

Hi Lauren,

Good to see you on Friday.

To confirm, I undertook a check of all accessible areas of the site for Badger setts / potential Badger setts prior to vegetation clearance commencing. Please note, areas of the site were too heavily vegetated at present to conduct a complete search, however where trails were present into the dense scrub I followed these as far as I could.

I have identified one potential Badger sett on site; this lies within the ditch along the boundary with the adjacent golf course. No evidence specific to Badgers was identified, however the entrances were of a size and shape indicative of Badger. Approximately five entrances were present, however only one showed signs of recent use. This was directed away from our site, towards the golf course. At present, I am not concerned that any impacts will occur to this sett associated with the scheme (as long as the buffer strip along this boundary is suitably protected during construction, as detailed within the ecological report), however there exists the potential for additional entrances to be created, and/or currently disused entrances directed towards the site to become reoccupied. We will keep an eye on this sett during the site visits as below. If any concerns arise I will let you know.

With regards to the commencement of vegetation clearance, as per the request of Chichester District Council, this must be undertaken sensitively, as follows :

*A first cut of all required vegetation will be made to avoid the bird nesting season, which spans March-August inclusive (Natural England, 2015). All scrub, trees and grass that requires removal will be cut to a **minimum height of 20cm** using hand held machinery, by/under the supervision of a suitably experienced Ecologist to ensure the protection of any wildlife present. All cutting will be made in a directional fashion from the eastern boundary towards the southern, northern and western boundaries, to passively encourage any wildlife present towards the retained ecological buffer strip and habitat beyond (see **Section 6.6**). During this first cut, scrub (but not grass) will also be cut from the ecological buffer strip to promote the establishment of a grassland strip prior to the planting of hedging.*

Care will be taken to avoid disturbance of any potential hibernacula such as rubbish or rubble piles.

All arisings will be removed from site immediately to avoid creating suitable areas of shelter for wildlife. This will reduce the suitability of the vegetation to support wildlife whilst ensuring its immediate protection, encouraging wildlife to relocate into surrounding land.

Please note, should any potential Badger setts or Fox dens be identified during clearance works these must be assessed by the Ecologist to determine the likelihood of them being active, with mitigation implemented as required (to be agreed with the LPA prior to undertaking).

Following the initial cut of vegetation, sensitive habitat manipulation will be undertaken to progressively further reduce the suitability of habitat to support wildlife. This will comprise two additional cuts:

The second and third cuts will be made following the end of the hibernation season from mid/late March (weather dependent, and no later than the end of September). The second and third cuts will be made at one week intervals following the first cut. Remaining vegetation will again be cut using hand-held trimmers, in a directional fashion and by/under the supervision of an Ecologist. An initial cut to a height of no less than 15cm will be made, followed by a cut to as low as possible 1-2 weeks later.

Upon completion of the above, all vegetation on site requiring clearance will be regularly managed until site stripping commences to prevent any potential recolonisation of wildlife. If this is not possible, reptile exclusion fencing must be installed around all site boundaries immediately following the final cut of vegetation, to be

advised by the Project Ecologist. If vegetation regenerates into that which could provide opportunities for nesting birds, the Project Ecologist must be consulted to ensure compliance with legislation.

I've attached a fee proposal for a daily watching brief for the vegetation clearance, alongside an invoice to cover the badger walkover undertaken last week for your kind attention (I've reduced the cost at this stage - I'll charge the last bit when we finish the Badger check during the vegetation clearance as that's when I'll issue a formal letter report).

Should you have any questions regarding the above please do not hesitate to ask.

Best wishes,

Sophie



Sophie Hughes BSc (Hons) MSc
Ecologist