

**Burton Bradstock Parish Council
Corncrake Management Plan
2021-2026**



This version FINAL – February 2021

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1. Background

Corncrake comprises two riverside fields with boundary hedges. It is a functioning flood plain for the river Bride crossed by two Public Rights of Way from 3 gated access points.

Corncrake provide an important contribution to the character of the village by providing a rural setting for the historic core/ defined Conservation Area.

Corncrake is well used and well loved by many residents, including daily dog walkers.

Seasonal flooding and proximity of the water table can result in extended periods of wet ground conditions.

Corncrake was bought at Public Auction by the Parish Council in 2012 to safeguard public use and ensure the area was managed for the benefit of wildlife and the public.

Constraints	Issues to be addressed:
Within 8 metres of the main river Bride activities are subject to compliance with Environment Agency Flood management works.	Changes to Corncrake management will require co-operation and support from the Environment Agency
Definitive line of two Public Rights of Way need to be maintained and kept clear of obstacles.	Puddling/ Poaching of gateways by cattle and pedestrian use
Site heavily used by residents/ visitors for walking and dog exercising.	Work with dog walkers to reduce issues impacting on public and cattle health.

Management Plan 2015-2020 - Practical Achievements:

- Planting of the Fruit Trees
- Planting of Oak Trees
- Instigation of Regular Hay cuts in July/August each year
- Establishing a Forest School Area used by the Village Primary School
- Western Hedge laid by volunteers in 2015
- Wildflower seeding primarily of Yellow Rattle - generally unsuccessful
- Scrapping and seeding of a wildflower area - successfully established and managed with an annual scything session undertaken by volunteers.



2. Management Plan Consultations

It is important that the management plan for Corncrake ensures that the interests of wildlife and the many users are balanced and mitigations are put in place to address community concerns.

The first Corncrake Management Plan (2015-2020) was developed with input from the Corncrake Working Group and approved by the Parish Council. A review was undertaken in 2018 resulting in revised management plan prescriptions.

A formal public consultation on this draft management plan will be undertaken in November/December 2020.

A revised management plan will be presented to Burton Bradstock Parish Council for adoption in January 2021.

3. Vision for Corncrake

Rural riverside meadows managed for wildlife and public enjoyment alongside a range of other benefits for the local community, including informal contact with nature, dog exercise and flood alleviation.



3.1 Objectives of the Corncrake Management Plan:

Maintain open rural character of fields

Maintain and improve public access

Conserve existing flora and fauna

Improve or extend habitats to widen range and quantity of species

Manage the flood alleviation potential of the fields

Improve the educational offer of the fields, especially use by the Village Primary School

4. Management Plan -2021 -2026

4.1 Overall Plan

To deliver the vision for Corncrake by prioritising the following management interventions over the next five years:

- Re Introduce cattle grazing to the Main Grassland Area and undertake further wildflower seed sowing
- Create a new woodland area of native tree species
- Extend the Forest School Area
- Manage Hedges according to Higher Stewardship guidance
- Deal with any public safety issues from trees

4.2 By Habitat Type:

Trees

Fence and plant an area of deciduous native trees between Common Lane Hedge and the walking path in the grassland meadow.

Undertake annual pruning of the Fruit Trees.

Provide tree care to all plantings, especially during dry summers.

<p>Grassland Areas</p>	<p>Re introduce cattle grazing to the main meadow area. Under a grazing license control grazing timings to Oct/Nov and then again March/April each year.</p> <p>Continue to take an annual hay cut in Late July each year.</p> <p>Invest in and distribute wildflower seed collected from nearby meadows in year 1-3 of this management plan.</p> <p>Continue to annually scythe the wildflower area and distribute cuttings as green manure around the main field.</p> <p>Control Blackthorn encroachment into the meadow areas.</p>
<p>Hedges</p>	<p>Side trim Common Lane Hedge every other year to maintain access to the Common Lane Ditch.</p> <p>Side trim Eastern Boundary Hedge every third year and undertake hedge-laying in year 3 of this management plan.</p> <p>Side Trim Western Boundary Hedge every third year and undertake hedge laying in year 5 of this management plan.</p>

4.3 By Management Block:	
Paths	<p>Maintain and promote open access for all.</p> <p>Maintained gates and fencing.</p> <p>Mow main paths regularly between April and August each year.</p> <p>Deal sensitively with any surface issues, avoid use of hard surfacing where possible.</p>
Forest Schools Area	<p>Continue to support the use of the Forest Schools Area by the Primary School by providing a contained, safe area for outdoor learning.</p> <p>Extend the area kept strimmed of nettles further along the derelict hedge.</p> <p>Consider stripping topsoil and re seeding with shade grass seed to reduce nettle growth.</p>

5. Action Plan - Actions Year by Year:

2021	
Habitat	Tasks required
Trees	<p>Plant an area of deciduous native trees between Common Lane Hedge and the walking path in the grassland meadow. (March)</p> <p>Undertake annual pruning of the Fruit Trees. (Winter)</p> <p>Provide care to all plantings, especially watering during dry summers.</p>
Grassland	<p>Take an annual hay cut in (Late July).</p> <p>Invest in and distribute wildflower seed collected from nearby meadows in year 1-3 of this management plan.</p> <p>Scythe the wildflower area and distribute cuttings as green manure around the main field (August).</p> <p>Control Blackthorn and Bramble encroachment into the meadow areas. (Winter)</p>
Hedges	<p>Side Trim Western Boundary Hedge (Winter).</p>
Paths	<p>Maintain gates and fencing.</p> <p>Mow main paths regularly between April and July.</p>

2022	
Habitat	Tasks required
Trees	<p>Undertake annual pruning of the Fruit Trees. (Winter)</p> <p>Provide care to all plantings, especially watering during dry summers.</p>
Grassland	<p>Take an annual hay cut in (Late July).</p> <p>Invest in and distribute wildflower seed collected from nearby meadows in year 1-3 of this management plan.</p> <p>Scythe the wildflower area and distribute cuttings as green manure around the main field (August).</p> <p>Control Blackthorn and Bramble encroachment into the meadow areas. (Winter)</p>
Hedges	<p>Side Trim Common Lane Boundary Hedge (Winter).</p>
Paths	<p>Maintain gates and fencing.</p> <p>Mow main paths regularly between April and July.</p>

2023	
Habitat	Tasks required
Trees	<p>Undertake annual pruning of the Fruit Trees. (Winter)</p> <p>Provide care to all plantings, especially watering during dry summers.</p>
Grassland	<p>Take an annual hay cut in (Late July).</p> <p>Invest in and distribute wildflower seed collected from nearby meadows in year 1-3 of this management plan.</p> <p>Scythe the wildflower area and distribute cuttings as green manure around the main field (August).</p> <p>Control Blackthorn and Bramble encroachment into the meadow areas. (Winter)</p>
Hedges	<p>Side Trim Western Boundary Hedge (Winter).</p> <p>Lay Eastern Boundary Hedge (Winter).</p>
Paths	<p>Maintained gates and fencing.</p> <p>Mow main paths regularly between April and July.</p>

2024	
Habitat	Tasks required
Trees	<p>Undertake annual pruning of the Fruit Trees. (Winter)</p> <p>Provide care to all plantings, especially watering during dry summers.</p>
Grassland	<p>Take an annual hay cut in (Late July).</p> <p>Invest in and distribute wildflower seed collected from nearby meadows in year 1-3 of this management plan.</p> <p>Scythe the wildflower area and distribute cuttings as green manure around the main field (August).</p> <p>Control Blackthorn and Bramble encroachment into the meadow areas. (Winter)</p>
Hedges	
Paths	<p>Maintain gates and fencing.</p> <p>Mow main paths regularly between April and July.</p>

2025	
Habitat	Tasks required
Trees	<p>Undertake annual pruning of the Fruit Trees. (Winter)</p> <p>Provide care to all plantings, especially watering during dry summers.</p>
Grassland	<p>Take an annual hay cut in (Late July).</p> <p>Invest in and distribute wildflower seed collected from nearby meadows in year 1-3 of this management plan.</p> <p>Scythe the wildflower area and distribute cuttings as green manure around the main field (August).</p> <p>Control Blackthorn and Bramble encroachment into the meadow areas. (Winter)</p>
Hedges	<p>Lay Western Boundary Hedge (Winter).</p>
Paths	<p>Maintain gates and fencing.</p> <p>Mow main paths regularly between April and July.</p>