Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Land at Great Haywards, Haywards Heath, RH16 4DX

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Contents

LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing and whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated only dominant species maybe recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

Background

1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Ian Eldred to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) assessment of the land at Great Haywards, Haywards Heath, RH16 4DX, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

1.2 The key objectives of a PEA (CIEEM 2017) are to:

- Identify the likely ecological constraints associated with a project;
- Identify any mitigation measures likely to be required, following the 'Mitigation Hierarchy' (CIEEM 2016; BSI 2013, Clause 5.2);
- Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA); and
- Identify the opportunities offered by a project to deliver ecological enhancement.

1.3 This report comprises the:

- Legislative and planning context (Section 1);
- Assessment methodologies (Section 2);
- Results (Section 3);
- Implications for development (Section 4);
- An impact assessment (Section 5); and
- Conclusions (Section 6).

Site Context and Status

1.4 The site is situated in the centre of Haywards Heath (TQ 32726 23586). It covers approximately 1.1ha and consists of commercial and residential units, a car park, tree lines, woodland and ornamental planting. The site is bound on all sides by a one-way road system (B2272) and a railway line runs underneath the site. The wider surroundings are a dense urban setting.

1.5 The aerial photography overleaf (Figure 1) shows the site and its immediate surroundings. The red line depicts the approximate site boundary and survey area.

Figure 1: Approximate location of the red line boundary.
Taken from Google Earth Pro on 02/06/25, imagery date: 09/15/2023

Proposed Development

1.6 There are no fixed proposals at the time of writing, and the scheme will be informed by a number of surveys of which ecology is one. It is understood that the development will likely involve the construction of a self-build single dwelling in the south of the site.

Planning Policies

1.7 The site was surveyed to assess its ecological value and to ensure the proposals were compliant with relevant planning policy and legislation. Policy guidance is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) as well as policies from the Mid Sussex District Plan (adopted March 2018):

- Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- Policy DP17: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC
- Policy DP18: Settings of the South Downs National Park
- Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- Policy DP38: Biodiversity

1.8 The Environment Bill (Environment Act 2021) received Royal Assent on 9th November 2021 and is now enacted as the Environment Act 2021. Part 6 (Nature and Biodiversity) and Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 insert a new section 90A and Schedule 7A into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA), which contain the

provisions requiring mandatory biodiversity net gain for development granted planning permission pursuant to the TCPA. These provisions require developments to provide a biodiversity value post-development that exceeds the predevelopment biodiversity value of the onsite habitats by at least 10%. This was adopted in February 2024 although there are a number of exemptions which may mean that biodiversity net gain is not required. These are listed under government guidance and are as follows:

- Development below a de minimis threshold;
- Householder applications;
- Small scale self-build and custom housebuilding;
- HS2; and
- Biodiversity net gain sites.

1.9 The site has therefore been surveyed to assess its ecological value and to ensure compliance with national and local plan policies and other relevant nature conservation legislation including; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

1.10 The report has been produced with reference to current guidelines for PEA (CIEEM 2017) and in accordance with BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

2.0 Methodology

Desktop Study

2.1 A desktop study search was completed using an internet-based mapping service (www.magic.gov.uk) for statutory designated sites and an internet-based aerial mapping service (maps.google.co.uk) was used to understand the habitats present in and around the survey area including identifying habitat linkages and features (ponds, woodlands etc.) within the wider landscape. Records were requested from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) for protected species, non-statutory sites and invasive species within 2km of the site boundary.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

2.2 An extended preliminary ecological appraisal was undertaken on the 28th May 2025 by Alice Bailey BSc (Hons) ACIEEM (FISC level 4) and Daniel Whitlock BSc (Hons). The surveyors identified the habitats present, following the standard 'UK Hab' auditing method. The site was surveyed on foot and the existing habitats and land uses were recorded on an appropriately scaled map (JNCC 2010). In addition, the dominant plant species in each habitat were recorded. The potential for the site to support protected species was also assessed.

Protected Species Assessments

2.3 Any evidence of protected species was recorded. Standard methods of search and measures of presence or likely absence based on habitat suitability were used for bats in trees and buildings (Collins 2016), breeding birds, dormouse (Bright *et al.* 2006), great crested newt (ARG 2010), reptiles (Froglife 2015), badgers (Creswell *et al*. 1990) and water vole (Strachan *et al*. 2011).

Limitations

2.4 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no single investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. The site was visited over the period of one site visit, as such seasonal variations cannot be observed and potentially only a selection of all species that potentially occur within the site have been recorded. Therefore, the survey provides a general assessment of potential nature conservation value of the site and does not include a definitive plant species list.

2.5 The protected species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on site, based on the suitability of the habitat and any direct evidence on site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species group. The assessment is only valid for the time when the survey was carried out. Additional surveys may be recommended if, on the basis of this assessment, it is considered reasonably likely that protected species may be present.

3.0 Results

Desktop Study

3.1 There is one internationally designated site located within 15km of the site boundary; Ashdown Forest SPA SAC is located *c.*10.4km north east of the site boundary and is designated for its rare heathland habitat (Figure 2). The development falls outside of the 7km SAC buffer zone, and so there are unlikely to be any associated implications.

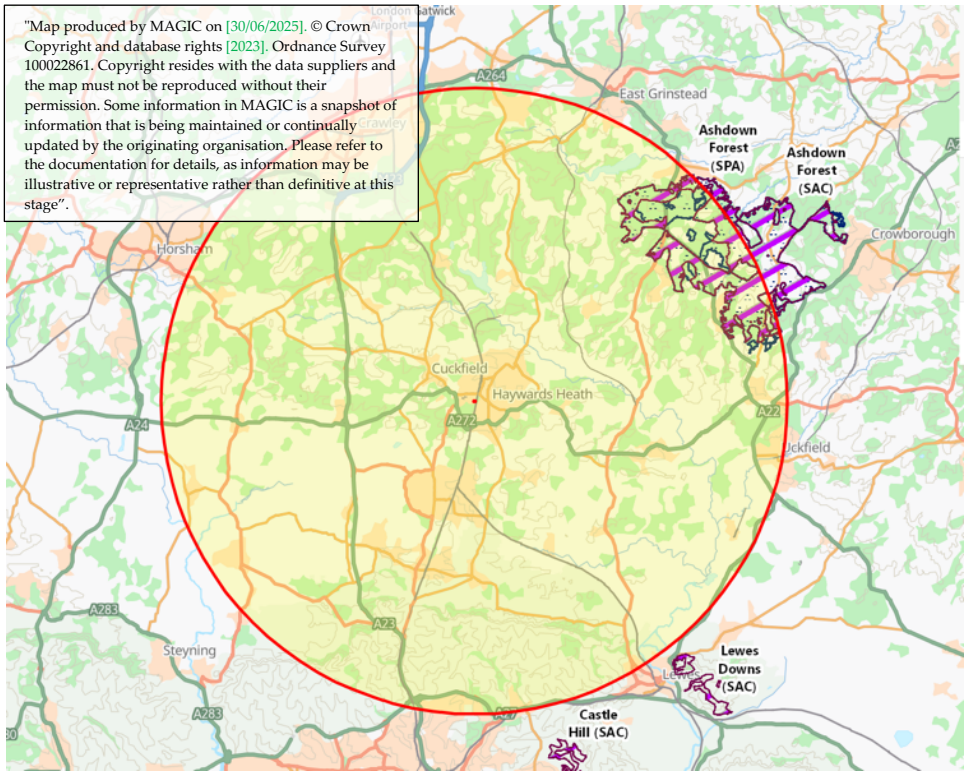

Figure 2: Internationally designated sites within 15km of the site boundary.

3.2 Three nationally designated statutory sites are located within 2km of the site boundary (Figure 3):

- Blunts and Paiges Wood (LNR), located *c.*840m northwest;
- Ashenground and Bolnore Woods (LNR), located *c.*460m south; and
- Scrase Valley (LNR), located *c.*1.6km northeast of the site boundary.

3.3 While the site does fall within a SSSI impact risk zone, but only large infrastructure (airports/ helipads) or significant pollution generators (livestock/ poultry units) are required to contact Natural England.

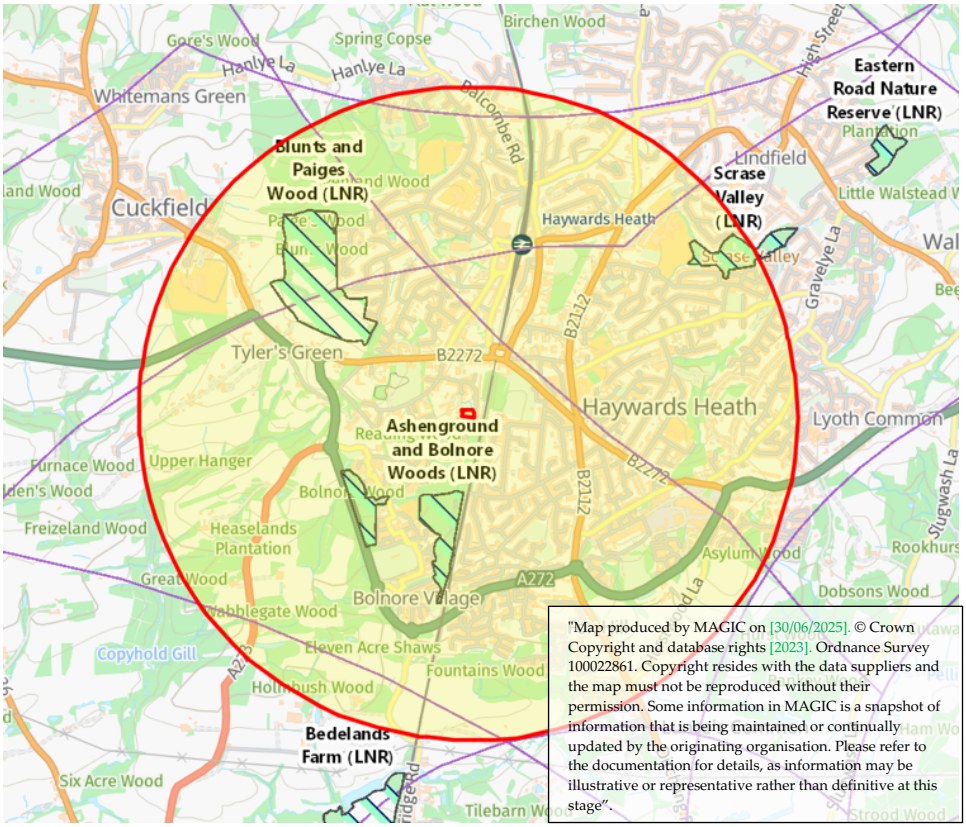

Figure 3: Nationally designated statutory sites, purple lines indicate SSSI impact risk zones.

3.4 One non-statutory site is present within 1km of the site boundary; Catt's Wood Complex Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is located *c.*90m south and is designated for the interconnected blocks of lowland mixed deciduous woodland, much of which is a species-rich ancient woodland.

3.5 There are also several units of priority habitat within 2km of the site (Figure 4), the closest of each type include:

- Deciduous woodland, *c.*40m south;
- Ancient and semi-natural woodland, *c.*270m south west;
- Ancient replanted woodland, c.460m south;
- Traditional orchard, *c.*520m south west;
- Lowland meadows, *c.*1.2km south east;
- Coastal floodplain and grazing marsh, *c.*1.9km north east;
- Open mosaic habitat, *c.*1.4km southeast; and

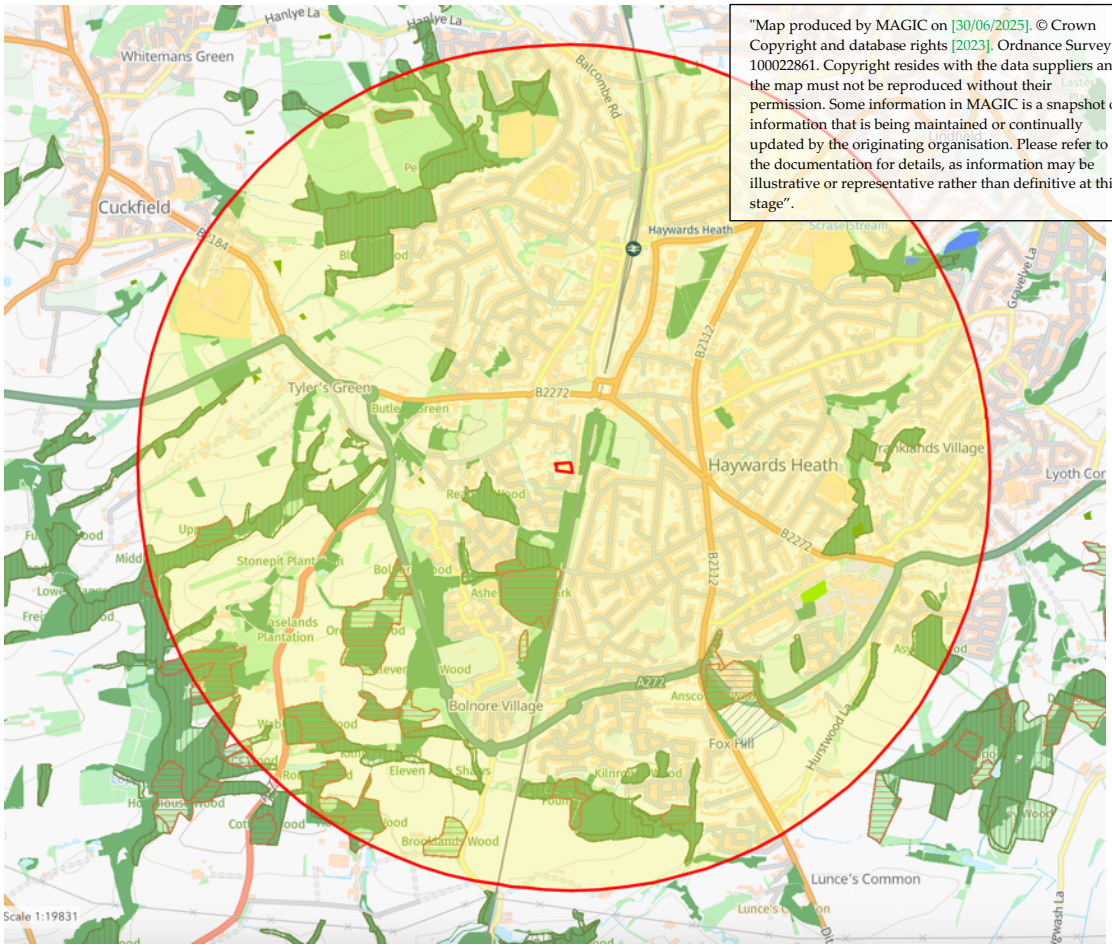

Figure 4: Priority habitat within 2km of the site including deciduous woodland (dark green), ancient and semi natural woodland (green vertical hatching), ancient replanted woodland (brown horizontal hatching), traditional orchards (lime green), lowland meadows (light green), coastal floodplain and grazing marsh (blue), open mosaic habitat (blue diagonal hatching).

3.6 The desktop study revealed 13 European Protected Species (EPS) licences were granted within 2km of the site boundary (Figure 5) (Table 1):

Table 1: EPSM licences granted within 2km of the site boundary

Species	Reason for license	Year	Location
Hazel dormouse	Destruction of a breeding place	2012	*c.*340m south west
Brown long-eared, common pipistrelle, natterer's and soprano pipistrelle	Damage to a breeding place	2014	*c.*320m south west
Hazel dormouse	Destruction of a breeding place	2013	*c.*380m west
Great crested newt	Destruction of a resting place	2013	*c.*380m west
Great crested newt	Destruction of a resting place	2011	*c.*900m south west
Great crested newt	Destruction of a resting place	2009	*c.*900km south west
Brown long-eared	Destruction of a breeding place	2010	*c.*1.1km north west
Brown long-eared and common pipistrelle	Destruction of a breeding place	2020	*c.* 1.1km north west
Hazel dormouse	Destruction of a resting place	2017	*c.*1.9km north west
Great crested newt	Unknown	2015	*c.*1.7km north west

Hazel dormouse	Destruction of a breeding place	2012	*c.*1.4km south
Hazel dormouse	Destruction of a breeding place	2018	*c.*1.4km south
Hazel dormouse	Destruction of a breeding place	2011	*c.*2km east

3.7 Within 2km of the site there are total of nine GCN license return locations, two 'present' GCN pond surveys, two 'absent' surveys and one inconclusive (Figure 5). The closest to the site boundary is a GCN class survey licence return located *c.*780m northwest and confirmed the presence of GCN in 2017.

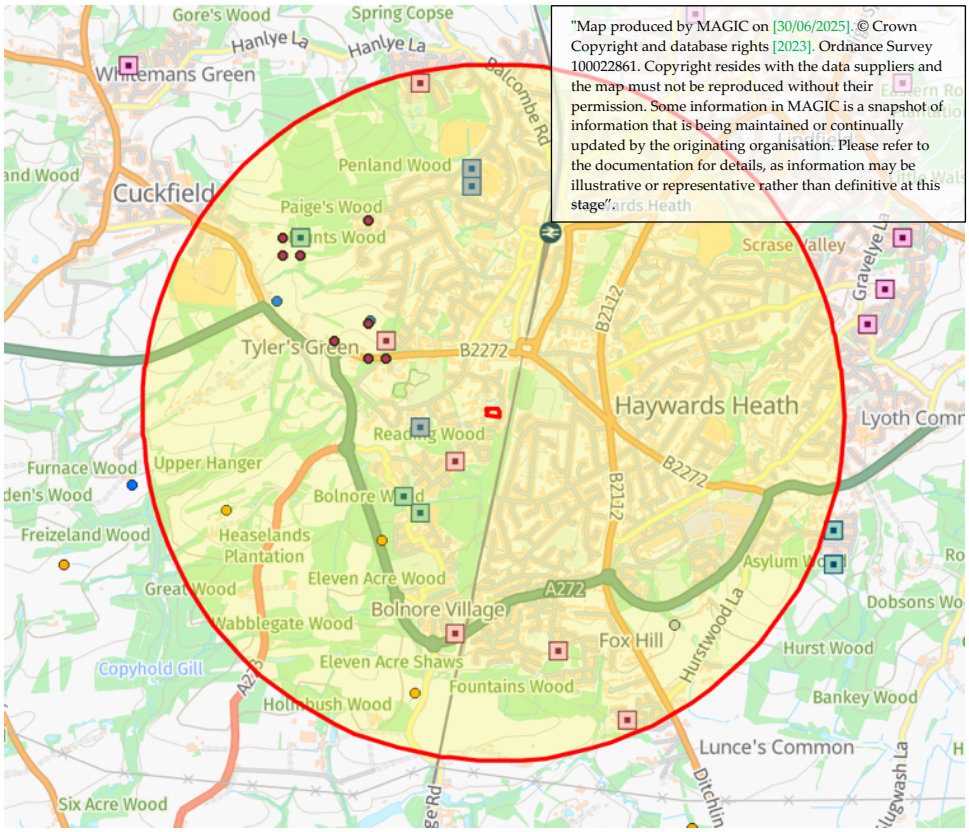

Figure 5: Location of EPS licences (bat- blue, dormouse- pink and GCN- green), GCN class survey licence returns (purple dots), present GCN pond surveys (blue dots), absent GCN pond surveys (orange dots) and inconclusive GCN pond survey (grey dot).

3.8 OS maps indicate there is a single pond on site, and 2 within 250m of the site boundary. These are shown in figure 6 below.

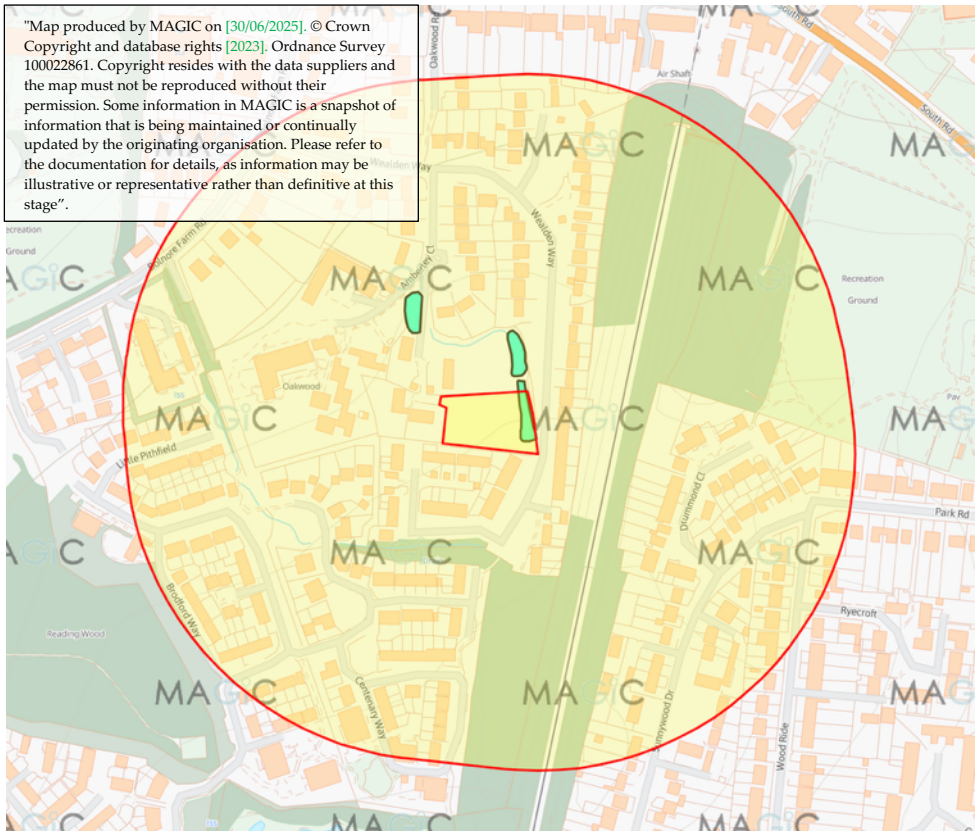

Figure 6: Location of ponds on site and within 250m of site.

Habitat Survey

3.9 The site largely comprised of bramble scrub, with boundary treelines. An area of woodland surrounding a pond was present in the eastern section of site. Broad habitat types identified within the site boundary are detailed below. Only species of note have been listed within this section.

3.10 The habitat map is presented in **Appendix 1**, site photos in **Appendix 2,** a full species list in **Appendix 3,** and biological records summary in **Appendix 4.**

Bramble Scrub (g4)

3.11 The majority of the site consisted of bramble scrub, which was at approximately 2.5 metres height at the time of survey. made up a rear garden to one of the properties on site. Species present included bramble, pendulous sedge, common nettle, pedunculate oak, bamboo, wood avens, cock's-foot, silver birch, goat willow, remote sedge and wild strawberry.

Pond

3.12 A pond was present in the east of site. This was surrounded by woodland, with a dense bramble understorey. Occasional stands of pendulous sedge were present around the waters edge.

Line of trees

3.13 Native lines of trees were present on the northern, southern and western boundaries of site. Tree species included ash, willow, silver birch and pedunculate oak.

Non-Native ornamental hedgerow

3.14 The southeastern site boundary supported a line of Leyland cypress, historically planted as a boundary feature.

Other broadleaved woodland

3.15 A small area of woodland was present in the east of the site, surrounding the on-site pond. Tree species were dominated by pedunculate oak, field maple, blackthorn, cherry and hawthorn. Understorey species included bamboo, cherry laurel, hazel, holly and hogweed.

Protected Species

Roosting Bats

Trees

3.16 All accessible on-site trees were assessed for Potential Roosting Features (PRFs). Those trees able to be assessed were considered to be unsuitable for roosting bats due to a lack of PRFs such as rot holes, broken limbs, complex growth forms and other veteran features. If any inaccessible boundary trees are to be removed to allow for development, it is recommended that an updated GLTA is undertaken.

Foraging and Commuting Bats

3.17 The site was dominated by bramble scrub, which is considered to provide moderate levels of foraging and commuting habitat for bats. The site, however, is embedded within a residential area, which limits the connectivity of the site with commuting corridors across the local landscape.

3.18 Suitable bat foraging and commuting features exist within the local landscape, particularly along the railway line that lies 30m east of site. The railway line is likely

to be used preferentially by bats when compared with the onsite habitats. However, the green onsite habitats have potential to act as a 'hop over' feature to aid passage of bats through the town centre when passing along the railway line. As such, it is considered the site has some potential for foraging and commuting bats.

Badgers

3.19 No evidence of badgers, including setts, latrines, or holes, was found within the site boundary at the time of the survey. Due to the dense bramble scrub that dominated the site, it is considered possible that badgers may be present on the site.

Great Crested Newt (GCN)

3.20 A single pond was present on site, with two further ponds within 250m of the site boundary. Some positive GCN pond surveys are present within 2km of the site boundary, though the closest is approximately 640m northwest of the site boundary. The dense bramble scrub and woodland is considered to provide suitable GCN terrestrial habitat. The onsite pond was able to be assessed, however permission was not given to access off-site ponds.

3.21 A Habitat Suitability Index for GCN was carried out on the on site pond. The HSI assessment calculates the mean of ten indices to identify a habitat suitability score for GCN. HSI scores are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: HSI scores for the on-site pond (P1)

Suitability Indices No.	Feature	P1
1	Geographic location	1
2	Pond area	0.75
3	Pond permanence	1
4	Water quality	0.33
5	Shading	0.6
6	Waterfowl effect	0.67
7	Fish presence	0.67
8	Pond density	1
9	Suitable newt habitat within 250m	1
10	Macrophyte cover	0.4
10th root - HSI score		0.7
Pond suitability		Good

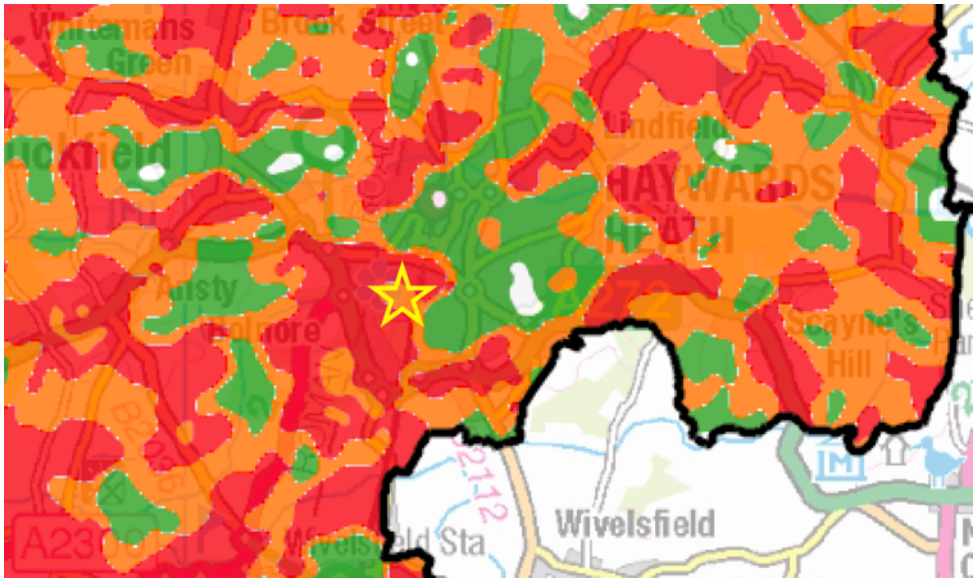

Figure 7: Location of site in NatureSpace impact risk zone.

3.22 The site lies in an amber/red Naturespace impact risk zone, which indicates a high chance of GCN presence in the local area.

3.23 Water samples were taken from pond 1 and sent for eDNA analysis. The samples produced a negative result, confirming GCN likely absence from pond 1. Results are shown in Appendix 4.

Hazel dormice

3.24 While suitable dormice habitat is present on site in the form of woodland, scrub, and trees with connected canopies, the site is bound on all sides by residential developments and roads, and is not connected to further suitable habitat in the surrounding area. Furthermore, the dominance of bramble provides a lack of food diversity for the species. As such, it is considered highly unlikely that dormice would be present on site.

Reptiles

3.25 The majority of the site was considered unsuitable for reptile species due to the dominance of tall bramble scrub, with a complete absence of edge habitats that provide habitat structure commonly associated with reptiles. It is considered that the surrounding gardens may provide some suitable habitat for low numbers of reptiles, which may utilise the site for foraging and shelter. As such, whilst the majority of the

site is considered unlikely to support reptiles, it is considered possible that low numbers may occasionally use the site.

Nesting Birds

3.26 The trees, scrub, and woodland on site were considered to have the potential to support nesting birds.

Other Species

3.27 Due to a lack of suitable habitat, the site was not considered suitable for other protected species, such as water voles and otters.

3.28 While it is considered likely that hedgehogs are present within the local area and are likely to be present within the thick bramble scrub on site.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 The following paragraphs consider the effects of the development on designated sites, priority habitats and protected and priority species. Where the desk study and habitat survey provide sufficient evidence for an assessment of effects on any of these groups to be taken through planning, these are detailed below, the need for additional surveys and when and how these should be completed are summarised, if required.

Effects on Designated Sites

4.2 The site does not fall within or adjacent to any statutory sites. One internationally designated site is located within 15km of the site boundary; Ashdown Forest (SPA and SAC) is located approximately 10.4km northeast of the site boundary and is designated for its heathland habitat. Policy DP17 of the Mid Sussex District Plan sets out a 7km Zone of Influence (ZOI) whereby developments may need to contribute to mitigation for an increase in recreational pressure to Ashdown Forest. The site falls outside this ZOI and therefore no mitigation is required. Owing to its significant distance to the site, impacts on the integrity of this designated site, or others, are not considered likely.

4.3 Three nationally designated statutory sites are located within 2km of the site boundary, the closest of which is Ashenground and Bolnore Woods (LNR), located approximately 460m south. The site is designated for its woodland and meadow habitats. It is considered that these sites are sufficient distance from the development

boundary for any significant impacts. The development is for a single residential dwelling, and therefore, any increases in recreational impact are likely to be minimal.

4.4 The site does fall within a SSSI impact risk zone, though only proposals such as large aviation infrastructure, mineral/ oil extraction, waste processing or discharge sites are required to contact Natural England. As long as any development proposals are for residential/ commercial purposes, no impacts on the SSSI are anticipated.

4.5 One non-statutory site is present within 1km of the site boundary; Catt's Wood Complex Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is located *c.*0.90m south and is designated for the interconnected blocks of lowland mixed deciduous woodland. No impacts resulting from the development are considered likely.

Effects on Priority Habitats

4.6 There are no priority habitats on site. A number of areas of priority habitat are located within the local landscape. The closest of these is a parcel of priority deciduous woodland approximately 70m south of the site boundary. Due to the urban context of the site there is no direct connectivity to offsite priority habitats, therefore the development of the site is unlikely to have any direct impacts on this, or any other, priority habitats.

Effects on on-site habitats

4.7 The habitats that dominate the site, are considered to be of moderate ecological value and are common and widespread throughout the local landscape. As such, it is considered that the loss or removal of these habitats would result in site level impacts only.

4.8 The habitats with the most ecological value on site are the treelines, pond, and woodland. Although they are dominated by non-native species, they do perform an ecological function for wildlife and biodiversity and should be retained as far as is reasonably possible.

4.9 The woodland and the treelines that border the site, provide linear features within the urban environment. Furthermore, these features support mature trees, providing landscape maturity and ecological connectivity.

4.10 The linear features within the site (the hedgerow), the mature trees bordering the car park, and the small area of woodland to the north of the site, provide cover and potential foraging habitat for birds and bats within the urban environment. Furthermore, these provide a landscape link to the south and north, where woodland along the railway line extends.

4.11 Due to the maturity of these habitats and the landscape connectivity they provide, these should be retained within the design of the scheme. If sections are lost, compensation measures for replanting should be reviewed within the design. Measures to maintain connectivity across the site, and measures to provide new opportunities within the site should be made.

Protected Species

Roosting Bats

4.12 Many of the trees on-site were subject to a ground-level tree assessment (GLTA). All trees assessed on site were considered to have limited potential, however, it is recommended that when tree removal plans are finalised, all trees will need to be reviewed to reassess their potential for roosting bats.

Foraging and Commuting Bats

4.13 According to Bat Conservation Trust guidelines it is important that proportionality is employed when recommending further survey work for bat species on a proposed development site. As stated within section 2.2.19 of the latest survey guidelines (2023), the following points need to be considered with regard to planning bat surveys:

- Likelihood of bats being present;
- Type of proposed activities;
- Scale of proposed activities;
- Size, nature and complexity of the site;
- Species concerned;
- Number of individuals.

4.14 The trees and woodland around the site boundary have the potential to form some connectivity with the wider green corridor of the wooded railway line. Whilst the wooded trainline is likely to be used preferentially by bats within the local landscape, the most likely function of the onsite habitat would be suspected as a 'hop-over'

feature to bridge the gap for bats flying over the urban town centre when the railway line passes below ground. As such, the site may be utilised by bats commuting along this feature opportunistically.

4.15 The proposals should seek to retain and enhance these features as much as is reasonably possible. A re-assessment of potential impact to bats should be made once proposals have been finalised.

4.16 Existing linear boundary features should always be designed into any proposed scheme as far as possible and should not be illuminated with additional lighting as to create a dark corridor suitable for bats foraging and commuting along the feature. All bat species are nocturnal, resting in dark conditions in the day and emerging at night to feed. Bats are known to be affected by light levels, which can affect both their roosting and foraging behaviour. Whilst the urban context of the site does not support a light-sensitive environment, the following should be considered as far as possible in relation to the woody features on site:

- Installing lighting only if there is a significant need;
- Using sodium lamps instead of mercury or metal halide lamps where glass glazing is preferred due to its UV filtration characteristics;
- Directing lighting to where it is needed and avoiding light spillage;
- Using baffled lighting where light is directed towards the ground and
- Avoid putting lighting near trees suitable for roosting bats, woodland, trees or hedgerows and angling light away from these linear features which are used by commuting and foraging bats.

Badgers

4.17 No evidence of badgers, such as setts, latrines or snuffle holes, was found anywhere on site or in the surrounding area, where access was possible. However, they may venture on to site from the surrounding area and there are safety measures that can be taken to ensure that no badgers are harmed during the development process. Best practice guidelines recommended that:

- A pre-works check of the site is undertaken to search the site for any recently created badger setts;

- Any excavations and/or trenches associated with construction are either covered at night or supplemented by means of escape for any badgers that may fall into the excavation whilst foraging;
- Any open pipes or conduits laid should be blocked off each night to prevent badgers from entering them;
- As far as possible, construction work should only take place between dawn and dusk with no late evening work to reduce possible disturbance.

4.18 If these methods are followed, no significant residual impacts are predicted on badgers on site or within the local area. These steps will also help to ensure no harm comes to other mammals such as near-threatened hedgehogs.

Reptiles

4.19 Habitat suitability for reptiles is limited to the dense, tall nature of the bramble scrub. Surrounding gardens may provide some, albeit limited, habitat with direct connectivity to the site. As such, whilst it is considered unlikely that significant populations of reptiles are present on site, it is recommended that any dense scrub is cleared sensitively, under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist.

Nesting Birds

4.20 Although no evidence of nesting birds was recorded on site at the time of the survey, it was considered that the trees, the hedgerow and woodland on site had suitability to support nesting bird species. It is recommended that any woody vegetation with potential to support nesting birds should be removed outside of the breeding bird season (March-September inclusive) or immediately after a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist. If active nests are identified, works in the vicinity of the nest must cease until the birds have fledged the nest.

Great Crested Newt (GCN)

4.21 A single pond is present on site, with a further two present within 250m of the site. Access to off-site ponds was not possible due to their location on private land. Water samples were taken from pond 1, which were sent for eDNA analysis. This confirmed GCN absence from pond 1.

4.22 Despite the negative eDNA result, two further ponds are present within close proximity to the site, being 15m and 50m north of site, with very few dispersal barriers.

Furthermore, the site lies in a potential amber/red Naturespace impact risk zone, which indicates a high chance of GCN presence in the local area. As such, it is considered possible that GCN are present within the surrounding ponds.

4.23 It is therefore considered that enrolment in NatureSpace's district licensing scheme may be required.

Dormice

4.24 While some dormouse records are present within 2km of the site boundary, the suitable habitat on site, including woodland, scrub and treelines, lacks direct connectivity to suitable habitat in the wider area, separated by residential development and roads. Dormice are highly unlikely to cross roads to reach the isolated parcels of habitat on the site. Furthermore, the dominance of bramble throughout the site does not provide a varied range of food sources for the species. As such, dormice are highly unlikely to be present on site and the development is not considered to be constrained by this species.

Other species

4.25 No potential for any other species, such as otters, water voles or hedgehog was identified within the site boundary and so are not considered to form a constraint on any potential development.

5.0 Biodiversity Net Gain

5.1 The lack of existing detailed proposals gives an opportunity to integrate a number of ecological enhancements into the development from an early stage.

5.2 Treelines, woodland, and scrub can be enhanced by removal of invasive and non-native species, as well as supplementary infill planting of native woody species and species-rich wildflower at ground level. Suitable woody species include hawthorn, field maple, wild privet, hazel, dog rose, spindle, guelder rose, and beech. A shade tolerant wildflower mix such as Emorsgate Seeds EH1F Wild Flowers for Hedgerows or EW1F Wild Flowers for Woodland would be suitable for planting within the ground layer of retained woody areas to contribute to biodiversity net gain post-development.

5.3 Bird boxes can be hung on mature trees within the site. The boxes should be hung a minimum of 2m off the ground. Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Nest Boxes and

Vivara Pro Barcelona WoodStone Open Nest Boxes (Figure 8) are recommended and are suitable for a range of smaller bird species including tree sparrows, wrens and robins.

Figure 8: Vivara Pro WoodStone Nest Boxes

5.4 Swift bricks can be integrated into the structure of the development in place of a standard brick in order to create nesting habitat for Swifts (Figure 9). They should be placed along the top of the building just below the eaves and not above windows. Several swift boxes should be placed in a row to create sufficient nesting locations.

Figure 9: AfS S bricks from actionforswifts.com

5.5 Bat boxes can also be integrated into the structure of the development (Figure 10). These provide good opportunities for crevice-dwelling species such as pipistrelles. The opening of the bat box/tube will be the only section visible, and they are designed so that they require little to no maintenance. Several of these tubes can be established

in a row together providing a good-sized roost space. The bat tubes should be inserted in the brickwork at least 4m from ground level in a location not illuminated by artificial lighting. Habibat, in association with the Bat Conservation Trust, provide a range of boxes which are unfaced for render or designed to match the brickwork of the building.

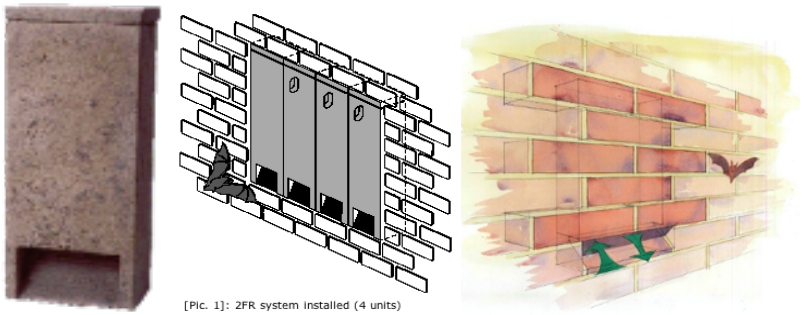

Figure 10: Bat tubes incorporated into the wall of a building to provide roosting space

5.6 Tree mounted bat boxes (Figure 11) can be installed onto retained mature trees. These should be placed where they will receive sunlight for most of the day, on south and west-facing aspects, as temperature is an important factor in the success of artificial bat roosts. They should not be placed closed to artificial light sources. Recommended boxes include:

- NHBS general purpose bat box – A general purpose bat box that supports a range of species (Figure 8). These can be hung on trees in a variety of heights and aspects in order to provide a variety of micro-climates.
- Large Multi Chamber WoodStone Bat Box – This is a multipurpose box designed for larger colonies and a range of bat species including pipistrelles, noctules and brown long-eared bats. These should be hung on mature trees around the site (Figure 8).

Figure 11: NHBS general purpose bat box (left). Large Multi-Chamber WoodStone Bat Box (right)

5.7 To encourage invertebrates and bees, Bee Bricks (Figure 12) can be incorporated into the buildings. The Bee Brick can be used in place of a standard brick or block in construction to create a habitat for solitary bees. Bee Bricks need to be placed in a warm sunny spot on a south-facing wall at a minimum height of 1m, with no vegetation obstructing the holes. No cleaning or management of the Bee Bricks is required.

Figure 12: Bee bricks to be incorporated into the development.

6.0 Impact Assessment

6.1 This section of the report forms an EcIA (Ecological Impact Assessment) and is designed to quantify and evaluate the potential impacts of the development on habitats and species present on site or within the local area.

6.2 The approach to this assessment accords with guidance presented within the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM 2018). In essence, an EcIA assesses the activities associated with a proposed scheme that are likely to generate changes within identified zone of influences, on identified ecological features and receptors. The proposals are subsequently reviewed, and mitigation and compensation measures are outlined which help to reduce negative impacts.

6.3 Table 3 summarises the impacts and required mitigation for each receptor as previously detailed in the discussion.

Table 3: Assessment of effects from the proposal after mitigation and compensation

Feature	Scale of Importance	Mitigation/Compensation Required	Residual Effect
National Statutory Designated Sites	National	None required – sufficient distance from sites. No related habitat on site.	Not significant
Non-Statutory Sites	County	Retention of woody habitats on site as far as possible and buffering from light pollution to maintain any existing landscape connectivity.	Not significant
Priority habitats	Site	Woody connectivity on site should be maintained as far as possible to retain existing levels of connectivity. Loss of any woody planting to be compensated through creation of new woody planting on site.	Not significant
Bats (roosting)	Up to local	Update GLTA to be undertaken on trees to be removed.	Not yet determined.
Bats (commuting and foraging)	Up to local	Boundary habitat and woodland on site should be retained and enhanced to maintain existing levels of connectivity.	Not yet determined.
Great Crested Newt	Up to local	eDNA surveys to be undertaken	Not yet determined
Badgers and hedgehogs	Up to Local	Sensitive clearance of all scrub habitat, under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist	Not yet determined
Breeding birds	Site	Mitigating direct harm to nests by removal of any suitable nesting habitat outside of nesting bird season or after a check by a suitably qualified ecologist.	Not significant

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The site does not lie within or adjacent to any designated sites. A number of statutory sites and non-statutory sites are located within the surrounding area; however, no residual negative impacts are anticipated due to the distances between the site and all designated sites, and the lack of related habitat to be lost. The site falls outside the Ashdown Forest 7km ZOI, and so no mitigation is required in relation to recreational pressure. Retaining the onsite woodland and trees as far as possible will maintain existing levels of connectivity of protected sites within the wider landscape.

7.2 There are no priority habitats on site, but woody vegetation should be retained as far as possible to maintain existing levels of landscape connectivity of nearby priority habitats. It is recommended that if any trees require removal they should be replaced with new native/species rich alternatives.

7.3 The scrub habitat dominating the site were considered to be of site value only. The mature trees and woodland were of greatest ecological value on site and should be retained and enhanced during development as much as is reasonably possible. Enhancements can be made to these features such as species-rich native wildflower planting at ground level and woody infill planting with native trees and shrubs.

7.4 It is considered that the mature trees within the woodland may have potential to support roosting bats. It is recommended that any trees to be removed are subject to an updated GLTA before felling.

7.5 It is suspected that the wooded trainline embankments that run 30m east of the site are likely to be used by foraging and commuting bats. As such, the onsite trees, scrub and woodland have potential to act as a 'hop-over' feature for bats passing through the town centre opportunistically whilst using these more suitable offsite corridors. Trees and woodland onsite are recommended to be retained and enhanced and a bat sensitive lighting strategy should be followed in their proximity to prevent potential impacts to opportunistic commuting/foraging bats and suitable offsite woodland. A re-assessment of potential impact may be required if these features are not retained once the proposals have been finalised.

7.6 Any clearance of suitable nesting bird habitat, including trees, hedgerow, and woodland, should be undertaken outside nesting bird season or after a nesting bird check by a qualified ecologist.

7.7 A single pond was present on site, with a further two within 250m of the site. The onsite pond was subject to eDNA analysis, which returned a negative result. Due to the presence of two further ponds within 250m, lack of dispersal barriers and location of the site within an amber/red impact risk zone, it is recommended that the development enrols in NatureSpace's district licensing scheme.

7.8 The majority of the site was dominated by urban habitats considered unsuitable for reptiles, dormice, hedgehogs, or other protected species. Onsite habitats such as the mature trees, hedgerow, and woodland were dominated by non-native species, of limited ecological value, and lacked meaningful connectivity to the wider landscape within the urban context in the centre of a town, bound on all sides by a main road. Any future development is not considered to be constrained by these species.

7.9 Recommendations for enhancements have been made within this report, aimed at improving the ecological value of the site post-development.

8.0 References

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Internet resources:

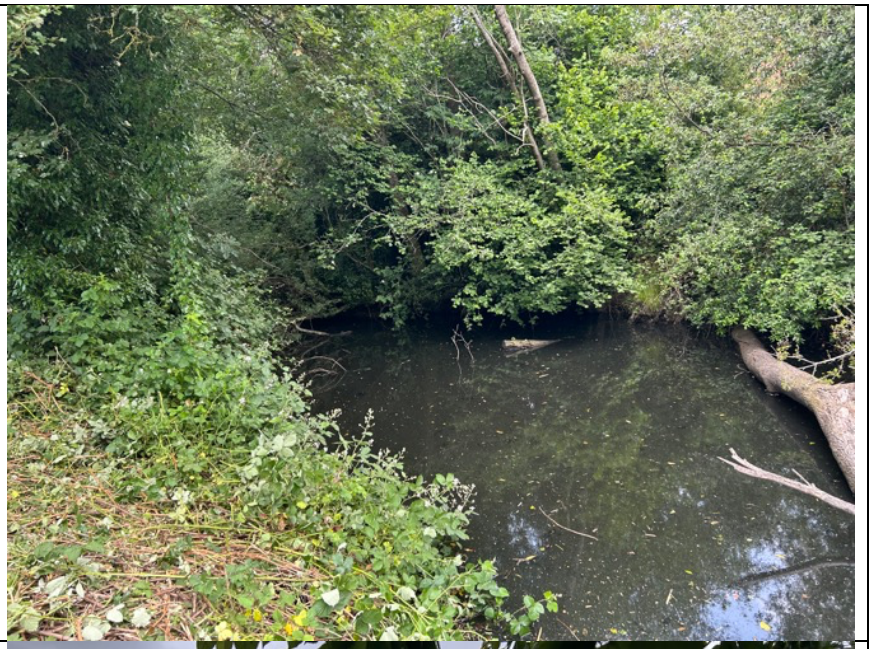
Google Maps: www.google.co.uk/maps

Magic Interactive Map: www.magic.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Habitat Map

Appendix 2: Photos

Photograph 1: Dense bramble scrub that dominated the site	
Photograph 2: Onsite pond	

Photograph 3: Onsite pond	
Photograph 4: Dense bramble taken from within woodland.	

Appendix 3: Species List

Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR
Grassland 1		
Arrow Bamboo	*Pseudosasa japonica*	O
Bramble	*Rubus sp.*	D
Cleavers	*Galium aparine*	F
Cock's-foot	*Dactylis glomerata*	O
Common Nettle	*Urtica dioica*	A
Goat Willow	*Salix caprea*	F
Pedunculate Oak	*Quercus robur*	O
Pendulous Sedge	*Carex pendula*	R
Remote Sedge	*Carex remota*	O
Silver Birch	*Betula pendula*	R
Wild Strawberry	*Fragaria vesca*	O
Wood Avens	*Geum urbanum*	F
Grassland 2		
Arrow Bamboo	*Pseudosasa japonica*	R
Ash	*Fraxinus excelsior*	O
Blackthorn	*Prunus spinosa*	F
Cherry Laurel	*Prunus laurocerasus*	O
Cleavers	*Galium aparine*	O
Damsons	*Prunus domestica subsp. insititia*	R
Field Maple	*Acer campestre*	F
Goat Willow	*Salix caprea*	O
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*	O
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*	O
Hogweed	*Heracleum sphondylium*	O
Holly	*Ilex aquifolium*	O
Silver Birch	*Betula pendula*	O
Wild Cherry	*Prunus avium*	O
Wood Vetch	*Vicia sylvatica*	O
Ornamental Non Native Hedgerow		
Lawson's Cypress	*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*	D
Lines of Trees		
Ash	*Fraxinus excelsior*	O
Field Maple	*Acer campestre*	O
Holly	*Ilex aquifolium*	O
pedunculate oak	*Quercus robur*	O
silver birch	*Betula pendula*	F
wild cherry	*Prunus avium*	F
Willow sp.	*Salix sp.*	O

Appendix 4: eDNA results

Folio No:	2557-2025
Purchase Order:	MSUS 6816
Contact:	The Ecology Partnership
Issue Date:	01.07.2025
Received Date:	17.06.2025

SureScreen Scientifics

GCN eDNA Analysis

Summary

When great crested newts (GCN), , inhabit a pond, they continuously release small amounts of their DNA into the environment. By collecting and analyzing water samples, we can detect these small traces of environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm GCN habitation or establish GCN absence.

Results

Lab ID	Site Name	OS Reference	Degradation Check	Inhibition Check	Result	Positive Replicates
GCN25 4532	Great Haywards	TQ 32757 23580	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12

Matters affecting result: none

Reported by: Amy Bermudez

Approved by: Jennifer Higginbottom

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