

Fairfield Association Hedges Plan

Updated 17/06/2025 by Ian Procter.

Excluding the table of contents itself, this document exactly matches the current version on the website last edited 17/06/2025, 18:24

<https://fairfieldassociation.org/fairfield-nature-reserve/fairfield-association-hedges-plan/>

Contents

Fairfield Association Hedges Plan	1
Introduction	3
Overall vision for the Nature Reserve hedges	3
Current overall situation	3
Maintenance principles	3
THE PADDOCK HEDGES	4
01. Paddock East	4
02. Paddock South	4
03. Paddock West	4
ORCHARD HEDGES.....	6
04. Orchard “Wild Area”	6
05. Orchard/Pads Footpath North	6
06. Orchard/Pads Footpath South	6
BIG MEADOW HEDGES.....	8
07. Big Meadow/Fauna Path.....	8
08. Ash Tree Corner.....	8
09. Big Meadow East – Section 1	8
10. Big Meadow East – Section 2	9
11. Big Meadow South	9
12. Big Meadow/Pads Footpath.....	9
GRAMMAR SCHOOL FIELD AND SCHOOL POND HEDGES	11
13. Grammar School Field/Fauna Path	11
14. School Pond/Fauna Path.....	11
15. School Pond/Fauna Path.....	12
16. Grammar School Field East/Fauna Path	12
CARR HOUSE MEADOW HEDGES.....	13
17. Carr House Meadow/Gun Range.....	13

18. Carr House Meadow/Fauna Path	13
19. Carr House Meadow/Fauna Path	13
LOWER SOWERHOLME HEDGES.....	15
20. Lower Sowerholme North West	15
21. Lower Sowerholme North	15
22. Lower Sowerholme East/Upper Sowerholme	15
23. Abigail Rigby Copse	16
24. Lower Sowerholme South/Flora Field	16
25. Lower Sowerholme West / Pads Footpath	16
WEST FIELD HEDGES.....	18
26. West Field North.....	18
27. West Field North East	18
28. West Field East.....	18
29. West Field South	19
30. West Field West.....	19
FLORA FIELD HEDGES	21
31. Flora Field North East.....	21
32. Flora Field South/Pony Wood path	21
33. Flora Field West/Pads Footpath	21
PONY WOOD AND LITTLE WOOD HEDGES.....	23
34. Pony Wood Path	23
35. Pony Wood South	23
36. Pony Wood (Little Wood)	23

Introduction

There is no end point for this plan. It should be reviewed every two years starting in May 2025.

Overall vision for the Nature Reserve hedges

Whilst the highest priority should as far as possible be to facilitate wildlife this should not be at the expense of the public's safe enjoyment of wildlife and the landscape. Hedges should be secure and include as much diversity as possible in terms of both species' composition and habitat (especially height and width).

Current overall situation

The Nature Reserve includes around 5½ kilometres of mainly thorn-based hedge. This includes:

- Hedges we inherited as the Nature Reserve expanded. These had been poorly maintained for many years but have now all been laid, gapped up and trimmed.
- Hedges planted by the contractors in 2012-13. All now laid, concluding in 2023-24.
- Hedges planted by us since 2023. These are at different stages of development.

I do not include the hedges between the Fauna path and School Fields / Carr House Meadow which have been deemed by the Trustees to be not our responsibility other than trimming back on the path side.

Maintenance principles

- We follow a cycle starting from either first planting or laying the hedge.
- The hedge is trimmed for the first 3 to 5 years to encourage low, dense growth.
- The hedge is then trimmed selectively. The detail depends on the location but ideally one third of each hedge should be trimmed each year to allow for flowering and seeding.
- As the hedge reaches its intended size it is managed until it is ready for laying (around 8 to 10 years for new hedges, 20 to 40 years for already laid hedges). Management includes leaving alone or trimming according to intended size.

THE PADDOCK HEDGES

NOTE: The Paddock is part of Cannon Hill Conservation Area so we must abide by its rules regarding tree felling and management.

01. Paddock East

The border with the allotments.

Length: 100m; Cycle start: 2012

Action up to now

- Historically very neglected.
- Some trees taken out by Hanafins who laid some thorn and replanted 2012.
- Neglected since and very overgrown with bramble.
- Each year we trim back the bramble to the inner fence to stop field invasion.

Taking into consideration

- Very inaccessible due to bramble. But now quite thick and dense growth.
- Boundary with the Allotments.

Long term objective

- A relatively high and thick hedge has developed here although with lots of bramble.

What next?

- Leave alone apart from stopping bramble invading field.

02. Paddock South

The border between the Paddock and the Fauna path.

Length: 50m; Cycle start: 2012

Action up to now

- Laid by Hanafins 2012.
- Regular trimming since.

Taking into consideration

- Fraser requests the western half be trimmed down so he can see the cattle.

Long term objective

- A high (4m), thick hedge with wide margins, to stock fence in field, wider on path side.

What next?

- Eastern half, leave alone.
- Western half, keep trimmed down for Fraser.

03. Paddock West

The border with the track from Sunnyside Lane.

Length: 100m; Cycle start: 2014

Action up to now

- Debris cleared, elder and sycamore cut back, saplings planted 2014.
- Saplings tended since.
- Insertion of brash to form dead hedge to keep out dogs.

Taking into consideration

- After consultation with Natural England and the Tree Conservation Officer, the FA decided not to fell the mature sycamores lining this hedge.

Long term objective

- Given the shade from the sycamore this will never be a thick hedge.
- Let it develop and see what happens.

What next?

- Continue to occasionally tend the saplings. It will be a long, slow job.
- Maintain dead hedges and secure fence.

ORCHARD HEDGES

04. Orchard “Wild Area”

The “wild area” is the area alongside the track from the shed. Like the Paddock, it is part of Cannon Hill Conservation Area.

Length: 100m; Cycle start: 2017

Action up to now

- Laid 2017.
- Occasional trimming.
- Infilling gap with dead hedge.
- Holly planted to fill gap 2023-24.

Taking into consideration

- Very shaded by trees.
- One section has a big gap.
- Keep entrances closed to keep area secure.
- Keep track clear.

Long term objective

- A thick hedge with wide margin in wild area.

What next?

- Leave alone apart from maintaining dead hedge and keeping secure.

05. Orchard/Pads Footpath North

The border between the Orchard and the Pads footpath alongside the fruit trees.

Length: 150m; Cycle start: 2013

Action up to now

- Laid 2013-15.
- Regular trimming since.

Taking into consideration

- Have to keep access clear down the path.
- The ‘vista gaps’ opposite the Orchard benches need to be kept low.
- Light for the Orchard fruit trees.

Long term objective

- Adjacent to fruit trees and vista gaps.
- Keep low (1.5 metre) to give light and views.
- Thick on the Orchard side.

What next?

- Annual trim back leaving as much as possible on the Orchard side.

06. Orchard/Pads Footpath South

The border between the Orchard and the Pads Footpath south of the fruit trees.

Length: 150m; Cycle start: 2013

Action up to now

- Laid in 2013-15.
- Regular trimming since.

Taking into consideration

- Have to keep access clear down the path.
- The 'vista gaps' opposite the Orchard benches need to be kept low.
- Neighbour's request to maintain their view.

Long term objective

- High, thick hedge, with gaps for bench vistas and the neighbour's view.
- Thick on the Orchard side.

What next?

- Trim on path side and vistas as above.

BIG MEADOW HEDGES

07. Big Meadow/Fauna Path

Length: 250m; Cycle start: Autumn 2021

Action up to now

- Hedge planted.
- Protected by electric fence rather than plastics.
- Annual trimming.

Taking into consideration

- Natural England requirements that hedges be <2metres high around wet grasslands.

Long term objective

- Thick hedge on field side.

What next?

- Trim until 2025.

08. Ash Tree Corner

Two short hedges under the ash tree.

Length: 20m; Cycle start: 2012.

Action up to now

- Planted by Hanafins.
- Part laid 2017.
- Trimmed since.
- Remainder laid 2024.

Taking into consideration

- Keep trimmed back to give wildflowers some light.

Long term objective

- Low hedge.

What next?

- Trim as required.

09. Big Meadow East – Section 1

This is the section that stretches from Ash Tree Corner to the gate.

Length: 30m; Cycle start: n/a

Action up to now

- Old hedge with lots of bramble.
- High and thick.
- Trimmed the invasive bramble as necessary.
- A small copse planted Dec 2024 to eventually replace the ash.

Taking into consideration

- Natural England requirements that hedges be <2metres high around wet grasslands.

Long term objective

- Thick hedge.

What next?

- Leave alone.

10. Big Meadow East – Section 2

This is the section from the gate to Big Willow Corner.

Length: 150m; Cycle start: 2019

Action up to now

- 2019 – From Anna’s Pool to corner, planted as a hedge.
- Occasional trimming since.
- 2023 – Plastic removal Dec 2024.
- Hedge planted from gate to Anna’s Pool in 2024.

Taking into consideration

- Natural England requirements that hedges be <2metres high around wet grasslands.

Long term objective

- New sections – thick hedge.

What next?

- Trim for a few years yet.

11. Big Meadow South

The border between Big Meadow and Lucy Brook.

Length: 300m; Cycle start: 2019

Action up to now

- 2019 – Planted hedge saplings in gaps alongside the Brook.
- Trimmed each year.

Taking into consideration

- Very wet and overgrown, rather low rate of success for the saplings.

Long term objective

- Possibility of Lucy Brook being realigned which will impact the hedge.

What next?

- Leave alone.

12. Big Meadow/Pads Footpath

Length: 400m; Cycle start: 2012

Action up to now

- Laid and replanted by Hanafins 2012.

- Regular trimming since plus some gapping up.
- Winter 2021-22 laid.
- Winter 2022-23 trimmed and gapped up.

Taking into consideration

- NE requirements that hedges be <2metres high around wet grasslands.
- Have to keep access clear down the path.
- The 'vista gaps' opposite the Orchard benches need to be kept low.
- Light for the Orchard fruit trees

Long term objective

Treat as two sections:

- a) Adjacent to fruit trees and vista gaps.
Keep low (1.5 metre) to give light and views.
- b) Remaining: 2 metre max.
Both thick on the Meadow side

What next?

- For next two years trim top to thicken
- Keep path access clear, thicker on field side.
- Lower height by fruit trees.
- Maintain vista gaps.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL FIELD AND SCHOOL POND HEDGES

13. Grammar School Field/Fauna Path

The western side of Grammar School Field up to School Pond area.

Length: 200m; Cycle start: 2012

Action up to now

- Cut back and replanted by Hanafins.
- Untrimmed except for pruning back bramble invading path margin through fence.
- Winter 2024-5: The cattle broke through the School Field side fence in search of fodder and then through the path side fence.
- The latter replaced to secure the path but leave cattle access to hedge for shelter.

Taking into consideration

- R. Storton's advice to leave the bramble within the fenced area.

Long term objective

- A high (4 m) thick hedge within the fencing with standard trees of hawthorn, holly and one sycamore.

What next?

- Leave alone within the fence.
- Cut back and dig out bramble along path.

14. School Pond/Fauna Path

The western side of Grammar School Field from the School Pond area to Ash Tree Corner.

Length: 100m; Cycle start: 2012

Action up to now

Two lines:

- a) Hedge laid and replanted by Hanafins.
Further gapping up 2012 and some trimming since.
- b) Willow living fence started 2014 and maintained each winter.

Taking into consideration

- Parts are very wet.
- Need for bird cover.

Long term objective

- Allow line a) hedge to grow as thick as possible within the fenced area.
- Willow living fence at 2m.

What next?

- a) Leave alone apart from cutting back to walkway fence.
- b) Maintain living fence at 2m keeping willow under control.

15. School Pond/Fauna Path

The southern side of School Pond from Ash Tree Corner to gate.

Length: 50m; Cycle start: circa 2008

Action up to now

Two sections:

- a) Thorn hedge planted by R. Loxam before Fauna.
 - Some supplementary planting by FA for species diversity 2012.
 - Trimmed by FA each winter until 2017.
 - Laid 2017.
 - Occasional trimming
- b) Willow living fence planted winter 2017.

Taking into consideration

R Loxam agreed the laying of this section.

The wet section forms a convenient bird watching area.

Long term objective

- a) A thick hedge with a gap for bird watching.
- b) Willow fence limited to 2m.

What next?

- Leave alone apart from the gap.
- Maintain willow.

16. Grammar School Field East/Fauna Path

From School Pond gate to Gun Range round the western edge of Carr House Meadow.

Note: This is not a Fairfield Association hedge.

Length: 350m; Cycle start: Circa 2008

Action up to now

- Thorn hedge planted by R. Loxam before Fauna.
- Some supplementary planting by FA for species diversity 2012.
- Trimmed by FA each winter until 2017.
- Flailed by R. Loxam Feb 2017 and on occasion since.

Taking into consideration

R. Loxam is responsible for this hedge apart from some trimming on the path side.

Long term objective

- None.

What next?

- Keep path clear.

CARR HOUSE MEADOW HEDGES

17. Carr House Meadow/Gun Range

Length: 100m; Cycle start: n/a

Action up to now

- A line of hawthorn and bramble.
- We have cut/dug out the invasive bramble in the meadow.

Taking into consideration

- Need for shade and shelter for cattle.
- Concealment of ugly sheds etc in Gun Range

Long term objective

- Leave as is.

What next?

- Leave alone apart from controlling invasive bramble.

18. Carr House Meadow/Fauna Path

From the single gate to the corner.

Length: 100m; Cycle start: 2012

Action up to now

- New hedge planted by Hannafins 2012.
- Trimmed by FA each year until 2017.
- Flailed by R. Loxam, without our permission, Feb 2017, but not since.

Taking into consideration

- Agreement with R. Loxam to leave alone.

Long term objective

- None.

What next?

- Keep path clear.

19. Carr House Meadow/Fauna Path

From the corner to the double gates.

Length: 50m; Cycle start: Autumn 2021

Action up to now

- Planted as a new hedge 2021.
- Trimmed since.

Taking into consideration

- Keep path clear.

Long term objective

- Wide hedge but keep low to maintain view into meadow.

What next?

- Trim to fence height.

LOWER SOWERHOLME HEDGES

20. Lower Sowerholme North West

Alongside the Pads Footpath above the Lucy Brook culvert.

Length: 50m; Cycle start: n/a

Action up to now

- None.
- Stock fence renewed on field side 2018.

Taking into consideration

- This is a line of trees with some infilling.
- The public like a 'tunnel effect' here.

Long term objective

- Very much as it is: a line of mature mixed trees, mostly hawthorn and elder, some ash and sycamore, with infilling scrub.

What next?

- Leave alone.

21. Lower Sowerholme North

This is the border between Lower Sowerholme and Lucy Brook. It is more of a hedge line than a hedge. So not included in total hedge length and we have left alone rather than trying to manage.

The Fairfield Association hopes to realign Lucy Brook to create a more natural channel. If this occurs, there will no longer be a hedge line.

Because of this, length and cycle start are not applicable.

Action up to now

- None.
- Stock fence renewed on field side 2018.

Taking into consideration

This is a fence between the field and the Lucy Brook streamside vegetation.

Long term objective

- Leave as is.

What next?

- Leave alone.
- Note possibility of de-canalising Lucy Brook.

22. Lower Sowerholme East/Upper Sowerholme

The boundary between Lower and Upper Sowerholme. A fence not a hedge thus not included in length total.

Action up to now

- None other than some fence maintenance.

Taking into consideration

- This is a fence between the field and the Upper Sowerholme 'wild area'.

Long term objective

- Leave as is.

What next?

- Leave alone.

23. Abigail Rigby Copse

The eastern end of the boundary between Lower Sowerholme and Flora Field.

Length: 50m; Cycle start: 2019

Action up to now

- Left in 2014 as a linear copse.
- Cleared and replanted to increase diversity 2019.
- Trimmed and plastics removed 2023.

Taking into consideration

- Used by cattle for shade and shelter.

Long term objective

- Species diverse copse.

What next?

- Leave alone.

24. Lower Sowerholme South/Flora Field

From Abigail Rigby Copse to the Pads Footpath.

Length: 200m; Cycle start: 2014

Action up to now

- 2014 Hanafins laid bits but mainly new planting.
- Trimmed on occasion and some gapping up.
- Western half laid autumn 2022.
- Eastern half laid winter of 2023-24.

Taking into consideration

- Natural England requirements that hedges be <2metres high around wet grasslands and preserve Flora Field grass margin.

Long term objective

- Thick hedge especially on the Flora Field side.
- Ample room for Flora Field margins.

What next?

- Trim the laid sections until 2025 and 2026.

25. Lower Sowerholme West / Pads Footpath

Length: 70m; Cycle start: 2015

Action up to now

- Laid and gapped up 2015.
- Trimmed to keep to 2 metres since.

Taking into consideration

- Natural England requirements that hedges be <2metres high around wet grasslands.
- Keep path clear.

Long term objective

- Thick hedge, especially on field side.

What next?

- Keep path clear.
- Trim top.
- Leave field side.

WEST FIELD HEDGES

26. West Field North

Length: 70m; Cycle start: 2020

Action up to now

- New hedge planted autumn 2020.
- Rather mysteriously this hedge did not initially thrive.
- Gapped up autumn 2021 and winter of 2023.

Taking into consideration

- Natural England requirement that hedges be <2metres high around wet grasslands.
- Neighbours express desire for view.

Long term objective

- 2m hedge, thick on field side.

What next?

- Trim until 2025 and then by negotiation with neighbours.
- Let sides widen.

27. West Field North East

Alongside Lucy Brook.

Length: 300m; Cycle start: 2020

Action up to now

Laid autumn 2020.

Taking into consideration

- Natural England requirement that hedges be <2metres high around wet grasslands.
- Neighbours express desire for view.

Long term objective

- 2m hedge, thick on field side.

What next?

- Let sides widen.

28. West Field East

The boundary between West Field and the Pads footpath.

Length: 400m; Cycle start: 2015

Action up to now

- Laid and gapped up 2014-15.
- Trimmed most years since.
- Spring and summer 2025: Bays within West Field fenced in to prepare for winter planting.

Taking into consideration

- Natural England requirement that hedges be <2metres high around wet grasslands.
- Adjacent to Pads footpath with wildflowers and public access.
- Agreement with County Council to maintain access over summer until their September strimming.

Long term objective

- 2 metre high from the path, thick on West Field side.
- Keep clear on path side but with respect for wildflowers.

What next?

- Maintain division of labour with Council.
- Keep path clear.
- Reduce height of existing hedge. Plant to bays, winter 2025.

29. West Field South

- Length: 100m; Cycle start: 2014

Action up to now

- New planting by Hanafins winter 2014.
- Occasional trimming.
- Laid winter 2023.

Taking into consideration

- Natural England requirement that hedges be <2metres high around wet grasslands.

Long term objective

- 2 metre high, thick on West Field side.

What next?

- Trim until 2026.

30. West Field West

Length: 400m; Cycle start: 2014

Action up to now

- Laid and gapped up 2013-14.
- Trimmed 2016 and 2017 with some further gapping up.
- Extra planting including under trees 2018.
- Winter 2023-24: New planting inside the old hedge. (Partly a duplicate hedge with three spinneys at intervals.)

Taking into consideration

- Natural requirement that hedges be <2metres high around wet grasslands.
- The sheep will restrict on the western side.

Long term objective

- 2 metre high, thick on West Field side.
- This has not worked. Most of the hedge is still too thin and lacking diversity.

What next?

- Protect with electric fence.
- Trim hedge.

FLORA FIELD HEDGES

31. Flora Field North East

Between Beehive Corner and Howson's gate.

Length: 150m; Cycle start: n/a

Action up to now

- None.

Taking into consideration

- Presently a linear copse along the line of the former track.
- Mature trees and thorn, mostly blackthorn.

Long term objective

- Leave as a linear copse.

What next?

- Leave alone.

32. Flora Field South/Pony Wood path

Length: 500m; Cycle start: 2018

Action up to now

- 2018 – The section alongside the Pony Wood western extension planted.
- 2019 – The remaining section round to canal planted.

Taking into consideration

- Maintain flower margin on field side.
- Keep path clear.

Long term objective

- High, wide hedge.

What next?

- Lay hedge from double gates to crest of slope winter 2025-6.
- Lay remainder in sections over three winters from 2026-7.

33. Flora Field West/Pads Footpath

Length: 430m; Cycle start: 2015

Action up to now

- Laid and gapped up 2015-16, apart from southern 50 metres – this laid autumn 2016.
- Trimmed and extra infilling winter of 2017.
- Summer access along path maintained by FA.

Taking into consideration

- Preserve Flora Field flower margin.
- Adjacent to Pads footpath with wildflowers and public access.
- Agreement with County Council to maintain access over summer until their September strimming

Long term objective

- High hedge with increasing width on field side.

What next?

- Maintain division of labour with Council.
- Keep path clear.
- Infill any gaps with dead wood to keep dogs out of field.
- Otherwise leave alone.

PONY WOOD AND LITTLE WOOD HEDGES

34. Pony Wood Path

Alongside Pony Wood path from the canal to the wood, bordering the small 'tup field'.

Length: 100m; Cycle start: 2014

Action up to now

- Mix of laying and new planting by Hanafins 2014.
- Gapping up and occasional trimming.
- Final plastic removed 2022.
- Short section behind the notice board laid 2024-5.

Taking into consideration

- Sheep will restrict southern side.
- Keep path clear.

Long term objective

- High hedge, widen to 1 metre of path.

What next?

- Cut back to 1 metre of path.

35. Pony Wood South

Bordering the small 'tup field'.

Length: 70m; Cycle start: 2014

Action up to now

- New planting by Hanafins 2014.
- Occasional trimming.
- Laid 2024-5.

Taking into consideration

- Sheep will restrict southern side.

Long term objective

- High hedge, widen into wood.

What next?

- Trim for three years.

36. Pony Wood (Little Wood)

Western and eastern sides of the former Little Wood.

Length: 100m; Cycle start: 2019

Action up to now

- December 2019 – Hedge planted.
- Occasional trimming.
- Plastics removed winter 2022-23.

Taking into consideration

- Sheep will restrict eastern side.

Long term objective

- High hedge merging into wood.

What next?

- Lay when ready.