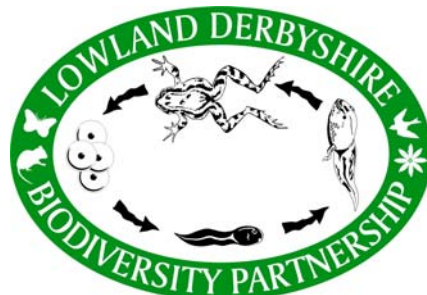


**LOWLAND DERBYSHIRE
LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

**ANCIENT AND SPECIES-RICH HEDGEROWS
HABITAT ACTION PLAN
2006 - 2010**



Prepared by the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership



Finalised in Feb 2006, following consultation

ANCIENT AND SPECIES-RICH HEDGEROWS HABITAT ACTION PLAN

TREND IN LOWLAND DERBYSHIRE: National figures show that there is currently a loss of 10% of hedgerows each year. There are no figures for this Local BAP area, but estimates for the East Midlands (Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire) for 1985 indicate that there are almost 38,000 miles of hedgerow (DoE/Countryside Commission 1986). The same report indicates that the East Midlands lost 16,000 miles of hedgerow between 1947 and 1985. In the first half of the 1980's the region had the highest proportional losses in the whole country; however figures from Lincolnshire indicate that the rate of loss there was running at 15% i.e. at a greater loss than the national average, which contributes to the high losses in the region. Since 1992, however, the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and the National Forest Tender Scheme have promoted the restoration and planting of hedgerows. In some areas this action has redressed the losses.

ESTIMATED EXTENT IN LOWLAND DERBYSHIRE: The amount of ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows within the LBAP area is unknown. The only comprehensive survey of hedgerows in Lowland Derbyshire is the Derby City Hedgerow Survey of 2003. The Project identified 187km of hedgerow, 80km of which were identified as species-rich.

NATIONAL BAP HABITATS: Ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows

ASSOCIATED NATIONAL BAP PRIORITY SPECIES:

Species which occur in Derbyshire: Bats, dormouse, brown hare, bullfinch, grey partridge, corn bunting, linnet, tree sparrow, turtle dove, and song thrush.

ASSOCIATED LOWLAND DERBYSHIRE BAP AUDITS: Derby City hedgerow survey 2003

SPECIES FOR WHICH ANCIENT AND SPECIES-RICH HEDGEROWS IN LOWLAND DERBYSHIRE ARE A KEY HABITAT: See Appendix 1 of the document 'Farmland habitats in Lowland Derbyshire'.

A vision for the future of ancient and species-rich hedgerows in Lowland Derbyshire

A landscape where hedgerows continue to play an important role in the wider countryside and urban areas of the LBAP area. Hedgerow trees are allowed to flourish and regenerate naturally. Hedgerow management is part of a working farmland system and is not carried out at a time of year that is detrimental to the farmland wildlife that relies upon hedgerow fruits and nesting opportunities. Important hedgerows in urban and urban fringe situations are protected from unnecessary damage and their futures are secured through appropriate management agreements. Hedgerows are kept as wildlife corridors, especially through urban and urban-fringe areas. Landowners understand the importance of mature, but well managed hedgerows for farmland birds.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background information on ancient and species-rich hedgerows in lowland Derbyshire can be found in the document "Farmland habitats in Lowland Derbyshire".

2. FACTORS WHICH HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON ANCIENT AND SPECIES-RICH HEDGEROWS

An impact ✓

A significant impact ✓ ✓

	Historic	Current
Land Management		
Lack of management (no cutting or laying) leading to hedgerow developing into lines of trees and to the development of gaps.	✓	✓✓
Poor land management (too frequent and badly timed cutting) leading to poor hedge growth conditions and the development of gaps.	✓	✓✓
Loss of hedgerow trees through senescence and felling, without encouraging replacements.	✓	✓✓
Use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers right up to the base of hedgerows leading to nutrient enrichment and a decline in species diversity.	✓✓	✓
Increased stocking rates, particularly of sheep, leading to hedgerow damage and their replacement with fences.	✓	✓✓
Hedgerow removal for agricultural, development and mineral extraction purposes.	✓	✓✓
Planning protection		
Lack of protection through the planning system and weaknesses within the Hedgerow Regulations.	✓✓	✓✓
Others		
Lack of understanding amongst general public and some land managers of how hedges are traditionally managed Many people (both farmers and non-farmers) have become used to a very manicured countryside. Hedges not cut every year and allowed to bear flowers and fruit are seen by some as indicative of 'poor land management'.	✓	✓✓

3. CURRENT ACTION

3.1 Legislation

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 made under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995 deem certain hedgerows *'important'*. Such hedgerows may not be removed other than in certain justifiable and exceptional circumstances. The presumption is in favour of protection and retention. Land managers are required to consult local authorities before hedgerows can be removed.

Article 10 of the EC Habitats Directive requires member states to encourage the management of hedges (and other linear features) in their land use planning and development policies and, in particular, with a view to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network. This is reflected in The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations, 1994, which recognises that such linear features are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

PPS9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation) further encourages the development of policies for the protection, maintenance and management of hedgerows.

The Wildlife and Countryside Acts 1981 and 1985 afford protection to some plant and animal species including birds. It is an offence to damage or destroy wild birds, their nests or eggs. This is particularly relevant to hedges with regards to timing of removal, trimming and other management.

Some hedgerow trees may be protected through Tree Preservation Orders issued by Local Authorities under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3.2 Designated Sites

- Over 100 Wildlife Sites support hedgerows as a recognised feature of the site. Many other Wildlife Sites have hedgerows within them or as a boundary feature. Wildlife Sites are afforded a degree of protection through planning policies set out in Local Plans.
- There are a number of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) which have ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows including Hammersmith Meadows LNR, Oakerthorpe LNR, Doe Lea LNR, Stoney Clouds LNR, Wessington Green LNR, Brearley Park LNR, Allestree Park LNR, and Fox Covert LNR.

3.3 Current Initiatives

- A Hedgerow Survey handbook has been produced by the UK Steering Group for the Ancient and/or species-rich hedgerow HAP. It provides a standard procedure for local surveys within the UK. The Derby City Hedgerow Survey used this methodology.
- The Wildlife Site System has recently revised the selection guidelines and now includes guidelines for species-rich and ancient hedgerows.
- The Wildlife Sites Initiative, run by the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Local Authorities carries out surveys of Wildlife Sites, some of which are designated under hedgerow guidelines. They also provide management advice to landowners.
- The Wildlife Sites Initiative also carry out Hedgerow Regulation Surveys for the Local Authorities providing advice on whether hedgerows qualify as ‘important’ from an ecological perspective.
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has produced a Habitat Creation Guide for Lowland Derbyshire which provides practical advice on hedgerow planting and management as well as providing suitable planting lists for new hedgerows with the Natural Areas.
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has also produced a short leaflet advising on the importance of hedgerows and also on management.
- Derbyshire County Council has carried out a Landscape Character Assessment for the county. The project has identified landscapes where species-rich hedgerows are a key characteristic and this is detailed in the publication “The Landscape Character of Derbyshire”. The document also provides suitable hedgerow and tree species mix for each of the 19 Landscape Character Types based on the DWT Habitat Creation Guide and field survey work.
- The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) provide management advice to owners of land.
- The National Forest Tender Scheme administered by the National Forest Company allows land owners to enter into long- term management agreements on their land. The goal is to create one third as woodland, but many other habitats are created and managed as well. During the first 10 years of the scheme 1994-2004, 59.11km of hedgerow were planted and 54.73km of hedgerow were restored and taken back into management.
- The Countryside Stewardship scheme, an agri-environmental scheme administered by DEFRA. ran for 12 years between 1992 and 2004. It had a number of options available for farmers to both create hedges and restore hedgerows. Figures from DEFRA RDS indicate that in the Lowland Derbyshire LBAP area between 2002 and 2004 14.58km were enhanced, 4.23km of hedgerow were planted and 2.18km were restored. The scheme is not open to new applications but existing agreements are still in operation, some up until 2014.
- The East Derbyshire Woodland Project runs a Free Tree Scheme where up to 50 trees are given away annually to community projects and landowners. Whilst the original scheme was intended to plant woodlands and small copses, many of the trees are being planted as hedgerows.
- Following the Derby City hedgerow survey, WildDerby provides 800m of species-rich hedges to schools and community groups on an annual basis. They also provide a free hedgelaying course every year for Derby residents and have produced biodiversity guide sheets for hedge planting and restoration.
- All of the major landowning LBAP partners, Severn Trent Water, National Trust, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and the Local Authorities have land with hedgerows on them, some of which are within existing Countryside Stewardship Schemes.

- A number of mineral extraction schemes, some of which caused the destruction of hedgerows include programmes to plant new hedgerows, many of which are along their former lines. Some mineral applications have involved the translocation of species-rich hedgerows, although this is always considered as a last option and has had mixed success rates depending on the conditions.

3.4 New Initiatives

- The Environmental Stewardship Scheme which replaced the Countryside Stewardship in 2005 has payments for managing existing species-rich hedgerows, restoring and creating new ones. The Entry Level Scheme pays landowners a flat payment per year if they score sufficient points per hectare. The Higher Level Scheme pays for capital works including hedgerow management, gapping up and planting. Farm Environment Plans which accompany Higher level Scheme applications identify hedgerows which need restoration, management or where opportunities exist for planting new ones.
- The cross compliance measures under Single Farm Payment (SFP) place restrictions on the timing of hedge cutting and the 2m buffers, from the centre of the hedge, also required under SFP will help protect hedges from farming operations.
- Recent Local Plan policies encourage the retention of existing hedgerows where they are not covered by the Wildlife Sites system, and their management. They also encourage the creation of additional hedgerows.
- The Hedgerow Regulations are currently under review and may be changed as a result of the consultation.

3.5 Research and Surveys

- Since 1978 a series of national hedgerow surveys have taken place as part of the Countryside Surveys, most recently the Countryside Survey 2000.
- The production of the Hedgerow Survey handbook in 2002 was the result of considerable research and survey pilots. The handbook provides a standard for local surveys that could be carried out by local communities. The methodology provides an opportunity to feed the results into a standard database.
- The Derby City hedgerow Survey took place in 2003.
- Derbyshire County Council's Landscape Character Assessment field survey work took place between 1997 and 2002. The survey work resulted in the publication of the 'Landscape Character of Derbyshire'. The original survey work is in a database format and can be interrogated to show hedgerow pattern across the LBAP area.
- A hedgerow survey is planned for Chesterfield, arising from the Greenprint.

4. ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

4.1 National Targets

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan HAP (currently under review) for ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows aims to ensure:

- that there is no net loss of species-rich hedgerows through neglect and removal by the year 2000
- no loss of hedgerows which are both ancient and species-rich by 2005.
- Achieve favourable condition for 25% (c47,500km) of species-rich and ancient hedges by 2000
- Achieve favourable condition for 50% (c95,000km) of species-rich and ancient hedges by 2005.
- Maintain the overall national number of individual hedgerow trees (c1.8 million). By maintaining the number of such trees within each county or district through ensuring a balanced age structure.

4.2 Regional targets

Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) sets the following targets.

- In addition to any existing management agreements, manage 2,500km of existing ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows by 2010
- Create 1,700km of new species-rich hedgerow.

4.3 National Forest Targets

The National Forest BAP, which includes the southern part of Derbyshire has targets for hedgerows:

- Plant 5km of hedgerow every year up to and including 2010
- Restore 20km of hedgerow every year up to and including 2010.

4.4 Lowland Derbyshire objectives and targets

Objective 1.

Identify and protect the best quality and most important examples of ancient and species-rich hedgerows, (such as those which appear on the first edition Ordnance Survey map and as defined in the document 'Farmland habitats in Lowland Derbyshire'), and bring all protected sites into favourable management.

Targets

- Ensure that all hedgerows that are considered important are marked on LBAP alert maps and are protected through the planning system by 2010.
- To bring an additional 100km of hedgerow into favourable management by 2010.

Objective 2.

To increase the amount of species-rich hedgerow within the LBAP area and ensure they are under future favourable management

Targets

- Identify areas where additional hedgerow planting and linkage are needed by 2007.
- Plant 50km of species-rich hedgerow by 2010.

4.5 Main factors likely to affect achievement of targets

Resources and Land management

- Most sites with hedgerows are on farmland and are in private ownership.
- Providing farm management advice to landowners is time consuming and current resource for such advice is limited.

Planning and Regulations

- Lack of enforcement of planning conditions and retention of existing features through the planning process.

Conflicts with other Conservation priorities

- Resolution of conflicts between other habitats of high value.
- Potential conflict with hedgerow creation in floodplains associated with flood alleviation.

Practical difficulties and lack of knowledge

- Inadequate survey/base data for many areas of the LBAP areas

5. ACTIONS

LDFAG= Lowland Derbyshire Farmland Action group (all of below)
 EN = English Nature, DEFRA (RDS)= Dept. of Environment Food Rural Affairs (Rural Development Service), DWT = Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, NT = National Trust, LA = Local authorities, FWAG = Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, BW = British Waterways, NFU = National Farmers Union, GEV = Groundwork Erewash Valley, EDWP = East Derbyshire Woodland Project, DCC (CDT) = Derbyshire County Council (Conservation and Design team), ST= Severn Trent, LRC = Local Record Centre, WSP = Wildlife Sites Panel, BTCV = British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Community groups = Other local, community and Friends Of groups

	ACTIONS	TIME - SCALE	LEAD AGENCY (in bold) & Partners
	DATA COLLATION		
AH1	Collate all existing information on hedgerow surveys for the LBAP area in one place and digitise information	By 2007	LRC, DWT
	SURVEY		
AH2	From data collation identify gaps in information and prioritise areas for survey work	By 2008	DWT, LDFAG
AH3	Work with community groups, local people, students and organisations to carry out hedgerow surveys for unrecorded areas of the LBAP areas	Ongoing	DWT, LAs (via Greenprint initiatives) GEV, EN,
AH4	Survey hedgerow Wildlife Sites on a rolling programme of at least once every 15 years	Ongoing	DWT
AH5	Survey potential hedgerow Wildlife Sites, assess them against the WS Selection guidelines and designate if appropriate.	Ongoing	DWT, WSP
	RESEARCH		
AH6	Carry out research into the historic landscape characterisation of the LBAP area and draw conclusions on historic hedgerow patterns and distribution.	By 2010	DCC (CDT)
AH7	Interrogate the field survey database associated with Landscape Character of Derbyshire to inform the survey data for hedgerows.	By 2010	DCC (CDT)
	CONSERVATION ACTION AND INCENTIVES		
AH8	Promote the Environmental Stewardship (ELS and HLS) to landowners as a way of sustainably managing boundary features such as hedgerows	Ongoing	FWAG, DWT, DEFRA (RDS), EN, NFU
AH9	On land owned and / or managed by LBAP partners ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient and species-rich hedgerows are managed favourably including the provision of hedgerow trees. • Appropriate opportunities are taken to link and restore hedges with new species-rich hedges. • Appropriate opportunities are taken plant new species- rich hedges. 	Ongoing	NT, ST, LAs, DWT, BW, GEV, BTCV and other Community Groups
AH10	Where appropriate promote to landowners planting of new species-rich hedgerows and ensure their future management	Ongoing	FWAG, DWT
AH11	Promote hedgerow planting through the East Derbyshire Woodland Project's Free Tree Scheme	Ongoing	EDWP, LAs
	MANAGEMENT AND CREATION ADVICE		
AH12	Produce a leaflet aimed at landowners, outlining sympathetic management and planting of species-rich hedgerows	By 2009	LDFAG
AH13	Promote favourable hedgerow management, including	Ongoing	FWAG, DWT,

	the provision of hedgerow trees through advice to landowners		
	REGULATION		
AH14	Ensure all planning applications and General Development Orders are adequately assessed in relation to ancient and species-rich hedgerows. Appropriate opportunities are taken to protect, maintain and manage hedgerows through decisions and conditions.	Ongoing	LAs, DWT, EN
AH15	Ensure policy documents, including LDFs include appropriate protection for ancient and species-rich hedgerows.	Ongoing	LAs, DWT, EN
AH16	Ensure all Hedgerow Regulation applications are surveyed against the stated criteria and 'important' hedgerow are protected.	Ongoing	LAs, DWT
	AWARENESS RAISING		
AH17	Hold a public event raising awareness of ancient and species-rich hedgerows and their importance for nature conservation.	By 2010	LDFAG

6. RESOURCES

It is envisaged that the majority of actions proposed will be carried out by the relevant organisations using current resources. These include:

- continuing investment by landowners and managers managing their land sympathetically for wildlife
- continuing management of hedgerows in the ownership of conservation organisations or public bodies
- English Nature's Wildlife Enhancement Scheme for public and private statutory sites and Reserves Enhancement Scheme for conservation bodies

The Environmental Stewardship is a two tier scheme comprising of the Entry level and Higher level scheme. The Entry Level Scheme (ELS) is designed to encourage a large number farmers and land owners into environmental management. A number of options under ELS will aim to encourage sympathetic management of hedgerows. The Higher Level Scheme (HLS) will be highly targeted and discretionary. HLS will offer options to carry out capital works on hedgerows such as gap up and planting new hedgerow trees. In addition the Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) is a whole farm scheme, similar to ELS but is open to all farmers who manage all or part of their land organically and who are not receiving aid under the Organic Aid Scheme or the Organic Farming Scheme.

Additional resources will be required to:

- Carry out surveys of hedgerows and support community groups etc carrying out such surveys.
- Digitise hedgerow information and distribute to LBAP partners.
- Increase the resources providing farmland management and agri-environmental grant advice to landowners.
- Enhance management of sites in the ownership of LBAP partners.