

LAND SOUTH OF GREVATT'S LANE, CLIMPING, WEST SUSSEX

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Prepared for: The Southern Co-operative Limited

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SLR



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

In July 2018, SLR Consulting Limited (SLR) was commissioned by The Southern Co-Operative Limited to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of a site west of Climping, West Sussex (National Grid Reference: SU 98798 01431). The development of a crematorium is proposed at the site which extends to approximately four hectares. It is understood that the proposed development would include a new access off the A259, crematorium facility with associated areas of carparking, landscaping (including wildflower meadow) and new swales/ditches to intercept surface water drainage connected to the existing network of agricultural drains.

An initial concept drawing (enclosed as Appendix B) has been provided which shows the general layout of the site and the location and extent of the associated landscaping which is proposed.

1.2 Site Description

The site comprises of the western part of a large arable field located between the towns of Litthampton to the east and Middleton-on-Sea to the west within an agricultural landscape. Arable fields are present in all directions in the local area which are bordered by hedgerows, ditches and linear woodlands. The A259 forms the northern boundary of the site. Drainage ditches are present to the west, east and south of the site. The ditch to the south is the most substantial and is known as the Rye Bank. Farm buildings (mainly modern sheds) occur off-site to the east (>250m) at Hobb's New Barn.

1.3 Scope of this Report

This report presents the findings of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA).

The report seeks to:

- ✦ establish baseline conditions and determine the importance of ecological features present (or those that could be present), as far as is possible;
- ✦ to identify potential ecological constraints to the proposed development and make initial recommendations to avoid potentially significant effects on important ecological features, where possible;
- ✦ to identify potential requirements for mitigation, where possible, including mitigation measures that will be required and those that may be required (depending on results of further surveys or final scheme design);
- ✦ to establish any requirements for more detailed surveys; and
- ✦ to identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancements as part of the project.

The assessment of impacts resulting from the proposed development and the detailed development of mitigation measures, if required, are beyond the scope of this report and should be covered in a separate Ecological Impact Assessment report, once development proposals have been finalised.

2.0 Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy

2.1 Relevant Legislation¹

2.2 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations) transpose Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (Habitats Directive) into English law, making it an offence to deliberately capture, kill or disturb² wild animals listed under Schedule 2 of the Regulations. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal (even if the animal is not present at the time).

2.2.1 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive), making it an offence to:

- ✦ Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests (with certain exceptions) and disturb any bird species listed under Schedule 1 to the Act, or its dependent young while it is nesting;
- ✦ Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 to the Act;
- ✦ intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection by any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 to the Act;
- ✦ intentionally or recklessly disturb certain Schedule 5 animal species while they occupy a place used for shelter or protection;
- ✦ Pick or uproot any wild plant listed under Schedule 8 of the Act; or
- ✦ Plant or cause to grow in the wild any plant species listed under Schedule 9 of the Act.

2.2.2 Protection of Badgers Act 1992

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it illegal to kill, injure or take a badger or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett or obstructing access to it.

2.2.3 Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

The NERC Act 2006 places a duty on authorities to have due regard for biodiversity and nature conservation during the course of their operations.

¹ Please note that the summary of relevant legislation provided here is intended for general guidance only. The original legislation should be consulted for definitive information.

² Disturbance, as defined by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, includes in particular any action which impairs the ability of animals to survive, breed, rear their young, hibernate or migrate (where relevant); or which affects significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species.

Section 41 of the Act requires the publication of a list of habitats and species publish which are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Section 41 list is used to guide authorities in implementing their duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity.

2.3 Relevant Planning Policy

2.3.1 National Planning Policy

The recently revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in July 2018 sets out several recommendations as to how Local Planning Authorities should address and consider biodiversity matters in their local plans. Further to this the NPPF sets out measures to be taken when considering planning applications, as follows:

“175. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁵⁸ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

176. The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites⁵⁹; and
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

177. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined. “

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Desk Study

An ecological data search was requested from the Sussex Local Biological Records Centre (SBRC) to provide records of protected and otherwise notable species, and non-statutory protected sites for the Site and land within a 2km radius of it. SLR is permitted to publish a summary of the findings but not the full report.

An internet-based desk study was also undertaken, whereby the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (<http://magic.gov.uk>) was searched for statutory designated sites (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) and European Protected Species (EPS) Licences granted within 1 km of the site.

3.2 Field Survey (see Drawing 1)

An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken by Mr Andrew Law, CEcol, MCIEEM on 21st August 2018 using standard Phase 1 Habitat survey methodology³. Particular features of interest were recorded on the field map using target notes. The survey covered the site itself plus a buffer of 20 m (access permitting – see Section 3.3 below).

Habitats and features with the potential to support protected and/or conservation priority fauna, together with any field signs of such species were searched for.

The survey area, where accessible, was searched for badger *Meles meles* setts and field signs.

Trees and structures within the survey area were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats via an external assessment at ground-level, based on criteria within the third edition of the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines⁴.

The potential for the site to be of importance to Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* was assessed. Ponds within and up to 250m of the site were identified by reference to OS maps and freely-available aerial photographs.

Searches were also made for non-native invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), such as Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica* and Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*.

Bird species were recorded on encounter basis.

The potential value of the site for bats (foraging and commuting), hazel dormouse, water vole, otter, reptiles and notable or priority species of invertebrates was subject to an initial assessment, although no specific surveys for these species/groups was undertaken.

³ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010) *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – A Technique for Environmental Audit (Revised reprint)*. Joint Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough.

⁴ Collins, J. (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists. Good Practice Guidelines. Third edition*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

3.3 Limitations

3.3.1 Desk Study

Desk study data is unlikely to be exhaustive, especially in respect of species, and is intended mainly to set a context for the study. It is therefore possible that protected species not identified during the data search do in fact occur within the vicinity of the site. Interpretation of maps and aerial photography has been conducted in good faith, using recent imagery, but it has not been possible to verify the accuracy of any statements relating to land use and habitat context outside of the field study area.

3.3.2 Access

Access to the site and buffer was unconstrained, except where ditches were present which could not be safely crossed to inspect off-site banks.

Where land was not able to be accessed habitats were identified through a review of freely available aerial photographs combined with whatever ground-truthing was possible from accessible land nearby. However, it is possible that evidence of notable species was missed on land which was not able to be accessed.

3.3.3 Survey Timing

The timing of the survey in August was within the recommended window for Phase 1 surveys (March to October). The arable crop growing on the field had been harvested in recent weeks prior to the visit leaving stubbles. The weather conditions preceding the survey were very warm and dry and this could have led to water levels in ditches being lower than normal.

4.0 Results

The results of the desk and field survey are reported below and describe the baseline conditions at the site and within the surrounding area.

4.1 Designated Sites

Designated sites within 2 km of the site are summarised below.

4.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

There are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the site.

4.1.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

One Local Wildlife Site (LWS) referenced as “Ar18 - Elmer Rocks” is present approximately 1km south of the site. The site is of importance for intertidal sand and shingle, vegetated shingle and off-shore rocks.

4.1.3 Priority Habitat Inventories, including Ancient Woodland

There is no ancient woodland present within the site or nearby (within 1km).

The boundary hedgerows (Target Notes 1, 2 and 6 – see Drawing 1) are likely to be long-standing due to their association with the Grevatt's Road, footpaths and ditches. These features have been augmented with much additional planting in recent years. It is therefore possible that they would qualify as being important hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

4.1.4 Ponds

There are no on-site ponds and none were evident within a 250m radius.

Available ordnance survey mapping shows a linear pond being present (638m west) at SU 97916 01388. Another pond is shown (585m south) on OS maps at SU 99006 00730, however, no pond is evident from the aerial (Google Earth Pro). An isolated pond is present 476m to the north at SU9859 0202.

Ditch-lines were considered to be unlikely to support GCN due to flowing water, routine maintenance and the likely presence of fish.

4.2 Habitats

The results of the Phase 1 Habitat Survey are illustrated in map form (Drawing 1). The following habitats were recorded within the Phase 1 survey area:

- ✦ Arable Farmland;
- ✦ Hedgerows / Shelterbelt - Broad-leaved Shrubs and Trees (Target Notes 1, 2 and 6);
- ✦ Ditches (Target Notes 3, 5);
- ✦ Tall ruderal vegetation (associated with open areas within hedgerows, along ditches and along the road); and
- ✦ Broad-leaved Woodland (TN 4).

A short description of each habitat type is provided below.

4.2.1 Arable Farmland

The majority of the site comprises of a large arable (cereal) field (see Figure 1). Due to cropping and applications of fertiliser and herbicide the diversity of flowering plants was very low.



Figure 1 – Arable Field looking from the north east into the Site.

4.2.2 Broad-leaved Tree – Shelterbelt (Target Notes 1, 2, 6)

Former field boundaries (native hedgerows) have been augmented by additional tree planting in spiral guards to thicken and diversify these features to the extent that they now resemble shelterbelts.

The wide lane (TN 1) through which a public footpath runs comprises of a mown grassland path and new planting in addition to the existing vegetation which forms a bushy hedge associated with a largely dry ditch (see Figure 2).

The main shrub species were blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), goat willow (*Salix caprea*), rose (*Rosa* sp) and some hazel (*Corylus avellana*). Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulis*), oak (*Quercus robur*) and birch (*Betula pendula*) are present in spiral guards. Mature specimens of field maple (*Acer campestre*) and apple (*Malus* spp.) are present to the south.

Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) was found to be locally dominant in the field layer. Ground flora was sparse and limited to species tolerant of trampling / mowing or a lack of management such as false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), white dead-nettle (*Lamium album*), vetches (*Vicia* sp.) and bristly ox-tongue (*Picris echioides*). A small patch of hardheads (*Centaurea nigra*) was noted.

To the north, the entrance to the site off the road has been subject to significant disturbance visible through the presence of bonfire sites, broken masonry, spoil heaps and litter (see Figure 3). Here black horehound (*Ballota nigra*) was noted together with great plantain (*Plantago major*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), dove's foot cranesbill (*Geranium molle*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), common mallow (*Malva sylvestris*), bramble, hogweed and clematis.



Figure 2 – Public Footpath and Lane



Figure 3 – Disturbed/burnt ground and dry ditch near to the A259

The shelter belt which is present along the roadside (TN 2) is wide (c.10m) and mature and comprised of goat willow, hawthorn, elm (*Ulmus procera*), field maple and English oak. Less frequent trees included Italian alder (*Alnus cordata*), cherry (*Prunus* sp.) and white willow (*Salix alba*). In places, dense beds of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and nettle (*Urtica dioica*) are present, together with scrambling Traveller's Joy (*Clematis vitalba*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) and patches of fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*). Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and grey poplar (*Populus canescens*) occur as mature hedgerow/boundary trees.

To the south west of the site the linear hedge/shelterbelt continues at TN 6 with hazel, field maple, ash, hawthorn and ivy (*Hedera helix*). The arable margins supported grey field speedwell (*Veronica polita*), sharp-leaved fuelle (Kicksia elatine), scarlet pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) and knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*).

4.2.3 Ditches

The boundary vegetation referenced as TN 1 contains a ditch, however, at the time of inspection it was dry and this appeared to be its usual state based on the dense ruderal vegetation which now obscures it.

Off-site to the east is an agricultural drain (TN 3) which occupies a c.10m wide un-cultivated corridor. At the time of the Phase 1 visit most of the ditch was dry, only holding water as it nears the more substantial Rye Bank Ditch (TN5) to the south. The ditch was heavily colonised by common reed (*Phragmites australis*), great willowherb, meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), nettle and bramble with clematis. Plant species included square-stalked St John's wort (*Hypericum tetrapterum*), hogweed, cocks foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*), hedge bedstraw (*Galium mullugo*), teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), yellow flag (*Iris pseudacorus*) and field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*). Trees planted on the off-site bank included leylandii and willow.

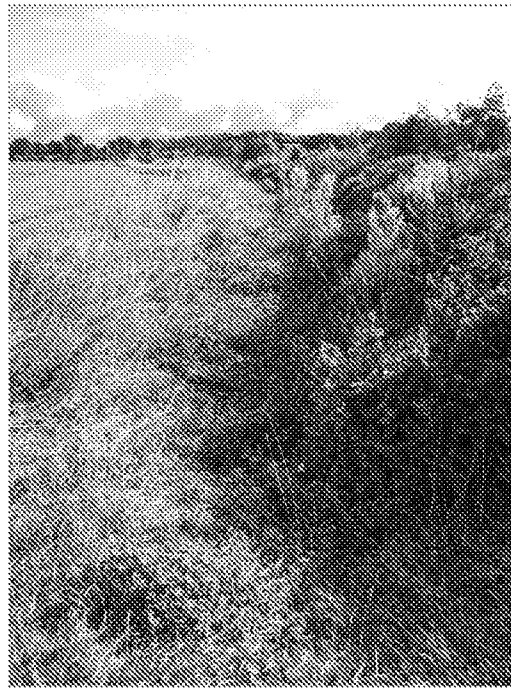


Figure 4 – Off-Site Drainage Ditch (TN 3)

To the south of the site and continuous with TN3 is the Rye Banks Ditch (TN 5 – see Figure 5). The ditch in this location was found to contain a shallow depth of water (c. 20cm) dominated by duckweed (*Lemna* sp). The ditch was dry when bordering the woodland (TN4) and found to comprise of a mown bank on the field site and an over-grown off-side bank. The composition of the over-grown off-side bank was similar to the adjacent broad-leaved woodland and comprised of oak, hazel, field maple, hawthorn and elder with scrambling bindweed and clematis.



Figure 5 – Rye Bank Drain

4.2.4 Broadleaved Woodland (TN 4)

Off-site to the south is a 50m wide, evenly-aged, mature woodland comprising of closely spaced trees (c. 40cm diameter at breast height) of which ash, oak and sycamore were the most frequent. Other tree and shrub species included hazel, field maple, hawthorn, wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*), elder and horse chestnut (seedlings).

Ground flora was either absent or dominated by ivy with occasional lords and ladies (*Arum maculatum*), wood dock (*Rumex sanguineus*), male fern (*Dryopteris felix-mas*), harts tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*), selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), false brome-grass (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), lesser burdock (*Actium minus*) and red campion (*Silene dioica*). Paths are present through the wood as is a dry ditch. Mammal paths cross the woodland. The wood is accessed via a metal footbridge.



Figure 6 – Broadleaved Woodland

4.3 Protected and Priority Species

4.3.1 Plants

Notable Plant Species

No notable plant species were recorded during the Phase 1 survey, however, close survey of the ditch lines was not undertaken due to the risks of lone working close to water.

Invasive Non-native Plant Species

No non-native invasive plant species were recorded during the Phase 1 survey.

4.3.1 Invertebrates

No habitats considered to be of likely high value to invertebrates were recorded during the Phase 1 survey as being present within the application site. The majority of the site comprises of a cultivated arable field. The ditch lines, where they hold water, may support aquatic invertebrates and other species such as dragonflies and damselflies, however they will receive run-off from adjacent fields and are therefore likely to be eutrophic in nature.

The shelterbelts were found to contain elm (*Ulmus*) in small quantities. Previous records for white-letter hairstreak butterfly were returned from the 2km search area. The presence of this species is therefore possible within the site.

4.3.2 Amphibians

Records of common toad, frog, palmate newt, smooth newt and great crested newt (GCN) were returned by SBRC for the 2km search area. Records of GCN post 2010 were concentrated on ponds within the gardens of properties either side of Climping Street, 2km to the east.

No ponds are present on site or within 500m not separated by barriers. Ditch-lines were considered to be unlikely to support GCN due to flowing water, routine maintenance and the likely presence of fish.

4.3.3 Reptiles

Records of slow worm, common lizard and grass snake were returned by SBRC from within the 2km search area.

The majority of the site has no potential to support reptiles. Ditch banks potentially provide a suitable habitat for reptiles such as grass snake.

4.3.4 Breeding Birds

The site habitats provide opportunities for nesting by birds in reeds, hedgerows, field margins and trees.

Birds recorded during the Phase 1 survey included green woodpecker, wood pigeon, wren, blackbird, blue tit, carrion crow and dunnock.

4.3.5 Otter

The ditches present within the site were not considered suitable (i.e. unlikely to contain prey species on a regular basis or be substantial enough to provide a corridor for movement) to support this species.

4.3.6 Water Vole

A previous record for water vole exists from 1997 at SU986013. This location is in the south-west corner of the site.

The Phase 1 survey did not record the presence of this species, however, due to the constraints of lone working near water no detailed survey of the lower banks was undertaken to look for field evidence (e.g. presence of water vole burrows, latrines and feeding signs).

It is considered that the Rye Bank Drain (TN 5 – see Figure 5) remains suitable for this species. The smaller ditch at TN 3 was considered to have lower suitability.

4.3.7 Badger

A search was made for evidence of badger setts and other evidence of presence such as snuffle holes, latrines and hairs caught on wires.

No field signs/evidence of badger was recorded within the application site or buffer.

4.3.8 Bats

No built structures are present within the site.

No trees were recorded with the potential to support bat roosts.

The shelterbelts (TN 1 and TN2), especially TN1, which is linked to the broad-leaved woodland are likely to be used by bats for foraging and commuting. The ditch lines (TN 5) are also likely to be used by bats for foraging and or commuting.

4.3.9 Other Mammals

The tussocky grassland margins of the shelterbelts (see Figure 7) and ditches were considered suitable to support harvest mouse (*Micromys minutus*). A previous record for this species was returned by SBRC from the 2km search area from the Burndell Area (2000-2010).



Figure 7 – Tussocky grassland along margins of TN 1 potentially provides a habitat for harvest mouse.

No records for hazel dormouse were returned by SBRC from within the 2km search areas. The site and surrounding area lacks with habitats with high suitability to support hazel dormouse which require extensive areas of suitable woodland and / or well-connected hedgerows with suitable foodplants. The adjacent linear woodland at TN 4 was considered to have low suitability as it lacks a shrub layer.

5.0 Potential Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

5.1 Potential Ecological Constraints to Development and Recommendations

5.1.1 Designated Sites

No statutory or non-statutory ecological sites are present within 2km and as such no direct impacts on these sites are predicted.

The advice of the relevant regulatory authorities should be obtained in respect of whether emissions to air would need to be subject to assessment in respect of the potential for impacts to occur in respect of statutory sites.

5.1.2 Habitats

The built elements of the proposed development would occupy the northern half of the arable field, currently used for growing cereals, and of low ecological value. Site landscaping is proposed to take place in the southern half which would provide protection/buffering/enhancement for features such as the Rye Bank Drain (TN 5) and off-site woodland (TN 4).

There would probably be a need to undertake the localised removal of boundary vegetation to achieve suitable visibility splays at the site entrance and a new swale. The concept drawing 18-201 shows additional landscaping on the eastern side of TN1 which will protect and buffer this feature.

No ditch features would be directly affected although there may be changes to their hydrological regimes especially during storm events when the new site ditches/swales are linked to them. Furthermore, the potential exists for pollution to enter the wider network of ditches from the site due to hydrological continuity.

5.1.3 Protected and Notable Species

White-letter Hairstreak Butterfly

The retention and enhancement of the boundary features, coupled with the proposals to deliver biodiversity enhancements through a site landscaping scheme (which included elm) would protect and increase the habitats available to this butterfly, if it is present.

Reptiles

Grass snake has the potential to be present in association with ditch lines. The proposals as currently presented do not involve the loss of ditches or their modification and as such an impact on this species has not been predicted.

Water Vole

The Phase 1 survey found that the southern perimeter ditch known as Rye Bank Drain had the potential to still support water vole which is fully protected by Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The development proposals, as currently defined, are not likely to directly affect this feature, however, there may be indirect effects arising from connections with new feeder ditches and swales (such as sedimentation/increased volumes of water/potential for pollution events). On a more positive note, the creation of new ditches and swales could benefit this species by increasing the extent of aquatic and terrestrial habitats.

Once further details are available in respect of the proposals for site drainage it is recommended that these are reviewed by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

Bats

The site contains wide and well-vegetated boundary vegetation (hedges/ditches) linked to off-site woodland which is likely to be used by bats for foraging and commuting. In contrast, the arable field itself is likely to be of negligible value to bats. The outline development and landscaping proposals would largely retain the boundary shelterbelts and there would be additional planting on the eastern side of TN1.

In addition, the proposed creation of new swales/ditches, wildflower grassland and trees would create new opportunities for foraging by bats.

The site is currently un-lit and the introduction of artificial light could change the way in which bats use the site for foraging. It is therefore recommended that a bat-friendly lighting scheme is implemented.

To conclude, use of the application site by bats is likely, however, impacts could be avoided by protecting boundary vegetation and the implementation of a bat-friendly lighting scheme. Proposals to create significant areas of wildflower grassland/trees and linear watercourses (ditches/swales) would increase the quality of habitats available to bats which when compared to the localised opportunities which currently exists would represent an enhancement.

Harvest Mouse

The retention and enhancement of the boundary features, coupled with the proposals to deliver biodiversity enhancements through a site landscaping scheme, leading to the creation of areas of wildflower grassland/trees and linear watercourses (ditches/swales), would increase the quality of habitats available to harvest mouse, if present.

5.2 Potential Opportunities for Biodiversity Enhancements

It is recommended that an ecologist works with a landscape architect to develop an appropriate scheme which delivers the various objectives for the site which include habitat creation/biodiversity enhancement.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) has been undertaken by SLR in respect of a proposed crematorium at a site west of Climping, West Sussex. The scope of work has included a desk study, Phase 1 habitat survey and the preparation of a PEA report, which is an initial appraisal of the likely value of the site for ecology.

The desk study identified that the PEA site is not designated as a statutory or non-statutory ecological site and none are present nearby. No important un-designated habitats such as ancient woodland or priority habitats⁵ are either present within the site or nearby or have the potential to be affected. The desk study identified a record from 1997 of water vole from the southern perimeter ditch.

The Phase 1 survey found that the majority of the site comprises of part of a large arable field which is managed intensively for cereal growing and therefore of negligible ecological value. The field is bordered by well vegetated shelterbelts/hedgerows or ditch lines to the north, west and south. The ditch line to the south was considered to have the potential to still support water vole and the perimeter vegetation is likely to be used by birds for nesting, bats (for foraging and commuting) and could also provide a habitat for harvest mouse, white-letter hairstreak butterfly and grass snake.

The PEA has concluded that the proposed development of the site as a crematorium is unlikely to give rise to significant ecological effects provided that:-

- boundary vegetation is retained and buffered with new planting comprising appropriate species to the locality. Any localised removal to facilitate access is minimised and undertaken outside of the bird nesting season and is accompanied by measures to reduce any potential effects on reptiles;
- the construction and function of the proposed new drains/ditches does not adversely affect the existing ditches (i.e. through sediment mobilisation, major changes in water levels and pollution) and in particular their ability to support water voles (assuming their continued presence);
- a bat friendly lighting scheme is implemented; and
- the proposed site landscaping delivers biodiversity enhancement through the creation of wildflower grassland, woodland and ditches/swales.

Follow-on surveys in respect of protected and or notable species may be required in the event that new information comes to light through consultation, development proposals change or if the above avoidance/mitigation/enhancement measures are not possible.

⁵ Lowland broad-leaved woodland, a UK Priority habitat, is shown on MAGIC as being present to the south (TN 4) – this is a general category assigned to broad-leaved woodland. It has not been verified on the ground (i.e. confidence limits are low) to determine whether a given area constitutes a Priority habitat.

APPENDIX A

SBRC Summary



Ecological Data Search SxBRC/18/261 - Summary Report

An ecological data search was carried out for land south of Grevatts Lane, Climping on behalf of Andy Law (SLR Consulting Ltd) on 11/07/2018.

The following datasets were consulted for this report:

	Requested	Radius/buffer size
Designated sites, habitats & ownership maps	Yes	2km
Protected, designated and invasive species	Yes	2km

Summary of results

Sites and habitats

Statutory sites	None present
Non-statutory sites	1 LWS
Section 41 habitats	4 habitats
Ancient and/or ghyll woodland	None present

Protected and designated species

International designations	57 species	1,493 records
National designations	173 species	5,428 records
Other designations	339 species	10,473 records
Total	368 species	11,334 records
Invasive non-native	33 species	158 records

The report is compiled using data held by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) at the time of the request. SxBRC does not hold comprehensive species data for all areas. Even where data are held, a lack of records for a species in a defined geographical area does not necessarily mean that the species does not occur there – the area may simply not have been surveyed.

This summary page may be published.
The full report and maps may not be published or otherwise shared.

The data search report is valid until 11/07/2019 for the site named above.

APPENDIX B

Feasibility Site Plan 18-201

DRAWING 1

Baseline Habitat Plan



LEGEND

	APPLICATION SITE
	PHASE 1 SURVEY BOUNDARY
	DITCH
	DRY DITCH
	ARABLE FIELD
	BROAD LEAVED SHELTER BELT WOODLAND
	DENSE RUDERAL VEGETATION (BRAMBLE/NETTLE)
	TARGET NOTE

SOUTHERN CO-OPERATIVE

SLR
SALISBURY RETIREMENT
HOSPITAL STREET
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
TYNE AND WEAR, NE4 6BE
T: 0191 261 2600
F: 0191 261 2601
www.slrconsulting.co.uk

GREVATTS LANE, CLIPPING

ECOLOGICAL REPORT

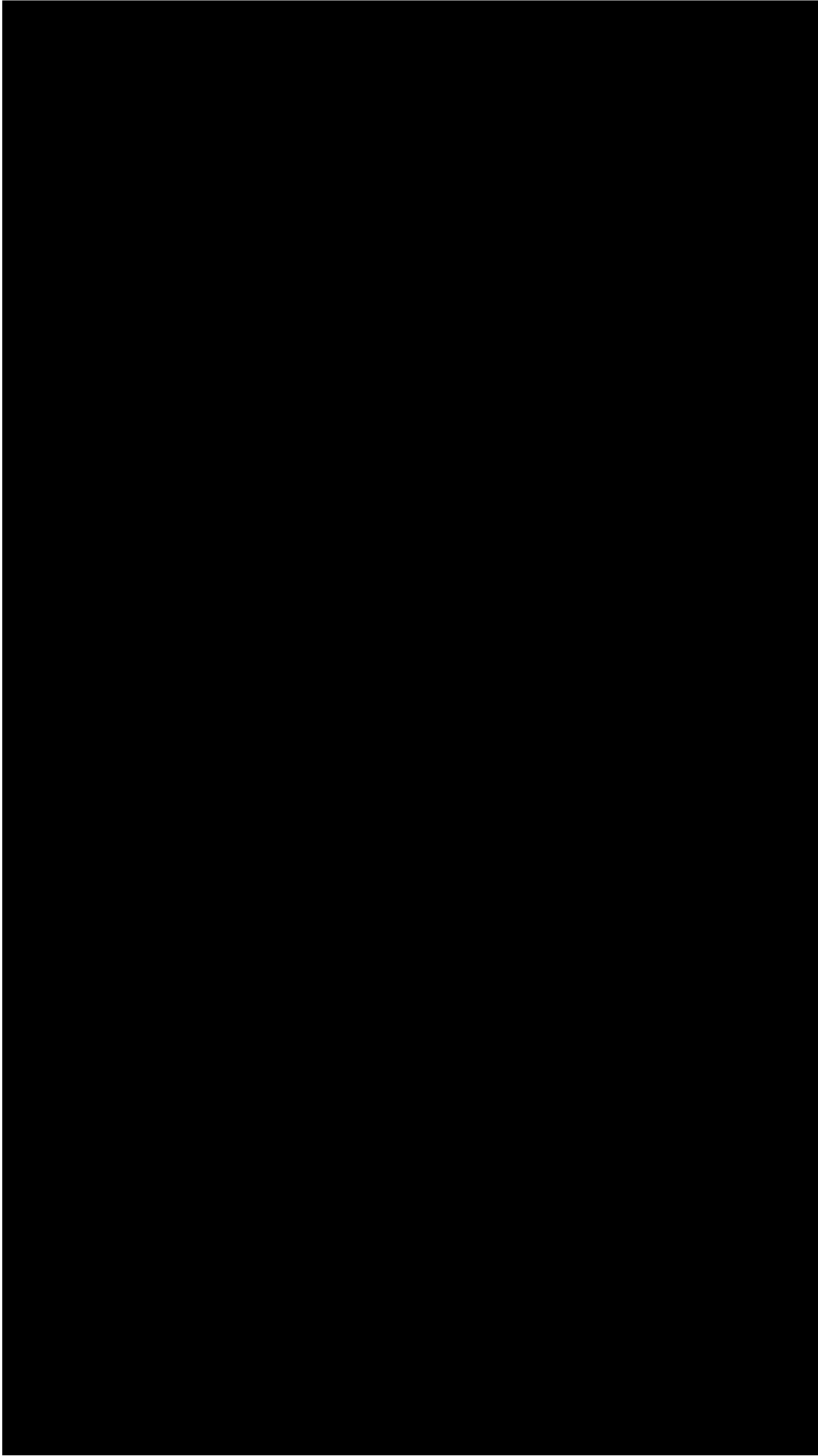
PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN

DRAWING 1

Scale 1:1500 @ A3

Date AUGUST 2018

EUROPEAN OFFICES



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