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**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Dear Yvonne

**Re: Kings Dell Field**

Thank you for showing me Kings Dell Field on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. I am writing to summarise our discussion and to propose a simple long-term management plan for the site.

**Background and site description**

Kings Dell is an abandoned arable field which has been out of cultivation for around 20 years. More recently it was purchased by a group of villagers and donated to the parish council, and has since remained unmanaged for two years.

The field now has a mosaic of semi-natural grassland and hawthorn scrub. The grassland is relatively diverse; on my visit I saw species including common spotted orchid, common agrimony, wild marjoram, cowslip, meadow buttercup and common knapweed. There are numerous anthills and extensive signs of rabbit grazing, and during my visit I also saw a small heath butterfly, a species which occurs on well-drained grassland with a short sward. There are also stands of rosebay willowherb, which are indicative of a history of disturbed ground. The scrub is dominated by hawthorn, with other species including dog rose, field maple and oak, and is even-aged. In some parts of the site, especially to the south-west around a larger willow, scrub has now become dominant.



View across site to the south-east

The field is bounded to the west and south-east by mature hedgerows, with a gap in the hedgerow on the south-east side. The boundary to the north is partially hedged with longer gaps which afford views across open countryside. The field has post and rail fencing which would not be stock-proof for sheep. We did not check the condition of the fence in detail.



Gap in hedgerow

There is currently little to no public access to the field and no evidence that it is in the ownership of the parish council. The entrance is overgrown and the only paths appear to be animal tracks.

## **Recommendations**

The site is already functioning well for wildlife, providing a valuable habitat mosaic which is likely to be scarce in the surrounding countryside. I would recommend that the overall management objective from an ecological perspective should be to maintain the balance of habitats much as it is now, while working towards a greater age range in the scrub component of the habitat. There is no requirement to manage the existing hedgerows, although the gap along the south-eastern boundary should be filled in with new planting.

Public access can be improved by opening up the entrance gate and installing a small interpretation panel which identifies the site as owned by the parish council and highlights the wildlife to be found there. A circular walking route could be kept clear, and a bench could be installed at the high point at the southern end of the site to provide an opportunity to pause and enjoy the view.

## **Management prescriptions**

### *Grassland*

The undulating ground, anthills and scattered scrub would make mowing impractical, and rabbit grazing is already keeping vegetation down in some parts of the site. While the parish council should maintain an aspiration to maintain the grassland by low intensity sheep grazing, this would require new fencing and the identification of a grazer, and may not prove to be possible. In the short term it could be maintained by strimming. Aim to cut up to two thirds of the grassland component of the site each year on rotation, leaving areas of long vegetation through the winter to provide valuable wildlife habitat, but ensuring these areas are cut during the subsequent years to prevent further development of scrub. Cutting can take place at a different time each year, approximately between late June and August. Arisings should be left for 3-5 days to drop seed and then raked off, and collected in a sacrificial area in the corner of the site.

### *Scrub*

The scrub should be coppiced to ground level on a ten-year rotation, targeting a different area of the site each year. Individual trees should be selected to be retained to maturity, including specimens of hawthorn, field maple and oak. This should include cutting back bramble on rotation, where it is encroaching onto the grassland. Arisings from coppicing can be stacked in the sacrificial area with the grass cuttings or, if necessary, burnt on a single designated fire site. This could be in the footprint of coppiced scrub, away from the more diverse grassland.

### *Hedge planting*

Plant a native hedgerow in the gap along the roadside (approx. 30m, measurement should be checked before ordering plants). Plant 400mm-600mm whips in two staggered rows 0.3m apart, at 0.4m spacing with rows offset by 0.2m. This equates to five whips per metre. Whips should be protected by 600mm spiral guards secured with canes, and the hedge line should be mulched to suppress weeds. Suggested species mix: 50% hawthorn, 10% hazel, 10% spindle, 10% field maple, 10% common dogwood, 10% dog rose.

Annual weeding along the hedge line for up to three years will support successful establishment.

### *Public access and walking route*

Strim the immediate area of the gate twice annually to ensure the entrance remains open and visible. Establish a clear walking route (indicated on the map) by strimming a path through the grassland twice annually and coppicing scrub where necessary to allow for a path around 2m wide. Cut back the hedgerow around the entrance gate. Scrub along the route of the path and the hedgerow around the entrance can then be maintained on an annual basis.

Design a site interpretation panel, A2 lectern-style with a timber frame and an illustration of some of the important species supported by the site. Install close to the entrance gate.

At the southern end of the site, install a simple wooden seat.

### **Action plan and site map**

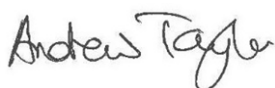
The actions proposed are detailed in the action table and on the map below.

### **Delivery and funding**

The habitat management actions proposed are deliverable by volunteers or by the parish council at relatively low cost. It may be possible for us to support elements of capital work such as hedge planting or new fencing through our [Environmental Improvement Grant](#) – please get in touch if you would like to discuss this further. We do not have grant funding available for items such as interpretation or benches.

I hope this meets your expectations and will help the parish council in the long-term management of Kings Dell Field. I would be happy to review and update elements of the plan if desired.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Taylor  
Projects Lead, Land Management  
Countryside & Rights of Way Service

## Action Plan

Ref. no.	Action	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Status
0.1	Grassland management – strimming	Annual, Jun-Aug	FPPC				
0.2	Scrub management – coppicing	Annual, Sep-Feb	FPPC				
0.3	Maintenance of entrance and walking route	Annual from year 2, May/Aug	FPPC				
1.1	Cut back hedgerow around entrance	Year 1, Sep-Dec	FPPC				
1.2	Coppice scrub along walking route	Year 1, Sep-Dec	FPPC				
1.3	Hedge planting	Year 1, Nov-Dec	FPPC			£500	
1.4	Design and install interpretation panel	Year 1	FPPC			£2000	
1.5	Supply and install wooden seat	Year 1	FPPC			£500	
2.1	Maintenance of hedge planting	Year 2, spring/summer	FPPC				
3.1	Maintenance of hedge planting	Year 3, spring/summer	FPPC				

# Kings Dell Field

Furneux Pelham  
Parish Council

Possible sacrificial area for  
grass cuttings and cut scrub

Fence line: review condition and repair  
or replace if grazing is feasible

Indicative route of strimmed path

Maintain vegetation around  
entrance gate to keep clear

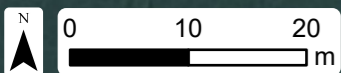
Boundary hedge planting

Grassland: cut up to two thirds annually,  
establish low intensity sheep grazing if feasible

Install interpretation panel

Scrub: coppice on ten year rotation

Install timber seat



Scale @ A4  
1:640  
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Rev  
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