stark ecology ltd

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

POORS GROUND, CHEVERELL WOOD, GREAT CHEVERELL, WILTSHIRE

BY

stark ecology ltd

JANUARY 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Stark Ecology Ltd was asked by Dolman Building Surveyors LLP to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of Cheverell Wood. The woodland is proposed for a temporary change of use from agricultural to Airsoft, to include the erection of structures. In the past the woodland has been used by the landowner for rough shooting (during the designated season) and between 1981 and 2001 it was used approximately 28 days per year for paintballing.

The area of Cheverell Wood that is used for Airsoft is c.22 acres, of 30 in total, and is located between OS Grid Reference ST971556 to the southwest and ST976559 to the northeast. Cheverell Wood is c.1.5km to the northwest of Great Cheverell and close to the village of Marston, surrounded by mixed farmland with good hedgerow and woodland connectivity.



Fig 1: Cheverell Wood is surrounded by mixed farmland with good hedgerow and woodland connectivity.

The preliminary ecological appraisal was carried out by Georgie Starkie BSc (Hons) MSc MRSB on 19th December 2023 when the weather was overcast (100% cloud) with rain and a light wind. The temperature was approximately 12°C.

METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database was consulted for details of protected habitats within 2km of the site. Details of European Protected Species licences granted by Natural England for work within 2km were also sought using the MAGIC website.

A data search for records of protected habitats and species within 2km of the site was requested from the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC).

The existing Woodland Management Plan for Cheverell Wood, prepared with the Forestry Commission in 2018, was reviewed.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The area of the woodland (c.22 acres) to be used for Airsoft was surveyed according to the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey guidelines set out by the Joint Nature Conservancy Committee (JNCC), in which the habitats present on site are classified. Any signs of protected or notable species were also recorded:

Bats: The habitats on site were assessed for their potential to provide commuting and foraging habitat for bats. The potential of the temporary structures within the woodland to support roosting bats was considered but individual trees were not assessed as no tree removal is proposed to allow the use of the site for Airsoft.

Badgers: Evidence of badgers was sought, in particular badger setts which can be recognised by their characteristic size and shape, with large spoil heaps outside entrances. Other signs such as latrines (small pits in which badgers deposit their faeces), pathways through vegetation, hairs adhering to vegetation or sett entrances and snuffle holes indicating foraging were also noted.

Hazel dormouse: The habitats on and surrounding the site were assessed for their suitability to support hazel dormouse.

Great crested newts: The habitats on and surrounding the site were assessed for their suitability to support great crested newts.

Reptiles: The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support reptile species.

Nesting birds: The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support nesting birds.

Other species: The potential for the site to be used by other species was assessed.

Limitations

Surveys provide a brief snapshot of the site at the time the work was carried out and while every step was taken to ensure that the results of the survey are accurate, features of ecological value can change and therefore this report is only valid for 12 months.

RESULTS

Desk Study

Habitats

There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 2km of Cheverell Wood and the woodland is not within any of the Bat Consultation Zones in Wiltshire.

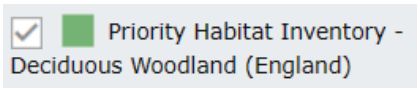
Cheverell Wood is itself a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) that is described as "woodland with a mixture of semi-natural and conifer plantation including very old sweet chestnut coppice stools". Within 2km of Cheverell Wood are two other LWS:

- Church Lane Copse, Great Cheverell is c.1.5k to the south and is described as "a small area of broadleaved woodland with springs adjacent to fishing lakes".
- North Close Wood is c.1.7km to the southwest and is described as an "area of woodland on a steep north facing slope dominated by mature sycamore."

The areas of Cheverell Wood that are not conifer plantation are identified as Broadleaved Woodland Priority Habitat.



Fig 2: The areas of Cheverell Wood that are not conifer plantation are identified as Priority Habitat.



Species

The data search results include records of nine bat species within 2km of Cheverell Wood:

- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* (one record from 1986);

- Lesser horseshoe *R. hipposideros* (including a maternity roost identified in 2019);
- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*;
- Natterer's *Myotis nattereri*;
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*;
- Brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* (including a maternity roost identified in 2016);
- Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (including a maternity roost identified in 2016);
- Soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus* (including a maternity roost identified in 2019); and
- Serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* (including a maternity roost identified in 2021).

The MAGIC website gives details of two European Protected Species licences granted by Natural England for work within 2km:

- In 2019, at a location c.1.2km to the northwest, a licence was granted for work resulting in the destruction of a resting place used by brown long-eared, serotine, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle.
- In 2017, at a location c.1.35km to the northwest, a licence was granted for work resulting in the destruction of a resting place used by common pipistrelle, whiskered *M. mystacinus* and Brandt's *M. brandtii*.

There are historic records of brown hare *Lepus europaeus* (1976) in Cheverell Wood and more recent records from around Marston (2015 and 2017).

There are large numbers of records for both badger *Meles meles* and hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* in the habitats surrounding Cheverell Wood.

Records of otter *Lutra lutra*, water vole *Arvicola amphibius* and beaver *Castor fiber* were also returned.

WSBRC do not hold any records of hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* within 2km of Cheverell Wood.

There is one historic record (1976) of great crested newt *Triturus cristata* within 2km of Cheverell Wood at a location that is c.650m to the northeast of the site.

There are historic records of slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix natrix,* common lizard *Lacerta vivipara* and adder *Vipera berus* which are more than 15 years old (many records are from the 1930s and 1940s).

Bird records include the following species which are associated with woodland:

- Lesser spotted woodpecker *Dryobates minor*;
- Mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*;
- Redwing *Turdus iliacus*;
- Wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*;
- Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*;
- Lesser redpoll *Acanthus cabaret*; and
- Red kite *Milvus milvus*.

Woodland Management Plan

The Woodland Management Plan produced for Cheverell Wood, with guidance from the Forestry Commission, has been in place since 2018 and has the following objectives:

- Selective thinning in order to enhance the health of trees and improve biodiversity.
- Thinning to focus on the retention of "minor" species to retain a diverse species assemblage.
- Widen rides to improve light and air flow.
- Create and manage open areas to improve biodiversity.
- Through thinning, create a mixed age woodland.

Under the terms of the Woodland Management Plan culling of grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*, muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi* and roe deer *Capreolus capreolus* is carried out on a regular and ongoing basis.

The following habitats were identified within the boundaries of the site and are shown on the Habitat Map in Appendix 1:

- Broadleaved woodland;
- Conifer plantation;
- Semi-improved grassland;
- Running water;
- Bare ground; and
- Buildings.

Broadleaved Woodland

Broadleaved woodland comprises predominantly oak *Quercus robur* with sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and hazel *Corylus avellana*. The understorey is predominantly bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.



Fig 3: Broadleaved woodland in Cheverell Wood.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

Conifer Plantation

The areas of the woodland that are conifer plantation have a less developed understorey than the broadleaved woodland.



Fig 4: The areas of the woodland that are conifer plantation support a less developed understorey.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

Semi-improved Grassland

At the southwestern end of the site is an area of semi-improved grassland which is predominantly cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*.



Fig 5: Semi-improved grassland at the southwestern corner of the site.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

Running Water

At the northeastern end of the site is a small watercourse which supports no vegetation.



Fig 6: There is a small watercourse running from south to north through the northeastern part of the site.

This photo taken facing south on 19th December 2023.

Bare Ground

The access track which runs from New Road through field edges to the northwest of Cheverell Wood is bare ground, being unmetalled hardcore that is well maintained.



Fig 7: An existing unmetalled hardcore track along field margins is used to access the woodland.

This photo taken facing southeast on 19th December 2023.

Buildings

There are four structures within the woodland that have been created for use during Airsoft games.

Building 1 (B1)

A complex of structures around the existing pole barn. This complex of structures is used as a reception area and as a rest/meeting area. The original barn has a timber and steel frame with an unlined corrugated metal roof. There are no walls.

Around the barn single storey metal structures, which are unlined and which open out into a central courtyard, have been installed. All sit on the ground and have not required the excavation of foundations.



Fig 8: The existing barn and metal structures erected around it.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

All other structures in this area are open to the elements and have timber or metal frames with unlined corrugated metal roofs. None of the buildings are enclosed.



Fig 9: This structure is within the complex around the original barn.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

Building 2 (B2)

This structure has been built with a timber frame, plywood walls and an unlined corrugated metal roof. Cladding has been added to the outer face of the buildings for aesthetic purposes. Doors and windows allow daylight to penetrate throughout.



Fig 10: Building 2.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

Building 3 (B3)

This building has the same structure as building 2.



Fig 11: Building 3.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.



Fig 12: Daylight penetrates throughout building 3 through windows and doors.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

Building 4 (B4)

This structure has a timber frame, unlined metal roof and plywood walls. It supports fewer windows and doors than the other structures and so is less disturbed internally by daylight.



Fig 13: Building 4.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

Bats

Roosting

As no tree removal is proposed for the use of the woodland for Airsoft, a full assessment of the trees within Cheverell Wood has not been carried out for roosting bats.

The four buildings were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats.

Building 1

This complex of buildings is considered to have Negligible potential to support roosting bats, for the following reasons:

- The original barn has a timber and steel frame and unlined corrugated metal roof that supports no crevices in which bats could roost.
- The newer structures created around the original barn have metal frames and unlined corrugated metal walls and roofs. They are open on one side and support no crevices or sheltered areas that could be used by bats.
- Where areas of the frames of the buildings are timber, they do not support complex joints in which bats could seek shelter.
- None of the structures provide protection from the worst of the weather, fluctuations in temperature or disturbance from daylight.

No evidence of bats (eg. droppings or feeding remains) was found in any part of this building.

Buildings 2 and 3

Both buildings are of similar construction and are considered to have Negligible potential to support roosting bats, for the following reasons:

- The timber frames do not support complex joints in which bats could seek shelter.
- The unlined corrugated metal walls do not provide suitable crevices in which bats could seek shelter.
- Windows and doors allow daylight to penetrate all areas and do not provide protection from fluctuating temperatures.
- The rough timber cladding on the external faces of these buildings is attached in a way which either provides no access to crevices behind or leaves a large gap which does not provide shelter.

No evidence of bats (eg. droppings or feeding remains) was found in any part of these buildings.

Building 4

This building has a timber frame which does not provide suitable crevices in which bats could seek shelter. The walls are unlined plywood and the roof is unlined corrugated metal. As a result, the building has Negligible potential to be used by crevice dwelling bat species.

This building is more enclosed than the others, with fewer windows and doors, and provides greater protection from disturbance from daylight and from eg. rain or wind. It provides little thermal stability as it is poorly insulated.

At the time of the survey carried out on 19th December 2023 one lesser horseshoe bat was recorded roosting in this building. No other evidence of bats was found.



Fig 14: A lesser horseshoe bat was roosting in building 4 at the time of this survey on 19th December 2023.

Building 4 provides little thermal stability and so is not suitable for hibernation. This survey was carried out during a period of mild but unsettled weather in December 2023 and so it was considered likely that the bat had sought shelter from heavy rain while out foraging. This assessment is based predominantly on the lack of any other evidence of bats using this structure, as well as the poor suitability of the building for hibernation.

To confirm this assessment a follow up visit was carried out on 10th January 2024 when the weather was clear and dry and the temperature was c.0°C. The lesser horseshoe bat was no longer present and no other evidence of roosting was found. As a result, building 4 is considered to be used by low numbers of lesser horseshoe bats on an infrequent basis, probably as a day and night roost. The building is not considered to be a hibernation roost.

Commuting and Foraging

The woodland supports high quality habitat for bats as they commute and forage through the surrounding landscape and it is well connected to other areas of suitable habitat for this purpose.

Badgers

There is evidence of badgers throughout Cheverell Wood with a number of setts identified, snuffle holes and pathways recorded.

At the northeastern end of the site, outside the area where Airsoft is played, is a main sett comprising around 20 entrances which are both Active and Inactive (Target Note 1 in Appendix 1). This area was overgrown with bramble at the time of this survey and so some sett entrances that could not be identified may have been present.



Fig 15: An overgrown area of bramble at the northeastern end of the site supports a main sett.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

At the western end of the woodland is a sett comprising five Inactive entrances and one Active entrance with very fresh digging (Target Note 2 in Appendix 1).



Fig 16: Fresh digging outside one active sett entrance at the western end of the woodland.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

Close to Building 1 at the southwestern corner of the site is a sett comprising three Active entrances and five Inactive sett entrances (Target Note 3 in Appendix 1). Fresh digging outside the three Active entrances indicates that the sett was in use at the time of this survey.



Fig 17: Fresh digging and a large spoil heap outside this sett entrance at the southwestern corner of the site.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

Hazel Dormouse

There are no records of hazel dormouse within 2km of Cheverell Wood but the woodland is suitable to support this species at all stages of its lifecycle, including for hibernation over the winter months. In the wider landscape the woodland is well connected to other areas of suitable habitat for this species in hedgerow and woodland networks.

Great Crested Newts

There is only one historic record of great crested newts within 2km of Cheverell Wood but the site provides suitable terrestrial habitat, including for hibernation over the winter months.

The woodland pond which is c.215m to the southwest of the area that is proposed for Airsoft is the only waterbody within 500m of the woodland and so this was assessed against the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) for its suitability for use by great crested newts (see Appendix 2). The pond is used by nesting waterfowl, with mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* present at the time of this survey and it supports limited aquatic vegetation. An HSI score of 0.46 means this pond is of Poor quality for great crested newts.



Fig 18: The woodland pond which is c.215m to the southwest of the area which is to be used for Airsoft.

This photo taken 19th December 2023.

Limited connectivity to suitable breeding habitat and a lack of records of great crested newts within 2km of Cheverell Wood mean that great crested newts are unlikely to be present in large numbers and may even be absent at this location.

Reptiles

The woodland edges provide suitable habitat for reptile species and include features which could provide shelter over the winter hibernation period (eg. in tree roots and at the base of log piles).

Nesting Birds

The woodland provides suitable habitat for a range of woodland species to use when nesting.

No evidence of the structures that have been built within the woodland being used by nesting birds has been found.

Other Species

Hedgehog

The woodland and surrounding habitats support suitable habitat for hedgehogs to use at all stages of their lifecycle, including for commuting, foraging, nesting and hibernation.

Brown Hare

A brown hare was seen commuting through the woodland during the survey carried out on 19th December 2023.

LEGISLATION

Bats

Bats are protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or handle a bat;
- Possess a bat (whether alive or dead);
- Disturb a roosting bat; or
- Sell (or offer for sale) a bat (without an appropriate licence).

In addition, it is an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost, whether it is currently in use or not.

Badgers

Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 which makes it illegal to:

- Kill, injure or take a badger; or
- Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett. A sett is defined as a structure or place used for shelter by badgers.

Penalties for offences are a fine of up to £5,000, plus up to 6 months imprisonment, for each illegal sett interference, badger death or injury.

Hazel Dormouse

Dormice are protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Capture, kill, disturb or injure a dormouse;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a dormouse;
- Obstruct access to breeding or resting places; or
- Possess, sell, control or transport a dormouse, whether alive or dead.

Great Crested Newts

Great crested newts are protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take a great crested newt;
- Possess a great crested newt (whether alive or dead);
- Take or disturb the eggs of a great crested newt; or
- Destroy or obstruct access to a place of shelter, breeding or protection used by a great crested newt.

Reptiles

All native reptile species are protected against intentional or reckless killing or injury by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

The habitat of the four common species of reptile (common lizard, slow worm, adder *Vipera berus* and grass snake) does not receive additional protection.

Nesting Birds

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 protects bird species in the UK and makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a wild bird;
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Other offences under this legislation relate to taking and possessing specimens or the eggs of wild birds.

Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are a Species of Principal Importance (SoPI) under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) and should, as such, be conserved through the planning process. Hedgehogs would also fall under the provisions of the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996, which prevents certain cruel acts against wild mammals.

Brown Hare

Brown hare are a SoPI under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) and should, as such, be conserved through the planning process. Brown hare would also fall under the provisions of the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996, which prevents certain cruel acts against wild mammals.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Use of Cheverell Wood for Airsoft

Cheverell Wood has been used for Airsoft games since May 2022. Games are held every two weeks with an on-site presence of up to 60 people between the hours of 8am and 4pm. No night-time games or overnight camping is allowed and there is no use of the woodland for any purposes between sunset and sunrise at any time of the year. Biodegradable pellets are used to reduce ground contamination and to avoid accidental harm to wildlife through ingestion.

To support the use of the woodland for Airsoft:

- Portaloos have been provided and are regularly emptied by a professional contractor.
- A generator provides power as needed but is removed from site after each visit.
- Rubbish bins are provided and rubbish is removed from the woodland at the end of each day the site is used.

Habitats

Areas of broadleaved woodland are identified as Priority Habitat and as such should be protected through the planning process for its biodiversity value. There are no plans to remove woodland or carry out work which would remove this habitat type and the Woodland Management Plan that is in place is based around objectives that will improve the biodiversity value of this habitat.

Bats

Roosting

The use of the woodland for Airsoft is not anticipated to result in any disturbance to bat roosts which could be present in trees. There are no proposals to remove any of the trees within the woodland in order for Airsoft to be played and as there is no activity within the woodland overnight, disturbance to roosts can be avoided.

Buildings 1-3 have Negligible potential to be used by roosting bats but Building 4 has been confirmed as a day/night roost that is used by low numbers of lesser horseshoe bats, most likely on an infrequent basis. In order to avoid disturbance to bats and their roosts, the following precautionary approach should be taken when Airsoft is being played:

- Lesser horseshoe bats are visible within the structure if they are present and so before the game begins, staff will check for signs that lesser horseshoe bats are in residence in this structure. Where bats are found to be present the building will be made inaccessible to players for that day using barrier tape across doorways.

- Players will be briefed at the start of the game to let them know that Building 4 is out of bounds on that day.

No further work to Building 4 should be carried out (including its removal) without further input from a suitably licensed ecologist.

Commuting and Foraging

The on-site habitats are suitable for bats as they commute and forage through the wider landscape and are well connected to other areas of suitable habitat for this purpose. There will be no loss of woodland as a result of the proposals to use Cheverell Wood for Airsoft and as there is no use of the site overnight or between the hours of sunset and sunrise (at any time of the year) no impacts on bats commuting and foraging through the woodland could reasonably be anticipated.

As there is no use of the woodland at night, no lighting is required and so there will be no disturbance resulting from artificial light.

Badgers

A number of badgers setts are present throughout Cheverell Wood and all show some signs of activity:

- There is a main sett at the northeastern end of the site which is at least 10m outside the area that Airsoft is played.

- There is a subsidiary sett at the southwestern end of the site, close to the complex of buildings that have been labelled "Building 1". This sett is in the practice range and as such is out of bounds for Airsoft games.

- The sett which was identified at the western end of the site (TN2) is a well-used outlier sett which had one Active entrance at the time of this survey. This sett is within the area of the woodland in which Airsoft is played.

For health and safety purposes the setts are taped off to protect Airsoft players and as a result this reduces disturbance to badgers and their setts.



Fig 19: Badger setts within Cheverell Wood have been taped off to protect them from disturbance and to protect Airsoft players from harm.

As there is no use of the woodland at nighttime and Airsoft games are only played infrequently, disturbance to badgers in Cheverell Wood can be kept to a minimum. Furthermore, fencing off the badger setts will protect them from accidental damage, as well as protecting Airsoft players from trip hazards.

Hazel Dormouse

This species has not been confirmed as present in Cheverell Wood and there are no records of dormice within 2km. However, there are no proposals to remove any potential dormouse nesting habitat and arboreal connectivity will not be removed or reduced. There is no use of the woodland at nighttime and no lighting is to be installed. As a result, no impacts on dormice or their nests could reasonably be anticipated from the infrequent use of the woodland for Airsoft.

The Woodland Management Plan that is in place for Cheverell Wood should improve the suitability of the woodland for hazel dormouse as it will open up the canopy in some areas allowing a more developed understorey to establish.

Great Crested Newts

Great crested newts have not been confirmed to be present in Cheverell Wood and the woodland pond which is c.215m to the southwest has limited suitability to support them when breeding. However, great crested newts could be present within the terrestrial habitat in the woodland, including over the winter months when hibernating.

Use of the woodland for Airsoft on 28 days per year is unlikely to result in harm to great crested newts or damage to their habitat but the Precautionary Measures set

out below should be followed in order to avoid accidental harm to hibernating or sheltering animals over the winter months.

Precautionary Measures

October – March (Inclusive)

The log piles created within the woodland to provide shelters for Airsoft games are suitable for great crested newts to use over the winter hibernation period and so any work to dismantle these structures must avoid the October - March period (inclusive).

Reptiles

The site supports potentially suitable habitat for common reptile species such as slow worm and grass snake, including for hibernation over the winter months in tree roots and in the base of log piles that have been created throughout the woodland.

Use of the woodland for Airsoft on 28 days per year is unlikely to result in harm to reptiles or damage to their habitat but the Precautionary Measures set out below should be followed in order to avoid accidental harm to hibernating or sheltering animals over the winter months.

Precautionary Working Methods

October – March (Inclusive)

The log piles created within the woodland to provide shelters for Airsoft games are suitable for reptiles to use over the winter hibernation period and are also suitable for hedgehogs to use for shelter over the winter months. Any work to dismantle these structures must avoid the winter hibernation period.

Nesting Birds

The woodland is suitable for use by nesting birds between March and August (inclusive). No habitat is proposed for removal and so there will be no loss of potential nesting habitat but disturbance to nesting birds is possible when Airsoft is being played.

As Airsoft is played infrequently this level of human disturbance is likely to be lower than it would be in other publicly accessible woodland which is used by eg. dog walkers. However, to minimise disturbance, where active nests are identified in the woodland all players will be briefed before Airsoft games commence and the following information will be provided:

- Location of the nest (to be marked with high visibility tape) in the woodland;
- Height of the nest (ie. in low scrub or high in a mature tree); and
- Any special measures to reduce the risk of disturbance to the nest.

Hedgehogs

The Precautionary Measures set out above for great crested newts and reptiles will protect hedgehogs from accidental harm over the winter hibernation period.

At all other times of the year hedgehogs would be unlikely to be disturbed or harmed by infrequent Airsoft games in the woodland.

Brown Hare

Use of Cheverell Wood for infrequent Airsoft games is not anticipated to result in harm or disturbance to brown hare at any stage of their lifecycle.

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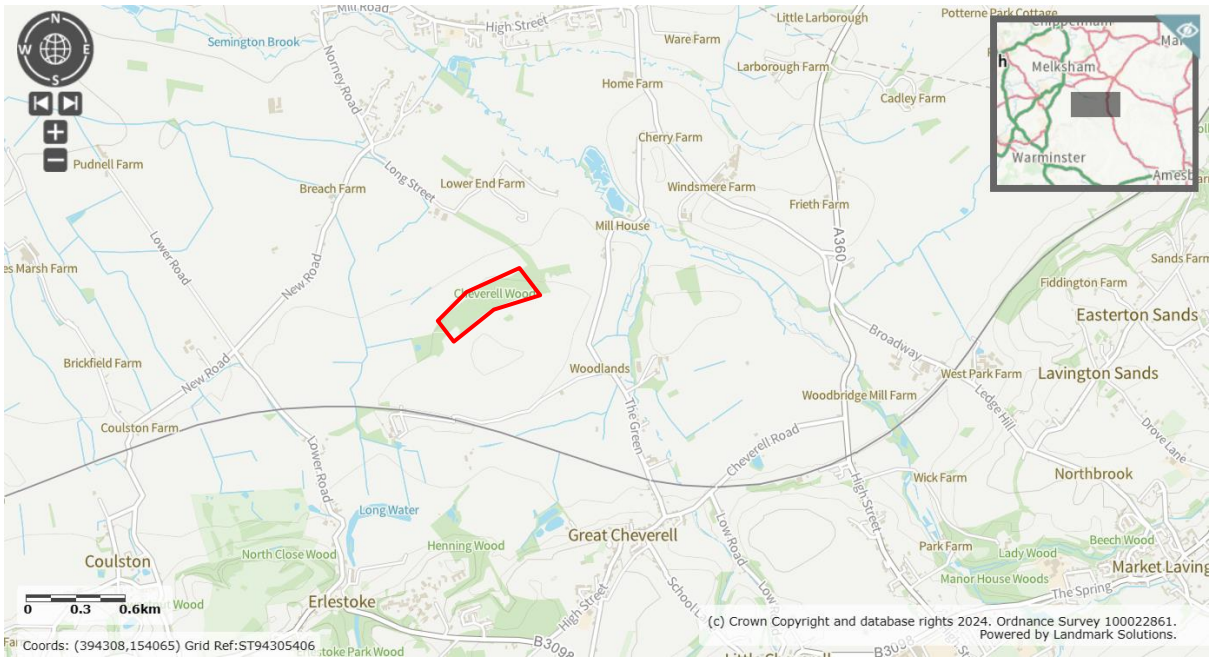
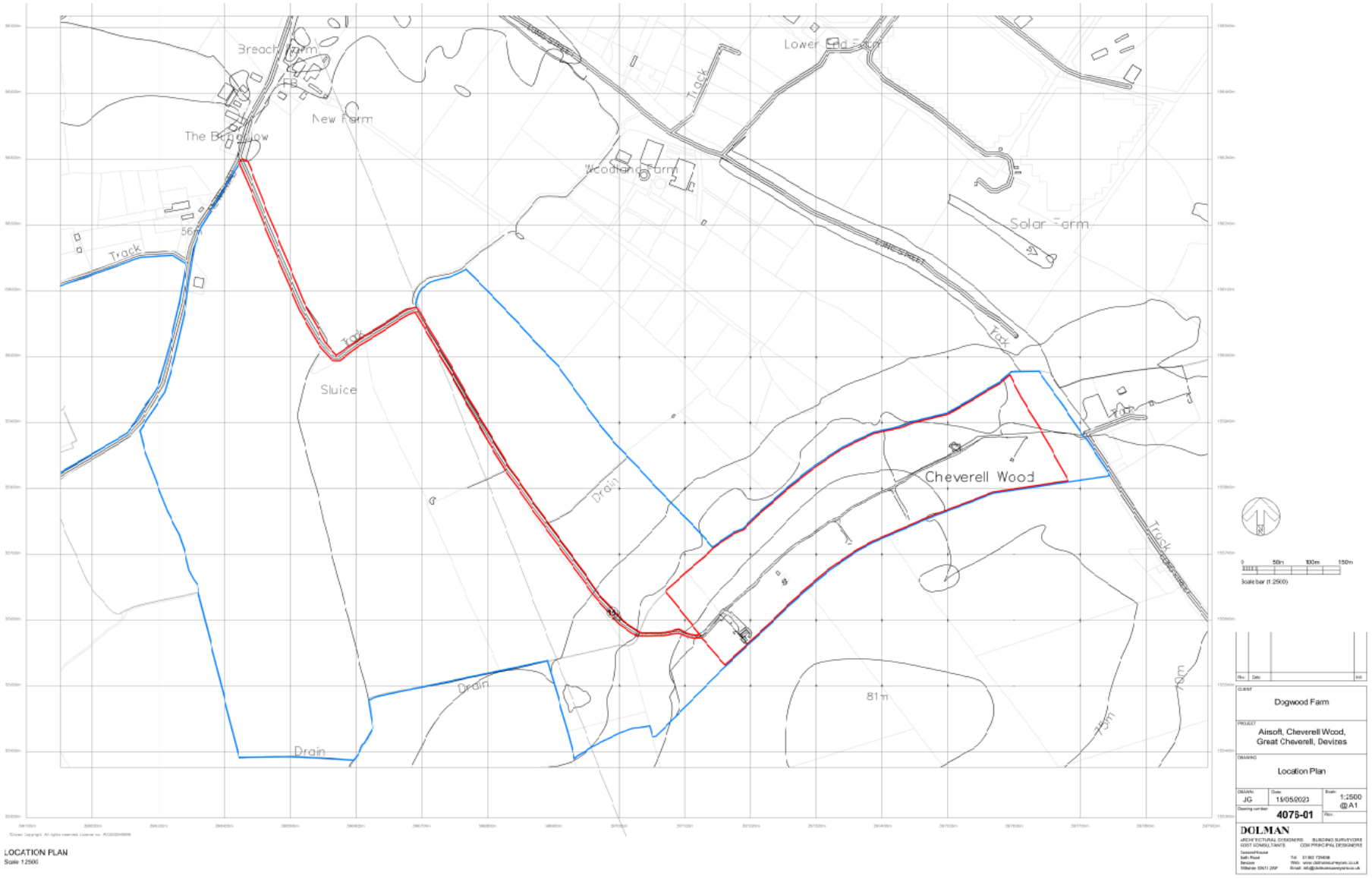
APPENDIX 1: SITE MAPS

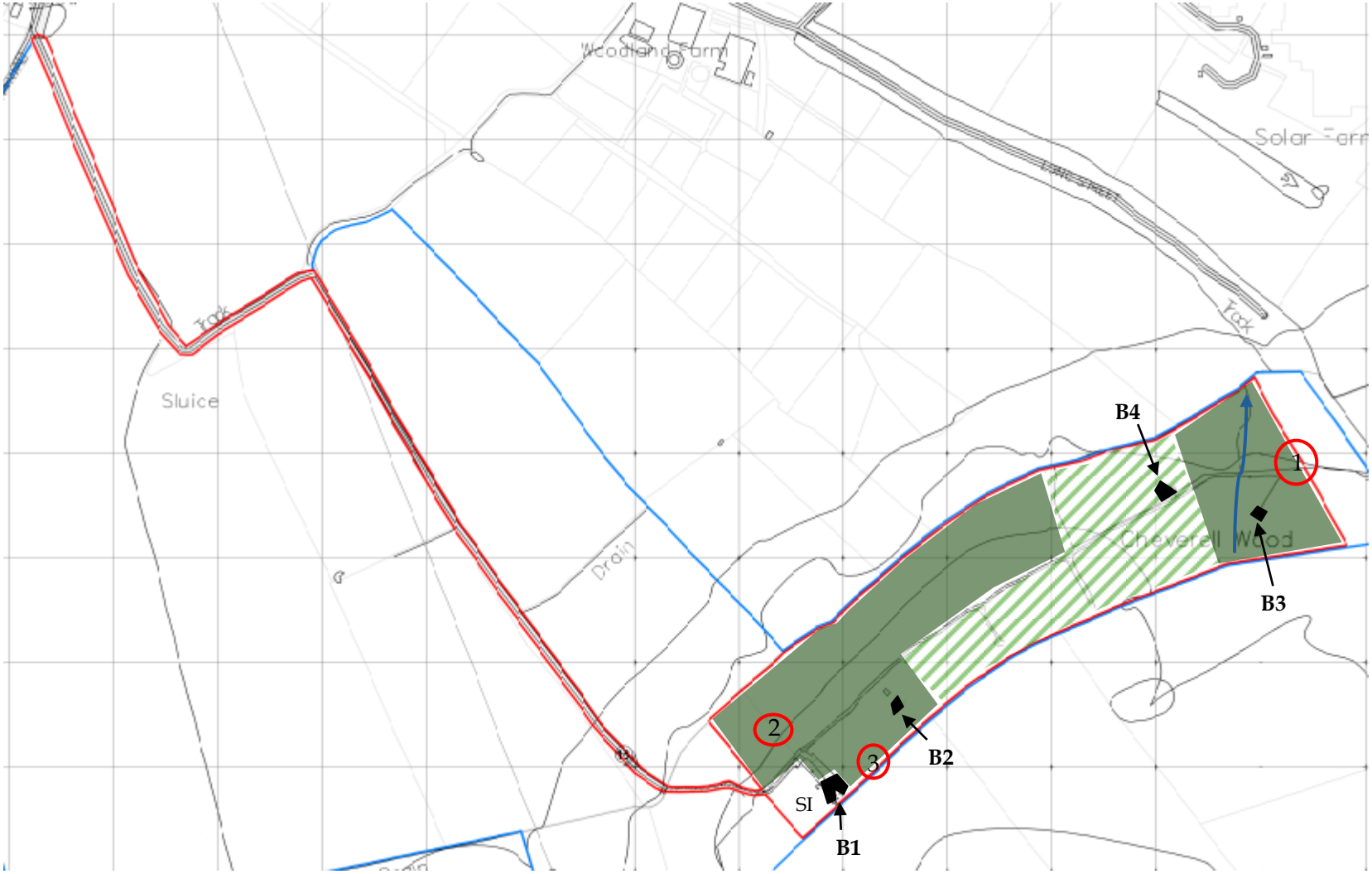






LOCATION PLAN
Scale 1:2500

Habitat Map


Woodland Farm
Solar Farm
Track
Track
Sluice
Drain
Cheverell Wood
B4
B3
B2
B1
SI
1
2
3

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Key



APPENDIX 2: GCN HABITAT SUITABILITY INDEX

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Survey Sheet - Habitat Suitability Index

Site Name: Cheverlell Wood Date: 19/12/2023

Pond Reference: Woodland pond

Surveyor: G Starkie

Geographic Location	A = 1
Pond Area (m^2)	886m^2 = 0.95
Permanence	Never dries (0.9) Rarely dries (1.0) Sometimes dries (0.5) Dries annually (0.1)
Water Quality	Good (1.0) Moderate (0.67) Poor (0.33) Bad (0.01)
Shade (%)	50% = 1
Waterfowl	Absent (1.0) Minor (0.67) Major (0.01)
Fish	Absent (1.0) Possible (0.67) Minor (0.33) Major (0.01)
Pond Count	How many ponds within 1 km? 2 = 0.75
Terrestrial Habitat	Good (1.0) Moderate (0.67) Poor (0.33) None (0.01)
Macrophyte Cover (%)	20% = 0.5

HSI = 0.46 (POOR)

APPENDIX 3: ADDENDUM TO WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

There is a Woodland Management Plan already in place for Cheverell Wood that is based around objectives that propose to enhance the biodiversity of the woodland and improve its health and structure. The Management Plan should be read in conjunction with this report but the following additional considerations will be needed:

- Roosting bats. Where trees that are proposed for removal support crevices, fissures, lifted bark or other features that could be used by roosting bats, further surveys by a suitably qualified and licensed ecologist will be carried out prior to felling. Where features are confirmed by the ecologist to be suitable for roosting bats the tree will be retained.
- Badger setts. Trees that are within 20m of any active badger sett entrance will be retained.
- Nesting birds. Removal of trees and work to widen rides will be carried out over the winter months, outside the nesting season (which is between March and August, inclusive).