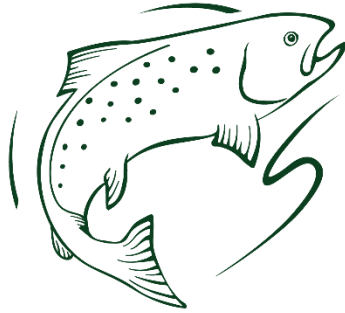


# River Habitat Restoration: River Witham at Little Ponton

## Outline Method Statement



**WILD TROUT TRUST**  
wildtrout.org

Version	Prepared by	Date
1.0	Tim Jacklin	22/12/2025

## 1. Summary of key works

1. Site Access, Preliminaries and final ecology surveys/protected species recovery
2. Excavation of new channels, ponds, scrapes and embankments - northern (downstream) section of site Installation of riffles and point bars.
3. Excavation of new channels, ponds, scrapes and embankments - southern (upstream) section of site.
4. Demobilisation and site restoration

### 1.1. Pre-construction & construction procedure

Construction of site compounds, lay-down areas, delivery of machinery and any other initial preparatory works to be undertaken in-line with specific site work activity. All works on site will be carried out in accordance with the appropriate British Standards and industry Codes of Practice. A qualified and experienced Geomorphologist must attend the site to advise on construction procedure at certain points during the works. This is to advise during construction of all features.

Biosecurity measures outlined in the following two documents should be followed by all personnel and machinery on site:

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/checkcleandry/documents/check-clean-dry-england.pdf>

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/>

### 1.2. Construction period

The construction period is expected to take 10-12 weeks, between **July and October 2026**, timed to avoid the breeding season of protected species white-clawed crayfish, and to maximise the likelihood of dry ground conditions and low river levels, ensuring cost effective delivery and minimal environmental disturbance as a result of the work on site.

Risk of disruption to works by high river levels has been considered and mitigated by procedures documented in Activity 5: Emergency Procedures for Flooding during temporary works, including monitoring of weather forecast and river levels, temporary cessation of construction and storage of machinery and materials out of the floodplain.

### 1.3. Public Access during the works

During the construction period, public access to the site should be restricted and fenced off. The contractor will ensure appropriate signage and fencing off the construction compound area and work area, and it is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure safe access for the workforce and appropriate restriction of access to the public. Appropriate signage will be provided at the access point to the public highway (SK 92441 32253, W3W visits.piano.fuels) and along the public footpath there, and a banksman used to supervise all deliveries.

#### 1.4. Heritage

The works are likely to be subject to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to protect and record archaeology and heritage, as a condition of Planning Consent. The contractor must follow the WSI and work under the supervision of an archaeological watching brief if required by the WSI. Some areas may have to be fenced to ensure no damage is caused by machinery access, etc. The requirements of the WSI will be incorporated into the contractor’s method statement prior to commencement of works.

#### 1.5. Biodiversity and Ecology

Ecology surveys and method statements have been prepared and must be implemented in the appointed contractor’s method statement. Prior to commencing development at the site, an ecological clerk of works (Peak Ecology Ltd) will be appointed to ensure the requirements are carried out. This includes, prior to any works commencing at the site, a tool box talk to all contractors working within the site to ensure they are aware of the specific requirements below, are able to recognise the relevant species and understand the reasonable avoidance measures required.

Prior to any site clearance and/or ground disturbance works commencing at the site, the extent of works will be agreed by the appointed ecologist and the contractors.

These include:

Habitat/Species	Further Work	Mitigation measures to be adopted
<b>White-clawed crayfish (WCC)</b>	Implement the <b>Method Statement for White-Clawed Crayfish, Peak Ecology Ltd., July 2025</b>  Implement the <b>White-clawed Crayfish Rescue Plan, Peak Ecology Ltd, July 2025</b>  Above using Peak Ecology Ltd., Natural England licensed for WCC.	See documents (left) for full details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-works - trapping/population assessment/ potential relocation</li> <li>• During works – crayfish rescue and relocation by trapping and hand search during staged drawdown of water.</li> </ul>
Badgers	Not recorded during PEA. Further survey to be carried out one month in advance of works by Peak Ecology Ltd. Adopt reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs) if detected.	Good working practices (daytime only working)
Birds	Walkover survey by ecologist prior to project works.	Carry out any clearance works between late August and late February. Nesting water bird checks will be carried out by Peak Ecology Ltd. immediately in advance of the works. Implement kingfisher habitat enhancements.  The scheme will not remove or manage any mature or semi-mature trees, ensuring that that potential nest sites for tree-nesting birds are retained.
Amphibians and reptiles	Considered low risk of impact by works - working method	Adopt reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs)

	statement to be prepared in advance of works by Peak Ecology Ltd.	
Otters	Check for otters immediately prior to the start of works by ecologist and adopt resulting advice.  Include large woody material in the construction as a positive conservation measure.	Construction work will be restricted to daylight hours.
Water Vole	A precautionary check for signs of use immediately ahead of work commencing by ecologist and adopt resulting advice.	Water Voles – no signs noted during PEA or subsequent survey (Sept 2025). Further survey to take place in April 2026 and immediately pre-works, and working method statement prepared in advance of works by Peak Ecology Ltd.
Fish	Implement the fish rescue as detailed in <b>White-clawed Crayfish Rescue Plan, Peak Ecology Ltd, July 2025</b>	Project works undertaken July-October outside fish spawning seasons.  Fish rescue from drained sections of river channel, relocated upstream of project site.

## 1.6. Sequence of Works

The works involve the realignment of sections of the river by excavation of new channel sections, diversion of water into the new sections, and back-filling of parts of the existing channel. It is important this is carried out in a sequence which minimises the risk to biodiversity and minimises the mobilisation of fine sediment.

For all sections of channel being realigned, the sequence will be:

- Carry out all excavations (floodplain lowering, new channel course) whilst retaining flow in the existing channel by leaving unexcavated bunds in place, thus preventing sediment entering the river channel.
- Temporarily stockpile the spoil required for back-filling alongside the section of existing channel to be back-filled.
- Remove excess spoil not required for back-filling from the floodplain.
- Install large woody structures and gravel features as per the design in the newly excavated channel (in the dry).
- Carry out crayfish trapping and electrofishing in the existing channel, as per White-clawed Crayfish Rescue Plan, Peak Ecology Ltd, July 2025, and relocate captured animals.
- Install silt control measures in-channel downstream of working area.
- Excavate downstream bund, allowing water to back up into new channel.
- Carry out staged excavation of upstream bund, gradually transferring flow from existing to new channel.
- Carry out further crayfish / fish rescue from existing channel by hand searching / electrofishing as water levels recede.
- Once flow is fully transferred to the new channel and ecological clerk of works is satisfied with the crayfish and fish rescue, backfill the existing channel with the stockpiled spoil, working in an upstream direction to prevent fine sediment ingress to the flowing channel.
- Remove in-channel silt control measures.

Note: There may be some changes to the outline method statement as more knowledge of site conditions are gained in the pre-construction and construction phases of the project to be determined by the contractor.

## Activity 1: Establish site access, compound and welfare facilities.

### Activities:

- Access at gate from public highway at SK 92441 32253, W3W visits.piano.fuels (Access route 1, Figure 1) onto existing track (Figure 2). NB This is a shared access with Anglian Water Services Ltd to the Wastewater Treatment Works, and part of the track is the route of a public footpath.
- Enact requirements of Traffic Management Plan condition specified as condition of Planning Permission (if applicable).
- Create surfaced, fenced compound area at SK 92515 32421, (W3W hood.smoke.decent) (Figure 3)
- Create surfaced tracking route from existing track to spoil spreading area (Figure 3, Figure 4)
- Establish site office/welfare cabin

Risks: Plant /machinery movements, public footpath safety, shared vehicle access to sewage works, machine strike of services, manual handling.

### Proposed working method overview:

- Review of site compound and new track area by ecologist and archaeologist - toolbox talk to contractors.
- Machinery to access site as agreed by the landowner and client, and compliant with any Planning Permission Condition. Track mats should be used as appropriate dependent on landowner requests and ground conditions at time of construction. Fence/gate/cattle grid removal and replacement (SK 92435 32418, Figure 3) may be required to facilitate the access route.
- Topsoil to be stripped and stockpiled for re-use.

### General Method of Work:

- Principal Designer and Contractor to reconfirm area of works and mark up extent of site works.
- Ecologist and Archaeologist to undertake necessary checks as described above.
- Erect temporary fencing to restrict public access to the site compound and to fence off historic sites (if present). Take instruction from archaeological watching brief (ongoing).
- Mark location of and install temporary protection measures to utilities, e.g. excavator mats to buried services at crossing points, goal posts for overhead cables.

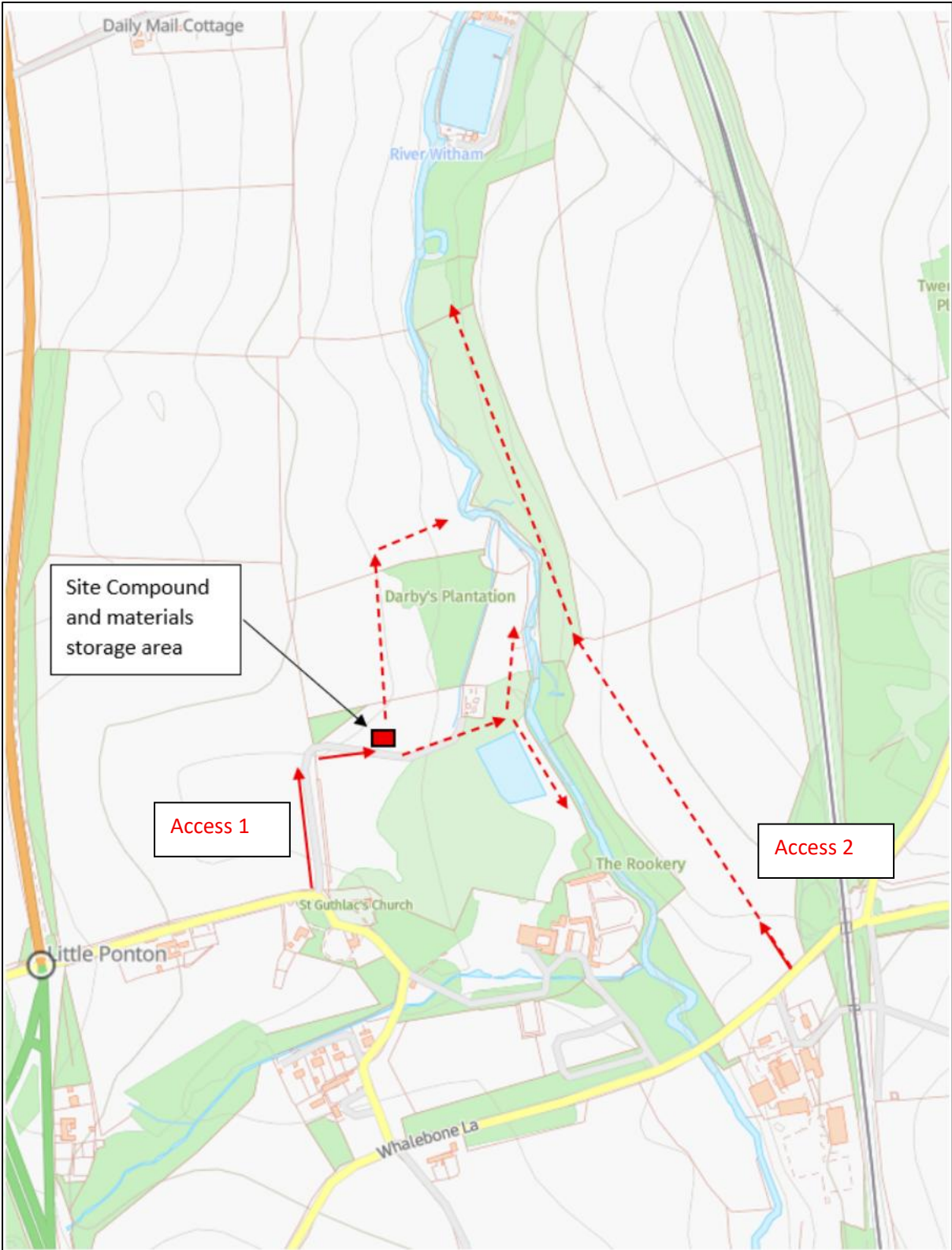


Figure 1 Site access routes. Solid lines = existing hard standing, dashed lines = tracking over agricultural land.



*Figure 2 Access track (and public footpath) – view south towards St. Guthlac's Church and public highway.*



Figure 3 Site compound location (hatched area) and access route to spoil spreading area (orange line) from existing track.

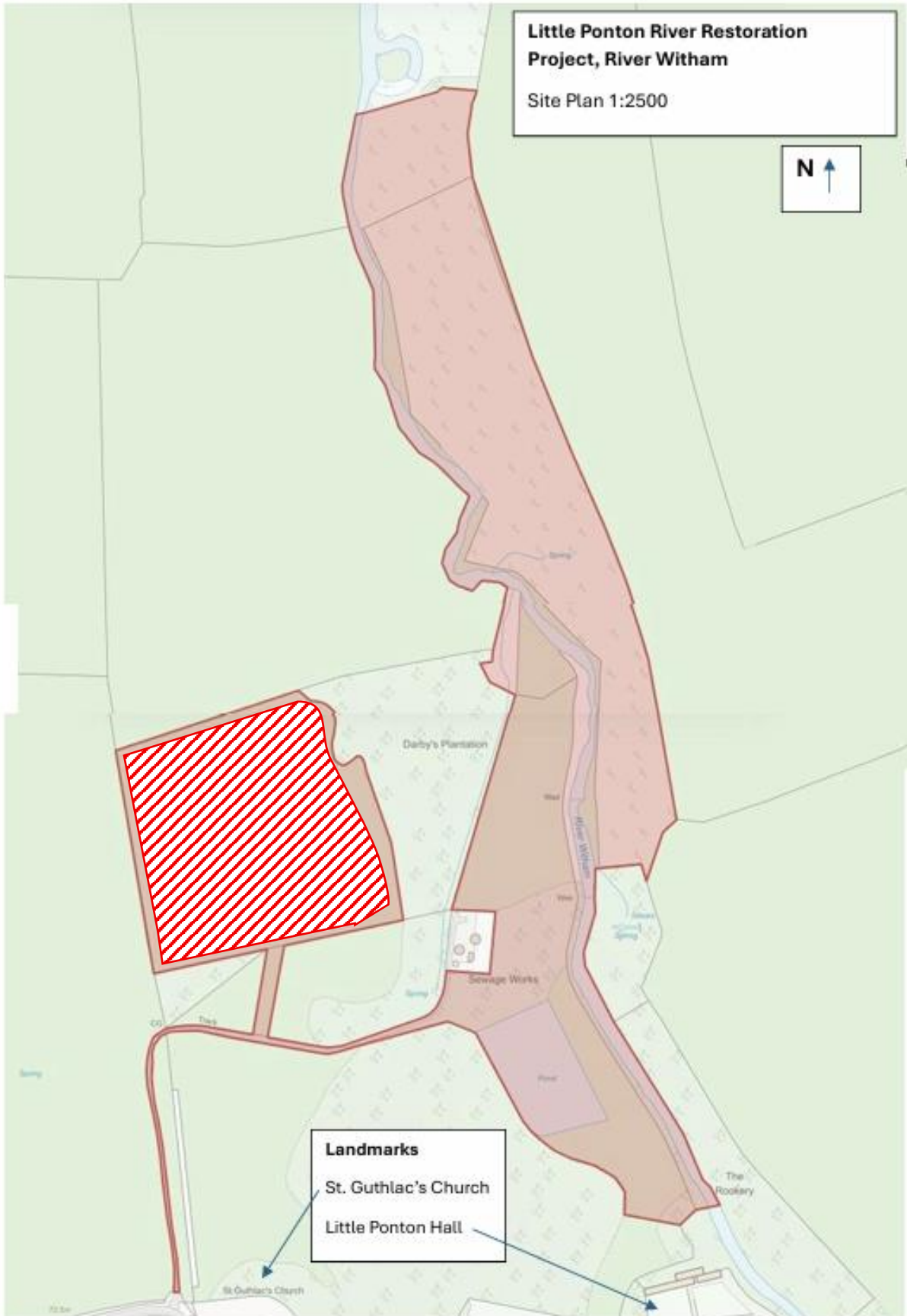


Figure 4 Project site boundary (as submitted for planning application) with area for surplus spoil spreading indicated by hatched area

## Activity 2: Excavation of new channels, ponds, scrapes and embankments -northern (downstream) section of site

### Activities

- Excavation of floodplain, channel, scrapes and backwaters on northern (downstream) section of site.
- Installation of Large Woody Structures and gravel features
- Mitigation actions for protected species alongside works
- Archaeological watching brief alongside works

Risks: Plant /machinery movements on site and public highway (Whalebone Lane), visitor safety, shared vehicle access to sewage works, machine strike of services, manual handling, water quality impacts (sediment, refuelling), working in/near water.

Proposed working method overview:

### **With reference to design drawing 2150767-DWG-DD-05**

- Ecologists to carry out crayfish trapping & relocation from existing channel in days leading up to this activity, along with other protected species checks as detailed above.
- Archaeological watching brief to oversee excavations according to WSI and planning conditions.
- Machinery to access site via Access Route 2 (Figure 1) as agreed by the landowner and client. Track mats should be used as appropriate dependent on ground conditions at time of construction. Fence removal and replacement may be required to facilitate the works.
- Leave and clearly mark-up unexcavated bunds at chainages 750–755m, 790-795m, 825-830m, 895-900m, 925-930m and 1025–1030m to retain all river flow in the existing channel. All excavations to be carried out ‘in the dry’ leaving the above 5-m buffers at the up and downstream connection points to the existing river channel to negate the risk of works being flooded out during excavation and prevent silt transmission to the river.
- Without disturbance to the existing channel, excavate the floodplain lowering area, scrapes S12 to S16 and the new channel course with the exception of the abovementioned bunds.
- Topsoil to be stripped and stockpiled for re-use to make up floodplain to finished levels.
- Temporarily stockpile spoil alongside sections of the existing channel to be back-filled. Remove surplus spoil from the floodplain for spreading to area indicated in Figure 4.
- The new channels, ponds and scrapes should be surveyed in on site prior to excavation beginning using coordinates provided with the design drawings, this should be undertaken with supervision from designers CBEC Ecoengineering Ltd.
- Import trunks/rootwads and gravel to site using Access 2.

- Install Large Woody Structures L18 – L25 to design **2150767-DWG-DD-13**. Fix structures in place with 3-m chestnut stakes driven to refusal with the excavator, then manually over-wired with 2.5-mm plain steel wire and fencing staples, as per Figure 5.



*Figure 5 Plain fencing wire and staple method of securing LWS structures to driven posts.*

- Install silt control measures at chainage 1090m, for example, Figure 6.
- Carry out fish rescue by electric fishing from existing channel; conclude trapping of crayfish. Relocate animals to off-site location advised by ecologists (upstream or downstream of project site).
- Remove downstream bunds first, allowing water to back up into new channel. Allow 1 -2 hours for settlement, then remove upstream bunds in stages to divert river flow into new channel.
- Carry out hand-search crayfish rescue and further fish rescue from existing channel as water recedes, to the satisfaction of supervising ecologist.
- Backfill existing channel to design levels.
- Install gravel features and LWS structures L16, L17, L26 and M5. Gravel to be sourced from Little Ponton quarry to design specification.
- Remove silt control measures at downstream end of reach.
- Make good and re-seed disturbed ground with specified seed mixture.



*Figure 6 Example of effective Silt control measure – permeable sheeting filled with straw and weighted, stretched across channel between ratchet straps.*

#### General Method of Work:

- Principal Designer and Principal Contractor to reconfirm area of works and mark up extent of site works.
- Ecologists to undertake necessary checks as described above.
- Erect temporary fencing to restrict public access to the site and to fence off historic sites (if present). Take instruction from archaeological watching brief (ongoing).
- Mark location of and install temporary protection measures to utilities, e.g. excavator mats to buried services at crossing points, goal posts for overhead cables.

## Activity 3: Excavation of new channels, ponds, scrapes and embankments -southern (upstream) section of site

### Activities

- Excavation of floodplain, channel, scrapes and backwaters on southern (upstream) section of site.
- Installation of Large Woody Structures and gravel features
- Mitigation actions for protected species alongside works
- Archaeological watching brief alongside works

Risks: Plant /machinery movements on site, visitor safety, shared vehicle access to sewage works, machine strike of services, manual handling, water quality impacts (sediment, refuelling), working in/near water.

Proposed working method overview:

#### **With reference to design drawing 2150767-DWG-DD-04**

- Ecologists to carry out crayfish trapping & relocation from existing channel in days leading up to this activity, along with other protected species checks as detailed above.
- Archaeological watching brief to oversee excavations according to WSI and planning conditions.
- Machinery to access site via Access Route 1 (Figure 1) as agreed by the landowner and client. Track mats should be used as appropriate dependent on ground conditions at time of construction. Fence removal and replacement may be required to facilitate the works.
- Leave and clearly mark-up unexcavated bunds at chainages 85-90m and 620-625m to retain all river flow in the existing channel. All excavations to be carried out 'in the dry' leaving the above 5-m buffers at the up and downstream connection points to the existing river channel to negate the risk of works being flooded out during excavation and prevent silt transmission to the river.
- Without disturbance to the existing channel, excavate the floodplain lowering area, scrapes S1 to S11 and the new channel course with the exception of the abovementioned bunds. Form the mounds E1 to E5.
- Topsoil to be stripped and stockpiled for re-use to make up floodplain to finished levels.
- Temporarily stockpile spoil alongside the section of the existing channel to be back-filled. Remove surplus spoil from the floodplain for spreading to area indicated in Figure 4.
- The new channels, ponds and scrapes and other features should be surveyed in on site prior to excavation beginning using coordinates provided with the design drawings, this should be undertaken with supervision from designers CBEC Ecoengineering Ltd.
- Import trunks/rootwads and gravel to site using Access 1. Gravel to be sourced from Little Ponton quarry to design specification.

- Install Large Woody Structures L1 – L15 , M1 to M4 and X1 to X2 to designs **2150767-DWG-DD-13**.and **2150767-DWG-DD-14**. Fix structures in place with 3-m chestnut stakes driven to refusal with the excavator, then manually over-wired with 2.5-mm plain steel wire and fencing staples, as per Figure 5.
- Form a gravel-bedded flush between outflow from Bath Springs to the new river channel (to be connected to Bath Springs outflow following back-filling of existing channel). NB Not shown on design drawings. Gravel to be sourced from Little Ponton quarry to design specification.
- Install silt control measures at chainage 635m, for example, Figure 6.
- Carry out fish rescue by electric fishing from existing channel; conclude trapping of crayfish. Re-locate animals to off-site location advised by ecologists (upstream or downstream of project site).
- Remove downstream bund (chainage 620-625m) first, allowing water to back up into new channel. Allow 1 -2 hours for settlement, then remove upstream bund (chainage 85-90m) in stages to divert river flow into new channel.
- Carry out hand-search crayfish rescue and further fish rescue from existing channel as water recedes, to the satisfaction of supervising ecologist.
- Backfill existing channel to design levels and create mound feature E6.
- Remove silt control measures at downstream end of reach.
- Make good and re-seed disturbed ground with specified seed mixture.

#### General Method of Work:

- Principal Designer and Principal Contractor to reconfirm area of works and mark up extent of site works.
- Ecologists to undertake necessary checks as described above.
- Erect temporary fencing to restrict public access to the site and to fence off historic sites (if present). Take instruction from archaeological watching brief (ongoing).
- Mark location of and install temporary protection measures to utilities, e.g. excavator mats to buried services at crossing points, goal posts for overhead cables.

## Activity 4: Demobilisation and site restoration

### Activities

- Landscaping of spoil (hatched area, Figure 4) and re-seeding
- Re-seeding of floodplain meadows
- Tree planting on mound areas E1 to E6
- Removal of site compound and temporary surfaced tracks, re-seeding as required
- Reinstatement of fencing, gates, cattle grid which were removed for access

Risks: Plant /machinery movements on site, visitor safety, shared vehicle access to sewage works, machine strike of services, manual handling,, working in/near water.

### Proposed working method overview:

- Seed mixes to be used – Sourced from Boston Seeds (or equivalent):
  - Loam & Alluvial Soils Wildflower Seed BS4M 80/20 (the loam mix)
  - Wetland & Pond Edge Wildflower Seed BS6M 80/20 (the water's edge mix)
- Tree species mix – Native trees sourced from Woodland Trust
  - Hazel, field maple, common alder, white willow, wild fruit trees (of Malus and Prunus).
  - As special landscape trees, 3 native black poplar trees will be planted.

## Activity 5: Emergency Procedures for Flooding during temporary works

### Measures

- Site Compound located on valley side out of flood risk zones at SK 92515 32421, (W3W hood.smoke.decent), including site office/welfare cabin and bunded fuel storage.
- All plant and machinery to be stored in site compound out of working hours.
- All project materials (gravel, tree trunks and rootwads) to be stored outside the floodplain until required for installation.
- Project manager for Wild Trout Trust (Tim Jacklin) and site supervisor for Principal Contractor (TBC) to sign up for flood alerts and flood warnings from Environment Agency, and monitor weather forecasts.
- Emergency Contacts Arrangements (ECA) Form - Temporary Works to be updated with Principal Contractor contact and supplied to Environment Agency prior to commencement of works.
- ECA contacts to be available out-of-hours to attend site within 2 hours during construction works.
- No temporary works such as scaffolding will be used. All unsecured items to be removed from the floodplain at the end of each working day.