

August 2019

Bell Meadow, Heveningham: Design Notes

Note: new and enhanced habitats have been highlighted in green on the attached layout plan.

Concept

A naturalistic, and easy to maintain community space which includes ample space for gatherings, a small sports pitch, nature walk and playground. A *variety* of natural habitats has also been introduced.

Areas are laid out in soft, organic forms and defined by either mown, hard-wearing lawn or long, low maintenance meadow grass underplanted with bulbs. In addition, a woodland area will be maintained in semi-wild state for wildlife. Additional native hedgerow planting will also provide a habitat.

The design aims to *sit seamlessly* into the rural landscape. Small, native ornamental trees provide wider seasonal interest without crowding or casting shade. Six fruiting trees introduce an orchard. A woodland walk provides a space in which to engage with nature. Planting creates an interesting space for the whole community.

The play area and its components are partially screened by a low embankment of unmown grass (also providing another habitat).

Layout

Stepping in from the street, the contours of the site remain unchanged: on either side, long and low maintenance meadow grass (c) grows beneath small, fruiting varieties (ii). Either would provide blossom and autumn interest. The mixed native hedge has been restored and continued to flank these areas. Two areas of native shrubs have been introduced as habitats (i)

Mown, hard-wearing grass (b) surrounds the informal community sports pitch (a). Echoing the lines of a circle ensure that its form is pleasing to the eye and not random. Clusters of Hawthorn provide naturalistic blossom (iii) and food for wildlife.

In the NE corner, the longer grass is replicated, with shade-tolerant meadow grass (c). This blends into a woodland garden/habitat. A plantation of River Birch (xii) create an intimate space to explore from the timber broadwalk (xiii). A willow tunnel has also been introduced (ix). 'Bug Hotels' could be introduced here. Note: this area is rendered safe with a post and rail fence along the river bank.

The play area is embraced and partially concealed by a low embankment, using any spoil from the earthworks and extra topsoil, seeded with long, hard-wearing grass (c). This creates a habitat and a bank to roll down and run along (vi). A large willow (v) provides a focal point, with circular bench. The play equipment will be made of natural materials and will be set in a ecologically-sound surface material (vii). A simple, timber pergola with seating is positioned to view the play area and other areas of the meadow (viii).

Trees: Malus (fruiting or ornamental), Crataegus (Hawthorn), Cornus mas (Cornelian cherry), Betula nigra (River Birch), Salix viminalis (Willow), Acer campestre (Field Maple).



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