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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Survey site:

Land at Brookhouse Lane, Ham Green, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 5PR

Client:

Mr Joe Alekna

Survey date:

20th March 2024

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Redditch Borough Council. The proposal is described as:

The change in use of land from agriculture to an enclosed dog park with two small gravel car parks.

Survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

| The site survey was undertaken by Jeremy Grout BSc (Hons), Consultant Ecologist | | | | | |
|---|------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|------|
| Date of survey | Temperature (°C) | Humidity (%) | Cloud Cover (%) | Wind (mph) | Rain |
| 20/03/2024 | 14 | 82 | 100 | 3.5 | None |

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| Ecological Survey Factor | Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice. |
| Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations | |
| Habitats and plants (see habitat map in appendix 1, location plan in appendix 2, photos in appendix 3 and proposal plan in appendix 4). | |
| <p><i>Summary of Survey Findings</i></p> <p><i>(UKHab codes used)</i></p> | <p>Site Context</p> <p>The site is located at National Grid Reference SP 0141 6396 and has an area of approximately 1.12ha that consists entirely young/semi-mature woodland. The proposals include a change in the use of land from agricultural use to an enclosed dog park with two small gravel car parks.</p> <p>The site itself is surrounded to the north by open agricultural land with pockets of woodland and minor roads beyond. To the east the site is bordered by a minor road with open agricultural land and pockets of woodland beyond. To the south the site is bordered by Swans brook with open agricultural land, scattered dwellings and minor roads beyond. While to the west the site is bordered by Deciduous woodland and open agricultural land, with further open agricultural land and pockets of woodland beyond.</p> <p>A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the</p> |

purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report. No protected or non-native invasive plant species (as listed under Schedules 8 or 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) were identified on the site. However, due to the time of year in which the survey was undertaken it is possible that such species would not be visible.

Other Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

The site comprises entirely young/semi-mature other lowland mixed deciduous woodland and has been assigned as this habitat for containing a mixture of both broad leaved and coniferous species. Species within the woodland itself include English Oak, Silver Birch, Ash, Cherry, Scott's Pine and Common Lime. Patches of scattered scrub were present Elder, Hawthorn and Bramble. The woodland ground flora comprised a grassland, which at the time of the survey was grazed by sheep. Species present within the grassland include Red Fescue and Yorkshire Fog, while herbaceous species include Common Nettle, Cow Parsley, Hogweed, Curled Dock, Lesser Celandine, Cut-leaved Cranesbill, Lords and Laddies, Creeping Buttercup, Wild Garlic, Spear Thistle and Cleavers.

The Other Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland was subject to a Condition Assessment, results detailed below:

- A. One age-classes present (1)
- B. Evidence of significant browsing pressure (2)
- C. No invasive species present in woodland (3)
- D. Five or more native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel (3)
- E. >80% of the canopy trees and >80% of the understorey shrubs are native (3)
- F. >40% of the woodland has areas of temporary open space (1)
- G. One or two class only present within woodland (2)

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| | <p>H. Tree mortality 10% or less, no pest or diseases and no crown dieback (3)</p> <p>I. No recognisable woodland NVC plant community at ground layer present (1)</p> <p>J. One or less storey across all survey plots (1)</p> <p>K. No veteran trees present in woodland (1)</p> <p>L. Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities (1)</p> <p>M. 1 hectare or more of nutrient enrichment and or 20% or more of woodland area has damaged ground (1)</p> <p>The lowland mixed deciduous woodland has been classified as POOR condition based on the statutory metric condition assessment included above.</p> <p><u>Hedgerow</u></p> <p>A single hedgerow with trees is present along part of the eastern boundary of the site. Hedgerow is listed as a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). The hedgerow is unmanaged and is approximately 3m high and 1.5m wide. No gaps were present between the base of the hedgerow and the ground as well as no obvious canopy gaps throughout the hedgerow. The trees within the hedgerow were mature and showed no signs of ill health. The hedgerow was dominated by Hawthorn with Bramble seen trailing through. While the ground flora that was present include Common nettle, Cleavers and Bramble.</p> <p><u>Developed Land; Sealed Surface</u></p> |
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| | <p>A hardstanding gravel track runs through the woodland splitting the woodland into two paddocks (paddock 1 and paddock 2)</p> <p><u>Local habitats</u></p> <p>A review of MAGIC.gov.uk identified Deciduous woodland, Traditional Orchard, Lowland Meadow, Ancient Woodland and Woodpasture and Parkland all of which are priority habitats. The closest priority habitat to the site is deciduous woodland located only 20m west of the site.</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | <p>The proposals include the change of land use from agricultural to an enclosed dog park with the implementation of two small gravel car parks. As such, minimal impacts are anticipated on the woodland itself, albeit selective felling of small trees (trees under 300mm dbh) to create more space within the paddocks.</p> <p>Deciduous woodland is located within 20m of the site. Given the development proposals include changing the use of land from agricultural to a dog park, as well as the construction of two small gravel car parks, it is not considered that any indirect impacts would occur on the deciduous woodland.</p> |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | <p>The creation of a species-rich grassland in the new areas of open space within the woodland would more than offset the minimal loss of scattered scrub and small sized trees that currently provides low ecological value, providing new opportunities for a range of fauna.</p> <p>Retained trees should be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations" (BS 5837) (2012). Additionally, given the presence of a brook adjacent to the southern boundary of the site, best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction.</p> |

| Locality and Designated Sites | |
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| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | <p>A review of the MAGIC.gov.uk database revealed two statutory designated sites within the 2km search radius of the site. The closest statutory designated site being Trickses Hole SSSI located approximately 860m west of the site. This SSSI is designated for its semi-natural mesotrophic grassland containing a diverse range of both fauna and flora. The other site within the 2km search radius of the site is Redditch Woods and Walkwood coppice LNR located approximately 1.25km northeast of the site. This site is designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland.</p> <p>The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from Eco Record and Worcestershire Biological Records Centre (WBRC).</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | <p>Due to the distance of the statutory designated sites from the development site, no impacts are foreseen.</p> <p>The site lies just within the impact risk zone for Trickses Hole SSSI. However, the proposed development type does not fall under a high-risk impact for this designation.</p> |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | None required |
| Invasive / Non-native species | |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | No problematic invasive and non-native species recorded on site. |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | N/A |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | No further surveys but remain vigilant. |
| Invertebrates | |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | No habitat for protected or notable invertebrates is found on site. |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | None foreseen. |

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| <i>Recommendations</i> | <p>The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for invertebrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of species-rich grassland to increase foraging opportunities. • The retention of deadwood onsite would provide opportunities for saproxylic invertebrates. |
| Bats | |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | <p>The site comprises woodland and a hedgerow, which provides suitable foraging, navigational and roosting opportunities for bats. However, given the surrounding habitats within the wider landscape (areas of woodland to the northeast and northwest), it is considered that local bat populations would not be reliant on the habitats present within the site.</p> <p>All trees within the development site were subject to a Ground Level Tree Inspection (GTLA). No trees were identified as having the potential to support roosting bats.</p> <p>Within the 2km search radius of the site there are three bat European Protected Species License (EPSL). The closest granted licence is located approximately 1.41km southwest of the site relating to Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared and Natter’s bat allowing the destruction of a breeding site and resting place granted in 2010. The other EPSL licences relate to Natter’s bat and Common Pipistrelle. The above species are known in the local area. However, as previously mentioned, given the surrounding habitats it is not considered likely that this faunal group would be reliant on the habitats present within the site.</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | <p>The proposed development may include the use of lighting around the parking area, which may lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting of surrounding habitats without mitigation. This may disturb commuting bats.</p> |

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| | <p>The majority of trees within the woodland are to be retained and unimpacted as part of the development proposals, albeit the loss of some small trees (trees under 300mm dbh). Due to the retention of most trees onsite, it is considered that this would not impact the foraging and navigation opportunities for bats.</p> <p>The existing hedgerow is to be retained and unimpacted as part of the development proposals.</p> |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | <p>A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. Parameters can be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting-2</p> <p>If any trees with bat roosting potential are to be removed, a close-up endoscope inspection of any features that could be used by roosting bats will be undertaken on the trees to determine the suitability of the features and to establish presence or likely absence of roosting bats. This may require a qualified climbing team or a Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP) to access the features. There is no seasonal constraint to this type of survey. If bat roosts are confirmed in the tree or where features cannot be fully inspected or access to the tree is impeded, bat emergence or re-entry surveys may be required with the use of infra-red cameras as an aid.</p> <p>If bat roosts are confirmed an EPSL application to Natural England will be required. The EPSL application requires that surveys have been undertaken within the most recent active bat season and planning permission must have been granted and all relevant wildlife-related conditions have been discharged prior to submission.</p> |

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| | The installation of two new bat boxes at the site on a retained will provide additional roosting habitat for bats. Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light. |
| Birds | |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | Some evidence of nesting birds was identified within the trees in the woodland. No habitat for schedule 1 birds was observed. The hedgerow also provides suitable habitat for nesting birds. |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | <p>The development proposals seek to retain the majority of trees within the woodland, albeit the loss of small sized trees. In any case, the woodland will provide continual nesting opporunties for birds. The development site itself within the woodland consists modified grassland, which provides negligible habitat for nesting birds.</p> <p>The hedgerow is to be retained and unimpacted as part of the development proposals.</p> |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | <p>In the event that any vegetation removal takes place, this removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.</p> <p>Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged.</p> |

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| | <p>The installation of two bird boxes at the site will provide additional nesting habitat for birds. The bird boxes will be installed on existing trees. General purpose bird boxes should be positioned 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight.</p> <p>The addition of a species-rich grassland throughout the woodland would create new forging opporunties for birds.</p> |
| Reptiles | |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | <p>The development site itself within the woodland comprises modified grassland that is currently used to house livestock, as such it is not considered suitable for reptiles due to the lack of foraging opportunities. The area of scattered scrub within the woodland and hedgerow H1 provides some shelter/hibernation opporunties for reptiles.</p> <p>A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for protected reptiles within the 2km search radius of the site.</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | <p>Losses to the scattered scrub and small sized trees throughout the woodland is likely to be inconsequential to local reptile populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of reptiles, if present.</p> |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | <p>A precautionary working method will be implemented for reptiles during construction, including the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of any root systems will be undertaken outside of the reptile hibernation season (October to March) insofar as is possible. • Heras fencing will be erected around the working area to prevent encroachment towards habitats where reptiles could be present. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. <p>The provision of log piles as specified below in 'Amphibians', would provide new enhanced shelter/hibernation opportunities.</p> |
| <p>Amphibians</p> | |
| <p><i>Summary of Survey Findings</i></p> | <p>Great crested newts (GCN) exist in metapopulations and are known to utilise ponds and their connecting terrestrial habitat during their life cycle; great crested newts are typically found within terrestrial habitats up to 500m from breeding ponds (Langton et al. 2001).</p> <p>There are nine ponds located within 500m of the site. The closest pond is located 100m east of the site and is separated from the site by open agricultural land and a minor road. The next closest pond is located ~214m north of the site and is separated from the site by open agricultural land. The next closest ponds are located ~219m, ~277m, ~335m and ~364m south and southwest of the site all separated from the site by open agricultural land, a minor road and Swans Brook which is considered a significant dispersal barrier. The remaining ponds are located ~473m, ~484m and ~497m, all located north and east of the site separated by open agricultural land and a minor road.</p> |

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| | <p>As mentioned above, the woodland floor within the site consists modified grassland used for supporting livestock, which provides limited suitability to support amphibians. It is considered that the scrub and hedgerow provides some shelter/hibernation opportunities for amphibians.</p> <p>There are no great crested newt European Protected Species License (EPSL) within the 2km search radius of the site.</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | Losses to the scrub throughout the woodland is likely to be inconsequential to local amphibian populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of amphibians, if present. |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | <p>The measures detailed above under 'Reptiles' would also serve to mitigate potential impacts to Amphibians, with the addition of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist. <p>The site could be enhanced for amphibians post-development through creation of amphibian hibernacula using rubble and logs from site clearance. Information on how to construct a hibernaculum can be found here: https://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/hibernaculum</p> |
| Badger | |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | No evidence of badgers (e.g. latrines, foraging holes, hairs) was identified within the site or adjacent to the site (30m radius) during the survey. The woodland itself is considered to offer suitable habitat for badger. |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | No works will be undertaken within 30m of a badger sett. The selective felling of small trees and scattered scrub is required. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local badger populations owing to their low value |

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| | and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present. |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | <p>Due to the likely presence of badger within the local area, basic precautionary mitigation during works is recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to habitats which badgers could use. South and west boundaries. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified within 30m, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist. |
| Riparian animals | |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | Swans Brook is located adjacent to the southern boundary of the site where the bank then extends for a further 10m down to the water course. No signs of Otter or Water Vole were recorded onsite during the survey. |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | The proposals involve the change of land use from agricultural to an enclosed dog park. New gravel car parks are to be constructed into the eastern aspects of the paddocks. However, due to the presence of the brook, indirect effects could occur during construction. |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | <p>Given the close proximity of Swans Brook south of the site, a precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to the watercourse and any retained habitats that otters could use. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. |
| Hazel dormouse | |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | <p>While the site is situated within the Hazel dormouse distribution zone, it is not considered that the woodland provides opportunity for this species, due to the lack of a scrubby understorey.</p> <p>There are no dormouse European Protected Species License (EPSL) within the 2km search radius of the site.</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | The majority of the woodland is to be retained and unimpacted as part of the development proposals. No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development. |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | None. |
| Other e.g. hedgehog | |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | The woodland ground flora comprises modified grassland used for livestock and is not considered suitable for hedgehogs due to the lack of shelter and hibernation opportunities. However, the scrub and hedgerow provides suitable foraging and shelter opportunities for Hedgehog. |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | Some areas of scrub may be removed to facilitate the development proposals. Hedgerow H1 is to be retained and unimpacted as part of the development proposals. |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | <p>Due to the likely presence of hedgehog in the area, similar to the badgers, a precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.• If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. |
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Appendix 1: Survey/Habitat map



Appendix 2: Location map



Appendix 4: Photos



Image 1: looking west within paddock 1 of woodland.



Image 2: looking east from inside paddock 2 in woodland.

Mr Joe Alekna

Land at Brookhouse Lane, Ham Green, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 5PR



Image 3: looking east along hardstanding track within woodland.

Mr Joe Alekna

Land at Brookhouse Lane, Ham Green, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 5PR

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