populus nigra*) x3, Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) x2.
- Black poplar should include both female and male 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
- 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.
- Allow for treated softwood or hardwood timber post and rail protection around each parkland tree to prevent livestock grazing. To consist of at least 3 rails, 1.5m height, stockproof mesh can be applied for additional protection. Contractor to state the design of the proposed protection method.

Appendix 4 – Post and Wire Fence Specification

Site 3 only.

- Install a new post-and-wire fence, at least 1m from hedge plants and trees and 2m from existing fence line.
- The wire fence should be at least 1.05m high when installed with two strands of minimum 2.5mm high tensile plain wire.
- The new fence should include treated softwood or hardwood timber fence posts and high tensile wire
- Use straining posts, no more than 150m apart, at each corner and at each end of the fence, and on turns.
- Intermediate posts should be at least 4.5m apart for high tensile steel. There must be suitable bracing to achieve stability.
- Additional electric fencing does not need to be installed by contractor but will be added by the landowner.
- Gateways should be left unplanted and clear for access.

Appendix 5 – Horse-proof Fence and Gate Specification

Site 4 only.

- Fencing along northern boundary (running SW-NE) will be 1.2 m away from the hedgerow plants and maximum of 1.5m from the existing northern boundary.
- Fencing running north-south will be 1.2m away from the hedgerow plants on the eastern side.
- Gate location will be agreed with landowner before installation.

Specification:

- The new fence should include 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 \(mcveighparker.com\)](#), see photo 8 for previous example.
- Gate to be 3.6m galvanised metal gate, including posts and gate furniture. Contractor to state which before installation.

Photo 8 – Example of fence required



Appendix 6 – Post and Wire Fence and Gate Specification

Site 6 only.

- Install a new post-and-wire fence as indicated on plans to create two enclosed plots, and create a protective fence at least 1m from hedge plants and 2m from existing fence line.
- The new fence should include hardwood timber fence posts (e.g. chestnut).
- Use straining posts, no more than 150m apart, at each corner and at each end of the fence, and on turns.
- Intermediate posts should be at least 4.5m apart for high tensile steel. There must be suitable bracing to achieve stability.
- Use high-tensile steel wire stock net of type HT8/80/15 to make a stock-proof fence with a finished height at least 1 m.
- Top the net with one strand of high-tensile galvanised barbed steel wire.
- Use straining posts, no more than 150m apart, at each corner and at each end of the fence
- Two 1.8m field gates at marked locations to provide access to scrub enclosure plot. Galvanised metal field gate, including posts and gate furniture. Contractor to state which before installation.