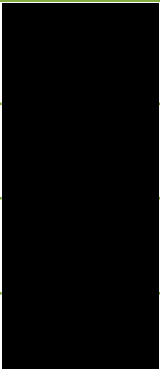


Biodiversity Net Gain Report

Land east of Summer Lane,
Upper Combe Farm, Upper Castle Combe

Client	N-Virocycle
Reference	2025-047
Version	1
Date	28/10/2025

Quality Assurance

	Name	Position	Date	Signature
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Document History

Version	Date Issued	Revision
1	28/10/2025	Issued to the client.

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The evidence which we have prepared and provided is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

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Non-Technical Summary

Purpose of Document	Smart Ecology was commissioned by N-Virocycle to produce a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report for Land east of Summer Lane, Upper Combe Farm, Upper Castle Combe. The purpose of the BNG Report was to inform a full planning application to Wiltshire Council for the erection of an agricultural fertiliser storage tank (PL/2025/06076).
Methodology	The statutory biodiversity metric tool was used to calculate the baseline and post-development biodiversity value of the site.
Results	The pre-development biodiversity value of on-site habitats was calculated as 0.11 units and the post-development value was 0.00 units. The proposed development would result in a 100 % decrease in habitat units and trading rules would not be satisfied.
Conclusions	The proposed development would achieve BNG by the purchase of 0.12 off-site habitat units, or statutory credits as a last resort. A Biodiversity Gain plan must be provided to the Local Planning Authority after planning permission has been obtained.



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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Smart Ecology was commissioned by N-Virocycle (the client) to produce a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report for Land east of Summer Lane, Upper Combe Farm, Upper Castle Combe (central national grid reference ST 84943 78331).
- 1.1.2 The purpose of the BNG Report was to inform a full planning application to Wiltshire Council for the erection of an agricultural fertiliser storage tank (PL/2025/06076). Refer to Appendix 1 for the proposed site plan.
- 1.1.3 The client has confirmed that they believe that planning permission, if granted, would be subject to the biodiversity gain condition as the proposed development is not exempt from mandatory BNG.
- 1.1.4 This BNG Report has been prepared with reference to the guidance provided in the statutory biodiversity metric user guide (Defra, 2025), the good practice principles set out in Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development (Baker et al., 2019), and Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates (CIEEM, 2021).

1.2 Aims

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this BNG Report is to:
 - Provide an assessment of the pre-development biodiversity value of the site.
 - Provide information on how the mitigation hierarchy and biodiversity gain hierarchy have been followed.
 - Provide an assessment of the post-development biodiversity value of the site and details of how the proposed development will achieve BNG.



2 Methodology

2.1 Metric Calculation Tool

- 2.1.1 The statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool (version 1.0.4 issued 3rd July 2025) was used to calculate the on-site baseline and post-development habitat units.

2.2 Measurement of Habitat Areas

- 2.2.1 Existing habitat areas were measured from the Baseline Habitats Plan (Figure 1, Section 8) in QGIS.
- 2.2.2 The areas of habitats that are proposed to be created post-development were identified from the Proposed Site Plan (see Appendix 1).

2.3 Condition Assessment

- 2.3.1 Condition assessments of on-site habitats were carried out by Robert Dunn on the 1st of May 2025. See Table 2-1 for details of the surveyor's experience and qualifications.

Table 2-1: Surveyor information

Surveyor	Qualifications/Experience
Robert Dunn BSc, MSc, ACIEEM	Twelve years' experience in ecological consultancy. MSc Environmental Biology: Conservation and Resource Management (University of Swansea - Merit). BSc Biological Sciences with Environmental Resources (University of Warwick - 1 st).

- 2.3.2 See Table 2-2 for details of weather conditions during the site visit.

Table 2-2: Survey weather conditions

Variable	Weather Conditions
Cloud cover	5 - 10 %
Temperature	26°C
Wind	Light breeze (BWS 2)
Precipitation	None

- 2.3.3 The condition of on-site habitats was assessed using the statutory biodiversity metric condition assessment sheets.



2.4 Strategic Significance

2.4.1 Strategic significance is the significance of a habitat based on its location and habitat type. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Wiltshire and Swindon¹ was reviewed to inform the strategic significance assessment.

2.4.2 See Table 2-3 for strategic significance categories and descriptions.

Table 2-3: Strategic significance categories and descriptions

Category	Detail
High	This category can only be applied to post development interventions when: • The location of the habitat parcel has been mapped in the Local Habitat Map as an area where a potential measure has been proposed to help deliver the priorities of that LNRS; and • The proposed intervention is consistent with the mapped potential measure in the LNRS for the habitat parcel.
Low	Where the definitions for high strategic significance are not met. Even if your project is in an area mapped with a potential measure, if the proposed intervention is not consistent with a potential measure proposed by the LNRS for that location, you should record strategic significance as low.

2.5 Limitations

2.5.1 No limitations were identified.

¹ <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/8288/Wiltshire-and-Swindon-Local-Nature-Recovery-Strategy>



3 Baseline Conditions

- 3.1.1 A Baseline Habitat Plan is provided in Figure 1, Section 8. A summary of existing on-site habitat areas is provided in Table 3-1.
- 3.1.2 It is believed that no activities have been carried out on-site since the 30th of January 2020 that have resulted in the loss of on-site biodiversity value (i.e. degradation).
- 3.1.3 The completed condition assessment sheets for on-site habitats are provided in Appendix 2. Quadrat data are provided in Appendix 3.
- 3.1.4 No irreplaceable habitats would be impacted by the proposed development.

Table 3-1: On-site habitat areas

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Condition
Modified grassland	0.0556	Poor



4 Proposed Design

4.1 Biodiversity Gain & Mitigation Hierarchies

- 4.1.1 No existing on-site habitats have medium, high or very high distinctiveness and so no mitigation for such habitats is required.
- 4.1.2 It is not possible to change the proposed design of the development to avoid the loss of modified grassland, which is only a low distinctiveness and low significance habitat. Therefore, off-site compensation (i.e. purchase of off-site biodiversity habitat units or statutory biodiversity credits) will be required to meet statutory BNG requirements.

4.2 Proposed Habitats

- 4.2.1 The proposed BNG is based on the Proposed Site Plan (Appendix 1), which shows:
- Loss of 0.0556 ha poor condition modified grassland.
- 4.2.2 The Proposed Habitats Plan is provided in Figure 2, Section 8.
- 4.2.3 Table 4-1 provides a summary of habitat areas which would be lost, retained, enhanced, or created.

Table 4-1: Habitats which would be lost, retained, enhanced, or created

Habitat Type	Lost, Retained, Enhanced or Created	Area (ha)
Developed land, sealed surface	Lost	0
	Retained	0
	Enhanced	0
	Created	0.0556
Modified grassland	Lost	0.0556
	Retained	0
	Enhanced	0
	Created	0

4.3 Strategic Significance

- 4.3.1 The strategic significance assigned to proposed habitats and justification for the choice of significance are provided in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2: Strategic significance for proposed habitats

Habitat Type	Strategic Significance
Developed land, sealed surface	Low – does not meet the definition for high strategic significance.



5 BNG Metric Results

- 5.1.1 The pre-development biodiversity value of on-site habitats was calculated as 0.11 units and the post-development value was 0.00 units.
- 5.1.2 The proposed development would result in a 100 % decrease in habitat units and trading rules would not be satisfied. See Figure 5-1 for the headline results.

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	-0.11		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	-100.00%		
	Hedgerow units	0.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.11	0.12	0.12
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

Figure 5-1: BNG Headline Results



6 Conclusions

- 6.1.1 The proposed development would achieve BNG by the purchase of 0.12 off-site habitat units, or statutory credits as a last resort.
- 6.1.2 A Biodiversity Gain plan must be provided to the Local Planning Authority after planning permission has been obtained.



7 References

Baker, J., Hoskin, R. & Butterworth, T. (2019). *Biodiversity Net Gain – good practice principles for development*. Ciria, London.

CIEEM (2021). *Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester, UK.

Defra (2025). *Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide*. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, London.



8 Figures

Figure 1 – Baseline Habitats Plan

Figure 2 – Proposed Habitats Plan





Figure 1 – Baseline Habitats Plan

Land east of Summer Lane, Upper Combe Farm, Upper Castle Combe

-  Site boundary
-  g4 - modified grassland

Base map and data from OpenStreetMap and OpenStreetMap Foundation (CC-BY-SA). © <https://www.openstreetmap.org> and contributors.

Date:	27/10/2025
Drawn by:	Robert Dunn
Checked by:	Rachel Barber

Smart Ecology\Projects\2025\2025-047\GIS





Figure 2 – Proposed Habitats Plan

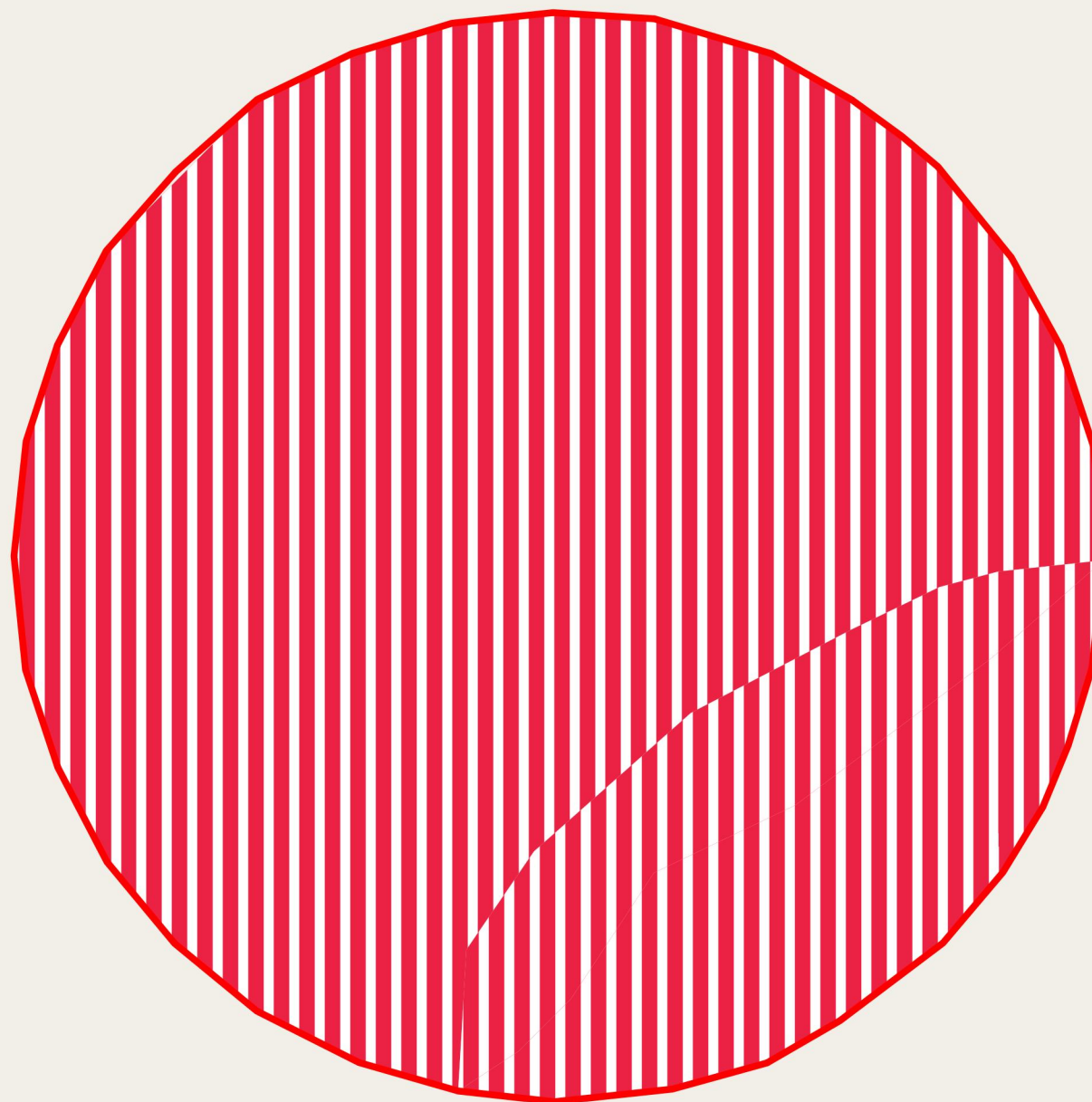
Land east of Summer Lane, Upper Combe Farm, Upper Castle Combe

-  Site boundary
-  u1b - developed land; sealed surface

Base map and data from OpenStreetMap and OpenStreetMap Foundation (CC-BY-SA). © <https://www.openstreetmap.org> and contributors.

Date:	27/10/2025
Drawn by:	Robert Dunn
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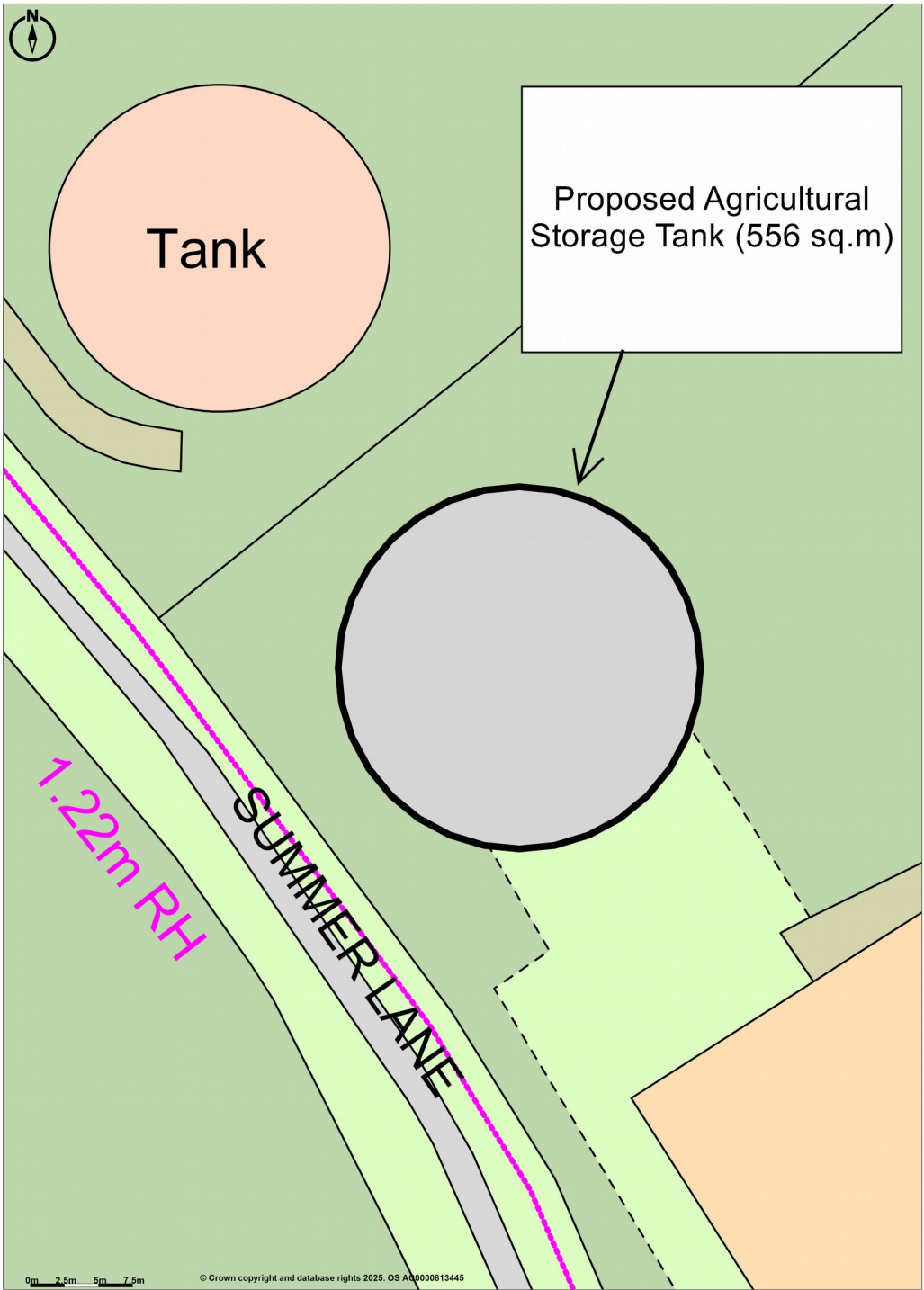


Appendix 1 – Proposed Site Plan

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Proposed Site Plan



Appendix 2 – Condition Assessments

Table A2-1: Condition Assessment – Modified Grassland

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² 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. 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 m ² (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.	No	Fewer than average of 6 species per m ² .
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.	No	Less than 20 % of field is less than 7 cm, sward
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	No scrub in field
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	Less than 5% physical damage in field.
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Yes	Some bare ground within field
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Yes	No bracken.
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4).	Yes	None noted during survey.
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)			No
Number of criteria passed			5
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/✓	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)		
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)	X	



Appendix 3 – Quadrat Data

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Broad-leaved dock Common chickweed Dandelion False oat-grass Hogweed Perennial rye-grass	Dandelion False oat-grass Hogweed Perennial rye-grass	Broad-leaved dock Dandelion Perennial rye-grass Scentless mayweed	Broad-leaved dock Common nettle Hogweed
Q5			
Broad-leaved dock Dandelion False oat-grass Perennial rye-grass			

