

Briefing Note – proposal to plant a hedge in Captain's Close

Recent work to replace the old fence between Captain's Close and the Ace Lane footpath with something sturdier and more attractive also cleared the ground both sides of the fence. The area inside the fence had been mostly covered in nettles. The Environmental Working Group proposes taking advantage of this opportunity to plant a hedge of mixed native species along the inside of the fence. This will provide a food source and habitat for wildlife and become an attractive feature to enhance the area and complement the new fence. The length of the boundary of Captain's Close where we are proposing to put the hedge is approximately 60m.

In order to avoid encroaching on the footpath, and to retain a view of Captain's Close from the path, we propose planting the hedge 3-4 feet away from the fence and leaving some gaps in addition to the one needed for the gate. We will also avoid planting under the large tree near the fence at the brook end.

What we'll need:

Trees

We will apply for free Hedge Packs from the Woodland Trust. Each pack contains 30 trees, a mix of dog rose, hawthorn, hazel, crab apple, and dogwood, sufficient for 6-8 metres of double-row hedging. We can apply for up to 4 packs. The window for applications is open until August and the trees will be delivered in November. We will also source some additional free trees of suitable species locally.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/> .

Mulch

To keep the area around the trees free of vegetation and retain moisture, we plan to put down mulch as soon as possible. There are various options, the preferred one would be to get wood chip donated by tree surgeons as this would be more attractive than old carpet or plastic sheeting.

Tree guards

To prevent damage from grazing animals and small mammals. The cost of 120 tree guards and canes/stakes ranges from around £115-£300. This is the only significant cost we expect to incur.

We can provide other equipment needed ourselves (string for marking out, spades etc).

Volunteers

The more the better but a group of 5-6 adults should be able to complete the planting in half a day, providing the ground is kept clear. We will seek to involve groups such as the Scouts and Guides too.

The Parish Council is asked to approve this provisional plan in order that the Environmental Working Group can go ahead with applying for trees and developing a more detailed plan.