



ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Little Meadow, Yapton

On Behalf of: Mr. Ross Hyams

Client:	Mr. Ross Hyams			
Project:	Little Meadow, Yapton			
Reference:	LLD3614-ECO-REP-001-00-EcIA			
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Validity:

This report is valid for 18 months from the date of the site visit. If works have not commenced by this date, an updated site visit should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist to assess any changes in the habitats present on site, and to inform a review of the conclusions and recommendations made.



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SUMMARY

Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Mr. Ross Hyams to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment of the proposed development of Little Meadow, Yapton (*Grid Reference: SU 97594 01940 – hereafter referred to as 'the site'*). A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site was undertaken on the 3rd of September 2025. The results of the preliminary assessment have subsequently been incorporated into this document.

The main body of the site was dominated by modified grassland, a habitat of low ecological value. A total of 5 no. individual trees were found to the north of the site; these are of higher ecological value and shall be retained, where actionable, within the scheme.

The site is within the Impact Risk Zone of Climping Beach, Felpham, Bognor Reef and Pagham Harbour SSSIs; however, the scope and scale of the development do not meet any of the criteria requiring consultation with Natural England. Mitigations regarding locally and nationally designated sites have also been ruled out due to the nature and intervening distances of the development.

Given the overall low suitability of the adjacent ponds and terrestrial habitat on and surrounding the site, a series of robust mitigation measures have been built into the scheme to minimise the potential risks to GCN and other amphibians.

The site also offers some suitable habitats for reptiles, commuting / foraging bats, hedgehogs, badgers and common invertebrates. Avoidance and mitigation measures have been built into the design of the scheme in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy and BS42020: 2013.

Once avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures have been taken into account, the impacts of the planned development upon biodiversity will be **negligible and non-significant**.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Mr. Ross Hyams to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment of the proposed development of Little Meadow, Yapton (*Grid Reference: SU 97594 01940 – hereafter referred to as 'the site'*).
- 1.2 The scope of this assessment has been determined with consideration of best-practice guidance provided by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018) and the Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development published by the British Standards Institute (BS 42020:2013).
- 1.3 An initial Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site was undertaken on the 3rd of September 2025. The findings subsequently led to the creation of this report.
- 1.4 A summary of said assessment, the potential impacts of the proposals, and details of avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures have been detailed within this report. Residual impacts are then discussed once all mitigation and compensation measures have been taken into account.

Site Information

- 1.5 The site covers c. 0.08 hectares (Ha), comprising an area of grassland immediately west of Little Meadow, Bilsham. The habitat immediately surrounding the site is a continuation of this grassland extending to the southeast, a small pond directly south, and residential properties to the north, east and west.

Surrounding Landscape

- 1.6 The site is set within a rural landscape, located off Bilsham Road, which links Yapton to Bognor Regis. The town of Yapton extends for over 2.0km to the north of the site, while the coast lies c. 2.3km to the south, at its nearest point. The wider landscape is characterised primarily by agricultural land interspersed with small to medium settlements and a network of woodland and hedgerows.

Development Proposals

- 1.7 It is understood that the development comprises the construction of a new residential building within the grassland to the west of Little Meadow. It is assumed that the proposals will include an associated driveway and rear garden.

Report Aims

- 1.8 The aim of the baseline surveys and Ecological Impact Assessment has been:
- Describe baseline conditions at the site;
 - Determine the importance of features which may be impacted by the scheme;
 - Identify impacts of the proposed development and set out appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures;
 - To identify any residual impacts;
 - To provide details of enhancements to be incorporated into the scheme;
 - Provide sufficient information to determine whether the project accords with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation, and where appropriate, to allow conditions or obligations to be proposed by the relevant authority.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (*MAGIC*) was consulted for all designated sites within a practicable zone of influence of the site. This included Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), National Nature reserves (NNR) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within a 2.0km radius of the site, and international statutory designated sites including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsars (Wetlands of International Importance) within a 10km radius of the site. Where SAC's designated for their bat interest are present this ZOI has been extended to 12km in accordance with recent guidance (SDNP, 2020).
- 2.1.2 *MAGIC* was also used to provide information on all Priority Habitats within a 2.0km radius of the site, and all records of granted European Protected Species Mitigation licences within a 1.0km radius of the site.
- 2.1.3 Given the quantum of development proposed / broad low ecological value of the site and the surrounding area, a local biological records centre search has not been provided. This is an approach in line with current guidance (CIEEM, 2020).
- 2.1.4 In accordance with Natural England's GCN Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature, 2001) a desktop search was undertaken to identify ponds within 500m and 250m of the site, which may have the potential to support breeding great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus*, using Ordnance Survey mapping, the *MAGIC* database and aerial photography.

2.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

- 2.2.1 The initial field survey was undertaken on the 3rd of September 2025 by the following Suitably Qualified Ecologist: James Tann, BSc (Hons). Weather conditions were mild to warm (c.18°C), with a moderate south-westerly wind (Beaufort Scale 3), 90% cloud cover and occasional to persistent light rain.

- 2.2.2 The field survey comprised a walkover inspection of the site and immediately adjacent land and boundaries features, in which ecological features were noted and mapped in accordance with principles of the UKHabs-Professional Classification System (Butcher *et al*, 2020). A minimum mapping unit of 25m² was used and habitats were identified to at least level 4 wherever practicable. Habitat categories were slightly amended to be consistent with those used as part of Biodiversity Net Gain calculations.
- 2.2.3 A list of plant species was compiled, together with an estimate of abundance. In addition, Target notes were used where necessary to provide supplementary information on features which were particularly interesting or significant to specific construction proposals, or too small to map.
- 2.2.4 The survey methodology was extended to provide more detail in relation to the sites potential to support rare or protected fauna, as described by the *Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017)*. The assessment of habitat suitability for protected, rare or priority species is based on current good practice guidance such as that presented in the *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (Gent and Gibson, 2003)* and *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins (ed.), 2023)*.

2.3 Daytime Bat Walkover Survey

- 2.3.1 A Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW) survey was undertaken on the 3rd of September 2025 by a suitably experienced surveyor (James Tann, Accredited Agent Under 2016-20460-CLS-CLS). Weather conditions were mild to warm (c.18°C), with a moderate south-westerly wind (Beaufort Scale 3), 90% cloud cover and occasional to persistent light rain.
- 2.3.2 The Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW) survey entailed a slow walkover of the site, during which time the surveyor identified any structures, trees and other features that could be suitable for bats to roost in, and any habitats which could be suitable for bats to commute, forage or swarm in.

- 2.3.3 During this survey, any direct evidence of bats was searched for and recorded, such as grease marks, urine stains, bat droppings, feeding remains and dead / live bats. Furthermore, any structures or trees which offered features with the potential to support bats were noted. For trees this included the identification of features such as, but not limited to, cracks, crevices and holes naturally formed by trees. For structures, this included the identification of features such as, but not limited to, slipped, missing or uneven tiles, gaps around the soffit / barge board, raised flashing.

Evaluation Criteria

- 2.3.4 All suitable bat habitat was assessed in accordance best practice criteria (Collins, 2023), which is outlined herein. During the survey all trees within and immediately adjacent to the site were assessed using the following criteria:

Table No. 01 – Criteria for Assessing the Bat Roosting Suitability of Trees

Suitability	Description
None	Either no potential roosting features in the tree, or highly unlikely to be any.
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if potential roosting features are present in the tree.
PRF	A tree with at least one potential roosting feature present.

- 2.3.5 If it was possible to adequately assess a Potential Roosting Feature (PRF) from ground level then this was completed, and the feature classified as either:
- **PRF-I:** Feature only suitable for individual or very small numbers of bats, either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitat; or
 - **PRF-M:** PRF is suitable for multiple bats and therefore has the potential to be used by a maternity colony.
- 2.3.6 Furthermore, all structures were assessed externally, and internally wherever possible for their potential to support bats, using the following criteria:

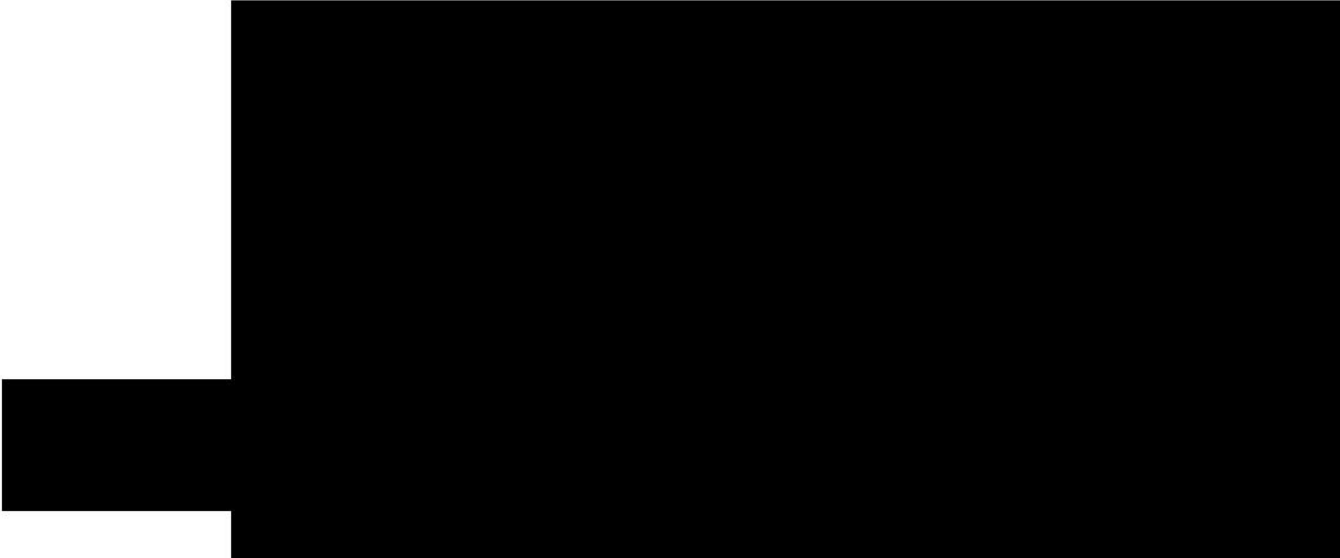
Table No. 02 – Criteria for Assessing the Bat Roosting Suitability of Structures

Potential Suitability	Description
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats. However, some small uncertainty remains, as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features occasionally.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, these do not provide enough shelter, space, protection, appropriate conditions or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status, irrespective of species conservation status.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat, with the potential to support high conservation status roosts irrespective of species conservation status.
Confirmed	Direct evidence of bats identified.

2.3.7 Finally, an assessment of the winter hibernation potential of the structures was made, in accordance with the following criteria:

Table No. 03 – Criteria for Assessing the Winter Bat Roosting Suitability of Structures and Trees

Potential Suitability	Description
Low	No or very limited potential winter roosting habitat
Moderate	Non classic site
High	'Classic sites', which offer stable humidity and consistent temperatures throughout the winter period, such as underground sites, cellars, tunnels etc.



2.5 Great Crested Newts – Habitat Suitability Assessment

- 2.5.1 Any ponds identified within or adjacent to the site were subject to a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment to determine their suitability to support GCN, in line with current guidance (Oldham *et al*, 2000). The HSI is a numerical index, between 0 and 1 (0 representing completely unsuitable habitat and 1 representing optimal habitat), calculated based on the suitability of 10 calculable indices.
- 2.5.2 HSI assessment is useful to aid in determining how suitable a given waterbody is for GCN, but it does not directly correlate with GCN presence or population numbers and serves as information only.
- 2.5.3 The 10 indices considered as part of the HSI assessment include geographic area, pond area, permanence of waterbody, water quality, shading, waterfowl presence, fish presence, number of ponds within 1km, suitability of terrestrial habitat and macrophyte cover, which were part of the preliminary assessment.

2.6 Ecological Impact Assessment

2.6.1 The methodology for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) follows best practice guidelines set by the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM): 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment' (CIEEM, 2018). This includes identifying the baseline conditions on the site and subsequently rating the potential effects of the development based on the sensitivity and value of the resource affected, combined with the magnitude, duration and scale of the impact (or change). This is initially assessed without mitigation measures, and then assessed again after allowing for the proposed mitigation measures; this provides the residual effects. The assessment is divided into construction effects and longer-term operational effects.

2.6.2 The CIEEM guidelines (2018) state that ecological features should be considered within a 'defined geographical context'. The geographical frame of reference used to determine ecological importance in this assessment is detailed below:

- International and European;
- National;
- Regional;
- County;
- District;
- Local;
- Site Level;
- Negligible.

2.6.3 Based upon CIEEM guidance, value was determined with reference to the following factors:

- Its inclusion as a Designated Site or other protected area;
- The presence of habitat types of conservation significance, e.g. Habitats of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
- The presence (or potential presence) of species of conservation significance e.g. Species of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
- The presence of other protected species e.g. those protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;

- The sites social and economic value.

2.6.4 The ecological impacts resulting from the proposals were then described according to a defined set of characteristics as defined within '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*' (CIEEM, 2018). When describing impacts the assessment refers to characteristics such as the extent; magnitude; duration; frequency; and, reversibility of the impact in order to provide justification for any conclusions about the nature and likelihood of the impact described.

2.6.5 Where initial impacts have been identified as significant, avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures have been proposed to avoid, prevent or offset such effects. This assessment then considers residual impacts (*once all mitigation has been taken into account*), with any significant effects highlighted. A significant effect is defined as "*an effect which either supports or undermines biodiversity conservation objectives for 'important ecological features' or for biodiversity in general*". Enhancement has been proposed to ensure that the development represents a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with National Policy.

2.7 Constraints and Limitations

2.7.1 Due to the field survey consisting of only one site visit, certain species, particularly some of the flowering plants, may not have been visible or may have been otherwise inconspicuous at the time of the survey and hence overlooked. These are accepted constraints associated with the UKHabs Survey Methodology.

2.7.2 No other limitations were encountered, or assumptions made during either the desk study or the field survey and it is considered that with the access gained and recording undertaken an accurate assessment of the site's ecological value has been made.

3.0 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

3.1 Designated Sites

Statutory Protected Sites

- 3.1.1 The following statutory protected sites are noted within the likely zone of influence of the proposed site:

Table No. 04 – Statutory Protected Sites

Site	Description	Location
<i>International Statutory Designated Sites within a Potential Zone of Influence</i>		
Pagham Harbour SPA/Ramsar	The SPA is designated under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive 79/409/EEC as it regularly supports more than 1% of Great Britain's population of the following Annex 1 species: • Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> • Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> • Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> And under Article 4.2 of the Birds Directive 79/409/EEC, as it supports important populations of the following migratory species: • Dark-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> It receives Ramsar designation for supporting over 20,000 waterfowl or 20,000 seabirds regularly.	c. 9.1km SW

- 3.1.2 The site lies within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of the following SSSIs: Climping Beach, Felpham, Bognor Reef and Pagham Harbour; however, the scope of the development would not require the LPA to consult with Natural England regarding potential impacts upon the aforementioned protected sites.

Non-Statutory Protected Areas

- 3.1.3 Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) are designations applied to the most important non-statutory nature conservation sites. They are recognised by the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and, as such, are material considerations when assessing planning applications. No SNCIs were identified within 2.0km of the site.

Pond Study

- 3.1.4 From a search using OS mapping and satellite imagery 5 no. of ponds were present within 500m, 3 no. of which were found within 250m of the site. 2 no. of these ponds were located immediately adjacent to the south (P1) and west (P2) boundaries of the site, while the remaining 3 no. were located c. 211m west, c. 330m west and c. 400m southwest on the opposing side of Bilsham Road. The locations of the ponds are detailed in the figure below.



Figure No. 02 – Surrounding Pond Plan, showing the ponds within 250m of the site (marked in red) with ponds numbered by proximity.

Pond Suitability Assessment

- 3.1.5 The two ponds located adjacent to the site were subject to an HSI assessment, a summary of which is contained within *Table No. 05*. The remaining three identified ponds were subsequently ruled out due to Bilsham Road creating a noteworthy barrier to dispersal between the ponds and the site.

Table No. 05 – Summary of HSI Results

HSI Criteria	P1 (South)		P2 (West)	
Location	1	Zone A	1	Zone A
Pond Area	0.5	c. 250 m ²	0.8	c. 400 m ²
Permanence	0.1	Dries Annually	0.9	Never Dries
Water Quality	0.33	Poor	0.33	Poor

HSI Criteria	P1 (South)		P2 (West)	
Shade	0.8	70%	1	10%
Waterfowl	0.67	Minor	0.01	Major
Fish	0.67	Possible	0.33	Minor
Pond Count	0.6	0.95 per 1km	0.6	0.95 per 1km
Terrestrial Habitat	0.33	Poor	0.33	Poor
Macrophytes	0.6	35%	0.4	10%
HSI Score	0.4917	Poor	0.3826	Poor

Priority Habitat

- 3.1.6 In accordance with the MAGIC dataset, within a 2.0km search radius of the site, there were UKBAP Priority Habitats (NERC, 2006) of Traditional Orchards, Deciduous Woodland (none of which was ancient), Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, and Coastal Vegetated Shingle.

3.2 Existing Habitat Assessment

- 3.2.1 Habitats within and adjacent to the site include:

- Modified Grassland
- Individual Trees
- Pond (*off-site*)

Modified Grassland

- 3.2.2 The site comprises a parcel of modified grassland dominated by perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* and annual meadow grass *Poa annua*. The area contained numerous patches of bare ground and appears to be subject to infrequent management with a rough sward height of between 3 and 5 cm. Species within the area included abundant white clover *Trifolium repens*, common daisy *Bellis perennis*, and common dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, frequent yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, with occasional selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, and broadleaf plantain *Plantago major* as well. Overall, this habitat is of **low** ecological value at the **site** level.



Photograph No. 01 – A snapshot of the modified grassland from the southern boundary, showing T1 to T5 at the northern boundary and Little Meadow to the west.

Individual Trees

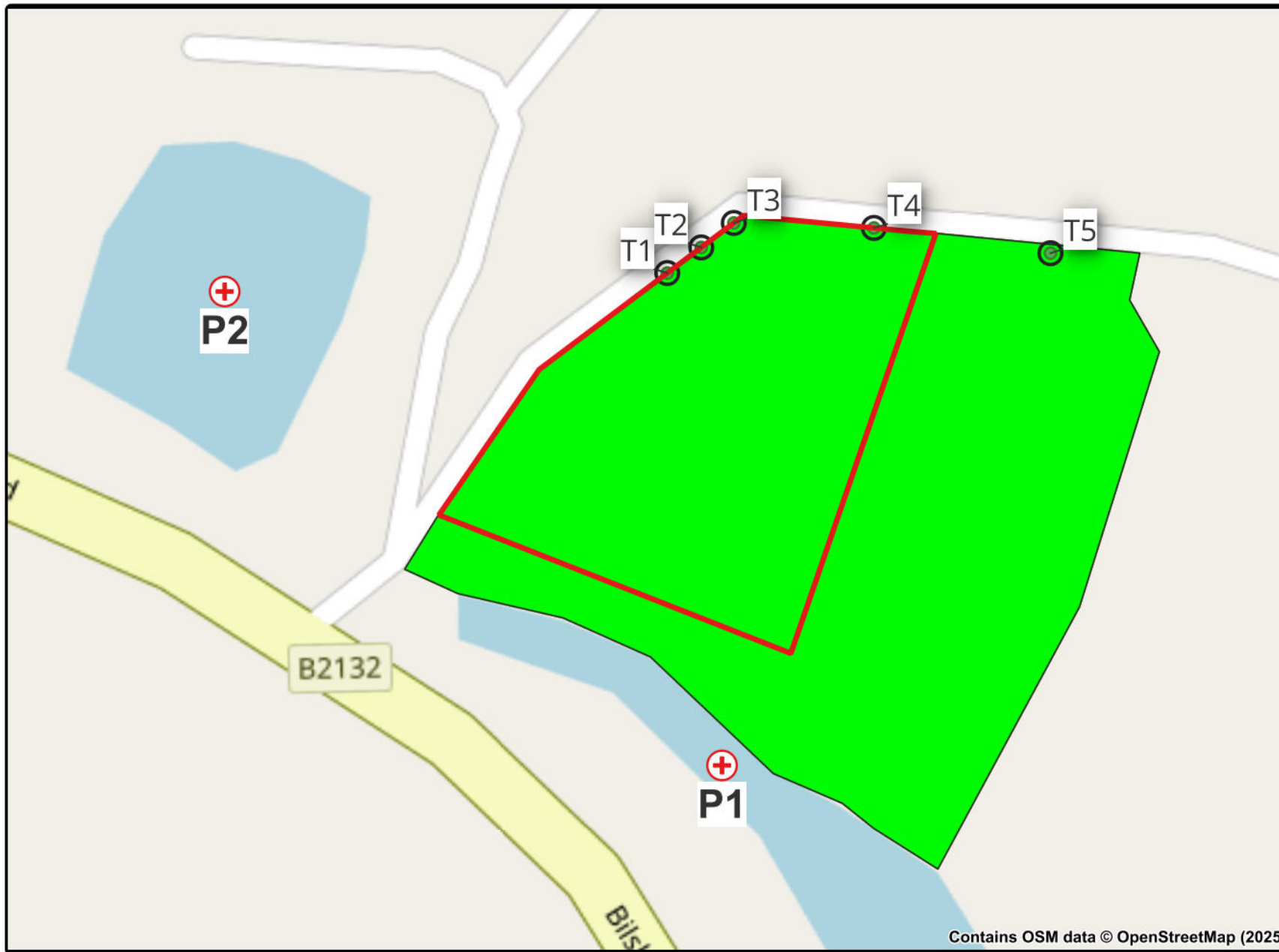
- 3.2.3 Along the northern edge of the grassland parcel were a total of 5 no. individual trees, consisting of 3 no. mature Layland cypress *Cupressus × leylandii* and 2 no. semi-mature birch *Betula pubescens*. The trees ranged from small to large in size and featured signs of routine limb removal, with some ivy *Hedera helix* present on the cypress trees. Overall, this habitat is of **moderate** ecological value at a **site / local** level.



Photograph No. 02 – A snapshot of the individual trees located at the northern extent of the grassland.

Pond (off-site)

- 3.2.4 Located outside of the red line, at the southern extent of the grassland containing the site was a small pond, which had almost entirely dried up. The habitat surrounding this area comprised a continuation of the adjacent grassland. While this habitat is of note, it was not located on or directly adjacent to the site boundary.



Legend

- Ponds
- Red Line Boundary
- Existing Rural Tree
- Modified grassland



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Client

Mr. Ross Hyams

Project Title & Location

Little Meadow, Yapton

Drawn by	Approved by	Rev	Date
JT	WM	00	10/10/25

Figure No. 01 - Site Habitat Plan



1:450

Invasive Species

- 3.2.4 The preliminary site assessment identified no Schedule 9 or locally listed invasive non-native species within the site bounds. However, the property to the west of the site was found to house a species of cotoneaster.

3.3 Protected Species Assessment

Amphibians

Desk Study

- 3.3.1 The data search returned no records for great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* from within the search area. But 7 no. records for three widespread amphibian species, including 5 no. common frog *Rana temporaria*, 1 no. common toad *Bufo bufo* and 1 no. smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris* and 1 no. palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus* were returned from within the 2.0 km search area. The closest record was for common frog, c. 570 m north of the site.
- 3.3.2 A total of 5 no. ponds were identified within 500m of the site, of which 3 no. were within a 250m range. Due to one of the ponds within 250m of the site being located on the far side of a road, it was discounted from the HSI assessment. The two remaining ponds in range, located immediately south (P1) and west (P2) of the site, were assessed, both scoring **poor** suitability for GCN.

Site Assessment

- 3.3.3 The proposed development is contained within an area of poor quality grassland, and was situated within the vicinity of two ponds, one of which, P1, is contained within the same grassland as the site. However, given the overall lack of vegetative cover within the grassland both on and surrounding the site, as well as the HSI assessment deeming both ponds as poor suitability for GCN, the site is considered to be of **low** value to this species and other widespread amphibians.

Reptiles

Desk Study

- 3.3.4 A data search returned 32 no. records for two species of reptiles from within the search area, including 24 no. records for slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, and 8 no. records for common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, the closest result was a slow worm located c. 550 m north of the site.

Site Assessment

- 3.3.5 Habitat of limited suitability in the form of modified grassland is present on the site and extends beyond the red line boundary into the surrounding area. The overall value of this habitat, however, is likely reduced due to a lack of vegetation density, from irregular mowing and poor floristic diversity, impacting prey populations. That said, the site may still support small populations of reptiles and thus be of **low** value to this species.

Bats

Desk Study

- 3.3.6 Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* and brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* bats have been recorded within 2.0 km of the site area. This included records for bat roost, observations of bats in the field and acoustic analysis. The closest record was centred c. 120 m north of the site and was for observations of a common pipistrelle bat roost.

Daytime Bat Walkover - Trees

- 3.3.7 From a ground-level assessment of the trees on site, two of the 5 no. present were immediately ruled out due to size and a lack of suitable features. A summary of the remaining three, all Leyland cypress, is contained within *Table No. 06*, with reference to the tree numbers illustrated in *Figure No. 01 – Site Habitat Plan*.

Table No. 06 – Bat Roost Assessment Results - Trees

Ref.	Suitability	Justification
T01	None	Mature Leyland cypress with a thin layer of ivy present on the lower trunk. There's a lack of density in the canopy showing evidence of semi-regular management, and many upper limbs too thin to support suitable roosting features. Overall, negligible.
T02	None	Mature Leyland cypress with moderate ivy present from the base to about 1m up. Significant evidence of management / broken limbs seen within the central body, creating gaps in the canopy. A lack of notable features identified from ground level, overall negligible.
T03	None	Mature Leyland cypress with moderate ivy present from the base to about 1m up. Relatively vertical structure with several bare unvegetated branches and some indication that dead / dying branches had been removed or broken off. Limbs within the mid to upper extent, relatively thin and lack any noteworthy features. Overall negligible.

Daytime Bat Walkover - Buildings

- 3.3.8 No buildings were present within the site and have therefore been scoped out of any further considerations within this report.

Winter Roosting Potential

- 3.3.9 The trees on site were also assessed for their winter hibernation potential. However, due to a lack of roosting features, all trees on site have been deemed as offering negligible winter roosting potential.

Foraging and Commuting Suitability

- 3.3.10 The site comprises an area of poor-quality modified grassland with parcels of mature trees to the north and a pond to the south of this, providing some limited foraging and commuting opportunities within the locality of the site. Further beyond the site boundary is a network of hedgerows / treelines which provide a linear commuting route and foraging resource for bats. Although a large portion of the surrounding habitat is open crop / farmland, limiting the overall value to all but the more gap-tolerant species, such as pipistrelles and aerial hawkers like

noctules. The site and its surroundings are therefore considered of **low** suitability for more common and widespread UK bat species.

Dormouse

Desk Study

- 3.3.11 A data search returned no records of hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* from within the 2.0 km search area.

Site Assessment

- 3.3.12 No suitable dormouse habitat was identified within the site boundary. Scrubby / arboreal habitat was identified immediately adjacent to the site, but this offered no favoured food plants for dormice and lacked any functional connectivity to the areas of suitable dormouse habitat in the wider environment. The site is therefore of **negligible** value to this species.

Birds

Desk Study

- 3.3.15 The data search returned numerous records for 50 no. species of birds from within the search area. This included records for 3 no. birds listed under Schedule 1 (Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981) (as amended), a further 15 no. found on the Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red List (Stanbury et al, 2021), and 12 no. classed as Section 41 Priority Species (NERC, 2006). Among the abovementioned records were multiple species with a known preference for farmland, such as merlin *Falco columbarius*, corn bunting *Emberiza calandra* and grey partridge *Perdix perdix*. As well as records for many small passerines and larger generalist species such as pigeons and gulls.

Site Assessment

- 3.3.16 The site itself is of **negligible** value to nesting birds, given the lack of dense vegetation; however, the mature trees and linear habitats within the surrounding area are likely to be of limited value to common passerines and generalist nesters such as pigeons.
- 3.3.17 The site offers suitable foraging habitat for some species of birds, but given the poor quality of the grassland available on the site, the extent of this suitability is limited. Overall, the site is of **negligible** value to foraging birds.

Invertebrates

Desk Study

- 3.3.18 The data search returned numerous records for invertebrates within the 2.0 km search area; however, of those records, only one instance of a protected / notable species was identified, 8 no. stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* recorded over March 2017, c. 1.4 km north of the site.

Site Assessment

- 3.3.19 During the site assessment, no plants of key importance to any rare or notable invertebrate species were identified. Furthermore, the floristically poor nature of the grassland on the site limits its value for more common or widespread species, and while patches of bare ground were prominent within some of the grassland, the site lacks the features necessary to support any noteworthy assemblages and is therefore of **negligible / low** value to invertebrates.

Others

- 3.3.20 The grassland on site could provide some suitable foraging habitat for hedgehogs, although the lack of readily available shelter within the area reduces the likelihood of their presence on site. The site is therefore of **low** value for foraging / commuting hedgehogs.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

- 4.0.1 Using the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (IEEM, 2006 & updated by CIEEM, 2018), the assessment set out below considers the potential impacts of the scheme prior to mitigation. Detailed avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures are then discussed, with residual impact identified once these measures have been taken into account. Wherever possible mitigation measures have been designed into the scheme as this gives greater certainty over deliverability and ensures the correct application of the 'Mitigation Hierarchy' (as advocated by BS42020:2013, Defra 2019 and CIEEM, CIRIA & IEMA 2016).
- 4.0.2 Protected species for which the site offers negligible suitability have been scoped out of further assessment.

4.1 Designated Sites

Potential Impacts

- 4.1.1 Several nationally designated areas were identified within a potential zone of influence of the site. However, none exist within or directly adjacent to the site, and due to such intervening distances / scope of the proposals, would not be likely to be impacted by the proposals.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 4.1.2 Due to a lack of potential impacts to designated sites, within a potential Zone of Influence of the site, resulting from the scheme, no mitigation or compensation actions shall be required.

Residual Impacts

- 4.1.3 Due to a lack of potential impacts to designations, within a potential Zone of Influence of the site, resulting from the scheme, no residual impacts are likely to occur at any magnitude.

4.2 Habitats

Potential Impacts

- 4.2.1 Development proposals will result in the loss of the modified grassland from the site. This habitat is of low ecological value, the loss of which would be of minor impact magnitude but certain to occur.
- 4.2.2 The individual trees adjacent to the site are likely to be adversely impacted by the smothering of vegetation through production of dust and emissions, as well as potential soil compaction during the construction phase. These impacts would potentially be of minor impact magnitude and likely to occur.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 4.2.3 Works during the construction phase will be undertaken in accordance with best practice guidelines to control any excess dust / emission creation, which may impact adjacent habitats. Measures shall include sheeting of vehicles carrying loose loads to and from the site, limitations on machinery use, such as the prevention of idling and provisions for appropriate storage of materials on-site.
- 4.2.4 All trees and hedgerows within the wider site shall be protected through the use of tree protection fencing in line with BS. Furthermore, site access shall be restricted to the existing driveway off of Bilsham Road.
- 4.2.5 The proposed landscape scheme shall include vegetated areas planted with species of a known wildlife value, such as plants listed on RHS Plants for Pollinators. This provision shall adequately compensate for the loss of small areas of grassland resulting from the scheme.

Residual Impacts

- 4.2.6 Provided mitigation and protection measures are followed, no priority or other important habitats or plant species will be affected by this development, the impact of which is **not significant**.

4.3 Amphibians

Potential Impacts

- 4.3.1 In the absence of mitigation, the development would see the removal of suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN and other amphibian species, which could result in the reckless killing / injury of said amphibians. Such impacts would be of low magnitude at the site level but may lead to a breach of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 4.3.2 Given the overall low potential to support terrestrial populations of GCN on and adjacent to the site, a series of robust mitigation measures shall be implemented. Such measures will include a staged clearance of the grassland, within and directly adjacent to the site, radiating from a central point. The initial cut shall bring the vegetation no lower than 150 mm and shall be left overnight to allow for any potential amphibians to disperse. Following this, the vegetation shall then be cleared to a height of <50 mm and maintained in this condition throughout all stages of the development to ensure the area remains unsuitable for terrestrial use.
- 4.3.3 Further to this, the area immediately surrounding P1 and to the southwest of the site shall be retained and protected throughout the development through the use of haras fencing to ensure avenues for dispersal are available.

Residual Impacts

- 4.3.4 Once mitigation measures are taken into account, the impact of the scheme on amphibians shall be **negligible** and ensure that any potential risks to GCN are appropriately compensated for.

4.4 Reptiles

Potential Impacts

- 4.4.1 In the absence of mitigation, works could result in the potential killing or injuring of common, widespread reptiles and the removal of small areas of suitable habitat. Given the generally low suitability of the site, the impact would be low at the site level but may result in a breach of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 4.4.2 As a precautionary approach, the modified grassland on site shall be cut in stages radiating out from a central point to encourage any reptiles present to disperse into suitable areas of retained habitat. Said clearance shall only be conducted in appropriate weather conditions (+9 °C, sunny, dry) and consist of a first cut to no lower than 150 mm with all arisings immediately removed and the area left for 24 in the same suitable conditions to allow reptiles to disperse. After such time, vegetation shall then be cut <50mm and maintained at this height throughout all stages of the development to ensure the habitat remains unsuitable for reptiles.
- 4.4.3 Parcels of grassland surrounding the site, namely the area to the southwest, shall be retained to provide habitat for any reptiles present to disperse into; in the unlikely event that reptiles are found during the clearance, they shall be translocated to a suitable area within this habitat.

Residual Impacts

- 4.4.4 Once mitigation measures are taken into account, the impact of the scheme on reptiles shall be **negligible**.

4.5 Bats

Potential Impacts

- 4.5.1 In the absence of mitigation, impacts could include the disruption of commuting corridors and foraging habitat through inappropriate lighting. Due to the low suitability of the habitats, impacts would be of minor significance but likely to occur.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 4.5.2 Artificial light spill on the site shall be kept within levels consistent with the surrounding area and aimed down and away from suitable adjacent bat commuting and foraging habitat (trees and hedgerows). Additionally, any external lighting designs shall comply with best practice standards in regard to external lighting and bats (BCT & ILP, 2023).

Residual Impacts

- 4.5.3 Once mitigation measures are taken into account, the impact of the scheme on bats shall be **negligible**.

4.6 Invertebrates

Potential Impacts

- 4.6.1 In the absence of mitigation, small areas of suitable habitat for common widespread invertebrates would be lost. Due to the low ecological value of habitats on site, the impacts would be of very minor impact magnitude, but certain to occur.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 4.6.2 The proposed landscape scheme shall ensure the surrounding grassland habitat is retained and protected from unnecessary damage. The majority of plant species used within the scheme shall have a recognised wildlife value, such as plants listed on RHS Plants for Pollinators.

Residual Impacts

- 4.6.3 The overall impact of the scheme will be **negligible**, with a positive impact in the long-term once vegetation has established.

4.8 Hedgehogs

Potential Impacts

- 4.8.1 The protected species assessment identified that, in the absence of mitigation, the scheme would see the removal of modified grassland, a habitat of low value to foraging hedgehogs. Due to the site's lack of suitability, the impacts would likely be very minor and certain to occur.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 4.8.2 All new closed board fencing or walls shall include a 13x13cm access gap to the base to allow the free movement of hedgehogs around the site. The gaps will be signed 'hedgehog highway' or similar to make their purpose clear and avoid accidental closure in the future. The scheme shall also include areas of new planting to account for the loss of habitat.

Residual Impacts

- 4.8.3 Once mitigation and compensation measures are taken into account, the impact of the scheme shall be **negligible**.

4.9 Future Baseline

- 4.9.1 The scheme seeks to replace the existing baseline with residential / urban habitats. As this area will likely be in frequent use, regular upkeep and maintenance shall occur to ensure the area remains fit for purpose.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The main body of the site is dominated by modified grassland, a habitat of low ecological value. A total of 5 no. individual trees were found to the north of the site; these are of higher ecological value and shall be retained, where actionable, within the scheme.
- 5.2 The site is within the Impact Risk Zone of Climping Beach, Felpham, Bognor Reef and Pagham Harbour SSSIs; however, the scope and scale of the development do not meet any of the criteria requiring consultation with Natural England.
- 5.3 Due to the nature of the proposals and the intervening distances between the site and any locally or nationally designated sites, impacts resulting from the scheme would be negligible and unlikely; thus, no mitigation or compensation shall be required.
- 5.4 The HSI assessment of P1 and P2 scored them both as poor suitability; however, given the locality and presence of suitable connected terrestrial habitat on site, GCN presence could not be ruled out. In the absence of further survey work, a series of precautionary measures have been built into the scheme to minimise the potential risks to GCN and other amphibians, due to the low HSI score of the nearby pond, habitats on site and the scale of the works this method is deemed proportionate and appropriate.
- 5.5 The site also offers some suitable habitat for reptiles, badgers, hedgehogs, foraging / commuting bats and low assemblages of invertebrates. Avoidance and mitigation measures have been built into the design of the scheme in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy and BS42020: 2013.
- 5.6 Once avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures have been taken into account, the impacts of the planned development upon biodiversity will be **negligible and non-significant.**

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Table No. 07 – Species List for Habitat Parcels**Modified Grassland**

Common Name	Scientific Name	DAFOR
Annual Meadowgrass	<i>Poa annua</i>	D
Bristly Ox Tongue	<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	R
Broadleaved Plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>	O
Common Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	A
Common Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	A
Common Ragwort	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	R
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	F
Perennial Ryegrass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	D
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	F
Selfheal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	O
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	A
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	F
Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	R

Individual Trees

Common Name	Scientific Name	DAFOR
Layland Cypress	<i>Cupressus × leylandii</i>	D
Downey Birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>	F
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	LA

D – Dominant; A – Abundant; F – Frequent; O – Occasional; R – Rare; L – Locally

Appendix A – Planning Policy and Legislation

Legislation

Legislation relating to wildlife and biodiversity of particular relevance to this report includes:

- *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;*
- *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);*
- *The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006; and*
- *The Environment Act 2021.*

This above legislation has been addressed, as appropriate, in the production of this report. Further details of legislation relating to the protection of particular ecological receptors are provided in the table below:

Ecological Constraint	Rationale
SACs (Special Area of Conservation), SPAs (Special Protection Areas) and Ramsars (Wetlands of International Importance)	Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 places a duty on the competent authority to maintain the favourable conservation status of designated SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. Therefore, where it appears to the appropriate nature conservation body that a notice of a proposal relates to an operation which is, or forms, part of a plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects), and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site, it must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, it may give consent for the operation only after having ascertained that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.
European protected species (bats, otters, dormice, water voles, great crested newts)	It is an offence under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to deliberately kill or injure a European protected species, to destroy breeding/resting sites, or to deliberately disturb these species and affect their ability to survive, rear young, breed, or hibernate.
Nationally protected species (bats, water vole, otter)	It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to intentionally or recklessly disturb a species listed on Schedule 5 whilst it is in a place of shelter, or to obstruct access to a place for shelter.
Nationally protected species (reptiles)	It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to kill or injure common species of reptiles.
National conservation priority species (white-clawed crayfish, fish, common toad, reptiles, noctule, water vole, otter, hedgehog), i.e., UKBAPs	Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of species and habitats that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, and to take, and promote others to take, such steps to further the conservation of these habitats and species. These species and habitats will be considered by Planning Authorities in regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021) to conserve and enhance the natural environment.
Badgers	It is an offence under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 to damage or destroy a badger sett; obstruct any entrance of a

Ecological Constraint	Rationale
	badger sett; and disturb a badger whilst it is occupying a badger sett.
Wild mammals (rabbits, foxes, water vole, otter, hedgehog, badger)	It is an offence under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 to inflict unnecessary suffering to any wild mammal with intent.
Nesting birds	It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to damage or destroy a bird's nest whilst it is in use, and to kill or injure a bird or destroy an egg.
Non-statutory designated sites (SNCI's, LWS, LNR's, etc.)	LNRs are designated under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which was amended by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The value for biodiversity of LNRs and LWSs are recognised, and the sites and surrounding buffers are protected by the Local Plan.
Biodiversity	Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 states that each public authority "must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity." This legislation makes it clear that planning authorities should consider impacts to biodiversity when determining planning applications. Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021) states that the planning system and policies should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, and that, if significant harm to biodiversity would result from a development, then development should be avoided (through locating on alternative sites with less harmful impacts).
Irreplaceable habitats (ancient woodland, veteran trees, lowland meadows)	Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021) states that 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 reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
Biodiversity Net Gain	+10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for new developments will be mandatory under the Environment Act (2021), although this deadline will be extended to April 2024 for small sites and there are exemptions for development below a 25m ² threshold, and for householder applications and self-builds. BNG means that proposals must result in more and/or better-quality natural habitats than there were before development. This also requires that any proposed habitats within the scheme would be necessary to manage for at least 30 years, which would be sought through the provision of S106 legal agreements or conservation covenants.

Local Planning Policy

The South Down National Park Local Plan (SDNP, 2019) sets out the planning policies for development in the district in relation to biodiversity. Those of potential relevance to this assessment are highlighted in the table below:

Policy Reference	Policy Text
Core Policy SD2: Ecosystem Services	1. Development proposals will be permitted where they have an overall positive impact on the ability of the natural environment to contribute goods and services. This will be achieved through the use of high-quality design, and by delivering all opportunities to: a) Sustainably manage land and water environments; b) Protect and provide more, better and joined up natural habitats; c) Conserve water resources and improve water quality; d) Manage and mitigate the risk of flooding; e) Improve the National Park's resilience to, and mitigation of, climate change; f) Increase the ability to store carbon through new planting or other means; g) Conserve and enhance soils, use soils sustainably and protect the best and most versatile agricultural land; h) Support the sustainable production and use of food, forestry and raw materials; i) Reduce levels of pollution; j) Improve opportunities for peoples' health and wellbeing; and k) Provide opportunities for access to the natural and cultural resources which contribute to the special qualities. 2. Development proposals must be supported by a statement that sets out how the development proposal impacts, both positively and negatively, on ecosystem services.
Strategic Policy SD9: Biodiversity and Geodiversity part 1	Development proposals will be permitted where they conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, giving particular regard to ecological networks and areas with high potential for priority habitat restoration or creation. Prior to determination, up-to-date ecological information should be provided which demonstrates that development proposals: - Retain, protect and enhance features of biodiversity and geological interest (including supporting habitat and commuting routes through the site and taking due account of any use by migratory species) and ensure appropriate and long-term management of those features; - Identify and incorporate opportunities for net gains in biodiversity; - Contribute to the restoration and enhancement of existing habitats, the creation of wildlife habitats and the creation of linkages between sites to create and enhance local and regional ecological networks; - Protect and support recovery of rare, notable and priority species; - Seek to eradicate or control any invasive non-native species present on site; - Contribute to the protection, management and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity, for example by supporting the delivery of GI and Biodiversity Action Plan targets and enhance Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA); and - Comply with the mitigation hierarchy as set out in national policy.

Policy Reference	Policy Text
Strategic Policy SD9: Biodiversity and Geodiversity part 2	The following hierarchy of site designation will apply in the consideration of development proposals: a) Internationally Protected Sites, as shown on the Policies Map (SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites, or candidate and formally proposed versions of these designations): i. Development proposals with the potential to impact on one or more international sites(s) will be subject to a HRA to determine the potential for likely significant effects. Where likely significant effects may occur, development proposals will be subject to Appropriate Assessment ii. Development proposals that will result in any adverse effect on the integrity of any international site will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that: there are no alternatives to the proposal; there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest why the proposal should nonetheless proceed; and adequate compensatory provision is secured b) Nationally Protected Sites SSSI, NNRs, MCZ as shown on the Policies Map: i. Development proposals considered likely to have a significant effect on nationally protected sites will be required to assess the impact by means of an EIA ii. Development proposals should avoid impacts on these nationally protected sites. Development proposals where any adverse effect on the site's notified special interest features is likely and which cannot be either avoided or adequately mitigated will be refused, unless the benefits of the development, at this site clearly outweigh the likely impact to the notified features of the site and any broader impacts on the network of nationally protected sites c) Irreplaceable Habitats (including ancient woodland as shown on the Policies Map, and veteran trees): Development proposals which result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and veteran trees will be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists d) Locally Protected Sites (Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI)/Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)/Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR and Local Geodiversity Sites (LGS)) as shown on the Policies Map: i. Development proposals considered likely to have a significant effect on local sites will be required to assess the impact by means of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) ii. Development proposals that will result in any adverse effect on the integrity of any local site which cannot be either avoided or adequately mitigated will be refused, unless exceptional circumstances outweighing the adverse effects are clearly demonstrated e) Outside of designated sites i. Development proposals should identify and incorporate opportunities to conserve, restore and recreate priority habitats and ecological networks. Development proposals should take opportunities to contribute and deliver on the aims and objectives of the relevant biodiversity strategies where possible.

Policy Reference	Policy Text
Strategic Policy SD8: Dark Skies	1. Development proposals will be permitted where they conserve and enhance the intrinsic quality of dark night skies and the integrity of the Dark Sky Core as shown on the Policies Map. 2. Development proposals must demonstrate that all opportunities to reduce light pollution have been taken, and must ensure that the measured and observed sky quality in the surrounding area is not negatively affected, having due regard to the following hierarchy: The installation of lighting is avoided; and If lighting cannot be avoided, it is demonstrated to be necessary and appropriate, for its intended purpose or use: Any adverse impacts are avoided; or If that is not achievable, then adverse impacts are mitigated to the greatest reasonable extent.' 3. Lighting which is proposed to be installed must meet or exceed the level of protection appropriate to the environmental zone 4. Outdoor lighting proposals are required to provide a statement to justify why the proposed lighting is required.