



MANAGE HEDGEROWS



INTRODUCTION

Native hedgerows are one of the most valuable habitats found around football facilities in Wales. They provide food, shelter and nesting opportunities for a wide range of wildlife, including pollinators, birds, bats and small mammals.

Hedgerows also connect habitats across the wider landscape, allowing species to move safely between areas and helping to strengthen local biodiversity networks.

For many Clubs, hedgerows already exist around pitches, boundaries, car parks and access routes. With the right management, these features can become important biodiversity assets, while enhancing the appearance and environmental value of Club facilities.

This resource will support your Club to:

- Understand the biodiversity value of native hedgerows.
- Identify opportunities to improve existing hedgerows.
- Manage hedgerows in a way that supports pollinators and wildlife.
- Improve habitat connectivity across club grounds.
- Support local biodiversity priorities and Welsh nature recovery goals.
- Integrate hedgerow management into your Club Biodiversity Action Plan.





BENEFITS

Why Native Hedgerows Matter

Native hedgerows provide benefits far beyond their role as a boundary feature.

They can:

- Provide nectar, pollen, berries and seeds throughout the year.
- Create nesting and shelter opportunities for birds and mammals.
- Support pollinators such as bees, butterflies and hoverflies.
- Improve habitat connectivity across the landscape.
- Reduce wind exposure around facilities.
- Improve water management and reduce soil erosion.
- Capture carbon and contribute to climate resilience.

A diverse hedgerow containing a mixture of native species will generally provide significantly greater biodiversity benefits than a single-species hedge or non-native ornamental planting.





HEDGEROW SPECIES

Native Hedgerow Species to Encourage

Many native Welsh hedgerow species provide important food sources at different times of the year. A varied hedgerow structure supports a wider range of species throughout the year.

Early Spring

These species provide some of the first nectar and pollen sources for emerging pollinators.

- Goat Willow.
- Blackthorn.
- Hazel.

Late Spring

These species provide abundant food during a key pollinator period.

- Hawthorn (Whitethorn).
- Field Maple.
- Wild Cherry.

Summer

These species provide nectar and shelter throughout the summer months.

- Bramble.
- Dog Rose.
- Honeysuckle.

Autumn and Winter

These species provide berries and food for birds and wildlife.

- Holly.
- Ivy.
- Rowan.
- Guelder Rose.





MANAGE & PROTECT

Managing Hedgerows for Pollinators

Many hedgerows are cut too frequently, preventing flowering and berry production.

Reduce Cutting Frequency

Where possible:

- Cut hedgerows on a two to three-year rotation.
- Avoid annual cutting across entire hedgerows.
- Allow sections to flower and fruit before trimming.

This approach allows species such as Blackthorn and Hawthorn to produce the flowers and berries that wildlife depends upon.

Cut in Rotation

Rather than cutting all hedgerows at the same time:

- Divide long hedgerows into sections.
- Cut different sections in different years.
- Ensure some areas always remain flowering and fruiting.

This creates a continuous supply of food and habitat.





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Retain Natural Structure

Wildlife benefits from hedgerows with varied heights and shapes.

Where safe and appropriate:

- Allow some sections to grow taller.
- Retain occasional mature shrubs and trees.
- Avoid creating overly neat or uniform hedges.

A more natural structure supports a wider range of species.

Protect Wildlife During Hedge Maintenance

Birds and other wildlife often nest within hedgerows during spring and summer.

Before undertaking any work:

- Check carefully for active nests.
- Follow relevant wildlife legislation.
- Avoid disturbing nesting birds.

In Wales, hedge cutting is generally best undertaken during autumn and winter once nesting season has ended.

Clubs should always ensure maintenance activities comply with relevant environmental and wildlife legislation.





HEDGEROW MARGIN

Create a Hedgerow Margin

The area immediately beneath a hedge can be just as valuable as the hedge itself.

Where possible:

- Leave a 1.5 to 2 metre grass margin alongside hedgerows.
- Reduce mowing frequency.
- Avoid herbicide application.
- Allow native wildflowers to develop naturally.

These margins provide nesting habitat for bumblebees, shelter for insects and feeding opportunities for birds.





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HEDGEROW & WATER

Hedgerows and Water Management

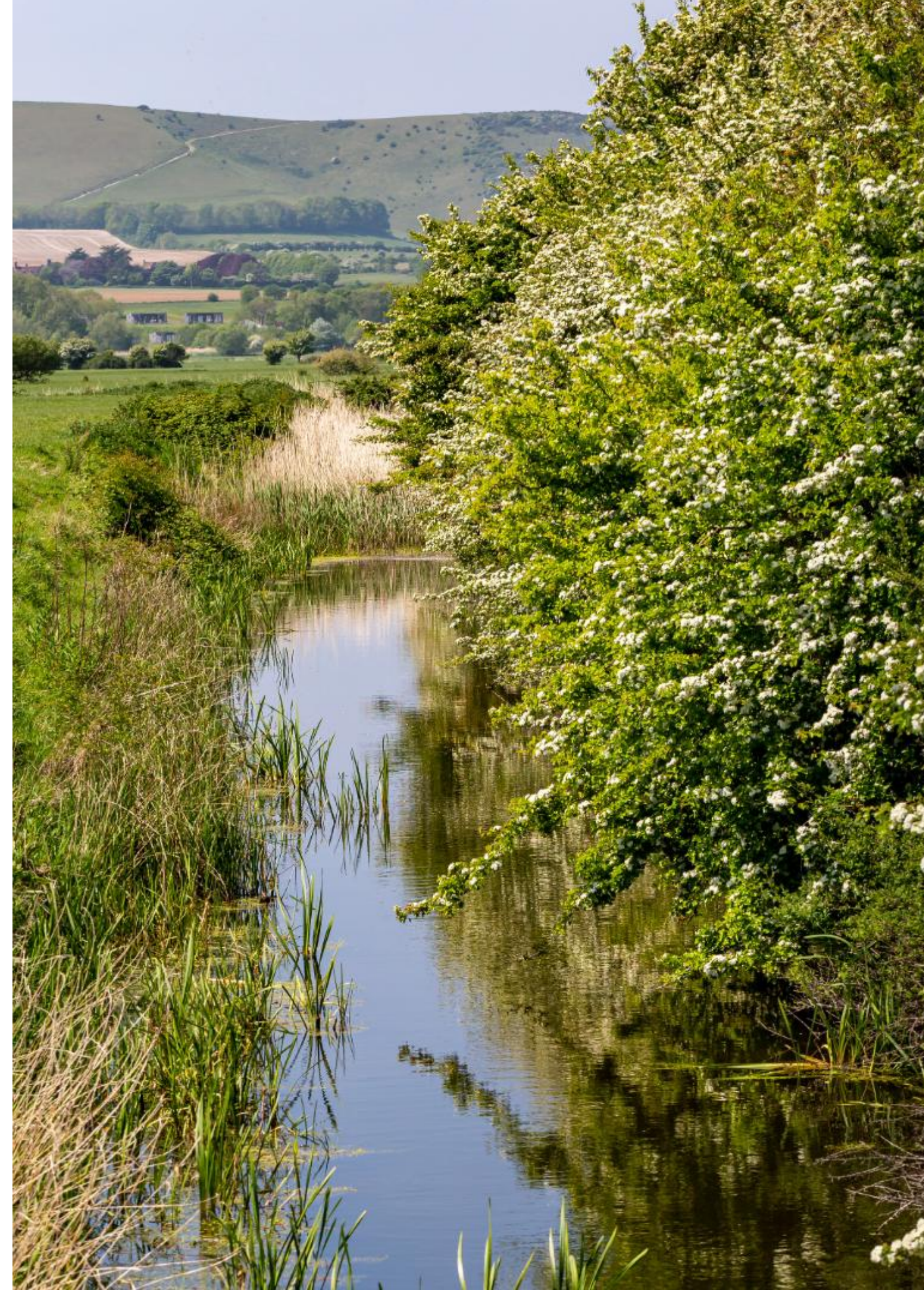
Native hedgerows can help improve local water quality and reduce flooding risks.

Where hedgerows are located near:

- Streams.
- Rivers.
- Ditches.
- Wetland areas.

They can:

- Reduce sediment runoff.
- Capture nutrients before they reach watercourses.
- Stabilise soil and riverbanks.
- Improve resilience during heavy rainfall.





EXISTING HEDGEROWS

Filling Gaps and Enhancing Existing Hedgerows

Many hedgerows at Clubs contain gaps or sections dominated by non-native species.

Opportunities for improvement include:

- Planting additional native species.
- Increasing species diversity.
- Replacing non-native shrubs over time.
- Connecting isolated habitat areas.

When planting new sections, use locally appropriate native species where possible. Planting a mixture of species generally provides greater biodiversity value than single-species planting.





FURTHER SUPPORT

Native flowering hedgerows are one of the most valuable biodiversity assets that many football Clubs already possess. By making small changes to maintenance practices, Clubs can significantly improve habitat quality for pollinators, birds and other wildlife while contributing to wider biodiversity recovery across Wales.

You do not need to make major changes immediately. Start by reviewing your existing hedgerows, identifying opportunities to reduce cutting frequency and creating space for nature to thrive.

Use what you have learned in this resource to:

- Inform one of your two mandatory Green Goals.
- Complete your Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Improve the management of existing hedgerows.
- Create stronger habitat connections across Club grounds.
- Engage members and volunteers in biodiversity projects.
- Support local and national nature recovery efforts.

Even simple actions, such as allowing a hedge to flower before cutting or leaving a grass margin at its base, can provide valuable habitat for wildlife and help create a more nature-friendly future for football in Wales.

Further information on Biodiversity can be found at www.faw.cymru/TogetherGreener-biodiversity

If you require support with this resource, please contact sustainability@faw.cymru