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Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Our ref: 15109
Date: 7 April 2026

By email only: Planning Department, planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk

Thank you for requesting advice on this application from Place Services' ecological advice service. This service provides advice to planning officers to inform Mid Sussex District Council planning decisions with regard to potential ecological impacts from development.

Application: DM/26/0499
Location: Sports Field East Grinstead Sports Club Saint Hill Road East Grinstead
Proposal: The use and expansion of parking facilities within the maintenance area at the Sports Club for staff vehicle and overflow parking.

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

No ecological objection	☐
No ecological objection subject to attached conditions	☒
Further information required/Temporary holding objection	☐
Recommend Refusal	☐
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the LPA's Appropriate Assessment	☐

Summary

We have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, December 2025), relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected & Priority species and habitats, and identification of appropriate mitigation measures and mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. We note from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, December 2025) that the proposed development site had been cleared and replaced with compacted hardcore at the time of the survey in September 2025. We

therefore accept that all baseline habitat extent, type and conditions have been based on a site survey of immediate adjacent habitats and aerial imagery.

We have also reviewed the information submitted relating to mandatory biodiversity net gains, including the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (JWK Wildlife Surveys, January 2026), Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Calculation Tool (February 2026), Habitat Condition Sheets and Offsite Post Intervention Habitat Condition Sheets. We note that Figure 1 in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, December 2025) comprises the baseline habitat plan.

We note from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, December 2025) that there are no buildings onsite and that there is a single Silver birch with Potential Roost Features for individual bats (PRFs-I). However, we understand that this tree is to be retained and therefore agree that no further surveys for bats are required. We highlight that if the plans should change and this tree needs to be removed, then appropriate compensation will be required in advance of works to avoid loss of roost resource (Reason and Wray (2023) UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management). We also highlight that a non-licensed Precautionary Working Method Statement for bats will be required which includes inspection of any affected trees by endoscope on the day and felling under the supervision of a licensed bat ecologist, as required in Table 6.3 of 4th Ed. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Bat Conservation Trust (Collins ed., 2023).

We support the Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected and Priority species (including Hedgehog, which is a threatened and Priority species) in Section 4.3.3 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, December 2025), which should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application. However, please note that we have no comments on Great Crested Newt as we have been instructed to leave comments on this European Protected Species to the [NatureSpace Partnership](#).

This provides certainty for the LPA of the likely impacts on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and, with appropriate mitigation measures secured, the development can be made acceptable.

The mitigation measures identified in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, December 2025) should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority

species particularly those recorded in the locality, including bats and mobile protected and Priority species.

We understand from Section 4.3.2 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, December 2025) that no additional lighting is proposed.

With regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains, it is highlighted that we support the submitted Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (JWK Wildlife Surveys, January 2026), Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Calculation Tool (February 2026), Habitat Condition Sheets and Offsite Post Intervention Habitat Condition Sheets. Biodiversity net gains is a statutory requirement set out under [Schedule 7A \(Biodiversity Gain in England\) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) and we are satisfied that submitted information provides sufficient information at application stage. As a result, a Biodiversity Gain Plan should be submitted prior to commencement, which also includes the following:

- a) A Biodiversity Gain Plan form (Ideally using the Government's template: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-gain-plan>)
- b) The completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development and post-intervention biodiversity values.
- c) Pre and post development habitat plans.
- d) Legal agreement(s)
- e) Biodiversity Gain Site Register reference numbers (if using off-site units).
- f) Proof of purchase (if buying statutory biodiversity credits at a last resort).

In addition, a [Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan](#) (HMMP) should be secured for all [significant on-site enhancements](#). However, we are satisfied that significant on-site enhancements are not proposed for this application. As a result, we are satisfied an HMMP for significant on-site enhancements will not be required for the Biodiversity Gain Plan.

However, it is recommended that the following matters will need to be considered by the applicant as part of the biodiversity gain condition:

- We note that the applicant is proposing to secure off-site enhancements in blue line boundary. Therefore, any off-site enhancements will need to be secured by a legal agreement with the Council as part of the Biodiversity Gain Condition and will also require a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan to set out the aftercare and monitoring strategy for the 30-year period from the completion of development. Evidence that the site has been registered on the [Biodiversity Gain Site Register](#) must also be provided prior to the discharge of the Biodiversity Gain Condition. As a result, it is recommended that the applicant explores securing off-site habitat units via a habitat bank registered on the Biodiversity Gain Site Register in the first instance.
- We query the proposal to enhance the off-site 'other neutral grassland' to 'Lowland meadow'. This is because this habitat contains a very high

distinctiveness and is an extremely difficult habitat to create. The habitat requires 16 species per m² with species that reflect specific grassland communities (e.g. NVC MG5), with at least four positive indicators for lowland meadows present within the sward. Therefore, further clarification with regard to the soil type and phosphorus levels should be provided to justify whether this habitat is realistic and achievable, alongside information on how the ground will be nutrient stripped and prepared before implementation. Furthermore, a pre-requisite of the planting should be the sowing of green hay on proposed habitat location, ideally from a local source. As a result, if this is not considered deliverable, the off-site habitat should be changed to 'Other neutral grassland' enhancement to good condition. However, this would also result in a 10% measurable biodiversity net gain not being achieved for habitat units.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, December 2025) to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 187d and 193d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). The reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Layout and should be secured by a condition of any consent.

This will enable LPA to demonstrate its compliance with its statutory duties including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and delivery of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable, subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013. We recommend that submission for approval and implementation of the details below should be a condition of any planning consent.

Recommended conditions

1. ACTION REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL RECOMMENDATIONS

“All mitigation measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, December 2025), as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination. This includes the Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected and Priority species in Section 4.3.3 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, December 2025), which avoids impacts on protected species.

This may include the appointment of an appropriately competent person e.g. an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) to provide on-site ecological expertise during construction. The appointed person shall undertake all activities, and works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details.”

Reason: To conserve protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

2. **WITHIN THREE MONTHS OF CONSENT: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY**

“Within three months of consent, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected, Priority and threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist in line with the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, December 2025), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;*
- b) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;*
- c) locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);*
- d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and*
- e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).*

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details shall be retained in that manner thereafter.”

Reason: To enhance protected, Priority and threatened species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Biodiversity Gain condition

Natural England advises that the biodiversity gain condition has its own separate statutory basis, as a planning condition under [paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#). The condition is deemed to apply to every planning permission granted for the development of land in England (unless exemptions or transitional provisions apply), and there are separate provisions governing the Biodiversity Gain Plan.

The local planning authority is strongly encouraged to not include the biodiversity gain condition, or the reasons for applying this, in the list of conditions imposed in the written notice when granting planning permission. However, it is highlighted that biodiversity gain condition could be added as an informative, using [draft text](#) provided by the Secretary of State:

“Biodiversity Net Gain

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition)” that development may not begin unless:

- (a) Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and*
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.*

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Mid Sussex District Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are listed in paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.”

Please contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Yours sincerely,

Hamish Jackson ACIEEM BSc (Hons)
Senior Ecological Consultant
 Place Services at Essex County Council



Place Services provide ecological advice on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council.

Please note:

This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.