Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report for pond creation

Manor Farm, Fifield Bavant, Salisbury SP5 5HT



black sheep
COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT

Prepared by Simon Smart BSc, MSc MCIEEM

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Executive Summary

There are no protected species, evidence of protected species or habitats for protected species on site. The project is to provide a wildlife pond, which will improve the biodiversity on site and provides Biodiversity Net Gain on site in line with National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and the Environment Act 2021. No further surveys are required. The pond is being funded by the Cranborne Chase AONB's Farming in Protected Landscapes and the landowner. The project is also supported by the Chalke Valley Farmer Cluster, a group of farmers working collaboratively to enhance the local landscape for wildlife.

1.0. Introduction

1.1. Survey - The key objectives of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are to identify; any likely ecological constraints associated with a project, identify any mitigation measures likely to be required, any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) and opportunities offered by a project to deliver ecological enhancement. Local Planning Authorities are required to take into account nature conservation issues, including species and habitats protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 when making planning decisions. Local Planning Authorities also aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity (National Policy Planning Framework 2021 (NPPF) and to have regard to conserving biodiversity, which includes restoring and enhancing a population or habitat under the Natural Environment & Communities Act (NERC) 2006.

1.2. Report - The aim of the report is to clearly set out the results of the survey, highlighting any effects of the proposed work on any protected species and/or habitats, on or adjacent to the site and provide mitigation and/or enhancement as appropriate.

1.3. Location of site - The site is on Manor Farm, Fifield Bavant (Fig. 1), grid reference SU 0101 2653.

1.4. Description of Site - The site is located on Manor Farmbetween Fifield Bavant and Fovant south of the A30. The pond is on an area of improved grassland surrounded by semi-improved grassland. The area associated with the pond creation is <0.02ha.

1.5 Description of Proposals - The planning application is for one wildlife pond. The type and scope of the survey is appropriate to the nature and extent of development and scale of impact.

Figure 1 Site of pond creation



2.0. Method

2.1. Desk Study - The Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was used to search for data on protected sites and priority habitat. The pond is 225m^2 therefore a data search from Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre was not requested. The Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record (HER) was used to search for non-statutory archaeology.

2.2. Field Survey - A Phase 1 Habitat Survey were carried out on 19th May 2023 assessing the site for species and/or habitats protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and The Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Surveys were carried out following all relevant guidelines (see Reference section), incl. categorising flora species in order of abundance under the DAFOR scale (JNCC, 2010). The weather on the survey was fine, still and clear.

2.2.1. Bats & Buildings - No buildings on site.

2.2.2. Bats & Trees – No trees in vicinity of pond which will be impacted by pond creation.

2.2.3. Other Protected Species – The survey assessed the site for signs of use by protected species that could be affected by the proposed development, eg, for nesting birds — nests, nesting material, etc., for badgers — badger holes, latrines, hair on wire fencing, snuffle holes, etc., for reptiles/amphibians — suitable habitat, presence in/under various materials, eg, in wood piles, etc., for dormice — nests, hedge type and connectivity, signs of feeding, etc.

2.4. Details of Surveyor – Simon Smart BSc, MSc, MCIEEM, Director and Principal Ecologist at Black Sheep Countryside Management with over 20 years' experience.

3.0 Ecological Assessment

The location where the pond will be created is in a valley bottom with deeper soils than the surrounding land and supports improved grassland which included Stinging nettle *Urtica dioica* (A), Cut-leaved geranium *Geranium dissectum* (F), Cock's-foot *Dactylus glomerata (F)*, Broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* (F), Rough Meadow-grass *Poa trivialis* (A).

The surrounding grassland (external to the pond creation) is on thinner soils and is semi-improved including Glaucous sedge *Carex flacca* (A), Rough Hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus* (A), Common vetch *Vicia sativa* (F), Germander Speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys* (F), Common Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata* (R), Ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata* (O), Common dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* (F), Goat willow *Salix caprea* (F), Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* (R), Dogrose *Rosa canina*(R), Rough meadow-

grass *Poa trivialis* (F), Black medick *Medicago lupulina* (O), Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* (R), Wood false brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum* (R).

3.1. Results from MAGIC – Knapp and Barnett's Downs SSSI (Ref 000864) is within 1km of the site to the east and Prescombe Down SSSI (ref 1000880) and SAC (UK0012553) is 2km to the west (Fig 3). There will be no adverse impacts on this protected site from the creation of the pond.

There is species-rich lowland calcareous grassland 570m to the south-west and Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland 340m west, both designated as County Wildlife Sites. To the east is an area of Deciduous Woodland, likely ASNW but not identified on the Inventory. There will be no adverse impacts on these habitats, indeed, it is expected that the pond will provide additional high value habitat for species associated with existing priority habitats.

4.0 Historic Assessment

A search of Scheduled Monuments on MAGIC identified the nearest Scheduled Monument (Barrow on Fifield Down 1003744) is over 1km away (Fig. 3). A search of the Historic Environment Record, hosted by Wiltshire County Council identified no archaeology on the location of the proposed pond location (see figure 4). There will be no adverse impact to the Scheduled Monument or non-statutory archaeology.

Figure 2 *Location of pond*



Figure 3 Priority Habitat and Statutory Designations

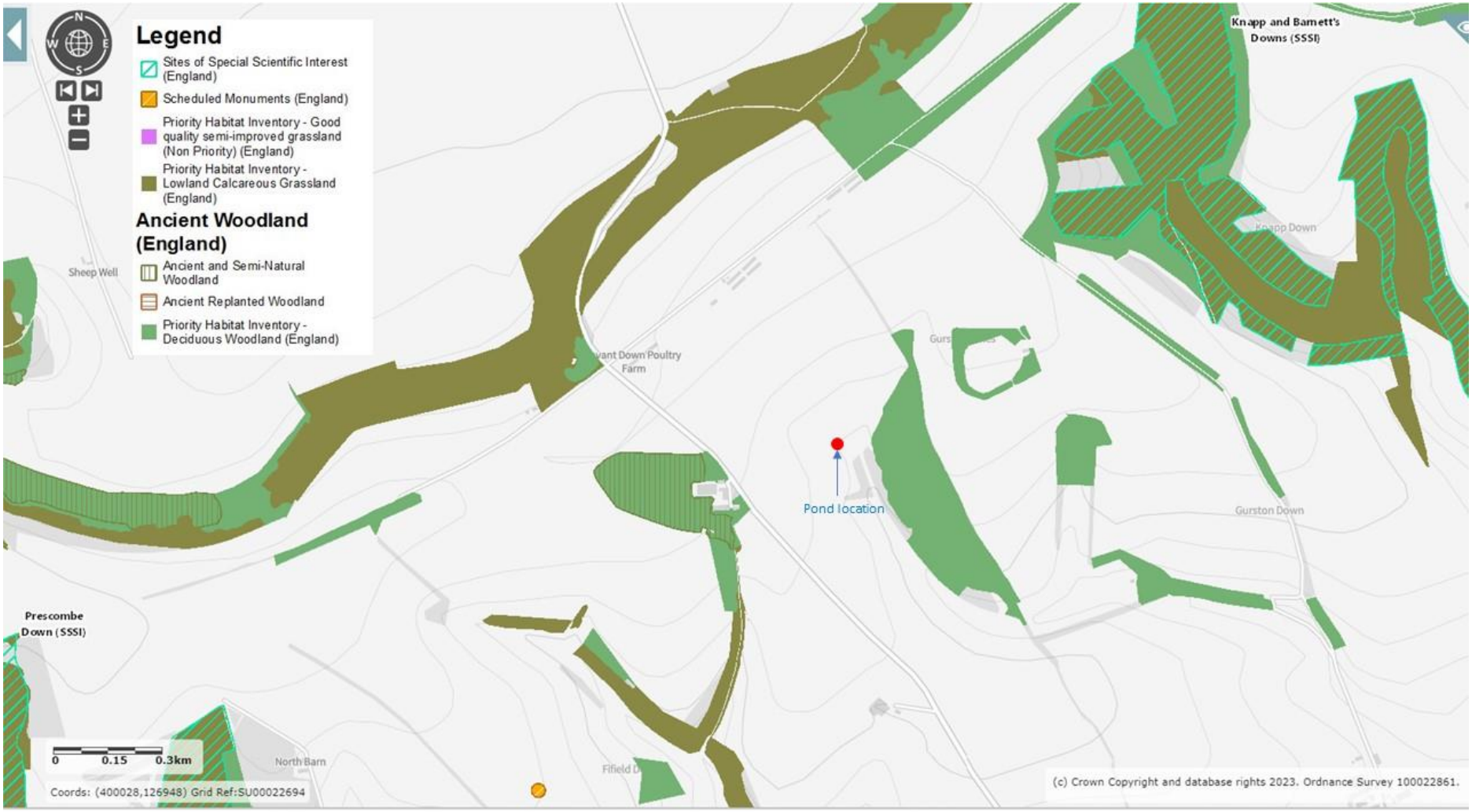
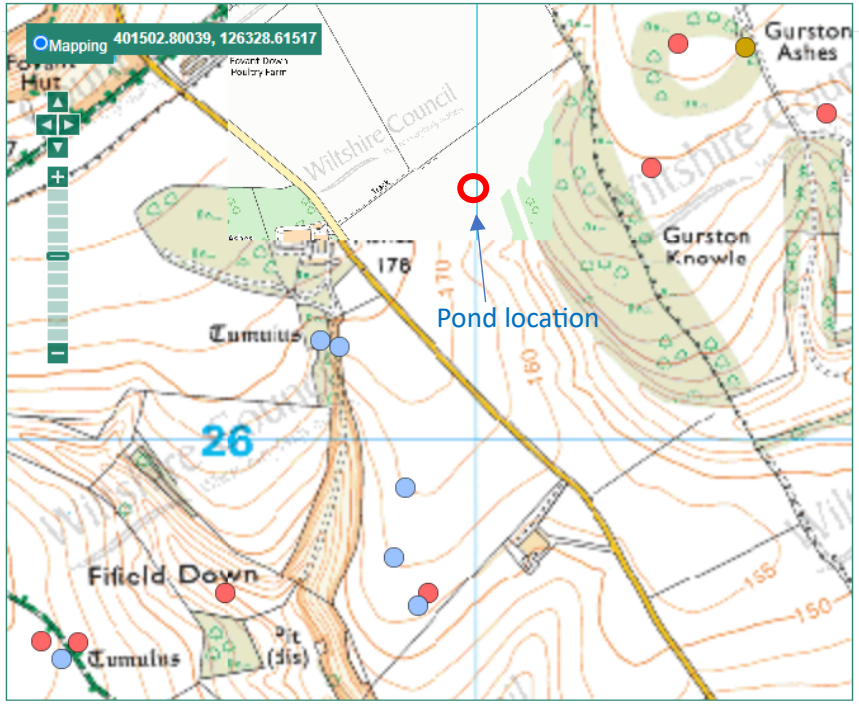


Figure 4 Non-Statutory Archaeology shown Wilts & Swindon HER



Building | Findspot | Monument | Other

14 results.

	SU02NW105	Neolithic Axe-Hammer, Fifield Down	A Neolithic axe-hammer with an hour-glass perforation.	View
	SU02NW150	Bronze Age Axe-Hammer, Fifield Bavant Down	A Bronze Age perforated axe-hammer.	View
	SU02NW201	Iron Age Farm Site, Fifield Down East	An enclosed Iron Age farm site was excavated in 1922.	View
	SU02NW301	Romano-British Finds, Fifield Down	Romano-British brooch, pottery and coins.	View
	SU02NW600	Round Barrow, Fifield Ashes	An undated circular mound which may have been a round barrow, which had been excavated in antiquity.	View
	SU02NW605	Bowl Barrow, Fifield Down	A Bronze Age bowl barrow excavated in 1922.	View
	SU02NW615	Undated Field System, Fifield Down	An undated field system.	View
	SU02NW616	Possible Iron Age Enclosure, Fifield Down	An undated rectangular enclosure.	View
	SU02NW626	Undated Bank, Fifield Ashes	A short undated bank.	View
	MWI65471	Outfarm Southwest of Knapp Down	Redeveloped 19th century outfarm.	View

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