

**Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
For
Green Land View
Stithians
Cornwall**

16 June 2021

Prepared for:
Wende and Tim Blowfield

Prepared by:
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Document Control

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Disclosure

The information, opinion and advice which we have prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct and the British Standard for Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development (2013). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

ISO Accreditations



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Summary

Site and methods

Purpose of report	To identify the ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the site and proposed development of a 25 pitch campsite.
Site assessed	Green Land View Campsite, Tregonning Road, Stithians, Truro TR3 7DB
Area (ha)	c. 1.8
Grid reference	SW 74934 36015
Planning Authority involved	Cornwall Council
Survey methods	Phase I habitat survey
Surveyor's name	Ben Wyatt BSc(Hons), ACIEEM and Eldon Douglas BSc (Hons) QCIEEM
Date of assessment	28 th May 2021
Weather on date of assessment	Overcast with a light breeze, with occasional light rain
Proposed work	To change the use of an agricultural field and develop a 25 pitch campsite within it

Results


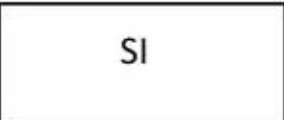


Designated sites	Kennall Vale county wildlife site (CWS) is located within a 1km radius of the site The site lies within 10km of the Fal and Helford SAC
Important habitats present	-
Non-native invasive species present	-
Protected species present	-
Potential for protected species	Bat Badgers Hedgehogs Nesting birds
Further survey recommendations	No further surveys recommended

<p>Mitigation recommendations</p>	<p>Designated Sites</p> <p>It will be necessary to ensure that the proposal does not cause an impact to the nearby SAC.</p> <p>Bats</p> <p>Precautionary measures have been recommended for bats regarding lighting within the site.</p> <p>Badgers</p> <p>It will be necessary to ensure animals don't become trapped in any excavations deeper than 1m and therefore precautionary measures have been recommended.</p> <p>Nesting birds</p> <p>If vegetation removal is needed, this should ideally be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, if this is not possible a nesting bird check will be required prior to the clearance.</p>
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Google Earth

Key & Notes

-  Survey boundary
-  Poor semi-improved
-  Bare ground
-  Species poor hedge

Green boxes denote ecological opportunities

Red boxes denote ecological constraints

CEC36000-02 – Green Land View
Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Plan

Drawn by: BW

Date: 15/6/21

Revision No.



I. Introduction

I.1. Background

Cornwall Environmental Consultants (CEC) Ltd was commissioned by Wende and Tim Blowfield in May 2021 to undertake an ecological assessment of Green Land View campsite. The location of the site, and its boundaries are shown on *Figure 1*. The site is located c. 2km to the northeast of the town of Penryn. The immediate boundaries to the site are formed of hedge bound pasture to the north, east and west and to the south by a minor road, beyond which is hedge bound pasture and small parcel of woodland. Similar habitats dominate the wider landscape in addition to a number of wooded areas.

A list of species present in each habitat is included in Appendix B of this report.

This report has been prepared by Ben Wyatt who is an ecologist with over 7 years' experience undertaking phase I habitat surveys and writing preliminary ecological appraisals.

Wende and Tim Blowfield propose to change the use of an existing agricultural site to a campsite. The proposed campsite will comprise 25 pitches and an associated toilet block.



Figure 1: Location of site with proposed development site and survey area shown in orange

The purpose of this report is:

- To identify key ecological constraints to the proposed development
- To allow likely mitigation or compensation measures to be developed

This report is suitable for submission as part of a planning application, however, if the proposals change the

report will need to be reviewed and may require updating.



2. Planning Policy and Legislation

2.1. Planning Policy

2.1.1. National Planning Policy Framework

National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018). Chapter 15 relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

The most relevant policies relating to planning decisions are:

- Recognising the wider benefits of natural capital and ecosystem services
- Minimising impacts to and providing net gains in biodiversity
- Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted
- Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss of deterioration of irreplaceable habitats
- By ensuring that new development is appropriate for its location, and that the potential sensitivity of the site is taken into account, planning decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

2.1.2. Cornwall Planning Policy

The Cornwall Local Plan (2016) sets out policies relating to the natural environment.

Policy 23 relates to all aspects of the natural environment, section 3 of this policy relates specifically to biodiversity and geodiversity. The policy sets out that developments should conserve, protect, and where possible, enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, giving appropriate weight to their level of importance.

Opportunities should be sought within developments, to create networks of wildlife corridors linking County Wildlife Sites and other areas of biodiversity importance, helping to deliver the Cornwall Biodiversity Action Plan's actions.

Proposals should avoid impacts to designated sites, protected species or species/ habitats of principal importance, and any proposals where such impacts cannot be avoided will only be permitted where suitable mitigation/ compensation can be provided, and if the tests of the relevant legislation are met.

The mitigation hierarchy should be applied, such that attempts are first made to avoid impacts, and to enable net gains. Where impacts are unavoidable, they must be adequately and proportionately mitigation. Compensation would be required, as a final resort, if full mitigation cannot be provided.

2.2. Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (HM Government, 1981, as amended) is the main piece of legislation

relating to nature conservation in Great Britain. It transposes into British law the Berne , Bonn and RAMSAR Conventions, and the European 'Birds Directive' (CEC, 1979). This legislation covers protection of wildlife (birds, other animals and plants), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) (with some SSSI's also designated as Special Protection Areas, SPA's), National Nature Reserves (NNR's) and RAMSAR sites.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (HM Government, 2010) transposes into British law the European 'Habitats Directive' (CEC, 1992), and covers Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) and European Protected Species (EPS) (see below). It also provides further protection for SPA's and RAMSAR sites.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (HM Government, 2000) increases protection for SSSIs and threatened species. It specifies the duty of Local Authorities to further the conservation of listed (UK BAP priority) habitats and species.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (HM Government, 2006) confers a legal duty on every public authority to conserve biodiversity under Section 40(1). Section 41 required the publication of lists of habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. This list contains the habitats and species previously known as UK BAP priorities for conservation, and the terminology of habitats and species of principal importance supercedes the UK BAP terminology. Such features will be referred to as Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) and Species of Principal Importance (SPIs), throughout this report.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 provides specific protection for badgers.

3. Methodology

3.1. Desk Study

The desk study consisted of a search of all existing ecological records within a 1km radius of the site using the information held by the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS). This data search was supplied to CEC on 8th June 2021.

3.2. Field Survey

A walkover site survey was undertaken to identify plant species and map habitats present. Signs of faunal species were also searched for; including tracks, prints, droppings, hairs, feeding remains, nests and burrows.

The survey was carried out by Eldon Douglas BSc (Hons) QCIEEM and Ben Wyatt BSc (Hons) ACIEEM on 28/5/2021. The study area included the proposed development site, as shown on *Map 1*.

The weather conditions at the time of survey was patchy cloud cover, light breeze and light shower.

The survey work was carried out in accordance with the following documents:

- Phase I Habitat Classification (JNCC, 2010)
- CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2013)
- BS42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development (BSI, 2013).

3.3. Limitations

The conclusions and recommendations presented within this report are based on the current ecological features identified, and the current red line boundary as shown in Map 1 Figure 1. Ecological features can change over time, particularly if site management/ use changes; as a guide it is recommended that this report is valid until June 2022.

Access was gained to all areas of the site, so a complete assessment of the site was made.

Data from biological records centres or online databases is historical information, and datasets may be incomplete, inaccurate or missing. It is important to note that even where data is held, a lack of records for a defined geographical area does not necessarily mean that the species is absent: the area may simply be under-recorded. Additionally, detailed grid reference locations of European Protected Species (EPS) records may be withheld by record centres / animal groups and remain confidential.

Furthermore, not all returned desk study records are listed and discussed in this report, only a discussion of important species, with relevance to the geographic location and the habitat types present within the site, is provided; if a full list is required, this can be supplied upon request.

4. Baseline Ecological Conditions

4.1. Site Description

The survey area comprised poor semi-improved grassland that is bound on all sides by a species-poor Cornish hedge, there is an existing field entrance on the southern boundary and a bare ground parking area. The current management of the site includes cutting the grassland to a short sward height of c. 3-5 cm. The hedgerows which bound the site have a varied structure and lack a dense and continuous shrub layer. Where present the shrub species are dominated by gorse with occasional blackthorn and hawthorn. There are areas of new tree and shrub planting around the site, largely located near the site entrance.



Figure 2: Site Overview- Showing the main site entrance and the western boundary hedge at the site.

Phase I habitat distribution is shown on Map 1 presented in *Appendix A* and a species list for each habitat is included in *Appendix B* of this report.

4.2. Designated Sites

4.2.1. Statutory Designated Sites

There are no designated sites within 1km of the proposed development site. However, the development site does lie within a 10km radius and therefore within the Zone of Influence for the Fal and Helford Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The Fal and Helford SAC is located c. 5.7km to the east of the proposed development site. The site has been primarily designated due to the presence of the following Annex I habitats; 1110 sandbanks which are slightly covered with sea water all the time, 1140 mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide, 1160 large shallow inlets and bays, 1130 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*), and the Annex II species shore dock. In addition the Annex I habitats 1130 estuaries and a number of Annex II

species are present but not considered to be a primary reason for designation.

4.2.2. *Non-statutory Designated Sites*

The desk study returned a single non-statutory designated site within a 1km radius of the proposed development site.

Kennall Vale County Wildlife Site (CWS) is located c. 900m to the north of the proposed development site and only partially falls within the 1km search radius. The CWS is dominated by beech woodland and has been designated due to the presence of the species of principal importance trout, ghost moth, otter, song thrush and bullfinch and a number of bat species.

4.3. Habitats

4.3.1. *Semi-improved grassland*

The site comprises a poor semi-improved grassland field which is dominated by grass species including Yorkshire fog and common bent-grass with limited forb species present. The grassland attains a short sward height of c. 3-5cm and appears to be subject to regular management. This habitat is considered to be of low ecological importance.

4.3.2. *Cornish hedge*

The hedges which bound the site sit atop an earth bank and lack a continuous shrub layer. The woody species which are present are dominated by gorse with occasional blackthorn and hawthorn. The ground flora is more diverse in terms of species number, however it is heavily dominated by red campion with occasional species including cleavers, bramble and wood sage amongst other species. The hedges on site are species-poor, however, despite this they are likely to be classified as Cornish hedge which is a Cornwall BAP priority habitat.

4.4. Species

4.4.1. *Flora*

Vascular Plants

A low number of vascular plant species were identified during the site survey. This is to be expected in consideration of the low number of species-poor habitats present within the site. No species of conservation importance were recorded during the survey.

Non-native Invasive Plants

No invasive plant species were observed on-site during the site survey.

Lower Plants

A specialised survey for non-vascular plants, bryophytes and lichens, was outside the scope of this study.

4.4.2. Bats

The ERCCIS desk study identified records for three species of bat within a 1km radius of the proposed development site. This includes two records for Natterer's bat and a single record for both common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat.

During the site survey an assessment of the potential for habitats present to support bats was made.

No buildings or mature hedgerow trees with potential to support roosting bats are present on-site. The habitats present within the site have limited potential to support bats. The grassland is structurally and species poor and unlikely to support a diverse assemblage of invertebrate prey items. The hedges have some value as foraging habitat and as a navigational feature. However, the hedges are not dense and continuous, reducing the quality of this feature as a flightline.

All UK bat species and their roosts are legally protected under the Conservation Regulations 2017 (HM Government, 2017).

4.4.3. Badgers

During the site survey an assessment was made of the potential for habitats on site to support badgers.

No badger setts or evidence of badger activity was observed on-site. However, the grassland field provides suitable foraging habitat and the hedges provide suitable sett building habitat. Due to the rural location of the site it is likely that badgers visit/ pass through the site on occasion.

Although widespread and common in Cornwall, badgers and their setts are legally protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (HM Government, 1992).

4.4.4. Dormice

The ERCCIS desk study revealed no records for dormouse within a 1km radius of the site.

The hedges on site are of limited suitability for dormice as they lack a dense continuous shrub layer and have poor diversity of woody species limited largely to gorse hawthorn and blackthorn. In addition, the site is located in an area of the county where there are limited records for this species. As such it is considered unlikely that this species is present on site and therefore not considered any further within this report.

Dormice and their nests are legally protected under the Conservation Regulations 2017; they are also species of principal importance and Cornwall BAP Priority species.

4.4.5. Otter

The ERCCIS desk study revealed three records for otter within a 1km radius of the site

There are no watercourses or riparian habitats present within the site and therefore no potential to support

otter. This species will not be considered further within this report.

Otters and their resting places are legally protected under the Conservation Regulations 2017, and are a species of principal importance and Cornwall BAP Priority species.

4.4.6. *Hedgehog*

The ERCCIS desk study revealed no records for hedgehog within a 1km radius of the site.

The hedges on site have some potential to support hedgehogs, providing shelter and possible hibernation sites within the most dense areas. The grassland field provides an area of suitable foraging habitat.

Hedgehogs are a species of principal importance and Cornwall BAP Priority species.

4.4.7. *Birds*

The ERCCIS desk study revealed over 30 bird species of conservation value within a 1km radius of the site.

The proposed development site has potential to support nesting bird species within the woody species of the hedges. In addition the hedgerows will provide a suitable foraging habitat at limited times of the year. The grassland field is not suitable for supporting ground nesting birds due to the short sward height.

4.4.8. *Reptiles and Amphibians*

The ERCCIS desk study revealed no records for reptile or amphibian species within a 1km radius of the proposed development site.

The grassland present within the site lacks the structural diversity to support reptile species and therefore this species is unlikely to be present within the site.

All British amphibian species require standing water to reproduce. The site supports no ponds within the site and the OS map suggests that the closest pond to the site is located c. 300m to the northwest of the site. The hedges and grassland field provide suitable foraging habitat for amphibians, however, it is anticipated that there are similar habitats in closer proximity to the pond and therefore unlikely to be present within the site.

Adder, common lizard, slow worm and grass snake are partially protected under Schedule 5 (section 9(1) and 9(5)) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Cornwall is considered a UK stronghold for adder. Slow-worm, grass snake, adder and common lizard are listed as species of principal importance and adder and grass snake have been identified as priority species for conservation within the county BAP.

4.4.9. *Invertebrates*

The habitats present within the site are not those which are considered to support the most diverse assemblages of invertebrate species.

5. Ecological Constraints and Opportunities, including mitigation requirements

5.1. Ecological Constraints

5.1.1. Designated sites

The development of a new campsite within 10km of Fal and Helford SAC has a potential to result in increased recreational pressure on this designated site. Impacts on SACs need to be assessed in the context of cumulative effects represented by overall increased recreational pressure in the area. The number of pitches on this site is unlikely to have a significant impact on its own, however it will contribute to a potentially significant cumulative impact.

Due to the small scale of the proposed development and the location of Kennal Vale CWS it is considered unlikely that the development will impact on this designated site.

5.1.2. Cornish hedge

It is understood that the existing hedge will be retained. The hedges are considered Cornish hedge and should this change and hedge removal be required it will be necessary to ensure that there is no net loss of this habitat. Hedge loss will need to be compensated with the at least the same if not greater length of hedge.

5.1.3. Bats

There will be a temporary loss of low quality foraging habitat throughout certain times of the year when the campsite is in use. In addition it is thought that the use of the campsite will lead to a low level increase in light levels within the site, which could impact the use of the boundary features by bats (mitigation is set out in section 5.2.2).

The loss of habitat is considered unlikely to cause a significant impact to bats due to the small scale of the impact and the abundance of quality habitat in the wider landscape.

5.1.4. Badgers

The proposed development will lead to the temporary loss of available foraging habitat at certain times of the year when the campsite is in use. This loss of habitat is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on any badger populations in the vicinity due to abundance of similar foraging habitat in the wider landscape.

It is understood that there are unlikely to be any excavations deeper than 1m associated with the development. However, precautionary measures will be required if there are (See section 5.2.3).

5.1.5. Hedgehog

There will be no loss of hedge which could support hedgehogs and a temporary loss of grassland habitat with potential to support foraging hedgehogs. This is not anticipated to impact populations of hedgehogs in

the area.

5.1.6. *Nesting birds*

The dense woody species within the hedges provide suitable nesting habitat for bird species. It is understood that there is no hedge removal associated with the proposed development. However, should this change it will be necessary to undertake precautionary measures to avoid impacts to nesting birds (see section 5.2.4).

5.2. Impact Avoidance and Mitigation

5.2.1. *Fal & Helford SAC*

Cornwall Council operate a standard mechanism for mitigation of this type of impact to a SAC, requiring a payment to be made for each new “unit” (assumed in this instance to be each pitch), which will pay for work to be carried out within the SAC to reduce the impact to acceptable levels. This payment will need to be agreed with Cornwall Council, and is usually secured through a S106 agreement, or other legal obligation.

5.2.2. *Bats*

Any lighting associated with the proposed development should ideally be low level downlighting which where possible should utilise timers. Lighting should be located, and face away, from the boundary hedges, to minimise light spill onto the hedges.

5.2.3. *Badgers*

Any excavations deeper than 1m in depth should either be fenced overnight or should have a sloping plank left in it overnight to avoid trapping any animals.

5.2.4. *Nesting birds*

Removal of vegetation suitable for nesting birds should ideally be removed outside of the nesting bird season which is generally considered to be March – September. If this is not possible then a nesting bird check should be undertaken prior to any removal and if an active nest is identified it will be necessary to creation an exclusion zone around the nest within which no works should take place until the nest has fledged naturally.

5.3. Further Surveys

No further surveys are required.

5.4. Ecological Enhancement Opportunities

Enhancement measures are recommended under NPPF Chapter 11, Cornwall Local Plan Policy 23 (see Section 2.1.2) and the Cornwall Planning for Biodiversity Guide 2018.

It is understood that it is proposed to create a species-rich margin between the existing hedge and the grassland field. This can be created through a change in management regime with less frequent cutting in these areas. Sowing these areas with a species-rich wildflower seed mix could also be considered.

It would be an ecological benefit to fill some of the gaps in the shrub layer of the boundary hedges. This can be achieved by planting native woody species in areas where the shrub layer is sparse.

Planting within the development site should look to utilise native species where possible and where introduced species are preferred pollinator friendly varieties should be selected.

6. Conclusions

The site comprises a single poor semi-improved grassland field which is bound by species-poor hedge. The site is located in a landscape of hedge bound pasture with occasional small parcels of woodland. The client propose to develop a 25 pitch campsite within the site.

A phase I habitat survey was undertaken and it was noted that the site has potential to support a number of protected species including bats, badgers, hedgehogs and nesting birds and where required, suitable measures will be put in place to minimise impacts to these species.

Ecological enhancements can be provided through the creation of species-rich margins, native planting and the gapping up of hedges.

No further surveys are required, and this report is suitable for planning, though it would need to be revised if there are any changes to the proposals.

7. References

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8. List of Appendices

A. Phase I Habitat Map

B. Phase I Habitat Survey Vascular Plant List

A. Phase I Habitat Map



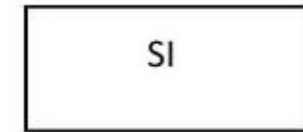


Google Earth

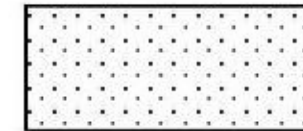
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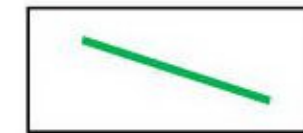
Survey boundary



Poor semi-improved



Bare ground



Species poor hedge

CEC36000 – Green Land View

Phase 1 Habitat Distribution

Drawn by: BW

Date: 15/6/21

Revision No.



B. Phase I Habitat Survey Vascular Plant List

Latin Name	Common Name	Habitats	
		Species-poor hedge	Poor semi-improved grassland
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	x	
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow foxtail		x
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet vernal grass		x
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow parsley	x	
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>	Hart's tongue		
<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	Hard fern	x	
<i>Camellia sp.</i>	Camellia		
<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>	Hairy bitter-cress	x	
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common mouse-ear	x	x
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping thistle	x	
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	x	
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot		x
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove	x	
<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>	Scaly male fern	x	
<i>Epilobium sp.</i>	Willowherb	x	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash		
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	x	
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-robert	x	
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	x	
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed, cow parsnip	x	
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog	x	x
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell	x	
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Common cat's ear		x
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	x	
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain		x
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater plantain		x

Latin Name	Common Name	Habitats	
		Species-poor hedge	Poor semi-improved grassland
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough meadow grass		X
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Common polypody	X	
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	Cherry laurel	X	
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	X	
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken	X	
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow buttercup		X
<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>	Rhododendron		
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Blackberry/bramble	X	
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common sorrel		X
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved dock	X	X
<i>Salix</i> sp.	Willow	X	
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Ragwort	X	
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red campion	X	
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly sow-thistle	X	
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Greater stitchwort	X	
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	Dandelion		X
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	Wood sage	X	
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	European gorse	X	
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Navelwort	X	
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common nettle	X	
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander speedwell		X
<i>Viola</i> sp.	Violet	X	