

# New 100m hedgerow boosts biodiversity in Needham Market

April 14, 2023



Network Rail has planted a new 100m hedgerow in a local park, improving biodiversity by providing an ideal habitat for animals, birds and insects.

Needham Market Town Council provided the land for the hedgerow, which was sourced and planted by specialist contractor, RAILScape.

A joint event was held at the site in Crowley Park earlier this week, with the council being represented by the town mayor Josephine Lea, Councillor Amanda Reardon and town clerk Kevin Hunter.

Network Rail pledged to plant the hedgerow after carrying out essential vegetation works near to the railway running through Needham Market last year.

Lineside vegetation is managed carefully by Network Rail to keep trains running safely and reliably. This includes working to offset any biodiversity losses by planting hedgerows, trees, shrubs and wildflowers. The Anglia railway alone has now planted the equivalent of 2,000 trees in the last year.

Crowley Park's hedgerow is made up of four main native plant species: hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel and dogwood. These make a great place to live for lots of wildlife, and local people can hope to spot bees, butterflies, blue tits, robins and dormice.

Liam Allen, Network Rail Anglia route engineer for drainage and lineside, said: "We always look to re-plant after vegetation management works, whether that's putting in suitable species next to the lineside, or finding other locations. In this case, we're pleased that our new Crowley Park hedgerow will be helping nature to flourish while being enjoyed by the public. I'd like to thank Needham Market Town Council and Railscape for working with us to make this happen."

Kevin Hunter, town clerk for Needham Market Town Council, said: "The Town Council is delighted with the outcome of the opportunity offered by Network Rail to install mature hedging at Crowley Park. There was no cost attached to the Town Council and the installation was carried out in an efficient and timely way which caused no disruption. The park now has an increased habitat for several wildlife species that are identified on the information boards sited close by the new hedge. The Council is confident the hedge will attract the keen interest of the many users of the park, as it becomes established."

The Needham Market hedgerow builds on other recent work Network Rail has been carrying out to boost biodiversity in East Anglia. Earlier this year, colleagues cleared an area of disused railway land in Lowestoft and **planted 30 young willow trees**. In November 2022, the business **pledged 16 acres of Norfolk reedbed** to the WildEast movement. This means that the land, near Haddiscoe, will be allowed to grow and thrive as a natural habitat.

*Photo credit: Network Rail*