

February 2026

Woodland creation at Mosewick Farm, Longley Green (Suckley)

A case study



Introduction

Mosewick Farm is a land holding of some 26 hectares of mainly grassland just south of Longley Green in the parish of Suckley (see coloured area in map below). The site was formally used over many years for horse grazing but the current owners have been working with a local sheep and cattle grazer and the Malvern Hills National Landscape Team to understand the character and ecology of the site and to put plans in place for positive changes in land management which will benefit nature and the landscape.

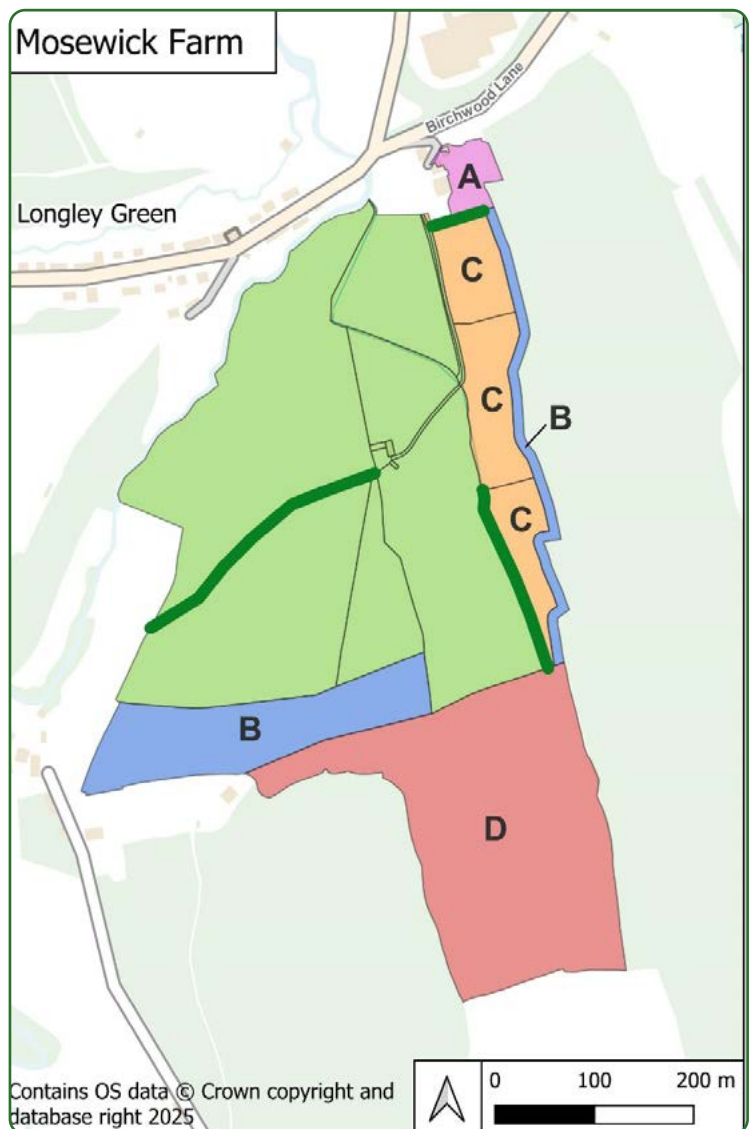
The woodland creation scheme

In the summer of 2024 a botanical survey of all the grassland at Mosewick Farm was carried out. It revealed that the grass sward on a 6 hectare area (marked D in the map to the right) was of low botanical interest, being dominated by vigorous grasses with the most numerous species being false-oat grass and Yorkshire fog. Some weeds such as hogweed were also present.

An application to create woodland on area D was subsequently prepared by Bearwood Associates Ltd on behalf of the landowner and submitted to the Forestry Commission as part of the Government's [England Woodland Creation Offer \(EWCO\) - GOV-UK Find a grant](#). The key elements of the proposed scheme were as follows:

- plant and guard 7,700 trees and shrubs;
- all plants to be of native stock comprising 20 different varieties;
- 20% open space built into the woodland in the form of rides and glades

The Forestry Commission approved the scheme and awarded £34,260 to implement it in November 2025. Contractors were appointed and, despite battling very wet weather, the field was planted out in late January and early February 2026.



Maintenance of the new woodland

The England Woodland Creation Offer provides 15 years of maintenance funding which will be used, amongst other things, to reduce competition to the trees and shrubs from weeds and grasses and to replace any trees and shrubs that have failed.



The benefits to nature and landscape

Mosewick Farm falls within a zone called 'Highly Wooded Landscapes' in the Malvern Hills National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan [MHAONB NRP to JAC 23Mar22](#) and within an area identified as the 'Principal Wooded Hills' in the Landscape Character Assessment for the area [MalvernLandStratGuideLoResFinal_000.pdf](#). The creation of new woodlands – of an appropriate size and composition - is listed as a key objective in both publications. In addition, the Habitat Map prepared as part of the draft [Herefordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\) - Herefordshire Council](#) states that woodland creation is a desirable action to support nature recovery in this area.

The main trees and shrubs planted were chosen because they match the species found in local woods in the area and so will create additional habitat which local wildlife is adapted to. The very wide range of plants was also chosen to create diversity and resilience in the face of a changing climate and to try and 'future proof' the new wood given the threat from known and currently unknown (potential) pathogens. A particular feature and value of the scheme is that it provides a physical connection between two existing and mature areas of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (the Halesend to the east and Bearswood Coppice to the west). The Halesend is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its woodland plant assemblages. The creation of this new woodland therefore expands the area of habitat available whilst also enabling woodland wildlife to move easily between these two existing woods.

Other changes at Mosewick Farm

Woodland creation is just one of a number of recently completed and planned activities which will benefit the soils and water and the diversity and abundance of wildlife in the area whilst also making a positive contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The majority of these changes are underpinned by a desire to ensure that Mosewick remains recognisable as working farmland. Funding for these various works has been provided either through the [Farming in Protected Landscapes – Malvern Hills National Landscape](#) programme or a [Sustainable Farming Incentive: guidance for applicants and agreement holders - GOV.UK](#) agreement which was approved late in 2025 (see map for letter references).

A – the first edition Ordnance Survey maps show that an orchard existed on part of this site in 1884. It was long since removed. A new 'traditional orchard' (large trees with wide spacing between them) of 30 apples and plums was planted here in February 2025. The trees were watered during the very dry spring and summer in 2025. Traditional orchards are one of our most important wildlife habitats and are a cultural feature in the landscape of the three counties.

B – these areas will be managed through a process of planting and natural regeneration to become 'scrubby' – containing longer grass, shrubs, bramble and small trees. They will provide shelter, food and a refuge from extremes of weather for many species of wildlife. The loss of scrubby areas like this from our countryside over decades of intensive agriculture is considered key to the decline of many native species including birds such as Nightingales which are now only very rarely heard singing in our area. The fact that that these scrub areas directly adjoin very important habitats such as the Halesend Wood (a nationally important Site of Special Scientific Interest) to the east and Bearswood Common to the north means they should be particularly valuable to nature.

C – these fields (comprising approx. 2.6 hectares) were reseeded with wildflower and grass seed in the Autumn of 2025. They are now being managed as traditional hay meadows, left to grow through Spring and Summer to provide food and shelter for many species of insect which will help to pollinate some of our crops and feed lots of other wildlife such as swifts, swallows and bats. They will then be cut for hay later in summer which will be fed to livestock over the winter. Sheep and cattle will also graze these pastures in the Autumn and early Winter.

Thick green lines – relic hedges have been 'gapped-up' (new plants inserted into gaps) and entirely new hedges are being planted on these lines. Fencing has been installed to protect this new planting. The intention is to allow these hedges to grow wide and bushy like others already on the site, helping to make effective corridors for wildlife movement between the important wooded areas and other habitats.



The following provide support to the Malvern Hills National Landscape Partnership:



A number of Town and Parish Councils also make a financial contribution to the work of the Partnership.

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