



Land off Church Road, Woodborough, Pewsey, SN9
5PQ

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



August 2025

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Notice to Readers:

The results of the survey and assessment work undertaken by All Ecology are representative at the time of surveying.

Every endeavour has been made to identify the presence of protected species on site, where this falls within the agreed scope of works.

The flora and fauna detailed within this report are those noted during the field survey and from anecdotal evidence. It should not be viewed as a complete list of flora and fauna species that may frequent or exist on site at other times of the year.

Up to date standard methodologies have been used, which are accepted by Natural England and other statutory conservation bodies. No responsibility will be accepted where these methodologies fail to identify all species on-site.

All Ecology cannot take responsibility where Government, national bodies or industry subsequently modify standards.

All Ecology cannot accept responsibility for data collected from third parties.

Reference to sections or particular paragraphs of this document taken out of context may lead to misrepresentation.

Summary

In January 2025, All Ecology was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of a site known as Land off Church Road, Woodborough, Pewsey, SN9 5PQ. The site occupies part of a grassland field within the village of Woodborough, Wiltshire. The site is the subject of a planning application for the erection of two residential dwellings.

The effect of the development has been considered and key constraints identified. The habitats present on site are of low ecological value in terms of their vegetation. Habitats of moderate value including hedge, trees and a narrow woodland which are present immediately adjacent to the site will be retained. The loss of grassland and tall ruderals is not significant and new residential gardens are expected to provide some limited ecological value.

The habitats on site have limited potential to support protected or notable species. The following species/groups are either present, potentially present, or could be encouraged onto the site and the recommended actions are as follows:

- Bats – There are no buildings or trees on site and adjacent trees provided only limited potential for roosting, and in any case, will be retained. The site is dominated by short grassland which is poor foraging habitat but the adjacent hedgerow and trees/woodland provides some limited potential for foraging and commuting. The loss of low value habitat in the form of heavily grazed grassland is not deemed significant and new gardens will provide new habitat with limited foraging value. Provided that lighting of the adjacent trees/woodland edge is avoided, no further surveys for bats are required.
- Badgers and other mammals – The grassland which dominates the site is of low value. Precautionary methods of working are advised with regards to the potential for passing Badgers, Hedgehogs or other small mammals.
- Birds – Nesting habitat present immediately adjacent to the site but habitats within the development area are of limited value. Any necessary pruning of adjacent hedge or overhanging trees to be carried out outside the bird nesting season of March – August unless a nesting bird survey confirms absence.

Suggestions for enhancement are given.

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1.0 Introduction

Background

1.1 In January 2025, All Ecology was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of a site known as Land off Church Road, Woodborough, Pewsey, SN9 5PQ. The site occupies part of a grassland field within the village of Woodborough, Wiltshire. The wider area outside of the small village is open countryside of fields bound by a network of hedgerows with occasional woodland.

1.2 The site is the subject of a planning application for the erection of two residential dwellings.

Objectives and Aim

1.3 The main objectives and aim of the survey were to identify features of ecological interest, undertake a basic search of habitats present for evidence of use, or potential use, by protected species, and to identify any other possible ecological constraints to the proposed redevelopment.

Site Location



Figure 1: Site location plan.

Aerial Photograph



Figure 2: Aerial view.

2.0 Methodology

Personnel

- 2.1 The survey was carried out by Daniel Roberts BSc Hons, an experienced consultant ecologist, and was overseen by James Godbeer BSc Hons MCIEEM, an ecologist with over 18 years' experience working as a consultant. James has extensive experience of managing environmental contracts, and particular experience in surveying, assessment and mitigation for rare and protected species. He has considerable knowledge of the development and planning process including Ecological Impact Assessments, sustainable ecological design and he has completed ecology chapters of Environmental Statements. James holds a number of protected species licences including bats (all species, all counties, Class Licence Registration No. 2015-12313-CLS-CLS), and Great Crested Newts (Class Licence Registration No. 2019-44282-CLS-CLS). He has successfully obtained European Protected Species mitigation licences for a number of bat species including Lesser Horseshoe, Greater Horseshoe, Serotine, Brown Long-eared, Common Pipistrelle and Natterer's bats, for a number of roost types including maternity and hibernation sites.

Desk Survey

- 2.2 In order to compile background information on the site and immediate surroundings Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) was contacted.
- 2.3 Information requested was as follows:
- Statutory site designations on or within 1 km of the site.
 - Non-statutory site designations on or within 1 km of the site.
 - Records of protected species within the 1 km of the site.
 - Records of rare or notable species within the 1 km of the site.
- 2.4 Online OS maps and aerial photographs were inspected for the presence of ponds in the surrounding area. Additionally, MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside, 2025) was used to establish the distance and direction of any statutory designated sites within the search area.

Field Survey

Habitats

- 2.5 The site was visited on the 13th January 2025 and surveyed in accordance with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Phase I Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC, 2010). This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential that might warrant further study.

Fauna

- 2.6 There were no buildings on site but adjacent trees were inspected for potential roosting features for bats.

- 2.7 The site and surroundings, for a minimum distance of 30 m where access was available, were searched for signs of Badgers. These include setts, latrines, dung pits, snuffle marks or hairs caught in hedges or on fencing. A search for any signs of Dormice such as gnawed nuts, or nests was also carried out.
- 2.8 Incidental observations of invertebrates and birds were recorded and a search made for any signs of previous nesting.
- 2.9 There were no refuges on site to be inspected for reptiles and amphibians. There are no ponds on site but one indicated on OS maps within 250 m of the application site boundary. This pond was subject to Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment.
- 2.10 The HSI is a measure of habitat quality using a numerical index between 0 and 1 derived from an assessment of variables known to influence the presence of Great Crested Newts (Oldham et al. 2000). It is used to assess whether a water body warrants detailed surveys to establish presence or absence of newts and aids in the assessment of impacts and the design of mitigation measures.
- 2.11 To calculate the HSI of the water bodies, ecologists first record the following variables before applying the HSI calculation to these: pond size; surface area; water depth; water quality; % shade, % macrophyte cover; presence of fish and waterfowl; number of water bodies within 1 km of survey water body; quality of terrestrial habitat surrounding pond and wet ditch; and type of marginal/aquatic vegetation (Oldham et al. 2000).
- 2.12 Once the HSI score is obtained it can be used to define water body suitability for Great Crested Newts in the following way (National Amphibian Recording Scheme, 2008):

Table 1: HSI Scores

<0.5	Poor
0.5 – 0.59	Below Average
0.6 – 0.69	Average
0.7 – 0.79	Good
>0.8	Excellent

- 2.13 Water bodies scoring above 0.5 are deemed as having potential to support Great Crested Newts and further surveys are usually required.

Equipment

- 2.14 Equipment used to aid the survey included a high-powered torch, ladder, binoculars and a camera.

Valuation of Ecological Features

- 2.15 The valuation process used in this report follows the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018).
- 2.16 The presence of injurious and legally controlled weeds has also been taken into account.

Nomenclature

- 2.17 The English name only of flora and fauna species is given in the main text of this report; however, scientific names are used for invertebrates where no English name is available. Vascular plants and charophytes follow the nomenclature of The Botanical Society for the British Isles (BSBI) 2007 database (BSBI, 2007) with all other flora and fauna following the Nameserver facility of the National Biodiversity Network Species Dictionary (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nbn/>), which is managed by the Natural History Museum.

Limitations

- 2.18 The site was fully accessible with no limitations to undertaking the survey in accordance with the stated methodology.

3.0 Results

Desk Survey

3.1 WSBRC provided the following records of designated sites within 1 km of the application site:

3.2 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- River Avon System – Located approximately 475 m to the west, the Avon is richer and more varied than in most chalk streams with over 180 species of aquatic plant having been recorded, one of the most diverse fish faunas in Britain and a wide range of aquatic invertebrates

3.3 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

- Kennet and Avon Canal – A restored canal much used for recreation located approximately 700 m to the north.
- Salisbury Avon Headwaters – A river complex above the SSSI located approximately 830 m to the southeast.
- Lambpit Copse – Semi-natural broadleaved woodland on a north facing slope located approximately 350 m to the north.

3.4 WSBRC provided the following notable and protected species records within 1 km of the site:

- **Mammals** – Otter, Badger, Hedgehog, Water Shrew, Brown Hare, Rabbit and Water Vole. Bats: Unidentified bat, Serotine, Daubenton's, Pipistrelle sp., Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Long-eared bat sp. and Brown Long-eared bat.
- **Birds** – Sparrowhawk, Red Kite, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Lapwing, Grey Heron, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Cuckoo, Peregrine, Kestrel, Grey Partridge, Coot, Moorhen, Skylark, Rook, House Martin, Corn Bunting, Yellowhammer, Reed Bunting, Linnet, Wheatear, Great Bustard, Tree Sparrow, Willow Warbler, Bullfinch, Whinchit, Starling, Song Thrush, Fieldfare and Barn Owl.
- **Reptiles** – Grass Snake and Common Lizard.
- **Amphibians** – Common Toad and Common Frog.
- **Insect (butterfly)** – Small Heath.
- **Mollusc** - Desmoulin's Whorl Snail.
- **Flora** – Scots Pine, Spreading Hedge-parsley, Bluebell, Common Cudweed, Heath Cudweed, Round-headed Rampion, Box, Corn Spurrey, Keeled-fruited Cornsallad, Jacob's-ladder, Yellow Vetchling, Sainfoin, Corn Cleavers, Basil Thyme, Field Gromwell, Large-leaved Lime, Marsh Willowherb, Meadow Brome, Whorl-grass, Blunt-flowered Rush, Narrow-leaved Meadow-grass, Mousetail, Yellow-juiced Poppy, *Alchemilla filicaulis subsp.*, Bastard-Toadflax and Wood Horsetail.
- **Fungi** – Bastard-Toadflax Rust.

Field Survey

3.5 The following table presents a description of the habitats present.

Table 2: Details of habitats present on and bordering the site.

Habitats	Description
Improved grassland (g4: Modified grassland)	The site is a field of short sheep grazed grassland. The grassland appeared to be species poor with Fescue sp. being abundant. Other grasses recorded within the sward included Creeping Bent, Cock's-foot, Yorkshire-fog and rare occurrences of Crested Dog's-tail and Field Wood-rush. Forbs were rare including Creeping Buttercup, White Clover, Lesser Celandine, Common Sorrel with Common Nettle and Cleavers near the field boundaries.
Tall ruderal/Ephemeral (BNG17) & hard standing (u1c: Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface)	A link from the field to Church Farm Lane to the north currently allows pedestrian access to the field. This link, under the canopy of adjacent trees has patchy grass with adjacent tall ruderals dominated by Common Nettle and encroaches partly onto a existing stone track.
Fence	Timber post and rail fence forms the north boundary of the field with post and wire stock fence on the east and west boundaries of the site. A private pedestrian access is located at the west end of the north boundary. The south boundary is open to the remainder of the field.
Adjacent habitats	A species-poor hedge of Beech, Hazel, Holly and Bramble is present within a private garden adjacent to the west boundary fence with Horse Chestnut trees overhanging the north boundary. A narrow woodland/line of trees is adjacent to the east with Ash, Holly, Sycamore, Cherry Laurel, Hawthorn, Horse-chestnut and Bramble recorded alongside the fence.



1: View of the site looking south from the northeast corner.



2: View of the site looking north from the southwest corner.



3: Post and wire fence on the east boundary.



4: Post and rail fence on the north boundary.

Fauna

3.6 The following table assesses the potential for other protected species to be present.

Table 3: Protected Species Assessment

Fauna	Description
Bats	Records: WSBRC provided 18 bat records with 16 of these records being of confirmed bat roosts. The majority of records in the surrounding area is of Brown Long-eared bats and pipistrelle species. None of the records originate from the application site or its immediate surroundings. Habitats (roosting): No buildings on site. No roosting features were recorded in trees overhanging the site but two adjacent Ash trees had ivy cover that may conceal potential for roosting. Habitats (foraging/commuting): The grassland itself provides sub-optimal foraging habitat and the majority of bat activity on site is expected to be confined mainly to the vegetation adjacent to boundary fences, particularly trees overhanging the north and east boundaries. Trees along the east boundary may also be utilised by commuting bats, particularly by any bats roosting in the nearby area. The site is expected to be utilised by a range of common species but the potential for more notable species would appear to be limited.
Badgers	Records: Four Badger records were provided in the surrounding 1 km; however, the exact location of these records was not given. Habitats: The grassland provides good foraging habitat with the adjacent narrow band of woodland providing cover and therefore areas of higher potential for the construction of setts. Presence/absence: No evidence of presence recorded. Badgers will be generally absent with potential currently limited to passing individual Badgers.
Dormice	Records: None provided.

	Habitats: The off-site narrow woodland to the east provides limited potential for Dormouse but the site itself which is almost entirely grassland is unsuitable and Dormice are unlikely to be present within the adjacent frequently pruned garden hedge. Presence/absence: No evidence of presence within the adjacent small woodland. Presence/absence unknown but any suitable habitats are off -site and therefore Dormice are deemed to be absent from the proposed development area.
Otters, Water Voles & Water Shrew	Records: WSBRC provided four records of Otter, 32 of Water Vole and two records of Water Shrew. Records were provided from the Kennet and Avon canal and the river complex feeding the River Avon. There are no records originating from the site or immediate surroundings. Habitats: None present. Presence/absence: Absent.
Other Mammals	Records: Other mammals that have been recorded in the surrounding 1 km include Hedgehog, Brown Hare and Rabbit. Habitats: The site has poor habitat for mammals being almost entirely short grazed grassland. Adjacent habitats provide cover for common small mammals and Hedgehogs could cross the site. Presence/absence: Moles appear to be present but no evidence was recorded of other mammals. Common mammals may pass through the site occasionally but notable species are expected to be absent.
Birds	Records: Multiple species including numerous red/amber listed species. Foraging Habitats: The grassland provides a limited resource but the adjacent hedge and trees provides good foraging opportunities. Nesting Habitats: Adjacent hedge and trees provide nesting opportunities. The field is unsuitable for ground nesting birds. Presence/absence: No evidence of previous nesting was noted but old nests could have been missed in the denser parts of hedge and woodland edge. Nesting birds are expected to be absent from the site but may nest in adjacent habitats.
Reptiles	Records: WSBRC provided individual records of Grass Snake and Common Lizard within 1 km; however, the exact location of these records was not given. Habitats: The grassland which dominates the site is short and therefore unsuitable. The site is poor for reptiles. Presence/absence: Expected to be absent.
Amphibian	Records: WSBRC provided two records of Common Toad and three of Common Frog within 1 km of the application site. No records of other amphibians were provided. Terrestrial Habitats: The grassland on the site is short and therefore poor terrestrial habitat. Adjacent habitats provide cover and foraging opportunities.

Aquatic Habitats: None present on site. In regards to the potential for Great Crested Newts to be present in the local area, there is one pond within 250 m of the application. Further details of this pond are as follows.

Pond Location:

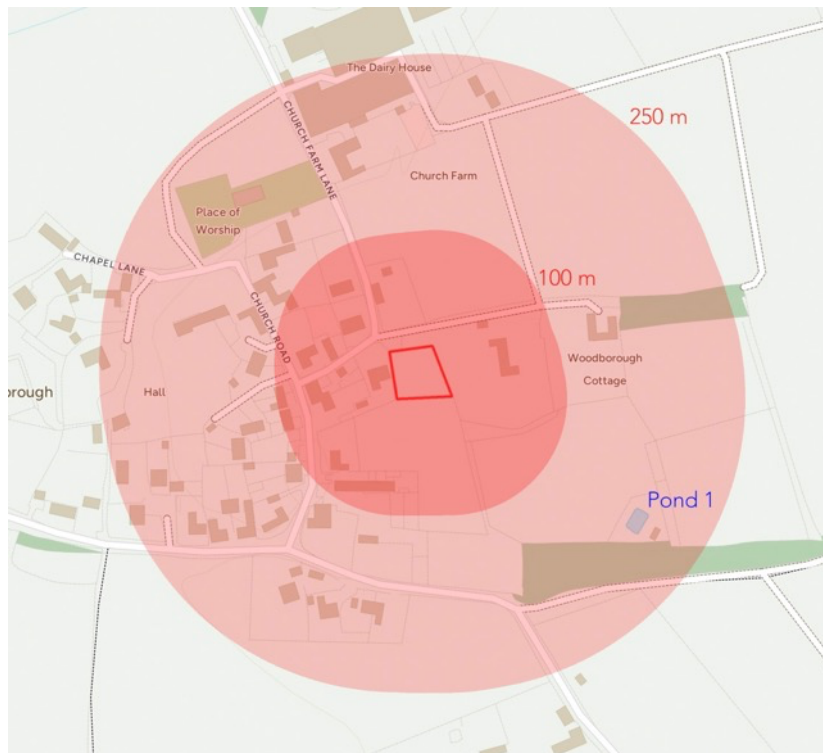


Figure 3: Pond location plan.



5: Pond

Table 4: Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment

Pond 1		
	HSI Factors	HSI Assessment
Geographical Location	Zone A	1
Pond Area	190 m ²	0.38
Permanence	Never dries	0.9

	Water Quality	Moderate	0.67
	Shade	None	1
	Waterfowl	Absent	1
	Fish	Absent	1
	Pond Count	5	0.75
	Terrestrial Habitat	Poor	0.33
	Macrophytes	25%	0.55
	HSI Score	0.71	
	Pond suitability: Pond 1 is classified as ‘Good’. This scored above the 0.5 threshold where further consideration is usually required. Presence/absence: Amphibians including Great Crested Newts are expected to be generally absent from the site grassland. Pond 1 is deemed suitable for Great Crested Newts, providing ‘good’ aquatic habitat located approximately 200 m to the southeast. This is within the range in which Great Crested Newts are known to disperse away from breeding ponds; however, this pond has been recently created, and given its isolation from other ponds in the wider area, the two closest being over 600 m to the west and southwest, inhabitation of this pond by Great Crested Newts is unlikely. There are no records of Great Crested Newts within 1 km. This species is expected to be absent from the site.		
Invertebrates	Records: WSBRC provided individual records of Small Heath butterfly and Desmoulin’s Whorl Snail.		
	Habitats: The species-poor grassland and tall ruderal is poor habitat but the hedges and tree provide limited areas of interest.		
	Presence/absence: Common assemblages of invertebrates are expected to be present in limited numbers. The potential for notable species to be present is minimal.		

4.0 Development Constraints and Recommendations

Development Proposals

- 4.1 The site is the subject of a planning application for the erection of two residential dwellings.

Designated Sites

- 4.2 There are no designated sites within the application boundary or immediately adjacent. Designated sites in the wider area are well separated from the application site and therefore no impact as a result of the proposed development is predicted.

Habitats

- 4.3 The grassland on site was identified as modified (improved) grassland and although this was not surveyed during the optimal period for grasslands, it was evidently this habitat type. In order to qualify as a NERC Priority Habitat, grassland typically has to be unimproved (good semi-improved grassland can also qualify) and would have to be examples of grasslands such as lowland calcareous grassland or lowland dry acid grassland, habitats not found on site. Any impacts as a result of loss/changes to the grassland on site and loss of a small area of tall ruderal habitat is considered to be negligible. No tree removal is proposed and no long-term adverse impact is associated with pruning of vegetation to allow for the creation of the proposed access driveway.
- 4.4 Where new trees or shrubs are to be planted, native tree and shrub species should be used as these are most beneficial to invertebrates, and many also produce seeds, nuts and berries that are food for native mammals and birds. Planting of non-native plant species should be limited to those that are not invasive and should prioritise those that provide a good source of nectar for invertebrates.

Fauna

Bats

- 4.5 There are no buildings on site and although ivy cover on adjacent Ash trees may conceal potential roosting features, any potential for roosting appeared to be low. Trees adjacent to the site are expected to be retained. The site provides potential bat foraging and commuting habitat associated with habitats alongside boundary fences, although the grassland within the field offers very little value. The development will result in the loss of the majority of the grassland. No significant impact to bats is expected due to the loss of habitat within the field and pruning of trees around the proposed site entrance. Provided off-site trees and other adjacent habitats are retained and not subject to significant lighting, impacts to bats can be avoided and a bat activity survey will not be required. In general, measures should include the use of lighting only where absolutely necessary utilising highly directional warm white LED lighting, an example being down spots at 2.5 m high using warm white (2700 K) 8W LED lamps, 550 lumens, 35 degree beam angle. These could be individually activated by PIR sensors on a 1 minute cut off to further reduce their impacts. These will assist in lighting only the areas where lighting is required and minimising light spill either directly or through reflected light.

- 4.6 New gardens are expected to provide foraging opportunities for common species of bats similar in value to existing grassland habitat. The new development provides an opportunity to significantly enhance the site for roosting bats by incorporating roosts into the new buildings. There are many ways that the buildings could be enhanced for crevice-dwelling bat species (virtually all UK bat species) without inconveniencing prospective occupants or requiring any significant design considerations. Bat tubes, panels, shelters or boxes can be installed in suitable locations around the site usually close to cover and at the apices of gable ends. A variety of aspects increases the likelihood of colonisation.

Dormice

- 4.7 There are no habitats within the site suitable for dormice but adjacent habitats, particularly to the east, provides some limited potential. Off-site habitats will be retained and provided these habitats are not subject to significant lighting, any impacts to dormice will be avoided and the off-site habitats will continue to provide suitable habitat for this species in the highly unlikely event that they are present.

Badgers and other mammals

- 4.8 Badgers will be generally absent with potential currently limited to passing individuals. Hedgehogs may also pass through the site and Moles are present within the field. No impact to mammals is predicted provided works are carried out following precautionary methods. In order to prevent trapping mammals that may cross the site, it is recommended that during the construction phase of the project any trenches and other excavations are back-filled before nightfall or a ramp left to allow animals to easily exit, and any open pipes larger than 150 mm should be capped off overnight. Any new garden fences should incorporate hedgehog access points to allow free access for this species around and on and off site.

Birds

- 4.9 The site provides limited value for birds but adjacent habitats provide opportunities for nesting and foraging. No evidence of nesting was recorded but birds could nest in suitable habitats in future.
- 4.10 Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments). Off-site nesting habitat will be retained; however, any pruning of hedgerows, shrubs and trees as well as on-going hedge and tree maintenance should take place outside the nesting season of March to August unless a pre-works nesting bird survey carried out by the ecologist concludes absence.
- 4.11 The proposed development should include enhancements for nesting and foraging birds to generally enhance the site. It is recommended that any new planting on site should concentrate on species that are native to the area and ideally produce a range of seeds and berries at varying times of the year. Nectar rich plants could also be used encourage invertebrates on to the site, which in turn provide food for birds as well as other species such as bats.
- 4.12 The following options could be explored for inclusion on the northeast side of the new buildings:

- Nest boxes for Swifts could be incorporated into the eaves. These not only provide nesting sites for Swifts but can also be used by other species such as House Sparrows and Starlings.
- House Martin nests could be provided under the eaves or on the north to east sides of the building.
- Individual boxes, such as the Schwegler Bird Home 1MR, could also be installed at a height of at least 2 m.
- Groups of multiple small bird boxes could also be installed at a height of least 2 m to provide nesting sites for birds such as House Sparrows.

Invertebrates

- 4.13 The habitats on site are poor but will support a limited variety of common invertebrate species; however, potential for more notable species is negligible. Enhancement for invertebrates is advised by creating invertebrate homes for pollinators.

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6.0 Plans

Land off Church Rd, Woodborough,
Pewsey, SN9 5PQ

UKHab Baseline Habitat Plan
August 2025

