

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	03/03/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/00469
Proposal:	Parkwater Farm, Cowesfield Green, Whiteparish, Salisbury, SP5 2QS
Site address:	Replace incidental timber garden outbuilding with an incidental timber clad garage, landscaping, improvements to access and relocate oil tank.
Case officer:	Mary Rose Scott

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:

- Planning Statement, Benchmark, January 2026
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey Report, Daniel Ahern Ecology, January 2026
- Existing location plan, Benchmark, January 2026
- Proposed part site, plan and elevations, Benchmark, October 2025

The site comprises a shed and access track. It is proposed to demolish the shed and construct a garage. The site connects to woodland to the north and east, with farmland/grassland fields further beyond, interspersed with more woodland and residential properties.

COMMENTS:

New Forest protected sites

The proposed development site lies within the 13.8km zone of influence for the New Forest internationally protected sites, which comprises the New Forest SPA, New Forest SAC and New Forest Ramsar site. Many of the special features of the New Forest protected sites afforded protection are vulnerable to adverse effects associated with an increase in recreation as demonstrated in Natural England's supplementary advice issued for the SPA on 19 March 2019 and for the SAC on 18 March 2019.

A test of likely significance has been carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council). This concluded that given the nature of the development (the proposal does not concern residential or tourism development, and no new dwellings are proposed), there would be no recreational impact on the New Forest, therefore there is no mechanism for adverse effect. The Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on the New Forest SPA, New Forest SAC and New Forest Ramsar site.

and the proposal is screened out of Appropriate Assessment. Wiltshire Council's "Interim recreation mitigation strategy for the New Forest internationally protected sites" (Version 1.1, 21 March 2023) therefore does not apply to this proposal.

River Test catchment

This development falls within the River Test catchment which drains into the Solent. This region is protected by a number of international designations and the proposal has the potential for adverse effects alone or in combination to the Solent designated sites (Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA)) with other developments through increased nitrogen in the catchment. Appropriate Assessment must be carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (the LPA) to determine the potential significant effects and the suitability of any measures proposed to avoid or mitigate those effects.

A test of likely significance has been carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council) as required by Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This concluded that since there is no proposal to create any overnight accommodation, there would be no overall mechanism for significant adverse effect. The HRA has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on the SAC and subsequently the application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

Mottisfont Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

The site lies within the 7.5km Mottisfont Bat SAC buffer and therefore may have potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of that site. Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Section 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) must be carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (the LPA) to determine the potential significant effects and the suitability of any measures proposed to avoid or mitigate those effects.

A test of likely significance has been carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council) as required by Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This concluded that given the scale and nature of the currently proposed development which does not propose removal of any bat habitat or roosts, and does not appear to propose any additional external lighting, there is no mechanism for adverse impact on the Conservation Objectives of the SAC, and the proposal can be screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

Other protected species and habitats

Bats

A preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken in October 2025. The single-storey shed appears to be in good condition and is in use (thus disturbed). The shed was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential, and no further survey is required.

The site likely provides some bat foraging and commuting opportunities. Habitat improvements in the wider site should be achieved through an adjoining application (PL/2026/00473), but there is also opportunity to incorporate wildlife-friendly features in the present site, such as bird and bat boxes, and insect blocks. **Details of biodiversity enhancements, in line with CP50 and the NPPF, should be provided as part of a biodiversity enhancements plan, to be secured via condition.**

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

There is some potential for GCN to use the wider site during their terrestrial phase, given the presence of at least five waterbodies within 250m of the site. The submitted documents include somewhat conflicting comments on whether further GCN survey (or registration under the District

Level Licence [DLL] scheme) is necessary. On the balance of evidence, it is my view that further survey work (nor registration on the DLL scheme) would not be required, provided the risk posed to GCN is minimised through appropriate working measures. This is because:

- i) the primary habitats to be impacted by the works comprise the existing shed and areas of hardstanding, and a very small area of scrub at the side of shed;
- ii) the grassland within the site is maintained as short;
- iii) the nearest ponds have “below average” suitability for GCN (using a Habitat Suitability Index); and
- iv) there are ample suitable habitats surrounding for GCN to disperse into, if present.

As such, it is recommended that the risk avoidance measures outlined in the submitted "DRAFT A Construction GCN Management Statement" are adhered to. **Finalised details of precautionary measures for GCN must be included within a Construction Method Statement (CMS), to be secured via condition.** Appropriate measures would include a toolbox talk and sensitive vegetation removal. There is also scope to improve the site for amphibians through, e.g., the addition of refugia – details could be provided as part of a biodiversity enhancement plan (as above), though it is acknowledged that it may be more appropriate to incorporate a refugia feature in the wider site, in association with the adjoining application (PL/2026/00473).

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.

Local sites

The site is close to a number of County Wildlife Sites, including Cowesfield Manor Meadow 250m south, Aldermoor Copse 210m southwest, Bushy Copse 380m southwest, Shortlands Row 250m west, Rosemead Farm Meadow 330m west and Cowsfield Wood 220m east.

CP50 requires that CWSs are protected from the effects of development, and that proposals must demonstrate how features of nature conservation can be protected. **It is therefore recommended that the aforementioned Construction Method Statement includes details of measures to reduce the risk posed to the surrounding habitats, including pollution prevention measures.** Given the wildlife value of these neighbouring habitats, **a lighting condition is also recommended to ensure that any residual risk to light-sensitive species is managed appropriately post-development.**

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). Based on the information available the biodiversity gain planning condition is not considered to apply to this application as it is for development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Note to case officer: you should be satisfied that the proposals meet the above criteria and act accordingly. Further information will be required from the applicant prior to determination in the event the application is considered to be subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain.

CONDITIONS:

1. 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 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.

2. Construction Method Statement

No development shall commence on site (including any vegetation removal or works to existing structures), until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Method Statement shall include all precautionary measures to be implemented during the construction period, for the protection of sensitive habitats and species known to be present within or adjacent the site, with particular reference to the surrounding local wildlife sites, and great crested newts, bats and nesting birds. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved Construction Method Statement.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection, mitigation and compensation for protected species and priority habitats throughout the construction period.

3. Lighting

No external light fixture or fitting will be installed within the application site unless details of existing and proposed new lighting have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details will demonstrate how the proposed lighting will impact on sensitive habitat compared to the existing situation. The plans will be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes on the Avoidance of Obtrusive Light (GN 01/2021) and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

REASON: To avoid illumination of wildlife-sensitive habitats, including habitat used by bats.

Informative – Great Crested Newts

There is a residual risk that great crested newts could occur on the application site. These species are legally protected and planning permission does not provide a defence against prosecution. In order to minimise the risk of these species occurring on the site, the developer is advised to clear vegetation during the winter, remove all waste arising from such clearance and maintain vegetation as short as possible in line with the recommendations made in Appendix 2 of the Ecology Evidence Summary Note (Benchmark, January 2026). If these species are found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist or the Council Landscape and Design Team (ecologyconsultations@wiltshire.gov.uk).

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 03/03/2026
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