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East Grinstead Sports Club
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Our ref: JK/2509d

East Grinstead Sports Club, East Grinstead: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

JWK Wildlife Surveys Ltd was commissioned by East Grinstead Sports Club to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment 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 for the construction of additional staff parking areas.

This report should be read in conjunction with the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, 2026c) and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculator (DEFRA, 2025).

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 130m southeast. The site has an approximate area of 0.095ha with a central grid reference of TQ378 364.

Offsite areas lie within the same ownership boundary approximately 220m west of the proposed development boundary and measures 0.55ha with a central grid reference of TQ376 364.

Onsite Condition

At the time of the survey the proposed development area had been cleared and entirely replaced with compacted hardcore.

Environment Act 2021

Schedule 14 of the Environment Act (2021) makes provision for biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England.

Overview

1 (1) This Schedule makes provision for grants of planning permission in England to be subject to a condition to secure that the biodiversity gain objective is met.

(2) Paragraphs 2 to 12 have effect for the purposes of this Schedule.

Biodiversity gain objective

2 (1) The biodiversity gain objective is met in relation to development for which planning permission is granted if the biodiversity value attributable to the development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat by at least the relevant percentage.

(2) The biodiversity value attributable to the development is the total of—

- (a) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat,
- (b) the biodiversity value, in relation to the development, of any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development, and
- (c) the biodiversity value of any biodiversity credits purchased for the development.

(3) The relevant percentage is 10%.

Methodology

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 V2, 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.

Baseline

A habitat condition assessment was undertaken on the existing onsite habitats using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments. This involved assessing a series of attributes representing key physical characteristics to assess whether the habitat is in a favourable condition. The habitats present on and off site were assessed as in either poor, moderate or good condition.

Due to the cleared nature of the site, with limited retained features, baseline habitats were determined through the use of aerial imagery for likely habitat extent prior to clearance and surveys of immediately adjacent habitats for likely categorisation and species composition. No pre-clearance information was available.

Post-Intervention

Similarly, a proposed habitat condition assessment based on the latest development proposals was undertaken. Proposed habitat conditions were assigned to newly created and enhanced habitats by reviewing the criteria characteristics for each habitat, set out in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments and the proposed landscaping plans. As a precautionary measure all created habitat conditions were assigned to Poor to remove potential limitations with achieving a higher condition rating, where a higher condition would be difficult to create.

The metric converts the results of the habitat and condition assessments into measurable biodiversity units which assign a biodiversity value of each habitat based on the below three components for quality:

- Distinctiveness
- Condition
- Strategic Significance

The results of the metric then provide a baseline biodiversity score for each habitat parcel which combine to create an overall score for the site.

A similar calculation is carried out using proposed habitats that provide a post-development score, including retained, enhanced and created features including the associated risk factors:

- Difficulty of creating, enhancing or restoring habitat
- Temporal Risk
- Spatial Risk

The total net unit change is calculated by deducting the post-development units from the baseline units.

Where necessary, and there is a negative gain or an insufficient positive gain, offsite measures or a revision of proposed development plans would be required to ensure a minimum of 10% gain is achieved as a result of the proposals.

Results

Baseline

Aerial imagery from 2012, 2013, 2018, 2020, 2021 and 2025 (Google Earth) showed some onsite features as remaining as bare ground consistently, particularly the access track and storage/turning areas, and therefore these areas were used as forming part of the baseline habitats. Some areas had been cleared historically but had since become vegetated to at least 2021. To minimise under-recording onsite habitat values these areas were categorised as mixed scrub rather than tall herb or ephemeral/ruderal vegetation. All vegetated habitats that were identified from online imagery as being continuously vegetated were classified as Other Woodland, Broadleaved due to the likely combination of adjacent wooded features, known presence of invasive non-native species and historically managed nature of the site due to usage (refer to Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2026c, for specific habitat descriptions).

The four retained trees, which are remnants of the removed wooded areas, have been categorised as individual trees within the baseline and post-intervention metric, rather than as retained sections of woodland due to the limited connectivity and closer characteristics to individual trees. It is considered this approach ensures no under-recording.

Results

A total net % gain for the proposed development works at East Grinstead Sports Club when applying the Statutory Metric is **11.37%** habitat units which indicates biodiversity net gain as a result of the scheme. It is acknowledged that a 10% gain is not possible within the redline boundary under current proposals and therefore offsite habitat creation and enhancement has been utilised to achieve the required gains. Refer to Fig 1 below for a summary of the biodiversity metric score.

Fig 1: Headlines Results Biodiversity Metric

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)		Area habitat units	0.22	
		Hedgerow units	0.00	
		Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)		Area habitat units	11.37%	
		Hedgerow units	0.00%	
		Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?		Yes ✓		
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	1.95	2.14	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

The calculated gain is based on the below habitat creation:

- Onsite retention of four trees;
- Offsite enhancement of 0.039ha other neutral grassland to Lowland Meadow;
- Offsite creation of 0.03ha mixed scrub; and
- Offsite creation of 0.13ha Other Woodland, Deciduous.

Should the development proposals change, or the above detailed habitat creation measures become impractical then the metric calculations should be re-assessed based on the latest design to ensure accurate results, which may include additional habitat creation and/or enhancement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on current proposals the landscaping design has been devised to maximise onsite habitat retention, broadly following the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy, specifically in relation to trees. The extent of development and limited size of the site ultimately results in an overall net loss that cannot be achieved within the site boundaries. Therefore to achieve the required minimum 10% gain and ensure all trading rules are satisfied offsite enhancement and creation have been utilised to meet the gains

The results of the completed metric calculations show the proposed development will result in an overall biodiversity gain of **11.37%** habitat units. This score does not include recommended enhancements detailed within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, 2026c), specifically bird, bat and insect boxes which will further increase the overall onsite biodiversity value as a result of the development.

The above summary is based on the current site proposals, should any significant changes to the proposed development works be required, the metric calculation should be re-evaluated by the project ecologist to ensure results remain accurate. I trust the above summary relating to biodiversity net gain at the above site is satisfactory, however if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

