

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

LAND AT ASHLEY COOMBE, WARMINSTER,
WILTSHIRE

By

stark ecology^{ltd}

NOVEMBER 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Stark Ecology Ltd was asked by Rubix Land Limited to conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Wiltshire. This is to inform a submission to Wiltshire Council for outline planning permission for residential development of part of the site with associated infrastructure and areas of public open space. Land within the wider blue line ownership boundary was also included in the surveys that have been carried out during 2024 and 2025.

The area of the site within the red line planning boundary is 5.5Ha with the centre of the site located at OS Grid Reference ST870438, to the south of Warminster. It is immediately surrounded by residential development to the north and west and open countryside supporting mixed farmland with excellent woodland and hedgerow connectivity to the south and east. The area of land within the blue line ownership boundary is c.4.3Ha in total area.



Fig 1: The red and blue line boundaries of Land off Ashley Coombe. The site is well connected to hedgerow and woodland networks.

The preliminary ecological appraisal was carried out by Georgie Starkie BSc (Hons) MSc MRSB on 5th April 2024 when the weather was dry with 50% cloud and a moderate wind. The temperature was approximately 14°C.

A follow-up survey to further assess the on-site habitats and carry out a Condition Assessment to inform a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation was carried out by Dominic Price FCMA on 11th July 2025 when the weather was clear, dry and sunny with no wind. The temperature was c.30°C.

The site was found to be suitable to support a range of protected species and so further surveys were carried out during 2024 and 2025:

- Breeding bird surveys were carried out by Gareth Harris MCIEEM between April and July (inclusive) 2024.
- Wintering bird surveys were carried out by Gareth Harris in January and February 2025.
- Ponds within 500m of the site were subject to eDNA analysis in April 2025. eDNA samples were collected by Georgie Starkie (Natural England GCN Survey Licence Number 2016-21144-CLS-CLS).
- Gareth Harris (Natural England Class 3 and 4 Bat Licence Number 2015-11684-CLS-CLS) carried out static monitoring of bat activity over the site from April to October (inclusive) 2025.
- Night-time bat walkover surveys supplemented the static monitoring of bat activity over the site and were conducted once per month by Georgie Starkie (Natural England Class 2 Survey Licence Number 2015-13123-CLS-CLS) from April to October (inclusive) 2025.
- Nest tube and footprint tunnel surveys for hazel dormouse were carried out by Georgie Starkie (Natural England survey licence number 2020-46689-CLS-CLS) between April and October (inclusive).

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).

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The site was surveyed according to the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal set out by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), in which the habitats present on site are classified (according to The UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0). 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 trees within the site boundaries were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats.

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.

Hedgehog: The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support hedgehogs when commuting, foraging, nesting and hibernating.

Breeding Birds

A breeding bird survey was conducted following the new Bird Survey Guidelines (Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group, accessed 2024, <https://birdsurveyguidelines.org>).

“While there are a number of existing approaches to surveying birds in the breeding season, including territory mapping options such as the Common Bird Census (CBC) (Marchant, 1980) and citizen science approaches such as the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) run by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), these methodologies were/are designed to monitor long-term trends in bird populations at a national level. As such they are broadly unsuitable for fine-scale applications, such as ecological impact assessments, which are often undertaken in a single season. As a result, there is an absence of a clear methodology for undertaking ornithological surveys in the bird breeding season. It is the purpose of these guidelines, to address this gap.

“The guidelines are loosely based on the CBC technique, making use of repeated visits in a single season (albeit fewer visits compared to CBC recommendations) and some simplified elements of territory mapping. However, where CBC asks exactly how many individuals are nesting (or holding territory) in a given area, the method presented here seeks to measure in what way, if at all, a given area is important to avian diversity, what species could potentially be breeding and, therefore, what the impacts of the project or development being considered are likely to be.”

A detailed survey methodology is found on the Bird Survey Guidelines website, but an abridged version follows:

Survey Effort and Dates

Six survey visits are typically recommended, spanning the period late March to early July. *“The bird breeding season is generally acknowledged to occur from late February to early August inclusive, although the majority of breeding activity occurs between March and early July. Therefore, as a general framework, breeding bird survey visits should be spread evenly between late March and early July in order to ensure that the surveys cover resident breeders which start breeding early, as well as migrant breeders which arrive later.”*

At Ashley Coombe survey visits commenced in early April, and were completed by mid-July, spanning the full survey period. Five dawn visits and one dusk visit were completed, in line with recommendations.

The survey dates were 4th April, 16th April, 7th May, 29th May, 25th June (dusk) and 16th July 2024.

Survey Timings

Five of the visits were undertaken at dawn, and a sixth was undertaken at dusk, in order to record crepuscular and nocturnal species such as owls, Nightjar, Nightingale, Grasshopper warbler etc. Generally, surveys of the breeding bird community should start between half an hour before sunrise and half an hour after sunrise. Surveys should typically be concluded by around mid-morning (10–11am). Dusk surveys commence before sunset and extend at least 1 hour after sunset.

Survey Conditions

Surveys were undertaken in good weather conditions, avoiding heavy rain, strong winds (Beaufort force >5) and where visibility/detection is negatively affected (e.g. fog, excessive disturbance).

Field Methods

A survey transect was walked by an experienced ornithologist, walked at a slow pace, taking in all habitat features on the site, including woodland, woodland edge, scrub, grassland patches and roadside verges. Due to the small size of the site, the informal network of paths was walked, as well as the roadside pavements and cycle track. This ensured that all parts of the site were adequately covered.

All species encountered on the site or adjacent land were recorded on a field map using the BTO species and activity codes, to denote behaviour. Birds overhead, not associated with the site were also noted, as well as birds feeding overhead.

Activity recorded included singing, calling, alarm-calling, nest building, food/faecal sac carrying, display/courtship and entering occupied nest sites.

Wintering Bird Surveys

A non-breeding bird survey was conducted following the new guidance Bird Survey Guidelines (Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group, accessed 2024, <https://birdsurveyguidelines.org>).

The aim was to identify and qualify the diversity of bird species interacting with the site, e.g., for wintering, commuting, roosting etc, where species may rely on the site for their winter survival and to achieve adequate body condition and health for breeding in the spring.

The methodology is broadly based upon the breeding bird survey methodology contained in the new Bird Survey Guidelines (Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group, accessed 2024, <https://birdsurveyguidelines.org>).

Two walked transects were delivered in January and February 2025. These transects adopted the same routes used in the breeding bird surveys of 2024, encompassing the peripheral boundary hedgerows of the sites, including the edge of adjacent gardens and green space, and included pasture and cultivated land within the site.

A detailed survey methodology is found on the Bird Survey Guidelines website, but an abridged version follows:

Survey Timings

Each survey visit was undertaken from shortly after sunrise, completed by mid-morning. Dusk visits were not employed and were considered unnecessary on this site, especially given the outcome of dusk surveys undertaken for the breeding bird surveys.

Survey Conditions

Surveys were undertaken in good weather condition, avoiding heavy rain, strong winds (Beaufort force >5) and where visibility/detection is negatively affected (e.g., fog, excessive disturbance).

Field Methods

A survey transect was walked by an experienced ornithologist who walked at a slow pace, taking in all habitat features on the site, including woodland, woodland edge, scrub, grassland and cultivated land.

All species encountered on the site or adjacent land were recorded on a field map using the BTO species and activity codes, to denote behaviour.

Birds overhead, not associated with the site were also noted, as well as birds feeding overhead.

Passive Acoustic Monitoring of Bat Activity

Surveys undertaken April to October 2025 inclusive.

Two monitoring points were used:

- Location 1 North. ST 87259 44072 (Wildlife Acoustic SongMeter Mini Bat 2)
- Location 2 South. ST 86936 43731 (Wildlife Acoustic SongMeter Mini Bat 2)

In all cases, omni-directional microphones were used, but efforts were made to ensure that microphones were pointing over open space and not blocked by vegetation or other obstructions, that microphones would not be impacted by

rustling leaves or running water, and that microphones pointed towards the likely commuting routes and foraging areas of bats. i.e., every effort was made to maximise the recording of bat passes.

Surveys were undertaken followed standard guidance provided by Collins (2016), English Nature (2004) and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2004).

These detectors are full spectrum detectors that are triggered automatically to record bat echolocation calls. They can be deployed and left to remotely record bat activity for a period of several nights. The detectors were programmed to begin recording 30 minutes before sunset until 30 minutes after sunrise, which allowed continuous monitoring to take place during the period when bats are active. The SM Mini Bat 2 is pre-programmed with the latitude and longitude of the survey location enabling the software to calculate the local sunset and sunrise times.

Sound analyses

Bat detectors were programmed to record to uncompressed .wav files, ensuring high quality recordings.

All sound data were processed manually, according to parameters described in Russ et al (2021). Later in the summer, analyses were undertaken using the BTO Acoustic Pipeline in order to manage the analysis of many thousands of bush crickets.

The British Trust for Ornithology's [Acoustic Pipeline](#); this recently-launched platform enables efficient processing of large datasets, and identification of sound files to species level, with the confidence levels indicated. It includes classifiers for the identification of bats (and other wildlife such as birds, crickets, small mammals) across Europe from high quality sound files. It processes sound files in the UK using regional classifiers enabling interpretation of results at a county scale (i.e., it takes into account the actual geographic distribution of individual bat species).

Note that the Acoustic Pipeline is currently the only platform able to identify bats using their social calls and is the only platform able to identify multiple species within the same sound file. Confidence in the Acoustic Pipeline is high following "training" of classifiers with thousands of sound files of confirmed species identity.

Sound files were uploaded and analysed by the Acoustic Pipeline; the resulting output was filtered to exclude bycatch of non-target species (such as crickets) and to exclude identifications made with confidence levels below 0.6.

Identifications are checked manually, using Wildlife Acoustic's Kaleidoscope Viewer, as follows-

- All records of greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, barbastelle bat, Leisler's bat, and Nathusius' pipistrelle are checked. Erroneous records are discarded or re-assigned.
- A proportion of noctule, serotine, brown long-eared bat, Daubenton's bat, and Natterer's bat are checked. Erroneous records are discarded or re-assigned.
- Records of Brandt's bat, whiskered bat, and Bechstein's bat are assessed – obviously incorrect records are discarded, and other records are accepted with caution. Records of whiskered & Brandt's bat are recorded aggregated.
- Soprano pipistrelle and common pipistrelle records are accepted.
- Any other bat species will be exceptionally rare/previously unrecorded in the county, and records will be assessed further.

Calls were checked manually in Kaleidoscope Viewer and were analysed and identified in line with Russ et al (2021), Middleton (2020) and Middleton et al (2014). For the purpose of the analysis a bat pass is defined as a single, uninterrupted sequence of echolocation calls lasting a maximum of 15 seconds. Only call sequences of three or more pulses were identified and labelled.

The resulting data were pivot-tabled in Excel and presented as calls by species, by night.

Where the Acoustic Pipeline identified calls of small mammals, particularly shrews and hazel dormouse, these records were checked and included in the report.

Bat Activity Surveys (Transects)

To supplement the static monitoring carried out at this site, bat activity transect surveys were conducted monthly from April to October (inclusive) 2025, each commencing at sunset and continuing for three hours after sunset. The site boundaries (incorporating the habitat within the red and blue line boundaries) were walked at a slow and continuous pace and bat activity was recorded using EM Touch Pro 2 detectors.

Surveys were carried out on 20th April, 28th May, 4th and 24th July (the first survey in July was following a delay to the June survey date), 22nd August, 26th September and 14th October 2025.

Hazel Dormouse

This site is small and so it was not possible to fully comply with the survey methods set out in the Dormouse Conservation Handbook (2nd Edition, which was the current

version at the time surveys were instructed). Thirty dormouse nest tubes and ten footprint tunnels were installed in the hedgerows and scrub around the site boundaries on 4th April 2025. They were then checked by a suitably licensed ecologist (Georgie Starkie, Natural England survey licence number 2020-46689-CLS-CLS) on 22nd May, 11th June, 11th July, 22nd August, 27th September and 16th October 2025.

Footprint tunnels were checked fortnightly (with paper and ink replenished) by the same surveyor until the end of the survey period in October 2025.

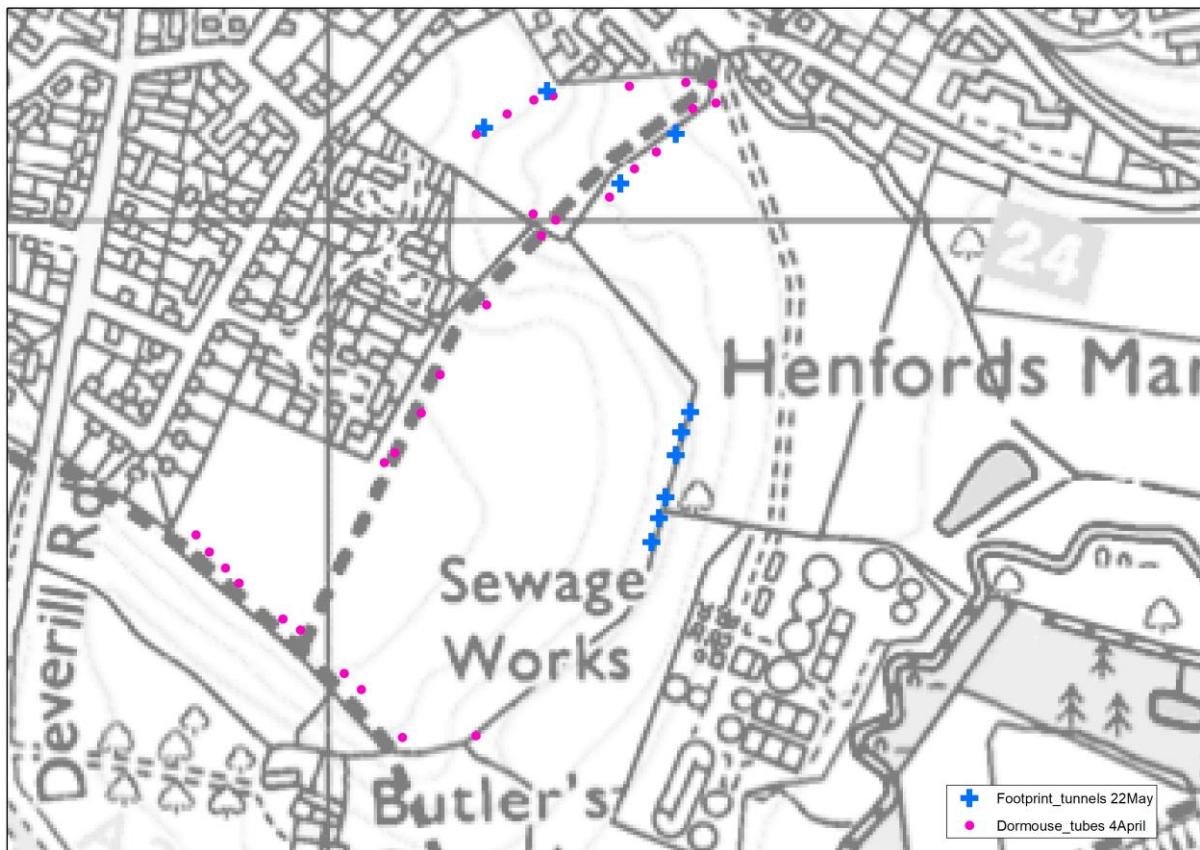


Fig 2: Dormouse nest tubes and footprint tunnels installed at the land off Ashley Coombe site.

Great Crested Newt (eDNA)

Two ponds have been identified within 500m of the land off Ashley Coombe (that are not separated from it by the River Wylfe, a barrier to dispersal for this species). Environmental DNA (eDNA) samples were collected from both ponds on 11th April 2025 and sent for analysis by Surescreen Scientific. There was full access to the banks of both ponds and no limitations to these surveys were identified.

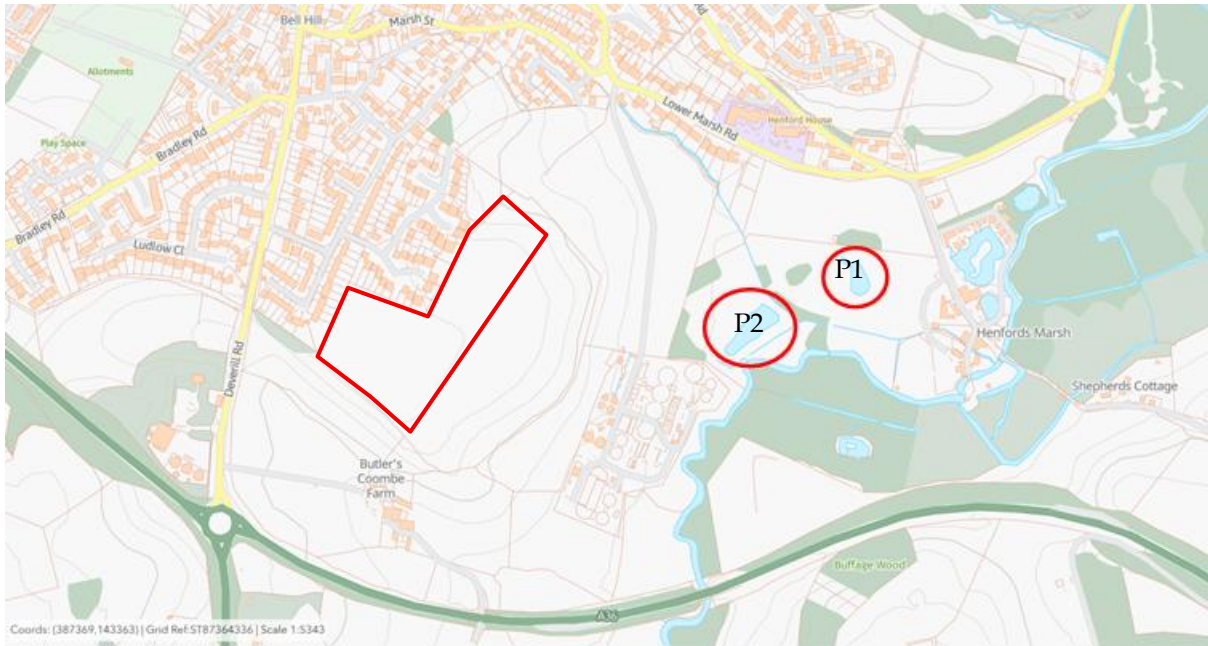


Fig 3: These two ponds are within 500m of the site off Ashley Coombe. eDNA samples were collected on 11th April 2025.

Limitations

Breeding Bird Surveys

Spring 2024 offered significant challenges for ecology surveys, resulting from the unseasonably cool, wet April and May. This raised challenges for undertaking fieldwork in fair weather conditions (when fair weather was limited, and weather was changeable), but also in the progress seen in the breeding bird cycle. Bird activity was typically lower than expected during April and early May.

Bat Activity Surveys

Bat surveys are affected by a range of factors which affect bat activity levels, including stage of bat life cycle, weather conditions, food availability, presence of predators and moon phase (with bright full moons known to impact bat activity levels).

Hazel Dormouse

Some nest tubes were not accessible for much of the summer due to very dense scrub growth.

Due to the limited amount of suitable habitat at this site it was only possible to install 30 nest tubes and 10 footprint tunnels.

In July 2025 a fire destroyed part of the site, including areas of scrub in which dormouse nest tubes had been installed.



Fig 4: Dense bramble scrub in this area of the site, where dormouse nest tubes had been installed, was destroyed by fire in July 2025.

General 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.

Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)

The methodology for the assessment of the likely ecological effects of the proposed development is based on CIEEM's Guidelines for Ecological Assessment in the UK, 2nd edition. Although this assessment does not constitute a formal Ecological/Environmental Impact Assessment, the CIEEM guidelines provide a useful framework for assessing ecological impacts at any level.

A development may have ecological effects beyond its site boundaries, therefore the CIEEM guidelines require that the 'zone of influence' be identified. Due to the relatively small size of this development, for the majority of ecological features the zone of influence is considered unlikely to extend beyond the footprint of the works and immediately adjacent habitat. Without mitigation, the proposed development may result in the following biophysical changes during construction and/or operation:

- Loss of and damage to habitats within or adjacent to the footprint of the development and construction zone.

- Any loss or damage of habitats could result in death and/or injury to protected species should they be present.
- Disturbance of immediately adjacent habitats and any wildlife using them.

RESULTS

Desk Study

Habitats

The River Wylfe, which forms part of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and River Avon System Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is c.300m to the southeast of the eastern boundary of the site. The river is designated as it is a large, lowland river system that includes sections running through chalk and clay, with transitions between the two.

The site does not lie within the consultation zones for the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.

There are no Special Protection Areas (SPA) within 2km of the site.

There are nine Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within a 2km radius of the site, as summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Local Wildlife Sites within 2km of Land off Ashley Coombe.

Local Wildlife Site	Site Description	Distance and Direction from Site
Smallbrook Meadows	A complex site which includes two LNRs and a WWT reserve and supports neutral grassland, wet and dry woodland, swamp and fen vegetation within the southern part of Warminster.	470m NE
Southleigh Wood	A large ancient woodland site mainly coniferised, but with semi-natural Oak woodland in the west.	720m SE
Eastleigh Farm Meadow	A complex of abandoned water meadows dominated by sedges and reeds.	850m E
Woodcroft Wood	Ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland and plantation on an ancient site.	860m SE
Cannimore Farm Meadow	Lowland meadow and valley fen with a stream running through it, with species-rich boundary hedgerows with mature trees.	1.1km W

Local Wildlife Site	Site Description	Distance and Direction from Site
Coldharbour Meadows	Species-rich grassland and swamp vegetation in a flood storage basin along with areas of reedbed, wet-woodland and associated habitats.	1.35km NW
Eastleigh Wood	An ancient woodland site with some semi-natural areas and substantial conifer plantation.	1.5km SE
Cop Heap	Calcareous and neutral grassland, broadleaved woodland and scrub on a low chalk hill on the northern edge of Warminster.	1.6km NE
Broadmead Lane Meadow	A wet meadow on a tributary of the River Wylye just downstream from Shearwater.	1.9km SW

There are no protected habitats within or immediately adjacent to the site.

Species

Bats: The data search results include records of at least thirteen bat species within 2km of the site, including the following identified to species level:

- Western barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*
- Daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii*
- Whiskered *M. mystacinus*
- Natterer's *M. nattereri*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Leisler's *N. leislerii*
- Common *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*
- Soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus*
- Nathusius pipistrelle *P. nathusii*

- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *R. hipposideros*
- Brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*.

A large number of the bat records are from Smallbrook Meadows, which is well connected to this site by high quality commuting and foraging habitat.

Other mammals: The data search returned records of five terrestrial mammal species from within 2km of the site: hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, badger *Meles meles*, hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, otter *Lutra lutra* and water vole *Arvicola amphibius*.

Herpetofauna: The data search returned records of three amphibian species and all four common reptile species from within the search radius. These were:

- Common toad *Bufo bufo*
- Common frog *rana temporaria*
- Great crested newt *Triturus cristata*
- Slow worm *Anguis fragilis*
- Grass snake *Natrix Helvetica*
- Common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*
- Adder *Vipera berus*

Birds: The data search returned records of 49 bird species within the search radius, the following are considered to be most relevant to the site: Skylark *Alauda arvensis*, yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*, redwing *Turdus iliacus*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* and fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*. House sparrow *Passer domesticus*, swift *Apus apus* and house martin *Delichon urbicum* may also be relevant to the proposals to develop the site.

The MAGIC website includes details of one bat licence granted by Natural England for work at locations within 2km. This licence was granted in 2010 for damage and destruction to a common pipistrelle breeding roost.

Although not listed on the MAGIC website, Stark Ecology Ltd has obtained licences for work affecting hazel dormouse at a location which is c.2km to the northwest of Ashley Coombe.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The site comprises the following habitats within the red line planning boundary, shown on the Habitat Map in Appendix 1:

- Arable
- Modified grassland
- Scrub
- Fence

Arable

Much of the southern area of the site was given over to arable fields, with a crop of barley present during the survey on 11th July 2025. The margins supported some species of interest, including dense stands of corn spurrey *Spergula arvensis* and fat-hen *Chenopodium album*. Other species encountered much more sparingly included field pansy *Viola arvensis* and bugloss *Brunnera macrophylla*. Soils were typified by free draining stony chalk, which is often associated with valuable arable assemblages

Although the arable field supported some species of note in the margins, there was an insufficiently diverse assemblage to classify this as an important arable site.



Fig 5: The southwestern area of the site is in arable use.

This photo taken facing northeast on 5th April 2024.



Fig 6: Arable land at the southwest corner of the site.

This photo taken facing southwest on 5th April 2024.

Modified Grassland

This site comprised a large area of grassland, much of which had been cut just prior to survey in July 2025, so the results were based on the remaining stands of grassland. At first sight it appeared to be a good mix of meadow species, with large stands of common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, suggesting a relatively high-quality meadow. However, further survey revealed the overall area to be species-poor, and notably with an almost total absence of forbs. The common bent and sweet vernal-grass were the dominant species across the area, with lesser stands of false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*.

Few forbs were recorded across the area and the most abundant species was common cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*. Other species included ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata* and white clover *Trifolium repens*. Overall diversity was extremely low with typically five species per square metre.

Despite the absence of grasses associated with high nutrient grasses, such as perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, this grassland was relatively species-poor and of low conservation value. As such, even though the species composition was a poor match, it was most closely associated with Modified Grassland (g4), due to the strikingly low species diversity. The habitat condition assessment found the grassland to be in Good condition within this habitat category (see Appendix 2).



Fig 7: The site includes large areas of Modified Grassland.

This photo taken facing east on 5th April 2024.

Scrub

Around the site boundaries are areas of dense predominantly bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. scrub.



Fig 8: Bramble scrub in the northern part of the site.

This photo taken facing northwest on 5th April 2024.

Fence

The boundaries of the site are generally formed by post and wire fences, with some sections of close board fence along the boundaries with private gardens.

Bats

Roosting

There are no buildings or other structures within the site boundaries which could be used by roosting bats.

During the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in April 2024 several mature trees within the boundary hedgerows in the area within the blue line boundary to the north were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. One mature ash tree was found to support a number of Potential Roost Features (PRFs) but as this tree is well outside the construction area no further assessment will be required to inform the development proposals for this site.

Commuting and Foraging

The habitat within the site boundaries was noted during the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to be suitable for bats to use when commuting and foraging through the landscape. The on-site habitats are of lower quality than the habitats in the landscape to the east of the site but it provides good connectivity through the landscape for bat species.

The results of static monitoring carried out at this site from April to October 2025 (inclusive) are set out in Appendix 5 and summarised below.

Greater and lesser horseshoe bats were recorded at both monitoring locations during April and July 2025 but only low numbers of calls were recorded. In September 2025 much higher numbers of calls of both species were recorded at the southern end of the site with greater horseshoe activity in particular concentrated in the hour before sunrise, which may indicate a night roost/feeding perch close to this part of the site or possibly mating behaviour, as in some cases sound files suggested that more than one bat was present.

On 28th April 2025 one call consistent with Bechstein's was recorded at each location (at location 1 at 2236 and at location 2 at 0334).

The following species were also frequently recorded over the site throughout the period of monitoring:

- Common pipistrelle
- Soprano pipistrelle
- Noctule

- Serotine
- Brown long-eared
- Daubenton's
- Whiskered/Brandt's
- Natterer's
- Barbastelle

Less frequently but still regularly recorded species were:

- Leisler's (at location 1 only)
- Nathusius pipistrelle (a likely migrant recorded passing over the site in September and October 2025).

During activity transect surveys carried out between April and October 2025 bat activity over the site was generally limited to commuting by noctule bats and foraging by common and soprano pipistrelle. Particularly high levels of foraging by pipistrelle bats were noted around mature trees to the southeast of the site.

Badgers

No badger setts were identified within the site boundaries and no snuffle holes or latrines were noted. The site supports suitable habitat for badgers as they commute and forage through the surrounding landscape.

Hazel Dormouse

The habitat which is potentially suitable for hazel dormouse at this site is limited to areas of scrub at the site boundaries which are fairly fragmented but which are connected to other areas of suitable habitat in the surrounding landscape. The extent of higher quality dormouse habitat close to the site (in particular to the east) means that remnant dormouse populations could be present in the on-site habitats.

Checks of nest tubes and footprint tunnels carried out from April to October (inclusive) did not identify any confirmed evidence of hazel dormouse in the suitable habitat at this site. One possible dormouse nest was noted in scrub (see Fig 9 below) on 11th July 2025 but the scrub in this area of the site was destroyed by a fire a few days later.

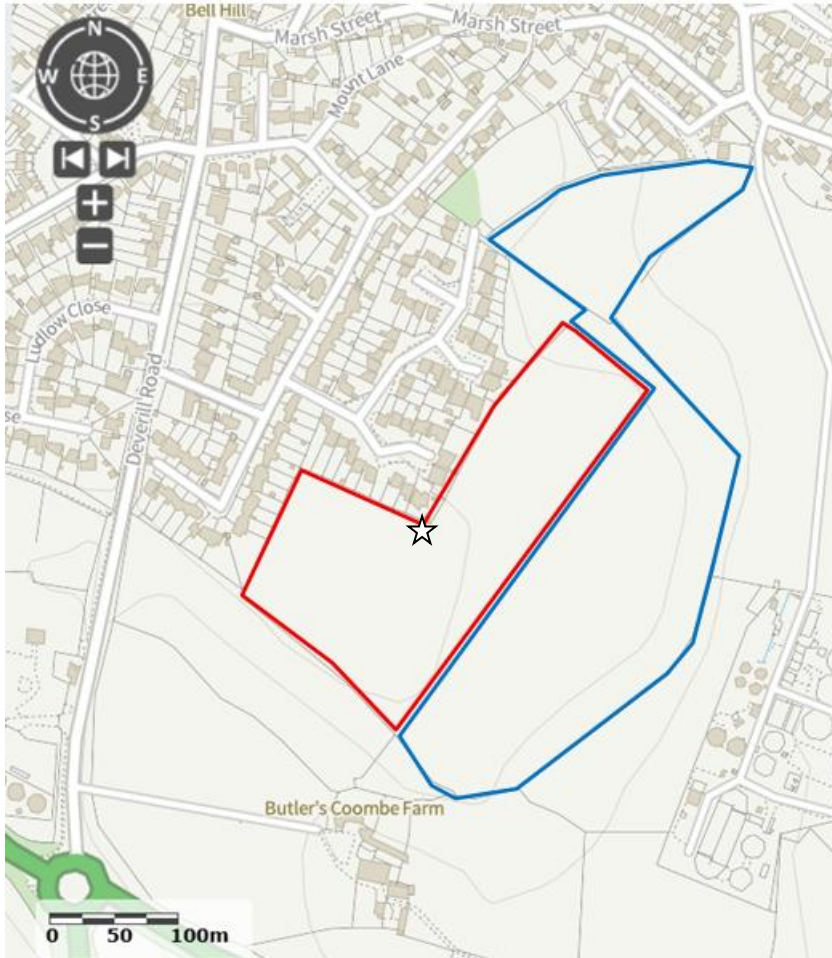


Fig 9: The location of a potential dormouse nest on 11th July 2025.

Hazel dormouse are known to be present in the landscape surrounding the site but have not been found to be present in scrub habitat at the site margins.

Great Crested Newts

Reference to Ordnance Survey mapping data reveals three ponds within 500m of the site, two of which are not separated from it by the River Wylfe, which acts as a barrier to dispersal for this species.

The scrub and grassland at this site provide suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts at all stages of their lifecycle, including for hibernation over the winter months, The ponds that are within 500m are both well used by waterfowl and support little aquatic vegetation so their suitability to support great crested newts was considered to be limited when they were visited on 11th April 2025.



Fig 10: The ponds within 500m of the land off Ashley Coombe are well used by nesting waterfowl, limiting their suitability for use by breeding great crested newts.

This photo taken on 11th April 2025.

An eDNA test of both ponds, carried out at an appropriate time of the year and in good weather conditions, confirmed that both ponds were negative for evidence of great crested newts.

Due to a lack of connectivity to suitable breeding habitat, the site off Ashley Coombe is not considered suitable to support great crested newts.

Reptiles

The site supports suitable habitat for common reptile species for basking and foraging within the grassland and scrub at the site margins. All four common reptile species have been recorded within 2km of the site and it is considered potentially suitable to support them.

Due to high levels of human activity at this site (predominantly dog walkers) reptile refugia surveys were not recommended and the presence of reptiles in areas of suitable habitat is assumed.

Breeding Birds

The hedgerows, trees and scrub provide good habitat for nesting birds. The grassland which dominates was also considered suitable habitat for ground-nesting species during the nesting season, although disturbance levels from human activity, including dog walkers, may lower the suitability of the site for use by ground nesting birds.

Six survey visits were delivered, including 5 dawn surveys and 1 dusk survey. These, and the survey conditions, are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Survey dates & conditions.

Visit	Date	Start Time	Weather Conditions
1	04/04/2024	0715	11°C, dry, low breeze, 6/8 cloud, heavy rain overnight to 6am
2	16/04/2024	0700	7°C, breezy, dry, 4/8 cloud, feels cold, rain front coming in
3	07/05/2024	0700	8°C, overnight rain, misty early morning, 8/8 cloud, still
4	29/05/2024	0700	13°C, heavy overnight rain, dry during survey, low breeze
5	25/06/2024	2110 (sunset 2130)	22°C, still/slight breeze, dry, 8/8 cloud
6	16/07/2024	0645	15°C, heavy rain overnight, misty at dawn, 8/8 cloud, breezy

A total of 40 bird species were recorded across these surveys, including many registrations of birds flying overhead, and foraging on/over neighbouring land. A full list of these species, their conservation status and their status on site are detailed in Appendix 3.

Thirty-three species were using the development site, with many considered territorial, but a few considered likely migrants (e.g. Willow warbler, Siskin); eight species were noted overhead, foraging or commuting (Cormorant, Grey heron, Canada goose, Mallard, Lesser black-backed gull) or using adjacent land (Collared dove, Greenfinch).

Species recorded have been classified as follows, in line with the Bird Survey Guidelines:

A - Priority species recorded breeding on site

Red listed species of Conservation Concern: Swift, House martin, Mistle thrush, Starling, House sparrow, Linnet, Greenfinch, Yellowhammer. Of which none were confirmed/suspected to breed on site, primarily using residential areas adjacent, but which use the site for foraging.

Amber Listed species of Conservation Concern: Kestrel, Lesser black-backed gull, Stock dove, Woodpigeon, Wren, Dunnock, Song thrush, Willow warbler. Of which

only Woodpigeon, Wren, Dunnock, Song Thrush are confirmed/suspected to have bred on site.

Birds listed on Schedule 1: Red Kite observed foraging, but not breeding on site.

See Appendix 3 for the estimated numbers of territories recorded for each priority species recorded. The location of estimated breeding territories of priority species is also provided (omitting those species which were recorded only once and those species only foraging on site or flying overhead).

Wood pigeon and Wren were recorded breeding throughout the site, using the edge habitats and dense scrub. Note that these species are included on the Amber List of birds of conservation concern in recognition of the significance of the UK population in a European context (now >20% of the breeding population) rather than specific decline in the UK.

The adjacent housing and residential areas support breeding House sparrow, and foci of activity suggest perhaps three colonies located on the western edge of the site using these residential areas. These House sparrows are seen throughout the development site, utilising the foraging resources provided here and in adjacent gardens.

Starlings were recorded regularly and in good numbers – multiple nesting pairs were present in the adjacent residential area, with several singing males, displaying pairs, territorial disputes, and foraging adults noted during most visits. Adults were observed on multiple occasions carrying food back to nesting sites, flying into the residential areas; they were likely observed carrying faecal sacs away from nests. As nestlings fledged, post breeding flocks of adults and juveniles were frequently seen across the site, within the red line boundary. As for House sparrow, the site is clearly of crucial importance for Starlings, providing extensive foraging for the large breeding population in the adjacent residential area.

Mistle thrush was recorded in two locations, just outside of the red line – however, this species typically forages upon grassland, pastures and green spaces, so nearby breeding birds are likely to forage within the red line. This species breeds early, typically fledging by late April. It is not suspected that this species bred within the development site but likely bred in nearby gardens or parkland which offer the combination of mature trees and open grassland beloved of this species.

Breeding birds associated with hedgerows and trees – these include Wren, Dunnock, Song thrush, and Willow warbler. Due to the absence of internal hedgerows and scrub, these were confined to the site boundary and/or adjacent hedgerows, and therefore part of their territories lie outside of the red line.

“Typical” farmland birds include Linnet and Yellowhammer. None were suspected to breed here; a large flock of Linnet was observed on the early April visit, associated with the cultivated fields and bird feeders in adjacent gardens, but this wasn’t seen on following visits, suggesting this was a late dispersing winter flock that bred elsewhere. A single Yellowhammer was also seen, foraging with House sparrows, and was not suspected to have bred here. Rook was recently added to the BOCC list, recognising that the UK supports a significant proportion of the European population. None were suspected to have bred on site, but one or more rookeries are known nearby; Rook were often recorded foraging on the site, and adjacent pastures in later visits.

Lesser black-backed gulls were noted flying over site on several occasions; Swifts were noted foraging overhead, as well as House Martins, typically associated with the insect abundance associated with the sewage treatment works to the east. A juvenile Kestrel was noted foraging during the dusk survey from the telegraph wires crossing the site – this is not suspected to have bred here, or nearby. A pair of Mallard were recorded in flight only.

Stock doves were noted during visits 2 and 3; a pair was observed in flight close to the boundary (in potentially suitable nesting habitat, such as cavities in mature trees) during visit 3, and during visit 3 four adults were recorded foraging on the ground amongst cattle on the adjacent pasture. It’s likely that one or more pairs bred off sites in mature trees or buildings, but breeding wasn’t suspected on site.

B - Secondary species recording breeding on site

Secondary species breeding (or suspected to be breeding) on site include Collared dove, Green woodpecker, Pied Wagtail, Robin, Blackbird, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Great tit, Coal tit, Blue tit, Treecreeper, Jackdaw, Carrion crow, Goldfinch.

C - Species recorded foraging overhead

These include Swift, House martin, Swallow, Red Kite.

D - Species recorded commuting overhead, but not associated with the site

This includes Grey heron (4/4/24), Cormorant (16/4/24), Red Kite, Mallard, Siskin.

It is also worth adding a category here of birds foraging on adjacent land, also utilising the development; for example, large numbers of corvids (especially, Carrion crow, Rook and Jackdaw) foraged along the corridor of the River Wylfe, and around the sewage treatment works. A lot of activity was noted of birds moving between the survey site and sewage treatment works, and for example, during the dusk survey on the 25th June, a notable movement of birds was recorded from the survey site,

onto the sewage works at dusk, as birds gathered to pre-roost, before then moving into roosting sites in surrounding trees. Also recorded foraging in the vicinity of the sewage treatment works were small numbers of Pied wagtail, Chiffchaff, and Swifts.

In addition, the cultivated land parcel in the western corner of the site, also favoured flocks of non-breeding birds, including the Linnet flock in early April, but later in the season small numbers of Wood pigeon, Jackdaws and Rooks were recorded foraging here, with smaller numbers of Starling, House sparrow, Pied wagtail and Blackbird.

Wintering Birds

Two early morning survey visits were delivered. These, and the survey conditions, are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3: Survey dates & conditions

Visit	Date	Start Time	Weather Conditions
1	29/01/2025	0830	2°C, frost overnight, 8/8 cloud cover Cirrus clouds, dry, still, sunny
2	27/02/2025	0815	2C, 1/8 cloud cover, dry, still, sunny

A total of 29 bird species were recorded across these surveys, including many registrations of birds flying overhead, and foraging on/over neighbouring land. A full list of these species, their conservation status and their status on site are detailed in Appendix 4.

Twenty-two species were recorded using the development site; an additional seven species were recorded flying over or across the site, or recorded on adjacent land, for example foraging on adjacent pastures (Little egret, Canada goose, mallard), the sewage treatment works (Rook, Lesser black backed gull, Herring gull, Stock dove)

Some bird species were likely resident, and were already exhibiting territorial behaviour, e.g. singing Song thrush, great tit, Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Green woodpecker, Blackbird, Dunnock and Robin. (The Mallard and Canada geese were also territorial and were observed courting and displaying).

Species considered to be non-resident, and likely only wintering here, or migrating through, were Siskin, Meadow pipit and Redwing.

Species recorded have been classified as follows, in line with the Bird Survey Guidelines:

A - Priority species recorded on site

Red listed species of Conservation Concern: Starling, House sparrow, Greenfinch, Herring gull. Starling and House sparrow are nesting in houses within the adjacent housing estate but are foraging within the boundary hedgerows and adjacent gardens. At least 50 House sparrow are regularly recorded, including a flock of 30 associating with 130 Chaffinches using the cultivated land/adjacent gardens.

These birds are utilising the cultivated ground at the southern end of the development site, as well as adjacent gardens. They are typically not using the grassland areas within the development but restrict themselves to the cultivated areas close to the gardens and housing.

A wintering flock of 25+ Greenfinch was noted using hedgerows and green space at the northern end of the site

Herring gulls are primarily using the area around the sewage treatment works for foraging, although a pair was noted here on one occasion.

Amber Listed species of Conservation Concern: Lesser black-backed gull, Mallard, Stock dove, Woodpigeon, Wren, Dunnock, Song thrush, Redwing, Rook and Meadow pipit.

Lesser black-backed gull, Mallard, Stock dove, Rook were recorded foraging on land adjacent to the development, and/or flying over the development site; they are typically foraging around the sewage treatment works or using the adjacent pastures. Rooks appear to be breeding in trees surrounding the sewage treatment works.

Amber listed species using the development site include Woodpigeon, Wren, Dunnock, Song thrush, Meadow pipit and Redwing.

Meadow pipit and Redwing were recorded in small numbers (2 and 1 bird respectively) and relate to birds wintering on/migrating across the site. Neither species will breed at this location, although Meadow pipit do breed on nearby Salisbury Plain. Redwing often form large winter flocks, foraging on berry-laden hedgerows, before dispersing and returning to breeding grounds in eastern Europe and Scandinavia.

Woodpigeon, Wren, Dunnock and Song thrush are likely to be resident birds at this location, as individuals of all species were recording singing and courting and are considered likely to be territorial resident birds.

Birds listed on Schedule 1: The listing of species upon Schedule 1 relates to breeding birds, and the additional protections afforded to these species, considered to be rarer or more prone to disturbance in the breeding season. This listing has little or no relevance to a winter bird survey unless breeding behaviour of these species is noted.

The only Schedule 1 bird species noted were Redwing, a species that does breed in Wiltshire.

B - Secondary species recorded on site

Secondary species recorded on site include Green woodpecker, Pied Wagtail, Robin, Blackbird, Goldcrest, Great tit, Blue tit, Jackdaw, Carrion crow, Magpie, Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Siskin. These comprise common and widespread passerines, found across much of the Wiltshire countryside.

C - Species recorded foraging overhead '

None.

D - Species recorded commuting overhead, but not associated with the site

These include Lesser black-backed gull.

During the breeding bird surveys, an additional category was added here of birds foraging on adjacent land, also utilising the development; when for example, large numbers of corvids (especially Carrion crow, Rook and Jackdaw) foraged along the corridor of the River Wylfe, and around the sewage treatment works. A lot of activity was noted of birds moving between the survey site and sewage treatment works. Such behaviour was recorded during the winter bird surveys, albeit in smaller numbers than observed during the breeding season. This likely reflects that many corvids are still yet to return to breeding grounds, and are foraging across the nearby extensive grasslands, for example, Salisbury Plain.

Other Species

Hedgehog

The site supports suitable habitat for hedgehogs to use when commuting and foraging through the wider landscape at night.

Brown hare

The site and surrounding landscape are suitable for brown hare to use when commuting and foraging.

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.

Where a badger sett is present within a proposed development site in England it is possible to request a licence from Natural England to close or interfere with the sett, if the reasons for doing so can be justified. Licences are only granted between 1st July and 30th November and an application can only be made once planning permission has been granted.

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.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The impact of the potential direct and indirect effects arising from the construction and operation of the proposed new development on protected sites, habitats and species has been assessed. The following species have been discounted from Impact Assessment as the site is considered unsuitable to support them:

- Roosting bats
- Hazel dormouse
- Great crested newt

Table 4 on the following pages sets out the anticipated impacts arising from the construction and operation of the new development, includes mitigation measures to address these impacts and then summarises the residual effect of each element.

In accordance with the EcIA Guidelines, the mitigation measures adopted aim to avoid, reduce and/or mitigate the impacts of the proposed new development. The purpose and objectives of these measures are to:

- Avoid the risk of killing or injuring protected species;
- Avoid damage to retained habitats within the wider site; and
- Protect key habitat features associated with the nearby SAC.

Description of proposed works

Seventy-seven new dwellings (with associated access and infrastructure) will be constructed on an area of Arable Land and Modified Grassland off Ashley Coombe. Mixed scrub at the site boundaries will be retained and there will be no impact on mature trees that are close to (but outside) the red line planning boundary.

Table 4: Ecological Impacts

Ecological Feature and Impact	Effect without Mitigation	Practical Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts after Mitigation
<u>Habitats</u>			
<i>Construction Phase</i>			
River Avon SAC	The site lies c.300m upslope from the SAC and there is potential for construction activities to result in harm to the watercourse from dust, run-off and other surface pollutants.	A CEMP will be produced to ensure strict protocols are in place to protect the river and river corridor throughout construction.	Neutral effect on the SAC.
<i>Operational Phase</i>			
River Avon SAC	Neutral.	None proposed.	Neutral effect on the SAC.
<u>Commuting and Foraging Bats</u>			
<i>Construction Phase</i>			
Bat species commuting and foraging through the wider landscape over the mixed scrub and grassland.	Without mitigation, development has the potential to result in disturbance to bats	A CEMP will be produced to ensure strict protocols are in place to protect commuting and foraging bats from disturbance during construction, to include (but not be limited	Neutral effect on bats commuting and foraging.

	commuting and foraging over the site and surroundings.	to): Adherence to strict nighttime working and lighting restrictions.	
<i>Operational Phase</i>			
Bats species commuting and foraging through the wider landscape over the mixed scrub and boundary hedgerows.	Without mitigation, development in close proximity to habitat which is of value to bats when commuting and foraging could be significant at a County level.	The Landscape Proposals for this site include the retention and enhancement of mixed scrub at the site boundaries. A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) will be produced to ensure habitat creation is carried out to ensure successful establishment. New external lighting will be designed to limit light spill onto ecologically sensitive areas to levels which would not be anticipated to result in negative impacts on bat species.	Neutral effect on bats commuting and foraging.
<u>Badgers</u>			
<i>Construction Phase</i>			
Harm to badgers that commute and forage through the site.	Major negative effect at Site level.	A CEMP will be produced to ensure strict protocols are in place to protect badgers from harm during construction, to include (but not be limited to):	Neutral.

		- Any excavations to be covered or left with an escape route for animals which fall into excavations overnight; - Suitable and safe storage of equipment and machinery to avoid accidental harm; and - Adherence to strict nighttime working and lighting restrictions.	
<i>Operational Phase</i>			
No impacts anticipated.	Neutral.	None proposed.	Neutral.
<u>Reptiles</u>			
<i>Construction Phase</i>			
Harm to reptiles that are present within the working area during site clearance and construction work.	Major negative effect at Site level.	A CEMP will be produced to ensure strict protocols are in place to protect reptiles from harm during construction, to include (but not be limited to): - Sensitive working methods and timings when carrying out initial site clearance; and - Safe storage of machinery and materials to prevent reptiles from	Neutral.

		accidental harm.	
<i>Operational Phase</i>			
No impacts predicted.	Neutral.	The proposals for this site include large areas of grassland in areas of public open space which will enhance opportunities for reptiles when sheltering, foraging and over the winter hibernation period.	Neutral.
<u>Breeding Birds</u>			
<i>Construction Phase</i>			
Vegetation removal could cause damage or destruction of active bird nests if undertaken between March and August (inclusive).	Major negative effect at Site level.	Sensitive timing of any vegetation removal to avoid the bird breeding season (March – August, inclusive). Where this is not possible, vegetation to be removed under the direct supervision of a suitably experienced ecologist. Where nests are present, vegetation removal will need to be delayed until the young have fledged and an ecologist has confirmed that the nest is no longer in use.	Neutral effect.
<i>Operational Phase</i>			
Loss of foraging habitat for house sparrow.	Major negative effect at Local level.	The proposals for this site include enhancement of boundary scrub, which will enhance sheltering and foraging	Neutral.

		opportunities for a range of bird species when established, including house sparrow. Grassland in public open space will provide additional foraging resources.	
<u>Hedgehog</u>			
<i>Construction Phase</i>			
Hedgehogs commuting through the site could become trapped in excavations or be harmed by stored materials and machinery.	Major negative effect at Site level.	A CEMP will be produced to ensure strict protocols are in place to protect hedgehogs from harm during construction, to include (but not be limited to): - Any excavations to be covered or left with an escape route for animals which fall into excavations overnight; - Suitable and safe storage of equipment and machinery to avoid accidental harm; and - Adherence to strict nighttime working and lighting restrictions.	Neutral effect.
<i>Operational Phase</i>			
Boundary fences could act as a barrier for this species when moving through the	Major negative effect at Local level.	Gaps of 12cm x 12cm will be left at the base of all new boundary fences to ensure the	Neutral.

surrounding landscape.		free movement of hedgehogs through the site and surrounding landscape.	
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DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Description of proposed works

The proposals for the site include the construction of seventy-seven new dwellings with associated access and infrastructure with areas of public open space predominantly to the north and east of the new development.

Designated sites

The site lies c.300m upslope from the River Avon SAC and SSSI, which are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended (known as the Habitat Regulations). Under the legislation, any potential development within the vicinity of a SAC must receive an additional impact assessment by a competent authority to ascertain potential impacts upon it. As such, further consultation with the Local Planning Authority/Natural England will be required as part of this application for outline planning consent.

Construction, including landscape planting, will need to be informed by a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), setting out measures to be adopted to protect the river and surrounding habitats from accidental harm. This CEMP will need to include (but not be limited to):

- Identification of ecological protection areas/buffer zones, tree root protection areas and details of physical means of protection.
- A summary of potentially damaging construction activities.
- An outline of proposed Environmental Best Practice working methodologies for construction.
- Proposed mitigation measures and sensitive working methods to address potential negative impacts of construction activities on protected and notable habitats and species.
- Details of required timings, and responsible parties in relation to the above-listed measures, including the role of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW).

The details set out in the CEMP will also protect other designated or protected sites that are within 2km of land at Ashley Coombe.

Habitats

The footprint of the proposed works will impact upon arable farmland and Modified Grassland. These habitats are common and not intrinsically ecological valuable and

therefore the construction of dwellings on these areas of the site would be anticipated to have limited ecological impact.

The scrub at the site boundaries is a more valuable ecological habitat which will not be impacted by the works and as such no adverse impacts upon it are anticipated.

The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Metric, submitted as a separate document, confirms that the proposals for this site can exceed the 10% target through the creation of Other Neutral Grassland in Good condition across all areas of Public Open Space.

Bats

Roosting

There are no structures or other features within the red line site boundary that could be used by roosting bats but integrated roost features will be provided in new dwellings in suitable areas of the site which are close to existing hedgerow/scrub habitat. The following integrated features would be suitable:

- [Integrated Eco Bat Box | NHBS Naturschutz](#) (a mix of cavity and crevice boxes would be recommended)
- [Vivara Pro Build-in WoodStone Bat Box | NHBS Naturschutz](#)

Commuting and Foraging

The on-site habitats are suitable for bats as they forage and commute through the wider landscape and they are well connected to higher quality habitat in the surroundings, particularly to the east along the River Wylye, through open pasture and to woodland.

Static monitoring and night-time activity surveys confirmed that bats, including species such as barbastelle, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe, rely on the habitats at this site when commuting and foraging through the surrounding landscape.

The proposals for the site will result in the loss of an area of arable land, which is of limited value to bats when commuting and foraging, and some areas of Modified Grassland. As the site will include significant areas of public open space which will be managed as grassland in Good condition, and as boundary scrub vegetation will be retained, it is anticipated that the site will continue to provide high quality habitat for bats and there will be no severance of connectivity for bats as they move through the surrounding landscape.

Lighting of the new development must result in no increase in light spill onto the southern boundary of the site, which provides important commuting and foraging habitat for greater and lesser horseshoe bats. It is proposed that final lighting design for this site will be agreed as a condition of any forthcoming planning consent.

Hazel Dormouse

Dormice are known to exist within the locality, and the scrub bounding the site was considered to potentially be suitable to support dormice as part of their wider habitat network. No evidence of dormice has been confirmed at this site and as boundary scrub habitat will be retained, no loss of suitable habitat for them is anticipated.

Badgers, Brown Hare and Hedgehog

No badger setts have been identified at the site and no latrines, pathways or snuffle holes were found. However, the site could be used by badgers and other wildlife when commuting and foraging through the surroundings and so the following steps should be taken to avoid accidental harm to animals moving across the site during development works:

- Any trenches that have to be left open overnight must be adapted so that any animal that falls into it is able to escape, either by leaving a gradient at one end, or placing a structure (such as a plank of wood) in the trench to allow animals to climb out; and
- Anything that may present a fire or other hazard (eg. stored chemicals) should be kept securely locked and made inaccessible to wild animals moving around the site at night.

Reptiles

The site provides suitable habitat for common reptile species such as slow worm and grass snake.

To protect individual animals from harm during construction, the following precautionary working methods will be adopted.

Precautionary Working Methods

April – September (Inclusive)

Where site works are to be carried out over the spring and summer months, when reptiles are active and could be present within the grassland, the following approach to site preparation is recommended in order to avoid negative impacts on them.

Prior to any works commencing, and before any delivery of materials for the works, all vegetation in the construction area should be progressively mown to gradually reduce the length and density of the vegetation on site. The final cut should be as close to the ground as possible without scouring. Progressive mowing carried out over several days will encourage any reptiles present to move out of the development area into surrounding retained habitat. Once the vegetation has been mown to ground level it must be kept close mown until works on site are complete. If the vegetation is allowed to re-grow reptiles may move back onto the development site and a progressive mowing regime should be reinstated to prevent harm to animals that have returned.

October - March (Inclusive)

The areas of the site that will be affected by construction do not provide suitable shelter for hibernating reptiles and there are no constraints when work is being carried out during this period.

Enhancement

Grassland in the public open space provided as part of this scheme has the potential to provide significant improvements for reptile species. A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) would be prepared as a condition of the consent for this scheme and would include the enhancement and ongoing management of the grassland for the benefit of reptiles (and other species). The provision of three artificial hibernacula in quiet areas surrounding the development would provide additional benefit for reptiles (as well as amphibians and small mammals), and will be built to the following specification:

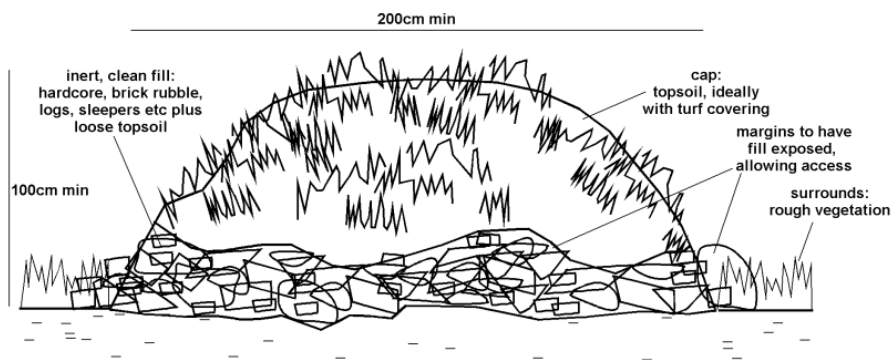


Fig 11: Hibernacula design (English Nature, 2001)

Breeding Birds

Forty bird species were recorded during these surveys, of which 33 species were utilising the proposed development and 9 were species commuting or foraging overhead and not actually utilising the site.

Eight red listed species of Conservation Concern were recorded: Swift, House martin, Mistle thrush, Starling, House sparrow Linnet, Greenfinch (of which House martin and Swift were just foraging overhead).

Ten amber Listed species of Conservation Concern were recorded: Stock dove, Wood pigeon, Wren, Dunnock, Song thrush, Willow warbler (plus Mallard, Kestrel, Lesser black-backed gull, Rook which didn't breed on the site)

Birds listed on Schedule 1 recorded using the site include only Red kite, recorded foraging/commuting, but not suspected to have bred within or close to the red line.

Within the site, there is suitable nesting habitat for ground-nesting farmland birds such as Skylark – none were noted during these surveys, and this is considered likely a result of regular disturbance caused by dogwalkers as well as the very high abundance of predators, particularly corvids associated with the site and the adjacent sewage treatment works.

Consequently, all suitable nesting habitat is associated with the boundary, whether gardens and residential areas, the boundary hedgerows, or the adjacent hedgerows, scrub and pastures.

The site therefore favours species utilising either hedgerows and mature trees (such as Woodpigeon, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Goldfinch etc) or residential areas and gardens (House sparrow, Starling, House martin, Swift, Robin, Blackbird).

Relative to the size of the survey site, much of the site is therefore not utilised for breeding, and in fact, the importance of the site relates to foraging activity. Breeding Starling, House sparrow, and other passerines in the gardens such as Robin, Blackbird, Song thrush, were frequently recorded foraging on the fields, and carrying food back to nesting sites in these dwellings.

The area of cultivation in the western corner of the site attracted small flocks of Linnet in early April, Wood pigeon, Jackdaws and Rooks, with smaller numbers of Starling, House sparrow, Pied wagtail and Blackbird. Birds gathering to forage around the sewage treatment works often utilised surrounding land, and so corvids (Rook, Jackdaw, Carrion crow) were seen gathering and moving between these fields.

In conclusion, the site is important for foraging birds of several species, but particularly for House sparrow and Starling, breeding in the nearby dwellings.

Enhancement

Enhancement for nesting birds will be provided in the new dwellings where integrated features will be incorporated in properties which are well connected to suitable habitat around the site boundaries. A range of nest features will be provided, including:

- [1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terrace | NHBS Naturschutz](#)
- [PRO UK Rendered Build-In Swift Box | NHBS Naturschutz](#)
- [Vivara Pro WoodStone House Martin Nest | NHBS Naturschutz](#)

The grassland in the public open space will retain foraging resources for a range of bird species and will be managed to provide a variety of food sources including seeds, worms and other invertebrates.

Wintering Birds

Across two winter bird survey visits, 29 species were recorded using the development site and adjacent land. Twenty-two species were recorded using the development site, and an additional 7 species were using adjacent land.

During the surveys, many individuals were considered to be resident birds already exhibiting territorial behaviour. Three species were recorded that were considered not be resident on the development site and unlikely to breed here (Meadow pipit, Siskin and Redwing).

Four Red listed species were recorded of which only three were actually using the development site - Starling, House sparrow, Greenfinch. Starling and House sparrow are breeding in the housing estate adjacent to the development but utilise the development site for foraging. Greenfinch are utilising the thick hedgerows and gardens and green space at the northern end of the site and will be impacted by changes in hedgerow management and quality of the development site.

Ten Amber listed species were recorded, of which four species were recorded on adjacent land (Lesser black-backed gull, Mallard, Stock dove, Rook) and six species were using the development site (Woodpigeon, Wren, Dunnock, Song thrush, Meadow pipit and Redwing.), albeit in small numbers. Most of these birds were considered likely to be resident breeding birds, except Meadow pipit and Redwing which are wintering only.

The wintering bird assemblage of the development site is characteristic of the wider countryside, with moderate numbers of common and widespread bird species. Only the association of the development site with adjacent gardens and green space enables the site to support birds of conservation concern, notably House sparrow, Starling and Greenfinch.

Almost all birds recorded on the development site are utilising the hedgerows and boundary features, especially adjacent gardens and green space, and especially where birds are provisioned with artificial food at garden feeders. These birds are utilising the combination of gardens, green space and hedgerows and the grassland and cultivated land for foraging.

In conclusion, the site provides foraging opportunities within boundary hedgerows and cultivated land for foraging wintering birds, particularly those breeding in the adjacent housing estates.

Enhancement

A number of the species recorded using the site over the winter months would benefit from additional planting in boundary scrub areas as this would provide additional refuge opportunities as well as enhancing foraging opportunities at this location.

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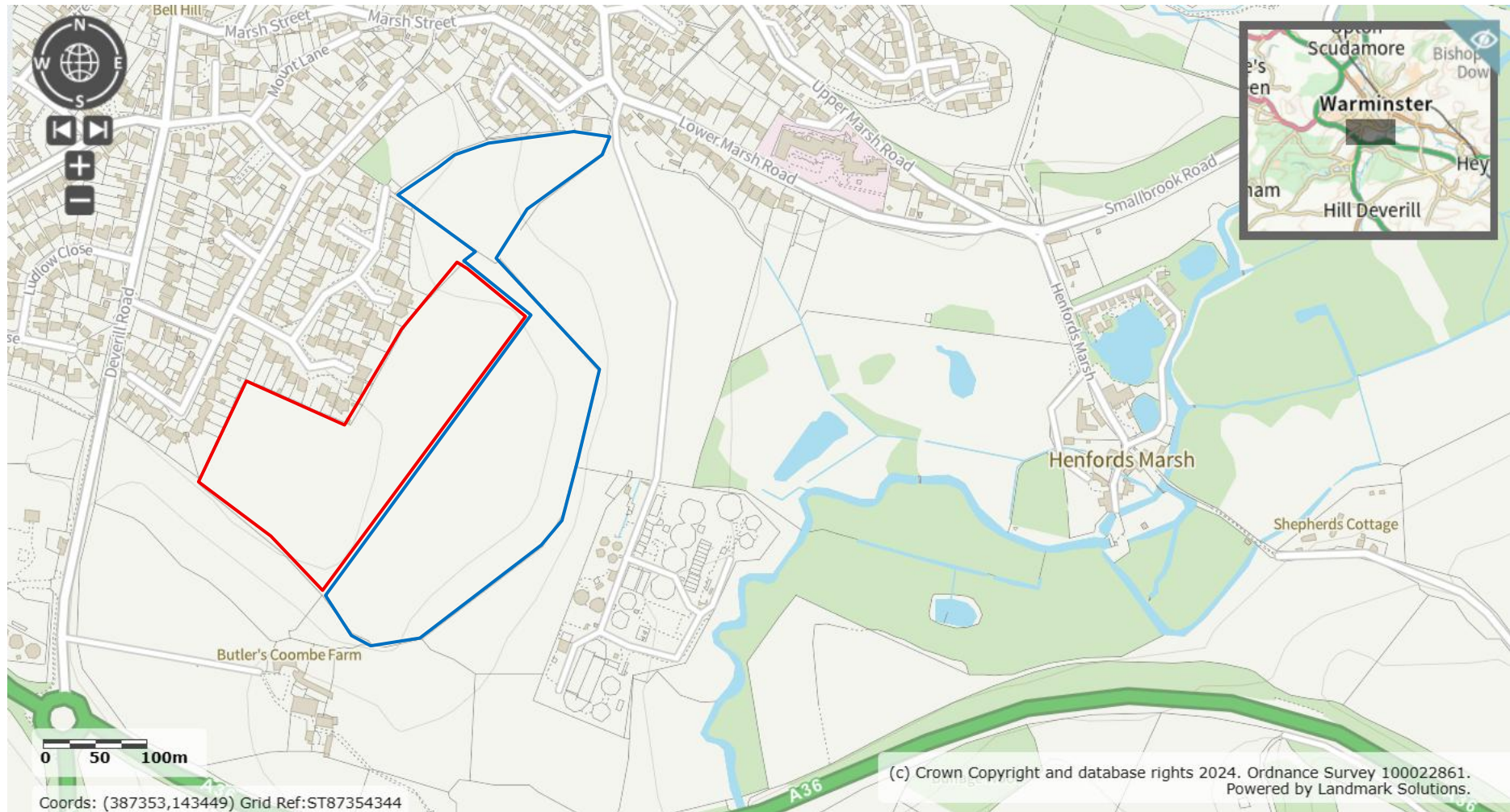
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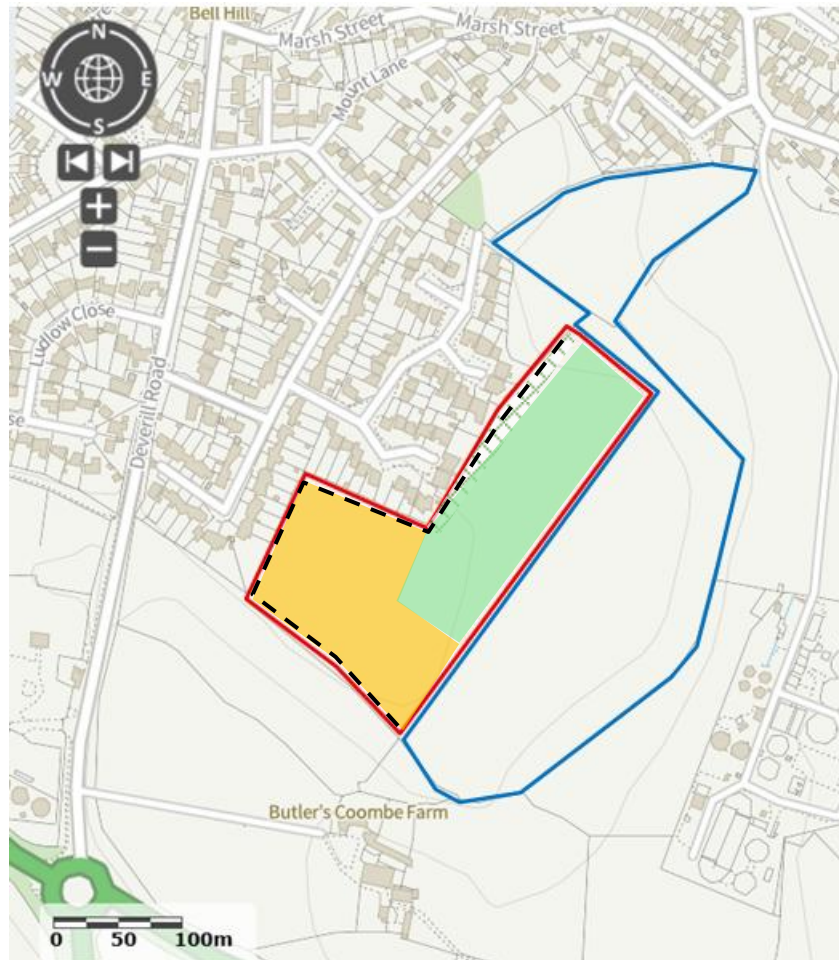
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Habitat Map



Key

- Site boundary
- Blue-line ownership boundary
- Arable
- Modified grassland (Good condition)
- Scrub (Moderate condition)
- Fence

Indicative Site Layout



APPENDIX 2: CONDITION ASSESSMENT SHEETS

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type			
Grassland - Modified grassland			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster	Survey date and Surveyor name	11/07/2025 Dominic Price
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference	ST870438	Habitat parcel reference	
Habitat Description			
ukhab - UK Habitat Classification			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. A Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.		Yes	
B Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.		Yes	
C Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.		Yes	
D Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.		Yes	
E Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens)².		Yes	
F Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.		Yes	
G There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA⁴).		Yes	
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)			Yes
Number of criteria passed			7

Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved *1/✓	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)	Yes	
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)		
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)		
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			
Footnotes			
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>. Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover. Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement. Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).			

Condition Sheet: SCRUB Habitat Type			
Habitat Types			
Heathland and shrub - Blackthorn scrub Heathland and shrub - Gorse scrub Heathland and shrub - Hawthorn scrub Heathland and shrub - Hazel scrub Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub Heathland and shrub - Dunes with sea buckthorn (H2160) Heathland and shrub - Willow scrub			
Habitat Description			
For Dunes with sea buckthorn see:	Dunes with sea-buckthorn (Dunes with Hippophae rhamnoides) - Special Areas of Conservation (jncc.gov.uk)		
For other scrub types see:	ukhab – UK Habitat Classification		
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster	Survey date and Surveyor name	11/07/2025 Georgie Starkie
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference	ST870438	Habitat parcel reference	
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range). ¹ - At least 80% of scrub is native, - There are at least three native woody species ² , - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover (except hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , common juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i> , sea buckthorn <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i> (only in its restricted native range), or box <i>Buxus sempervirens</i> , which can be up to 100% cover).	No	
B	Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran ³) shrubs are all present.	Yes	
C	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁵) and species indicative of suboptimal condition ⁶ make up less than 5% of ground cover.	Yes	
D	The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.	Yes	
E	There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	No	
Number of criteria passed		3	

Condition Assessment Result (out of 5 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√	
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)		
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	Yes	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)		
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF BREEDING BIRD SURVEYS 2024

Species	Conservation status & protection				Species present by visit						Breeding Status	Comment
	BOCC ³	Schedule 1 ⁴	UK BAP ⁵	S41 / Local BAP ⁶	04/04/2024	16/04/2024	07/05/2024	29/05/2024	25/06/2022	16/07/2022		
Cormorant						y						Breeding offsite, commuting overhead
Grey heron					y						-	Breeding offsite, commuting overhead
Canada goose					y	y	y	y			n/a	Breeding offsite
Mallard	A						y				n/a	breeding offsite
Red kite							y				n/a	breeding offsite
Kestrel	A								y		n/a	breeding offsite
Lesser black-backed gull	A				y	y				y	-	Breeding offsite, commuting overhead
Stock dove	A					y	y				Probable Breeding	1-2 pairs breeding in mature trees
Wood Pigeon	A				y	y	y	y	y	y	Probable Breeding	Multiple pairs in the hedgerows and scrub
Collared dove						y	y				Possible breeding	1 pair, assoc with housing
Swift	R									y	-	Foraging high over site only

Green woodpecker						y				y	Possible breeding	breeding confirmed with juvenile, but unknown nest location
Swallow					y	y	y	y		y	n/a	breeding offsite
House martin	R					y		y			n/a	breeding offsite
Pied wagtail						y					Possible breeding	observed foraging only, likely breeding amongst housing or STW
Wren	A				y	y	y	y		y	Probable Breeding	Multiple pairs
Duncock	A		Y	Y	y	y	y	y		y	Probable Breeding	Multiple pairs
Robin					y	y	y			y	Probable Breeding	Multiple pairs
Song thrush	A		Y	Y	y		y		y		Probable Breeding	Pairs noted using gardens offsite, and hedgerows close to STW. Juveniles noted.
Mistle thrush	R				y	y					Probable Breeding	Singing males noted offsite, singing near STW and green space to the north
Blackbird					y	y	y	y	y	y	Probable Breeding	Multiple pairs
Chiffchaff					y	y	y	y		y	Confirmed Breeding	Multiple pairs, juveniles noted
Willow warbler	A				y			y			Possible breeding	Noted only on hedgerow by STW, offsite
Blackcap					y	y	y	y			Probable Breeding	Multiple pairs
Great tit					y		y	y		y	Confirmed Breeding	Multiple pairs, juveniles noted
Blue tit						y		y		y	Confirmed Breeding	Multiple pairs, juveniles noted
Coal tit						y				y	Possible breeding	Possible pair bred on hedgerow, or roaming birds from nearby conifer woodland
Treecreeper										y	Possible breeding	Single singing male
Rook	A							y	y		n/a	foraging on fields and STW, breeding offsite

Jackdaw						y	y	y	y		n/a	foraging on fields and STW, breeding offsite
Carrion crow					y	y	y	y	y	y	Probable Breeding	foraging on fields and STW, breeding offsite
Magpie					y	y	y	y		y	Probable breeding	Present
Starling	R		y	y	y	y	y	y		y	n/a	foraging on fields and STW, breeding offsite
House sparrow	R		y	y	y	y	y	y		y	Confirmed Breeding	Multiple pairs, juveniles noted. Foraging on survey site. Breeding offsite
Chaffinch					y			y	y	y	Probable Breeding	1-2 territories
Goldfinch					y	y	y	y		y	Confirmed Breeding	Multiple pairs, juveniles noted
Linnet	R		y	y	y						n/a	wintering flock only, dispersed by end of April
Greenfinch	R		y	YY			y				Confirmed Breeding	Permanent territory,
Siskin								y			-	2 calling birds overhead
Yellowhammer	R		y	y		y					n/a	single bird foraging with house sparrows

Summary territory map presenting locations of all priority species of conservation concern:



APPENDIX 4: SUMMARY OF WINTERING BIRD SURVEYS 2025

Species	Conservation status & protection				Species present by visit		Breeding Status	Comment	Recorded on development site
	BOCC ¹	Schedule 1 ²	UK BAP ³	S41 / Local BAP ⁴	29/01/2025	27/02/2025			
	-	-	-	-					
Little egret					y	y	n/a	foraging around cattle on adjacent pasture	N
Canada goose						y	n/a	10 adults on adjacent pasture, territorial	N
Mallard	A					y	n/a	flock of 5 courting birds on adjacent pasture	N
Lesser black-backed gull	A				y		n/a	flying overhead, occasionally perched/foraging in housing estate	N
Herring gull	R				y		n/a	Pair associated with STW	N
Stock dove	A					y	n/a	1-2 birds in tree by STW, likely territorial pair	N
Wood Pigeon	A				y	y	n/a		Y
Green woodpecker						y	n/a	calling birds, likely territorial	Y
Pied wagtail					y	y	n/a	foraging around cattle on adjacent pasture or STW	Y
Wren	A				y	y	n/a		Y
Duncock	A		Y	Y	y	y	n/a		Y
Robin					y	y	n/a		Y

Song thrush	A		Y	Y	y	y	n/a		Y
Blackbird					y	y	n/a		Y
Redwing	A	Y				y	n/a	single calling bird	Y
Goldcrest					y		n/a		Y
Great tit					y	y	n/a		Y
Blue tit						y	n/a		Y
Rook	A					y	n/a	25+ foraging around STW, rookery in adjacent trees	N
Jackdaw					y	y	n/a		Y
Carrion crow					y	y	n/a		Y
Magpie					y	y	n/a		Y
Starling	R		Y	Y	y	y	n/a	small flocks, territorial around housing	Y
House sparrow	R		Y	Y	y		n/a	wintering flock using cultivated land and garden feeders, 30+ in flock with chaffinch, and scattered small groups in adjacent housing estate.	Y
Meadow pipit	A				y	y	n/a	1-2 birds wintering on hilltop	Y
Chaffinch					y	y	n/a	large wintering flock using cultivated land and garden feeders, 130+	Y
Goldfinch					y	y	n/a		Y
Greenfinch	R		Y	YY	y	y	n/a	winter flock 25+ using hedgerow and adjacent green space	Y
Siskin						y	n/a	winter flock of 20+ on hedgerow alders, and individuals on nearby bird feeders	Y

APPENDIX 5: SUMMARY OF BAT ACTIVITY SURVEYS 2025

April 2025

Location 1

	22/04/2025	23/04/2025	24/04/2025	25/04/2025	26/04/2025	27/04/2025	28/04/2025	29/04/2025	Grand Total
Greater Horseshoe Bat								1	1
Lesser Horseshoe Bat							1		1
Daubenton's Bat	333	16	5	5	3	1	5	2	370
Whiskered/Brandt's bat	30	2	2	2	1	1	1		39
Natterer's Bat			1			2	2	3	8
Noctule		3			14	3	5	10	35
Leisler's Bat						2		6	8
Serotine			1		7	3	1	62	74
Common Pipistrelle	1860	1269	511	671	542	438	236	162	5689
Soprano Pipistrelle	955	631	89	315	53	253	496	330	3122
Nathusius' Pipistrelle							3		3
Brown Long-eared Bat		5	6	12	4	12	12	7	58
Grand Total	3178	1926	615	1005	624	715	763	583	9409

Location 2

	22/04/2025	23/04/2025	24/04/2025	25/04/2025	26/04/2025	27/04/2025	28/04/2025	29/04/2025	Grand Total
Greater Horseshoe Bat			2			4	3	1	10
Lesser Horseshoe Bat						2			2
Daubenton's Bat	18	2			1				21
Whiskered Bat	1	10	1	12	17	16	17	12	86
Natterer's Bat		3			1				4
Noctule		4		3		2	5	4	18
Serotine			3			5	6	5	19
Common Pipi- strelle	1226	299	144	257	194	215	135	85	2555
Soprano Pipi- strelle	571	289	184	333	143	191	67	73	1851
Brown Long-eared Bat						1			1
Barbastelle					1	16	9	1	27
Grand Total	1816	607	334	605	357	452	243	181	4595

Survey Sheet – Bat Activity

Site Name: Ashley Coombe

Date: 24/04/25

Weather Conditions: 100% cloud, wind B1, no rain

Max Temp: 15.1°C

Min Temp: 11.1°C

Sunset Time: 2013

Survey Type: Transect

Survey Starts: 2013

Survey Ends: 2300

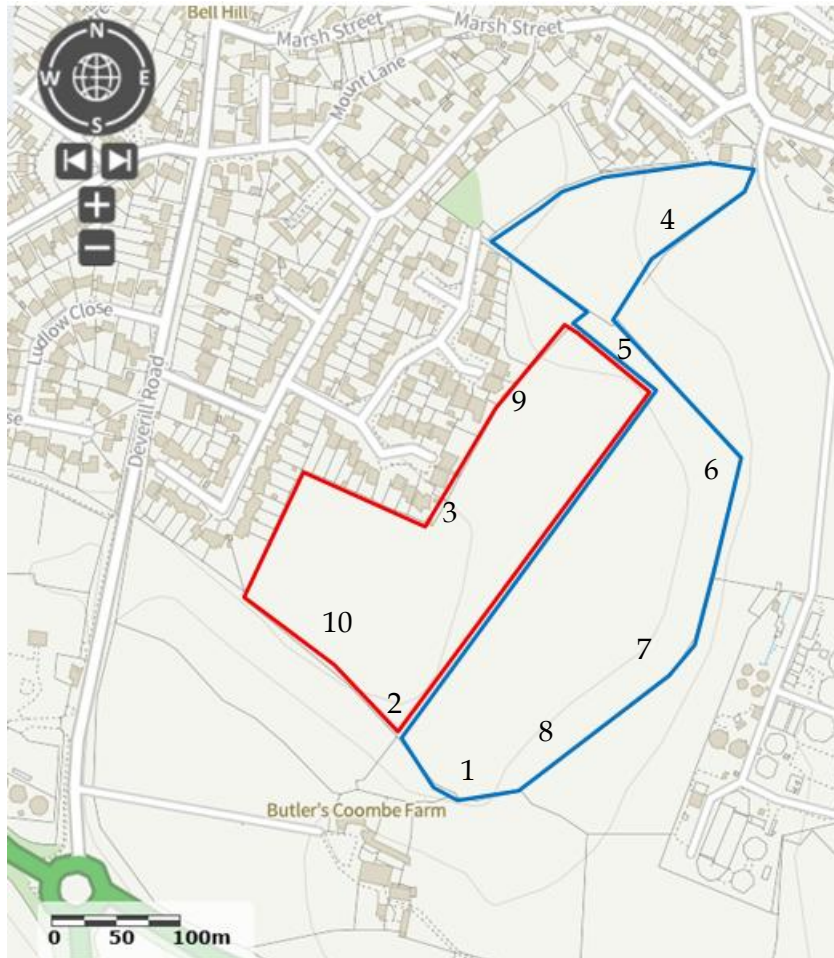
Surveyor: GS

Survey Kit Used:

EM Touch Pro 2

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
2039	1	45 pip	Foraging over scrub
2040	1	55 pip	Foraging over scrub
2041	1	55 pip	Foraging along boundary trees and scrub
2043	2	45 + 55 pip	Several bats foraging along mature tree line
2053	3	45 pip	Faint call HnS
2056	3	45 pip	Foraging along back of gardens
2108	4	45 pip	Faint calls HnS
2113	5	45 pip	Faint – likely foraging over adjacent field
2116	6	55 pip	Faint foraging HnS
2119	7	55 pip	Foraging over field by sewage works
2122	8	BLE, 45 + 55 pip	Foraging at field edge
2126	1	45 + 55 pip	At least 3 bats foraging overhead
2128	2	45 + 55 pip	At least 3 bats foraging along tree line
2138	9	45 pip	Foraging along rear of gardens
2151	4	45 pip	Foraging HnS off site

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
2156	5	45 pip	Foraging over adjacent field
2159	6	45 pip	Foraging over adjacent field
2202	7	55 pip	Foraging off-site
2205	8	45 pip	Foraging HnS
2206	1	45 + 55 pip	Several bats foraging at field edge
2208	2	45 + 55 pip	Foraging along mature tree line
2211	10	45 + 55 pip	Several bats foraging along boundary
2212	10	Nyctalus	HnS
2219	9	45 pip	Faint calls HnS
2231	4	45 pip	Faint call HnS foraging over path
2239	6	55 pip	Foraging off site
2242	7	45 pip	Foraging over field by sewage works
2245	8	55 pip	Foraging HnS – quite faint
2246	1	45 + 55 pip	Foraging by several bats ongoing
2250	2	45 + 55 pip	Several bats foraging along tree line
2253	10	45 + 55 pip	Several bats foraging along tree line



May 2025

Location 1

	20/05/2025	21/05/2025	22/05/2025	23/05/2025	24/05/2025	25/05/2025	26/05/2025	Grand To- tal
Daubenton's Bat		2		1	31		3	37
Whiskered Bat			5	2			2	9
Natterer's Bat			1	1				2
Noctule	6	11	6	8	2		2	35
Leisler's Bat	1	0	6	8	3	3	0	21
Serotine	12		67	17	2	6	39	143
Common Pipistrelle	30	4	153	101	278	47	328	941
Soprano Pipistrelle	83	49	430	192	251	83	397	1485
Brown Long-eared Bat			2	2		1		5
Grand Total	132	66	670	332	567	140	771	2678

Location 2

	20/05/2025	21/05/2025	22/05/2025	23/05/2025	24/05/2025	25/05/2025	26/05/2025	Grand To- tal
Daubenton's Bat				2	1	2	2	7
Whiskered Bat	5	9	5	16	3	11	6	55
Natterer's Bat		1	1					2
Noctule	1		3				1	5
Serotine	4	4	1	1	2	18		30
Common Pipi- strelle	38	54	8	88	510	83	508	1289
Soprano Pipi- strelle	16	20	21	104	44	51	21	277
Barbastelle			1	1	16	1	9	28
Grand Total	64	88	40	212	576	166	547	1693

Survey Kit Used:

EM Touch Pro 2

Survey Sheet – Bat Activity

Site Name: Ashley Coombe

Date: 28/05/25

Weather Conditions: 100% cloud, wind B1, no rain for 2 hours then light rain

Max Temp: 13°C

Min Temp: 12°C

Sunset Time: 2110

Survey Type: Transect

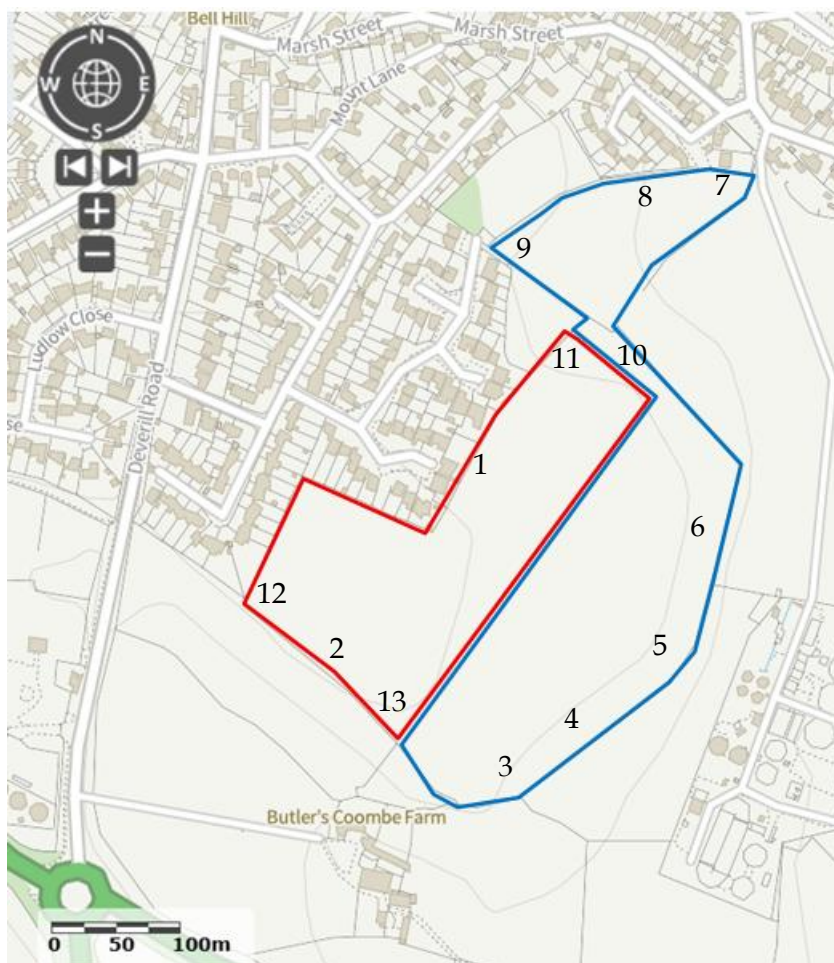
Survey Starts: 2110

Survey Ends: 2310

Surveyor: GS

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
2144	1	45 pip	Faint calls HnS
2153	2	45 pip	Commuting W along tree line
2200	3	45 pip	Foraging at edge of field
2201	4	55 pip	Faint calls HnS
2202	4	BLE	HnS
2204	5	55 pip	Foraging HnS
2205	5	Serotine	HnS
2211	6	55 pip	Foraging over scrub
2219	7	55 pip	HnS at field edge
2220	8	Serotine	HnS
2223	9	Serotine	HnS
2227	10	Serotine	HnS
2230	11	55 pip	Faint calls HnS
2233	1	45 pip	Faint calls HnS
2234	1	45 pip	Several bats foraging HnS

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
2239	12	45 pip	HnS
2243	2	55 pip	Foraging along tree line
2244	13	55 pip	Foraging along tree line
2246	13	45 pip	Foraging along tree line
2300	1	45 pip	Foraging HnS



June 2025

Location 1

	24/06/2025	25/06/2025	26/06/2025	27/06/2025	28/06/2025	29/06/2025	30/06/2025	Grand Total
Daubenton's Bat	1	2		48	14	9	3	77
Whiskered/Brandt's bat	2	3	2	17	0	4	3	31
Natterer's Bat			1					1
Noctule	18	7	7	3	4	9	4	52
Leisler's Bat		2				3		5
Serotine	11	25	4	19	4	1	4	68
Common Pipistrelle	15	151	64	325	101	71	53	780
Soprano Pipistrelle	64	143	130	343	36	49	46	811
Brown Long-eared Bat	1	2	2	1	2	3	2	13
Grand Total	112	335	210	756	161	149	115	1838

Location 2

	24/06/2025	25/06/2025	26/06/2025	27/06/2025	28/06/2025	29/06/2025	30/06/2025	Grand Total
Greater Horseshoe Bat		1		3	1			5
Daubenton's Bat	1						3	4
Whiskered/Brandt's	7	4		4	3	3	6	27
Natterer's Bat					4	5		9
Noctule	7	3	5	2	8		6	31
Leisler's Bat				1		1		2
Serotine		5	2	7	10	7	92	123
Common Pipistrelle	109	129	95	241	65	48	44	731
Soprano Pipistrelle	40	32	13	157	25	36	28	331
Brown Long-eared Bat					1		4	5
Barbastelle	6	15		23		6	6	56
Grand Total	170	189	115	438	117	106	189	1324

Survey Kit Used:

EM Touch Pro 2

Survey Sheet – Bat Activity

Site Name: Ashley Coombe

Date: 04/07/25

Weather Conditions: 50% cloud, wind B2, no rain

Max Temp: 18°C

Min Temp: 15°C

Sunset Time: 2126

Survey Type: Transect

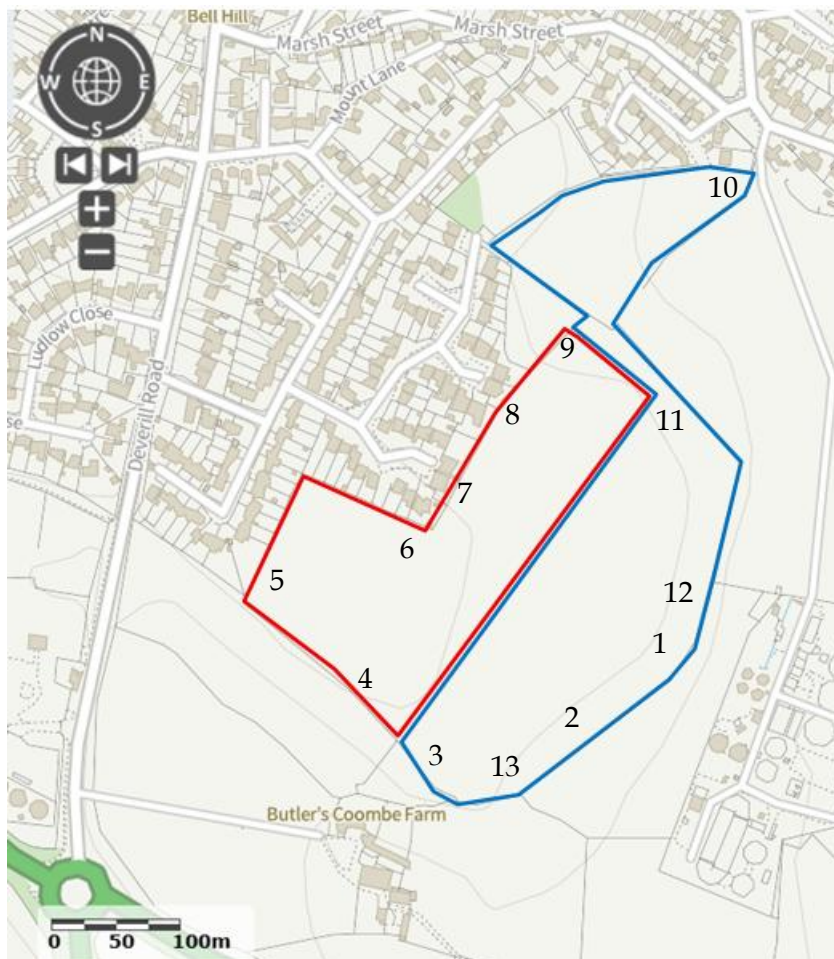
Survey Starts: 2126

Survey Ends: 0026

Surveyor: GS

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
2211	1	Serotine	HnS
2214	2	45 pip	Foraging over field edge
2217	3	55 pip	Foraging along mature tree line
2219	4	45 pip	Commuting along mature tree line
2224	5	45 pip	HnS along back of gardens
2228	6	45 pip	HnS
2231	7	55 pip	Faint calls HnS
2233	8	45 pip	Foraging along back of gardens
2237	9	45 pip	Foraging HnS
2243	10	45 pip	Faint calls HnS
2249	11	45 pip	Foraging HnS
2256	12	45 pip	HnS
2303	2	45 pip	HnS
2304	13	55 pip	Foraging around mature trees
2305	13	Myotis sp.	HnS at field corner

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
2307	4	55 pip	Foraging along tree line
2324	7	45 pip	HnS
2326	8	55 pip	HnS
0001	1	55 pip	HnS
0010	2	45 pip	HnS
0014	3	45 + 55 pip	Foraging along tree line
0017	4	45 pip	HnS



July 2025

Location 1

	22/07/2025	23/07/2025	24/07/2025	25/07/2025	26/07/2025	27/07/2025	28/07/2025	Grand Total
Greater Horseshoe Bat				1				1
Lesser Horseshoe Bat			1					1
Daubenton's Bat	1	1	4		1	1	1	9
Whiskered/Brandt's bat	5	2			3		10	20
Natterer's Bat		2	3	1		1	1	8
Noctule	2	1	17	1		5	4	30
Serotine			2	2		1	1	6
Common Pipistrelle	10	24	96	40	27	19	39	255
Soprano Pipistrelle	23	14	62	34	12	13	18	176
Brown Long-eared Bat	1		1		4	2	3	11
Barbastelle					9	8		17
Grand Total	42	44	186	79	56	50	77	534

Location 2

	22/07/2025	23/07/2025	24/07/2025	25/07/2025	26/07/2025	27/07/2025	28/07/2025	Grand To- tal
Greater Horseshoe Bat		1		1		2		4
Lesser Horseshoe Bat		2		1		1	2	6
Daubenton's Bat			1	3		1	3	8
Whiskered/Brandt's bat	12	5	11	17	10	8	26	89
Natterer's Bat	5	9	4	4	2		9	33
Noctule	8		1	1			1	11
Serotine	2			8			2	12
Common Pipistrelle	49	49	107	128	46	23	61	463
Soprano Pipistrelle	45	26	112	120	14	26	32	375
Brown Long-eared Bat	3	3	3		1	1	1	12
Barbastelle	36	13	38	26	23	20	20	176
Grand Total	160	108	277	309	96	82	157	1189

Survey Kit Used:

EM Touch Pro 2

Survey Sheet – Bat Activity

Site Name: Ashley Coombe

Date: 24/07/25

Weather Conditions: 50% cloud, wind B1, no rain

Max Temp: 19°C

Min Temp: 16°C

Sunset Time: 2107

Survey Type: Transect

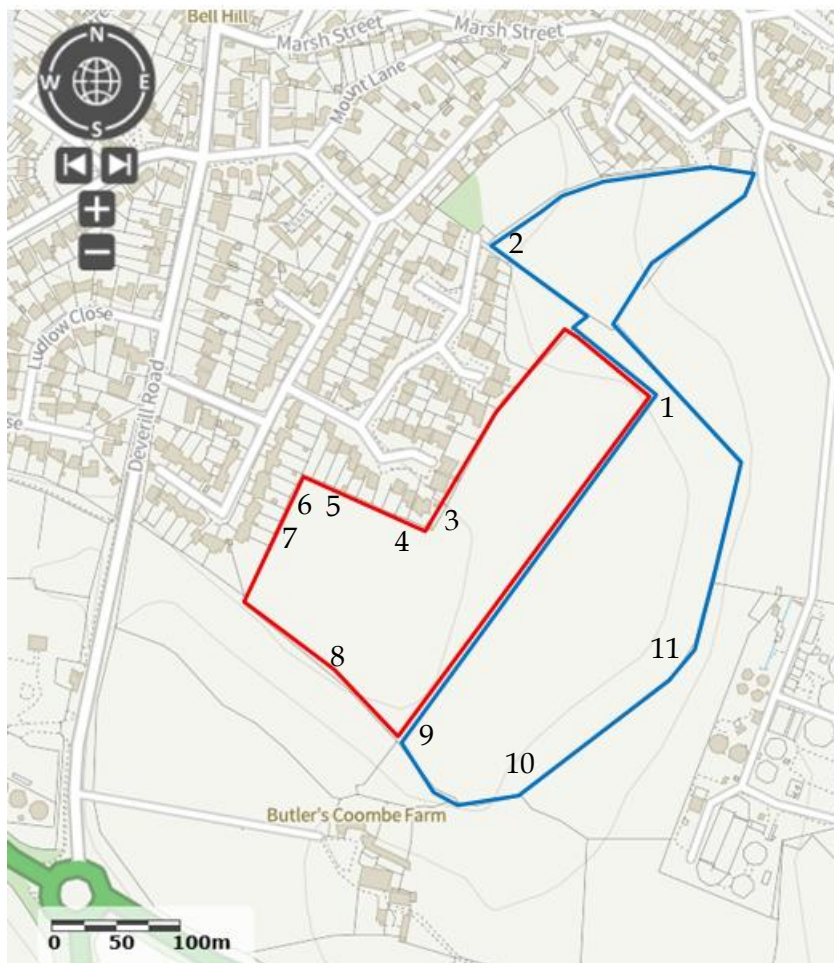
Survey Starts: 2107

Survey Ends: 0007

Surveyor: GS

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
2131	1	Noctule	HnS high over site
2142	2	55 pip	Foraging at field edge
2149	3	45 pip	Foraging along field boundary
2151	3	Noctule	HnS
2151	4	55 pip	2 bats chasing along field edge
2152	4	55 pip	Foraging at gateway
2153	5	55 pip	Foraging along field edge
2154	5	55 pip	Foraging along field edge
2156	6	55 pip	At least 3 bats foraging at the field edge
2157	7	55 pip	Several bats foraging along field edge
2201	8	Myotis	Along field edge
2206	9	45 + 55 pip	Several bats foraging around mature trees
2210	10	45 pip	Foraging around mature trees
2216	11	Noctule	HnS
2238	2	45 pip	HnS at field edge – brief

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
2249	3	45 pip	Foraging to rear of gardens
2256	6	55 pip	Brief calls HnS
2308	9	45 + 55 pip	Foraging HnS around mature trees
2350	3	45 pip	HnS



August 2025

Location 1

	18/08/2025	19/08/2025	20/08/2025	Grand Total
Greater Horseshoe Bat	1			1
Daubenton's bat	4	2		6
Whiskered/Brandt's Bat	10	2		12
Noctule	2	1	1	4
Serotine	1			1
Common Pipistrelle	53	38	10	101
Soprano Pipistrelle	32	17	2	51
Brown Long-eared Bat	3	1		4
Barbastelle	1			1
Grand Total	107	61	13	181

Location 2

	18/08/2025	19/08/2025	20/08/2025	21/08/2025	22/08/2025	23/08/2025	24/08/2025	25/08/2025	Grand Total
Greater Horseshoe Bat					1			8	9
Lesser Horseshoe Bat	4		1	1	1	2	3	1	13
Daubenton's Bat	2	1	4	0	2	3	6	2	20
Whiskered/Brandt's bat	1	0	1	24	59	56	45	57	243
Natterer's Bat				3	1	4	2	5	15
Noctule	2	4		2	2	2	3		15
Serotine					1			1	2
Common Pipistrelle	125	148	45	27	115	133	42	137	772
Soprano Pipistrelle	43	48	14	51	103	147	50	134	590
Brown Long-eared Bat				3	5	2	2	2	14
Barbastelle			2	58	34	51	29	74	248
Grand Total	177	201	67	169	324	400	182	421	1941

Survey Kit Used:

EM Touch Pro 2

Survey Sheet – Bat Activity

Site Name: Ashley Coombe

Date: 22/08/25

Weather Conditions: 0% cloud, wind B1, no rain

Max Temp: 16°C

Min Temp: 15°C

Sunset Time: 2015

Survey Type: Transect

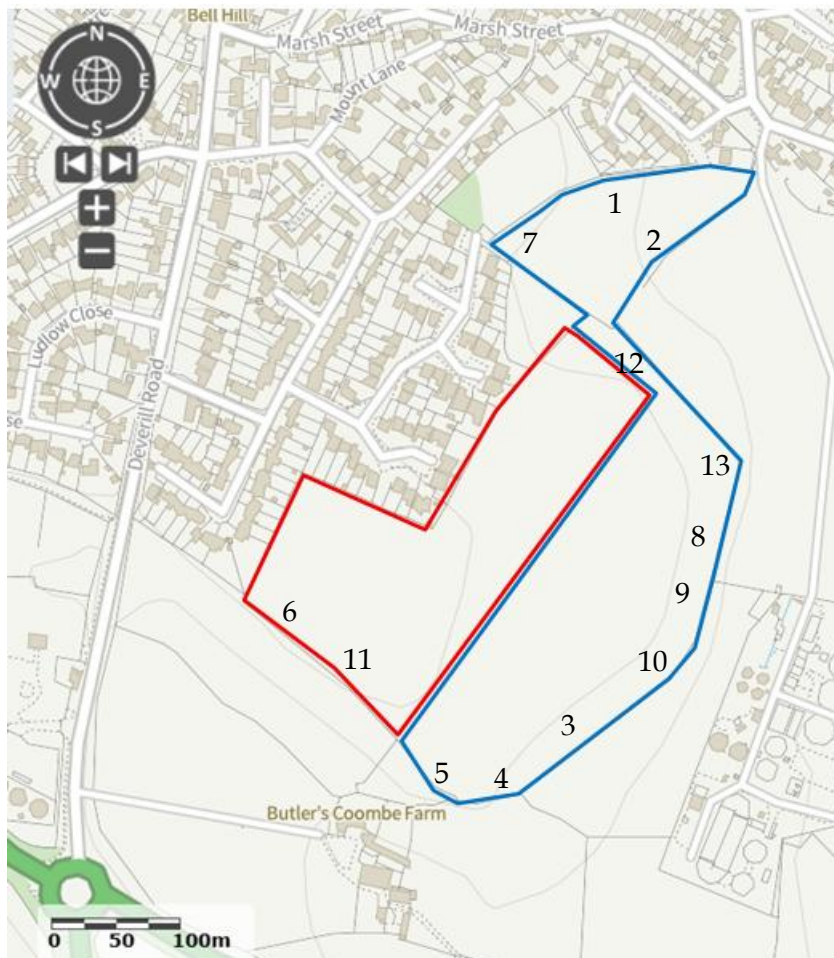
Survey Starts: 2015

Survey Ends: 2315

Surveyor: GS

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
2038	1	45 pip	Faint HnS
2044	2	Noctule	Faint call HnS
2107	3	Serotine	Foraging HnS
2109	4	55 pip	Foraging HnS
2111	5	55 pip	Foraging along tree line
2113	5	Noctule	Faint call HnS
2118	6	45 pip	Faint call HnS
2128	7	BLE	HnS
2140	8	55 pip	HnS
2141	9	45 pip	Foraging over field near sewage works
2143	10	Myotis	HnS
2144	10	45 pip	HnS
2145	3	55 pip	HnS
2145	3	Myotis	HnS
2145	3	Noctule	HnS

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
2147	4	45 pip	Foraging along tree line
2147	4	Serotine	HnS
2151	11	45 pip	Foraging HnS
2207	7	45 pip	HnS
2212	2	45 pip	Foraging HnS
2215	12	Myotis	HnS
2218	13	45 pip	HnS
2222	10	55 pip	HnS



September 2025

Location 1

	18/09/2025	19/09/2025	20/09/2025	21/09/2025	22/09/2025	23/09/2025	24/09/2025	Grand Total
Greater Horseshoe Bat	1						1	2
Daubenton's Bat	14	9			1	3	1	28
Whiskered Bat	11	4	1	1	1	3	6	27
Natterer's Bat	4	7	2	1	1	1	4	20
Noctule	1	6		1		1	1	10
Serotine					1	3		4
Common Pipistrelle	1089	555	17	23	29	24	10	1747
Soprano Pipistrelle	1954	1618	25	7	29	25	32	3690
Nathusius' Pipistrelle	10	1						11
Brown Long-eared Bat	1	3		1	1	2	2	10
Barbastelle	3	8						11
Grand Total	3088	2211	45	34	63	62	57	5560

Location 2

	18/09/2025	19/09/2025	20/09/2025	21/09/2025	22/09/2025	23/09/2025	24/09/2025	Grand Total
Greater Horseshoe Bat	29	26	23					78
Lesser Horseshoe Bat	25	109	69			7		210
Daubenton's Bat	4	5						9
Whiskered/Brandt's Bat	52	164	27	8	33	33	87	404
Natterer's Bat	7	15	2		3	5	7	39
Noctule	2	1				2	1	6
Serotine		1						1
Common Pipistrelle	1863	1684	98	14	8	30	15	3712
Soprano Pipistrelle	971	1385	705	13	28	242	49	3393
Nathusius' Pipistrelle		5						5
Brown Long-eared Bat		2					1	3
Barbastelle	22	25	4				1	52
Grand Total	2975	3422	928	35	72	319	161	7912

Survey Sheet – Bat Activity

Survey Kit Used:

EM Touch Pro 2

Site Name: Ashley Coombe

Date: 26/09/25

Weather Conditions: 100% cloud, wind B1, no rain

Max Temp: 16°C

Min Temp: 15°C

Sunset Time: 1857

Survey Type: Transect

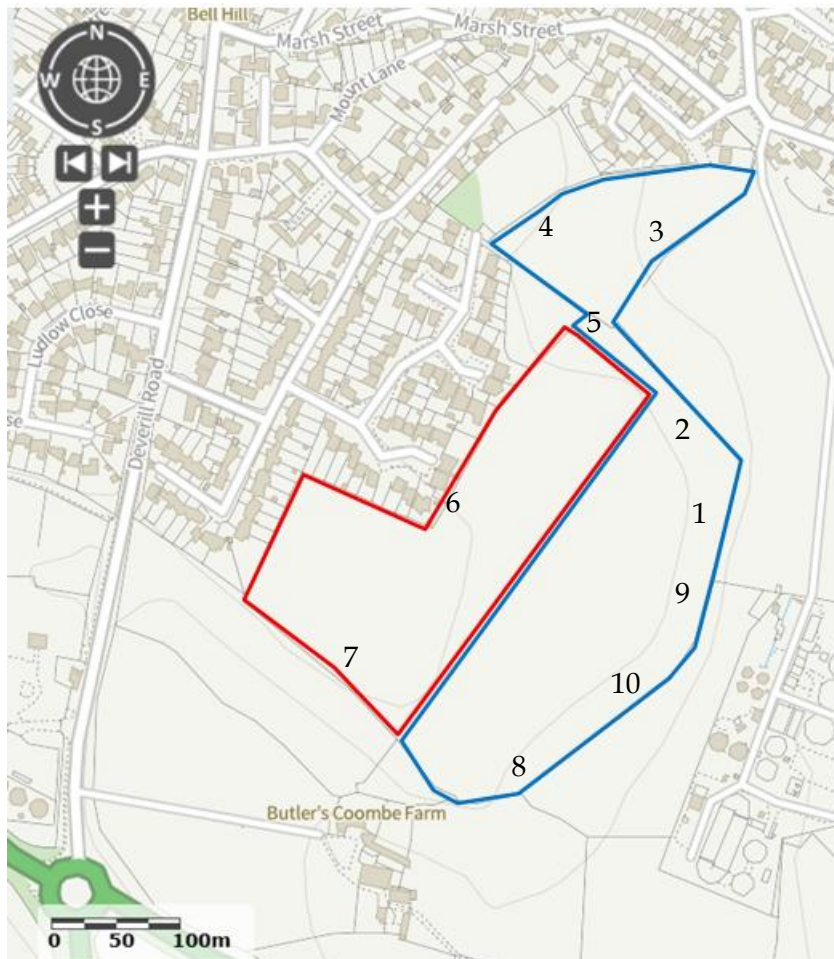
Survey Starts: 1857

Survey Ends: 2157

Surveyor: GS

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
1915	1	45 pip	Foraging over scrub
1919	2	45 pip	Commuting along site boundary
1924	3	45 pip	Foraging over adjacent field
1943	4	Pip	HnS
1946	5	Myotis	HnS
1950	6	55 pip	HnS
1952	6	Pip	SnH
1959	7	55 pip	Faint call HnS
2001	7	45 pip	Faint call HnS
2001	7	55 pip	Foraging along tree line
2004	8	55 pip	Foraging over adjacent field
2008	9	45 pip	Faint call HnS
2020	4	Myotis	HnS
2036	7	Myotis	HnS
2038	8	55 pip	Faint calls HnS

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
2042	10	55 pip	Faint calls HnS
2051	3	55 pip	HnS along tree line



October 2025

Location 1

	08/10/2025	09/10/2025	10/10/2025	11/10/2025	12/10/2025	13/10/2025	14/10/2025	Grand Total
Daubenton's Bat		1	1			1	1	4
Whiskered Bat		1	1	2	1	3		8
Natterer's Bat	1		2					3
Common Pipistrelle	44	21	37	110	38	77	5	332
Soprano Pipistrelle	3	18	44	20	61	103	18	267
Nathusius' Pipistrelle			2					2
Brown Long-eared Bat	1		2					3
Barbastelle		1						1
Grand Total	49	42	89	132	100	184	24	620

Location 2

	08/10/2025	09/10/2025	10/10/2025	11/10/2025	12/10/2025	13/10/2025	14/10/2025	Grand Total
Daubenton's Bat	3	4	5					12
Whiskered Bat	9	8	22	4				43
Natterer's Bat		1	2					3
Noctule			3	2	1			6
Serotine			1					1
Common Pipistrelle	45	50	44	24	9	35	5	212
Soprano Pipistrelle	33	32	25	35	2	21	6	154
Brown Long-eared Bat	1							1
Barbastelle	3		2					5
Grand Total	94	95	104	65	12	56	11	437

Survey Sheet – Bat Activity

Survey Kit Used:

EM Touch Pro 2

Site Name: Ashley Coombe

Date: 14/10/25

Weather Conditions: 100% cloud, wind B2, no rain

Max Temp: 13°C

Min Temp: 12°C

Sunset Time: 1817

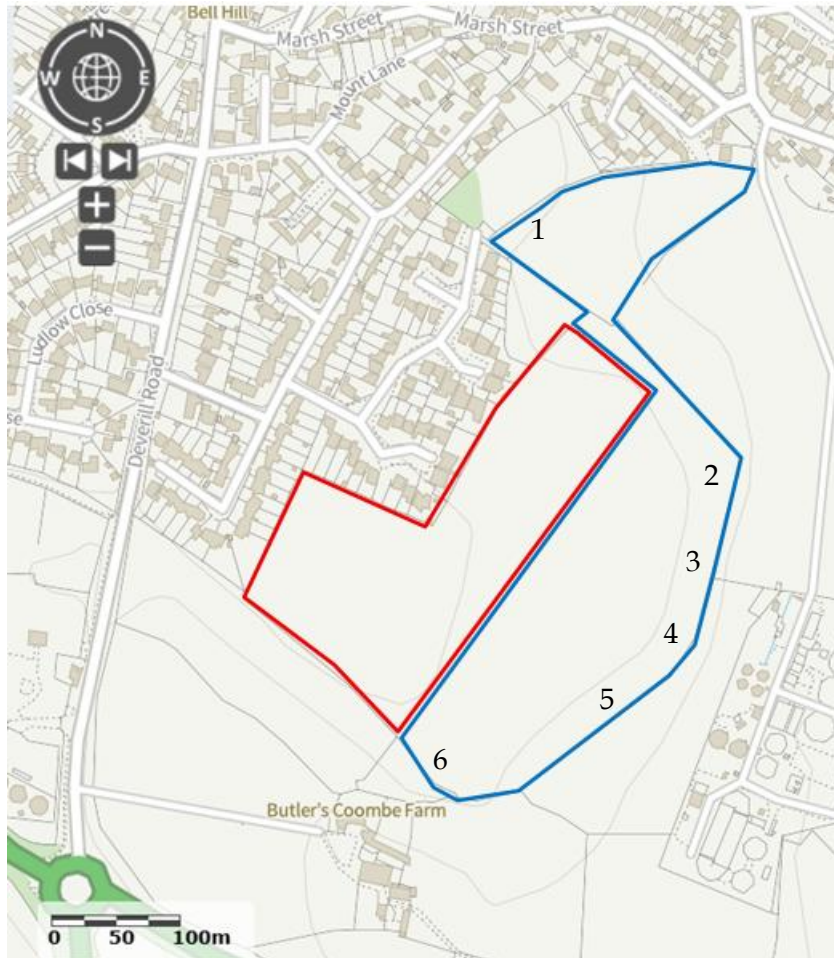
Survey Type: Transect

Survey Starts: 1817

Survey Ends: 2117

Surveyor: GS

Time	Map Ref	Species	Activity
1845	1	Myotis	Brief call HnS
1856	2	55 pip	Faint call HnS
1857	2	55 pip	HnS
1857	1	45 pip	2 bats HnS
1858	3	55 pip	Faint call HnS
1859	3	45 + 55 pip	HnS
1901	4	Serotine	HnS
1903	5	55 pip	2 bats foraging HnS
1905	6	45 + 55 pip	Foraging under mature trees
1930	6	45 pip	Faint call HnS
1954	5	45 pip	HnS
1957	6	45 pip	HnS foraging around trees



APPENDIX 6: EDNA RESULTS

Folio No: 239-2025
Purchase Order: Henfords
Contact: Stark Ecology
Issue Date: 02.05.2025
Received Date: 16.04.2025

GCN Report

Technical Report



GCN eDNA Analysis

Summary

When great crested newts (GCN), *Triturus cristatus*, inhabit a pond, they continuously release small amounts of their DNA into the environment. By collecting and analyzing water samples, we can detect these small traces of environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm GCN habitation or establish GCN absence.

Results

Lab ID	Site Name	OS Reference	Degradation Check	Inhibition Check	Result	Positive Replicates
GCN25 0577	P1 Henfords Ashley Coombe	ST 8764 4386	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12
GCN25 0578	P2 Henfords Ashley Coombe	ST 8749 4381	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12

Matters affecting result: none

Reported by: Chelsea Warner

Approved by: Consuela Sopronyi



Methodology

The samples detailed above have been analyzed for the presence of GCN eDNA following the protocol stated in DEFRA WC1067 'Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt, Appendix 5' (Biggs et al. 2014). Each of the 6 sub-sample tubes are first centrifuged and pooled together into a single sample tube which then undergoes DNA extraction. The extracted sample is then analyzed using real-time PCR (qPCR), which uses species-specific molecular markers to amplify GCN DNA within a sample. These markers are unique to GCN DNA, meaning that there should be no detection of closely related species.

If GCN DNA is present, the DNA is amplified up to a detectable level, resulting in positive species detection. If GCN DNA is not present then amplification does not occur, and a negative result is recorded. Analysis of eDNA requires attention to detail to prevent the risk of contamination. True positive controls, negative controls, and spiked synthetic DNA are included in every analysis and these have to be correct before any result is declared and reported. Stages of the DNA analysis are also conducted in different buildings at our premises for added analytical security.

SureScreen Scientifics Ltd is ISO9001 accredited and participates in Natural England's proficiency testing scheme for GCN eDNA testing.

Interpretation of Results

Sample Integrity Check:	When samples are received in the laboratory, they are inspected for any tube leakage, suitability of sample (not too much mud or weed etc.) and absence of any factors that could potentially lead to inconclusive results. Any samples which fail this test are rejected and eliminated before analysis.
Degradation Check:	Pass/Fail. Analysis of the spiked DNA marker to see if there has been degradation of the kit or sample between the date it was made to the date of analysis. Degradation of the spiked DNA marker may lead indicate a risk of false negative results.
Inhibition Check:	Pass/Fail. The presence of inhibitors within a sample is assessed using a DNA marker. If inhibition is detected, samples are purified and re-analyzed. Inhibitors cannot always be removed, if the inhibition check fails, the sample should be re-collected.
Result:	Presence of GCN eDNA (Positive/Negative/Inconclusive) Positive: GCN DNA was identified within the sample, indicative of GCN presence within the sampling location at the time the sample was taken or within the recent past at the sampling location. Positive Replicates: Number of positive qPCR replicates out of a series of 12. If one or more of these are found to be positive the pond is declared positive for GCN presence. It may be assumed that small fractions of positive analyses suggest low level presence, but this cannot currently be used for population studies. In accordance with the WC1067 Natural England protocol, even a score of 1/12 is declared positive. 0/12 indicates negative GCN presence. Negative: GCN eDNA was not detected or is below the threshold detection level and the test result should be considered as evidence of GCN absence, however, does not exclude the potential for GCN presence below the limit of detection. Inconclusive: Controls indicate inhibition or degradation of the sample, resulting in the inability to provide conclusive evidence for GCN presence or absence.

