

What's happening at Mosewick Farm?

Mosewick Farm is a land holding of some 26 hectares of mainly grassland towards the south east of Longley Green village (see map). Many residents will know the site because some of it is very visible as you travel along Stock Lane from the north towards the village and because a public Right of Way runs across the site from the adjacent Halesend Wood in the east. The site was formally used over many years for horse grazing but the current owners have been working with a local sheep and cattle grazier and the Malvern Hills National Landscape (formerly AONB) Team to understand the character and ecology of the site and to put plans in place for positive changes in land management. These plans 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. However, the aim is also to ensure that the majority of the site continues to be managed as farmland and it will still be recognisable as such in the future.

Funding applications to support a range of management measures have now been prepared and submitted to the National Landscape's Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) grant programme and to the Government's Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme. The FiPL application has recently been approved. The following list (see also accompanying map) sets out the key changes which are expected to be made over the next 12 months or so, the first of which has already been implemented. Other changes may follow in due course, especially in respect of trying to store and slow the flow of water across the site in very wet conditions.

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 have been 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 and bramble. 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 south means they should be particularly valuable to nature.

C – these fields (comprising approx. 2.6 hectares) will be reseeded with wildflower and grass seed in the Autumn of 2025. In the future they will be 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/or cattle will also graze these pastures in the Autumn and early Winter.

D – over 7,500 native broadleaved trees and shrubs will be planted in this 6 hectare field in the autumn or winter of 2025/26 to create a new woodland. This will link the ancient woodlands at Bearswood and the Halesend.

Thick green lines – relic hedges will be 'gapped-up' (new plants inserted into gaps) and/or entirely new hedges will be planted on these lines to replace lost hedges. Fencing will be installed to protect the 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.

What does all of this mean for me?

Whilst some new permanent fencing and gates will be installed as part of new management on the site all rights of way will of course continue to be accessible to users. Any pedestrian gates installed will be self-closing and 'easy access'. No stiles will be installed. Some seasonal temporary fencing (electric fencing) may also be employed to help control livestock in the years ahead. We hope that your enjoyment of this lovely area and the wildlife it sustains will be enhanced in the years ahead.

Any questions or comments can be directed to: pesrich@worcestershire.gov.uk

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