

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	04/04/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/01533
Proposal:	Change of use of agricultural land to a basic camping site.
Site address:	Manor Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham, SN12 7QT
Case officer:	Peter Crozier

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:

- Proposed Site Plan, SJ Planning & Design Service, January 2026
- Design & Access Statement, SJF Planning & Design Service

The site comprises a plot of grassland adjacent to woodland to the east, arable land to the north and west, and agricultural/industrial buildings to the south. It is proposed to create a 10-pitch campsite with a temporary/portable toilet block. An area for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is proposed in the north of the site.

It is understood that the site will comprise grassland pitches with no permanent structure or hardstanding, as indicated by the BNG metric, which shows no loss of habitat. The proposal is considered unlikely to adversely affect any protected species or local sites (with the nearest being a County Wildlife Site over 500m away). The neighbouring woodland could constitute Priority Habitat (as per Natural England's Priority Habitat Inventory), but no direct impacts are anticipated, provided the site remains unlit and that enhancements can be secured. This is also considering the seasonal nature of the proposals – the site would only operate between April-September, and only 10 pitches are mapped.

As such, a lighting condition should be applied. Further, and in line with CP50 and the NPPF, biodiversity enhancements – such as a bird and bat box, or invertebrate blocks/loggeries – should be secured via condition.

Biodiversity Net Gain

A completed small sites statutory metric calculation (*Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric)*, Simon Filipowicz, January 2026) has been submitted. Information in the completed on-is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	2.88 Habitat units
	0.00 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation of occurred?	No

It is noted that the metric calculation does not include the existing hardstanding (access through the site to the south). This should be included in the BNG calculation, as the redline application boundary and site boundary used for the BNG assessment must match. However, the addition of artificial sealed surfaces (the existing access track) will not alter the baseline values, therefore, a re-consultation with Ecology will not be necessary following the amendment of the metric.

The proposed BNG is welcomed and includes grassland enhancement and the addition of a native-species hedgerow with trees. 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.

NB. The Design and Access statement notes that the “site would offer up to 20 pitches”; this is in contrast to the submitted site plan, which shows 10 pitches only. The BNG area in the north must not be used for further pitches, as it is unclear whether the proposed BNG enhancements would be achievable if the grassland is to be regularly disturbed as additional pitches.

CONDITIONS:

1. 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 bat 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 such as the adjacent woodland.

2. Enhancements for Biodiversity

Prior to the commencement of development, details of the number, design and locations of biodiversity enhancements – such as bat roosts and nesting opportunities for birds (e.g. bat and bird boxes) – and including evidence of installation of said enhancements, shall be submitted to the local authority for approval.

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 04/04/2026
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