Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Winwick Village Hall

October 2026

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Executive Summary

Site

Location	Land at Winwick Village Hall, Huntingdonshire, PE28 5PN.
Site Context	The Site is a parcel of land dominated by modified grassland.
Landscape Context	Habitats within the vicinity of the Site were dominated by an urban area and agricultural field parcels. Various ponds, hedgerows, woodland blocks and river corridors were also present.

Project

Proposed works	The proposed construction of residential dwellings with associated access and infrastructure.
Ecological Background	No previous ecological assessments are known to have been undertaken on habitats within the Site at the time of writing.

Methods

Objectives	• Outline all recorded ecological constraints associated with the Site with a focus on protected and notable habitats and species. • Provide a baseline of onsite habitats and other ecological features. • Deliver specialist advice to ensure compliance with relevant environmental and wildlife legislation, and current best practice guidelines.
Approach	A desk-based assessment was conducted using readily available online resources and local biological records up to 2 km from the Site boundary obtained from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre. A UKHab survey of the Site was conducted by Brown & Co Assistant Ecologist Megan Carter BSc (Hons) MSc on 31 October 2025. All habitats within the Site were identified, assessed, and the potential of the Site and immediate vicinity to support protected and notable species was estimated.

Results

Habitats	The Site was dominated by modified grassland.
Species	Habitats had potential to support GCN, hedgehog and nesting birds.

Recommendations

Further Work & Surveys

- Nesting Birds – clearance/management of any onsite vegetation higher than 300 mm should take place outside of the core nesting bird season (March-August inclusive). **If this cannot be achieved**, it is recommended that a pre-works check by a suitably qualified ecologist should take place within 48 hrs prior of any works.

Mitigation

- Hedgehog – any refugia with potential to be used by hedgehog should be avoided by the works.
- GCN - A District Level Licence (DLL) has been authorised by Natural England for Great Crested Newts.
- Other taxa – various recommendations to protect and mitigate risks to animals outlined in section 4.2.2.
- Environment – various recommendations to protect and mitigate risks to the environment outlined in section 4.2.3.

Enhancement

- Inclusion of biodiversity enhancement features outlined in section 4.3.1.
- General biodiversity enhancements recommendations are outlined in section 4.3.2.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Background

Brown & Co was commissioned by Mr R J and Mrs M E Angood in October 2025 to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land at Winwick Village Hall, Huntingdonshire, PE28 5PN (NRG: TL 10461 80806)—hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.

This report sets out the results of a desk-based study and a survey of the Site undertaken on 31 October 2025.

The Site is a parcel of land dominated by modified grassland. A section of hedgerow was present in the north of the Site.

This report has been produced to support a planning application for the Site which includes the construction of new residential five dwellings. Works and Site personnel are anticipated to access the Site via existing roadways.

1.2 Site Description

1.2.1 Present Context

The Site was a flat parcel of land within the village of Winwick, Huntingdonshire, in the north-west of Cambridgeshire (See Figure 1). The Site was dominated by modified grassland, with a section of hedgerow in the north of the Site.



Figure 1 – Site location (redline), showing the wider local landscape (© 2026 Microsoft Corporation, © 2026 Maxar, ©CNES (2026) Distribution Airbus DS).

Imagery taken from Aerial Imagery Oct 2026.

1.2.2 Landscape Context

The wider landscape around the Site was dominated by the small urban area of Winwick and agricultural field parcels, Various hedgerows, woodland blocks, waterbodies, and grassland are also present within the vicinity of the Site, including a line of trees adjacent to the south-eastern boundary.

Multiple public roadways, chiefly associated with the small urban area of Winwick are present within the vicinity of the site.

No Statutory Main Rivers are present within 2 km of the Site.

1.2.3 Connectivity

Considering the outlined contextual features above, it is estimated that overland connectivity of the Site to local habitats is moderate owing to open boundaries with only minor dispersal barriers including a few minor roadways, and numerous interconnected hedgerows, field margins, woodland blocks and meadows are present that are considered to facilitate connectivity for terrestrial fauna.

Nine ponds are present within 250 m of the Site boundary, the closest of which, P1, was 10 m E of the Site:

- P1 (TL 10436 80807);
- P2 (TL 10443 80752)
- P3 (TL 10401 80769)
- P4 (TL 10578 80642)
- P5 (TL 10286 80607)
- P6 (TL 10633 80833)
- P7 (TL 10608 80895)
- P8 (TL 10183 80874)
- P9 (TL 10503 80740) – Dry at time of survey

This is considered to leave a high potential for semi-aquatic species with terrestrial life phases to commute to/from the Site.

It is estimated that more mobile, flying species, such as bats, birds and certain insect taxa, would be able to commute to and from the site.

2. Methods

All methodology associated with the onsite and desk-based elements of this document have been undertaken with reference to CIEEM (2017a and 2017b) and British Standards (2013) and adapted for the specific context of the Site and project proposals.

2.1 Objectives

The aim of this report is to provide an assessment of the Site and certain aspects of adjacent areas in regard to identifying and discussing any potential ecological constraints associated with the project. Such constraints include statutory designated sites and their associated Impact Risk Zones, protected and notable species and habitats, and invasive non-native species. A plan showing all onsite habitats and important ecological features within the zones of influence will be generated. Recommendations for further work/surveying, appropriate mitigation, and enhancement opportunities will be provided.

Professional judgement based on project knowledge and survey observations is occasionally relied upon. All standards, guidance, and professional opinions within this assessment are subject to ongoing review and scrutiny in the light of newly emerging data and information sources.

2.2 Mitigation Hierarchy

In applying the widely used professional guideline of the mitigation hierarchy (see Figure 2), the following processes for this report was adhered to:

Avoid – ecological features of note, as identified by this report, should be avoided in the first instance. This can be achieved by applying a compensatory design strategy that appropriately buffers said features or shifts the Site footprint.

Minimise – any potential adverse impacts identified in this report should be appropriately mitigated for in the design and project implementation phases.

Compensate – when avoidance and minimising options have been exhausted, impacts can be compensated for via project outcomes. Compensation should seek to provide adequate project and design options that will equal or exceed the impact to be compensated for.

Offset – the project has the opportunity to deliver enhancements to offset and exceed the requirements of avoidance, minimisation, and compensation.

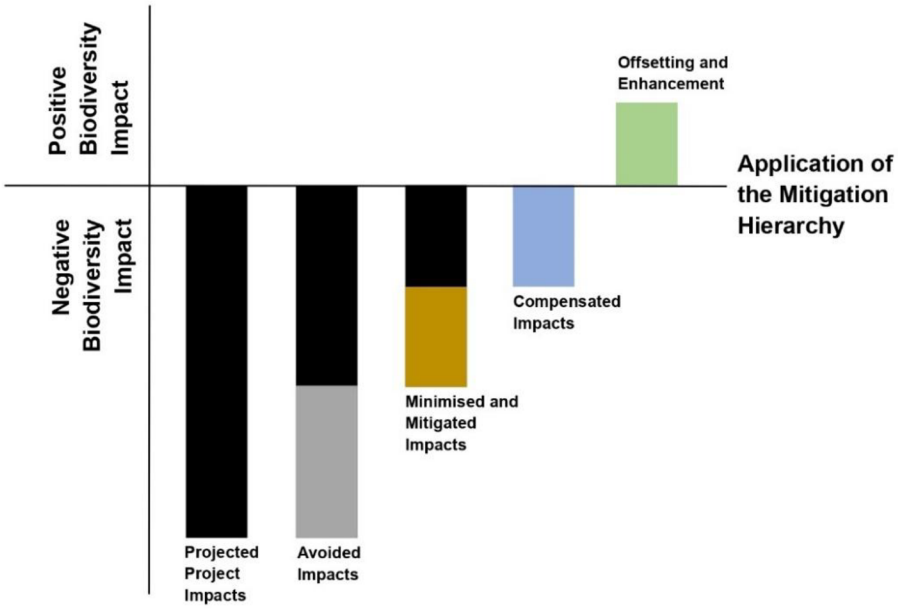


Figure 2 – Summary of the process of applying the mitigation hierarchy adhered to during this assessment.

2.3 Criteria of Importance

Statutory and non-statutory designated sites and habitats within the zones of influence were assessed on the following criteria to allocate their relative importance:

- Type of designation.
- Habitat Rarity.
- Protected, notable and/or threatened species records.

- Biodiversity – quantity of native of widely naturalised animal, plant and fungal species; and genetic diversity within individual species' populations.
- Diversity of habitat type, age, and structure.
- Connectivity on a Site, local vicinity, and landscape level.

2.4 Legislation and Policy

Appendix A sets out the national and local planning policy, as well as environmental and wildlife legislation relevant to the Site. The project must adhere to these documents at all times. The contents of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are written in part to avoid an offence being committed in regard to this policy and legislation.

2.5 Zones of influence

Zones of influence include the Site, any adjacent areas/features that could be impacted by the project (including hydrological and nutrient cycling disruption), and areas/features that could be temporarily impacted by the project, such as access routes and equipment and/or materials storage areas. Current guidance from CIEEM (2018) recommends that all zones of influence are assessed as part of ecological assessments.

Table 2.1 presents the zones of influence employed in this assessment.

Table 2.1 – *Zones of influence investigated during this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*

Ecological Feature	Zone of Influence
European statutory designated sites notified for bat populations	10 km
Statutory designated sites	5 km
Non-statutory designated sites	2 km
Local biological records and granted European Protected Species licences	2 km
Priority habitats (habitats of principal importance to biodiversity conservation in England listed under Section 41 in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 (as amended))—desk-based assessment	1 km
Non-priority habitats assessed at the time of survey	50 m
Badger (*Meles meles*) setts/activity	50 m
Bat suitable habitat – commuting and foraging	2 km
Bat roosting features	30 m
Beaver (*Castor fiber*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), and white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) suitable habitat/signs	100 m
Bird records (direct observations at the time of survey) of species listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended)	500 m.
Waterbodies suitable as breeding sites for great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*)	250 m
Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) suitable habitat/signs	50 m
Reptile (direct observations at the time of survey and hibernacula/shelter searches)	30 m
Roman Snail (*Helix pomatia*) suitable habitat	30 m
Other protected species records (direct observations at the time of survey) listed on Schedules 5 and 8 of the WCA and/or European Protected Species (EPS) listed on the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (CHSR) 2017 (as amended) and suitable habitat	100 m
Priority species records (direct observations at the time of survey) as listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended) such as brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*), harvest mouse (*Micromys minutus*), and polecat (*Mustela putorius*)	50 m.
Other common and widespread species records (direct observations at the time of survey) such as small mammals and insects	10 m

2.6 Desk Study

A desk-based assessment was conducted of the following features:

2.6.1 *Statutory and Non-statutory Designated Sites Notified for Nature Conservation*

A search on Defra's online MAGIC tool was used to identify and assess statutory designated sites within the zone of influence. The local records provided by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC) were used to set out the non-statutory designated sites located within the zone of influence. Descriptions of the sites were given using information set out in the biological records and information published by Natural England, e.g. SSSI citations. Distance (nearest 5 m), direction, connectivity, and any notified protected or notable species were also discussed where relevant. Statutory sites designated for non-conservation purposes, such as geological sites, were excluded from this assessment.

2.6.2 *Priority Habitats*

Priority Habitats were assessed up to 1 km from the Site boundary. Defra's online MAGIC tool was used to identify these habitats and their extent. The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory was used to search for Priority Trees within the zone of influence. Distance and connectivity were also discussed where relevant.

2.6.3 *Protected and Notable Species Records*

Local biological records supplied by CPERC and a variety of opensource webpages, and citizen science observations were used to inform an assessment of protected and notable species within the zones of influence. Given that species' distributions, populations, and individual territories change relatively often through time (Bright *et al.* 2006; Matthews *et*

al. 2018; Thaxter *et al.* 2010), species records are only considered relevant to this assessment if they occurred within the last 10 years.

2.6.4 *Connectivity*

Connectivity is discussed and referred to in multiple sections throughout this report to support the ecological assessment of the Site and proposed works.

While the scientific concept of connectivity has been traditionally hard to define (Crooks 2010) and is potentially a complex of different processes (Fahrig *et al.* 2021), for the purposes of this assessment Merriam (1984) and Taylor *et al.* (1993) are lent from in the following definition:

The degree to which isolation of organisms is prevented via biotic and abiotic factors that impact movement and/or dispersal.

With this definition of connectivity, in the context of the Site's connectivity to the various features outlined in this report, this can include physical barriers such as public roadways or watercourses, or behavioural responses such as animals' reactions to disturbance (Tischendorf & Fahrig 2000)—where physical barriers are not present, functional barriers may still exist where species are less able/likely to use certain areas (Crooks 2010).

The permeability of landscapes and habitats is assessed on a taxa, species, and population level as the consequences of dispersal barriers can vary markedly between these groups depending on their ecology. For example, connectivity for flying bats and birds to onsite habitats could be assessed to be higher than that of terrestrial small mammals that need to locomote at ground level.

Different levels of connectivity can impact species in different ways. For example, species that naturally exist in metapopulations—a group of geographically local populations that

share occasional migration of individuals and geneflow between them—may be more negatively impacted by relatively low connectivity than species with less frequent landscape geneflow. At an ecosystem level, reduced connectivity through fragmentation of landscapes (physically or functionally) is considered to have negative biodiversity effects (Rudnick *et al.* 2012). Although, reduced connectivity and fragmentation is often thought to be conflated with habitat loss and may have some positive impacts (Fahrig 2016 & 2017). Nevertheless, less connectivity reduces species' capacity to disperse through landscapes and improving connectivity in mainland Britain fits in with a key output of the Lawton reviews' (2010) 'bigger, better, *more joined up'* recommendation for ecological sites and networks to the then UK Environment Secretary.

This assessment ranks connectivity on the following scale:

High – good connectivity, perhaps with direct linking features and habitats. No major or moderate dispersal barriers present.

Moderate – medium connectivity. Opportunities for dispersal are present, perhaps under certain conditions such as time of day or year, but dispersal barriers are present to some degree and may inhibit species' movement. More permeable corridors and habitats may be preferred.

Low – poor connectivity. At least one major dispersal barrier is present; there is negligible potential for movement to/from the Site.

2.7 Field study

A survey of the site was conducted on 31 October 2025 by Assistant Ecologist Megan Carter BSc (Hons) MSc.

The survey area was defined to include the Site and relevant zones of influence shown in Table 2.1. The survey area was subject to a walkover by the attending ecologist, wherein the onsite habitats were identified and assessed in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd 2023). Flora species lists were compiled for each habitat and assigned positions on the DAFOR (Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional, or Rare) scale as laid out in Walker *et al.* (2010). Additionally, the Site was assessed for its suitability for protected and notable species. Any evidence of such species, e.g. Badger setts and signs, was recorded and geo-referenced onsite.

An adaptation of Jukes (2021) 'checklist' for considering site suitability for invertebrates in initial scoping was employed in reference to onsite habitats. This method seeks to identify the presence/absence of ecological features that benefit invertebrate abundance and diversity.

2.8 Limitations

The survey of the Site was conducted in October 2025, outside of the optimal botanical assessment period and habitat survey season (April-September inclusive). Thus, it is considered that there was moderate risk of notable plant species, such as invasive non-natives, habitat characteristic species, and protected species, not being recorded by this survey. However, onsite habitats were common and widespread in Britain and were not considered to present complex ecological communities, such as flora-rich woodland floor or lowland meadow, that would be misidentified outside of the optimal botanical assessment period. As such, it is estimated that an accurate baseline ecological condition of the Site was captured at the time of survey. The survey was conducted in October 2025. As the habitats and plant species recorded are all common in south-east England, the survey is considered valid for a further 12 months from the date of this report.

While searches of opensource aerial imagery are useful resources to provide data on the Site and its surrounding landscape, there are inevitable situations where some features, such as garden ponds, are not detected and other features misidentified. These limitations are considered to be unavoidable when employing such tools, however, this assessment does not provide significant enough weight to the results of these searches that they would impact its findings.

References to protected species within this report do not constitute full protected species survey results and should not be treated as such.

3. Results

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Designated Sites

No European statutory designated sites notified for bats were identified within 10 km of the Site. No statutory designated sites were identified within 5km of the Site and one non-statutory designated site was identified a hedgerow 1, 057 m NW of the Site.

3.1.2 Priority and Notable Habitats

Priority Habitats (habitats of Principal Importance to biodiversity Conservation in England as outlined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended)) that were identified within 1 km of the Site on Defra's MAGIC tool are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 – *Priority Habitats*

Habitat	Number, Distance and Direction of Closest Parcel	Connectivity
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	6 parcels; 71 m S	Moderate – the Site is connected via agricultural field parcels with hedgerow boundaries.
Traditional orchard	1 parcel; 239 m S	Moderate – the Site is connected via agricultural field parcels with hedgerow boundaries and across a few minor roadways.

No records of ancient or veteran trees were identified within 2 km of the Site boundary.

It is considered that multiple native hedgerows and ponds within 1 km of the Site may meet the criteria of Priority Habitats.

3.1.3 European Protected Species Licences

There were no Natural England European Protected Species Applications noted in the last 10 years within 2 km of the Site.

3.2 Field Study

3.2.1 UK Habitat Classification Survey

This section outlines all habitats recorded within the Site on the 31 October 2025. A plan depicting the onsite habitats, their extent and location, and relevant target notes are shown in Appendix B; photographs of the Site are shown in Appendix C.

UKHab habitats identified within the Site:

- Modified grassland – g4
- Other native hedgerow – h2a6

3.2.1.1 Modified Grassland

The Site comprised a modified grassland field (Photograph 1). The sward was dominated by perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), with frequent Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), and occasional cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*). Forbs included common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), and broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*).

3.2.1.4 Other Native Hedgerow

Existing section of hedgerow (Photograph 2). Hedgerow was dominated by hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), with frequent bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), and occasional field maple (*Acer campestre*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), elm-leaved blackberry (*Rubus ulmifolius*) and field elm (*Ulmus minor*). One emergent wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) was present within the hedgerow.

3.3 Protected and Notable Species Evaluation

A search of local biological records was conducted by CPERC up to a distance of 2 km from the Site boundary. Only records within the last 10 were included in this assessment. Certain records were selected in this assessment in reference to their relative relevance to the Site and project proposals. Any records not accurate to 100 m or less are considered to fall below the spatial accuracy threshold for this investigation and are not considered further.

All records of species protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended), and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were included in this assessment, as well as additionally selected notable species records.

3.3.1 Badger

The local records returned no occurrence of badger within 2 km of the Site.

The Site has some habitat suitable for badger sett-building behaviour and foraging via onsite grassland, but it is relatively small and more suitable habitat is present in the wider area.

No signs of badger were recorded at the time of survey.

Therefore, it is considered that potential for the Site to support badger is negligeable—no impacts from the proposed works to these species are anticipated.

3.3.2 Bat

The local records returned no occurrences of bat species within 2 km of the Site.

There were no onsite features suitable for roosting bat.

Therefore, it is considered that potential for the Site to support roosting bats is negligible—no impacts to these species from the proposed works are anticipated.

It is estimated that habitat for foraging bat was present in the local vicinity in the form of more extensive hedgerows, woodland blocks, and waterbodies.

3.3.3 Birds

No birds that are protected or are Priority Species (species of Principal Importance to biodiversity Conservation in England as outlined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended)) were returned by the local records.

The online opensource tool Swift Mapper identified no records of swift (*Apus apus*) within 2 km of the Site.

Records of notable and protected birds are present within the zone of influence for these taxa and offsite nesting habitat in the form of adjacent trees and hedges could be impacted by the works. A section of hedgerow which is suitable for nesting birds is proposed to be removed to create the Site access. All British birds are protected while nesting.

Therefore, it is considered that nesting birds may be present within the Site and be impacted by the proposed works.

3.3.4 Great Crested Newt

The local records identified two location records of great crested newt (GCN) within 2km of the Site, the closest of which was 93 m S of the Site with moderate connectivity via residential dwellings, vegetated gardens, and a hedgerow.

Nine ponds are present within 250 m of the Site, one of which was dry at the time of survey. eDNA was carried out on P1 (TL 10436 80807), P2 (TL 10443 80752), P3 (TL 10401

80769) P4 (TL 10578 80642), P6 (TL 10633 80833) P7 (TL 10608 80895). All results were positive with the exception of P6 which was negative.

Therefore, it is considered that there is potential for the Site to support GCN in their terrestrial phase—impacts from the proposed works to this species are possible.

A DLL (DLL-ENQ-CAMB-00155) was authorised on 22 July 2026.

3.3.5 *Hazel Dormouse*

No occurrences of hazel dormouse were returned in the local records. No onsite vegetation stands are considered capable of supporting viable hazel dormouse populations—this species has a naturally low population density, 1.75-2.5 individuals per ha on average (Bright *et al.* 2006) and therefore generally requires larger blocks of suitable habitat (or connected areas of habitat) to support breeding populations.

Therefore, it is considered that the potential for the Site to support breeding hazel dormouse is negligible—no impacts from the proposed works to this species are anticipated.

3.3.6 *Invertebrates*

Occurrences of invertebrate Priority Species returned from local records included small heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*) and white-letter hairstreak (*Satyrium w-album*). Common species such as cinnabar (*Tyria jacobaeae*) are considered likely to be present within the Site.

No other notable invertebrate species were recorded on the Site and the onsite habitats are not deemed suitable to support other notable and protected invertebrates such as Roman snail.

Table 3.2 outlines an adaptation of Jukes (2021) good practice guidance on invertebrate ecology surveying on initial site assessments regarding the results of the Site survey.

Table 3.2 – *Jukes (2021) criteria for good invertebrate sites*

Criteria of Good Invertebrate Habitat	Site Passes Criteria (Y/N)	Rationale
Range of habitat types or features	N	The Site was dominated by modified grassland.
Structural variation within habitats	N	Onsite habitats were relatively uniform.
Variation in topography	N	The Site was a flat parcel of land.
Abundance of flowering plants	N	A poor diversity and abundance of flowering plants was present within the Site.
Availability of sunlight	Y	The Site is largely open with sunlight being readily available.

The Site does not lie within a Buglife Important Invertebrate Area or a B-line.

Considering the relative lack of extensive resources and habitats for invertebrates within the Site, and the relatively small scale and low impact nature of the proposed works, it is estimated that the potential for the Site to support and impact protected invertebrates is negligible—no impacts from the proposed works to these species are anticipated.

3.3.7 Other Mammals

The local records returned no records of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within 2 km of the Site. Nevertheless, it is considered that hedgehog are likely to be present within the local area. Grassland and adjacent boundary hedgerows offer suitable shelter and foraging habitat.

Therefore, it is considered that there is potential for hedgehog within the Site—impacts from the proposed works to these species are anticipated.

Local records showed no records of Brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) within 2km of the Site. The Site is considered to be too isolated and small to be suitable for Brown Hare.

Therefore, it is considered that potential for Brown hare within the Site is negligible—no impacts to these species from the proposed works are anticipated.

No additional occurrences of other mammals within 2 km of the Site were returned by local records.

3.3.8 Plants

No records of vascular plants listed under Schedule 8 or 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), or the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended) were returned by the local record search.

No protected, notable, or invasive vascular plant species were recorded onsite at the time of survey.

No impacts from the proposed works to these species are anticipated.

3.3.9 Reptiles

No records of reptiles were returned from the local records search.

No signs of reptile were recorded onsite at the time of survey.

Habitats within the Site were unsuitable for common and widespread reptiles due to their relatively small and disturbed nature. The short sward grassland provided a lack of shelter

and foraging opportunities. Much more suitable habitat for commuting and foraging reptiles including areas of woodland, is present within the local vicinity.

It is considered that potential for the Site to support reptiles is negligible—no impacts from the proposed works to these species are anticipated.

3.3.10 Watercourse Species

The local records identified no occurrences of watercourse species within 2 km of the Site.

There were no watercourses within the Site.

Therefore, it is considered that potential for the Site to support watercourse species is negligeable—no impacts from the proposed works to these species are anticipated.

3.4 Evaluation

Evidenced by the results of this assessment, Table 3.3 outlines the various ecological features associated with the Site and project proposals and determines the need for further actions.

Table 3.3 – *ecological feature evaluation*

Ecological Feature	Further consideration	Rationale
Designated sites	No	There are no designated sites within the vicinity of the Site.
Priority Habitats	No	As the proposed project does not involve the removal of large areas of habitat or extensive development, no impacts to these habitats are anticipated. However, protection measures are appropriate in the context of adjacent areas of Priority Habitat.
Onsite habitats	No	All onsite habitats are common and widespread within Britain.

Badger	No	No evidence of badger setts were recorded at the time of survey.
Bat	No	No onsite habitats and features are considered to have potential to support roosting bat. The wider landscape is estimated to have myriad opportunities for foraging and commuting bats.
Birds	Yes	Onsite features have potential to support nesting birds.
Great crested newt	Yes	Nine ponds are present within 250 m of the Site boundary.
Hazel dormouse	No	No stands capable of supporting viable hazel dormouse populations were present within the Site or within adjacent habitats.
Invertebrates	No	Habitats within the Site offer relatively little resources for common and widespread invertebrate species.
Other mammals	Yes	Habitats within the Site may support hedgehog.
Plants	No	No protected, notable or invasive plants were recorded within the Site.
Reptiles	No	Onsite habitats were unsuitable for commuting and foraging reptile. There is a lack of suitable connected habitat in the wider landscape.
Watercourse species	No	No riparian zone habitats are present within the Site.

4. Outputs and Opportunities

4.1 Further Work & Surveys

The following recommendations are required regarding protected species within the Site. The outputs will inform more detailed mitigation and potential licencing recommendations in the context of the project proposals.

4.1.1 Nesting bird

Clearence/management of any onsite vegetation higher than 300 mm should take place outside of the core nesting bird season (March-August inclusive). **If this cannot be achieved**, it is recommended that a pre-works check by a suitably qualified ecologist should take place within 48 hrs prior of any works.

Any identified nests may need to be buffered by 5 m, or greater, exclusion zones where no works can take place until the young have fledged or the nest is deemed to be no longer active.

4.1.2 Great Crested Newt

A District Level Licence (DLL) has been authorised by Natural England for Great Crested Newts.

4.2 Mitigation

4.2.1 Hedgehog

Any refugia with potential to be used by hedgehog, such as vegetation piles and scrub, should be avoided by the works. If individual hedgehog are encountered within the works area, all works must stop and a suitably qualified ecologist consulted before proceeding.

4.2.2 *General Animal Protection Measures*

The following measures should be adhered to throughout the project to protect local fauna:

- If any potentially protected, notable or vulnerable animals, such as newts, bats, or reptiles, are encountered in the works area or in directly adjacent habitats, **all works must stop** and a suitably qualified ecologist consulted before proceeding.
- Creation of unintended habitat features that may be used by terrestrial fauna, e.g. spoil piles and brash piles, to be avoided during works where possible.
- No works to take place between sunset and sunrise.
- Avoidance of artificial lighting after dusk to minimise potential impacts to nocturnal fauna—lighting scheme to be in line with guidance set-out in Institution of Lighting Professionals (2023).

4.2.3 *General Environmental Protection Measures*

The following measures should be adhered to throughout the project to protect the local environment:

- Avoid unnecessary chemicals, herbicides, pesticides, vermicides and creating debris on the Site as these substances could harm wildlife. Liquid chemicals could further drain into the groundwater, causing contamination of the wider landscape.
- Plant, equipment, and/or materials should be stored on areas of hardstanding where possible.
- Fuel considerations to avoid leakage and pollution of the local environment:
    - All equipment, machinery and/or plant used in the scope of the proposed works should be fitted with fuel drip trays where possible.
    - All storing of fuel and re-fuelling of equipment, machinery and/or plant should take place with the use of drip-capture devices.

- All onsite personnel should have access to spill mitigation devices for other equipment capable of leaking fuel or oil.

- Activities generating dust should be avoided or dampened where possible.

4.3 Enhancement

All enhancements set out in this section seek to uplift biodiversity—the variability within and among living organisms, species and ecosystems—local to the Site. These recommendations will adhere to the principles and guidance set-out in The National Pollinator Strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England (Defra 2014), the Environmental Improvement Plan (Defra 2023a), Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network (Lawton *et al.* 2010), and the National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities 2023), among other documents, as well as following standing advise from Buglife, Championing the Farmed Environment, the Environment Agency, Farm wildlife, Hedgelink, Natural England, and the People's Trust for Endangered Species.

4.3.1 Taxa-specific Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities

The proposed works have potential to provide taxa-specific enhancements to benefit local biodiversity in the following recommended ways:

- Artificial bird boxes to benefit threatened, protected and notable species. These could include features for swift & starling, among other species. Boxes to be affixed to buildings or mature trees.
- Artificial bat boxes to benefit all bat species. Boxes to be affixed to buildings or mature trees.
- Features for invertebrates to provide novel resources for a variety of niches. To include deadwood features, seed sowing and general planting for pollinators, and artificial nesting habitat for solitary bees.

4.3.2 *General Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities*

The following measures are recommended to provide supplementary enhancements to benefit local biodiversity:

- Where biological resources are used on Site, such as wood for fences, materials should be sustainable and locally sourced where possible; Forestry Stewardship Council certified for timber resources.
- Avoid transporting offsite soil onto the Site. Where unavoidable, ensure that soil is peat free and suitable for the proposed transplant location. Peat free soil/compost retains water reducing the amount of watering required, it also releases nutrients slowly and has a reduced impact on the environment when compared with compost containing peat.
- Avoid pollutants and general litter/debris which can cause harm to wildlife.
- Naturally occurring vertebrate carcases to be left in situ if deemed not to be a danger to public health. This promotes necrobiome ecology and encourages taxa such as fungi and beetles—keystone species in woodland habitats (Mondor *et al.* 2012).

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APPENDIX A: Planning Policy & Legislation

Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Section 19 of the NPPF aims to ensure planning policies and decisions drive nature's recovery, safeguard critical habitats and landscapes, and recognize natural capital as central to sustainable growth. The framework's requirements for ecological considerations in both plan-making and development decisions are summarised below.

Development plans must proactively identify environmental opportunities and safeguards by:

- Utilizing Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), Protected Landscape Management Plans, and River Basin Management Plans to identify ecological networks and areas for restoration.
- Steering development towards land of the least environmental value and avoiding higher-quality agricultural land where poorer-quality alternatives exist.
- Setting local Green Infrastructure standards that draw upon Natural England's national standards.
- Setting local standards for BNG exceeding the statutory minimum only for specific site allocations and ensuring these are fully justified.

Plans should also aim to integrate the following design and landscape priorities where relevant:

- New streets should generally be tree-lined. Selection must be arboriculturally sound, climate-resilient, and include long-term maintenance provisions.
- In National Parks, the Broads, and National Landscapes, development must be limited in scale and designed to avoid harm to their statutory purposes and natural beauty. Major development in these areas should be refused except in exceptional circumstances where it is in the public interest.
- Development must maintain the character of the undeveloped coast and not hinder the King Charles III England Coast Path.

Ecological reports supporting development proposals should demonstrate compliance with the following:

- Significant harm to biodiversity must be avoided (through alternative site selection); if unavoidable, it

must be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for. Proposals failing this hierarchy should be refused.

- Proposals must minimize biodiversity impacts and incorporate features for priority or threatened species. Specifically, integrated nest boxes (e.g., swift bricks) are required unless there are compelling technical reasons against them.
- Development should strengthen ecological networks extending beyond the site boundary, informed by LNRS and other assessments.
- Proposals should use Green Infrastructure and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits for biodiversity, water management, and climate resilience.

Ecological assessments must also differentiate between levels of site importance:

- International Sites (Habitats Sites): Must be refused unless it is certain there will be no adverse effect on site integrity, or specific derogation tests are met.
- National Sites (SSSIs): Support is only given if no adverse effect on special interest features occurs, or if the benefits clearly outweigh the impact.
- Local Sites: These should only be supported if there is no significant adverse effect on integrity or if the benefits clearly outweigh the harm.
- Irreplaceable Habitats: Loss or deterioration of habitats like ancient woodland or veteran trees must be refused unless there are "wholly exceptional reasons" and a suitable compensation strategy is in place.

Main Environmental and wildlife Legislation (England)

Environment Act 2021

Schedule 14 of The Environment Act 2021 makes it mandatory for all new developments (with some limited exceptions) to achieve a biodiversity net gain (BNG) of at least 10% by the time the development is completed compared to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This percentage may be amended in the future by the Secretary of State.

Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2017 (as amended).

Section 43 of Part 3 of this legislation makes it an offence to do any of the following with regards to European Protected Species (animals) as listed on Schedule 2:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species.
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species.
- Deliberately takes or destroy the eggs of such an animal.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal. (*Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute this activity*).

Section 43 of Part 3 of this legislation makes it an offence to do any of the following with regards to European Protected Species (plants) as listed on Schedule 5:

- Deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy a wild plant of a European Protected Species.
- Be in position of or to transport said plant.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (as amended).

Section 40 of Part 3 of this act compels public bodies (local authorities, police, fire and health authorities, and utility companies) with exercisable functions within England to consider actions to be taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England—in particular to have regard to the United Nations Environmental Programme Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992, any relevant local nature recovery strategies, and any relevant species conservation strategy or protected site strategy (prepared by Natural England).

Section 41 of Part 3 of this Act ensures the publishing of a list containing species and habitat types that are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving or enhancing biodiversity in England.

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996.

Under this legislation it is an offence to mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with the intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

Under this legislation it is an offence to (or intend to, or to be reckless as to whether your actions would have these consequences):

- Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger (or attempts to do so).
- Damage or destroy any part of a badger sett. (*Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities*).
- Obstruct access to a badger sett. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).
- Disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Part 1 of this act makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild bird, to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built, and/or to take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Part 1 also makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird included in Schedule 1 of the act, and to take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bid included in Schedule ZA1.

Schedule 5 list non-avian species that are afforded various protections under Sections 9.1a, 9.1b, 9.2, 9.4a, 9.4a (Whales), 9.4b, 9.4c, 9.5a and 9.5b.

Schedule 8 lists plant species that are protected from intentionally picking, uprooting or destroying under Section 13.

Schedule 9 lists non-native invasive plants for which it is an offence under Section 14 to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any part of said plants. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).

Other Legislation (England)

- **The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2017**
- **Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003** (as amended).
- **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**
- **Hedgerows Regulations 1997.**
- **Weeds Act 1959.**

APPENDIX B: Site Habitat Plan

See overleaf.

Plans are indicative approximations of the layout of onsite habitats and are not drawn to measurable scale.

Baseline Habitats



Produced on Land App, Oct 12, 2026.
© OpenStreetMap contributors

10 m
Scale 1:591 (at A4)

N

APPENDIX C: Photographs



Photograph 1: existing modified grassland.



Photograph 2: existing section of hedgerow.