



Aylesmore Court, St. Bravials, GL15 6UQ

## Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



May 2021

All Ecology Ltd

Tel: 01453 393001

Email: [info@allecology.co.uk](mailto:info@allecology.co.uk)

Web: [www.allecology.co.uk](http://www.allecology.co.uk)

## Document Control

**Site:** Aylesmore Court, St. Bravials, GL15 6UQ

**Title:** Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**For:** Plan-A Planning and Development Ltd

**Project Number:** 2186

**Document Version:** 1.0

**Survey Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Document Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Version	Date	Version Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1.0	24/05/21	-	DR	VP	JG



### England and Wales Office

All Ecology Ltd,  
Haw Street,  
Coaley,  
Dursley,  
Gloucestershire,  
GL11 5AY.

### Scotland Office

All Ecology Ltd,  
Bowfield Road,  
Howwood,  
Renfrewshire,  
PA9 1BZ.

Tel: 01453 393001

Email: [info@allecology.co.uk](mailto:info@allecology.co.uk)

Web: [www.allecology.co.uk](http://www.allecology.co.uk)

All Ecology is the trading name of All Ecology Ltd. Registered in England and Wales, Company Number 8306310

## Notice to Readers:

The results of the survey and assessment work undertaken by All Ecology are representative at the time of surveying.

Every endeavour has been made to identify the presence of protected species on site, where this falls within the agreed scope of works.

The flora and fauna detailed within this report are those noted during the field survey and from anecdotal evidence. It should not be viewed as a complete list of flora and fauna species that may frequent or exist on site at other times of the year.

Up to date standard methodologies have been used, which are accepted by Natural England and other statutory conservation bodies. No responsibility will be accepted where these methodologies fail to identify all species on-site.

All Ecology cannot take responsibility where Government, national bodies or industry subsequently modify standards.

All Ecology cannot accept responsibility for data collected from third parties.

Reference to sections or particular paragraphs of this document taken out of context may lead to misrepresentation.

## Executive Summary

In April 2021, All Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of a small site at Aylesmore Court, St. Bravials, GL15 6UQ. The application site is a small part of a lawn within the gardens of the property, with stone wall forming the east boundary and Aylesbury Brook to the south.

The site is the subject of a planning application to permit the construction of a swimming pool and associated pool house. This will result in the permanent loss of a small area of grassland and temporary disturbance of the immediate surrounding area during construction.

The survey focussed upon the impact of the proposals on the site and any potential impacts that could be caused by works to protected and notable species.

The site is dominated by habitats of low ecological value, which are easy to replace. The site is unlikely to permanently support any protected or notable flora or fauna; however, the site has some limited potential for nesting birds, passing terrestrial small mammals and bats that are likely to forage in the general area. The loss of a small area of low value habitats is not considered significant but passing small mammals, nesting birds and foraging bats are considered.

The site is adjacent to Aylesmore Brook. A pollution prevention plan should be implemented to avoid pollution incidents that could have adverse effects on the flora and fauna within the brook, as well as have a detrimental effect on areas further downstream

Measures to avoid any impacts to wildlife through any new lighting are detailed, as well as precautionary measures to avoid harm to wildlife. Suggestions for a small number of enhancements for bats and birds are given.

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
Background	3
Objectives and Aim	3
Site Location	3
Aerial Photo	4
<b>2.0 Methodology</b>	<b>5</b>
Personnel	5
Desk Study	5
Habitat Survey	5
Fauna	5
Equipment	6
Valuation of Ecological Features	6
Nomenclature	6
Limitations	6
<b>3.0 Results</b>	<b>7</b>
Desk Survey	7
Habitats	7
Fauna	8
<b>4.0 Development Constraints and Recommendations</b>	<b>11</b>
Development Proposals	11
Habitats	11
Protected and Notable Species	11
<b>5.0 References</b>	<b>13</b>

# 1.0 Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 In April 2021, All Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of a small site at Aylesmore Court, St. Bravials, GL15 6UQ. The application site is a small part of a lawn within the gardens of the property with stone wall forming the east boundary and Aylesbury Brook to the south. The site is situated in a rural location south of St. Bravials with the surrounding area comprising a mosaic of pasture and arable land with pockets of woodland linked by a network of hedgerows.
- 1.2 The site is the subject of a planning application to permit the construction of a swimming pool and associated pool house. This will result in the permanent loss of a small area of grassland and temporary disturbance of the immediate surrounding area during construction.

## Objectives and Aim

- 1.3 The main objectives and aim of the survey were to identify features of ecological interest, undertake a basic search of habitats present for evidence of use, or potential use, by protected species, and to identify any other possible ecological constraints to the proposed development.

## Site Location



Figure 1: Site location plan.

## Aerial Photo



Figure 2: Aerial photograph indicating site boundaries.

## 2.0 Methodology

### Personnel

- 2.1 The survey was carried out by Daniel Roberts BSc Hons and overseen by James Godbeer BSc Hons MCIEEM, an ecologist with over 14 years' experience working as a consultant. James has extensive experience of managing environmental contracts, and particular experience in surveying, assessment and mitigation for rare and protected species. He has considerable knowledge of the development and planning process including Ecological Impact Assessments, sustainable ecological design and he has completed ecology chapters of Environmental Statements. James holds a number of protected species licences including bats (all species, all counties, Class Licence Registration No. 2015-12313-CLS-CLS), and Great Crested Newts (Class Licence Registration No. 2019-44282-CLS-CLS). He has successfully obtained European Protected Species mitigation licences for a number of bat species including Lesser Horseshoe, Greater Horseshoe, Serotine, Brown Long-eared, Common Pipistrelle and Natterer's bats, for a number of roost types including maternity and hibernation sites.

### Desk Study

- 2.2 In order to compile background information on the site and immediate surroundings Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental records (GCER) was contacted.
- 2.3 Information requested was as follows:
- Statutory site designations on or within 1 km of the site.
  - Non-statutory site designations on or within 1 km of the site.
  - Records of protected species within the 1 km of the site.
  - Records of rare or notable species within the 1 km of the site.
- 2.4 Online OS maps and aerial photographs were inspected for the presence of ponds in the surrounding area. Additionally, MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside, 2021) was used to establish the distance and direction of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and species records within the search area.

### Habitat Survey

- 2.5 The site was visited on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and surveyed in accordance with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Phase I Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC, 2010). This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential that might warrant further study.

### Fauna

- 2.6 The habitats present on the site were searched for signs of animal activity. The trees were assessed for their potential to support bat roosts by visually inspecting them from the ground using binoculars and high-powered torches where appropriate. Potential features such as holes, cavities or splits were recorded and then inspected, where possible, for signs of bats, which including grease/urine stains, scratch marks, droppings or the bats themselves. There were no buildings on site.



- 2.7 The site and surroundings, for a minimum distance of 30 m, were searched for signs of Badgers. These include setts, latrines, dung pits, snuffle marks or hairs caught in hedges or on fencing.
- 2.8 Incidental observations of invertebrates and birds were recorded and a search made for any signs of current or previous nesting.
- 2.9 The habitats were assessed for their potential to support reptiles and amphibians. With regard to Great Crested Newts there were no ponds on site or within the near vicinity with the closest pond indicated on OS maps 480 m southeast. A section of Aylesmore Court has been controlled a within gardens a short distance west of the site, creating a 'pond-like' feature; however, this is flowing and was considered to be unsuitable for GCN.

### **Equipment**

- 2.10 Equipment used to aid the survey included binoculars and a camera.

### **Valuation of Ecological Features**

- 2.11 The valuation process used in this report follows the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018).
- 2.12 The presence of injurious and legally controlled weeds has also been taken into account.

### **Nomenclature**

- 2.13 The English name only of flora and fauna species is given in the main text of this report; however, scientific names are used for invertebrates where no English name is available. Vascular plants and charophytes follow the nomenclature of The Botanical Society for the British Isles (BSBI) 2007 database (BSBI, 2007) with all other flora and fauna following the Nameserver facility of the National Biodiversity Network Species Dictionary (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nbn/>), which is managed by the Natural History Museum.

### **Limitations**

- 2.14 The site was fully accessible with no limitations to undertaking the survey in accordance with the stated methodology.

## 3.0 Results

### Desk Survey

- 3.1 There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites within 1 km of the site. The only site of conservation importance is an unconfirmed Local Wildlife Site known as Harpfield Meadows U, which comprises of three meadows of moderately interesting MG5a community. This potential LWS is located 833 m from the site; no further consideration is required.
- 3.2 GCER provided the following records for protected and notable species within 1 km of the site boundary:
- **Mammals** – Hedgehog, Badger and unidentified bat species.
  - **Birds** – Tree Sparrow, Cuckoo, Redstart, House Sparrow, Marsh Tit, Dunnock, Song Thrush, Stock Dove, Curlew, Spotted Flycatcher, Skylark, Mallard, Tree Pipit, House Martin, Willow Warbler, Mistle Thrush, Linnets, Hobby, Spotted Flycatcher, Bullfinch, Swift, Yellow Wagtail, Hawfinch, Yellowhammer, Grey Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Fieldfare, Pied Flycatcher, Tawny Owl, Redwing, Starling, Goshawk and Common Crossbill.
  - **Invertebrate** – Lepidoptera: Small Heath and Small Blue.

### Habitats

- 3.3 The majority of the site comprises a small part of a lawn with two small trees. A short section of stone wall forms the east boundary of the site with a small brook flowing immediately adjacent to the south.
- 3.4 The lawn was well-maintained with a short sward and appeared to be dominated by Perennial Rye-grass with frequent Yorkshire-fog and occasional Cock's-foot, Fescue sp. and rare Meadow Foxtail. Creeping Buttercup was found to be frequent across the lawn with occasional White Clover, Cuckooflower, Dandelion and Daisy. This grassland was classified as amenity grassland.
- 3.5 The outer edges of this habitat, particularly adjacent to the wall, were found to comprise small areas of tall ruderal vegetation comprising of frequent Common Nettle with occasional Hogweed, Cow Parsley, Creeping Thistle and rare Herb-Robert, Wood Avens, Willowherb sp., Ground-ivy, Hart's-tongue, Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage, Wavy Bitter-cress and Lords-and-Ladies. Two small apple trees are present within the lawn.
- 3.6 The east boundary is formed of stone wall with a short-dilapidated section, which extends a short distance along the south boundary.



Photograph 1: Lawn.



Photograph 2: Apple trees



Photograph 3: Stone wall.

## Fauna

### Bats

- 3.7 GCER provided one record of a potential bat roost in a building on the site indicated by droppings of an unidentified species.

- 3.8 This is not considered to be significant in the context of this development, which would occupy a small area of amenity grassland. The small site is unlikely to be important for bats but it is expected that at least some bats will forage and commute in the surrounding area and the presence of the adjacent small watercourse increases the likelihood of bats foraging over the site.

#### Badgers

- 3.9 GCER provided one Badger recorded comprising a sett located approximately 400 m northwest of the site.
- 3.10 The short grassland on site is optimal foraging habitat for Badger but the potential for setts is negligible. The adjacent off site scrub on the opposite side of the east boundary wall provides possible cover for the construction of setts but a search did not find any setts or any other evidence of Badger presence. Badgers are expected to be generally absent from the site and immediate vicinity but may pass through on occasion.

#### Other mammals

- 3.11 Two records of Hedgehog were provided by GCER and this species may be present in the area but the site itself provides minimal cover for small mammals. The Brook immediately south of the site is small, shallow and fast flowing, which is sub-optimal for Water Vole and limited to passing Otters; these species are expected to be generally absent. Mammal potential on site is limited to passing individual small mammals including Badgers and Hedgehogs.

#### Birds

- 3.12 GCER supplied records of a wide range of bird species in the surrounding area. The site is a small pocket of short, well-maintained amenity grassland and two small trees and is therefore unsuitable for ground nesting birds and provides only a limited foraging or nesting resource.

#### Amphibians

- 3.13 No records of amphibians were provided. There are no ponds on site and terrestrial habitat is dominated by short grassland that offers little cover and is considered poor. With regard to Great Crested Newts, apart from a wider, dammed section of the flowing brook, which is deemed unsuitable, there are no ponds in near vicinity of the site. The closest pond is indicated on OS maps 480 m southeast and is the only pond within 500 m of the site. Great Crested Newts are considered to be absent from the site.

## Reptiles

- 3.14 No reptile records were provided by GCER and habitats on site comprising of mostly short amenity grass and isolated patches of tall ruderal are considered to be unsuitable. Reptiles are absent from the site.

## Invertebrates

- 3.15 Two records of invertebrates were provided by GCER within 1 km of the site comprising of Small Heath and Small Blue butterflies. The site is short amenity grassland has negligible potential for rare or notable species and the two small fruit trees are unlikely to be important to invertebrates. Only a limited number of common species are expected to be present.

## 4.0 Development Constraints and Recommendations

### Development Proposals

- 4.1 The site is the subject of a planning application to permit the construction of a swimming pool and associated pool house. This will result in the permanent loss of a small area of grassland and temporary disturbance of the immediate surrounding area during construction.

### Habitats

- 4.2 Habitats on site consists of short amenity grassland, small pockets of tall ruderal and two small trees with a short section of stone wall. These habitats do not qualify as priority habitat and the loss of a small area for the construction of the swimming pool and pool house is not considered to be important.
- 4.3 The site is situated adjacent to Aylesmore Brook. Any pollution could have adverse effects on the flora and fauna within the brook, as well as have a detrimental effect on areas further downstream. As a precaution, during the construction phase of the project on no account should any chemicals, including vehicle fuels or lubricants be left on site at night where they might be accessed by accident or deliberately (e.g. vandals) resulting in spillage into the brook either directly or through run-off. Any contractors engaged in works on the site should have in place secure storage facilities and an agreed pollution prevention plan. Appropriate pollution control equipment should be available at the site to control spillages if they do occur.

### Protected and Notable Species

#### Bats

- 4.4 There are no buildings on site and the trees are small and unsuitable for roosting bats. At least a small number of bats are expected to forage on site, mainly in association with the adjacent brook. Provided there is no increase in lighting along this brook, the small scale nature of the works means that any impacts to bats are expected to be negligible.
- 4.5 The brook should not be subject to any lighting and light spill into the surrounding areas should be minimised through the implementation of a suitable lighting strategy, if any lighting is required. Measures should include the use of lighting only where absolutely necessary utilising highly directional warm white LED lighting, an example being down spots at 2.5 m high using warm white (2700 K) 8W LED lamps, 550 lumens, 35 degree beam angle. These could be individually activated by PIR sensors on a 5 minute cut off to further reduce their impacts. These will assist in lighting only the areas where lighting is required and minimising light spill either directly or through reflected light.
- 4.6 Consideration should be given to the installation of a bat box at the apex of the pool house gable wall if the design is deemed suitable, or three bat boxes on a nearby mature tree in order to enhance the site for these species.

#### Badgers and other mammals

- 4.7 The site provides potential foraging habitat for Badgers and passing individuals of various common mammals as well as Hedgehogs. The scale of works is small and the impacts to small

areas of habitat are not considered significant. During works any excavations or trenches should be backfilled before nightfall or ramps created to avoided trapping small mammals.

#### Birds

- 4.8 No impacts to birds are predicted; however, the removal of trees should be carried out outside of the bird nesting season of March to August. Where this is not possible, it should be confirmed that nesting birds are absent from trees by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to works commencing. If they are present, then the nest and surrounding habitat must remain intact until the young have fledged.
- 4.9 Consideration could be given to installing bird boxes on the side of the new pool house building in order to enhance the site. Nest boxes, such as the Schwegler 1MR, bird should be installed at a height of at least 2 m from the ground, with the entrance hole between north and east. This avoids the worst of the weather and prevents the box and its inhabitants becoming overheated in sunny weather. Nest boxes could also be installed on nearby trees.

## 5.0 References

BSBI (2007). BSBI 2007 List. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.bsbi.org.uk/taxonomy.html> [accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021].

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, SI 2010/490

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, (c.37), London: HMSO.

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.cieem.net/ecia-guidelines-terrestrial-freshwater-and-coastal-> [accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021].

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010) Handbook for Phase I Habitat Survey – a Technique for Environmental Audit. JNCC: London.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2021). UK BAP Priority Habitats. [Online]. Available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5718> [accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021]

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2021a). UK BAP Priority Species. [Online]. Available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5717> [accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021]

Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (2021). MAGIC. [Online]. Available at: [www.magic.gov.uk/](http://www.magic.gov.uk/) [accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021].

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, (c.16), London: HMSO.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992, (c.51), London: HMSO.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments). (c.69), London: HMSO.