

Project – Ham Cross Farm lake Construction

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Author – MWE

Tel - 01359 242356

Email – contact@miles-water.com



Ham Cross Farm Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

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Author	Thomas Everett Bsc (Hons)
Reviewers	<u>Kate Hiseman</u>
Organisation	Miles Water Engineering Limited

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Executive Summary

- **The site.** Miles Water Engineering undertook the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for the proposed construction of a lake and wetland at Ham Cross Farm, Lower Chicksgrove, Tisbury, Salisbury SP3 6ND.
- **Further documentation.** A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is recommended prior to beginning works. This is due to the ecological sensitivity of the site, accounting for both its proximity to the Nadder and location with the Chilmark Bat SAC.
- **Ecological benefit.** The proposed works diversify habitats on site and create habitat for species outlined within local documentation/policy (National Landscape plans, Bat SAC plan and SSSI guidance).
- **Natural England consultation.** Natural England should be consulted by the LPA regarding the proposals, as they are within the impact zone for the River Nadder SSSI.
- **Further surveys.** Further surveying has not been deemed necessary within this report, provided the recommended CEMP is completed prior to works beginning and accounts for protected species understood to be within the locality.

1. Site overview

- 1.1. The site is located approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the village of Fovant. The nearest main road is the A303, approximately 4.5 miles away (see Figure 1 below).



Figure 1 Ham Cross Farm and village of Fovant to south west

- 1.2. The site borders Chicks Grove Road as well as the C276 to Moor Hill to the North and Northeast (with woodland on the other side of the road), arable land to the South and Southeast (with some scattered woodland) and the landowner's property to the West and Northwest, as well as grassland on the West side of the driveway to the property (see Figure 2).



Figure 2 Redline boundary of the site, taken from Google Earth 2025.

2. Description of the works

- 2.1. The proposal is for the construction of a natural conservation lake, as well as a wetland utilising the overflow of the lake. The remaining topsoil will be used to create two bunds (Figure 3).
- 2.2. Further details of the works can be found in document xxx that accompanies this application, with Appendix1 of this PEA detailing the proposal drawing.



Figure 3 Proposed location of new lake (blue), wetland (green), swail (yellow), and bunds (light blue).

3. Methodology

- 3.1. **Habitat surveys.** Habitat surveys were carried out in accordance with up-to-date best practice using the UK Habitat Classification system (CIEEM Good Practice Guidance for Habitats and Species. (2021)). Habitats were classified using the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0, as published by UKHab 2023. Habitat surveys were completed for any habitats which will or likely could be directly impacted by the works. Adjacent habitats will be noted within this report to detail the wider ecological impact of the site – but these were not formally surveyed. A site walkover took place on 14/10/25, carried out by Thomas Everett BSc (Hons).
- 3.2. **Species** A local Environmental Record Centre (LERC) request was made to Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC). This request was made in line with CIEEM best practice and to ensure that the ecological

context of the site is best understood. This included details of legally protected species, notified sites, local wildlife sites, geological sites, protected road verges, WWT reserves, bat consultation zones, and designated sites (SSSI, SAC). No field surveys were undertaken for protected or priority species during the walkover survey.

4. Desk Survey Results

Statutory Sites

- 4.1. National Landscape Designation.** The site is within the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape (formerly AONB). The area is a National landscape due to the combination of unique geology and ecology, shown by the prevalence of chalk grassland and streams. Ancient woodland is all prevalent within the AONB. In the context of the site, the
- 4.2. SSSI's and SAC's.** The site is not within a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). The nearest SSSI is the river Nadder (middle). Chilmark Quarries SSSI next closest site, being 1km away from the site. The site is within the impact zone for the river Nadder SSSI (See Appendix 1).
- 4.3. SAC's.** The site is within the Chilmark Bat SAC consultation zone and so falls within the jurisdiction of the measures outlined in Wiltshire County council/Natural England's Bat Special Areas of Conservation Planning Guidance. The River Nadder is also an SAC, as well as Chilmark quarries. The Bat SAC zone classification triggers the need for a bat survey (see Appendix 2)

Non Statutory Sites

- 4.4.** There are two Local Wildlife sites within 1km of the site, these being Thorney Bottom Wood (approximately 750m away) and Chicks Grove Wood (approximately 500m away) (see Appendix 3).
- 4.5. Priority habitats.** There is a variety of priority habitat within 1km of the site, including deciduous woodland, chalk streams, wood pasture and parkland and ancient woodland (see Appendix 4).

Priority Species

4.6. The WSBRC data search revealed 516 records with 89 different species recorded. Species which could be impacted (positively or negatively) are detailed below (with approximate distances from the site):

- **Water vole *Arvicola amphibius***, the closest being 258m away from the site.
- **Otter *Lutra lutra***, the closest being 309m away from the site
- **Hedgehog *Ernaceus europaeus***, the closest being 121m away from the site.
- **Brown hare**, the closest being 154 meters away from the site.
- **Small blue *Cupido minimus***, the closest being 1100m away from the site.
- **White clawed crayfish *Austropotamobus pallipes***, approximately 501m away from the site.
- **Bats**, including:
 - Daubenton's Bat - *Myotis daubentonii* 405m
 - Soprano Pipistrelle - *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* 405m
 - Brown Long-eared Bat - *Plecotus auritus* 405m
 - Lesser Horseshoe Bat - *Rhinolophus hipposideros* 405m
 - Barbastelle - *Barbastella barbastellus* 483m
 - Serotine - *Eptesicus serotinus* 483m
 - Whiskered/Brandt's Bat - *Myotis mystacinus/brandtii* 483m
 - Natterer's Bat - *Myotis nattereri* 483m
 - Noctule - *Nyctalus noctule* 483m
 - Common Pipistrelle - *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* 483m
 - Leisler's Bat - *Nyctalus leisleri* 778m
 - Greater Horseshoe Bat - *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* 778m
 - Long eared Bat species *Plecotus* 872m
- **Listed birds (green, amber and red)**, including:
 - Lesser Redpoll - *Acanthis cabaret* 405m
 - Skylark - (*Alauda arvensis*) 799m
 - Kingfisher - (*Alcedo atthis*) 380m
 - Swift - (*Apus apus*) 1259m
 - Greenfinch - (*Chloris chloris*) 862m
 - Cuckoo - (*Cuculus canorus*) 1259m
 - House Martin - (*Delichon urbicum*) 1259m
 - Little Egret - (*Egretta garzetta*) 1259m
 - Yellowhammer - (*Emberiza citrinella*) 862m
 - Kestrel - (*Falco tinnunculus*) 1259m
 - Moorhen - (*Gallinula chloropus*) 380m
 - Linnet - (*Linaria cannabina*) 799m
 - Nightingale - (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) 862m
 - Red Kite - (*Milvus milvus*) 1259m
 - House Sparrow - (*Passer domesticus*) 862m
 - Marsh Tit - (*Poecile palustris*) 862m
 - Turtle Dove - (*Streptopelia turtur*) 862m
 - Starling - (*Sturnus vulgaris*) 862m
 - Redshank - (*Tringa totanus*) 461m

- Redwing - (*Turdus iliacus*) 405m
- Fieldfare - (*Turdus pilaris*) 862m
- Mistle Thrush – (*Turdus viscivorus*) 1259m
- Barn Owl – (*Tyto alba*) 1105m
- Lapwing – (*Vanellus Vanellus*) 405m

- 4.7. Additional species – badgers *Meles meles*.** Although no records were within the LERC, badgers could be present on site, particularly within the woods to the south.
- 4.8.** Other species are identified within the Cranborne and Chase National Landscape (Formerly AONB) Management Plan and are listed in Appendix 5.
-
- 5.1.** See Appendix 6 for site boundary habitat survey results, and Appendix 7 for UK habs survey results
- 5.2.** Much of the site comprises of *g3c other neutral grassland*. This area comprises much of the site, and the entirety of the area on which the pond, swail and wetland are to be located. Species include common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), common thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), sorrel (*Rumex acetosa* or *Rumex acetosella*), orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), dove's-foot (*Geranium molle*), creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), powdery mildew (*Erysiphe spp.*), common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), fall dandelion (*Leontodon autumnalis*), bitter dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), and stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*). A mosaic exists along the southern boundary of this field where it meets the woodland, consisting of saplings and Tussocky grassland. The ground cover of this mosaic remains largely the same, with a notable presence of false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*. The saplings within the mosaic include Silver birch *Betula pendula*, Black alder *Alnus glutinosa*, Large - leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos*, Wild Cherry *Prunus avium*, Common pear *Prus Communis*, Crab apple *Malus sylvestris* and Common hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*. There are 4 trees within the field, with the secondary code 203 mature tree(s). They have been numbered at TN (target note) 1, TN2, TN3 and TN4. TN1 is a Pin Oak *Quercus palustris*, target notes 2 and 3 are English Oak *Quercus robur*. Target note 4 was identified as a horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*.
- 5.3.** The hedge along the Northeastern boundary of the site is *h2a Native Species – Rich Hedgerow*. Species within the hedge include common hazel (*Corylus*

avellana), sloe (*Prunus spinosa*), common dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), common hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), and hedge bedstraw (*Galium mollugo*).

5.4. There is a small woodland to the South/Southeastern edge of the site, classed as *w1f Lowland mixed deciduous woodland*. The canopy cover consists of the following tree species: English Oak *Quercus robur*, Northern red oak *Quercus rubra*, Large leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos*, Small leaved lime *Tilia cordata* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. The ground cover of this woodland consists of common hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), wood avens *Geum urbanum*, slender false brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, common ivy (*Hedera helix*), Swan's-neck thyme-moss *Mnium hornum*, garden chervil *Anthriscus cerefolium*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, orchard grass *Dactylis glomerata*, and common dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*.

5.5. It is likely that bats are foraging across the site, with the potential there could be activity relating to the mature oak trees within the site. Records provided by the LERC relate to species commonly associated with water courses or mature woodland and therefore there are unlikely to be negative impacts to these species.

6 Constraints, opportunities and recommendations.

Constraints

6.1. The following factors constrain the proposed works, and must be accounted for before works can begin:

- **SSSI impact zone.** The project is within the impact zone for the river Nadder SSSI, however, given the small scope of the proposed works and that there are likely to be no impacts (due to there being barriers between the site and the river), it is unlikely that there would be any negative impacts.
- **Chilmark Bat SAC.** The project is within the buffer zone for the Chilmark Bat SAC, concerning Greater Horseshoe and Barbastelle bats. Further information on bat activity is required as per the guidance to inform measures for avoiding negative impacts. It is recommended that a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) is carried out prior to works being undertaken.

- **Mammals and birds** The site presents good foraging habitat for badgers particularly within the grassland and deciduous woodland to the south of the site. The walkover survey did not include a presence/absence survey. As the proposal is within a grassland field, it is anticipated that ground nesting birds could be impacted. Therefore badger and nesting bird surveys should be carried out prior to construction and avoidance measures should be included within the Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP).
- **National Landscape (formerly AONB) designation.** The project is within the Cranborne and Chase National Landscape and must be sensitive to the protective measures in place (i.e. within the management plan).

Opportunities

6.2. The following factors leave opportunity for the proposed works to enhance the ecological profile of the area:

- **Bat foraging habitat.** The pond and wetland created on what is currently neutral grassland would create suitable foraging habitat for bats.
- **Biodiversity enhancement.** The pond, wetland and new bunds introduce new habitat types to the site and enhance what would otherwise be solely grassland.
- **Habitat connectivity.** The addition of the pond and wetland creates an opportunity for species move across an otherwise open and relatively sparse landscape.
- **Water quality.** The addition of a wetland with native aquatic species will contribute to improved water quality within the locality.

Recommendations

6.3. The following recommendations are put forward regarding the works going forward, and to contribute to a CEMP if requested:

- **Bats** A PRA bat survey should be commissioned to survey the site, to inform a CEMP, and to comply with BCT best practice guidance, and in compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This should include the trees within the grassland, the line of trees along the road to the north west, the woodland to the south east and the trees to the south west. This will inform the requirement for further surveys. If bats are known to be using the site, then measures should be taken to ensure that potential disruption to bats is mitigated. These measures should be implemented into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or similar document. These measures include, but are not limited to, avoiding artificial lighting , avoiding working around active hours (dawn and dusk, and including a soft start period an hour after dawn and before dusk), mitigate against the creation of pollutants (dust and fumes) ,mitigating against unnecessary noise and vibration (e.g. by allocating tracking routes away from potential roost features, enforcing speed limits and ensuring revs are minimised while vehicles are on site).
- **Birds** A nesting bird survey should be undertaken between March and September prior to construction as all birds and their eggs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- **Badgers.** A survey of the site should be carried out prior to construction. Badgers sett are legally protected through the Badgers Act 1992, and therefore a survey should be to identify the presence/absence of setts, and whether there is likely disturbance to a sett. If a sett is found within close proximity to the works, then a further badger survey should be undertaken (between February and September).
- **Tracking.** Tracking of any heavy plant should take place through the existing gate in the centre of the hedge and to avoid the need to clear habitat to allow tracking.

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BRIG (ed. Ant Maddock). (2008). *UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat Descriptions: Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland*. UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Available from: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5706>

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Policy and legislation

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Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents> [legislation.gov.uk]

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents> [legislation.gov.uk]

Environment Act 2021

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents> [legislation.gov.uk]

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<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1997/1160/contents> [legislation.gov.uk]

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

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<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/407/contents> [legislation.gov.uk]

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/contents> [legislation.gov.uk]

UK Biodiversity Action Plan

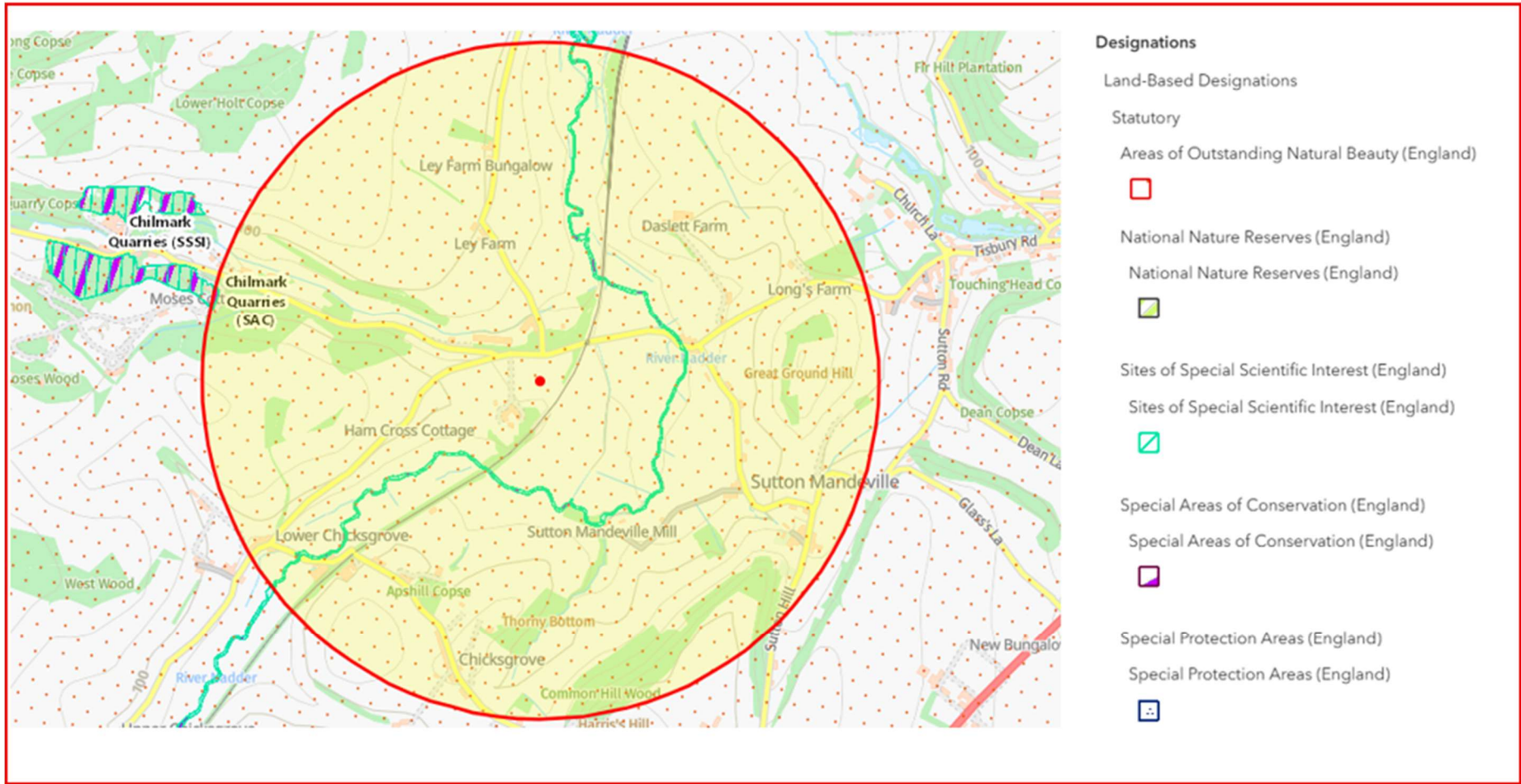
<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap/>

Cranborne Chase National Landscape

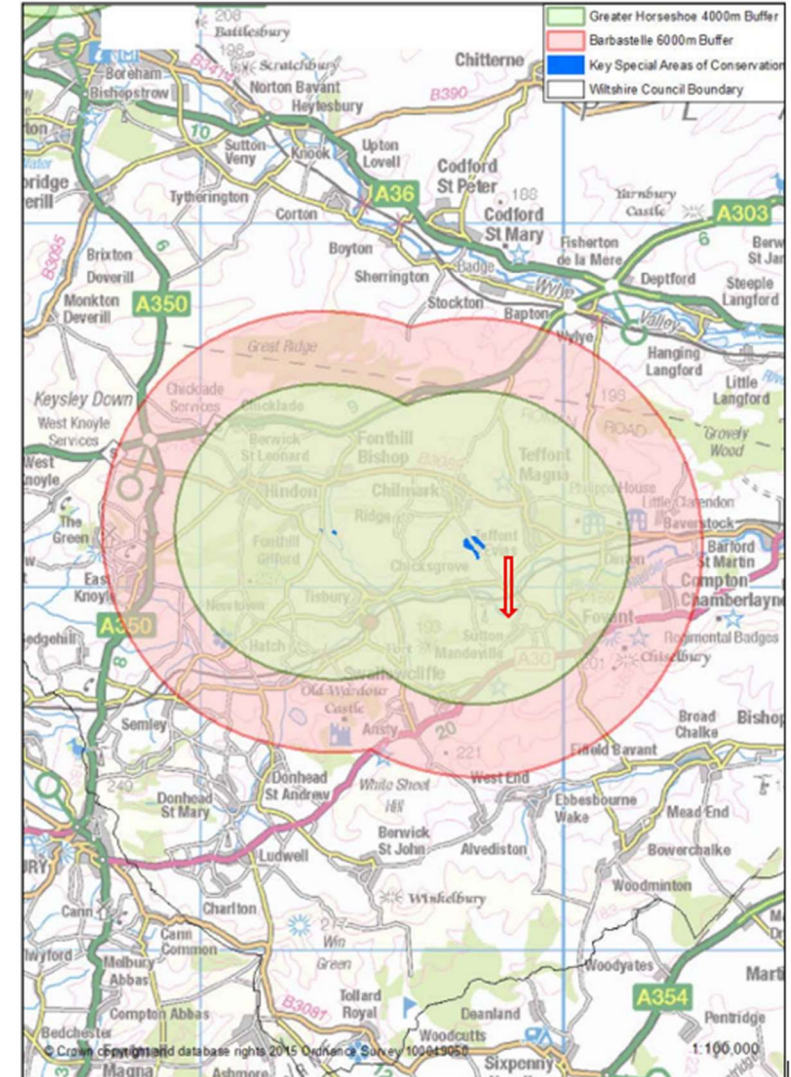
<https://cranbornechase.org.uk/>

9. Appendices

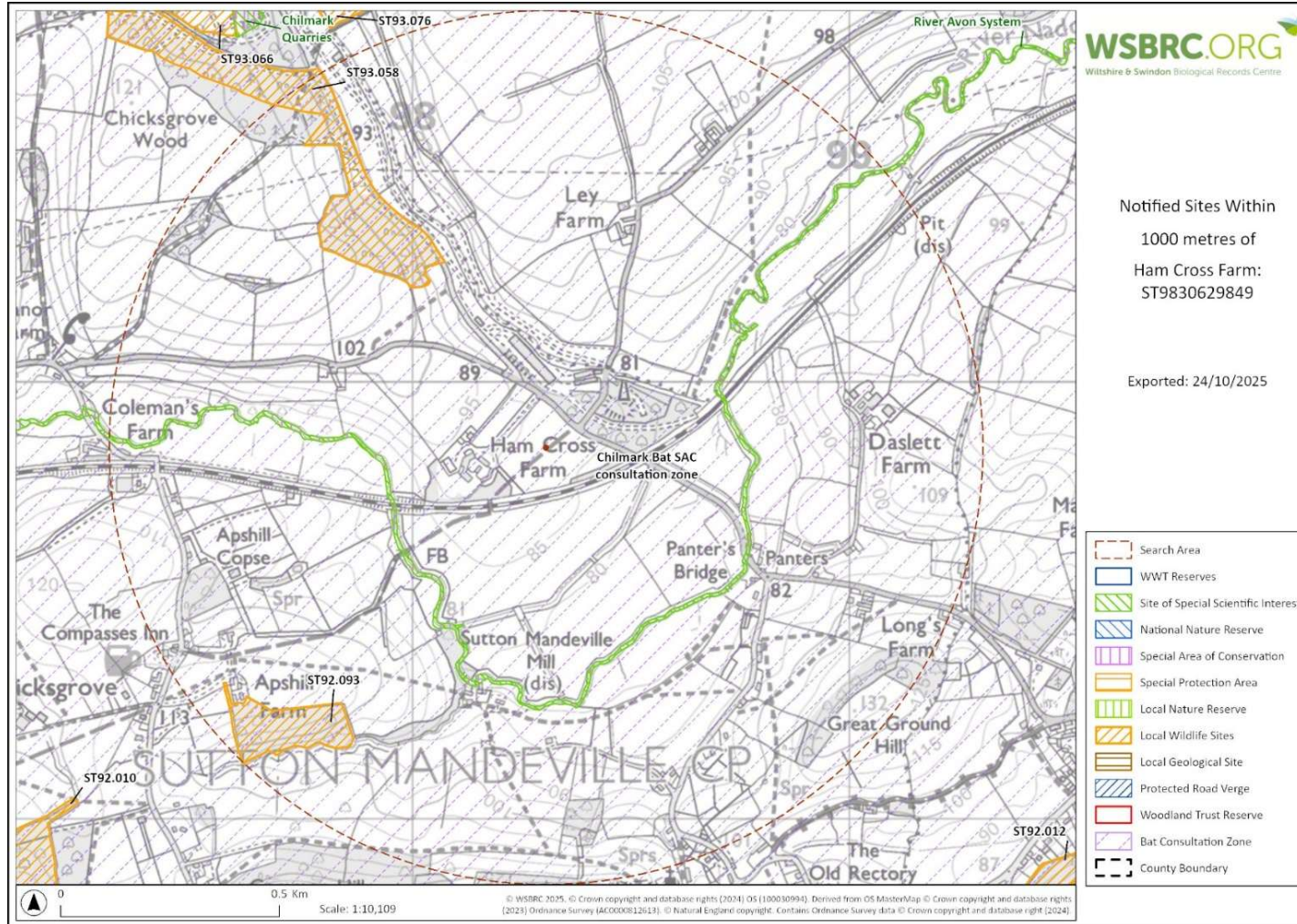
Appendix 1 Statutory sites (1km radius of site) (MAGIC GIS)



**Appendix 2 Site in context of Cilmark Bat SAC
consultation zone for greater horseshoe and
barbastelle bats (see red arrow)**



Appendix 3 Non Statutory Designations (1km radius of site) Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre



Appendix 4: Priority habitat (1km radius) MAGIC GIS



Appendix 5 Species outlined with the Cranborne and Chase National Landscape (Formerly AONB) Management plan.

- **Birds, including:**

- Corn Bunting – *Emberiza calandra*
- Grey Partridge – *Perdix perdix*
- Lapwing – *Vanellus vanellus*
- Turtle Dove – *Streptopelia turtur*
- Skylark – *Alauda arvensis*
- Tree Sparrow – *Passer montanus*
- Cuckoo – *Cuculus canorus*
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker – *Dryobates minor*
- Mistle Thrush – *Turdus viscivorus*
- Whitethroat – *Sylvia communis*
- Willow Warbler – *Phylloscopus trochilus*
- Spotted Flycatcher – *Muscicapa striata*
- House Sparrow – *Passer domesticus*
- Linnet – *Linaria cannabina*
- Yellowhammer – *Emberiza citrinella*
- Common Sandpiper – *Actitis hypoleucos*
- Tawny Owl – *Strix aluco*
- Meadow Pipit – *Anthus pratensis*
- Dunnock – *Prunella modularis*
- Song Thrush – *Turdus philomelos*
- Bullfinch – *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*
- Swift – *Apus apus*
- Little Grebe – *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

- **Butterflies, including:**

- Adonis Blue – *Polyommatus bellargus*
- Duke of Burgundy – *Hamearis lucina*
- Pearl-bordered Fritillary – *Boloria euphrosyne*
- Dark Green Fritillary – *Speyeria aglaja*
- Small Blue – *Cupido minimus*

- **Mammals, including:**

- Hedgehog – *Erinaceus europaeus*
- Brown Hare – *Lepus europaeus*
- Water Vole – *Arvicola amphibius*
- Greater Horseshoe Bat – *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Harvest Mouse – *Micromys minutus*
- Dormouse – *Muscardinus avellanarius*

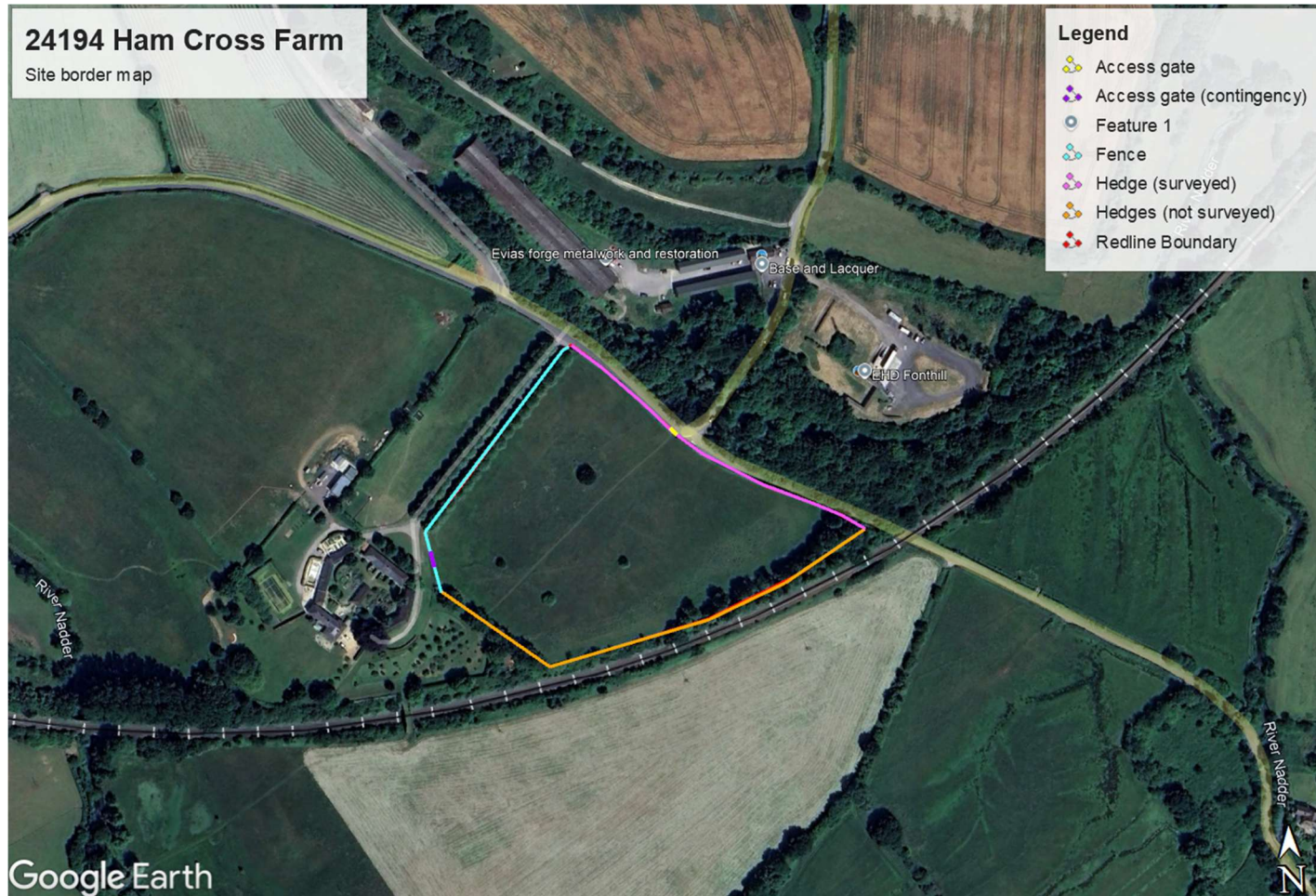
- **Aquatic species, including:**

- White-clawed Crayfish – *Austropotamobius pallipes*
- Wild Trout – *Salmo trutta*
- Grayling – *Thymallus thymallus*
- Dace – *Leuciscus leuciscus*
- Chub – *Squalius cephalus*

- **Plant species, including:**

- Early Gentian – *Gentianella anglica*
- Prickly Poppy – *Papaver argemone*
- Pheasant's-eye – *Adonis annua*

Appendix 6 Site boundary survey results



Site boundary map showing hedges surveyed, as well as site access gates. Note that the Northern hedge (in pink) has been surveyed as plant will be tracking through the existing gate within it. The southwestern and southeastern hedges were not surveyed, as the works will have minimal effect on these hedges due to both proximity and the nature of the works. Taken from google earth 2025.

Appendix 7 UK Habs survey results



- ✓ 203 - Mature trees
- ✓ h2a native species hedgerow
- ✓ w1f lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- ✓ g3c6 grassland mosaic
- ✓ g3c6 grassland

Habitat map showing habitats on site, as well as the site access gate circled in red.