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**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL
OF LAND AT BLUEBELL MEADOW EAST LANGDON RD CT15 5JJ.
20TH OCTOBER 2020**



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1. INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land at Bluebell Meadow, East Langdon Road, Kent, CT15 5JJ. The survey and report were commissioned by Mr and Mrs Whittington.

The ecological survey was carried out by Sean McMinn from Marsh Environmental on the 20th October 2020, a suitably qualified ecologist who is licensed by Natural England for the following, protected species:

- Birds (including barn owls)
- Bats
- Great Crested Newts

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The area of land at Bluebell Meadow is located between the villages of East Langdon and Martin near Dover and set in a rural landscape of open farmland (arable/pasture) with some hedgerow. The survey area (approximately 1.84ha) consists mostly of improved grassland (horse grazed), horse paddock and riding area with stables and outbuildings. There are boundary hedgerows (fragmented) on the west, northern and southern boundaries, comprising of hawthorn occasional sycamore, hazel and bramble. The proposed development area is located at approximate grid reference: TR 33868 46591.

FIGURE 1: LAND AT BLUEBELL MEADOW AND APPROXIMATE SURVEY AREA



3. METHODOLOGY

Site Survey

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land at Bluebell Meadow, East Langdon Road, Dover, Kent was undertaken on the 20th October 2020. The survey area concentrated on the area of land as defined in red on figure 1.

The ecological survey is based on the Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - A technique for environmental audit, (JNCC 2010), and standard best practice as recommended by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management in their Guidelines For Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM 2017).

All habitats were described as standard Phase 1 classification (Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 2010, Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey). A basic habitat plan illustrates the results in figure 2.

FIGURE 2: PHASE 1 SURVEY HABITAT MAP OF LAND AT BLUEBELL MEADOW



4. RESULTS – WHAT WE FOUND

Objectives


The objectives of this commission were to:

1. Conduct a baseline ecological survey and appraisal of the above site and identify notable factors/features;
2. prepare a 'Phase 1' Habitat Map with Target Notes to recognised standards;
3. produce a written summary of results;
4. provide appropriate recommendations for mitigation, biodiversity protection/ enhancement, etc.

Limitations

It should be noted that, whilst the investigation of the site was appropriately intensive within the intended framework of the commission, and we feel it is unlikely that significant matters have been overlooked, a single visit will inevitably miss species not apparent on the date of survey by reason of seasonality, mobility, habits or chance.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Habitats & vegetation (NB. Please be aware that several designated habitat types and many plants enjoy legal protection in Britain.)	
General description	The area of land at Bluebell Meadow is located between the villages of East Langdon and Martin near Dover and set in a rural landscape of open farmland (arable/pasture) with some hedgerow. The survey area (approximately 1.84ha) consists mostly of improved grassland (horse grazed), horse paddock and riding area with stables and outbuildings. There are boundary hedgerows (fragmented) on the west, northern and southern boundaries, comprising of hawthorn occasional sycamore, hazel and bramble. The proposed development area is located at approximate grid reference: TR 33868 46591.
Target Note (TN) 1.4 (for location of TNs please see plan above)	Boundary hedgerows with hawthorn, hazel, field rose, bramble scrub and occasional sycamore providing some nesting bird habitat for a range of common garden and farmland bird species.
Statutory designations (on/near)	Information from MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) Information on this site from MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) is as follows: The nearest Statutory Designated Sites to Bluebell Meadow is Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) >4km north and south east at the nearest points.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Non-statutory designations (on/near)	<p>Information from MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside)</p> <p>Information on this site from MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) is as follows:</p> <p>There are no Non-Statutory sites within 1km of the land at Bluebell Meadow.</p>
Notable hedgerows, woodland or scrub	There is a fragmented hedgerow at the western boundary with an intact hawthorn hedge at the northern boundary. There is also a planted native hedge of hazel, hawthorn, field rose between the horse paddock and stables and along the southern boundary.
Ecologically notable trees (e.g. veteran, wildlife significant) ¹	None recorded.
Ponds/water courses	There are no ponds located within the development area .
Notable communities	None observed on site.
Notable vascular plants	None observed on site.
Notable bryophytes	None present on site.
Notable lichens	None present on site.
Notable fungi	None present on site.
Other notable habitats/vegetation	Boundary hedgerows.
<p>Mammals (NB. Several species and their habitats have very strict protection in British/European law.)</p>	
Badger	None observed 

¹ Please note that we do not check TPO status as this is a landscape/amenity planning classification.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Otter	None observed: No suitable habitat exists.
Other mustelids	None observed.
Bats	There are no buildings or trees on site that have the potential to support roosting bats. It is possible incidental foraging may occur by commuting bats over the site but in general the habitat on site is poor for foraging bats.
Water vole	None present on site, no suitable habitats.
Common or hazel dormouse	None present. Considered unlikely in this area due to limited habitat on site and poor connectivity to outer areas.
Deer	None.
Hedgehog	None present.
Shrews	None present.
Others	Other mammals such as fox, rats and mice may use the site for foraging/breeding as suitable habitat exists.
<p>Birds (NB. With the exception of eleven derogated pest or very common species, the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 and amendments) gives protection to all wild birds in Britain from killing, injuring or taking as well as taking, damaging or destroying nests in use or being built, and taking or destroying eggs. Many species are also protected by European and international statutes.²)</p>	
Schedule 1	No evidence of any Schedule 1 species on site and considered unlikely.
Red list	None recorded
Active nests	No active nests found (out of season). The nesting bird habitat is confined to the hedgerows and buildings on site. The grassland habitat is mostly unsuitable for grassland/ground nesting species being grazed/cut frequently.
Other	Woodpigeon, goldfinch, chaffinch, pied wagtail, redwing magpie and carrion crow. There are likely to be a greater range of bird species in the general area.
<p>Herpetofauna (NB. The grass snake, slow-worm viviparous (common) lizard and adder (viper) are all protected from intentional killing and injury under Schedule 5, Section 9(1), of the Wildlife and Countryside Act as amended/reinforced by the CROW Act 2000. They are also protected under Schedule 5, Section 9(5) which prohibits selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale, or advertising for sale, any live or dead animal, or any part of, or anything derived from the species. Other species and their habitats have stricter protection at national and European levels.)</p>	

² Please also see http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/status_explained.aspx and <http://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u38/downloads/home-news/2011-11/SUKB%202011%20final.pdf> for red and amber lists etc., and explanations.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Adder	There is no suitable habitat on site for this species however may occur in the surrounding areas.
Grass snake	There is no suitable habitat on site for this species however may occur in the surrounding areas.
Slow-worm	There is no suitable habitat on site for this species however may occur around the field margins and in the surrounding areas.
Common lizard	There is limited suitable habitat on site for this species however may occur around the buildings and field edges and in the surrounding areas.
Rarer reptiles	None (not found in this area).
Great crested newt	Unlikely as there are no ponds on site.
Natterjack toad	No (not found in this area).
Other amphibia	None.
Fish	
Significant fishery	None present on site.
Other notable fish	None.
Macro-invertebrates (NB. Several species enjoy legal protection.)	
Notable assemblage (terrestrial)	None present or indicated on site.
Notable assemblage (aquatic)	None.
Crayfish	None present.
Roman snail	None observed.
Lesser silver water-beetle	None.
Stag beetle	None.
Mining bees	None observed.
Other notable spp or groups	None present on site.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Notable invertebrate habitat	None present on site.
“Invasive” species (There are an increasing number of these being listed by authorities, some subject to regulatory control.)	
Japanese knotweed (or related <i>Fallopia</i> spp.)	None present on site.
Giant hogweed	None present on site.
Himalayan balsam	None present on site.
Tree-of-heaven	None present on site.
New Zealand pigmyweed	None present on site.
Floating pennywort	None present on site.
Parrot’s feather	None present on site.
Water fern (<i>Azolla</i>)	None present on site.
Weeds Act natives (common ragwort, creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks)	Common ragwort recorded on site.
Other exotics that may cause problems such as <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> , <i>Buddleia davidii</i> .	None.
Invasive animals (signal crayfish, killer shrimp, oak processionary moth, harlequin ladybird, zebra mussel, grey squirrel etc.)	None recorded.
<i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> and other serious plant diseases (sudden oak death, etc.)	None observed on site.
Policy	
Are there any known conflicts with local planning biodiversity policy	None.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Are there any known conflicts with national planning biodiversity policy	None.
Are there any known conflicts with European or international biodiversity policy	None.

GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION (Geodiversity is a material planning consideration)	YES/NO	ACTION REQUIRED IF "YES"
Are there any features of geological importance on the development site?	Unknown	
Are there any features of geological importance adjacent to the development site or that might be affected by the development (during or post construction)?	Unknown	

FIGURE 3: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF LAND AT BLUEBELL MEADOW.



5. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are to meet compliance with current legislation, planning policy and best practice as recognised by the various statutory authorities. They are intended to fulfill ecological planning formalities and facilitate the implementation of the project.

FURTHER WORK LIKELY TO BE NEEDED	
From observations of this walk-over examination, is further work likely to be needed regarding notable/protected species, habitats, planning policy, biodiversity duty or related regulatory compliance?	YES
<u>Work required if "yes":</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Birds – The boundary hedgerow habitats on site provide good nesting/breeding bird habitat for a range of bird species. Any clearance of these habitats should be undertaken outside the bird breeding season (typically, March – August). If this is not possible then it is recommended that a suitable qualified ecologist checks the site for any active nests before commencement of any vegetation clearance.	Compliance with law protecting active birds' nests
To avoid the risk of infringement of regulations, conduct a pre-clearance search of all areas of the site using suitably qualified ecological scientists under a Marsh Environmental method Statement or one formally pre-agreed by us immediately prior to site stripping to move any vulnerable taxa to safety or allow other necessary precautions to be taken prior to the commencement of development activity.	Legal compliance, especially laws protecting mammals, birds and herpetofauna.
If there are any steep-sided excavations created during construction, please ensure they are covered overnight or provided with ramps to prevent any mammals becoming trapped. Re-fill such excavations as soon as feasible.	Prevention of cruelty.
Avoid unnecessary negative impacts of new lighting at night, e.g. on bats, invertebrates, plants, night sky. Minimise the hours when lighting is used, avoid "spillage" by using directional down-lighting, reduce brightness of necessary illumination and keep light from shining on any potential bat roost entries, mammal holes, etc.	Reducing ecological impact and compliance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 125.
Create new wildlife habitats appropriate to the site's context, e.g. through the use of log piles, "wild" corners and native planting; install bird, bat and invertebrate boxes and incorporate these into the project's landscape/building design scheme. (We can provide specific recommendations for models and siting on request, but they must be of good quality and durable.) Bat and bird boxes must be inspected annually and replaced when needed (usually after ten years). The development plans for the site should include the provision of 'hedgehog gates' at the bases of any boundary fencing to allow free movement of hedgehogs through the landscape.	Best practice and compliance with government policy on biodiversity protection and enhancement (see Biodiversity enhancement below).
Appoint an Ecological Clerk of Works and formally	Best practice (BS42020, etc.)

FURTHER WORK LIKELY TO BE NEEDED

<p>instruct ("toolbox talk") contractors and site personnel on agreed policies, recommendations and requirements to maintain environmental quality and minimise impacts during construction, generally avoiding unnecessary disturbance and pollution.</p>	
<p>Establish "green" roofs and walls on all suitable structures that can accommodate them, ensuring appropriate ecological science input to their management and maintenance.</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement.</p>
<p>Use native planting (preferably of local origin and reflecting local botany) wherever feasible in all landscaping. Where exotic species are planted, always avoid invasive species and choose those with wildlife value such as for nectar or shelter. (A selection of species is available from us.)</p>	<p>Biodiversity enhancement and helping to assure "no net loss".</p>
<p>Embody Green Infrastructure protocols in landscaping and ensure ecological linkage out from and into the site. (Please ask us if you require further details.)</p>	<p>Ecological connectivity and biodiversity protection/enhancement.</p>
<p>Ensure that the "carbon footprint" of all aspects of the project and its future operation is compliant with current best practice. This may include taking appropriate steps to avoid or reduce the use of fossil fuels, employing scientifically sound carbon offset/CO₂ sequestration and instating renewable energy technologies. Ensure the measures agreed are quantified, independently verified and monitored.</p>	<p>To follow government and international policy on climate change.</p>
<p>Wherever possible, retain mature trees and established native hedgerows on site and at the periphery by designing around them. Protect trees in line with BS5837 and do not remove ivy, mistletoe, standing dead wood, snags or rot unless there is a clear and material safety risk or presence of a serious pathogen. (Ask for advice on pathogens from a qualified silvicultural ecologist if in doubt.)</p>	<p>Tree and biodiversity protection; BS5837: 2012 <i>Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction</i>.</p>

6. BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS

Ecological enhancements should where possible be included in the proposed development plans to contribute towards the intended objectives of planning legislation below:

The UK Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged—(Para 118). The design and implementation of habitat enhancements can also be used to contribute towards the "Home Quality Mark" or similar accreditation, should this be a consideration for this site?

Biodiversity enhancements for the site could include some of the following:

- Provision of ready-made bird boxes (sparrow terrace timber boxes or house martin nests for instance or mix of open-fronted and hole-nesting boxes constructed from woodcrete suitable for starlings and other hole nesting species).
- Provision of reptile / amphibian hibernacula (as stand alone or within new walls by creating recesses into wall structures).
- Provision of log piles for invertebrates (including stag beetles), reptiles and amphibians.
- Use native planting (preferably of local origin) in all landscaping. Where exotic species are planted, always avoid invasive species and choose those with wildlife value such as for nectar or shelter
- Priority should be given to species and habitats present on the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan species list, and where there is the potential for that species to occur on site.
- The list includes great crested newt, common toad, viviparous lizard, slow-worm, grass snake, adder, house sparrow, tree sparrow, hedgehog, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, brown hare, water vole, harvest mouse, dormouse, otter as well as many more species. <https://www.kmbrc.org.uk>

7. REFERENCES

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