

Arboricultural Method Statement

Balcombe Cricket Club – replacement enclosed practice nets

Site: Balcombe Cricket Club, access via RH17 6PE

Applicant: Balcombe Cricket Club

Proposal: Change of use of land outside the boundary of the cricket playing area for replacement enclosed practice nets

Supporting documents: Planning Statement, Version 3, 26 January 2026; Arboricultural Report to BS5837, 25 February 2026

Version: Final 18 July 2026

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1. Introduction

This Arboricultural Method Statement has been prepared to support the planning application by Balcombe Cricket Club for the replacement and enclosure of the existing cricket practice nets. The proposal involves relocating the practice nets behind the current net area, outside the boundary of the cricket playing area, and changing the use of an area of scrub and woodland edge to recreation use.

The statement should be read alongside the submitted planning statement, proposed site layout, access plan, biodiversity information, Tree Constraints Plan, survey data sheets and Arboricultural Report to BS5837 dated 25 February 2026. It is intended for use by Balcombe Cricket Club and the appointed contractor.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate that the proposed development can be undertaken with appropriate regard to retained trees and in accordance with the principles of BS 5837:2012, *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations*. The document provides a practical sequence of works and identifies measures to prevent damage to roots, stems, branches and soil structure.

This statement covers tree protection fencing, ground protection, site access, storage restrictions, working methods close to retained trees, arboricultural supervision and procedures for dealing with unexpected site conditions.

The BS5837 report confirms that Balcombe Cricket Club is situated within the High Weald National Landscape and is surrounded by open meadows and woodland areas. The woodland to the east of the cricket pitch, Braky Wood, is described as a commercial conifer crop, predominantly Norway spruce, with a border of broadleaved trees.

The tree report states that the site is outside the conservation area and that there are no Tree Preservation Orders connected to the trees surveyed for the proposed construction site.

3. Project Description

The proposed development comprises replacement of the existing cricket practice nets with a new enclosed practice facility. The club proposes to move the nets approximately 25 m into the scrub area behind the current location so that the facility can meet cricket safety requirements while remaining outside the playing area boundary. The affected development footprint is approximately 25 m by 8 m, equivalent to about 0.02 hectares.

The proposal is required because the existing practice nets are old, the surface is no longer safe for practice, and the current facility is not enclosed. The planning statement explains that the England and Wales Cricket Board recommends practice nets are located at least 3 m from the playing boundary, and the existing arrangement does not meet this safety requirement.

The club has considered alternative locations around the ground but discounted them due to playing-area encroachment, land levels, services, parking pressure, visual impact and land ownership constraints. The preferred location is behind the existing nets, where the proposed facility would be adjacent to current cricket infrastructure and no more visually intrusive than the existing facility.

All works must be carried out in accordance with this method statement unless a variation is agreed in writing by the project arboriculturist and, where required, the Local Planning Authority.

4. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Balcombe Cricket Club site manager	Ensure this method statement is issued to all relevant contractors and that sufficient resources are available to implement tree protection measures.
Principal Contractor / Site Manager	Implement and maintain all tree protection measures, brief site operatives and prevent unauthorised access into protected areas.
Project Arboriculturist	Provide arboricultural advice, attend key stages where required and record compliance with the approved tree protection measures.

5. Tree Protection Principles

Retained trees must be protected by establishing Construction Exclusion Zones around their Root Protection Areas. These zones must remain free from construction activity unless specifically authorised within this method statement. No excavation, level changes, storage, fires, cement mixing, fuel storage, vehicle movement or dumping of spoil shall take place within protected areas.

Tree protection fencing and ground protection must be installed before any demolition, construction, clearance or delivery activity begins. Once installed, protection measures must be retained in good condition until all construction works likely to affect retained trees have been completed.

The principal arboricultural constraints identified by the BS5837 report are the removal of holly scrub group G001, ash tree T006 and cherry tree T007, and the potential encroachment of the proposed cricket net playing surface into the western Root Protection Area of mature oak tree T008.

For this proposal, particular care will be needed at the interface between the cricket ground and the adjoining scrub and woodland edge. The BS5837 tree survey considered trees within the immediate vicinity of the proposed construction site and identified common oak, Norway spruce, ash, beech, wild cherry and holly among the species present.

6. Sequence of Works

1. Hold a pre-commencement meeting with Balcombe Cricket Club, the appointed contractor, site manager and project arboriculturist.
2. Confirm the final approved location of the replacement nets, construction access route and working area before any clearance or construction activity begins.
3. Carry out the approved removal of holly scrub group G001, ash tree T006 and cherry tree T007 where required to facilitate the development, subject to statutory checks and ecological safeguards.
4. Set out the final net position with reference to the BS5837 recommendation to relocate the nets 1 m to the north west to facilitate safe construction, avoid further

tree removals and prevent disturbance to Root Protection Areas of adjacent retained trees.

5. Install tree protection fencing and any required ground protection around 008 and retained woodland-edge habitat before site access, deliveries or construction works begin.
6. Inspect and sign off tree protection measures before works commence.
7. Access the works area from the track to the cricket club and over the cricket field using lightweight plant and equipment, as described in the planning statement.
8. Undertake construction of the enclosed practice nets in accordance with the approved layout and this method statement.
9. Supervise any works within or adjacent to retained Root Protection Areas where required.
10. Maintain all protection measures until construction activity presenting a risk to retained trees has ceased.

7. Tree Works

The BS5837 report concludes that holly scrub group G001, ash tree T006 and cherry tree T007 will require removal to enable the proposed development. No additional tree removals should be undertaken unless they are approved by the project arboriculturist and, where required, the Local Planning Authority.

All approved tree works, including removal of ash affected by ash dieback, should be carried out by competent and appropriately insured arboricultural contractors and, where applicable, in accordance with BS 3998:2010, *Tree work – Recommendations*.

Before tree or vegetation works are undertaken, checks should be made for Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Area status, protected species and nesting birds. The planning statement notes that the proposed site is outside Balcombe Conservation Area, but this should be confirmed before works commence. If protected species or active nests are identified, works must stop and appropriate specialist advice must be obtained.

8. Tree Protection Fencing

Protective fencing must be installed to form a robust barrier around retained trees and their Root Protection Areas. Fencing should be fit for purpose, resistant to displacement and clearly signed as a tree protection area. The exact alignment must be shown on the Tree Protection Plan and confirmed on site before works commence.

No person shall move, remove or alter protective fencing without written agreement from the project arboriculturist and, where necessary, the Local Planning Authority.

The fencing in this project will be placed around the mapped route zone for T008 as per the map in the arboriculture report.

9. Ground Protection

Where temporary access, pedestrian movement or limited construction activity is required close to retained trees, ground protection must be installed before use. The specification should be appropriate to the expected loading and must prevent soil compaction, rutting and contamination within Root Protection Areas.

Ground protection should remain in place until the relevant phase of works is complete. It must not be used as a storage area unless this has been specifically agreed as part of the approved working method.

For this work the access is via the map shown in the planning documents. The access to the site is not through any of the woodland. No materials or machinery will be accessing the site via the woodland.

10. Works Within or Near Root Protection Areas

Works within or immediately adjacent to Root Protection Areas must be avoided wherever possible. Where such works are unavoidable and approved, they must be carried out using the least damaging practical method and under arboricultural supervision where specified.

The BS5837 report identifies that the proposed cricket net playing surface will encroach into the western aspect of the Root Protection Area of mature oak tree T008. To mitigate potential harm, any excavation within the RPA of T008 will be undertaken manually and under arboricultural supervision where required.

The surface used should be porous to enable gaseous exchange and water movement to retained tree roots and no unnecessary excavation or compaction occurs within retained Root Protection Areas.

Other measure to protect existing trees are as follows:

- Excavation within Root Protection Areas should be avoided unless specifically approved.
- Where excavation is approved, hand tools or air-spade methods should be used where appropriate.
- Roots with a diameter greater than 25 mm should not be severed unless agreed by the project arboriculturist.
- Exposed roots should be protected from drying, frost and physical damage.
- No concrete washout, fuel, oil, chemicals or other contaminants may enter Root Protection Areas.
- Any unexpected roots, soil changes or conflicts with approved methods must be reported immediately.

The final layout should incorporate the BS5837 recommendation to move the nets 1 m to the north west where practicable, in order to facilitate safe construction, avoid further tree removals and prevent disturbance to Root Protection Areas of adjacent retained trees.

11. Site Access, Storage and Contractor Facilities

The planning statement states that the works for cricket nets will use lighter materials and smaller equipment than building construction, with equipment expected to be below 3 tonnes. Contractors have confirmed that access can be taken from the track to the cricket club and over the cricket field to the working area. The precise access route should be agreed before works begin and kept outside protected tree areas wherever practicable.

Temporary access over the cricket field should be managed to avoid unnecessary tracking, rutting or compaction, particularly near retained trees or woodland edge habitat. Vehicle movements should be restricted to the agreed route, and turning, parking, storage and contractor welfare areas should be located away from Root Protection Areas and retained vegetation.

Materials that could damage trees or soil, including cement, fuels, oils, solvents and chemicals, must be stored in suitable containment away from retained trees and drainage routes leading into Root Protection Areas.

12. Services and Drainage

The submitted planning statement does not identify major new service or drainage diversions for the practice nets. If any services, drainage runs, ducting or foundations are later proposed close to retained trees or woodland edge habitat, the route and installation method must be reviewed before works begin and should minimise excavation and root disturbance.

Any changes to service routes that could affect retained trees must be reviewed by the project arboriculturist before installation.

13. Landscaping and Post-Construction Works

Final landscaping within or close to Root Protection Areas should be undertaken carefully and should avoid excavation, compaction and changes in soil level. Cultivation should be shallow and carried out by hand where necessary. Any new planting should be designed to complement retained trees and avoid future conflicts with buildings, hard surfaces and services.

Once construction is complete, a final arboricultural inspection may be undertaken to confirm that tree protection measures have been removed appropriately and that retained trees have not been damaged by the works.

14. Biodiversity and Woodland Context

The proposed development footprint is approximately 0.02 hectares and comprises scrub woodland and edge habitat. The planning statement identifies bramble and bracken with mature holly and ash, while the BS5837 report identifies common oak, Norway spruce, ash, beech, wild cherry and holly in the immediate vicinity of the proposed construction site. Biodiversity Net Gain impacts are expected to be addressed through off-site habitat units, with details to be provided in the Biodiversity Gain Plan if permission is granted.

The proposed works are adjacent to existing cricket facilities and the adjoining Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site. The works should therefore be planned to keep retained woodland edge areas

undisturbed, prevent storage or contamination within retained habitat, and ensure that any required clearance is limited to the approved area only.

15. Monitoring and Supervision

Arboricultural monitoring should be undertaken at key stages where required by the Local Planning Authority or where works present a risk to retained trees. Particular attention should be given to fencing and ground protection installation, vegetation clearance, works close to retained trees, and any manual excavation within the Root Protection Area of oak T008. Monitoring visits should be recorded and made available to the applicant, contractor and Local Planning Authority if requested.

Stage	Arboricultural action
Pre-commencement	Review approved drawings, confirm protection locations and brief the site manager.
After fencing installation	Inspect protective fencing and ground protection before site works begin.
During sensitive works	Attend site where works occur within or adjacent to Root Protection Areas, including manual excavation within the RPA of oak T008.
Post-construction	Inspect retained trees and confirm protection measures have been removed appropriately.

16. Emergency Procedures and Variations

If accidental damage occurs to a retained tree, protective fencing, ground protection or soil within a Root Protection Area, works in the affected area must stop immediately. The site manager must notify the project arboriculturist, who will inspect the damage and advise on remedial action.

Any variation from the approved method statement must be agreed in writing before it is implemented. Where the variation may materially affect retained trees or planning compliance, the Local Planning Authority should be consulted before works proceed.