EMMETT EDWARDS

LOWER LAINES FARM, CUCKFIELD, RH17 5AA

Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme

November 2025

eas ltd
Environmental Assessment Services Ltd

REPORT DATA SHEET

Requirement	**Data**
Report Reference	820a/GB/LowerLainesFarm/BES
Date	November 2025
Client	D Edwards & Son
Report type	Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme
Purpose	Supporting Information
Revisions	-
Prepared by	Daniel Milford BSc (Hons) Signed [redacted]
Approved by	Lucy Monday BSc (Hons), MCIWEM, MIEnvSc, ACIEEM Signed [redacted]

D EDWARDS & SON

LOWER LAINES FARM, CUCKFIELD, WEST SUSSEX RH17 5AA

Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme

November 2025

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Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme

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1. THE SITE AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Background

1.1.1. The following report, prepared by Environmental Assessment Services Limited, is to be submitted to Mid Sussex District Council to address Condition No.4 issued under Planning Application Number DM/25/1948 for the permitted installation of 40No. solar PV panels and associated cabling and batteries at Lower Laines Farm, in Cuckfield, West Sussex.

1.1.2. The recommendations of this report are to be agreed with the developer and submitted for approval to Mid Sussex District Council. Where the recommendations contained in section 3 of this report are approved, they are to be implemented and retained as detailed thereafter. It is recommended that evidence of the completed works should be obtained and retained for confirmation should it be sought by the Council.

1.2. The Site

1.2.1. The existing site (0.171371 ha) comprises the northeast corner of a field historically used for mixed (non-cereal) crops and later for agricultural storage, together with the site access track and farm buildings. See Appendix A for site location and existing site plans.

1.2.2. The site is currently owned by Mr Edwards (The Applicant) who has all maintenance and management responsibilities.

1.2.3. The site lies within a rural area to the south of Cuckfield and is predominantly surrounded by agricultural fields with some additional farm buildings north of the site. The B2036 is approximately 250 m west and the A272 150 m south. A wastewater treatment works lies 300 m south of the site and the residential dwellings of Cuckfield lie 400 m north.

1.3. Proposed Development

1.3.1. Planning permission has been granted for the installation of 40No. solar PV panels mounted on frames above the ground within the northeast corner of the field, and the installation of below ground level cables to the proposed battery storage site along the existing access track. The batteries will be housed in an existing barn within the yard, and a charging point will be installed on the outer wall.

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1.4. **Aim of Report**

1.4.1. The aim of this report is to provide further detail of measures to be implemented as part of the site's redevelopment to enhance the overall ecological value of the site (i.e., a detailed scheme of biodiversity enhancements), with the aim of maximising ecological gains under the current scheme for development, as recommended within the PEA, and to satisfy Condition 4 set out by Mid Sussex District Council under application No. DM/25/1948.

2. EXISTING ECOLOGICAL STATUS

2.1. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), undertaken in July 2025 by EAS Ltd, found the site to comprise modified grassland with five small conifers and a wild plum tree on the northern boundary, and a patch of transplanted garden planting close to the centre of the site. The access track consists of an unvegetated loose surface, and the existing buildings and yard are all on a sealed surface.

2.2. The site was confirmed to be of general low ecological value with low potential to support amphibians, reptiles, badgers, dormice and other notable species. No significant works are to be undertaken on the existing outbuilding / barn which is to house the batteries and as such bats are unlikely to be significantly impacted.

2.3. The PEA confirmed appropriate mitigation and outlined potential enhancement measures in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the site. In accordance with Condition 6, the following protection measures are to be implemented:

i. Measures for the protection of Reptiles, Amphibians and Birds

Clearance and installation is to be undertaken between November and February, inclusive, when amphibians and reptiles are unlikely to be using the installation area, or the vegetation within the proposed installation area is to be cut to ground level and kept low leading up to and during the installation period. This will deter amphibians and reptiles from using the site during the installation works.

If this is not possible for overriding reasons, an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) is to be employed to oversee the works and implement protection measures as appropriate.

ii. General Protection Measures

The grass sward is to be kept to low levels leading up to and during installation period with regular cutting as required.

Open excavations are to be covered overnight and checked regularly. Should any animals become trapped, they will be assisted to escape or appropriate assistance will be sought.

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2.4. The proposed enhancement recommendations have been agreed with the developer and are to be implemented as set out within the following section (3) of this report.

3. ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, completed by EAS ltd (July 2025), included outline recommendations for the ecological enhancement of the site. The development will retain the majority of existing habitats within their current condition and deliver the following enhancements.

3.1. Treatment of Existing Planting

3.1.1. The existing transplanted garden planting (consisting of phormium, privet, box, camelia and cotoneaster) is to be removed from the site and the area prepared and seeded in accordance with section 3.2 below.

3.1.2. The existing conifers along the northern boundary are to be retained or replaced in accordance with section 3.3 below.

3.1.3. The area of bramble which has overgrown what is likely a small (dead) tree or tall post along the eastern boundary is to be retained as existing, see section 3.3 below.

3.2. Grassland Enhancement

3.2.1. The garden planting (referred to in section 3.1.1 above) is to be cleared by hand and the existing grassland cut to short sward prior to the installation of the solar panels to deter amphibians, reptiles and birds from using the site.

3.2.2. The solar panels and all associated infrastructure is then to be installed. Impacts from this activity are to be limited to the existing grassland, which is to be reinstated and enhanced within the first planting season following installation.

3.2.3. The soil within the installation area is likely to be damaged / compacted during the installation process. The ground will therefore need to be prepared prior to planting.

3.2.4. The existing soil is to be loosened in compacted areas and prepared for sowing. Existing vegetation not significantly disturbed by the installation may be retained and overseeded. No new topsoil is to be imported, and no fertiliser applied to the soil. This is intended to avoid nutrient enrichment which favours dominant grasses and weeds.

3.2.5. As a result of the PV panels, the ground is expected to be more shaded than existing. As such a more shade tolerant seed mix suited to clay soils is to be used on site. Species are to be introduced to enhance the site ecology including those more usually suited to woodland habitats. These will include: fescue grass, bent grass, autumn hawkbit, cat's-ear, common knapweed, common toadflax, cowslip, meadow buttercup, nettle-leaved bellflower, ox-eye daisy, ragged robin, ribwort plantain and yarrow.

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3.2.6. Topsoil is to be prepared during dry conditions when the soil is not waterlogged or frozen, to deliver a friable soil which can then be gently firmed and raked. This will most likely need to be done manually due to access limitations around the solar panels. Topsoil that has not been re-aerated may have limited ability to successfully support new plants, so care will need to be taken to achieve successful planting. No topsoil fallow period is recommended in this case, as it is not intended to remove the existing seedbed from the soil (only enhance it with additional species suited to new site conditions).

3.2.7. There are varied recommendations for over seeding, in this case the supplier's recommendations are to be taken into consideration. Generally, existing grass should be mown to 25 mm, seed spread evenly over the area, using a brush and firming down with a roller to ensure that the seed is in contact with the soil, and keeping the area moist if no rain falls after sowing.

3.2.8. An appropriate cutting regime is to be used to promote plant diversity within the grassland. Cutting should be undertaken to remove undesirable dominant species and promote species diversity.

3.2.9. Following establishment of the grassland, the sward height should be allowed to increase and then be cut/grazed to provide areas of varying sward length. This will offer increased habitat availability for invertebrates and ground nesting birds, as well as increased foraging potential for amphibians, reptiles, bats, birds and hedgehogs.

3.3. **Tree/Shrub Enhancement**

3.3.1. No trees are to be removed as a result of the proposed development. The existing conifers are to be retained as existing as they do provide some ecological value. Should any of the existing conifers along the northern boundary fail, they are to be replaced by native tree planting with known benefits for wildlife. Species may include ash, pedunculate oak or goat willow.

3.3.2. The overgrown bramble along the eastern boundary is also to be retained as existing. No enhancement is necessary beyond containment to prevent bramble encroachment into the adjacent grassland.

3.4. **Monitoring**

3.4.1. Confirmation should be provided to Mid Sussex District Council to confirm the above recommended planting has been undertaken in the first planting season, following the installation of the solar panels.

3.4.2. The standard time to target condition for modified grassland in good condition is 7 years (10 years for other neutral grassland). In this case, the targets given are considered achievable with appropriate planting and management. Management of the habitats proposed is not considered onerous and is unlikely to be failed. No further monitoring of the site is therefore recommended in this case, beyond that of the first installation and establishment of the new grassland. If any planting does fail, the failure should be assessed and new planting and management implemented to ensure success.

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4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. The Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy outlines the measures of enhancement to be implemented as part of the site's redevelopment.

4.2. The current ecological value of the site is low. The recommended enhancement measures should increase the habitat diversity of the site, provide increased foraging and nesting opportunities for local wildlife, and increase the aesthetic appeal of the area.

4.3. Basic monitoring and appropriate management of the site is required to ensure the measures provide the long-term biodiversity enhancement.

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APPENDIX A

Site Location and Existing Site Plans

FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY

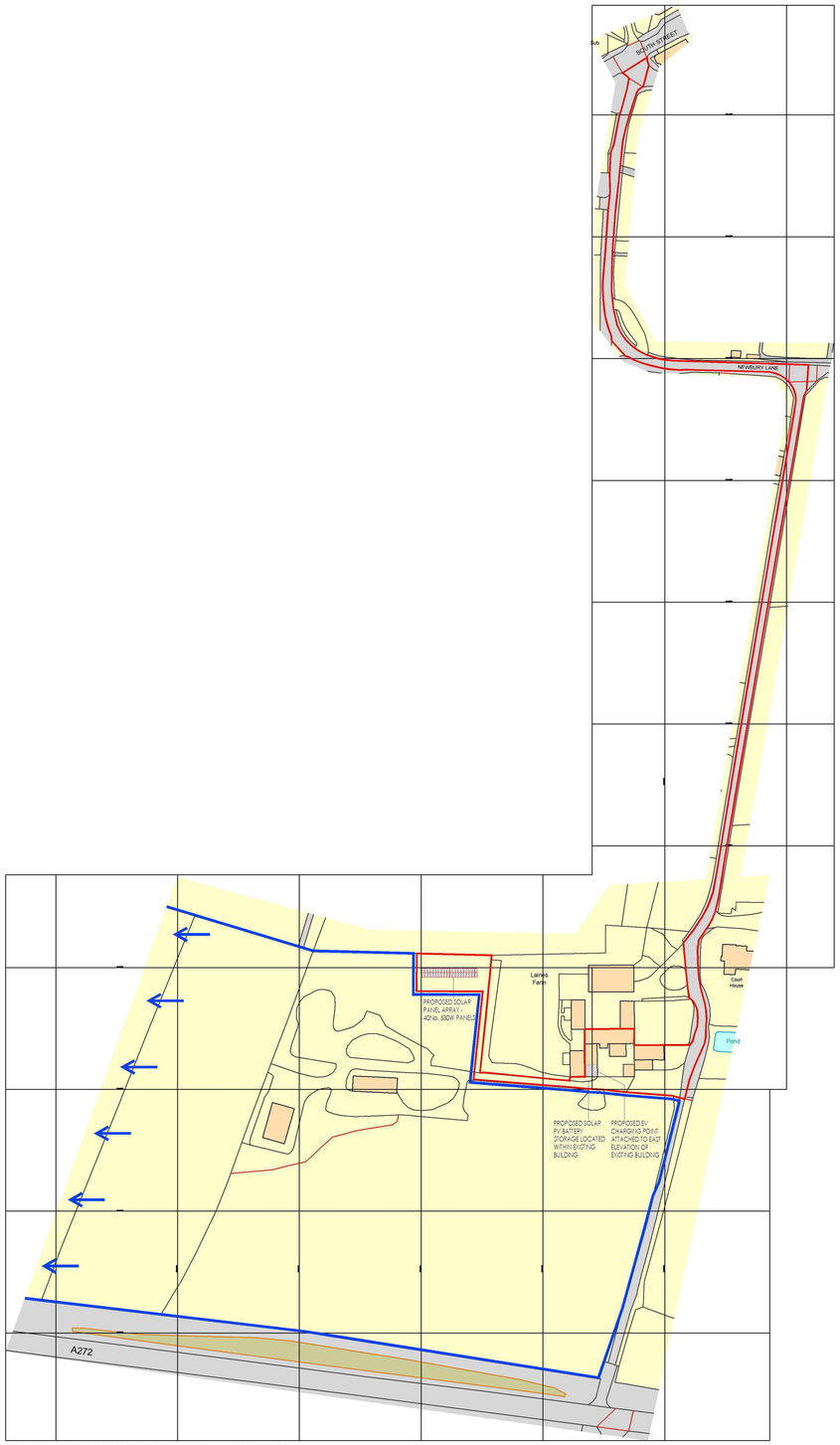
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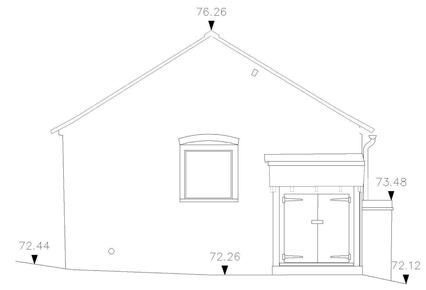
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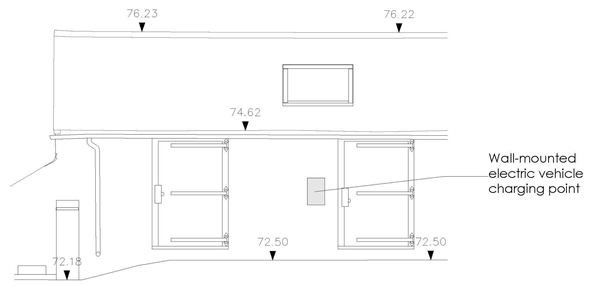
SITE LOCATION PLAN - AS PROPOSED

SCALE @ 1:1250 ON AN A1 SHEET



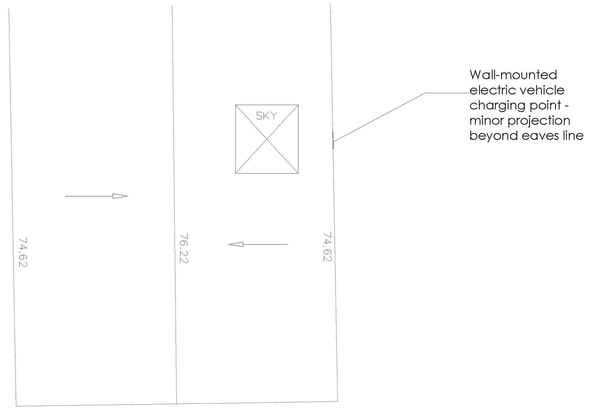
SOUTH ELEVATION - NO VISIBLE CHANGES AS PROPOSED

SCALE @ 1:50 ON AN A1 SHEET



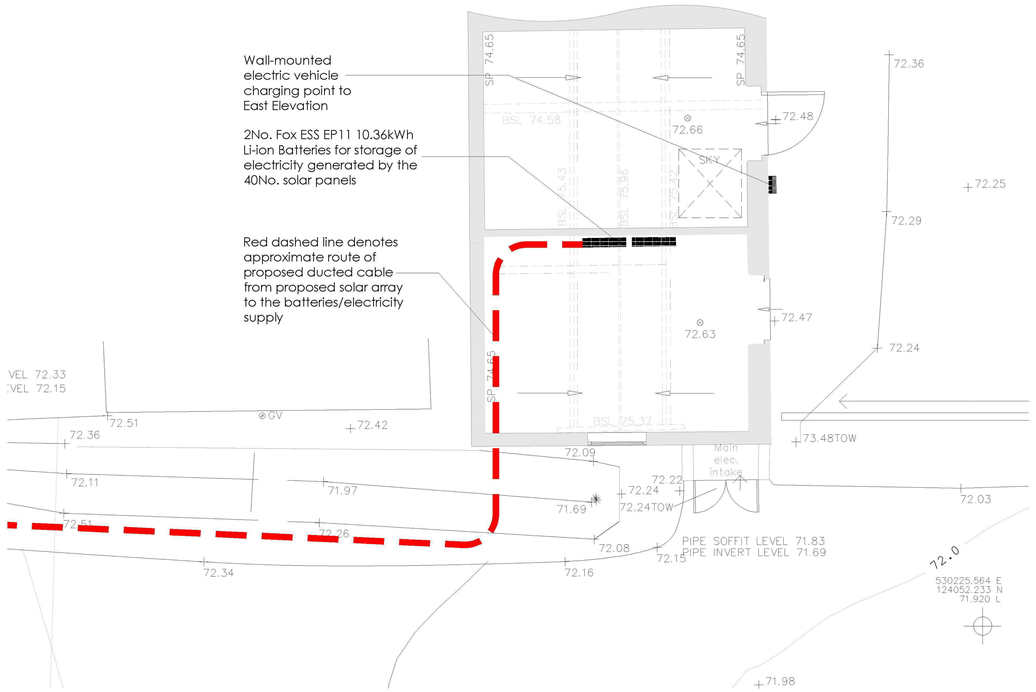
EAST ELEVATION - NO VISIBLE CHANGES AS PROPOSED

SCALE @ 1:50 ON AN A1 SHEET



ROOF PLAN - AS PROPOSED

SCALE @ 1:50 ON AN A1 SHEET



OUTBUILDING PART GENERAL ARRANGEMENT - AS PROPOSED

SCALE @ 1:50 ON AN A1 SHEET

0m 25m 50m 75m 100m 125m

VISUAL SCALE 1:1250 @ A1

0m 1m 2m 3m 4m 5m

VISUAL SCALE 1:50 @ A1

REV.	DATE.	BY.	AMENDMENT.	CHK.
*	*	*	*	*

PLANNING

gould baxter

2 Lucastes Mews, Paddockhall Road,
Haywards Heath,
West Sussex, RH16 1HE
(01444) 452604
hh@gouldbaxter.co.uk
www.gouldbaxter.co.uk

NOTES.
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CHECK ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE BEFORE ANY WORK IS COMMENCED.

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CLIENT.
Mr & Mrs D. Edwards

PROJECT.
Lower Laines Farm
Newbury Lane
Cuckfield, West Sussex
RH17 5AA

DRAWING.
Site Location Plan, Part Outbuilding GA, Roof Plan and Elevations - As Proposed

DATE.	SCALE AT A1.	DRAWN BY.	CHECKED BY.
02.07.2025	Varies	RH	MC

JOB NO.	DRAWING NO.	REV.
GH877	D.PL.002	*

APPENDIX B

Proposed Site Plans

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LOWER LAINES FARM, CUCKFIELD, RH17 5AA

Biodiversity Net Gain

Proposed Habitat Map - July 2025



Loose surface track - 240.57 m2

Sealed surface - 835.64 m2

Grassland - 542.47 m2

PV panels and cabling to be installed above / below

Trees

eas ltd
Environmental Assessment Services Ltd
Unit 4B, The Courtyard, Holmsted Farm, Staplefield Road, Cuckfield,
West Sussex, RH17 5JT
Phone : +44 (0) 1444 882552 email : info@easltd.co.uk
web site : www.easltd.co.uk