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**LAND OFF EVESHAM ROAD,
CRABBS CROSS,
REDDITCH,
WORCESTERSHIRE**

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**Report to
Masfields Architects & Surveyors**

Project Ref: 2020/097 A V1

**Worcestershire Wildlife Consultancy
Lower Smite Farm
Smite Hill
Hindlip
Worcester
WR3 8SZ**

Tel: 01905 754909

www.worcestershirowildlifeconsultancy.org

September 2020

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Title: Land off Evesham Road, Crabbs Cross, Redditch, Worcestershire –
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Submitted to: Masfields Architects & Surveyors

Report number: 2020/097 A

Date: September 2020



Author: Joshua Evans BSc (Hons) MCIEEM Senior Ecologist

Internal reviewer: Edward Leszczynski BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM – Consultancy Manager

Authorised by: Edward Leszczynski BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM – Consultancy Manager

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SUMMARY

In August 2020, Worcestershire Wildlife Consultancy was commissioned by Mr Matthew Bennett of Masefields Architects & Surveyors to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Land off Evesham Road, Crabbs Cross, Redditch, Worcestershire. The appraisal was requested to ensure compliance with National and European legislation.

Habitats- The site is partially composed of secondary woodland. Where possible, as much of the woodland should be retained as the plans permit. It is recommended that retained trees, scrub and tall ruderals remain on site due to the benefits to wildlife they provide. This will also help to maintain structural diversity.

Badgers – A single potential sett was discovered on site and this has the potential to be active, although during the appraisal it was largely covered up with ivy and no obvious latrines, snuffle holes or recent ‘scratching posts’ were note on the base of the trees on site. **The site must be monitored on a fortnightly basis within three months prior to development.** If active, then there may be a need to apply suitable mitigation and/or a sett closure via a licence application.

As there is a possibility that mammals such as foxes or badgers could cross the site, it is recommended as a precaution during any construction phase that any trenches should be covered when not in use and provided with a 45° escape ramp to ensure that they do not become trapped.

Nesting Birds -Work must not commence on the secondary woodland until the birds have finished nesting, preferably waiting until the end of the nesting season (nesting season generally considered to be between late February to late August). Tree works and shrub / vegetation removal must be undertaken outside the main nesting season and where this is not possible a suitably qualified ecologist acting as the on-site Ecological Clerk of Works **must** be engaged to check for nesting birds and to provide advice on the most appropriate way to proceed.

Bats: The woodland trees were not considered to be suitable for roosting bats as they are too immature to have developed suitable features for bats to roost in. However, they may form part of a foraging route and any retained woodland trees on site must avoid strong lighting shining onto the canopy line. In addition, the site could be enhanced to increase its suitability for roosting bats (please refer to Table 4).

No other evidence of protected species was found during the survey. With the exception of badgers and nesting birds, and lighting issues regarding bats, there appear to be **no other obvious and immediate issues** for this development with regard to any other species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. However, in the event that any protected species listed in Table 1 is found on the site during the development works then **all works must cease immediately**, and the advice of a suitably qualified ecologist must be sought.

It should be noted that if more than twelve months elapse between this appraisal and the commencement of any development then a further appraisal may be required at an appropriate time to determine the status of any protected species that may have taken up residence during the intervening period.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Commissioning Brief

In August 2020, Worcestershire Wildlife Consultancy was commissioned by Mr Matthew Bennett of Masefields Architects & Surveyors to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Land off Evesham Road, Crabbs Cross, Redditch, Worcestershire. The appraisal was requested to ensure compliance with National and European legislation.

1.2 Summary of the Proposed Development

It is our understanding that a pre-application (20/00705/PREAPP - 12 Crabb Cross Lane) for planning permission is being sought to develop part of the site for residential purposes.

1.3 Site Location and Description

The site is located off Evesham Road in Crabb's Cross, Redditch, Worcestershire B97 5JP at NGR SP 04234 64460, to the rear of 12 Crabbs Cross Lane.

The site contains a small section (approximately 1.7 Ha) of broadleaf secondary woodland that occurs between a small public car park and to the rear of two properties that are not part of the development. There is a hard-standing track leading down through the woodland.

The woodland has a denser canopy on the northern part of the site that abuts the car park whilst the southern section has been partially clear felled. The secondary woodland has developed over former residential properties that were present before the 1970s changes to the road network around Redditch. According to the historical data from Google Earth, the site was not wooded in 1945 but was on the 1999 aerial photos; the first signs of the site being mapped as being wooded was on the 1986 Ordnance Survey map.

The surrounding habitats include the A441 and the residential and commercial properties of Crabbs Cross.

1.4 Scope of the Survey Assessment

The ecological assessment focussed on the following points:

- Determining the potential of the area of the proposed development work to support protected species, of which account must be taken prior to and during the planned works in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
- The appraisal also aimed to identify habitats and species recognised within the local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP Habitats).
- The appraisal recommendations are also guided by the relevant legislation:

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC), 2006 states: “Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.

Furthermore, the survey assessment recommendations are guided by the National Planning Policy Framework¹ (NPPF), where the following policies are of particular relevance:

Para. 8. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Para. 170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

¹ National Planning Policy Framework 2 published July 2018

- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Para. 174. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Para. 175. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The site visit also focussed on assessing the potential of the site to support populations of priority species, whose protection and recovery is promoted in paragraph 174, especially those given protection under British or European wildlife legislation as stated above.

The survey assessment recommendations are also guided by the relevant legislation:

- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC), 2006 states: “Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.

1.5 Desk Study

A search for protected sites and species was conducted using the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside website (MAGIC).

1.6 Survey Constraints

The comprehensiveness of any ecological appraisal may be limited by the season in which the site visit was undertaken. To confirm the presence or absence of all protected and notable species usually requires multiple visits at suitable times of the year. This report cannot therefore be considered to provide a comprehensive analysis of the ecological interest of the site. However, it does provide a “snapshot” of the level of the ecological interest present on and across the site on the day of the visit and highlights areas where further survey work may be required.

2. METHODOLOGY

Joshua Evans of Worcestershire Wildlife Consultancy undertook the appraisal on 13th August 2020. The weather at 11:00 hrs was warm, sunny with a slight breeze, 20% cloud cover and an air temperature of 22.6°C.

Table 1: Methodology

Phase 1 habitat survey	The aim of the Phase 1 survey is to provide a description of the semi-natural vegetation of a particular site and is made in accordance with the JNCC Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC, 1990). Where necessary, the condition of habitat is described, and full plant lists collated to provide greater detail, which helps when identifying the conservation significance of a particular habitat. The appraisal also aimed to identify invasive plants listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act that could have implications for works on site. Where appropriate, maps are provided in other formats, such as annotated aerial photographs.
Badgers	The site is assessed for suitable habitats that may support badgers (<i>Meles meles</i>). Where relevant habitat occurs, evidence of badgers including setts, latrines, tracks, snuffle holes, padding or guard hairs is recorded.
Bats	The site is assessed for suitable habitats that may support bats. For example, buildings are assessed for holes in soffits, missing tiles and gaps in the masonry whilst trees are assessed for features such as cracks and holes.
Birds	The site is assessed for suitable habitats that may support birds in terms of feeding, nesting and roosting. Where relevant habitat occurs, evidence identifying the presence of birds including nests, droppings, pellets and feathers is recorded.
Dormice	The site is assessed for suitable habitats that may support dormice (<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>) including woodland and hedgerows. Where relevant habitat occurs evidence of dormice including nests and gnawed nuts is recorded.
Great crested newts	During the site visit the potential of the site to support great-crested newts (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>) is assessed; this includes looking for potential breeding sites such as ponds, disused swimming pools and other water-bodies. The appraisal also focuses on the potential for this species to find refuge in places such as log piles, rubble and compost heaps. Where still water-bodies occur a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) is calculated. This is a standard appraisal method developed specifically to evaluate the habitat suitability for great crested newts (Oldham <i>et al.</i> 2000). A series of factors must be considered. Each factor is assessed along suitability guidelines and allocated a value of between 0.1 (highly unsuitable) to 1.0 (highly suitable). The geometric mean of these values provides an overall suitability value for the site. Although this is no substitute for a dedicated survey the suitability value informs the decision on whether to undertake a dedicated survey.
Otters	The area under appraisal is searched for suitable habitat along water-bodies, recording where appropriate, evidence pertaining to the presence of otters (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) in the form of holts, spraints, anal jelly, tracks and feeding remains.
Reptiles	The site is assessed for suitable habitats that may support reptiles. Slow-worms (<i>Anguis fragilis</i>) and common lizards (<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>) inhabit a variety of habitats, such as rough grassland, heathland and woodland edge where there are suitable opportunities for maintaining their body temperature and

	finding suitable prey. Grass snakes (<i>Natrix natrix</i>) and barred grass snake (<i>Natrix helvetica</i>) are normally associated with water-bodies but they have a wide home range of up to 2km ² and can occur anywhere within that range, particularly in grassy sites as the common name implies. Where relevant habitat occurs, evidence identifying the presence of reptiles, particularly tracks and sloughed skin is recorded.
Water Voles	The area under appraisal is searched for suitable habitat along water-bodies, recording where appropriate, evidence pertaining to the presence of water voles (<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>) in the form of burrows, latrines, runs, footprints and distinctive "feeding lawns".
White-clawed crayfish	The area under appraisal is searched for suitable habitats that may support white-clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>). This typically includes freshwater streams and rivers but may also include still water-bodies.

3. RESULTS, APPRAISAL & RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Desk study

The MAGIC data search found no statutory or non-statutory sites of nature conservation importance within 1km of the site.

3.2 Protected/notable species and habitats

Table 2: Protected/notable species appraisal

Species	Habitats/features	Evidence	Likelihood of presence	Potential impact	Recommendations Further survey required? (Yes/No) / Avoidance / mitigation / enhancement measures
BADGERS	Much of the site is relatively flat with limited areas for a badger to excavate a sett. However, in the northern section there is a single oval hole, covered in dense ivy that appears to be a sett. There were no obvious latrines, snuffle holes or recent 'scratching posts' on the bases of the trees on site.	A single sett entrance found in the north-eastern woodland section.	Given the sett evidence, badgers are thought very likely to pass through the site as part of a larger foraging area.	Low to moderate.	With regard to the badger sett, if any works are planned within 30m of the sett it is recommended that the sett is monitored for a period of at least 3 months (prior to development) on a fortnightly basis to ascertain the level of the sett's usage. This can be carried out at any time of year but for best results it should be performed in either Winter or Spring. If the sett is found to be unoccupied during this period, then a licence to disturb a badger sett will not be required. If no work is planned within 30m of the sett then a fencing plan to prevent any disturbance of the sett should be developed with advice from a suitably qualified ecologist. As badgers or other mammals could potentially cross the site, it is recommended as a precaution during any construction phase that any trenches should be

					covered when not in use and provided with a 45° escape ramp to ensure that they do not become trapped.
BATS	<p>No obvious roosting features within the trees on site. Most trees on site are too immature to have developed suitable features for roosting bats such as holes, cracks or fissured bark. However, it is possible that local bats may forage over the grounds as part of wider foraging area.</p>	<p>None.</p> <p>Worcestershire Wildlife Consultancy have undertaken a number of surveys in the Redditch area, including Crabb's Cross and have noted the following species: noctule (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>), common pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>) and soprano pipistrelle</p>	<p>Negligible for roosting bats. Moderate to high for foraging bats.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>No bat surveys.</p> <p>However, it is recommended that strong lighting is avoided along any retained trees on site.</p> <p>The proposed development will inevitably be accompanied by some degree of lighting, potentially during the construction phase and certainly after completion, which could have negative effects on local bats. Lighting should not be directed onto any installed bat roosting features as this is known to deter bats from using them. It is strongly recommended that any lighting to be incorporated in the site should be low-powered (i.e. lux level of 3 or less), downward-pointing and/or mounted at a low level (e.g. standard bollard height) to minimise the level of impact of lighting on bats. The best types of lighting to use are narrow spectrum lights with no UV content, warm white LED or low-pressure sodium. Ideally the times that the lighting is operational should be limited to allow for some dark periods overnight. This may be possible through passive</p>

		<i>(Pipistrellus pygmaeus)</i> .			<p>infrared sensors and/or controlling levels of lighting throughout some of the night-time period.</p> <p>The most current guidance (September 2018) produced between the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Professionals should be adhered to and can be accessed via the following link: https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/.</p>
BIRDS	<p>The trees, hedgerows, patch of woodland and mature shrubs on site provide suitable nesting habitat for birds, and resources for other wildlife such as shelter and food.</p>	<p>The following species were seen on and flying over the site during the appraisal: woodpigeon (<i>Columba palumbus</i>), blackbird (<i>Turdus merula</i>), robin (<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>), wren (<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>), great tit (<i>Parus</i></p>	<p>Present. Likely to find nesting opportunities within the shrubby vegetation on site.</p>	<p>High if suitable nesting habitat is removed / demolished during nesting season).</p>	<p>All birds are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is therefore generally unlawful to intentionally kill or injure a bird, damage or destroy an occupied nest or take or destroy eggs other than in exceptional prescribed circumstances. Additional protection is given to species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act insofar as it is unlawful to disturb them during nest building, at the nest or when caring for dependent young. Therefore, development operations should take care to avoid the risk of harm to birds and their nests, especially during the nesting season (generally considered to be late February to late August).</p> <p>Tree work and scrub/shrub removal should be undertaken outside the main nesting season and</p>

		<i>major</i>) and blue tit (<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>).			where this is not possible a suitably qualified ecologist acting as the on-site Ecological Clerk or Works must be engaged to check for nesting birds and to provide advice on the most appropriate way to proceed.
DORMICE	The habitats on site are unsuitable for dormice as there is a distinct lack of suitable understorey and there is no connectivity to any woodland or other suitable habitat that might support this species. Furthermore, dormice appear to be absent from north-eastern Worcestershire.	None.	None.	None.	No surveys recommended.
GREAT CRESTED NEWTS	There are no static waterbodies on site or any within 500m of the site, excluding those on the distal side of major barriers such as the road networks around Crabb's Cross.	None on site.	Unlikely to be present due to the hostile expanse of roads and distance from suitable breeding habitat.	Very Low.	No surveys recommended.

<p>OTTERS, WATER VOLES & WHITE-CLAWED CRAYFISH</p>	<p>There is no flowing waterbody within or near to the site and therefore there is no suitable habitat for water voles, otters or white-clawed crayfish.</p>	<p>None on site.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>REPTILES</p>	<p>The habitats that surround the site are generally hostile for reptiles, due to the highly managed, closely mown nature of the lawn as well as the dense road network. Whilst secondary woodland can provide cover for reptiles, it is very isolated from suitable habitat and there are few basking areas for reptiles, other than the clear-felled area.</p>	<p>None on site.</p>	<p>Highly unlikely.</p>	<p>Extremely low.</p>	<p>None.</p>

Table 3: Habitat/features appraisal

Habitat/Feature	Description	Local BAP ² habitat Y/N	Evaluation and potential impact	Recommendations Avoidance / mitigation / enhancement measures
SECONDARY WOODLAND	The woodland is fairly dense on the north-eastern side of the site but has been partially clear felled on the south-western side. It has numerous signs of natural colonisation. The canopy and understorey of the wooded area is dominated by Norway maple (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>), with occasional to rare silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>), wild cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>), ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>), field maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>), young pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), grey willow (<i>Salix cinerea</i>), rowan (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>), holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>), wych elm (<i>Ulmus glabra</i>), and cotoneaster (<i>Cotoneaster</i> sp.). The ground flora includes cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>), male fern (<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>), herb-Bennet (<i>Geum urbanum</i>), herb Robert (<i>Geranium robertianum</i>), white dead-nettle (<i>Lamium album</i>), broad-leaved dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>), common	N	The extent of the proposed works are not known. The loss of a small, young secondary woodland is considered to be of low impact, when compared to the rich complex of woodlands in the Stroud Valleys area.	Where possible, as much of the woodland should be retained as the plans permit. It is recommended that retained trees, scrub and tall ruderals remain on site due to the benefits to wildlife they provide. This will also help to maintain structural diversity. Consideration must be given to lighting for bats and nesting bird issues as highlighted in Table 2. Mature trees and shrubs should be retained where possible as they provide habitat and shelter for a range of wildlife, particularly birds. Bird boxes could be installed to help replace lost nesting habitat from the removal of trees. Suggestions are given in Table 4 and Appendix 4. With any cleared areas, post-development, the site could be enhanced

² Biodiversity Action Plan

Habitat/Feature	Description	Local BAP ² habitat Y/N	Evaluation and potential impact	Recommendations Avoidance / mitigation / enhancement measures
	<p>nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), burnet rose (<i>Rosa pimpinellifolia</i>), bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.), ground ivy (<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>), creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>), upright hedge-parsley (<i>Torilis japonica</i>), hogweed (<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>), and cock's-foot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>).</p> <p>Some bryophytes were noted including <i>Hypnum cupressiforme</i> agg., <i>Brachythecium rutabulum</i> and <i>Kindbergia praelonga</i>.</p>			<p>by sowing native wildflower seeds in un-cut margins (see Appendix 4) and by allowing some previously mown areas to grow longer between cuts.</p>
<p>PLANTED HEDGE</p>	<p>There is a planted hedge (that divides the site off from the adjacent car park and pedestrian access route to the underpass beneath the A441) that is largely overgrown bramble, ivy and common hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) with rarely occurring field rose (<i>Rosa arvensis</i> agg.), dogwood (<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>) and hedge bindweed (<i>Calystegia sepium</i>).</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>Very Low</p>	<p>Where possible, development works should take care not to damage hedgerow features during construction works, particularly if this is during the nesting bird season.</p> <p>Removal of hedgerows should be avoided, but if necessary should be undertaken outside the main nesting season and where this is not possible a suitably qualified ecologist acting as the on-site Ecological Clerk of Works must be engaged</p>

Habitat/Feature	Description	Local BAP ² habitat Y/N	Evaluation and potential impact	Recommendations Avoidance / mitigation / enhancement measures
				to check for nesting birds and to provide advice on the most appropriate way to proceed.

Table 4: Additional recommendations

Number	Additional recommendation
1	Nesting opportunities for house sparrows, swifts and house martins can be provided in the form of sparrow terraces, swift boxes and house martin cups on the exterior walls of any buildings as part of any proposed future development on the site. Barns, carports and open fronted porches are suitable locations for swallow cups. All these species have undergone a decline in recent years (Red List in the case of house sparrows, Amber List in the case of swifts, house martins and swallows). These nesting features should be installed under the eaves of a building at minimum heights of 2m and face in a north to south-east direction. In addition, hole-fronted and open-fronted bird boxes can be installed on medium-large trees at similar heights and directions to attract other species of birds. Examples are provided in the Ecological Enhancements Appendix below.
2	Roosting opportunities for local bats can be incorporated into any buildings as part of any proposed future development on the site through the installation of bat boxes under the eaves either on the exterior walls (e.g. Schwegler 1WQ/1FF bat box) or fitted into the walls (Habibat 001 bat box) and the creation of raised ridge tiles. Bat boxes (e.g. Schwegler 2FN) can also be installed on medium- large trees. Bat boxes should be installed at minimum heights of 2.5m, facing away from external illumination and should ideally face in a south-east or south-west orientation. Examples are provided in the Ecological Enhancements Appendix below. It is strongly recommended that any lighting to be incorporated in the site should be low-powered (i.e. lux level of 3 or less), downward-pointing and/or mounted at a low level (e.g. standard bollard height) to minimise the level of impact from lighting on bats. The best types of lighting for use are narrow spectrum lights with no UV content, warm white LED or low-pressure sodium.
3	The ecological value of the site can be enhanced through planting native species and/or those of value to wildlife, i.e. producing fruits, seeds, nuts or single-flowers. Leaving patches of unmown grass and tall herb as well as creating compost heaps/log piles creates valuable wildlife habitat, particularly for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals including hedgehogs ³ . In more residential areas, gardens can be made more permeable to wildlife, such as hedgehogs, through leaving small gaps of 13x13cm under fences. Further information is provided in the Ecological Enhancements Appendix below.

³ The State of Britain's Hedgehogs 2015, publicised at a special UK summit on hedgehogs: since 2000, records of the species have declined by half in rural areas and by a third in urban ones. Hedgehogs are also a species of 'Principal Importance' under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and therefore need to be taken into consideration by a public body when performing any of its functions with a view to conservation.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Habitats - The site is partially composed of secondary woodland. Where possible, as much of the woodland should be retained as the plans permit. It is recommended that retained trees, scrub and tall ruderals remain on site due to the benefits to wildlife they provide. This will also help to maintain structural diversity.

Badgers – A single potential sett was discovered on site and this has the potential to be active, although during the appraisal it was largely covered up with ivy and no obvious latrines, snuffle holes or recent ‘scratching posts’ were noted on the base of the trees on site. **The site must be monitored on a fortnightly basis within three months prior to development.** If active, then there may be a need to apply suitable mitigation and/or a sett closure via a licence application.

As there is a possibility that mammals such as foxes or badgers could cross the site, it is recommended as a precaution during any construction phase that any trenches should be covered when not in use and provided with a 45° escape ramp to ensure that they do not become trapped.

Nesting Birds -Work must not commence on the secondary woodland until the birds have finished nesting, preferably waiting until the end of the nesting season (nesting season generally considered to be between late February to late August). Tree works and shrub / vegetation removal must be undertaken outside the main nesting season and where this is not possible a suitably qualified ecologist acting as the on-site Ecological Clerk of Works **must** be engaged to check for nesting birds and to provide advice on the most appropriate way to proceed.

Bats: The woodland trees were not considered to be suitable for roosting bats as they are too immature to have developed suitable features for bats to roost in. However, they may form part of a foraging route and any retained woodland trees on site must avoid strong lighting shining onto the canopy line. In addition, the site could be enhanced to increase its suitability for roosting bats (please refer to Table 4).

No other evidence of protected species was found during the survey. With the exception of badgers and nesting birds, and lighting issues regarding bats, there appear to be **no other obvious and immediate issues** for this development with regard to any other species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. However, in the event that any protected species listed in Table 1 is found on the site during the development works then **all works must cease immediately**, and the advice of a suitably qualified ecologist must be sought.

It should be noted that if more than twelve months elapse between this appraisal and the commencement of any development then a further appraisal may be required at an appropriate time to determine the status of any protected species that may have taken up residence during the intervening period.

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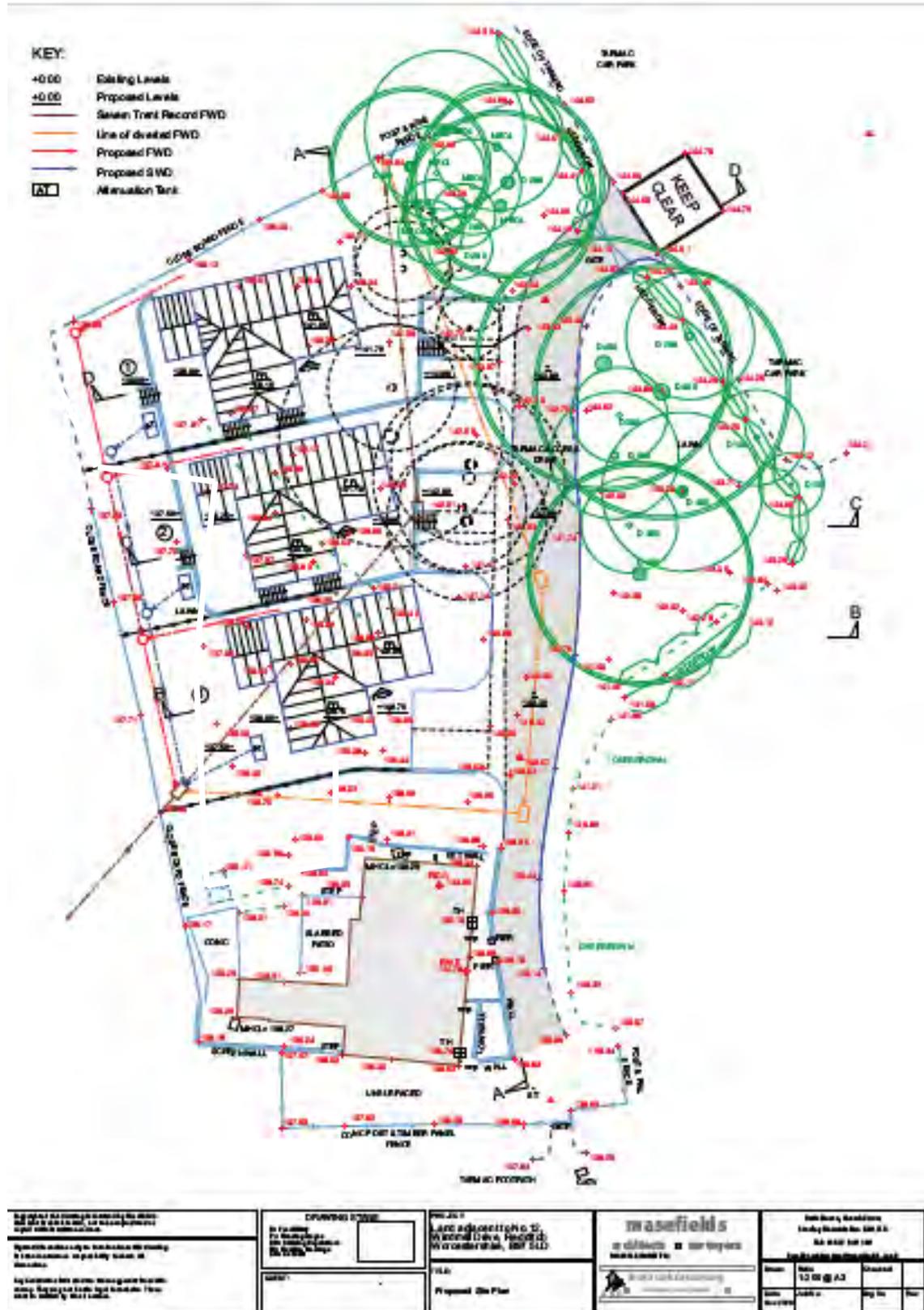
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Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan -
<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/environment-and-planning/biodiversity/action-plans.aspx>

Appendix 1: Site Maps



Appendix 2: Photographs



Plate 1: Track through the centre of the site.



Plate 2: Top end of the site adjacent to the car park.



Plate 3: The main section of the denser secondary woodland.



Plate 4: Single badger sett entrance – does not appear to be in regular use.



Plate 5: The northern secondary woodland interior.



Plate 6: The clear-felled section.



Plate 7: The clear-felled section looking towards the car park area.



Plate 8: The edge of the site alongside the A441 Evesham Road.



Plate 9: The upper canopy that faces the A441.



Plate 10: The boundary hedge that sits alongside the pedestrian way leading to an underground pedestrian passage beneath the A441.

Appendix 3: Wildlife Legislation

Badgers

Under the ***Protection of Badgers Act 1992*** and the ***Wildlife Order (NI) 1985***, it is illegal to:

- wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly treat a badger – or attempt to do so
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett (whether or not there is a badger in it at the time)
- disturb a badger while it is occupying a sett
- sell, keep or mark a healthy badger or possess any dead badger or part thereof.

Bats

Under the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981***, the ***Wildlife Order (NI) 1985*** and the ***Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*** (and ***NI 1995***) it is illegal to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats
- intentionally, deliberately or recklessly* disturb bats
- intentionally, deliberately or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection, ie bat roosts (even if they are not currently occupied)
- possess, sell or transport a bat, or anything derived from it.

Dormice

Dormice and their habitat are fully protected under the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*** and the ***Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017***, making it illegal to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture dormice
- intentionally, deliberately or recklessly* disturb dormice
- intentionally, deliberately or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct breeding or resting sites or places used for shelter or protection (whether occupied or not)
- possess or transport a dormouse (or any part thereof) unless under licence
- sell or exchange dormice.

Otters

Otters and their habitat are fully protected under the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)***, the ***Wildlife Order (NI) 1985*** and the ***Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*** and ***(NI) 1995***. It is illegal to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture otters
- intentionally or recklessly* disturb otters
- intentionally or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct breeding or resting sites or places used for shelter or protection (holts, couches etc) – whether occupied or not
- possess or transport an otter (or any part thereof) unless under licence
- sell or exchange otters.

Water Vole

Water voles are protected under the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Amendment 1998)***, making it illegal to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture water voles

- intentionally or recklessly* disturb voles
- intentionally or recklessly* disturb, destroy or obstruct access to any place that water voles use for shelter or protection (whether occupied or not);
- possess or transport a water vole (or any part thereof) unless under licence
- sell or exchange water voles.

Birds

All wild birds (ie resident, visiting and introduced species) in the UK are protected by law under the ***Wildlife and Countryside (WCA) Act 1981 (as amended)***, the ***Wildlife (NI) Order 1985***, and the ***Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2001***, making it illegal to:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is being built or in use
- take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird
- possess or control (e.g. for exhibition or sale) any wild bird or egg unless obtained legally.

Birds that receive special protection

Species listed in ***Schedule 1*** of the ***WCA 1981*** and the ***Wildlife Order (NI) 1985***, such as the barn owl and peregrine falcon, receive special protection. In addition to the above legislation, it is also illegal to *intentionally or recklessly** disturb any bird listed on ***Schedule 1*** while it is nest-building, or at or near a nest containing eggs or young, or to disturb any of its dependent young. Disturbance could occur, for example, through noise caused by construction works in close proximity to the nest. * The term “recklessly” applies in England and Wales following the ***CRoW Act 2000***.

White-clawed crayfish

Under the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*** it is illegal to *intentionally take (i.e. capture), sell, barter or exchange* white-clawed crayfish.

Great crested newt

Great crested newts and their habitat are *fully protected* under the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)***, and ***Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017***. It is illegal to:

- intentionally or deliberately capture, kill or injure great crested newts
- intentionally, deliberately or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used for shelter or protection, including resting or breeding places (occupied or not)
- deliberately, intentionally or recklessly* disturb great crested newts when in a place of shelter
- sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale great crested newts or parts of them. The legislation covers all life stages: eggs, larvae, juveniles and adults.

Widespread Amphibians

In England, Scotland and Wales the common frog, common toad, smooth newt and palmate newt are all protected against sale, trade etc under the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)***.

Widespread reptiles

All native British reptiles are protected against intentional killing and injury under the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*** and the ***Wildlife (NI) Order 1985***. ***In England, Scotland and Wales***, slow-worm, common lizard, adder and grass snake are also protected against killing, injury and sale, barter or exchange, but their habitats or places of shelter are not specifically protected.

Invertebrates

Certain invertebrate species are covered by the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended)*** and the ***Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 (as amended)*** and given full protection against killing and injury, damage and/or destruction of their place of shelter, or taking. Other species are protected against sale only. For those species receiving *full protection*, it is illegal to:

- intentionally kill, injure or capture
- intentionally or recklessly* disturb
- intentionally or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct places of shelter or protection, including breeding sites (occupied or not)
- possess or transport an animal (or any part thereof) unless under licence
- sell or exchange animals.

* The term “recklessly” was added as an amendment to the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*** as a result of the ***CRoW Act 2000*** – this applies to England and Wales only.

Plants

Plants are protected by the law. The ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*** and the ***Wildlife (NI) Order 1985*** make it an offence for any person who is not “authorised” to intentionally uproot any wild plant. An “authorised” person can be the owner or occupier of the land on which the action is taken, or anybody authorised by them; or any person authorised in writing by the local authority for the area within which the action is taken. In addition, the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*** also includes, within ***Schedule 8***, in the order of 60 plant species that it is illegal for any person to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy. It also makes it an offence to offer wild bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) bulbs for sale.

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (Environment Act 1995)

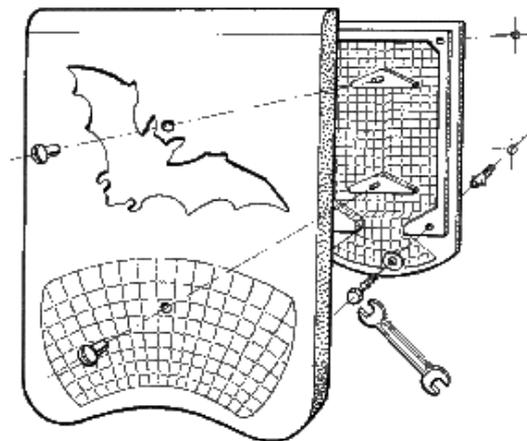
Under the Hedgerows Regulations it is against the law to remove most countryside hedges without first getting the permission of the local district council. These Regulations were introduced to offer protection to 'Important Hedgerows', as defined by the Regulations, in response to concern at the rapid loss of hedgerows in England and Wales. Various criteria specified within the regulations are used to identify important hedgerows for wildlife, landscape or historical reasons.

Appendix 4: Ecological Enhancements

BAT ROOSTING FEATURES



Schwegler 1FF bat box



Schwegler 1WQ Summer & Winter bat box



Habibat 001 Bat Box

Ibstock Bat Brick

Both integral bat boxes, fitted into wall



Vincent Pro bat box



Beumaris bat box

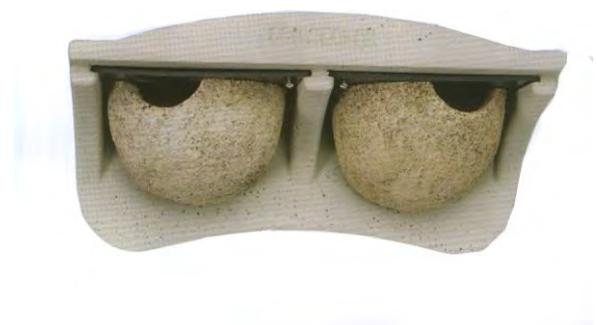
BIRD BOXES



Various designs of swift boxes



House Sparrow terrace box



House Martin terrace box



Hole-fronted bird box (for trees)



Open-fronted bird box (for trees)



Swallow cup



Hole-fronted bird box (for buildings)

Planting Choices for Wildlife



Many wildlife species benefit greatly from considerate planting choices that still meet our practical and aesthetic needs. Plants and trees provide food for wildlife as well as places to nest and rest. Vegetation providing a variety of these functions creates an environment more beneficial for wildlife.

Non native species

Native species provide the best habitat for UK wildlife but there are also many non-native species, which are single flowering and/or provide fruits/nuts/seeds that can be used as food sources for insects, birds and small mammals. When using these non-native species in planting schemes, care should be taken to avoid invasive species such as Cotoneaster and Rhododendron. This is especially important when sites are adjacent to open countryside particularly nature reserves.



Fire thorn *Pyracantha coccinea*

Uses of Wildlife Planting

Wildlife value can be easily incorporated into visually pleasing and useful green areas and amenity spaces, such as borders, grass verges and tree screens.

Attractive Borders: Well selected decorative borders can be valuable for many insects and birds. Native plants can be mixed with single flowering ornamental species to add aesthetic interest and increase the flowering period of a planting scheme.

Shrubs and hedges: Native spiky species like blackthorn and hawthorn are effective barriers when used in hedges. They also provide an attractive feature at all times of year especially when in blossom and fruit. Bushy areas of foliage provide useful nesting and feeding areas for birds and small mammals, as well as foraging/commuting corridors for bats.

Grasses mixes and verges: Leaving uncut areas of suitable grasses provides great wildlife value and is economical to manage. Diverse grassy areas and verges also create an attractive human environment with different flowers and colours. There are a range of native grass and flower mixes for various soil types available on the market.



Wild flower grass mix

Species Selection

There are wildlife friendly species suitable for all situations, from fields, verges, shady corners or small gardens. Listed below are native wildlife friendly plant species organised by type and suitability for different locations.

Large Trees

Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*
Beech *Fagus sylvatica*
English Elm *Ulmus procera*
Oak *Quercus robur* or *Q. petraea*
Small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*
White willow *Salix alba*
Wild cherry *Prunus avium*



White willow

Medium/small trees

Alder *Alnus glutinosa*
Aspen *Populus tremula*
Crab apple *Malus sylvestris*
Field maple *Acer campestre*
Holly *Ilex aquifolium*
Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*
Silver birch *Betula pendula*
Yew *Taxus baccata*



Tussocky grassland

Native shrubs

Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*
Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*
Elder *Sambucus nigra*
Guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*
Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*
Hazel *Corylus avellana*



Blackthorn

Plants for shady areas

Archangel *Lamium galeobdolon*
Betony *Stachys officinalis*
Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*
Bugle *Ajuga reptans*
Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*
Ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*
Lily of the valley *Convallaria majalis*
Lords-and ladies/cuckoopint *Arum maculatum*
Nettle-leaved bellflower *Campanula trachelium*
Primrose *Primula vulgaris*
Sweet violet *Viola odorata*
Wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*

Plants for marshy areas & pond edges

Bugle *Ajuga reptans*
Hemp agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum*
Marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*
Marsh woundwort *Stachys palustris*
Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*
Purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*
Ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*
Water avens *Geum rivale*
Water forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides*
Water mint *Mentha aquatica*
Water violet *Hottonia palustris*
Yellow flag *Iris pseudacorus*

**Beneficial cultivated plants
 (generally non-natives)**

Grecian windflower *Anemone blanda*
 Angelica *Angelica archangelica*
 Aubretia *Aubretia deltoidea*
 California poppy *Eschscholtzia californica*
 Candytuft *Iberis sempervirens*
 Christmas rose *Helleborus niger*
 Cosmos *Cosmos bipinnatus*
 Evening primrose *Oenothera biennis*
 Fleabane *Erigeron spp.*
 Forget-me-not *Myosotis spp.*
 French marigold *Tagetes patula*
 Globe thistle *Echinops ritro*
 Grape hyacinth *Muscari botryodes*
 Hollyhock *Althaea rosea*
 Honesty *Lunaria rediviva*
 Ice plant *Sedum spectabile*
 Lenten rose *Helleborus orientalis*
 Tree mallow *Lavatera spp.*
 Michaelmas daisy *Aster nova-belgii*
 Mint *Mentha x rotundifolia*
 Perennial cornflower *Centaurea montana*
 Perennial sunflower *Helianthus decapetalus*
 Phlox *Phlox paniculata*
 Poached-egg plant *Limnanthes douglasii*
 Red valerian *Centranthus ruber*
 Snapdragon *Antirrhinum majus*
 Spring crocus *Crocus chrysanthus* and hybrids
 Sweet alyssum *Lobularia maritima*
 Sweet bergamot *Monarda didyma*
 Sweet William *Dianthus barbatus*
 Tobacco plant *Nicotiana affinis*
 Wallflower *Cheiranthus cheiri*
 Alpine rock-cress *Arabis alpina*
 Winter aconite *Eranthis hyemalis*
 Yellow alyssum *Alyssum saxatile*

Native wildflowers for borders

Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*
 Betony *Stachys officinalis*
 Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*
 Chicory *Cichorium intybus*
 Chives *Allium schoenoprasum*
 Common poppy *Papaver rhoeas*
 Corncockle *Agrostemma githago*
 Cornflower *Centaurea cyanus*
 Corn marigold *Chrysanthemum segetum*
 Cowslip *Primula veris*
 Cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis*
 Dame's-violet *Hesperis matronalis*
 Devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*
 Field scabious *Knautia arvensis*
 Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*
 Goldenrod *Solidago virgaurea*
 Great mullein *Verbascum thapsus*
 Greater knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa*
 Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*
 Herb-robert *Geranium robertianum*
 Lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*
 Marjoram *Origanum vulgare*
 Meadow cranesbill *Geranium pratense*
 Common mallow *Malva sylvestris*
 Oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*
 Primrose *Primula vulgaris*
 Red campion *Silene dioica*
 Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis*
 Spiked speedwell *Veronica spicata*
 Tansy *Tanacetum vulgare*
 Teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*
 Toadflax *Linaria vulgaris*
 White campion *Silene alba*
 Wild thyme *Thymus drucei*
 Yellow loosestrife *Lysimachia vulgaris*



Marjoram



Cornflower



Perennial sunflower

Appendix 5: Ecological Experience

Joshua Evans BSc (Hons) MCIEEM – Senior Consultancy Ecologist

Joshua joined the team in 2008, previously working as an independent consultant, prior to that he worked for the National Trust and Forestry Commission as an ecological surveyor. For the last 23 years he has worked in both the conservation and consultancy sector. Many of these years were in woodland conservation and management. He is an experienced ecologist with particular expertise in terrestrial invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and bats and holds Natural England (NE) and Natural Resources Wales licences for bats, dormice, great crested newts, white-clawed crayfish and barn owls.

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Worcestershire Wildlife Consultancy provides an independent professional ecological service, encompassing a broad range of ecological knowledge and skills. While maintaining a local focus within the Midlands, we also operate throughout the UK.

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- Phase 1 Habitat Surveys
- Protected Species Surveys
- Bat Surveys
- Great Crested Newt Surveys
- Reptile Surveys
- Badger Surveys
- Nesting Bird Surveys
- Breeding Bird Surveys
- Barn Owl surveys
- Otter & Water Vole Surveys
- Dormouse Surveys
- Invertebrate surveys
- Small Mammal Surveys
- Botanical Surveys (incl. NVC – National Vegetation Survey)
- Hedgerow Surveys
- Invasive Weed Surveys
- Protected Species Licence Applications (incl. Bat Low Impact Class licence)
- Ecological Clerk of Works
- Mitigation Advice & Implementation
- Monitoring – Botanical & Wildlife
- BREEM Assessments (incl. Code for Sustainable Homes)
- Ecological Planning Advice
- GIS Analysis
- Pond Surveys
- River Corridor Surveys
- Habitat Management Plans
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