Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Land at Bolney Road, Ansty

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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 snapshot 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 may be 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 Devine Homes to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) of the land at Bolney Road, Ansty, Haywards Heath, RH17 5RW, 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, including an impact assessment (Section 4 & 5);
- Conclusions (Section 6).

Site Context

1.4 The site is located south of Bolney Road, A272, and the village of Ansty and west of Haywards Heath (TQ 28921 23093). The site covers an area of *c.*1.6 hectares and consists of an area of grassland and a small woodland. The surrounding area comprises agricultural land to the east and south, separated by a hedgerow, and a small housing estate to the north.

1.5 The aerial photograph overleaf (Figure 1) shows the site and its immediate surroundings.

Figure 1: Approximate location of the redline boundary of the site.

Description of the Proposed Development

1.6 It is understood that the current proposals for the site are for a small residential development including associated access, parking and private gardens.

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 Mid Sussex District Plan (Adopted March 2019). These policies include the following which are considered relevant to ecology, biodiversity and nature conservation:

- 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.

1.8 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.

1.9 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

2.8 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 and habitat linkages and features (ponds, woodlands, etc.) within the wider landscape. Data for non-statutory sites, and local protected and notable species within 2km of the site was obtained from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC).

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

2.9 An extended preliminary ecological appraisal was undertaken on the 9th of June 2025 by principal ecologist Matt Pendry BSc (Hons) MCIEEM. The surveyor 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

2.10 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 2023), breeding birds[1], dormouse (Wells *et al.* 2025), great crested newt (ARG 2010), reptiles (Froglife 2015), badgers (Creswell *et al*. 1990) and water vole (Strachan *et al*. 2011).

Limitations

2.11 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.

2.12 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.

[1] https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/birdatlas/methods/breeding-evidence

3.0 Results

Desktop Study

3.1 There is one international statutory designation located within 15km of the site boundary (Figure 2); Ashdown Forest (SAC & SPA) is located c.13.6km north east of the site boundary.

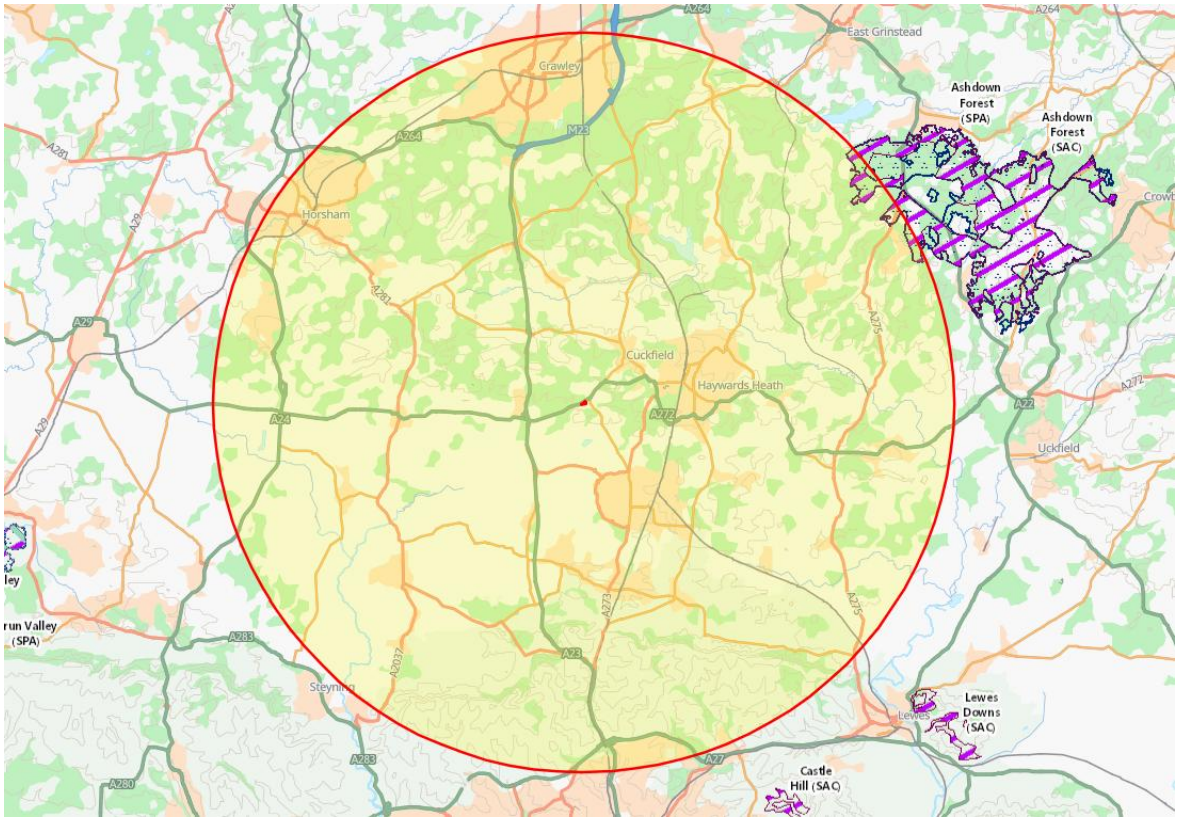


Figure 2: Internationally designated sites within 15km (yellow circle) of the red line boundary.

3.2 The site does not fall within or adjacent to any national statutory designations, and there are no national statutory sites located within 2km of the site boundary. The nearest statutory site is Blunts and Paiges Wood (LNR), located c.2.9km east of the site boundary. While the site does fall within a SSSI impact risk zone, only aviation infrastructure projects (airports/ helipads) are required to contact Natural England regarding impacts to the SSSI.

3.3 There are five non-statutory sites located within 2km of the site boundary:

- Pickwell Lane (Designated Road Verge), located c.460m west;
- Cuckfield Bypass (DRV), located c.1.1km north east;
- Great Wood & Copyhold Hanger (Local Wildlife Site), located c.1.2km east;

- Pond Lye (LWS), located c.1.3km south; and
- The Hanger (LWS), located c.1.8km north west of the site boundary.

3.4 The site is surrounded by a number of parcels of priority habitat within 2km (Figure 3), including:

- Deciduous Woodland *c.*75m north;
- Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland *c.*110m west;
- Traditional orchard, *c.*130m west;
- Ancient replanted Woodland *c.*200m west; and
- Woodpasture and parkland, *c.*940m north of the site boundary.

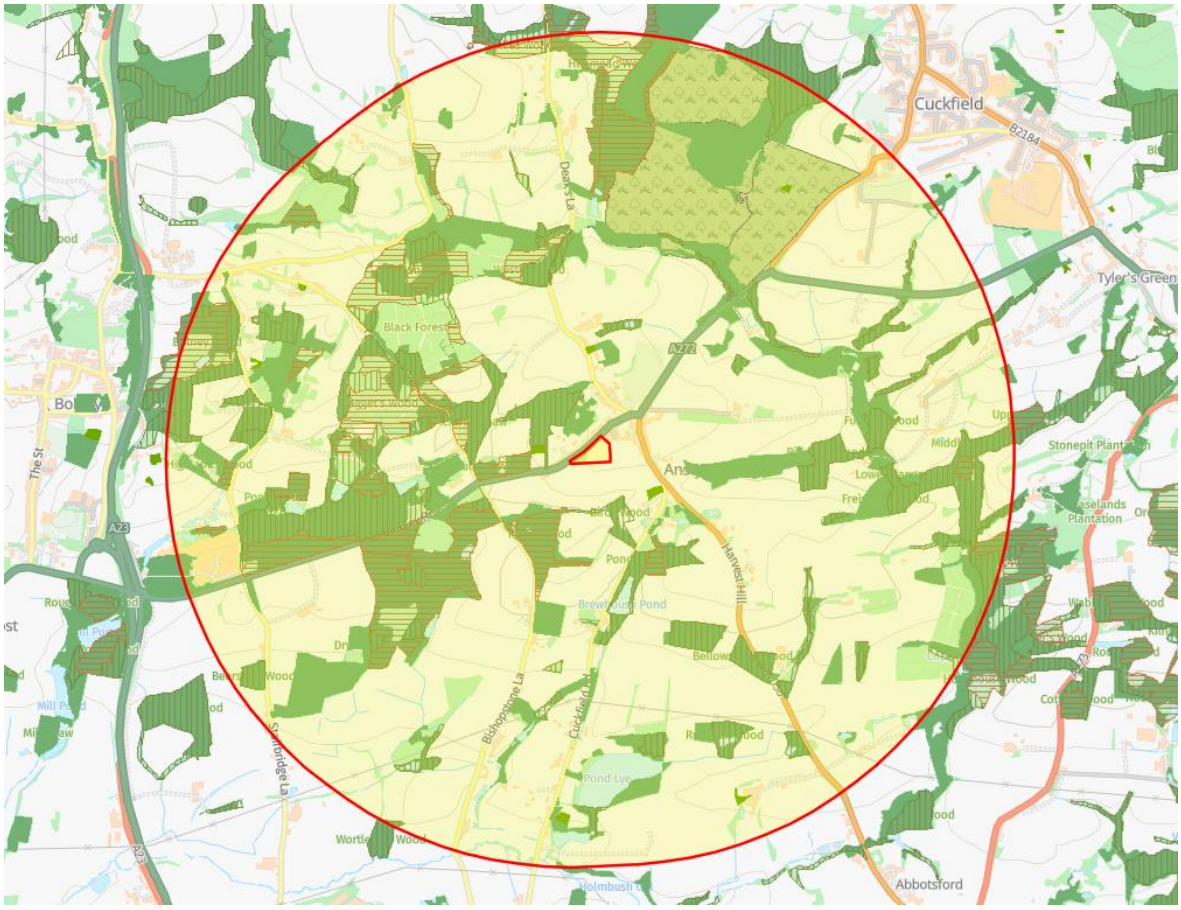


Figure 3: Priority habitats within 2km of site boundary including: deciduous woodland (dull green), ancient woodland (brown vertical and green horizontal hatching), traditional orchards (pale green) and woodpasture and parkland (green with symbols).

3.5 The desktop study revealed there was one European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence issued within 2km of the site boundary, one confirmed GCN pond and two pond surveys absent of GCN. These are listed below and shown in Figure 4:

- EPSM licence for the destruction of a common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared resting place, c.840m south;
- Ponds surveyed and absent of GCN are located c.950m south and 1.3km south east;
- Confirmed great crested newt (GCN) breeding pond in 2019 located *c.*1.6km east of the site boundary.

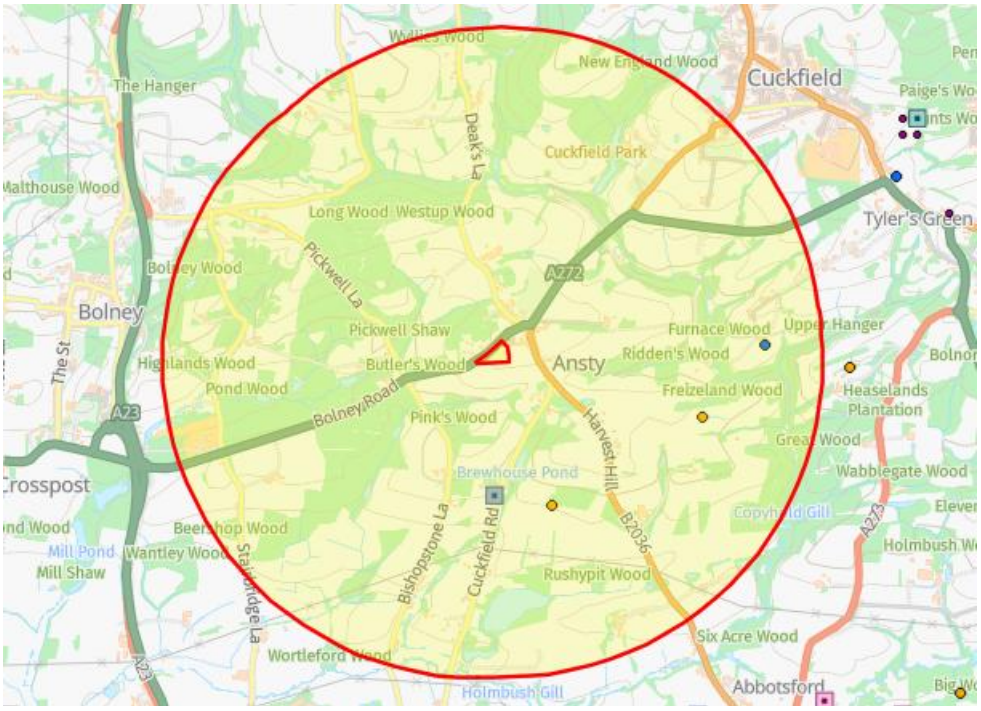


Figure 4: EPSM licences (blue square) issued within 2km of the site boundary, confirmed GCN pond (blue dot) and GCN absent pond (orange dot).

3.6 OS mapping and aerial photography revealed no ponds on site and three within 250m of the site boundary (Figure 5).

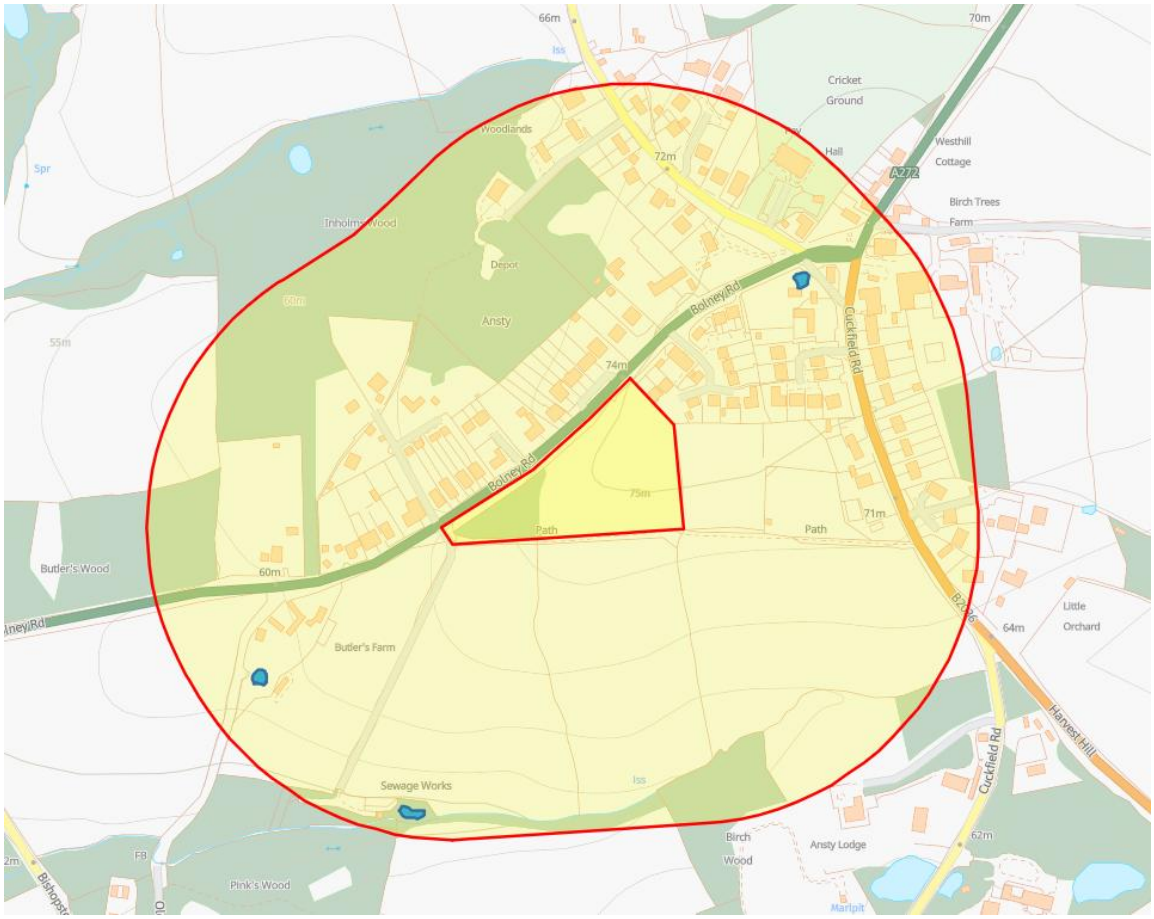


Figure 5: Ponds located within 250m of the site boundary.

3.7 A 2km records search was requested from SxBRC. The records closest to site, within the last 10 years and relevant to the habitats on site have been included in Table 1.

Table 1: Species records within 2km of the site boundary in the past 10 years

Species	Status	Closest record to site
Common toad *Bufo bufo*	Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) Schedule 5 s9.5a; NERC act (2006) Section 41	c.1.5km south (10/04/2016)
Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	c.1.8km south east (06/2016)
Grass snake *Natrix helvetica*	Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) Schedule 5 s9.5a; NERC act (2006) Section 41	c.800m west (05/04/2017)
Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) Schedule 5 s9.4b/c, s9.5a; Habitats Directive Annex 4; NERC Act (2006) Section 41	c.650m east (19/06/2020)
Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellous pygmaeus*	Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) Schedule 5 s9.4b/c, s9.5a; Habitats Directive Annex 4; NERC Act (2006) Section 41	c.650m east (19/06/2020)
Brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*	As above	c.1.6km south (12/09/2017)
Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*	As above	c.1.7km south (29/07/2020)
Natterer's bat	As above	c.1.6km south

Myotis nattereri		(12/09/2020)
White tailed eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*	Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) Schedule 1 Pt 1; Birds Directive Annex 1	Within 2km (17/11/2023)
Red Kite *Milvus milvus*	Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) Schedule 1 Pt 1; Birds Directive Annex 1	Within 2km (14/03/2021)
Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (01/06/2021)
Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*	Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) Schedule 1 Pt 1; Birds Directive Annex 1	Within 2km (11/11/2020)
Skylark *Alauda arvensis*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (20/04/2021)
Woodlark *Lullula arborea*	Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) Schedule 1 Pt 1; Birds Directive Annex 1; NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (28/03/2020)
Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (24/07/2020)
Linnet *Linaria cannabina*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (03/04/2017)
Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (24/07/2020)
Tree pipit Anthus trivialis	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (02/05/2016)
Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (07/06/2020)
Marsh tit *Poecile palustris*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (12/05/2024)
House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (15/06/2022)
Dunnock *Prunella modularis*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (14/11/2020)
Firecrest Regulus ignicapilla	Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) Schedule 1 Pt 1	Within 2km (10/04/2016)
Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (05/04/2020)
Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (15/06/2022)
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor*	NERC act (2006) Section 41	Within 2km (13/03/2016)
Barn Owl *Tyta alba*	Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) Schedule 1 Pt1	Within 2km (10/07/2023)

Habitat Survey

3.8 The site is comprised of one sheep-grazed field bordered by mature tree lines and scrub just outside of the northern- eastern and southern site boundaries and a small woodland in the western corner. Broad habitat types identified within the site boundary are detailed below.

3.9 Only species of note have been listed within this section, the full species list can be found within **Appendix 3.**

Modified grassland (g4)

3.10 The grassland on site did not qualify as other neutral grassland as it was species poor with an average of 5.4 species/m2, and grass dominated within broad-leaved herb coverage of less than 20%. Sward height was low with sheep grazing on site at the time of the survey. Grasses comprised dominant sweet vernal grass, with abundant Yorkshire fog and frequent common bent, and annual meadowgrass. Herbaceous species included occasional greater bird-s-foot trefoil, creeping thistle, meadow buttercup, and common sorrel.

***Lowland mixed deciduous woodland* (w1f)**

3.11 The south-west corner of the site contained an area of woodland which is approximately 0.3ha. It contained a number of mature trees including oak, birch, beech, sweet chestnut and hazel. The woodland lacked a significant understory with little to no shrub habitat. The other species in this area included bracken, red fescue and foxgloves. There were however a few piles of deadwood from previous woodland management.

Offsite habitats

3.12 Just beyond the southern boundary is a band of mature hazel coppice which canopy extends over the boundary into the site. A holly hedgerow with trees is present along part of the western site boundary and a linear band of sycamore and ash woodland is located on the embankment just beyond the northern site boundary.

Protected Species

Bats Roosting

3.13 Trees proposed for removal within the woodland due to honey fungus were subject to a ground level trees assessment. Two of these trees featured small crevices which may be of value to individual bats and as such have been characterised as having PRF-I features. No potential maternity roost features (PRF-M) were identified on any of the trees proposed for removal.

Bats Foraging and Commuting

3.14 The species-poor grassland habitat on site offered some limited opportunities for foraging bats. The western woodland and adjacent offsite habitats provide good

connectivity and commuting opportunities to/from foraging and roosting sites in the surrounding area.

3.15 Bat activity surveys have been carried out on site in 2016 (SES, 2016) and again in 2022 (The Ecology Partnership, 2022a). Surveys found the site to be used mainly by common pipistrelle, with lower numbers of soprano pipistrelle, myotis, and serotine and negligible numbers of brown long-eared, Leisler's and noctules.

Great crested newt (GCN)

3.16 No ponds were identified on site however there were multiple ponds within 250m of the red-line boundary. From the desk study results, only ponds 1-3 were considered suitable for further assessment due to the others being north of Bolney Road and east of Cuckfield Road. These roads were considered to be significant barriers to dispersal. The data search did return records for GCN; however, these were over 1.5km to the south at Pond Lye which is on the opposite side of Cuckfield Road which presents a dispersal barrier.

3.17 Ponds 1-3 were located on private land and could not be fully assessed on the day of survey. Ponds 1 and 2 could be partially assessed from adjacent roads, however pond 3 could not. Previous survey by Southern Ecological Solutions in August 2017 assessed ponds 1 and 2 visually using a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI). The results from these surveys indicated that both of these ponds had 'poor' suitability to support GCN due to multiple factors, namely presence of ducks, lack of aquatic vegetation and vertical embanked pond margins. These findings were consistent with observations from this survey, suggesting little change in the suitability for these ponds to support GCN.

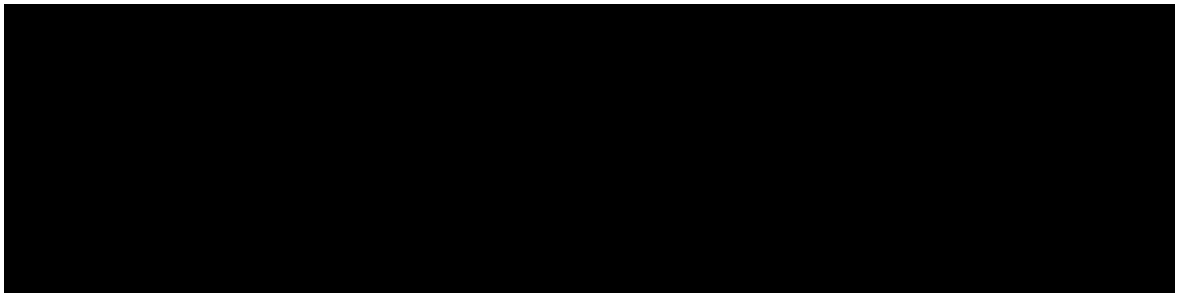
Dormice

3.18 The woodland onsite lacked a significant understory to be considered optimal habitat for dormice. The offsite habitat along the boundaries contain suitable treeline and scrub habitat for dormice due to the frequent hazel trees and suitable composition beneath the treeline. The woodland and treeline network throughout the wider landscape to the south provides direct connections to additional suitable dormouse habitat, such as, Pink's Wood 250m to the south-west, and Birch Wood 188m to the south. However, no records were returned by the data search.

3.19 Extensive dormouse surveys have been carried out on site in 2016 and 2022 (SES, 2016 & The Ecology Partnership 2025b) and both surveys did not find any evidence of dormouse within the site. As the habitat on site has not changed since these surveys, it is considered that dormouse are still likely absent from site.

Reptiles

3.20 The grazed grassland on site was largely unsuitable for reptiles and it did not provide sufficient cover from predators. Edge habitats were more suitable, however, reptiles surveys undertaken by SES and The Ecology Partnership in 2016 and 2022 found no reptiles to be present on site (SES, 2026 & The Ecology Partnership, 2022c). As the habitat on site has not changed since these surveys, it is considered that reptiles are still likely absent from site.



Nesting birds

3.22 The western woodland and adjacent edge habitats all provide suitable opportunities for nesting birds.

Other Species

3.23 The site was considered unsuitable to support other protected species, such as water vole and otters due to lack of suitable habitat.

3.24 Given the open nature of the site, and the presence of suitable foraging habitat, hedgehogs are considered likely to use the site for foraging and commuting purposes, and stag beetles may be utilising the deadwood within the woodland.

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 any statutory or non-statutory designated sites. In addition, there are no internationally designated sites within 10km of the site and no other statutory designated sites within 2km. The site does lie within a SSSI IZR, however, the development is not listed as the type that would require consultation with the LPA.

4.3 The site is located within 2km of three LWS. All of these are over 1km away and over 1.5km walking distance, and so are unlikely to be significantly affected by this development. As such, this development is not expected to have any significant negative direct or indirect effects on any statutory or non-statutory designated sites.

Effects on Priority Habitats

4.4 A single priority habitats are located on site: lowland mixed deciduous woodland. The woodland was considered to be in poor condition due to a significant lack of understory and little variation in age class of tree. As such, it is considered to be of site value only. It is recommended that this habitat be retained within the masterplan, protected throughout construction and enhanced. Any unavoidable lost should be compensated for through creation of new like for like habitat or enhancement of remaining habitat to be managed to the higher condition.

Effect on on-site habitats

4.5 The modified grassland habitat is species-poor as well as being common and widespread in the local area. As such, this habitat is considered to be of site value only.

Protected Species

Bats Roosting

4.6 PRF-I features were identified on two silver birch trees in the western woodland with honey fungus. As such, prior to the removal of these trees, bat boxes should be established on nearby retained trees, and the two birch trees should be soft-felled in sections and left overnight, before chipping or cutting into small pieces the next day.

4.7 No PRFs were identified on any of the other trees to be impacted on site and therefore bat roosting potential is considered to be negligible for these trees. All mature trees in the woodland and just outside the site boundary to the north and east are due to be retained and protected from the development. As such, no further survey or mitigation is required.

Bats Foraging and Commuting

4.8 The site was generally considered to be of 'moderate' suitability for foraging and commuting bats given the presence of woodland and linear boundary habitats including hedgerows and mixed scrub that provide connectivity to suitable foraging/roosting habitat in the surrounding area.

4.9 Bat activity surveys carried out in 2016 and 2022 recorded an average of 39 passes a night with 72% comprising common pipistrelle, 14.3 % soprano pipistrelle,.9.4% Myotis species, 2.7% serotine and the remaining 1.6% was made up of Nyctalus species and brown log-eared bats. Overall, the composition of bats using the site was determined to be of site value, due to the generally low level of activity by relatively widespread and common species.

4.10 All the adjacent boundary hedgerow and scrub habitats are due to be retained as part of the proposals. As such, it is considered that the ecological functionality of the landscape will not be impacted upon. As the habitat on site has not changed since the last bat activity survey and the data in this survey was largely similar to the data in 2016, as well as the fact that no commuting habitat is being removed, it is considered that update bat activity surveys are not necessary.

4.11 However, it is recommended that a sensitive lighting scheme is implemented as part of the scheme, to ensure these potential commuting features remain sufficiently dark. All bat species are nocturnal, resting in dark conditions in the day and emerging at night to feed. Light at various levels can affect both their roosting and foraging behaviour. Recommendations for a sensitive lighting scheme include:

- Installing lighting only if there is a significant need;
- Using LED luminaries due to their lower intensity, sharp cut-off and good colour rendition – any lights with UV elements or metal halide lights should not be used;
- Lights with peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats (Stone 2012);

- Lights with an upward light ratio of 0% and good optical control;
- Careful consideration of column height to avoid light spill;
- Any external security lights should use motion-sensors and short (1-minute) timers;
- Avoid putting lighting near tree lines or hedgerows and angling light away from these linear features which are used by commuting and foraging bats;
- Planting a barrier or using man-made features required within the scheme to form a barrier.

4.12 Light levels should be kept below 0.4 lux along the north-western and southern site boundary habitats to ensure a dark corridor across the site, for more light sensitive species, such as brown long-eared bats.

4.13 On the basis that a bat sensitive lighting strategy is prepared and adhered to, and taking into account the small scale of the scheme (1.6ha), it is considered that there will be no significant residual impacts on commuting and foraging bats.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

4.14 There are no ponds on site and three potential breeding ponds within 250m. Ponds 1 and 2 had previously been assessed as having 'poor' suitability for GCN in a previous survey in 2017 for a previously application, which overlaps the current site. These ponds were observed to be in a similar 'poor' condition on the survey for this report.

4.15 Pond 3 was on private land so could not be assessed, however, the land between the pond and the site was heavily grazed by sheep which would make dispersal north of the pond unlikely. Dispersal would more likely be south to Pink's Wood which contains multiple water bodies. In addition, if it was discovered that pond 3 is a breeding pond, the Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment for GCN predicts that an offence is highly unlikely based on area of land affected (Table 2).

Table 2: Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment Calculator for Pond 3

Component	**Likely effect** (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	**Notional offence probability score**
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	1 - 5 ha lost or damaged	0.04

Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.04
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

4.16 As such, it is considered great crested newts are likely absent from site. However, as a precaution, it is recommended that the grassland on site should continue to be grazed leading up until the works to deter amphibians from entering the works area. Should a GCN be found during construction, all works should cease and a mitigation licence will need to be obtained from Natural England.

4.18 Best practice guidelines recommend that:

- 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.

4.19 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 rabbits.

Nesting Birds

4.20 The woodland and boundary habitats on site all have the potential to support nesting birds. These habitats are largely to be retained during development, however, where small sections of these habitats are to be removed during development it is recommended that these works should be undertaken outside 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.

Other Species

4.21 No suitable habitat for other protected species, such as otters or watervoles was identified on site, and dormouse and reptiles have been previously confirmed absent from site, as such no further survey is recommended.

4.22 The site has potential to support hedgehog. Whilst receiving no specific legal protection, they are protected from certain forms of harm under the wild mammals (Protection) Act 1996. As, such, it is recommended that best practice guidelines be followed throughout any development to ensure no individuals are harmed.

Ecological Enhancements

4.23 Several enhancements can be made to the final development to provide increased ecological opportunities for a range of species and assist 'biodiversity net gain' assessments for the site post-development.

4.24 A 'wildlife corridor' should be established along the northern and southern site boundaries to ensure wildlife can safely traverse the site. This should include retained and new areas of native scrub and wildflower grassland.

4.25 It is recommended that flowering lawn mixes are used for areas of shorter grass within the main development. These include a diverse mix of low-growing wildflowers and slow growing grasses allow for a short and attractive lawn with high value for pollinators. The grassland along the southern, western and northern edges of the site, could be enhanced through the creation of wildflower-rich grassland. This would involve the cutting short of the existing grass, scarifying and applying an appropriate seed mix such as Emorsgate EM5.

4.26 It is also recommended that new street trees are created throughout the scheme, including the use of fruit trees where appropriate.

4.27 Artificial bird and bat boxes can be built into the development to provide new nesting opportunities on site and to achieve ecological enhancements in line with policies set

out by the Local Planning Authority. It is recommended that these are positioned on the retained mature trees in the western woodland.

4.28 The site could be enhanced for hedgehog, through provision of hedgehog shelters in secluded areas around the edge of the development and all gardens should provide a 13x13cm access hole on each fence, to allow for safe movement of hedgehog across the site.

4.29 It is recommended that log piles and hibernacula be created along the edges of the site (Figure 6). The log piles should be made from native, broadleaved trees. Some of these logs should be buried c. 50cm into the soil to create new opportunities for invertebrate species such as stag beetles. Planting around the newly created and retained log piles with species such as honeysuckle or clematis can also add value.

Figure 6: Log piles and hibernacula can be created within the edges of the site.

4.30 Any attenuation ponds on site can be enhanced to provide value for wildlife. To create diverse vegetation around the ponds, pond edge wildflower seed mixes can be sown such as Emorsgate EP1F.

4.31 It is recommended that following approval, a biodiversity enhancement and mitigation strategy is conditioned to detail the specification, and location of these features within the final design, and a Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) and/or Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) to detail long-term maintenance and management of these features.

5.0 Impact Assessment

5.1 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.

5.2 The approach to this assessment accords with guidance presented within the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM 2018).

5.3 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 influence, on identified ecological features and receptors. The proposals are subsequently reviewed and mitigation and compensation measures are outlined which help to reduce negative impacts.

5.4 Table 4 below summarises the impacts and required mitigation for each receptor as previously detailed in the discussion.

Table 4: Assessment of effects from the proposal after mitigation and compensation

Feature	Scale of Importance	Mitigation/Compensation Required	Residual Effect
Non-statutory LWS	District	No impacts predicted due to the small scale of the development and distance from sites.	Not significant
Priority habitats	Site	Woodland to be retained and protected on site.	Not significant
Foraging/ commuting bats	Site	Potential foraging habitat to be retained as part of the development and sensitive lighting scheme (including dark corridors) to be implemented.	Not significant
Nesting birds	Site	Removal of any suitable nesting habitat outside of nesting bird season or after a check by a suitably qualified ecologist.	Not significant
Commuting and foraging badgers and hedgehogs	Site	Safety measures enforced on site during works to mitigate any possibility of accidental harm to badgers through interaction with open excavations.	Not significant

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 No Statutory nature designations fall within 10km of the site.

6.2 There are three Local Wildlife Sites within 2km of the red-line boundary, however they are of a significant distance away to not be affected by this development.

6.3 Lowland mixed deciduous woodland priority habitat is present on site, and should be retained and protected.

6.4 The site was largely comprised of species-poor grassland, which is common and widespread throughout the local area and the UK as a whole, however, in order to avoid any net-loss of biodiversity, it is likely that creation of new areas of flower-rich grassland will be required.

6.5 Two birch trees on site had PRF-I features of value to individual roosting bats. It is recommended that these trees are subject to sensitive soft felling and bat boxes are established nearby, prior to works. There were no potential bat roosting features identified on any other trees to be lost on site. As such, no further survey with regards to roosting bats is required.

6.6 Previous surveys on site have found relatively low numbers of common and widespread bats to be utilising the boundary habitats on site. These habitats will be retained and protected from the development. A detailed sensitive lighting strategy will be required including dark corridors across the southern/western site boundaries, to ensure no significant impact on foraging and commuting bats.

6.7 The development area, which comprised short-sward grassland was considered unlikely to support great crested newts owing to the distance and poor suitability of the closest ponds. As a precaution, it is recommended that the grass continues to be grazed and if any GCN are found during works then all works will cease and a Mitigation Licence will be sought from Natural England.

6.9 Birds may use the scrub and boundary hedgerow on site for nesting and foraging. The majority of which are due to be retained during development, however; any works to these features this should be undertaken outside of bird nesting season (March – August inclusive) or after a nesting bird check by a qualified ecologist.

6.10 Previous surveys of the site in 2016 and 2022 found no evidence of reptiles or dormouse on site. As the habitat on site and in the surrounding area remains unchanged, it is considered that these species are still likely absent from site and no further survey is required.

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

7.0 References

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CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd Edition.* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

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The Ecology Partnership (2022b) Ansty – Reptile survey report.

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Wells, D., Chanin, P. & Gubert, L. (2025) Hazel Dormouse Mitigation Handbook. The Mammal Society. ISBN: 978-1-0687982-2-1

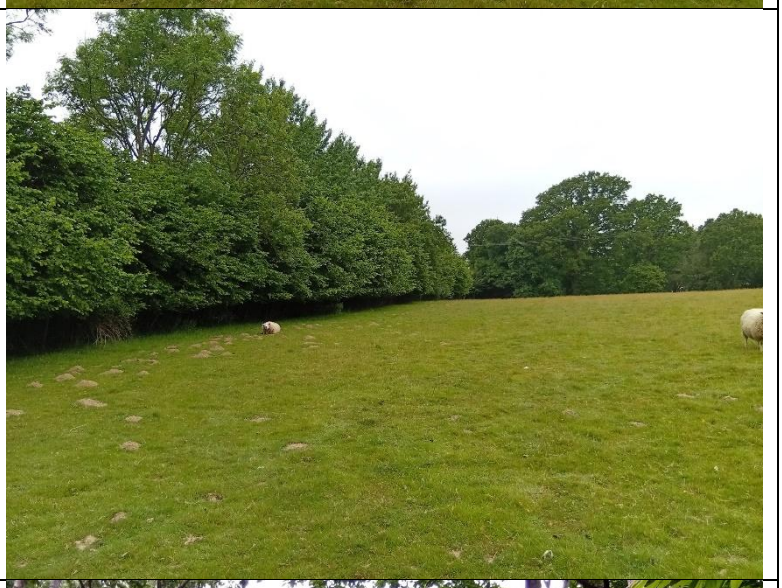
Wilson, G.J., Harris, S. & McLaren, G. (1997) *Changes in British badger population, 1988-1997.* People's Trust for Endangered Species, London.

Internet resources:

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

Magic Interactive Map: www.magic.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Photos

Photograph 1: Modified grassland in the west of the site looking east.	
Photograph 2: Modified grassland in the east of the site looking west.	
Photograph 3: Woodland in the west of the site.	

Appendix 2: Habitat Map


Application boundary
Habitats
Hardstanding
Modified grassland
Hazel scrub
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
Artificial unvegetated surface
Ruderal/ephemeral
Line of trees
Site: Land South of Bolney Road
Client: Devine Homes
Survey date: 09/06/2025
Surveyor: MP
ECOLOGY PARTNERSHIP
The Ecology Partnership Ltd
Thorncroft Manor
Thorncroft Drive
Leatherhead
KT22 8JB
0
25
50 m
Satellite imagery sourced from Google Earth Pro on 04/08/2025 (c) Google

Appendix 3: Species List

LATIN	ENGLISH	Abundance & quadrat presence
Grassland		
Anthoxanthum odoratum	Sweet vernal grass	D (1,2,3,4,5)
Agrostis capillaris	Common bent	A (1,2)
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire fog	A (1,2,5)
Poa annua	Annual meadowgrass	O (1,5)
Rumex acetosa	Common sorrel	O (2,3,5)
Ranunculus repens	Creeping buttercup	O (3)
Cirsium arvense	Creeping thistle	O (4,5)
Cynosurus critatus	Crested dog's-tail	O
Lotus pendunculatus	Greater bird's-foot trefoil	O (1,2,3)
Stellaria graminea	Lesser stitchwort	O (2)
Ranunculus acris	Meadow buttercup	O (2,4)
Lolium perenne	Perennial ryegrass	O
Festuca rubra	Red fescue	O
Poa pratensis	Smooth meadow grass	O (3)
Bromus hordeaceus	Soft brome	O
Juncus effusus	Soft rush	O
Trifolium pratense	White clover	O (4)
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved dock	R
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's-foot	R
Cerastium fontanum	Common mouse ear	R
Urtica dioica	Common nettle	R
Juncus conglomeratus	Compact rush	R
Rumex crispus	Curled dock	R
***Taraxacum officinalis* agg.**	Dandelion	R
Geranium molle	Dove's-foot cranesbill	R
Luzula campestre	Field woodrush	R
Veronica chamaedrys	Germander speedwell	R
Ulex europaeus	Gorse	R
Arctium minus	Lesser burdock	R
Cirsium palustre	Marsh thistle	R
Trifolium arvensis	Red clover	R
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort plantain	R
Poa trivialis	Rough meadowgrass	R
Cirsium vulgare	Spear thistle	R
Woodland/scrub		
Betula pendula	Silver birch	A
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire fog	A
Quercus robur	Pedunculate oak	A
Agrostis capillaris	Common bent	F
Agrostis stolonifera	Creeping bent	F
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's-foot	F
Hedera helix	Ivy	F

Ilex aquifolium	Holly	F
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	F
Rubus fruticosus	Bramble	F
Urtica dioica	Common nettle	F
Cirsium arvense	Creeping thistle	O
Corylus avellana	Hazel	O
Glechoma hederacea	Ground ivy	O
Iris foetidissima	Stinking iris	O
Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken	O
Ranunculus repens	Creeping buttercup	O
Rumex sanguinea	Wood dock	O
Sambucus nigra	Ash	O
Alliaria petiolata	Garlic mustard	R
Castanea sativa	Sweet chestnut	R
Geum urbanum	Woodavens	R
Juncus effusus	Soft rush	R
Prunus avium	Wild cherry	R
Rosa canina	Dogrose	R
Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan	R
Stachys sylvatica	Hedge woundwort	R

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Date: 08/08/2025