

Garage at rear of
9 Winifred Street
Dowlais
Merthyr Tudful
CF48 3SD

A Scheme for
Biodiversity Enhancement

For

Mr Terrance Morgan

May 2024

Morgan Ecology

Status	Name	Date
Author	Phil Morgan CEnv MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist	13 May 2024
Reviewer	Diane Morgan BA (Hons) ACIEEM, Senior Ecologist	13 May 2024

Contents

A	Introduction and background	1
B	Existing value for biodiversity	1 – 2
C	Timescale	2
D	Biodiversity enhancements	2 – 3
E	Site location plan	4
F	Site enhancement measures	5

A Introduction and background

Permission has been granted for the construction of a garage on waste ground at the rear of 9 Winifred Street, Dowlais. The Consent (P/24/0044), was granted by the local planning authority, Merthyr Tudful County Borough Council, on the 24th of April 2024, and includes a Condition (4), requiring that the owner provide a Scheme for Biodiversity Enhancements, and obtain appropriate agreement, in writing, from the Council prior to the commencement of any work.

The request for the Scheme is to comply with Future Wales and Planning Policy Wales 12, which requires that all developments maintain and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with Policy EnW1, of the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan.

Presently, the site comprises of a small area of waste ground, on the north-west side of a narrow, metalled lane, which slopes gently down to the west. Other garages are already present on adjacent plots further down the lane, to the west. It is intended that the new garage will be constructed to be in keeping with other nearby garages. The site is sandwiched between the terraced houses along Winifred Street and a reclaimed area of land to the north-west, which was historically used as railway sidings for the nearby Ivor Iron Works. Most of the area to the south and east is urban in nature, featuring domestic dwellings and small commercial enterprises.

This Scheme for Biodiversity Enhancements is prepared to comply with Condition 4 of the planning consent: it takes into consideration the likely presence of species in the vicinity, and the desire of the owner to contribute to encouraging wildlife in the community of Dowlais.

B Existing value for biodiversity

As noted above, the site is small, and comprises of heavily compacted waste ground, with plant species typical of disturbed/well used ground. The site is approximately 54m² in size, and the proposed garage will occupy some 24m² of the plot. Inspection, on Wednesday the 8th of May 2024, by two experienced independent ecologists, noted the presence of 27 plant and two bird species on the site, or on immediately adjacent land. Table 1 below lists the various species noted. The property is located at National Grid Reference (NGR) SO 0620 0822, at an altitude of 290m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

Table 1: Garage site species list

Common name	Scientific name
Flora	
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.
Broad-leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>
Buttercup, creeping	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>
Clover white	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.
Dogwood, a	<i>Cornus</i> sp.
Grasses, various	<i>Poa</i> sp.
Grasses, common couch	<i>Elytrigia repens</i>
Hedge woundwort	<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>
Herb-Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>
Horsetail/mare's-tail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>
Nettle, common	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Nipplewort	<i>Lapsana communis</i>
Oak	<i>Quercus</i> sp.
Plantain, greater	<i>Plantago major</i>
Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
Ragwort	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>
Shepherds purse	<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>
Silverweed	<i>Potentilla anserina</i>
Speedwell, thyme-leaved	<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Thistle, creeping	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Vetch, common	<i>Vicia sativa</i>
Willow, a	<i>Salix</i> sp.

Willowherb, great Willowherb, rosebay	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i> <i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>
Fauna	
House sparrow Robin	<i>Passer domesticus</i> <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>

The lane, which will serve the garage, forms the boundary line between open ground to the north-west and urban environment (initially with Winifred Street) to the east. The adjacent open grassland/scrub to the north-west (formerly the railway sidings), provides an interesting semi-natural habitat, and all of the tree/shrub species listed in Table 1 are on this third-party owned site. This area is also criss-crossed by numerous paths used by local people.

No part of the development site is designated for nature conservation. Within a 2km radius there is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – Cwm Taf Fechan Woodlands – some 1.7km to the north, but no nearby Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar sites, or National Nature Reserves (NNR).

The only Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC), within the 2km search radius, was Cyfarthfa Castle/Park, at just over 1.7km to the west. It is not considered that this site will be impacted by the proposed development.

Much of the Merthyr Tudful Council area lies within a B-line route. These are routes originally proposed by Buglife, as locations where particular efforts must be made to provide food plants for bees and other insect species. The presence of the site within such a route was therefore, taken into account, when considering the recommendations made in this document. In common with the situation nationally, insects are very under-recorded in the area.

C Timescale

The owner plans to commence the development in July 2024, with completion during August 2024. The proposals made in this Scheme for Biodiversity Enhancements can readily be delivered in the late summer, early autumn of 2024, and some within the process of construction. This of course assumes that all other planning conditions have been met, enabling construction commencement in July 2024, and that Condition 4 has been signed off in writing by the Council. The proposed timeframe for practical delivery is set out in Table 3 (below).

D Biodiversity enhancements

Enhancements are limited by the modest size of the site, ground conditions, and aspect/shading of the new garage etc. Nonetheless, specific measures are included to benefit birds and insects.

Habitat improvements

Existing rocks on site are to be retained, or moved to reinforce the property boundary. The rocks of themselves have no intrinsic value, but can be utilised to as part of the habitat improvement proposals. No specific tree planting is proposed, as natural re-generation is taking place in the area, and given the small site, any tree planting may result in long term stability issues for the garage. Further, no specific wildflower planting is proposed (beyond the plants in Table 2), because, with the exception of the garage entrance, all other elevations are in shade.

Table 2 recommends specific shrubs which must be planted, and these will have value for local wildlife. It is vital that these plants are sourced locally, and be of native stock, to maintain the local gene-stock. This also avoids the risk of plant diseases, which can be introduced with imported stock. Proximity to the adjacent former railway sidings, will in time, introduce other species to the site, in addition to the ones already present, including bramble and cleavers.

Two trellises will be fitted to the outside wall of the garage at the rear, and on the north-east side elevation, to assist the climbing plants listed in Table 2. They can be fitted at the same time as

other external fittings are provided on the garage. It is expected that the retained rocks will be naturally colonised in due course.

Table 2: Recommended shrub species

Plant	Planting locations	Benefitting insects
Dog rose (<i>Rosa canina</i>)	Planted between rocks at rear of garage	Native shrub beneficial for a range of insects
Honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>)	Planted at base of trellis at rear of garage, and near to rocks	Native shrub beneficial for a range of insects, and small mammals
Old man's beard or traveller's joy (<i>Clematis vitalba</i>)	Planted at base of trellis at rear of garage, and near to rocks	Native shrub beneficial for a range of insects

Ideally several plants of each species would be planted, in order to account for losses of planting examples. To minimise this risk, planting must take place in late autumn/early winter. If a dry spell is occurring, then supplementary watering must be undertaken by the owner.

Species specific measures

In addition to the trellises recommended the garage provides a suitable location for the provision of a bird nest box. A suitable box, given the nearby scrub is a small diameter hole box made of woodcrete, for good longevity (see Plate 1). These boxes can be obtained from a variety of suppliers, but it is essential that whichever design box is obtained, that it is put at a height where it cannot be reached by a cat. The box can be provided at the same time as other external fittings are made to the garage.

Table 3: Timeframe for enhancement provision

Provided measure	Timeframe and deadline by which measures must be in place
Shrub planting	Planting in late autumn/early winter 2024
Fitting trellis	Fitted by late summer 2024
Provision of bird box	Late summer 2024

It is important that all preparatory measures of installing the trellises and repositioning the rocks are in place before the early autumn 2024. The planting of shrubs must be focussed late autumn/early winter period, when plants are generally dormant, and normally will get plenty of rainwater during that time of the year. Any losses of the enhancement features within a 5-year period (until end of 2029) must be replaced.

E Site location plan

Figure 1: Site location plan



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N.B. Site boundary is shown bordered in red

F Site enhancement measures

Plate 1: Suitable woodcrete 'Seville' small diameter nest box



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Llys Newydd, Llanfihangel Talyllyn, Aberhonddu LD3 7TG

Tel: 07713 258937