

East Grinstead Sports Club, East Grinstead

East Grinstead Sports Club Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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Executive Summary

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the proposed development area at East Grinstead Sports Club, East Grinstead, was completed by JWK Wildlife Surveys Ltd in March 2025 on behalf of East Grinstead Sports Club. This Ecology Report forms part of the environmental support to accompany the planning application for proposed works at the site, which consists of the construction of additional parking areas.

This Ecology Report includes the results of a desk study, protected and notable habitat and species assessment. The surveys were completed to establish the ecological baseline conditions within the site and to identify any potential ecological constraints to the proposed development.

The survey area is sited within a predominantly rural location approximately 2.1km southwest of East Grinstead within the Mid-Sussex District of West Sussex. The settlements of Turners Hill and Crawley Down lie 3.6km west and 3.3km northwest, respectively. The site is accessed via the wider East Grinstead Sports Club directly from Saint Hill Road which bounds the eastern margins of the wider site, approximately 120m east.

The desk-based search revealed that the site falls wholly within the High Weald National Landscape in addition to the SSSI IRZ for Weir Wood Reservoir SSSI and Ashdown Forest SAC, SPA and SSSI. The site is dominated by habitats considered to be common and widespread with no hydrological connection or any functionally linked land to any designated site. The works are discrete in nature and therefore not expected that the proposed works will lead to a negative impact on any designated site.

Habitats within the survey site were assessed as being of local importance. The habitats supported are widespread throughout the landscape however the site supports features with potential for use by widespread amphibians, reptiles, breeding birds, bats and badger. The site has connections to the wider ecological network, providing wildlife corridors for more mobile species including bats to move through the landscape.

Based on the current proposals, it is considered that precautionary approaches in relation to amphibians, reptiles, breeding birds, bats and badger will be sufficient in order to safeguard these species groups should they be present onsite and to avoid any legal infringement relating to these species.

Details regarding mitigation, including precautionary working practices together with recommendations for ecological enhancement to help contribute towards achieving biodiversity gains are provided below

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

JWK Wildlife Surveys Ltd was commissioned by East Grinstead Sports Club to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal relating to the proposed development of land at East Grinstead Sports Club, East Grinstead, West Sussex (hereafter referred to as “the site”).

Planning permission is being sought to develop a section of the site for additional vehicle parking with existing access points utilised.

The land subject to survey at East Grinstead Sports Club is the proposed working footprint which is presented in Figure 1 (Appendix A) with photographs of habitats present provided in Appendix B.

1.2 Study Area Context

The survey area is sited within a predominantly rural location approximately 2.1km southwest of East Grinstead within the Mid-Sussex District of West Sussex. The settlements of Turners Hill and Crawley Down lie 3.6km west and 3.3km northwest, respectively. The site is accessed via the wider East Grinstead Sports Club directly from Saint Hill Road which bounds the eastern margins of the wider site, approximately 120m east.

The proposed development area is formed of a narrow strip of land on a broadly northeast to southwest orientation running parallel to an existing onsite road that connects to the main parking areas. The development footprint comprises a narrow, managed grass verge with associated hedgerow and scattered trees along its length. The surrounding habitat is formed of the wider Sports Club estate with building and hardstanding to the south and, southwest and southeast with woodland to the east and northeast, and sports facilities to the north and west. The wider landscape is formed of further extensive playing fields with interspersed woodland blocks, private residential and agricultural land. The site has an approximate area of 0.095ha with a central grid reference of TQ378 363.

1.3 Scope of Survey and Aims

The primary aim of the survey undertaken is to provide an assessment of the baseline ecological conditions present within the survey area, in order to identify any ecological constraints present on site. Specifically, the key objectives of this report are to:

a) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

- Identify all statutory and non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation concern within the survey area and its surroundings;
- Record and categorise habitat types within the survey area in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification user manual (UK Habitat Classification Working Group, 2023);
- Provide a condition assessment of each semi-natural habitat present in line with Crosher *et al.* 2019;
- Identify the potential for and presence of protected species or other species of conservation interest within the survey area including: Protected Species (PS), Species of Principal Importance, (NERC Act, 2006) and Sussex Local Biodiversity Action Plan (Sussex LBAP) species.
- Provide recommendations to mitigate any development related impacts where possible and highlight requirements for any further ecological surveys; and
- Provide recommendations for ecological enhancements and net gain.

1.4 Legislative and Regulatory Context

1.4.1 Legislation

Many UK wildlife species and their habitats are protected by legislation. The key articles of relevance to this site include:

- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habs Regs 2017);
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981);
- Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997;
- Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996); and
- The Environment Act 2021.

A summary of pertinent legislation in respect of ecology and biodiversity is provided within Appendix C.

1.4.2 National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and
- minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.

This will contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including the establishment of coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future issues.

1.4.3 Biodiversity Framework

b) Habitats and Species of Principle Importance

Section 41 (S41) of the NERC Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

c) Local Biodiversity Action Plan

The Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan (Local BAP) was devised as the means by which national biodiversity targets for species of principal importance under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) would be met locally. The document also includes locally important habitats and species that are characteristic of Sussex but not covered by the national targets. Although the UKBAP has been superseded by the Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, local BAPs are still widely used as the species of principal importance remain the same.

2. Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

A desk study was undertaken for the site to obtain background ecological information for the site in March 2025. The desk study included the identification of statutory and non-statutory designated sites as well as protected and notable species.

2.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

A search was carried out using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website to identify the presence of the following statutory designated sites for nature conservation:

- Statutory sites of European and international designation within 1km of the site including: Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); Special Protection Areas (SPAs); and Ramsar sites.
- Statutory sites of national or regional designation within 1km of the site, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); National Nature Reserves (NNRs); and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).

The MAGIC website was also used to identify if the site falls within any of Natural England's Impact Risk Zones for SSSIs.

2.1.2 Protected and Notable Species and Habitats

Records of legally protected species and other species and habitats of notable conservation interest within 1km of the site were obtained from SxBRC. These records included Protected Species, species listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (1981) (as amended) ('Schedule 1 species'), Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) Species of Principal Importance, Birds of Conservation Concern Red and Amber List (Eaton et al, 2015), Sussex BAP species, ancient woodland and invasive non-native species (Schedule 9).

Records received that were over 10 years old were considered historical and were not included within this assessment. Although the data provided by SxBRC is one of the most complete data sets of species available, the absence of records does not necessarily relate to an absence of species.

The following online resources were also used to identify ecological data of relevance to the scheme including habitats of principal importance:

MAGIC website – accessed January 2025. This website was used to identify recorded habitats of principal importance within the survey area. MAGIC was also used to search for Protected Species Mitigation Licences (PSML) which have been granted within 1km of the site. Typically, PSML are granted for development works affecting protected species such as bats (Chiroptera), Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*).

Additionally, online details provided by NatureSpace Partnership were assessed to provide the District Level Licensing Impact Risk Zone (DLL IRZ) in relation to great crested newt for the entire site.

2.2 Survey Area

The survey area for the information detailed within this report was defined as all land within the proposed working footprint for the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Professional judgement was used to determine a proportionate and pragmatic survey area appropriate to this project during the survey. This was determined through consideration of the Zone of Influence, the potential impacts of the scheme, geographical area, desk study results, habitat quality and likely species present in accordance with good practice guidance and was considered appropriate to meet the objectives of the survey (Refer to Section 1.3 Scope of Survey and Aims).

2.3 Field Survey Methodology

2.3.1 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

a) UK Habitat Classification Survey

The UK Habitat Classification survey was undertaken by Jack Kellett on 04th March 2025, following good practice guidance in the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017). The survey was limited to the boundaries of the site.

Habitats were classified following the methodology of the UK Habitat Classification system found in The UK Habitat Classification User Manual (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, 2023). This involved mapping and describing the broad habitats and compiling a general plant species list to reflect the floristic assemblage of each habitat type. All botanical names follow the nomenclature of Stace (2019).

b) Protected Species Assessment

The protected species assessment was undertaken in accordance with the Guidance for Baseline Ecological Assessment (Institute of Environmental Assessment, 1995), which strengthens the standard methodology by looking for evidence of or habitats which may support legally protected and notable species. This includes:

- Waterbodies with suitable habitat to support great crested newt and other amphibians including common toad (*Bufo bufo*);
- Watercourses (eg. ditches, rivers, ponds) with suitable habitat for white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*);
- Presence of features within trees and structures suitable for bat roosts. These were then categorised based on their suitability to support a bat roost, following good practice guidance in Collins (2016);
- Signs of badger (*Meles meles*) activity, for example setts, latrines, runs, guard hairs and footprints;
- Evidence of and the potential for other protected and/or notable species such as hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), west European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*);
- Suitable habitat for breeding and wintering birds;
- Evidence of and habitats suitable for birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- Habitats suitable for reptiles;
- Habitats likely to support protected / notable invertebrates; and
- Presence of non-native invasive plant species.

Specific points of notable conservation interest within each survey area were identified as numbered “Target Notes” (TN).

2.4 Limitations

The findings of this report represent the professional opinion of qualified ecologists and do not constitute professional legal advice. The client may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited in this document. Should there be a delay in the proposed timeline, it is considered prudent that the survey findings be reviewed and updated as required for subsequent planning applications so that the assessment of ecological impacts is undertaken against an accurate baseline.

2.4.1 Data Search

It is important to note that, even where data is held, a lack of records for a defined geographical area does not necessarily mean that there is a lack of ecological interest; the area may be simply under-recorded.

2.4.2 Habitat Assessment

It should be noted that the habitat survey does not constitute an invasive species survey. Any invasive species noted onsite will be identified and their extent mapped but a detailed search for this species group was not undertaken and a specialist survey will need to be carried out by a suitably qualified person to ascertain for definite the presence or absence of any invasive species.

3. Results

3.1 Desk Study Results

3.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

The site falls wholly within the High Weald National Landscape which is designated for landscape value associated with rolling downland features. No other designated sites are present within 1km.

The closest site of international importance is Ashdown Forest SPA, SAC and SSSI is located approximately 3.5km southeast of the survey site at its closest point. The site is designated for its species rich grassland, heathland and woodland habitats with rare floral, bird and invertebrate assemblages.

3.1.2 SSSI Impact Risk Zone

The site falls within the SSSI IRZs for Ashdown Forest and Weir Wood Reservoir SSSI, located 1.6km south and noted for breeding and wintering bird populations.

3.1.3 Habitats

A search of MAGIC and data from the desk study identified three habitats of principle importance (NERC Act, 2006) present within 1km of the site and are listed below in Table 1. No habitats of principle importance were present within the site.

Table 1 Habitats of Principle Importance Located within 1km Search Area of the Site.

Habitat	Details and closest location in relation to the site
NERC Act (2006) Habitat of Principal Importance: Deciduous Woodland	Approximately 30 blocks of woodland were present within 1km, including 16 ancient stands. The closest feature was located 10m northeast with the closest ancient stand situated 17m northeast.
NERC Act (2006) Habitat of Principal Importance: Traditional Orchard	Two discrete areas, the closest located 580m southeast.
NERC Act (2006) Habitat of Principal Importance: Woodpasture and Parkland	Single extensive area, 180m southeast.
NERC Act (2006) Habitat of Principal Importance: Hedgerow	Extensive network of hedgerows within the surrounding landscape associated with private and agricultural land. Single length of native hedgerow within the development footprint.
NERC Act (2006) Habitat of Principal Importance: Ponds	Six ponds were identified using online sources within 500m.

3.1.4 Protected and Notable Species

Table 2 Protected and Notable Species Records (post 2015) within 1km of the Site.

Species		Record details	Protection / Conservation status
Amphibians	Great Crested Newt	The data search returned a single recent record for Great Crested Newt, located 450m northeast from 2023. Further records for Common Toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>) and Common Frog (<i>Rana temporaria</i>) were present within 1km, the most	Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
	Other		

		recent relating to Common Toad, 1km southeast from 2018.	
Reptiles		The data search returned no recent records.	Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
Birds (excluding Barn Owl)		The data search returned recent records for Song Thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>), House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>), Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>), Swift (<i>Apus apus</i>) and Dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>).	NERC Act (2006), Birds Directive A1, Schedule 1 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Red List, Amber List, UK BAP Priority, Sussex Notable Bird.
Barn Owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>)		The data search returned no recent records.	Schedule 1 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
Bats		The data search returned recent records for Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>). The closest and most recent record was from 2022, located 600m northwest.	Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, NERC Act (2006), Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
Hazel Dormouse		The data search returned no recent records.	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
Water Voles (<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>)			Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), NERC Act (2006), UK BAP Priority, Sussex Rare
Badger (<i>Meles meles</i>)		The data search returned recent records within 1km.	Protection of Badgers Act (1992) and Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
West European Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>)		The data search returned recent records for hedgehog within 1km.	Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), NERC Act (2006), UK BAP Priority,
Invertebrates		The data search returned recent records for multiple invertebrate species; the majority associated with grassland and woodland habitats.	Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), NERC Act (2006), UK BAP Priority, Nationally Rare, Sussex Rare.
Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)		The data search returned recent records for nine species within 1km of the site.	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 9. Sussex INNS

No recent records for any other protected or notable species were returned from the data search.

3.1.5 Great Crested Newt DL Impact Zone

Based on open source DL mapping the site falls entirely within the red impact zone for great crested newts.

3.1.6 Protected Species Mitigation Licences

A single granted PSML was present within 1km of the site which related to Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared bat located approximately 100m southeast from 2012.

3.2 Field Surveys

3.2.1 UK Habitat Classification Survey

Table 3 below describes the habitats identified during the field survey. Figure 1 (Appendix A) provides a habitat plan of the site, with corresponding target notes and photographs provided in Appendix B.

Table 3: Habitat Assessment

Habitat	Description / Species Composition
Other Developed Land (u1b6)	The southern and south-eastern extents of the survey area comprised tarmac forming the existing onsite access road.
Other Neutral Grassland (g3c)	Generally species poor, managed grassland forming a narrow verge and further amenity grassland areas. Dominant species comprised Fescue species (<i>Festuca sp</i>), Creeping Bent (<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>), Perennial Rye-Grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>), Sweet Vernal Grass (<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>), Hairy Sedge (<i>Carex hirta</i>), Self-Heal (<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>), Daisy (<i>Bellis perenne</i>), White Clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>), Common Mouse-ear (<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>) and Common Ragwort (<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>). All areas of grassland were heavily managed with uniform sward height throughout.
Native Hedgerow (h2a)	A single length of managed native hedgerow of approximately 100m in length ran parallel to the existing access road and current parking areas. The feature measured approximately 1.5m in height and less than 1.5m in width. Dominant species comprised Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>), Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>), Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), Holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>), Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), Rose (<i>Rosa sp</i>) and Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>). Some areas of Ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>) were also noted. Two gaps were noted within the southern extents.
Non-Native Ornamental Hedgerow (h2b)	A length of Cherry Laurel (<i>Prunus lauracerasus</i>) hedge ran parallel to the native onsite feature along the northern extents for 60m. The hedgerow was less than 1.5m in height and width.
Trees (h3) (200)	Several trees were present onsite at the time of the survey, comprising mature Pedunculate Oak and semi-mature Ash, Silver Birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) and Yew (<i>Taxus baccata</i>).

3.2.2 Protected Species Assessment

Table 4: Protected and Notable Species Assessment

Species		Suitable Onsite Habitat/Features	Overall Potential of Onsite Presence
Amphibians	Great Crested Newt	No onsite waterbodies were present at the time of the survey with the closest features comprising a small length of ditch 100m northeast and ponds 140m southwest, 145m south and 355m south with a further three ponds present within 500m. The areas of onsite hardstanding and managed grassland were considered to provide limited suitability for amphibians, however the hedgerows were noted to provide potential terrestrial features for this species group (Refer to Target Note 1 in Appendix B).	Low
	Other		Low
		The site had limited connections with the majority of immediately bounding habitat being managed or developed land, however woodland areas were present within 20m to the northeast.	
		Overall, the potential usage of hedgerow habitats within the site by amphibians cannot be ruled out and their potential presence onsite must be taken into account, however the likelihood is limited due to the heavily developed and managed nature of immediate surrounding habitats.	

Reptiles		Marginal hedgerow areas were noted to contribute towards creating a varied habitat structure preferred by this species group (Refer to Target Note 2 in Appendix B), however the discrete size of the site and restricted connectivity to optimal offsite areas limits the potential usage by this species group in significant numbers.	Low
Breeding Birds (excluding Barn Owl)		The onsite trees and hedgerow were considered to provide suitable nesting features for a range of bird species. The limited size of the site would restrict usage to low numbers of breeding pairs. At the time of the survey a pair of Jackdaws (<i>Corvus monedula</i>) were noted to be nesting within an internal trunk cavity of an onsite mature Oak (Refer to Target Note 3 in Appendix B). The site has connections to the wider landscape for mobile bird species with direct links to offsite woodland areas.	Confirmed
Barn Owl	Foraging / Commuting	The lack of any extensive onsite habitat limits the potential for use by this species.	Negligible
	Roosting / Nesting	No onsite trees were noted to have any suitable roosting or nesting features. No suitable features present.	Negligible
Bats	Foraging / Commuting	Onsite hedgerow and scattered trees were considered to provide suitable habitat for foraging bats, with the onsite linear features connecting two woodland blocks, however, the site receives extensive light spill from adjacent floodlit sports facilities which is likely to restrict usage by any light intolerant species (Refer to Target Note 4 in Appendix B) with more optimal features in the wider landscape.	Low
	Roosting	A single mature Oak tree was noted to have an extensive trunk cavity that could be utilised by roosting bats (Refer to Target Note 5 in Appendix B). At the time of the survey this feature was in use by breeding birds and therefore considered unlikely to also be utilised by roosting bats.	Low
Hazel Dormouse		The onsite hedgerow was of discrete size and lacked any direct connections to further hedgerow features of woodland blocks which are considered to limit potential usage by this species.	Negligible
Water Vole		No waterbodies were present onsite with no connections to any optimal offsite habitats for use by this species.	Negligible
Badger	Foraging / Commuting	Grassland areas were considered to provide suitable foraging habitat for this species with good connectivity to similar offsite features, however limited due to size (Refer to Target Note 6 in Appendix B) and level of human disturbance.	Low
	Sett Building	The site was considered to provide some suitable sett building features; however, the limited size of the site with more optimal habitats in adjacent offsite areas reduces the potential.	Low
Invertebrates		Onsite hedgerow and tree areas were considered to provide suitable habitat for a range of invertebrate species. However, habitats were common and widespread within the surrounding landscape with more optimal offsite features within close proximity.	Low
Other Protected and Notable Species		Hedgerow and grassland areas provide suitable foraging and sheltering habitat for Western hedgehog and their presence onsite cannot be ruled out.	Low

Invasive Non-Native Species	Cherry Laurel was noted to be present within the survey area.	Confirmed
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4. Discussion and Recommendations

4.1 Designated Sites

The site falls wholly within the High Weald National Landscape in addition to the SSSI IRZ for Weir Wood Reservoir SSSI and Ashdown Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar. The site is dominated by habitats considered to be common and widespread with no hydrological connection or any functionally linked land to any designated site. The works are discrete in nature and limited to habitats of limited biodiversity value and therefore not expected that the proposed works will lead to a negative impact on any designated site.

Recommendations

It is considered the proposed works will have no negative impact upon any designated site or their qualifying features, however if the nature of the proposed works were to change, it is recommended that the client contact Natural England for advice before proceeding with works.

4.2 Habitats

The site is identified on MAGIC (MAGIC, 2025) as falling approximately 20m from an ancient woodland stand which lies to the northeast. Under current proposals no works will take place within a 15m ancient woodland buffer zone and therefore no specific mitigation is required.

Recommendations

It is considered the proposed works will have no negative impact upon the ancient woodland, however if work proposals change and development is required closer than the proposed, it is recommended that the client contact Natural England for advice before proceeding with works

4.3 Protected Species

4.3.1 Amphibians and Reptiles

It is considered that the likelihood of significant populations of amphibians and reptiles utilising onsite habitats within the proposed development zone is limited due to discrete size and further limited extent of suitable onsite features. However, the potential for these species groups to pass through the site cannot be ruled out, and it is considered that a precautionary approach, including the below detailed reasonable avoidance measures to works should be sufficient to safeguard these species groups throughout the proposed works. Full details are provided below.

- A toolbox talk will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist for all site workers before any works commence. This should specifically cover amphibian and reptile identification, ecology and specifically what to do if any animal is found. All workers will need to ensure they are fully briefed and aware of the need for careful working practices on site to avoid committing an offence to amphibians and reptiles or their habitats.
- The areas of hedgerows to be removed should be subject to a two phased clearance approach prior to any works commencing. In the first phase of habitat management, all standing vegetation will be reduced in height to approximately 200mm above ground level. Vegetation will be cleared using hand tools, such as chainsaws and strimmers. All vegetation will be cleared in an outwardly direction, pushing any individuals to offsite, retained areas. All cut vegetation will be removed from the site.
- The second phase of habitat management will involve the remaining vegetation being cut to ground level using hand tools, this will take place at least 48 hours (longer if bad weather) after the first phase to ensure any animals have time to move out of the area. The vegetation should then be maintained at this level for the entirety of the works to prevent any amphibians recolonising during works. This work can only take place between the active period for these species which is taken to be March to October, inclusive

- Due to the continued well managed nature of habitats within rest of the proposed working area no vegetation management is considered necessary prior to works, assuming existing conditions and management regimes are maintained.
- All machinery, equipment and materials will be stored within areas identified by the project ecologist as providing unsuitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians.
- During works all trenches/footings/foundations etc. will be excavated individually and back filled immediately after where possible. Where this is not possible, excavations will be covered to prevent animals becoming trapped within the excavation. If this is not possible, one or both sides of the excavation will be sloped in order to allow egress from the excavation, or a suitable ramp provided to allow animals to escape. All trenches etc will be checked regularly for any trapped animals.
- Should any protected species or signs of protected species including great crested newt be identified during works, then all works must stop and the project ecologist contacted for further advice. Works will not resume until advised it is safe to do so by an ecologist.

4.3.2 Breeding Birds

Suitable bird nesting habitat was recorded within the site including scattered tree and hedgerow habitats. All wild birds in the UK are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs. Jackdaws were confirmed breeding within a single onsite mature Oak at the time of the survey.

Due to the limited size of the site, nesting provision should be installed upon completion of works to avoid any disturbance during the construction phase. Compensatory nesting provision should be installed on newly planted trees. Three bird boxes should be included and be specific to Sussex Notable species such as House Sparrow and Starling.

Recommendations

Under current proposals direct impact on potential breeding bird habitat will be undertaken and therefore, such works should avoid the bird nesting season which typically runs from March to August inclusive. If works during the bird nesting season cannot be avoided, a precautionary nesting bird check will be required no more than 24hrs in advance of works. This would involve ecologists monitoring potential nesting habitats to determine whether they are in use by nesting birds. If nesting birds are discovered, the nest must be left in situ until no longer in use with a suitable buffer zone setup to protect the nest.

As an active nest was present onsite, no works shall proceed that may negatively impact upon the breeding success. A breeding bird check should be undertaken prior to any onsite works commencing to ensure all young birds have fledged and no active nests are present.

4.3.3 Bats

Potential roosting features were present within trunk cavities of an onsite Oak; however these features could not be fully inspected due to use by breeding birds. It is not considered that bats will utilise the features at the same time as an active Jackdaw nest. Areas of hedgerow and scattered trees were considered to provide foraging and commuting habitat with connections to offsite woodland to the northeast and southwest.

Recommendations

Roosting

Prior to any direct works to the onsite tree with potential bat roosting features (Tree 1) being undertaken, a climbed aerial inspection, by a suitably experienced and licenced ecologist, should be undertaken to fully assess the roosting potential. The results of the aerial assessment should then be used to determine any further mitigation measures, which may comprise dusk emergence surveys if evidence of roosting bats are found or the full extent of internal areas cannot be fully assessed.

In addition, prior to any felling works an updated ground level assessment should be undertaken to ensure no new potential roosting features have formed.

The aerial inspection will only be undertaken once any breeding bird activity has ceased and no active nests are present.

Continued roosting provision, comprising two bat boxes, should be installed on retained mature trees within the site of adjacent wider estate.

Commuting and Foraging

Currently the site receives light spill at night from adjacent sports pitches within the wider estate and under current proposals no additional lighting is being proposed, therefore light levels will not increase above the existing baseline and lighting is not considered to impact local bat populations that may utilise onsite features.

The loss of the majority of onsite trees and length of native hedgerow would remove suitable green corridor features that links two woodland blocks to the northeast and southwest. It is therefore recommended that the existing non-native hedgerow that will be retained will be replaced with a native species rich hedgerow with trees to provide continued commuting routes across the site.

4.3.4 Badger (and other notable mammals)

The onsite hedgerow and grassland habitats provide some potential for foraging badger and hedgehog and their potential presence onsite must be taken into account.

Recommendations

Materials must be stored safely at night with lids securely fitted. If trenches are required as part of the works these must be closed over night or ramps installed to enable badgers, and other mammals, to escape. The ramps must be substantial enough for badgers to use therefore these should comprise planks of wood or similar. Similarly, any piping should be sealed at night if not possible to fully connect to prevent any animals entering.

Development provides the opportunity to enhance a site for biodiversity in accordance with local and national planning policy, therefore recommendations for site enhancement measures are provided in the section below

5. Ecological Enhancements

Government planning policy (National Planning Policy Framework) now explicitly requires local authorities to seek wildlife gains through the planning process and not to just offset losses. Therefore, development projects should aim to create ecological enhancements and improve the biodiversity value of sites above and beyond mitigation / compensation requirements. A range of enhancement measures have been recommended below to contribute towards meeting these aims.

5.1 Native Species-Rich Planting

Any landscaping schemes should include a significant proportion of native species-rich planting of local provenance including a range of native trees, hedges, shrubs and wildflowers in order to increase the ecological value of the site for wildlife. The use of nectar rich and fruit bearing trees and shrubs is also advised where possible.

5.2 Connectivity

Any planting proposals for the scheme should serve to enhance the habitats on site for biodiversity and improve connectivity with the wider environment through the creation and maintenance of green corridors. This could be achieved through minimising light spill on boundary features, supplementary planting of vegetated boundaries to ensure species can pass the site freely.

5.3 Bats

The proposed development presents an opportunity to enhance the site for bats. It is recommended that two bat boxes, in addition to those required for mitigation should be erected within the site, or wider estate, upon completion of the construction phase. This could include Schwegler 2F boxes or the Schwegler 1 FQ, which is maintenance free. Bat Boxes should be oriented southwest to southeast and located at least 3m above ground level. The bat boxes must be located outside external light spill and close to suitable vegetation. They should be sheltered from strong winds and be exposed to the sun for part of the day. More details are provided in Appendix D.

The exact location of the bat boxes should be discussed and agreed with an ecologist prior to construction.

5.4 Birds

It is recommended that two bird boxes, in addition to those required for mitigation, should be installed on suitable retained trees or incorporated into the onsite retained and enhanced hedgerow. These could include Schwegler 2m or 1b boxes or Vivara open nest box. The boxes should be positioned at least 2m high where possible, facing between north and east, thus avoiding strong sunlight and the wettest winds. The birds should have a clear flight path to the nest without any clutter directly in front of the entrance. It is recommended that the boxes should be specific to Sussex Notable species. More details are provided in Appendix E.

Due to the limited regular usage of artificial nesting provision by Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) supplementary planting of suitable evergreen features across two areas of proposed shrub planting should be undertaken. This should include Yew and Holly.

The exact location of the bird boxes should be discussed and agreed with an ecologist prior to construction.

5.5 Additional Enhancements

Invertebrates

A range of insect nesting boxes¹ could be attached to trees/shrubs within the retained areas to encourage insect biodiversity at the site. Several long-lasting products are available that can be attached to trees, including boxes designed to attract pollinating insects, and ladybirds and lacewings that are a natural form of pest control for aphids and greenfly.

¹ Available at <https://www.nhbs.com/browse/search?q=insect+boxes>

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Appendix A. Figure

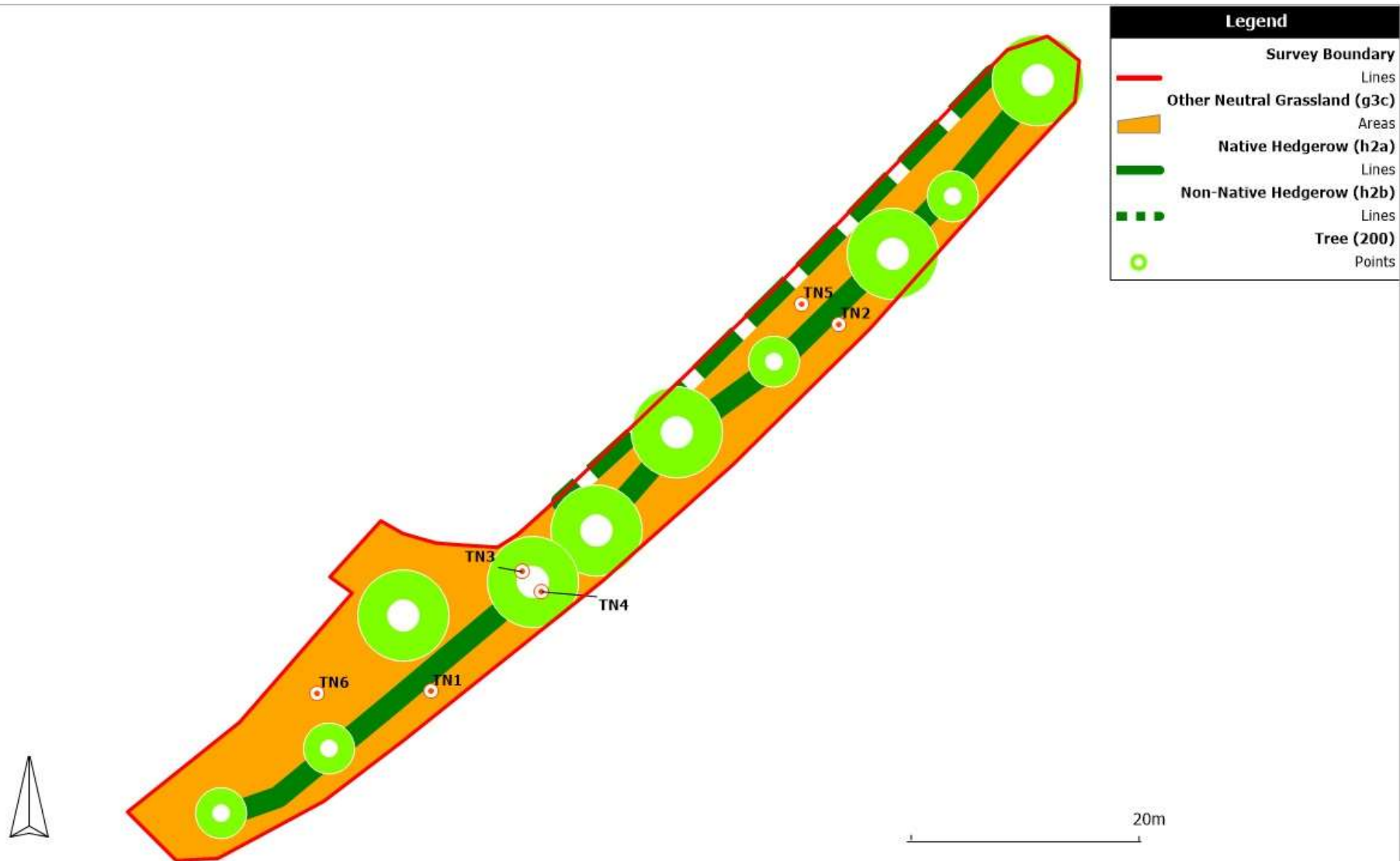


Figure 1: East Grinstead Sports Club Habitat Plan

Drawn by: JK
Date: 28 March 2025

Appendix B. Target Notes

Target note number	Comments	Photo
N/A	Photograph 1: A view southwest along the existing access track.	
N/A	Photograph 2: Looking southwest between the two onsite hedgerows.	
1/2	Photograph 3: Amphibian and reptile habitat within onsite marginal habitats.	

N/A	Photograph 4: Looking northeast along the onsite hedgerow.	
3/4/5/6	Photograph 2: Breeding bird, badger and bat habitat within onsite hedgerow and scattered tree areas.	
3	Photograph 3: Showing active Jackdaw nest within the onsite trees.	

Appendix C. Legislation

Legislation relating to European Protected Species of potential relevance to East Grinstead Sports Club Development Proposals

European Protected Species and their resting places (e.g. bat roosts) are protected under Schedules 5 & 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 transpose the European Union's 'Habitats Directive' (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (EC Habitats Directive) into UK law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European Sites', the protection of 'European Protected Species' (EPS), and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites. EPS are listed on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take certain animals listed in Schedule 5;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to sale, possession and control of wild animals listed in Schedule 5.

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal listed as a European Protected Species;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species in such a way as to be likely:
 - to impair their ability:
 - i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or;
 - ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate, or;
 - to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal, or;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to possession, control sale and exchange of an EPS.

Great crested newt, otter and several species of bat are listed as a Species of Principal Importance (SoPI) under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Legislation relating to reptiles

All native reptile species have some degree of protection in the UK, through section 9(1) and (5) (specified in Schedule 5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). There are two different levels of protection afforded to reptiles through this legislation according to species. Sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) and smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) are afforded

protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (are species of European importance) and are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the CROW Act (2000) however these species are not of potential relevance to the site or adjacent land. The more common widespread species of reptile of potentially relevance to the site are protected against killing, injuring and trade as detailed below.

Protection against killing, injuring and trade

The four widespread species of reptile, namely the common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) and adder (*Vipera berus*) are protected under section 9 (parts 1 and 5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Only part of sub-section 9(1) applies. This makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill or injure, and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative).

Grass snake, slow-worm, common lizard and adder are species of principal importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006).

Legislation relating to breeding birds

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built;
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird; and

Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 provides further protection for selected species (including peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), barn owl (*Tyto alba*), little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*) and black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) during the breeding season. If any person intentionally or recklessly disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturb dependent young of such a bird. That person shall be guilty of an offence. For the purpose of this offence 'Any wild bird' means any bird included in Schedule 1.

A number of bird species are species of principal importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006).

Conservation status - Birds of Conservation Concern (Eaton et al. 2015)

The UK's leading bird conservation organisations have worked together on the third quantitative review of the status of the birds that occur regularly in the UK, updating the last review in 2011. The status of birds within the UK have been regularly monitored through a series of surveys, including the national Breeding Bird Survey, Common Bird Census, sea bird monitoring programs and wetland monitoring programs. The result of this review and continued monitoring is The Population Status of Birds in the UK, Birds of Conservation Concern 4: 2015.

Birds are assessed against criteria to place each species on one of three alert lists, red, amber or green. Red list species are considered to be of high conservation concern, being either globally threatened, having historical UK population declines, having a rapid population decline or breeding range contraction of 50% or more in the last 25 years.

Amber list species are considered to be of medium conservation concern as they meet one or more of the following criteria (but none of the red list criteria): Red listed for historical decline in a previous review but with substantial recent recovery (more than doubled in the last 25 years), a UK breeding range contraction of between 25% and 49%, a reduction of breeding or non-breeding population of 25-49% in the last 25 years, a 5-year mean of 1-300 breeding pairs in the UK, an unfavourable European conservation status, at least 50% of the UK breeding population found in 10 or fewer sites, or where the breeding population in the UK represents 20% or more of the European breeding populations.

Green list species are considered to be of low conservation concern. They include all regularly occurring species that do not qualify under any of the red or amber criteria are green listed. The green list also includes those species listed as recovering from Historical Decline in the last review that have continued to recover and do not qualify under any of the other criteria.

Legislation relating to bats

Bats are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This act protects individuals from:

- intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level);
- intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection; and
- selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale

In addition, all species of bat are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species (all bats);
- deliberate disturbance of bat species as to impair their ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young; and
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate.
- deliberate disturbance of bat species as to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place; and
- keeping, transporting, selling, exchanging or offering for sale whether live or dead or of any part thereof.

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by Natural England will be required for works liable to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake activities listed above. A licence is required to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and monitored.

Legislation relating to badger

Badgers and their setts are afforded protection under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992). Under this Act it is an offence to wilfully kill, injure, ill-treat, take or possess a badger, or attempt to do so. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to a sett; or to interfere with a sett whilst it is occupied thus causing disturbance to a badger. These provisions have implications for construction or preparation works undertaken in the vicinity of an active sett and may be confounded by distance from the sett entrance. Any works resulting in ground penetration, vibration or noise near an identified badger sett entrance/s have the potential to disturb badgers and advice should be sought from a suitably experienced ecologist under such circumstances. If disturbance to an active sett is probable, then a licence may need to be obtained from Natural England before any works commence.

A sett is defined as any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger. If monitoring indicates a sett is not displaying signs of recent use, then it is not protected by the law. However, field signs that can suggest current occupation (such as hairs, fresh spoil, faeces, and prints) can remain for a period of several weeks and therefore do not prove current occupation.

Disturbance around known occupied setts is not considered to require a licence if there is no reason to believe that the 'disturbance' is greater than that commonly tolerated by badgers e.g. felling of small trees/shrubs, clearing out of ditches etc. However, for more significant works in the vicinity of a badger sett, a licence issued by Natural England will be required. Recently issued guidance by Natural England (Natural England, 2009a, 2009b) provides further guidance on how the legislation should be interpreted.

Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006

The Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) is designed to help achieve a rich and diverse natural environment and thriving rural communities through modernised and simplified arrangements for delivering Government policy.

It was created to make provision in connection with wildlife, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks and the Broads; to amend the law relating to rights of way; to make provision as to the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council; to provide for flexible administrative arrangements in connection with functions relating to the environment and rural affairs and certain other functions; and for connected purposes.

Section 40 of NERC carries an extension of the earlier CRoW Act biodiversity duty to public bodies and statutory undertakers to ensure due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. Section 41 requires the Secretary of State, as respects England, to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The updated list was published in May 2008.

Appendix D. Bat Box Design

Example	Type	Dimension D x W x H (cm)	Target species	Location
	2F Schwegler Bat Box (General Purpose) with or without Double Front Panel	16 x 16 x 33	Without panel: Particularly successful with brown long-eared bat. Also used by noctule. With panel: Ideal for crevice-dwelling species: pipistrelles, <i>Myotis</i> species (particularly Daubenton's), Leisler's and serotine.	On trees or buildings and at a height of 3 to 6m. In open sunny positions and in groups of 3 to 5 facing different directions. Please note that once bats have inhabited a roost site they may only be disturbed by licensed bat workers.
	1FQ Schwegler Bat Roost (For External Walls)	9 x 35 x 60	Species known to use buildings e.g. pipistrelles, long-eared bats, Natterer's, whiskered, Brandt's, Alcaethoe (assumed based on current evidence), Daubenton's (occasionally), Bechstein's (very rarely), noctule (very rarely), Leisler's, serotine and barbastelle (rarely).	On external or internal walls (e.g. within a loft space). A minimum of 3m above the ground and where there is a clear flight path for bats entering and leaving. Please note that once bats have inhabited a roost site they may only be disturbed by licensed bat workers.

Appendix E. Bird Box Designs

Example	Type	Dimension D x W x H (cm)	Target species	Location
	2M Schwegler Nest Box Hole-fronted 32mm entrance hole	17 x 16 x 35	Multi-purpose , including: great-, blue-, marsh-, coal- and crested tit, redstart, nuthatch, collared and pied flycatcher, wryneck, tree and house sparrows, and occasionally bats.	It can be freely suspended and has a conical roof. These features protect against cats and deter martens. It is very popular in private gardens and especially around fruit trees, mainly in areas where the trees are short and have many branches. Please note that once bats have inhabited a roost site they may only be disturbed by licensed bat workers.
	Schwegler Nest Box 1B Hole-fronted 32mm entrance hole	16 x 16 x 23	Multi-purpose , including: great-, blue-, marsh-, coal and crested tit, redstart, nuthatch, collared and pied flycatcher, wryneck, tree and house sparrows, bats.	Suitable walls or semi-mature/mature trees and shrubs; attached to a tree trunk or hung from branches. Ideal points include discrete areas away from predators, such as against walls, plant and metal supports.

Example	Type	Dimension D x W x H (cm)	Target species	Location
	Vivara Pro WoodStone Oval Open Nest Box	15 x 23 x 25.5	Robin, wren (if well hidden), spotted flycatcher, pied and grey wagtail, song thrush and black redstart.	Robin and spotted flycatcher: hidden high on a wall or tree amongst climbing vegetation such as ivy. Wren and song thrush: low in dense vegetation. Ensure that it is well concealed and sited higher if your area has a particularly high cat population.