



# The Ecology Co-op

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Building B, Lords Wood Barns, Petworth, GU28 9BS

Tel: 01798 861 800 - E-Mail: [info@ecologyco-op.co.uk](mailto:info@ecologyco-op.co.uk) - Web: [www.ecologyco-op.co.uk](http://www.ecologyco-op.co.uk)

## Ecological Appraisal

### Site Name

Brows Farm, Liss

### Issue Date

27 November 2023

### Client

Hamish Petty

### Author

Lynn Spencer

**Project No: P5815**

The Ecology Co-operation Ltd  
Registered Office: Greens Court, West Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9NQ  
Company number: 8905527





## Document Control

Issue No	Author	Reviewer	Issue Date	Additions/alterations	Notes
Original	<b>Lynn Spencer</b> BSc (Hons), MSc ACIEEM	<b>Kate Priestman</b> MCIEEM, CEnv	27.11.2023	N/A	

## Conditions of use

This report has been prepared by The Ecology Co-operation Ltd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. This report only becomes the property of the client once payment for it has been received in full.

We disclaim responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above.

This report is confidential to the client, and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

## About the Author

This report has been prepared by Lynn Spencer, a Senior Ecologist at The Ecology Co-op, with 10 years' experience. She has a Level 1 bat survey licence. As an Associate member of the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and as Chartered Ecologist through this body, she is bound by their code of professional conduct.

## About the Reviewer

This report has been reviewed by Kate Priestman, who is a Principal Ecologist with over twenty years' experience. Kate has undertaken survey work and reporting, and prepared European Protected Species licences for numerous schemes. As a Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv), she is bound by CIEEM's code of professional conduct.



## Report Summary

<b>Purpose</b>	The Ecology Co-op was commissioned by Hamish Petty to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Brows Farm, Liss, further to a proposal which comprises a two-storey extension of a building used as a golf driving range.
<b>Context</b>	The site is situated in a rural area, west of Liss, Hampshire. It comprises a golf driving range.
<b>Key findings</b>	The habitats being affected by the proposed development are of low ecological value. Lines of trees to the north and west of the site have potential to support foraging/commuting bats.
<b>Recommendations</b>	The proposed development should include an 'ecologically sensitive lighting scheme' in accordance with guidance produced by the Bat Conservation Trust.
<b>Are further surveys required?</b>	No further surveys are considered necessary.



## CONTENTS PAGE

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1	Purpose of the Report.....	1
1.2	Background.....	1
1.3	Policy and Legislation.....	3
<b>2</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>3</b>
2.1	Desk Study.....	4
2.2	Field Survey.....	4
2.3	Badgers.....	4
2.4	Bats.....	4
2.5	Breeding Birds.....	5
2.6	Dormice.....	5
2.7	Great Crested Newt.....	5
2.8	Reptiles.....	6
2.9	Other Notable Species.....	6
<b>3</b>	<b>BASELINE CONDITIONS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
3.1	Designated Sites and Granted EPS Licences.....	6
3.2	Habitats.....	10
3.3	Badgers.....	11
3.4	Bats.....	11
3.5	Breeding Birds.....	12
3.6	Dormice.....	12
3.7	Great Crested Newts and other Amphibians.....	12
3.8	Reptiles.....	13
3.9	Invasive Non-native Species.....	13
3.10	Other Notable Species.....	14
3.11	Survey Limitations.....	14
<b>4</b>	<b>IMPACT APPRAISAL</b> .....	<b>14</b>
4.1	Designated Sites.....	14
4.2	Habitats.....	14
4.3	Bats.....	14
<b>5</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>15</b>
	<b>APPENDIX 1 – Wildlife Legislation and National Planning Policy</b> .....	<b>16</b>
	<b>APPENDIX 2 – South Downs Local Plan - Adopted 2 July 2019 (2014-33)</b> .....	<b>21</b>
	<b>APPENDIX 3 – Reducing Impacts of Artificial Light</b> .....	<b>22</b>



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of the Report

The Ecology Co-op has been commissioned by Hamish Petty to undertake an Ecological Appraisal of Brows Farm, Liss by The Ecology Co-op. This report presents the findings of a walkover survey undertaken by Lynn Spencer, BSc (Hons), MSc, ACIEEM, associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (ACIEEM) and Natural England Level 1 Bat Survey Class Licence holder on 22nd November 2023. It provides details on the potential for any protected/notable species and/or habitats to be present at the site and a simple assessment of the potential ecological constraints and opportunities in relation to a proposed development which comprises a two-storey extension of a building used as a golf driving range. Recommendations for further surveys that are likely to be required to inform a planning application of the proposal are provided where necessary, and possible measures to avoid, mitigate and/or compensate for significant adverse effects are summarised. The potential to incorporate ecological enhancement measures as part of the scheme is discussed, in addition to any requirement to achieve biodiversity net gain.

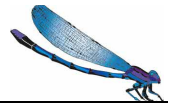
This report is designed to inform the client and their team (as appropriate) about the initial findings of the site walkover and desk study research in relation to the site proposals, highlighting the key ecological constraints and opportunities, and any further survey requirements.

### 1.2 Background

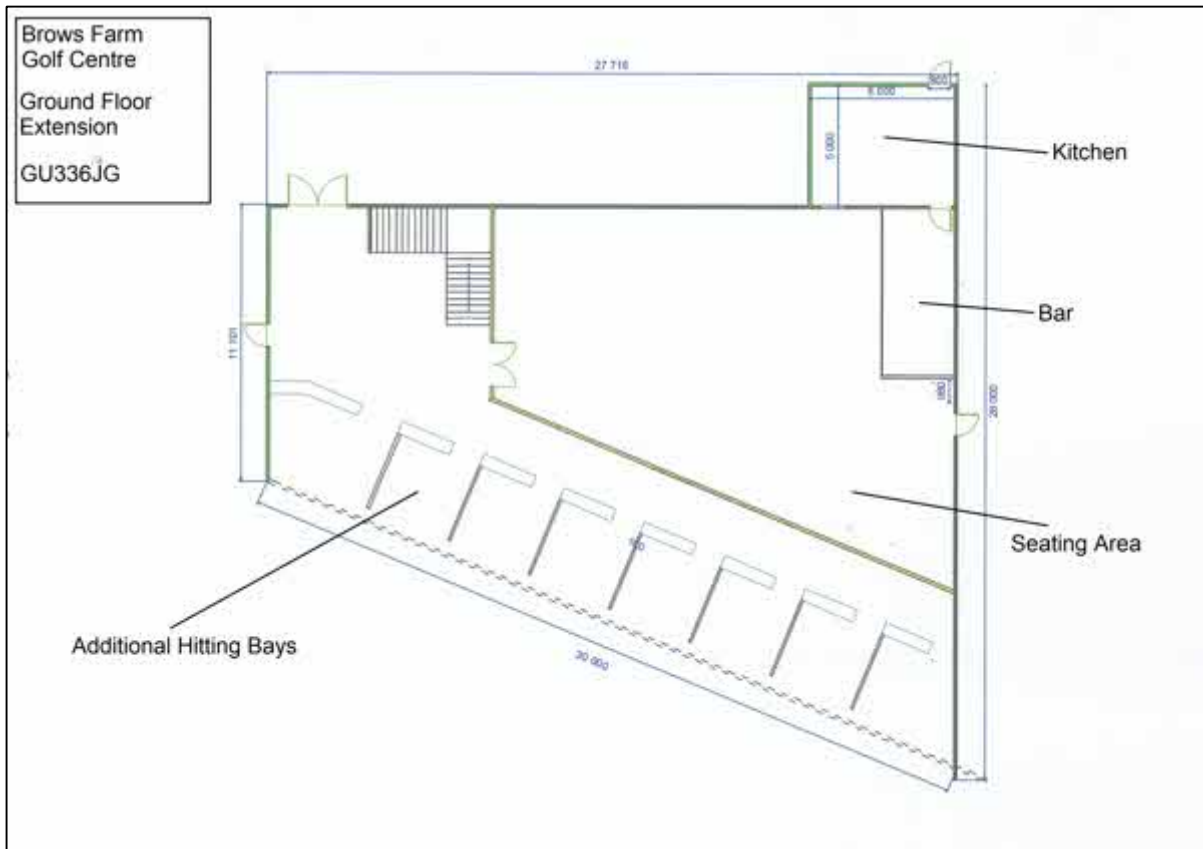
The site is located at Brows Farm, Farnham Road, Liss GU33 6JG. The central grid reference for the site is SU 77362 27832.

The site is situated in a rural area, west of Liss, Hampshire. It comprises a golf centre driving range.

The proposed development comprises a two-storey extension of a building used as a golf driving range. The location of the site is illustrated in Figure 1. The layout of the proposed development is illustrated in Figure 2.



**Figure 1.** Location of the site. The approximate site boundary is outlined in red. Image produced courtesy of Google maps (map data ©2023 Google)



**Figure 2.** Development layout plan (Image produced courtesy of Brows Farm Golf Centre 2023).

### 1.3 Policy and Legislation

Legal protection applying to relevant bird, mammal, herpetofauna, invertebrate species and flora, and current nature conservation planning policy is outlined in Appendix 1 of this report.

Where possible, this report provides guidance on how the proposal can be designed to meet the requirements of both local planning policy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Details of the NPPF can be found in Appendix 1 and relevant local planning policy by South Downs National Park Authority is provided in Appendix 2.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The methodologies used for this survey are in accordance with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal<sup>1</sup>, but also consider the Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, Second Edition<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

<sup>2</sup> CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.



## 2.1 Desk Study

A search of on-line mapping resources was undertaken to identify the location of any features of potential ecological interest including ponds within 500m (relevant to great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*), watercourses (relevant to riparian mammals and crayfish) and connectivity to woodland, scrub, and hedgerow networks (relevant to bats and dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*) in the wider landscape around the site. The connectivity of the site to these features, buildings and other semi-natural habitats, such as grassland and heathland, are also relevant to great crested newts, reptiles and a wide variety of notable species of conservation concern.

The MAGIC website resource ([www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk)) was used to identify the location of designated sites for nature conservation and European Protected Species (EPS) licences granted in relation to the survey site.

## 2.2 Field Survey

A site walkover survey was undertaken on 22nd November 2023, during which the habitats contained within the site were described and evaluated. Since this site is relatively small in scale and contains limited semi-natural habitat diversity, it was not considered necessary to undertake comprehensive UKHab mapping of the site. All habitat types contained within the site, together with the dominant botanical species and indicators of important habitat types, such as ancient woodland or unimproved grassland, have simply been listed and described where identified.

Habitats and features at the site were evaluated for their potential to support legally protected species and/or species of conservation interest. In addition, observations of any important plant communities, bird assemblages or other potentially valuable ecological features were recorded.

Details of the preliminary survey methods for each legally protected species are given below. Any site-specific limitations to the survey, e.g., access constraints or seasonal constraints, are set out in section 3.11.

## 2.3 Badgers

Badgers *Meles meles* exploit a range of habitats, including gardens, coniferous woodland, deciduous woodland, mixed woodland and arable land. They live in an underground system of tunnels and nesting chambers, known as a sett, with territories ranging from 30ha to 150ha or more.

Habitats within the site and surrounding area were broadly assessed for their potential to support badgers. Any signs of badger activity, for example setts, footprints, latrines, well-worn paths and foraging marks, were recorded. Further surveys were recommended as appropriate.

## 2.4 Bats

Bats can use a wide range of features for roosting purposes, including loft spaces, cavity walls, loose tiles, mortice joints and cracks/gaps in a variety of built structures. They can also be found in trees with holes, splits, cracks, cavities, ivy and loose bark.





Trees, buildings and other structures were broadly assessed for their potential to support roosting bats and further surveys are recommended as appropriate.

The potential for roosting bats for each feature, or group of features was assessed as negligible, low, moderate, or high, in accordance with best practice. Any evidence confirming the presence of bats was clearly recorded including photos and samples taken (e.g., droppings), where appropriate. Further surveys were recommended as appropriate.

The habitats surrounding the site and wider landscape were broadly assessed for their potential to support foraging and commuting bats.

## 2.5 Breeding Birds

Birds can use a wide range of natural and artificial habitats when breeding, including trees, hedgerows, fields, houses and garden sheds. The habitats contained within the site and adjacent areas were broadly assessed for their potential to support important bird species/assemblages, and breeding birds. Any birds identified during the site visit were recorded. Special attention was paid to notable species such as red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern<sup>3</sup> and those species afforded special protection on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). Further surveys are recommended as appropriate.

## 2.6 Dormice

Dormice are found in deciduous woodland and hedgerows, feeding on flowers, pollen, fruits, insects and nuts, favouring hazel *Corylus avellana* and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* for food and as bedding. The site was broadly assessed for its potential to support dormice. This included use of on-line mapping resources to assess the surrounding area for connectivity to large blocks of woodland, scrub and extensive hedgerow networks.

Further surveys are recommended as appropriate in accordance with best practice guidance<sup>4</sup>.

## 2.7 Great Crested Newt

Great crested newts breed in ponds during the spring and spend the rest of the year feeding on invertebrates primarily in semi-natural habitats including woodland, hedgerows, marshes and tussocky grassland. A desk study was undertaken to identify ponds and wet ditches within 500m of the site that might support breeding great crested newts. Where access permission was granted, or ponds could be viewed from public roads or footpaths, the ponds were assessed for their potential to support great crested newts using the Habitat

---

<sup>3</sup> Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, N., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win I. (2021). Birds of Conservation Concern 5: the status of bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. *British Birds* 114, pp 723-747.

<sup>4</sup> Bright, P., Morris, P. and Mitchell-Jones, T. (2006). *The dormouse conservation handbook 2nd Ed.* English Nature, Peterborough.



Suitability Index (HSI) (Oldham et al 2000)<sup>5</sup>. The value of the site for terrestrially foraging great crested newts and any features that might be used by hibernating newts has also been assessed.

Further surveys are recommended as appropriate, in accordance with best practice guidance (English Nature 2001)<sup>6</sup>.

## 2.8 Reptiles

The common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and adder *Vipera berus* are widespread species that can be found in any of these habitats, whereas smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* and sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* have much more restricted and isolated populations on lowland heathland and sand dunes.

Habitats on the site were broadly assessed for their potential to support reptiles. Particular attention was paid to those features that provide suitable basking areas (e.g. south-facing slopes), hibernation sites (e.g. banks, walls, piles of rotting vegetation) and opportunities for foraging (rough grassland and scrub). Further surveys are recommended as appropriate.

## 2.9 Other Notable Species

The site's habitats were broadly assessed for their potential to support species of principal importance for nature conservation (Section 41 NERC Act 2006) and other notable species. This includes mammals such as harvest mouse *Micromys minutus*, hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, brown hare *Lepus europaeus*, and many bird species. The site was broadly assessed for its potential to support important invertebrate assemblages with particular attention paid to features such as standing dead-wood, wet flushes, bare earth banks and botanically rich areas.

# 3 BASELINE CONDITIONS

## 3.1 Designated Sites and Granted EPS Licences

Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area (SPA), Woolmer Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Liss Riverside Railway Walk (North) Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Liss Riverside Railway Walk (South) LNR lie within 2km of the site. Details of these designated sites are provided in Table 1 and their locations are shown in Figure 3.

There is one granted EPS licence for mitigation projects within 1km of the site boundary (see Figure 4). The EPS licence concerns destruction of a resting place of common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* approximately 145m west of the site in 2015.

---

<sup>5</sup> Oldham, R.S., Keeble, J., Swan, M.J.S. and Jeffcote, M. (2000). Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*). *Herpetological Journal* 10, 143-155.

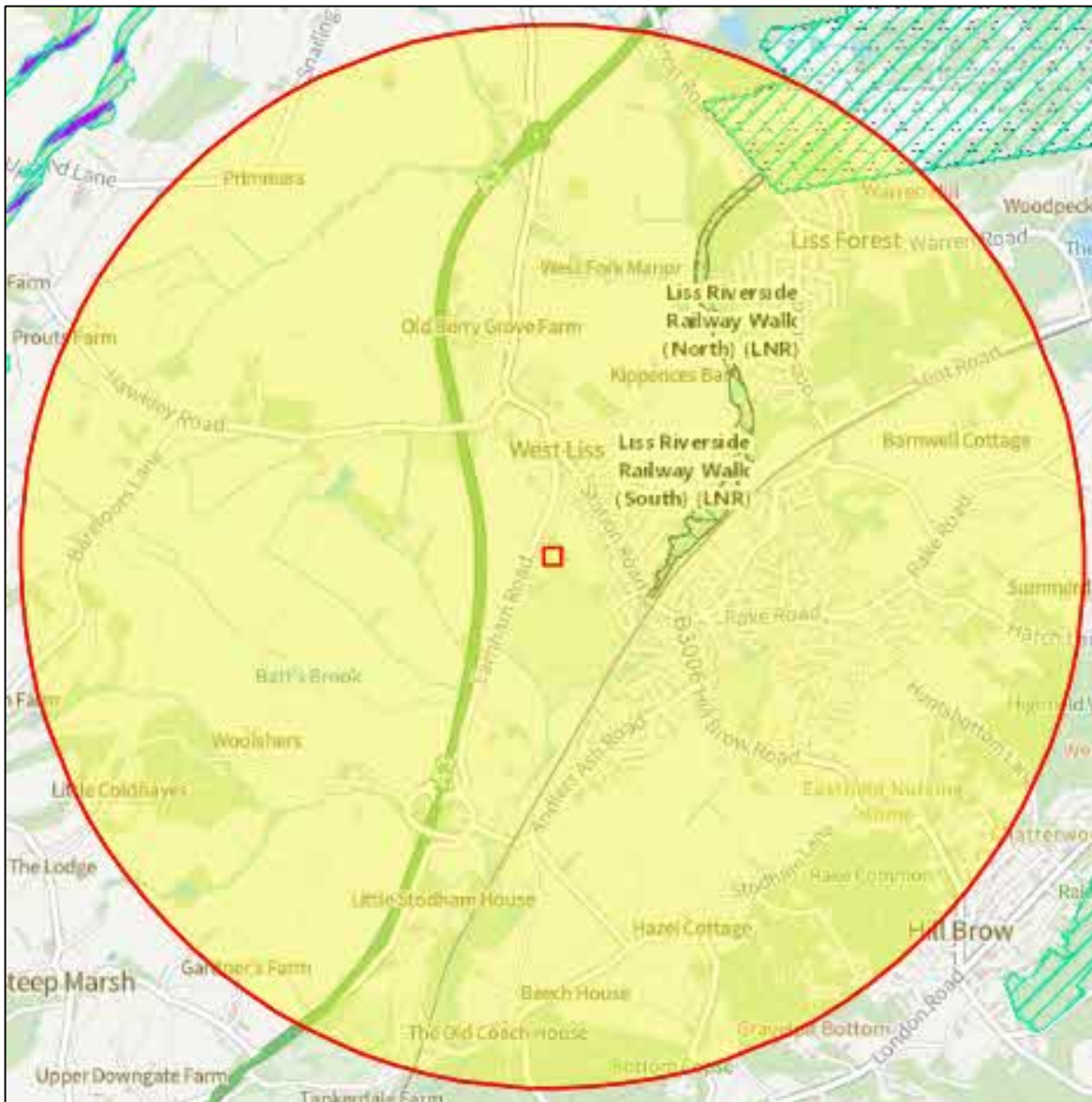
<sup>6</sup> English Nature (2001). *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.



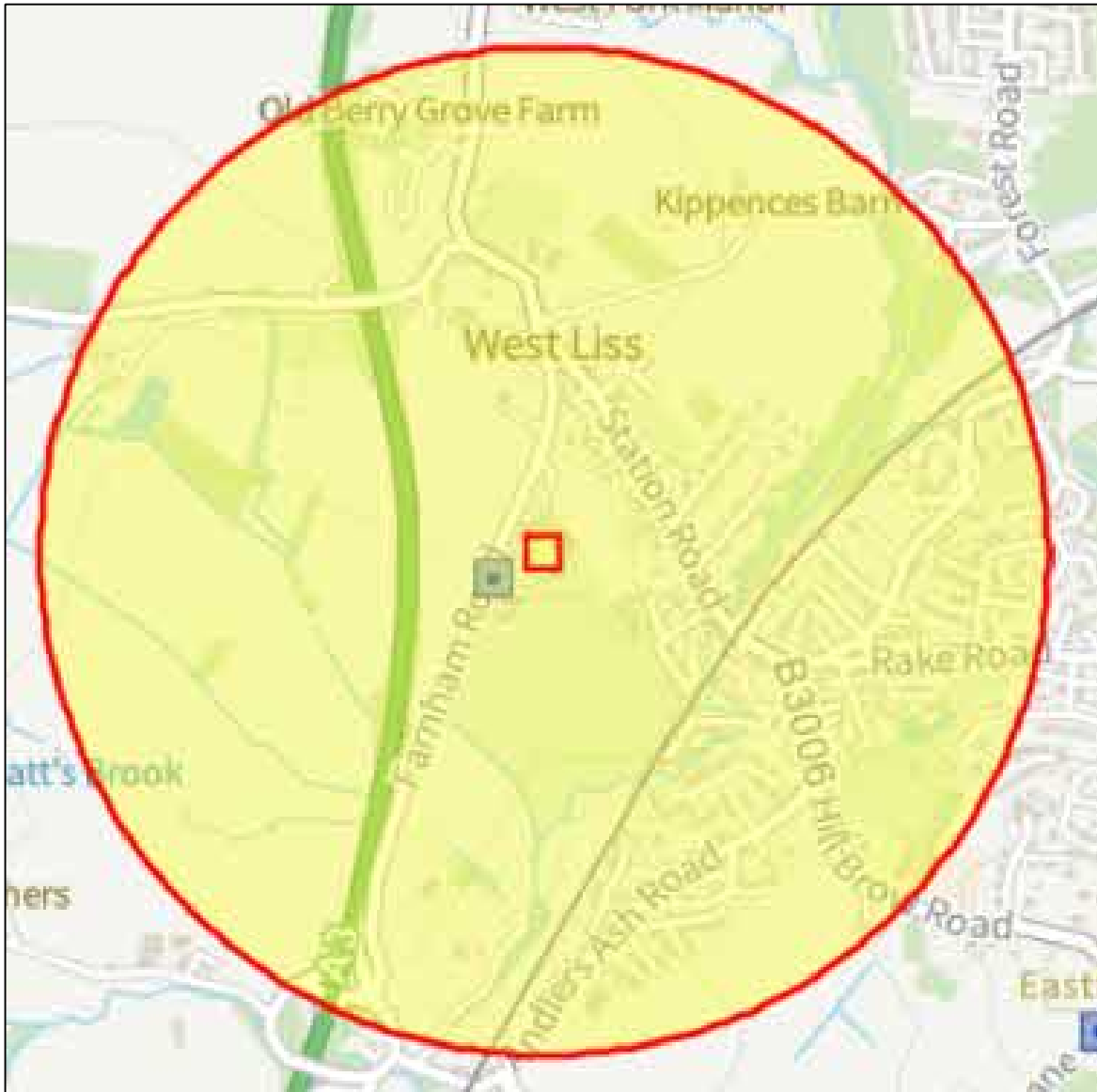
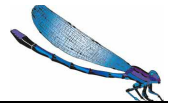
There are several patches of deciduous woodland (priority habitat) within 2km of the site. The nearest is approximately 1km north-west of the site (see Figure 5).

**Table 1.** Designated sites

Site name	Designation	Features listed on citation	Proximity
<b>Statutory designated sites</b>			
Wealden Heaths Phase II	SPA	The SPA comprises several distinct areas of wet and dry heathland, valley bogs, broad-leaved and coniferous woodland, permanent grassland and open water. The Wealden Heaths SPAs form part of a complex of heathlands in southern England that support breeding bird populations of European importance.	1.6km north-east
Woolmer Forest	SSSI	Woolmer Forest SSSI contains the largest and most diverse area of lowland heathland habitats in Hampshire (outside the New Forest) and is considered the most important area of heathland in the Weald of southern England. It is the only site in Britain known to support all twelve native species of reptiles and amphibians and supports a nationally important heathland flora, with associated birds and invertebrate fauna.	1.6km north-east
Liss Riverside Railway Walk (North)	LNR	A LNR, the alder, willow habitat rich wood is transected by a hardened path.	1km north-east
Liss Riverside Railway Walk (South)	LNR	A LNR, the alder, willow habitat rich wood is transected by a hardened path.	0.4km east

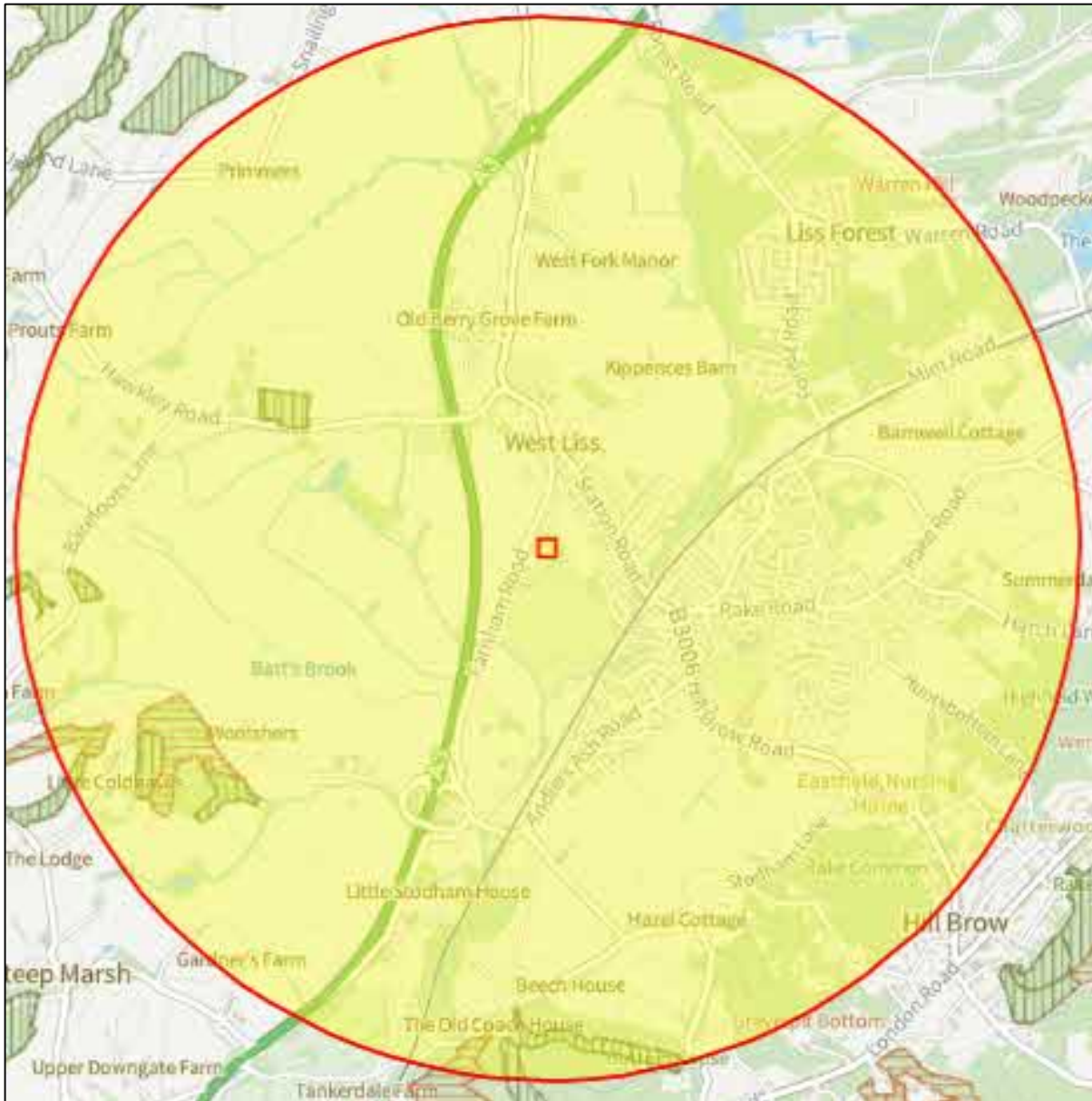
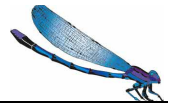


**Figure 3.** Designated sites within a radius of 2km of the application site. Image produced courtesy of Magic maps (<http://www.magic.gov.uk/>, contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0).



**Figure 4.** Granted EPS licences within 1km of the application site. Image produced courtesy of Magic maps (<http://www.magic.gov.uk/>, contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0).



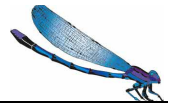


**Figure 5.** Habitats of importance for nature conservation. Image produced courtesy of Magic maps (<http://www.magic.gov.uk/>, contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0).

### 3.2 Habitats

The area on site where the golf driving range is to be extended comprised artificial grass and closely-mown modified grassland with a sward height of approximately 5cm, consisting predominantly of perennial ryegrass with some daisy *Bellis perennis* and white clover *Trifolium repens* (Photograph 1).

In the wider area there were tree-lines to the north and west. Species present included pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and elder *Sambucus nigra*.



**Photograph 1.** Area of artificial grass and modified grassland where golf driving range is to be extended.

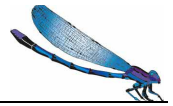
### 3.3 Badgers

No signs of any badger activity were seen during the survey assessment, though there are habitats of value for this species within the site and surrounding landscape. It is likely that if any setts were situated within 30m of the site boundary, then evidence of badger activity would have been observed.

### 3.4 Bats

There are no buildings or trees within the site. However, the new driving range will abut on to an existing driving range adjacent to the site (Photograph 2). This comprises a three-sided wooden panelled building with a sloped felt roof. The building is in good repair with no gaps or cracks in the panelling and no evidence of bats. It is therefore considered that the building has negligible bat roost suitability.

Lines of trees to the north and west of the site are considered to be suitable for foraging and commuting by a variety of the more common species of bat such as the pipistrelle species. Woodland and hedgerows within the wider landscape are considered to be the features of greatest value to foraging/commuting bats within the context of the site. Overall, the site is considered to have low value for foraging and commuting bats.



**Photograph 2.** Existing driving range adjacent to the site.

### *3.5 Breeding Birds*

There is no habitat suitable for breeding birds within the site. Lines of trees to the north and west of the site have the potential to support a variety of common nesting birds. These areas will not be impacted by the development.

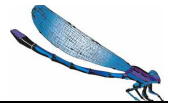
### *3.6 Dormice*

The site contains no woodland, scrub or hedgerows suitable for dormice and the species is highly unlikely to be present.

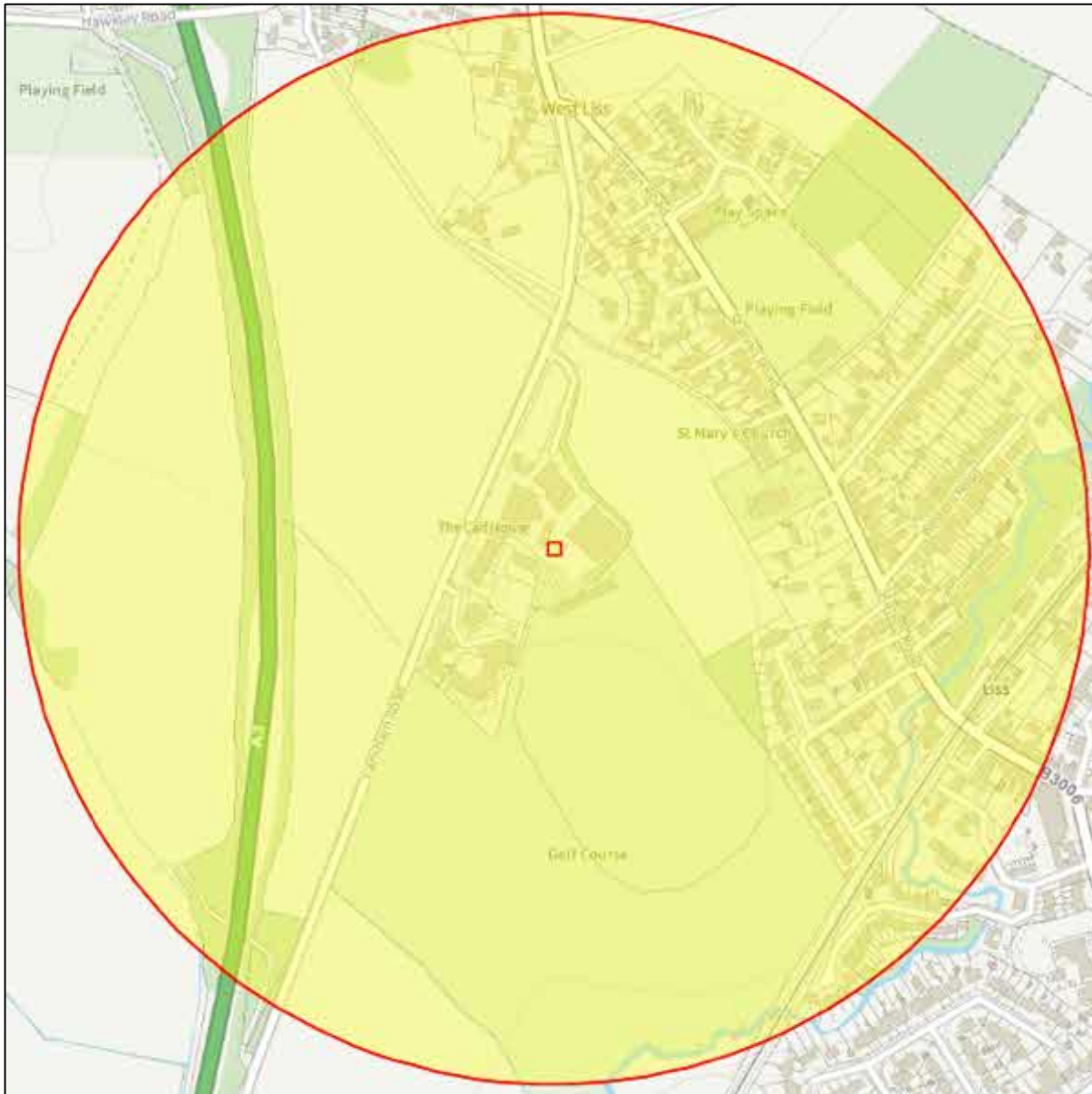
### *3.7 Great Crested Newts and other Amphibians*

There are no ponds within the site. Aerial photography and Ordnance Survey maps show one ditch within 500m of the site (Figure 7). This consisted of running water and was determined to be unsuitable for great crested newts. Additionally, the site consists of artificial grass and closely mown modified grassland which offers little foraging resources or shelter for great crested newts. No further surveys are recommended with respect to great crested newts as it is considered unlikely that this species would be found on the site at any





time.



**Figure 6.** Ponds within 500m of the site. Image produced courtesy of Magic maps (<http://www.magic.gov.uk/>, contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0).

### 3.8 Reptiles

The site does not contain any suitable habitat for reptiles and comprises artificial grass and closely-mown modified grassland.

### 3.9 Invasive Non-native Species

No evidence of invasive non-native species was found during the walkover survey.



### *3.10 Other Notable Species*

There was no habitats suitable for other protected or notable species identified within the site.

### *3.11 Survey Limitations*

An initial site assessment such as this is only able to act like a 'snapshot' to record any flora or fauna that is present at the time of the survey. It is therefore possible that some species may not have been present during the survey but may be evident at other times of the year. For this reason, habitats are assessed for their potential to support some species, even where no direct evidence (such as droppings) has been found.

## **4 IMPACT APPRAISAL**

### *4.1 Designated Sites*

The site is outside the zone of influence of all designated sites and, based on this and the small scale of the development, there are no identified mechanisms of impact on designated sites as a result of the proposed development. Therefore, in relation to designated sites, the proposed development is considered to pose a 'negligible' impact risk.

### *4.2 Habitats*

The habitats which will be affected by the proposals are of low ecological value and of importance at the site level only. The proposed development will result in the partial loss of modified grassland. Ecological enhancement opportunities for native tree and shrubs within the scheme are discussed in section 5 below.

### *4.3 Bats*

As the site may be used by foraging and commuting bats, it is important that the potential for disturbance from artificial lights is considered. The proposed development is likely to require an 'ecologically sensitive lighting scheme' in accordance with guidance produced by the Bat Conservation Trust (summarised in Appendix 3).

## **5 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT**

The proposed development represents an opportunity for habitat enhancement to benefit insects, birds, and bats. Any planting scheme should include native shrub species and flowering species known to encourage insect diversity. Such enhancement measures are in line with the recommendations of the NPPF and as such would be considered favourably when determining the planning application.

Bird boxes and bat boxes should be implemented within the scheme to provide additional nesting and roosting



opportunities.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development will result in the partial loss of modified grassland. Impacts on habitats are not considered to extend beyond the site level.

The proposed development should include an 'ecologically sensitive lighting scheme' in accordance with guidance produced by the Bat Conservation Trust.

It is important that no habitat clearance or other site preparation work should be undertaken until planning permission has been granted and all relevant protections for habitats of importance and protected species have been detailed and implemented. Please be advised that any work to remove or modify habitats outside of typical management may undermine a future planning application.

The enhancement opportunities identified in section 5 of this document will result in new opportunities for nesting birds and roosting bats, and likely beneficial effects for biodiversity at the site should they all be implemented in full.

**It is important that no habitat clearance or other site preparation work should be undertaken until planning permission has been granted and all relevant protections for habitats of importance and protected species have been detailed and implemented. Please be advised that any work to remove or modify habitats outside of typical management may undermine a future planning application.**

Should you need any further advice on the information provided above, please do not hesitate to contact The Ecology Co-op [REDACTED]



## APPENDIX 1 – Wildlife Legislation and National Planning Policy

### Introduction

The following text is intended for general guidance only and does not constitute comprehensive professional legal advice. It provides a summary of the current legal protection afforded to wildlife in general and certain species. It includes current national planning policy relevant to nature conservation.

### The ‘Birds Directive’, ‘Habitats Directive’ and ‘Natura 2000 Sites’

The Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (“the Birds Directive”) sets a framework for the protection of wild birds. Under the Directive, several provisions are made including the designation and protection of ‘Special Protection Areas’ (SPAs) – areas which support important bird populations, and the legal protection of rare or vulnerable species.

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the “Habitats Directive”) directs member states of the EU to take measures to maintain the favourable conservation status of important habitats and species. This requires the designation of a series of sites which contain important populations of species listed on Annex II of the Directive (for example Bechstein’s bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, Barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus* and white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*). Together with ‘Special Areas of Conservation’ (SACs), SPAs form a network across Europe of protected areas known as the ‘Natura 2000 sites’.

Annex IV lists species in need of more strict protection, these are known as “European Protected Species (EPS)”. All bat species, common dormice *Muscardinus avellana*, otter *Lutra lutra* and great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* are examples of EPS that are regularly encountered during development projects.

### The ‘Habitats Regulations’

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended (the “Habitats Regulations”) is the principle means of transposing the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, and updates the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (“the 1994 regulations”) in England and Wales.

‘Natura 2000’ sites, now known as National Site Network sites under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, receive the highest level of protection under the Regulations which requires that any activity within the zone of influence of these sites would be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) by the competent authority (e.g. planning authority), leading to an Appropriate Assessment (AA) in cases where ‘likely significant effects’ to the conservation objectives are identified.

For European Protected Species, Regulation 41 makes it a criminal offence to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal;
- deliberately disturb wild animals of such species;
- deliberately take or destroy their eggs (where relevant);
- damage or destroy a *breeding or resting place* of such an animal;
- possess, control, sell or exchange any live or dead animal or plant, of such species;
- deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy a wild plant of such species.



The Habitats Directive and Habitats Regulations provide for the derogation from these prohibitions for specific reasons provided certain conditions are met. An EPS licensing regime allows operations that would otherwise be unlawful acts to be carried out lawfully. Natural England is the licensing Authority and, in order to grant a license, ensures that three statutory conditions (sometimes referred to as the ‘three derogation tests’) are met:

a licence can be granted for the purposes of “preserving public health or safety or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment” (Regulation 53 (2) (e);

a licence can be granted if “there are no satisfactory alternatives” to the proposed action;

a licence shall not be granted unless the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

### **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.**

This remains one of the most important pieces of wildlife legislation in the UK. There are various schedules to the Act protecting birds (Schedule 1), other animals including insects (Schedule 5), plants (Schedule 8), and control of invasive non-native species (Schedule 9).

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, all wild birds (with the exception of those listed on Schedule 2), their eggs and nests are protected by law and it is an offence to:

take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built

take or destroy the egg of any wild bird

disturb any bird listed on Schedule 1, while it is nest building, or at a nest with eggs or young, or disturb the dependant young of any such bird.

Schedule 5 lists all non-avian animals receiving protection to a varied degree. At its strongest, the Act makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturb animals while occupying such places. Examples of species with *full protection* include all EPS, common reptile species, water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* and Roman snail *Helix pomatia*. Other species are protected from sale, barter or exchange only, such as white letter hairstreak *Satyrrium w-album*.

The Act makes it an offence to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any plant or seed, and sell or possess any plant listed on Schedule 8. It is also an offence to intentionally uproot any wild plant not listed on Schedule 8 unless authorised [by the land owner]. Species on Schedules 5 and 8 are reviewed every 5 years when species can be added or removed.

Measures for the prevention of spreading non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife is included in the Act, which prohibits the release of animals or planting of plants into the wild of species listed on Schedule 9 (for example, Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandifera*, New Zealand Pygmyweed *Crassula helmsii*).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) also prohibits certain inhumane methods of traps and devices for the capture or killing of wild animals and certain additional methods such as fixed trap, poisoning with gas or smoke, or spot-lighting with vehicles for killing species listed on Schedule 6 of the Act (this includes all bat species, badger, otter, polecat, dormice, hedgehog and red squirrel).

### **Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)**



The NERC Act (2006) created the statutory nature conservation body Natural England, and places a statutory duty on all public bodies, including planning authorities, under Section 40, to take, or promote the taking by others, steps to further the conservation of *habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity* in England (commonly referred to as the 'Biodiversity Duty'). This duty extends to all public bodies the biodiversity duty of Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, which placed a duty only on Government and Ministers. Section 41 of the NERC Act lists the habitats and species of principle importance. This includes a wide range of species from mosses, vascular plants, invertebrates through to mammals and birds. It originates from the priority species listed under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) with some omissions and additions.

### **Environment Act (2021)**

The Environment Act sets a target of halting the decline in species through the inclusion of a legally binding 2030 species abundance target. Aiming to restore natural habitats and enhance biodiversity, the Act requires new developments to improve or create habitats for nature (through mechanisms such as mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain), and tackle deforestation. Going forwards, UK businesses will need to look closely at their supply chains as amongst other measures they will be prohibited from using commodities associated with wide-scale deforestation. Woodland protection measures are also strengthened through the Act.

The Act enables the reform of the Habitats Regulations and further improves protection for nature through the establishment of Local Nature Recovery Strategies that support national Nature Recovery Networks. In addition, the Act provides for the production of Protected Site Strategies and Species Conservation Strategies, aimed at supporting the design and delivery of strategic approaches to deliver better outcomes for nature.

### **Protection of Badgers Act (1992)**

The badger *Meles meles* is afforded specific legal protection in Britain under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992), and Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (see above).

Under this legislation, it is a criminal offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure, take, possess, or cruelly ill-treat, a badger, or to attempt to do so;
- interfere with a sett, by damaging or destroying it;
- to obstruct access to, or any entrance of, a badger sett; or
- to disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett.

A licence may be obtained from Natural England to permit certain prohibited actions for a number of defined reasons including interference of a sett for the purpose of development, provided that a certain number of conditions are met. Note that licenses are not normally granted for works affecting badgers between the end of November and the start of July.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023)<sup>7</sup> sets out the Government's view on how planners should balance nature conservation with development and helps ensure that Government meets its biodiversity commitments with regard to the operation of the planning system.

---

<sup>7</sup> HM Government (2023). National Planning Policy Framework. Department for Communities and Local Government. Available online at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005759/NPPF\\_July\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf)





Paragraph 179b, which states that council policies should “*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.*” The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005, 2005)<sup>8</sup>. In accordance with the NPPF, it is important that developments should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- minimising impacts on existing biodiversity and habitats;
- providing net gains in biodiversity and habitats, wherever possible;
- establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

## **UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework**

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP), first published in 1994, was the UK’s response to the commitments of the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) until 2010, when the UK BAP was replaced by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. This framework covers the period 2011 to 2020 and forms the UK government’s response to the new strategic plan of the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) published in 2010. This promotes a focus on individual countries delivering target for protection for biodiversity through their own strategies.

The most recent biodiversity strategy for England, 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' was published by Defra (2011), and a progress update was provided in July 2013 (Defra 2013).

'Biodiversity 2020' builds on the Natural Environment White Paper for England – 'The Natural Choice', published on 7 June 2011, and sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade.

Biodiversity 2020 deliberately avoids setting specific targets and actions for local areas and species because the Government believes that local people and organisations are best placed to decide how to implement the strategy in the most appropriate way for their local area or situation.

## **Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC)**

In 1996, the UK’s leading non-governmental bird conservation organisations listed the conservation status of all bird species in the UK against a series of criteria relating to their population size, trends and relative importance to global conservation. The lists, known as the ‘Red’, ‘Amber’ and ‘Green’ lists (in order of decreasing concern) are used to inform key conservation policy and decisions. The lists are reviewed every five years and are a useful reference for determining the current importance of a particular site for birds. The most recent review was undertaken in 2021 (Stanbury et al, 2021), which provides an up to date assessment of the conservation status of birds in the UK.

## **References**

Protection of Badgers Act (1992). HMSO London. Available at:  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/51/contents>

---

<sup>8</sup> HM Government (2005) ODPM Circular 06/05 Government Circular: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System*. Available online at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7692/147570.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7692/147570.pdf).



Circular 06/2005 (2005). Government Circular: Biodiversity and geological conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7692/147570.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7692/147570.pdf)

Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (“the Birds Directive”). Available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1373>

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the “Habitats Directive”). Available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1374>

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations”). Available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1379>

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111176573>

Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000). HMSO London. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>

Defra (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services).

Defra (2013) Progress Update. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-simple-guide-and-progress-update-july-2013](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-simple-guide-and-progress-update-july-2013).

Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, N., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win I. (2021). Birds of Conservation Concern 5: the status of bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. *British Birds* 114, pp 723-747.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). HMSO London. Available at: [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/pdfs/ukpga\\_20060016\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/pdfs/ukpga_20060016_en.pdf)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government. Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005759/NPPF\\_July\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf)

Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (1981). HMSO London. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents>





## APPENDIX 2 – South Downs Local Plan - Adopted 2 July 2019 (2014-33)

Policy number/title	Policy summary
SD9 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>Development proposals will be permitted where they conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, giving particular regard to ecological networks and areas with high potential for priority habitat restoration or creation. Prior to determination, up-to-date ecological information should be provided which demonstrates that development proposals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a) Retain, protect and enhance features of biodiversity and geological interest (including supporting habitat and commuting routes through the site and taking due account of any use by migratory species) and ensure appropriate and long-term management of those features;</li> <li>2. b) Identify and incorporate opportunities for net gains in biodiversity;</li> <li>3. c) Contribute to the restoration and enhancement of existing habitats, the creation of wildlife habitats and the creation of linkages between sites to create and enhance local and regional ecological networks;</li> <li>4. d) Protect and support recovery of rare, notable and priority species;</li> <li>5. e) Seek to eradicate or control any invasive non-native species present on site;</li> <li>6. f) Contribute to the protection, management and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity, for example by supporting the delivery of GI and Biodiversity Action Plan targets and enhance Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA); and</li> <li>7. g) Comply with the mitigation hierarchy as set out in national policy.</li> </ol>



## **APPENDIX 3 – Reducing Impacts of Artificial Light**

Bright external lighting can have a detrimental impact upon foraging and commuting bat flight paths, but more importantly can also cause bats to remain in their roosts for longer. Artificial lighting can also cause significant impacts to other nocturnal species, most notably moths and other nocturnal insects. It can also result in disruption of the circadian rhythms of birds, reducing their fitness.

Guidelines issued by the Bat Conservation Trust<sup>9</sup> should be referred to when designing the lighting scheme. Note that lighting designs in very sensitive areas should be created with consultation from an ecologist and using up-to-date bat activity data where possible. The guidance contains techniques that can be used on all sites, whether a small domestic project or larger mixed-use, commercial or infrastructure development. This includes the following measures:

### **Avoid lighting key habitats and features altogether.**

There is no legal duty requiring any place to be lit. British Standards and other policy documents allow for deviation from their own guidance where there are significant ecological/environmental reasons for doing so. It is acknowledged that in certain situations lighting is critical in maintaining safety, such as some industrial sites with 24-hour operation; however, in the public realm, while lighting can increase the perception of safety and security, measurable benefits can be subjective. Consequently, lighting design should be flexible and be able to fully consider the presence of protected species.

### **Apply mitigation methods to reduce lighting to agreed limits in other sensitive locations – lighting design considerations.**

Where bat habitats and features are considered to be of lower importance or sensitivity to illumination, the need to provide lighting may outweigh the needs of bats. Consequently, a balance between a reduced lighting level appropriate to the ecological importance of each feature and species, and the lighting objectives for that area will need to be achieved. The following are techniques which have been successfully used on projects and are often used in combination for best results:

- dark buffers, illuminance limits and zonation;

- sensitive site configuration, whereby the location, orientation and height of newly built structures and hard standing can have a considerable impact on light spill;

- consideration of the design of the light and fittings, whereby the spread of light is minimised ensuring that only the task area is lit. Flat cut-off lanterns or accessories should be used to shield or direct light to where it is required. Consideration should be given to the height of lighting columns. It should be noted that a lower mounting height is not always better. A lower mounting height can create more light-spill or require more columns. Column height should be carefully considered to balance task and mitigation measures. Consider no lighting solutions where possible such as white lining, good signage, and LED cats eyes. For example, light only high-risk stretches of roads, such as crossings and junctions, allowing headlights to provide any necessary illumination at other times;

- screening, whereby light spill can be successfully screened through soft landscaping and the installation of walls, fences and bunding;

---

<sup>9</sup> Bat Conservation Trust and Institute for Lighting Professionals (2023) Guidance note 8. Bats and Artificial Lighting. <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>



glazing treatments, whereby glazing should be restricted or redesigned wherever the ecologist and lighting professional determine there is a likely significant effect upon key bat habitat and features;

creation of alternative valuable bat habitat on site, whereby additional or alternative bat flightpaths, commuting habitat or foraging habitat could result in appropriate compensation for any such habitat being lost to the development;

dimming and part-night lighting. Depending on the pattern of bat activity across the key features identified on site it may be appropriate for an element of on-site lighting to be controlled either diurnally, seasonally or according to human activity. A control management system can be used to dim (typically to 25% or less) or turn off groups of lights when not in use.

### **Demonstrate compliance with illuminance limits and buffers.**

*Design and pre-planning phase;* it may be necessary to demonstrate that the proposed lighting will comply with any agreed light-limitation or screening measures set as a result of your ecologist's recommendations and evaluation. This is especially likely to be requested if planning permission is required.

*Baseline and post-completion light monitoring surveys;* baseline, pre-development lighting surveys may be useful where existing on or off-site lighting is suspected to be acting on key habitats and features and so may prevent the agreed or modelled illuminance limits being achieved.

*Post-construction/operational phase compliance-checking;* as a condition of planning, post-completion lighting surveys by a suitably qualified person should be undertaken and a report produced for the local planning authority to confirm compliance. Any form of non-compliance must be clearly reported, and remedial measures outlined. Ongoing monitoring may be necessary, especially for systems with automated lighting/dimming or physical screening solutions.

### **Lighting Fixture Specifications**

The Bat Conservation Trust recommends the following specifications for lighting on developments to prevent disturbance:

- Lighting spectra: peak wavelength >550nm
- Colour temperature: <2700K (warm)
- Reduction in light intensity
- Minimal UV emitted
- Upward light ratio of 0% and good optical control

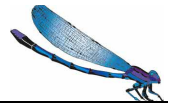
### **Further reading:**

Buglife (2011) A review of the impact of artificial light on invertebrates.

Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (2009) Artificial light in the environment. HMSO, London. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/artificial-light-in-the-environment>

Rich, C., Longcore, T., Eds. (2005) Ecological Consequences of Artificial Night Lighting. Island Press. ISBN 9781559631297.

CPRE (2014) Shedding Light: A survey of local authority approaches to lighting in England. Available at: <http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/dark-skies/item/3608-shedding-light>



Planning Practice Guidance guidance (2014) When is light pollution relevant to planning? Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/light-pollution>

Institution of Lighting Professionals (2021) Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2011. Available at: <https://www.theilp.org.uk/resources/free-resources/>

Voigt, C.C., Azam, C., Dekker, J., Ferguson, J., Fritze, M., Gazaryan, S., Hölker, F., Jones, G., Leader, N., Lewanzik, D. and Limpens, H., 2018. *Guidelines for consideration of bats in lighting projects*. Unep/Eurobats. Available at: [https://cdn.bats.org.uk/uploads/pdf/Resources/EUROBATSGuidelines8\\_lightpollution.pdf?v=1542109376](https://cdn.bats.org.uk/uploads/pdf/Resources/EUROBATSGuidelines8_lightpollution.pdf?v=1542109376)

End.

---