

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	27/02/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/00509
Proposal:	Erection of 2no. 3-bed dwellings (Class 3) and associated works
Site address:	Land adj. Chivers, High Street, Winterbourne Bassett, SN4 9QB
Case officer:	Audrey Lo

Recommendations:

☐	No Comment
☐	Support
☐	No objection
☒	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
☐	Objection - further information required
☐	Objection in principle
☐	HRA completed

Thank you for consulting Ecology. I have reviewed the application and supporting documents against OS Maps, aerial photography of the site and surrounding area, together with GIS layers of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and existing records of protected species.

Information considered:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report, Smart Ecology, December 2025
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Smart Ecology, January 2026
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric, David Withington, November 2025
- Planning Statement, LDPC, undated
- Proposed Site Plan, LSAD, December 2025

The site comprises a grassland plot where it is proposed to construct two dwellings. The site is neighboured by grassland to the south, a ditch to the east and residential properties further beyond. Previously, plans for three dwellings (21/00584/FUL) and one dwelling (PL/2021/09801) were refused for reasons not relating to ecology, though the latter was allowed at appeal. The approved single dwelling is adjacent to the present plot, at the western boundary.

COMMENTS:

Protected species

Bats

The site contains no buildings or trees with potential roosting value. Some of the habitats on site (grassland, hedgerow and scrub) may provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. The ecology report recommends that lighting must be kept to a minimum, and be in accordance with Guidance note GN08-18 "Bats and artificial lighting in the UK", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals. The recommendations set out in Section 5.2 of the ecology report should therefore be adhered to.

Nesting birds

The adults, young, eggs and nests of all species of birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding. Please be advised that works should not take place that will harm nesting birds (such as vegetation clearance or building demolition) from March to August inclusive. The applicant is advised to check any structure or vegetation capable of supporting breeding birds and delay removing or altering such features until after young birds have fledged.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

There are no waterbodies within 250m of the site, the closest being 300m away. Using Natural England's Rapid Risk Assessment tool, it was predicted that an offence would be highly unlikely, provided precautionary measures are applied. The Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) detailed within the appendices of the ecology report must be complied with, and secured via a planning condition. The RAMs include appropriate timing provisions, details of site induction, and measures to be implemented pre- and during construction, such as the covering of open excavations, and phased vegetation clearance. Such measures will also reduce any residual risk posed to reptiles, badgers and hedgehogs.

Biodiversity enhancement

In line with the NPPF and CP50, the report recommends the installation of bat and bird boxes, as well as hedgehog nest boxes. The locations of these enhancements are not shown on any plans, therefore, a biodiversity enhancement condition should be applied. It is recommended that wildlife-friendly plantings are also incorporated into the enhancements, such as further trees and hedgerow.

Biodiversity Net Gain

From 12 February 2024 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

A completed statutory metric calculation, condition assessments and map confirming the baseline units of the site has been submitted (Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Smart Ecology, January 2026; Statutory Biodiversity Metric, David Withington, November 2025). The report states that the ditch alongside the eastern boundary contains water for less than four months of the year, and therefore a watercourse assessment is not required.

The pre-development (baseline) situation is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	0.30 Habitat units
	0.30 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation occurred?	No

Confirmation of how the development will achieve BNG is a post-determination matter however consideration should be given to how any proposed BNG will be secured.

The submitted metric indicates 0.44 biodiversity units are required to meet the 10% BNG requirement and that on-site BNG is not achievable. All land located outside the redline application boundary of the development site is considered off-site. All off-site biodiversity gains sites must be registered on the national biodiversity gains site register. Guidance on how to register a biodiversity gains site, and/or allocate off-site gains to your development

(e.g., through the purchase of biodiversity units) can be found here: [Make off-site biodiversity gains as a developer - GOV.UK](#). In order for the Biodiversity Gain Plan condition to be discharged, all off-site gains must be shown on the Biodiversity Gain Plan as allocated to this development on the national biodiversity gains site register.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

The development will be carried out in strict accordance with the following documents:

- Section 5 and Appendix 5 (Reasonable Avoidance Measures) of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report, Smart Ecology, December 2025, ref 2025-140
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Smart Ecology, January 2026, ref 2025-140

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

2. Enhancements for Biodiversity

Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancements – such as nesting opportunities for birds and roosting opportunities for bats – shall be submitted to the local authority for approval. The approved details shall be implemented before occupation of the final works.

REASON: To provide mitigation/enhancement for biodiversity.

Sign off by WC Ecologist will only be given once ALL outstanding information has been submitted and agreed sufficient.

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 27/02/2026
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