

Method Statement



Method Statement for Woodpecker Camping Site – Nesting Birds, Reptiles and Amphibians

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Submitted to:

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Revision History

Revision	Date	Amendment
ISSUE 1	MAY 2018	1 ST ISSUE

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The client, Miss Alison Baird, is seeking to secure planning permission (reference number: CM/7/18/PL) for the diversification of an agricultural field to a 60 pitch tent camping field (hereafter referred to as 'the site', grid reference: TQ 00071 01758). The camping field will be in seasonal operation, from April to October (inclusive) each year.

The site consists of an arable field, recently reseeded with grass, bordered with hedgerow and trees and areas of tall ruderal. The key constraints identified during the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (ADAS 2018) was the presence of suitable habitat for nesting birds, reptiles and common amphibians.

1.2 Description of Works

Current plans for the site are to change land use from an agricultural field to a camping field which will operate from April to October. The camping field will include 60 tent pitches, two plumbed screened portable showers, two plumbed portable toilets, two screened changing cubicles, four screened portable chemical toilets with hand wash facilities, and a washing up/drying area within an existing building.

The development includes plans to trim a section of hedgerow and tall ruderal vegetation to be removed to create a pedestrian pathway of hardstanding for ease of access to facilities located to the southwest of the site, next to the disused building within the field. Plans to create and maintain rough grass margins on the western and southern perimeter of the field have also been included (see Appendix 1).

1.3 Purpose of this Document

This method statement covers the vegetation clearance works involving the hedgerow and tall ruderal to create a pedestrian pathway of hardstanding.

This document has been produced to ensure the proposed works will be carried out in a manner which minimises the risk of causing a breach of legislation with respect to nesting birds, common amphibians or reptiles (see Appendix 2).

Note that this Method Statement is based on a strategy of avoidance. In the highly unlikely event that nesting birds, reptiles, great crested newts or common amphibians are disturbed / harmed at any stage of the work, it would demonstrate that avoidance has not proven to be effective in this situation. Therefore, all works should cease and advice from Natural England must be sought on how to proceed.

1.4 Justification for the Use of a Method Statement

The nature of the works is such that effects on habitat which could be used by nesting birds, common amphibians or reptiles can be avoided through careful planning and minor changes to the works which have already been discussed and agreed.

Furthermore, due to the small area of the works and the fact that the vegetation clearance will be minor, the habitat loss will be minimal and will rapidly re-establish. No breeding habitat will be affected for any of the protected species and no habitat fragmentation will occur.

It should be noted that by implementing the measures below, there will be a negligible risk of encountering nesting birds or great crested newts but nonetheless, it is necessary to include the requirement to cease works if either of these species are found.

2 Working Methods – Vegetation Removal

The procedure for the removal of vegetation will be as follows:

- All works will be carried out by the client using hand tools (i.e. strimmer, brush cutters) and no plant machinery will be brought onto the site.
- A suitably experienced ecologist should be on site during any hedgerow trimming to check for nesting birds if the clearance is undertaken between March and August. If an active bird's nest is found, a 5m buffer should be put in place around the nest and it must be retained undamaged until the young have fledged.
- If vegetation removal is to occur when reptiles are active (March to October), this should be phased and carried out in two stages:
 - **Stage 1** - Remove all required vegetation to 15cm and leave the site for approximately 2 days, if possible, but at least overnight before embarking on stage two.
 - **Stage 2** - Any remaining vegetation should then be cut to, or as close as possible to, ground level.
- If a great crested newt is found, works must stop and advice sought from Natural England. Reptiles and common amphibians may be moved to an area of similar habitat away from the working area.

3 Conclusion

The proposed measures will avoid impacts which would be regarded as a breach of legislation on nesting birds, reptiles and common amphibians. In the unlikely event that the works result in a potential offence, works must cease and Natural England would need to be consulted.

4 References

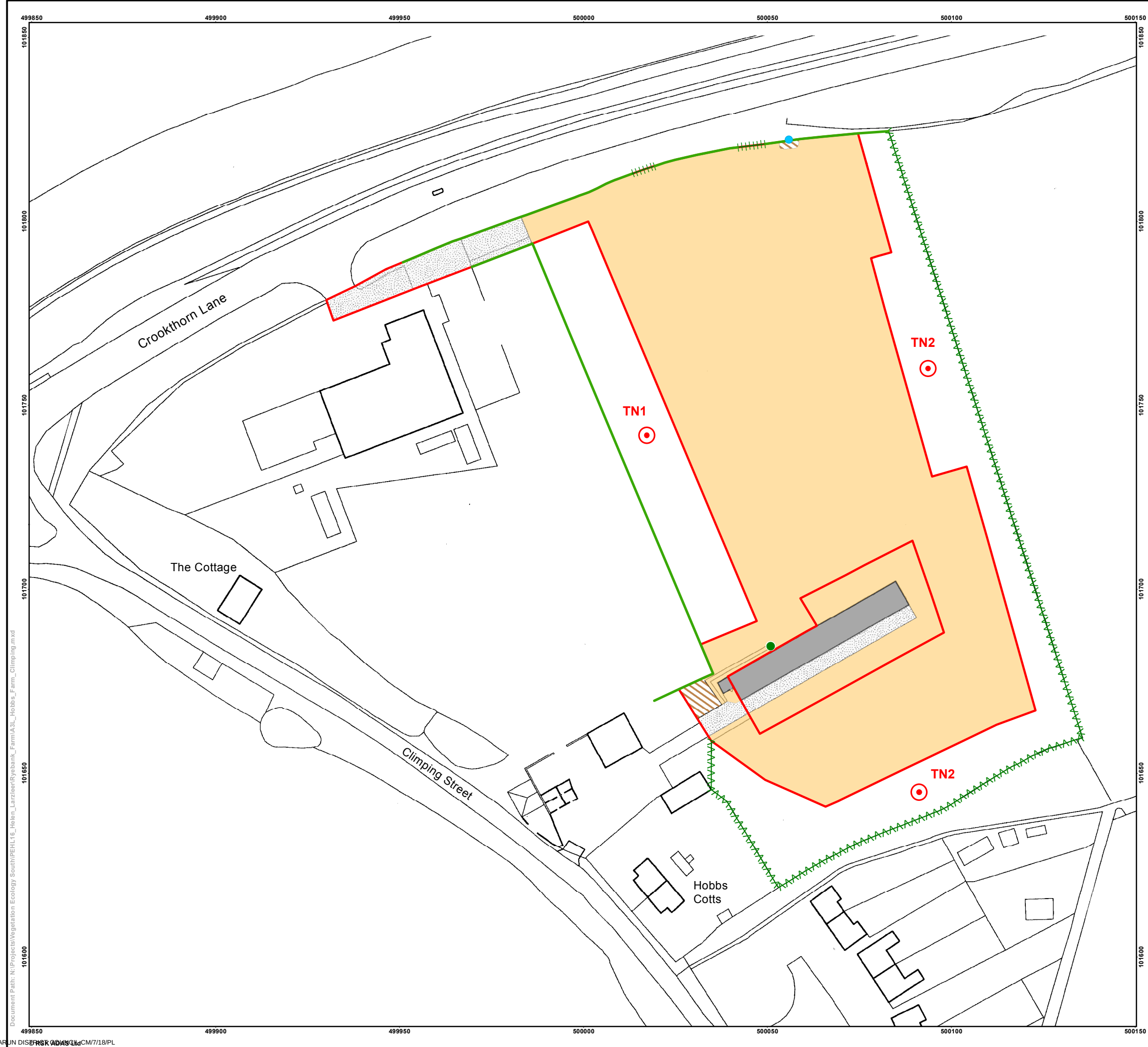
ADAS (2018) *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Woodpecker Camping Field, Climping.*

English Nature (2001) *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines.*

Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) *Protection of certain wild animals.*

Appendix 1: Site Plan

See following page.



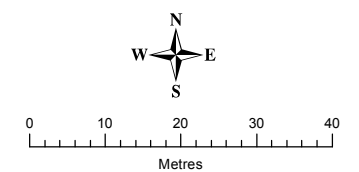
Alison Baird

Hobbs Farm, Climping Street,
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Phase 1 Habitat Plan

- Site boundary
- Tall ruderal
- Arable land
- Bare ground
- Building
- Scattered trees
- Standing water
- Intact hedge - species pool
- Hedge and trees - species pool
- Hedge - native species-rich
- Target note
 - TN1: Asparagus crop
 - TN2: Rough grass margin

Drawn by Paul Taylor 10/05/2018, Verified by Stephanie Cox 10/05/2018



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Appendix 2: Legislative Background

➤ *Reptiles*

Reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) making it illegal to intentionally kill or injure a common reptile. Rare reptiles (smooth snake and sand lizard) also receive legal protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. It is illegal to deliberately injure, kill, capture or disturb a rare reptile, or to damage or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection. Rare reptiles may only be handled by licensed ecologists.

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5,000 per offence and potential prison sentences of up to six months. Vehicles implicated in an offence can be compounded and both the company and/or the individual(s) concerned can be held liable.

All reptile species are species of principal importance under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and local authorities and other public bodies have a legal duty to take their conservation into account. Because of this they are a material consideration in the planning process.

➤ *Nesting Birds*

Wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to take or harm them, their nests (whilst in use or being built) or their eggs.

Additionally, for species listed in Schedule 1 of the Act, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb the adults while they are in and around their nest or intentionally or recklessly disturb their dependent young.

➤ *Great crested newts*

The domestic legislation protecting Great Crested Newts arises largely from the Habitats Directive, which has a central aim to restore scheduled species to a favourable conservation status.

Great Crested Newts are protected by UK and European legislation. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a Great Crested Newt,
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a Great Crested Newt,
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a Great Crested Newt, and

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a Great Crested Newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

In addition, The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012 make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or kill a Great Crested Newt,
- Deliberately disturb a Great Crested Newt,
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or a resting place of a Great Crested Newt, and
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange or offer for sale or exchange a live or any part of a Great Crested Newt.