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# EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

## LAND AT CHURCH LANE, NEWCHURCH, ROSSENDALE

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2021 by Hurstwood Holdings to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey at a piece of land off Church Lane in Newchurch, Rosendale (O.S. grid reference SD 83353 22351 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises a disused piece of land which supports bare ground, with establishing ruderal and ephemeral vegetation. Church Lane and St Nicholas Newchurch borders the site to the east, private dwellings to the south and west and a public house to the north. In the wider context the site is situated in the town of Newchurch surrounded by residential and business properties.



Figure 1 showing the location of the site edged in red

### Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the construction of two new private dwellings with access, car parking and landscaping.

### Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken to JNCC standards (JNCC, 2010). The site was walked, and each habitat was assigned a Phase 1 habitat category. Species lists were taken at locations of botanical interest. All botanical nomenclature follows Stace, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries.
- 2.2 During the Extended Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, for example, looking for signs of Badger activity (e.g., setts, paths, latrines and hairs on fences), assessing any waterbodies on site or near the site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt, assessing any trees for bat roost suitability and assessing the site for reptiles.
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

### Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.4 Joe Cooper (Ecologist) carried out the Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021. Joe is fully trained and has much experience in habitat and protected species assessments. October is within the sub-optimal time of the year for botanical surveys. Protected species assessments can be undertaken at any time of the year. The weather at the time of the survey was warm, clear and dry.

### Survey Constraints

- 2.5 The site was fully accessible. There were no constraints to the survey.



## 3.0 RESULTS

### PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats on the proposed development site are described below.

#### Bare Ground

- 3.2 The access track and car park to the property is comprised of hardstanding and tarmac (see Photograph 1). Some ephemeral species have begun to self-seed.



Photograph 1 showing the bare ground

#### Ephemeral Short Perennial

- 3.3 The access track and car park to the property is comprised of hardstanding and tarmac (see Photograph 2). Ephemeral, short perennial vegetation is present on the edges of this bare ground, with some bryophytes having spanned the majority of the car park to the rear of the property. Species assemblage includes Broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, White clover *Trifolium repens*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, Perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*, Herb-Robert *Geranium robertianum*, Bristly oxtongue *Helminthotheca echioides*, Creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, Common vetch *Vicia sativa* and White stonecrop *Sedum album*. Grass species are interspersed within the ephemeral vegetation, species includes Perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus Lanatus*, Common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and False oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*.







Photograph 2 showing the ephemeral short perennial

#### Tall, Ruderal Herb

- 3.4 Small bands of tall ruderal vegetation are present at the site boundaries towards the entrance (see Photograph 3). Species include Rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, Creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, Ivy *Hedera helix*, Common mallow *Malva sylvestris*, Herb-Robert *Geranium robertianum*, Canadian fleabane *Erigeron canadensis*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Columbine *Aquilegia vulgaris*, Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla vulgaris*, Spurge *Euphorbia* sp., Bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Gorse *Ulex europaeus*, Goat willow *Salix caprea*, Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, Common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Bristly oxtongue *Helminthotheca echioides* and Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*.



Photograph 3 showing the tall, ruderal vegetation



### Scattered and Continuous Scrub

- 3.5 Scattered and continuous scrub is located along the northern and western boundary and interspersed within the ephemeral vegetation (see Photographs 4). Species assemblage includes Fuchsia *Fuchsia magellanica*, Elder *Sambucus nigra*, Grey willow *Salix cinerea*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, Ivy *Hedera helix* and Common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*.



Photograph 4 showing the rank neutral grassland

### Scattered Trees

- 3.6 Along the eastern and western boundary of the site is a selection of scattered trees. Two large Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* trees are located on the western boundary (see Photograph 5). Sycamore and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, are located along the eastern boundary within the scrub (see Photograph 6).







*Photograph 5 showing the scattered trees.*



*Photograph 6 showing the scattered trees.*



### Spoil

- 3.7 Several large stones have been placed at the entrance to the site (see Photograph 7).



*Photograph 7 showing one of the spoil piles*

### Boundaries

- 3.8 A stone brick wall surrounds the site on the northern, western and southern boundary which is covered in Ivy (see Photograph 8).



*Photograph 8 showing the wall surround the site*

## PROTECTED SPECIES

### Great Crested Newt

- 3.9 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit) and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.10 No waterbodies exist on the site. No ponds could be located within 500 metres of the site. An overflow from the Clough Bottom Reservoir runs west of the site on the opposite side of Newchurch. It is not considered to be optimal habitat for Great Crested Newt. The site supports no suitable terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt.

### Bats

- 3.11 All bat species are European Protected Species. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit). Bats are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.12 The mature trees located along the peripheries were assessed for any potential roosting features (PRFs). No evidence was found and therefore required no further survey. The off-site tree belts to the east of the site offer potential bat foraging and commuting habitat.

### Badger

- 3.13 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These Acts, for example, make it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 3.14 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity such as latrines or snuffle holes was located on site.

### Nesting Birds

- 3.15 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- 3.16 The habitats located on the site offer potential nesting habitat for birds. The mature trees and continuous scrub vegetation offer some potential for nesting birds.

## INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.17 No invasive, non-native species, as listed on Schedule 9 Part II (plants) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), were found on site or immediately adjacent to the site.



## PROTECTED SITES

- 3.18 No statutory protected sites lie on the site or immediately adjacent to the site boundary. One statutory protected site Lee Quarry Sites of Special Scientific Interest is located 2.7km west of the site.
- 3.19 The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, which lists certain types of development that may have a deleterious impact on protected sites nearby. The development is not listed; however, the LPA may consult Natural England for advice on any potential impacts the proposed development may have on the nearby protected sites.
- 3.20 No non-statutory protected sites exist on site.



## 4.0 ASSESSMENT

### Habitats

- 4.1 The Phase 1 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.
- 4.2 The site comprises a piece of disused land, which supports bare ground ephemeral short perennial and scrub which offer a limited source of pollen and nectar for invertebrates.

### Development Context

- 4.3 The development proposals include the construction of two private dwellings, with associated access, landscaping and parking. Bare ground, ephemeral vegetation, scrub and tall ruderal will be lost to the development. Given the site currently offers low ecological value, no specific habitat mitigation is considered to be necessary. However, the landscaping scheme will increase the ecological value of the site and include native and non-native flowering species, to provide a better pollen and nectar source for invertebrates. Bird and bat boxes will be erected where possible.

## PROTECTED SPECIES

### Great Crested Newt

- 4.4 No ponds exist on the site. The site supports limited suitable terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt. Given the lack of breeding habitat in the locality, it is reasonably unlikely that Great Crested Newt occurs on site. No further amphibian survey work or mitigation is necessary.

### Bats

- 4.5 No buildings exist on site. The scattered trees on site offer potential bat foraging and commuting habitat. It is recommended that the trees be retained, and the site is enhanced for bat habitat with the provision of bat boxes on the new buildings.

### Badger

- 4.6 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity was located during the survey. Badger is not considered to be a constraint on development.

### Nesting Birds

- 4.7 The site supports suitable nesting habitats for birds within the continuous scrub and scattered trees. Nesting birds can be mitigated for by allowing no works to potential nesting habitats to be carried out within the bird nesting season (which is generally March – August) unless a nesting bird survey is undertaken first.

## INVASIVE SPECIES

- 4.8 No non-native, invasive species as listed on Schedule 9 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and is included on The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (Non-native Species) are present on or immediately adjacent to the site.

## PROTECTED SITES

- 4.1 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites lie within the proposed development site. The nearest statutory protected site is Lee Quarry SSSI. Given the distance and barrier habitats in-between, it is considered that there will be no deleterious impact upon the LNR from the development.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary of Findings

- 5.1 Protected species are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. The presence of protected species, the effect of the proposed development and suitable mitigation, if required, must be established before planning permission can be granted. Following the findings from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the following survey may be required:

- **Nesting Birds** - If any work to the trees or hedgerow needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season (which is generally March to August), then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

### Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

- 5.2 St Nicholas Newchurch and adjoining land has a line of mature Ash trees that connect with those found on site. This and the Church should be protected during the construction phase of the development. The CEMP should include a sensitive lighting scheme to prevent impacts on potential foraging, commuting, and roosting bats.

### Habitat Enhancement

- 5.3 General recommendations to bring biodiversity gain to the site are:

- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
- Bird boxes and/or bat boxes should be erected on the new buildings where possible.
- Trees planting of native species where practically possible.
- 'Hedgehog holes' to be incorporated into the fencing of the site.



## 6.0 REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX A PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP



