

Ecological Impact Assessment

Land at Eastern Way, Melksham,
Wiltshire - Lidl

26 January 2026

Ecology
Arboriculture
Land Management





Report Details

Report Title	Ecological Impact Assessment
Report Reference	3074-EcIA-AG

Quality Assurance & Revision Record

Revision	Date	Author	Checked By	Approver	Summary of Changes
V1	26 January 2026	Anna Galvin BSc MSc	Matthew Davey BSc MSc MCIEEM	Richard Pash BSc MCIEEM	

Disclosure

The content of this report that has been provided by GE Consulting is true, and has been prepared and submitted in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. Its contents are compliant with British Standard BS42020: 2013 Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the stated client and unless otherwise agreed in writing by GE Consulting, no other party may use, make use of or rely on the contents of the report. No liability is accepted by GE Consulting for any use of this report, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided.

GE Consulting has exercised due care in preparing this report. It has not, unless specifically stated, independently verified information provided by others. No other warranty, express or implied, is made in relation to the content of this report and GE Consulting assumes no liability for any loss resulting from errors, omissions or misrepresentation made by others.

Any recommendation, opinion or finding stated in this report is based on circumstances and facts as they existed at the time that GE Consulting undertook the work. Nothing in this report constitutes legal opinion. If legal opinion is required the advice of a qualified legal professional should be secured.

© Copyright GE Consulting Services (UK) Limited 2025

Site Details

Site Name and Location	Land at Eastern Way, Melksham, Wiltshire - Lidl
Central OS Grid Reference	ST 92231 64257
Client	Lidl

Boundary



Executive Summary

Site Location	The Site is located directly parallel to Eastern Way in Melksham. Surrounding land use includes residential development to the west and agricultural fields to the north, south and east of the Site.
Proposals	Detailed application for a Lidl store.
Survey Work	Desk-based study, extended UK Habitat Classification survey, bat activity survey, dormouse survey, reptile survey, breeding bird survey.
Designated Sites with Potential Impacts	No designated sites are anticipated to be impacted.
Baseline Habitats	Modified grassland, other neutral grassland, species-poor hedgerow, species-poor hedgerow with trees and individual tree.
Protected/ notable Species	The Site is suitable for badger, foraging and commuting bats including Annex II species, breeding birds, hedgehog, reptile, common amphibians and dormouse.
Mitigation and Compensation	👉 Enhancement of retained areas of modified grassland to other neutral grassland; 👉 Enhancement of retained hedgerow; 👉 Creation of mixed scrub; 👉 Creation of new trees; and 👉 Creation of new hedgerow.
Biodiversity Net Gain	A separate BNG Statement and Assessment Report is provided (GE Consulting, 2025a).
Enhancements	4no. externally mounted bird boxes; 3no. externally mounted bat boxes; and 2no. hibernacula.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Site Context	1
1.2	Description of Proposed Development.....	1
1.3	Aims	1
2	Methods	2
2.1	Ecological Scoping and Baseline Data Collection	2
2.2	Field Surveys	2
2.3	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment	2
2.4	Baseline Evaluation and Impact Assessment	2
2.5	Limitations	3
3	Baseline Conditions & Evaluation	3
3.1	Designated Sites	3
3.2	Habitats and Flora.....	4
3.3	Fauna	4
4	Further Survey Work.....	8
5	Impact Assessment and Mitigation	8
5.1	Designated Sites	8
5.2	Habitats and Flora.....	9
5.3	Fauna	10
6	Summary of Assessment and Mitigation	14
7	Biodiversity Net Gain.....	14
8	Protected/Notable Species Features	14
9	Monitoring	16
10	Conclusions	16
11	References	17

Figures

- 1: UK Habitat Classification Survey and Protected Species Findings
- 2: Night-time Bat Walkover Survey Results
- 3: Automated Bat Detector Survey Results
- 4: Dormouse Tube Location and Survey Results
- 5: Reptile Felt Locations and Survey Results
- 6: Breeding Bird Survey Results
- 7: Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan

Appendices

Appendix 1 – General Glossary of Terms	26
Appendix 2 – Planning Policy and Legislation	28
Appendix 3 – Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey	31
Appendix 4 – List of Flora and Fauna Mentioned in Text.....	35
Appendix 5 – Bat Activity Surveys	37
Appendix 6 – Dormouse Survey	48
Appendix 7 – Reptile Survey	49
Appendix 8 – Breeding Bird Survey.....	50

1 Introduction

This report presents the results of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) at Land at Eastern Way, Melksham, Wiltshire - Lidl in relation to a detailed planning application. The surveys were commissioned by Lidl.

The area within the application boundary is hereafter referred to as the 'Site'. A 'wider survey area' located to the south of the Site is referred to where relevant throughout this report.

1.1 Site Context

The Site is located directly parallel to Eastern Way in Melksham. Surrounding land use includes residential development to the west and agricultural fields to the north, south and east of the Site. Busy A roads bound the Site to the north and west with a roundabout at their juncture to the immediate north west of the Site. The agricultural fields to the immediate east of the Site benefit from outline planning consent for residential led mixed use development under planning reference PL/2023/11188.

1.2 Description of Proposed Development

Proposals consist of the establishment of a Lidl food store with associated access, car parking and soft landscaping.

1.3 Aims

The aims of this report are to:

- 🦋 Identify and describe the habitats and species likely to be affected by the proposed development and assess the ecological value of these features;
- 🦋 Identify key ecological constraints to the proposed development and evaluate the significance of any potential effects; and,
- 🦋 Provide recommendations for mitigation and enhancement opportunities in accordance with relevant planning policy, legislation and other published guidance (see **Appendix 2**).

2 Methods

2.1 Ecological Scoping and Baseline Data Collection

2.1.1 Desk Study

A desk-based study was undertaken in December 2025 whereby:

- Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) was contacted for records of protected/notable species and sites designated for nature conservation value within a 2km radius of the Site boundaries;
- MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) was searched for international designated sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar) within 10km, Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) and European Protected Species (EPS) Mitigation Licences within or adjacent to the Site
- Previous reports were reviewed with any relevant results provided in the appropriate sub-sections; and,
- Aerial photography of the wider area was reviewed to identify possible important habitat features.

2.2 Field Surveys

Table 1 summarises the surveys undertaken to provide ecological baseline information for the Site. Full details are provided in the appendices.

Table 1: Summary of Baseline Data Collection Surveys

Survey Type	Date (s)	Relevant Appendix
Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) condition assessment	June 2025	3
Bat Activity Surveys	April – October 2025	5
Dormouse survey	April – December 2025	6
Reptile survey	April – August 2025	7
Breeding bird surveys	April – July 2025	8

2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

A baseline BNG assessment was undertaken using the statutory biodiversity metric (released in January 2025, July 2025) to assess the pre-development and indicative post-development value of the habitats on Site following current guidance (Defra, 2024). Further details are provided in the BNG Statement and Assessment Report (GE Consulting, 2026a).

2.4 Baseline Evaluation and Impact Assessment

Determining the importance of ecological features was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2018). The guidelines recommend a scale of significance from International to Local ecological importance as a frame of reference, however also notes that it can be adapted to suit local circumstances. As such, where ecological receptors are assessed to be of less than Local value, an additional valuation of 'Site value' has been included.

An assessment was then made of possible ecological impacts of the proposed development on each feature within the development's likely 'Zone of Influence' (Zol). Where uncertainty exists, a precautionary approach has been adopted.

Measures are described to ensure that any impacts can be avoided, minimised or compensated for by applying the mitigation hierarchy in accordance with NPPF (2024) paragraph 193(a) which states:

"If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused."

2.5 Limitations

Care has been taken to ensure that balanced advice is provided on the information available and collected during the study period (s), and within the resources available for the project. However, the possibility of important ecological features being missed due to survey timings, absence during surveys or the year of survey cannot be ruled out. In addition, the lack of evidence or records of protected species on Site does not preclude their presence from Site.

Due to the change of the Site boundary, the roadside verge and associated street trees parallel to Eastern Way weren't surveyed during the Site Walkover Survey. To ensure that the Site habitats were not undervalued, where appropriate habitat classification has assumed the highest realistic distinctiveness, and best possible condition considered likely to be present were used, given the current use/management. The precise grassland type and condition will be verified during an update survey carried out during the appropriate survey window.

3 Baseline Conditions & Evaluation

3.1 Designated Sites

A summary of designated sites within the search area is provided in **Table 2**.

The Site lies within a IRZ for Spye Park SSSI (c. 2.7km northeast of the Site), however no consultation with Natural England is required due to the nature of the proposals.

There is one Local Geological Site Sahara Sand, Melksham Without, 1.7km from the Site boundary, designated for being a working pit in sands and some sandstone with good sedimentary structures and fossils. This site is not designated for nature conservation interest and is therefore not considered further within this report.

Table 2: Designated sites records within 2km of Site boundary, 10km for European sites

Site Name	Proximity to Site	Description
<i>National Site Network</i>		
Bath & Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC	9.4km northwest	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site 👉 Not Applicable Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site 👉 Not Applicable Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site

Site Name	Proximity to Site	Description
		1304 Greater horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> 1323 Bechstein's bat <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i> Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection 1303 Lesser horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>
Local Wildlife Sites		
Eighteen Acre Plantation	1.1km east	Plantation woodland with much field maple, ash and oak.
Morass Wood	1.6km east	Former coppice woodland on a moderate greensand slope with large areas of very wet flush.
Bristol Avon River	1.6km west	One of the main river systems draining north-west Wiltshire.
Hanging Wood	1.7km northeast	Mature poplar plantation on a very wet ancient site with Hazel understorey and characteristic ground flora throughout.

3.2 Habitats and Flora

The distribution of habitats is shown on **Figure 1** and full details with photographs are provided in **Appendix 3**.

The Site comprises a field of modified grassland which is not botanically diverse and is managed through cattle grazing and an area of grassland roadside verge, it is therefore considered to be of **Site** importance. The field is bound by species-poor native hedgerows (HPI) and species-poor native hedgerow with trees (HPI). Given their low diversity in the context of the surrounding area, the hedgerows are of no more than **Local** importance. A single mature oak tree is present on the eastern boundary, it is considered to be of **Local** importance due to its size and maturity.

3.3 Fauna

Full survey results are included in the relevant appendix.

3.3.1 Amphibians

Two records of great crested newt (EPS, SPI, Annex II) within 2km of the Site have been recorded in the last 10 years. The closest record was 1.2km to the south. One record of common toad (SPI) was recorded within 2km of the Site in the last 10 years. This was located 0.8km to the southwest of the Site. Three EPSL for great crested newt were present within 2km of the Site for the damage and destruction of a resting place c.1.3km to the south of the Site.

One waterbody lies within 250m of the Site to the northeast, however this was identified as unsuitable for great crested newt by EAD Ecology in 2023 (EAD Ecology, 2023a) due to it being a slurry pit. There are no waterbodies on Site.

The grassland on Site is of a uniform sward and therefore does not provide optimal terrestrial habitat for amphibians. Some sheltering opportunities are present in hedgerow bases on Site. However, due to the lack of optimal terrestrial habitat and no suitable ponds within 250m, great crested newts are therefore

considered to be **absent** from the Site and have been scoped out of further assessment. A low risk to common amphibians such as common toad may be present, and therefore the Site is considered to be of **Local** importance for these species.

3.3.2 *Badger*

Four records of badger were returned from WSBRC within the last 10 years. The closest record being c.0.6km to the east of the Site.

No evidence of badger was found during the Site walkover survey, however badgers are a highly mobile species and may cross the Site on an opportunistic basis.

Badger is not listed as a species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and has therefore not been assigned a scale of importance in this case but will be considered further in this assessment in relation to their legal protection only.

3.3.3 *Bats*

29 records of bat roosts were returned from WSBRC within the last 10 years. Of these, two records belonged to serotine the closest being c. 0.7km southeast of the Site. 20 of these records were for common pipistrelle with the closest roost being c. 0.3km southwest of the Site. Two of these records were for soprano pipistrelle with the closest recorded 0.7km southeast of the Site. Four records of brown long-eared bat roosts were recorded within 2km of the Site with the closest being 1.7km north of the Site. One record of a long-eared bat species was recorded 0.8km southeast of the Site. It should be noted that the distance from the Site is estimated due to grid references from the records centre being reduced due to the sensitivity and vulnerability of this data.

Three EPSLs were returned by MAGIC, two for the destruction of a resting place for brown long-eared c. 0.3km northeast and one for the damage to a breeding site, damage to a resting place and destruction of a resting place c. 1.3km northeast.

Emergence surveys were conducted by EAD Ecology in 2021 and updated in 2023 (EAD Ecology, 2023b) in relation to outline planning permission (PL/2023/11188) for an adjacent scheme to the east of the Site where 7 roosts were confirmed across all surveys for common pipistrelle, noctule, *Myotis* species and long-eared species. The closest of these tree roosts lies c. 0.1km east of the Site.

3.3.3.1 *Roosting bats*

One suitable tree is present on Site on the eastern boundary. The tree was subject to emergence surveys by EAD Ecology in 2021 where no roosting bats were observed. Therefore, the Site is considered to be of **Local** importance to roosting bats.

3.3.3.2 *Commuting and foraging bats*

Within the Site, the grazed modified grassland, hedgerows and trees provide suitable commuting and foraging habitat for a variety of bat species (including Annex II bats), which are connected to a network of continuous suitable habitat (hedgerows, agricultural fields and some areas of woodland) within the wider area. The Site is considered to be of Moderate suitability for commuting and foraging bats.

Three night-time bat walkover surveys (NBWs) have been undertaken in April, June and September 2025 of the Site and wider survey area.

During these surveys activity was dominated by common pipistrelle (194 passes) with *Nyctalus* sp. being the second most recorded (54 passes), soprano pipistrelle and *Myotis* sp., were recorded occasionally (17 and 22 passes) and serotine and Nathusius' pipistrelle were recorded once.

Bat activity during the NBWs was focused along the eastern section of the Site, predominantly along the eastern hedgerow.

Seven automated detector surveys have been undertaken between April – October 2025. During these surveys, at least 10 species were recorded. These are shown below in order of frequency:

- 🦇 Common pipistrelle (58.49%)
- 🦇 *Nyctalus* species (21.48%)
- 🦇 *Myotis* species (12.37%)
- 🦇 Soprano pipistrelle (4.42%)
- 🦇 Long-eared species (1.11%)
- 🦇 Serotine (1.04%)
- 🦇 Lesser horseshoe (0.55%)
- 🦇 Greater horseshoe (0.22%)
- 🦇 Nathusius's pipistrelle (0.16%)
- 🦇 Barbastelle (0.16%)

Static detector location and average numbers of passes per species for each location are shown in **Figure 3**.

The results from the NBW and static detector surveys show that the vast majority of activity within the Site is attributed to common pipistrelle, which are considered common and widespread within the UK and are a light-tolerant species. At least three Annex II species were recorded using the Site, namely lesser horseshoe, greater horseshoe and barbastelle. However, these species were recorded in low numbers (20 total passes of lesser horseshoe, 9 total passes of greater horseshoe and 6 total passes of barbastelle bats). This suggests that the Site does not provide integral foraging or commuting habitats for these species. Overall, the assemblage of bats recorded over the survey period are considered to be typical due to the Site's geographical context and habitats within the wider area. As such, taking into account the small scale of the Site, the numbers and species of bats identified, the Site is considered to be of **Local** importance for commuting and foraging bats.

3.3.4 Birds

WSBRC returned numerous records of notable and protected birds within 2km of the Site within the past 10 years. This included species that may utilise the Site such as greenfinch (BoCC Red), house sparrow (BoCC Red) and swift (BoCC Red).

The species-poor hedgerow, species-poor hedgerow with trees and the individual trees on Site provide suitable nesting opportunities for bird species. Breeding bird surveys were conducted in April, June and July where several species of notable bird species were recorded including dunnock (Amber, S41), greenfinch (Red), rook (Amber), whitethroat (Amber), skylark (Red, S41, WBAP), woodpigeon (Amber) and wren (Amber). Two probable breeders (woodpigeon and wren) and four possible breeders (dunnock, greenfinch, whitethroat and skylark) were recorded on Site. Therefore, it is considered that the Site is up to **Local** importance for breeding birds.

3.3.5 Hazel dormouse

WSBRC returned 4 records of hazel dormouse within 2km of the Site within the last 10 years, with the closest situated 0.4km southeast of the Site. No granted EPS licences for hazel dormouse were returned

by MAGIC. The species-poor native hedgerow and species-poor native hedgerow with trees within the Site provides suitable dormouse habitat, which is connected to further suitable habitat (hedgerows and woodland) beyond the Site boundary.

A suite of dormouse surveys were undertaken between April-December 2025 and numerous dormouse nests were identified during these surveys. Further details are provided in **Appendix 6** and **Figure 4**. The Site is considered to be of **Local** importance for dormice.

3.3.6 Invertebrates

WSBRC returned numerous records of invertebrates within 2km of the Site in the last 10 years. None of these records were from within the Site boundary or adjacent habitats. The modified grassland, trees and hedgerows present on Site all provide suitable habitat for a range of invertebrate species. However, there is no indication that a notable invertebrate assemblage could be supported and the Site is considered to be of **Site** importance.

3.3.7 Reptiles

WSBRC returned one record of slow worm c.1.8km southwest and 10 records of grass snake within 2km of the Site within the last 10 years, with the closest record being 0.8km southwest of the Site.

The grassland and hedgerow bases may provide some suitable habitat for common and widespread reptile species. Therefore, reptile surveys were conducted between April – August 2025. During the sixth survey, the refuges was discovered to have been destroyed. However, this is not anticipated to have impacted the validity of the surveys due to the prior five surveys returning no reptiles on Site.

No reptiles were recorded during these surveys and so it is considered that reptiles are likely absent from the Site. However, it should be noted that due to the change in Site boundary, the additional inclusion of the roadside verge parallel to Eastern Way was not surveyed. Common species of reptile could be utilising this area of grassland, however given the lack of evidence found within the Site and the wider survey area it is unlikely to be a significant population. Therefore, the Site is considered to be on Site importance for reptiles.

3.3.8 Other Notable Species

WSBRC returned 15 records of otter within 2km of the Site within the last 10 years with the closest record being 0.7km northeast of the Site. 14 records of water vole were returned within 2km of the Site within the last 10 years with the closest record being c.0.8km south of the Site. Five records of beaver were returned within 2km of the Site in the last 10 years with the closest record being c. 1.7km northwest of the Site. Numerous records of hedgehog were returned within 2km of the Site within the last 10 years, with the closest record being c0.1km west of the Site.

The Site supports suitable habitat for hedgehog in the form of hedgerows and associated trees and modified grassland. It is considered likely that hedgehog may opportunistically commute, shelter and forage on Site and therefore the Site is considered to be of **Site** importance for hedgehog.

No suitable habitat is present on Site for otter, water vole or beaver and no evidence of these species has been recorded during the various field surveys, therefore these species are considered to be **absent** from the Site and have not been considered further.

4 Further Survey Work

No further ecological survey work is considered necessary for this application; however any changes to the proposed masterplan or if any significant amount of time has passed since the date of this report, a re-appraisal may be required.

5 Impact Assessment and Mitigation

5.1 Designated Sites

5.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

The Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC lies approximately 9.4km to the north-west of the Site and is designated for its populations of greater horseshoe and Bechstein's bats as the primary reason for designation, with lesser horseshoe listed as a qualifying species but not a primary reason for designation. This SAC is primarily an underground site which provides stable hibernation conditions and swarming conditions for a significant number of the qualifying species.

The SAC includes the hibernation sites associated with 15% of the UK greater horseshoe bat population and is selected on the basis of the importance of this exceptionally large overwintering population. The SAC also supports small numbers of Bechstein's bats hibernating in abandoned mines, though maternity sites remain unknown.

Within Wiltshire, the key guidance document is the "Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC Planning Guidance for Wiltshire". The guidance states *"In order to maintain the integrity of the SACs, it is important to protect the network of 'sensitive features' used by the designated bat populations (as set out in 3.1). These species can be highly mobile and although individual bats are known to occasionally migrate tens of kilometres between roost sites, there are a number of roosts where large numbers of these bats are known to regularly hibernate and breed. These have been identified as 'Core Roosts' for the purposes of this guidance."* Additionally, the landscapes surrounding these Core Roosts which are used regularly for foraging and commuting are also of particular importance and have been identified as 'Core Areas'. The size of these Core Areas is dependent upon the typical ranging behaviour of the species involved. The guidance document defines these as:

- 🦇 4km surrounding greater horseshoe Core Roosts;
- 🦇 2km surrounding lesser horseshoe Core Roosts;
- 🦇 1.5km surrounding Bechstein's Core Roosts; and
- 🦇 6km surrounding barbastelle Core Roosts (except at Mottisfont, where local evidence justifies a requirement for a 7.5km radius).

The Site does not lie within any bat consultation zones in relation to the SAC.

In addition, typical Bechstein habitat, namely established woodlands, are not present within the Site or surrounding area, such that the Site is not considered to be of particular interest or value for this species. Greater Horseshoe bats and Lesser Horseshoe bats associated with the designation are unlikely to utilise the Site as these species typically fly to foraging areas within four and two kilometres of their roosts respectively. Greater Horseshoe bats are known to fly up to 12km from a roost when suitable foraging habitat is in short supply, however, surveys have shown that the Site is only very occasionally used by these species. Accordingly, the proposed development is unlikely to adversely affect the qualifying interest features of the designated site, namely the Bechstein's, Greater Horseshoe or Lesser Horseshoe bat populations during either the construction or operational phase. As such impacts to designated sites are not predicted as a result of the proposals.

5.1.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Several local wildlife sites lie within 2km of the Site, with Eighteen Acre Plantation LWS being the closest c. 1.1km east of the Site.

Standard airborne and water pollution prevention measures, in line with the Pollution Prevention for Businesses (2024) guidance, will be followed throughout construction to avoid negative impacts through pollution and run-off.

No recreational impacts to the LWS within 2km of the Site are anticipated due to the proposals being for commercial development and not residential.

5.2 Habitats and Flora

In the absence of mitigation there is some risk of degradation to retained habitats during enabling and construction from unsympathetic pruning, and root zone damage/ compaction during construction. To avoid such impacts, Root Protection Areas (RPAs) will be identified, and suitable protective fencing installed where required in line with best arboricultural practice during construction (BS5837:2012). Standard airborne and water pollution prevention measures will be employed during construction. Such measures should be detailed within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which could be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

The loss of habitats within the Site do not pose an 'in principle' constraint to the development. Measures to restore and enhance existing habitats, to ensure successful establishment of new habitats, and to maintain the value of all ecological features in the long-term will be detailed within a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) which will be controlled through the Biodiversity Gain condition.

Specific measures in relation to existing habitats are detailed below.

Some of the habitats present within the Site require further consideration in relation to supporting protected and notable species as further discussed below in **Section 5.3**.

5.2.1 Hedgerows

The majority of hedgerows within the Site will be retained and protected as part of the detailed proposals. However, in order to facilitate access it will be necessary to breach some hedgerows with some additional thinning to existing hedgerows. The amount of hedgerow loss will be kept to the minimum required and based on the Landscape Proposals Overall (Corscadden Associates, 2025) a total length of 150m will be thinned.

New native species rich hedgerow will be planted as part of the proposals (c. 420m). In addition, retained hedgerows (totalling c.100m) have been identified for enhancement through provision of infilling gaps and the hedgerow base will be seeded with a specialist wildflower mixture.

With the proposed mitigation and compensation measures, no significant impacts are anticipated on hedgerows, with the measures proposed considered to represent a significant enhancement for hedgerow habitat within the Site.

5.2.2 Modified grassland

Approximately 0.94ha of modified grassland is anticipated to be lost through the development of the Site, with 0.052ha being retained and 0.172ha enhanced. The enhanced areas of modified grassland will

form an ecological buffer to the east of the Site and will be selectively harrowed and overseeded with a species-rich mix. Therefore, no significant impacts are anticipated on modified grassland.

5.2.3 Other neutral grassland

Around 0.13ha of other neutral grassland (this classification is assumed due to the change in the Site boundary, see Section 2.5) is to be lost through the development of Site, with 0.54ha being retained. The creation of other neutral grassland (0.172ha) through the enhancement of existing modified grassland will help mitigate the small loss of other neutral grassland required for the creation of pedestrian footpaths to the Site. Therefore, no significant impacts are anticipated on other neutral grassland.

5.2.4 Trees

The individual trees on Site are to be retained within the scheme. In addition, 35 new individual trees are to be planted throughout the development. With the proposed mitigation measures no significant impacts are anticipated on trees, with the measures proposed are considered to be a significant enhancement for tree habitat on Site.

5.3 Fauna

5.3.1 Badger

Badgers and their setts receive protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which protects them from deliberate harm and injury.

No badger setts or evidence of badger activity were found on Site, therefore it is considered that the species doesn't currently pose a constraint to the proposed development. However, mindful that badgers are highly mobile and frequently establish new setts, suitable habitats which are to be affected by development, such as the line of individual trees, could support badger setts in the future.

The following precautionary measures are therefore recommended:

- 🦡 Update survey of affected habitats, no less than one month prior to works commencing;
- 🦡 Exclusion of badgers under a Natural England badger licence should any active setts be discovered that require removal/ disturbance during works; and
- 🦡 Good practice construction measures to ensure badgers are either unable to access the construction site or cannot become trapped in excavations (e.g. through covering up at night or inserting an 'escape ramp').

The habitat creation and enhancement measures proposed above would maintain and enhance foraging opportunities for badgers post-development.

5.3.2 Bats

All species of bat and their breeding sites or resting places (roosts) are protected under Regulation 41 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

5.3.2.1 Roosting

A single tree (T16) was identified as having potential roosting features for bats. This tree was subject to emergence surveys by EAD Ecology in 2021 (EAD Ecology, 2023b) where no roosting bats were observed. However, it should be noted that bat roosts in trees are highly transient in nature, being delicate and

short-lived roosts that are not constantly occupied throughout the season. Current proposals are to retain T16 and for it to remain unlit. However, should it be found necessary to remove T61 e.g. for health and safety reasons, prior to commencement of works, potential roosting features will be inspected via endoscope, involving aerial assessments where necessary to identify presence/likely absence of roosting bats. In the event that evidence of roosting bats is identified, works will cease, and further information collected in order to inform a mitigation licence application to Natural England.

The nearest offsite roost previously identified by EAD Ecology (2023b), lies c. 0.12km southeast of the Site boundary. The additional foraging and commuting habitats, namely the hedgerow creation, grassland enhancements and scrub creation are anticipated to offset any impacts to the viability of this roost and the additional confirmed roosts further from the Site boundary. Connectivity from these roosts to the Site are not to be impacted through the retention of the eastern boundary (H3).

5.3.2.2 *Commuting and foraging*

Without appropriate mitigation, the loss and/or fragmentation of boundary hedgerows and an increase in lighting during both construction and operation have the potential to adversely impact light averse species of bats that forage and commute within the Site.

To minimise the impacts on commuting and foraging bats, the majority of boundary vegetation will be retained, protected and suitably buffered as part of the scheme. Where boundary vegetation is to be lost to facilitate access into the development this will be compensated for through enhancing the condition of existing hedgerows and creating new hedgerows in locations that contribute to maintaining and enhancing habitat connectivity through the Site.

In addition, a sensitive lighting strategy will be developed for the construction and operational phases by a lighting professional, with input from an ecologist. The lighting scheme will be designed to ensure that no light is directed onto boundary hedgerows or bat and bird boxes. Principles of the sensitive lighting scheme are outlined below and are in line with best practice guidance.

During the construction phase, the following mitigation measures will be implemented:

- 👉 All works will be undertaken during daylight hours, with works commencing no earlier than 30 minutes prior to sunrise and finishing no later than 30 minutes after sunset. No artificial lighting will be left on outside of normal working hours; and
- 👉 Where security lighting is required, it is recommended that these are motion activated with hooded luminaires, and these must be directed away from boundary hedgerows and bat and bird boxes.

During the operational phase, the following mitigation measures will be implemented:

- 👉 Luminaires will not be directed at sensitive habitats, boundary vegetation or onto bat and bird boxes. Where required, lights can be fitted with hoods, baffles or louvres to reduce back-spill;
- 👉 Only luminaires with an upward light ratio of 0% will be used, and low-level bollard lighting will be used where feasible to retain darkness above the luminaire;
- 👉 All external luminaires used on site will lack UV elements and will be warm-white coloured (<2700 Kelvin) to reduce blue-light components;
- 👉 LED luminaires will be used due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour retention and dimming capability; and
- 👉 Where security lighting is installed this will be motion-activated.

It is anticipated that habitat retention, enhancement and creation measures detailed above will provide greater diversity and quality of habitats on the Site. Where possible, taking into account construction access requirements, the landscape planting should be undertaken in advance of removal. The future management of the Site under the provisions of a HMMP will ensure successful establishment and long-

term management of these features and as such will increase their value to foraging and commuting bats.

5.3.3 *Birds*

The Site supports a total of four possible (dunnock, greenfinch, whitethroat and skylark) and two probable breeding species (woodpigeon and wren) within the Site, of which all are considered to be notable species. One ground nesting bird species were recorded as possible.

In the absence of mitigation, there is a risk that the loss /fragmentation of the hedgerows and associated trees will lead to a negative impact on the breeding bird population within the Site. In addition, if construction takes place during the breeding bird season, increased disturbance caused by construction noise, dust and vibration is likely to affect the ability of birds to hold territory and breed successfully within habitats adjacent to the works area. To mitigate for this, all hedgerows (with exception for losses to facilitate access) will be retained and protected as part of the development. Retained hedgerows will be clearly marked through Heras fencing (or similar) and will be subject to regular checks throughout construction to ensure they are still intact.

Some existing hedgerows will be enhanced and new habitats will be created within the Site to compensate for the loss of suitable breeding bird habitat. Habitats to be created will comprise other neutral grassland, hedgerows and new tree planting which will provide a number of new opportunities for breeding and foraging once established.

Given the protection afforded to all breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young, any vegetation clearance, including the future management of habitats, should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to August inclusive). If this is not practicable, then works should be preceded by a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist within 48 hours of the commencement of works. If nesting birds are found to be present then an appropriate buffer will be implemented around the nest, in which no works can take place until all birds have fledged.

With the proposed mitigation and compensation measures no significant impacts are anticipated for breeding birds, with the measures proposed considered to represent a significant enhancement for birds within the Site.

5.3.4 *Hazel dormouse*

Dormouse are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The development will result in the impact to 150m of suitable dormouse habitat. Direct impacts upon dormice are considered to be limited and are associated with the removal of sections of hedgerows to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian access. Impacts potentially arising include disturbance during the construction period, and permanent habitat loss. This could result in partial fragmentation of habitats in the absence of mitigation.

In order to minimise any potential impacts and to ensure legal compliance, a Natural England EPS Mitigation Licence for dormice will be required prior to the removal of the hedgerows. A detailed mitigation plan will be developed as part of the licence application. To gain a Licence from Natural England, the proposed development must satisfy three criteria:

-  The development must be for reasons of overriding public interest;
-  There is no satisfactory alternative; and,
-  The favourable conservation status of the species concerned will be maintained and/or enhanced i.e. through appropriate mitigation.

The following sections detail the mitigation that will be implemented in order to maintain the favourable conservation status of dormice in the area. It is considered that all three derogation tests would be met by the proposals and the below mitigation strategy.

- 🦉 Hedgerow removal has been minimised.
- 🦉 Vegetation removal will be overseen by a licensed ecologist following a contractors briefing;
- 🦉 Suitable habitat will only be removed in mid-September – October or April – May when dormice are active but not breeding or hibernating with no more than 0.25ha of habitat being removed per day;
- 🦉 If this cannot be achieved (depending on the phasing), the hedgerows will be coppiced to above ground level using hand tools in winter (November – February), with the stumps removed in the following summer (April to May) when dormice have emerged from hibernation but are not breeding;
- 🦉 Dormouse nest boxes will be installed across the Site (the number of boxes will be determined within the licence)
- 🦉 In order to ensure that connectivity is maintained and that the favourable conservation status is not adversely affected, 420m of hedgerow will be created across the Site providing a net gain in suitable habitat post-development. The planting scheme will incorporate native species of local provenance known to provide valuable food resources to dormice throughout the dormouse active season (species to include hawthorn, elder, dogwood, blackthorn, and hazel).

The population will be assessed through the monitoring of the dormouse nest boxes in line with the Natural England licencing requirements.

5.3.5 Hedgehog

During the construction and enabling works, there is potential to harm hedgehogs. The measures outlined above for badgers will also ensure that hedgehogs will be safeguarded. Any individuals encountered during enabling works will be moved to a place of safety outside the construction zone. The habitat enhancement and creation will provide suitable foraging and sheltering opportunities for hedgehog.

With the proposed mitigation and compensation measures no significant impacts are anticipated for on hedgehog, with the measures proposed considered to represent a significant enhancement for hedgehog within the Site.

5.3.6 Invertebrates

Although a notable invertebrate assemblage is not considered likely to be present within the Site, the habitats within the Site do provide suitable habitat for invertebrates.

Without appropriate mitigation, the loss and/or fragmentation of the hedgerows and associated trees and modified grassland has the potential to negatively impact any invertebrate assemblage that is present within the Site. To mitigate for this, all hedgerows (with exception for losses to facilitate access), will be fully retained and protected as part of the scheme.

The existing hedgerows, and modified grassland habitats will be enhanced, and new habitats will be created within the Site to compensate for the loss of suitable invertebrate habitat. Habitats to be created will comprise modified grassland, hedgerows and individual trees.

With the proposed mitigation and compensation measures no significant impacts are anticipated for invertebrates, with the measures proposed considered to represent an enhancement for invertebrates within the Site.

5.3.7 Reptiles and Common Amphibians

Reptiles and common amphibians may be utilising the additional grassland verge parallel to Eastern Way that was not covered during the initial surveys due to a change in the Site boundary. As such, during construction and enabling works, there is considered to be a low risk of common species of reptile to be killed or injured which would be an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

In order to protect reptiles which could be present onsite during construction and enabling works, the following Method Statement will be followed when removing the grassland and scrub habitats:

- 🦎 Sensitive clearance of scrub and grassland will be undertaken under the supervision of an ecologist;
- 🦎 Habitat manipulation will be undertaken to encourage reptiles to disperse to areas of retained habitat around site margins and beyond the southern boundary; and
- 🦎 These works will only be undertaken during the reptile active season of April to October inclusive, in suitable weather conditions when temperatures exceed 10°C.

Some existing hedgerows and modified grassland habitats will be enhanced, and new habitats will be created within the Site to compensate for the loss of suitable reptile habitat. Habitats to be created will comprise other neutral grassland, hedgerows and mixed scrub.

With the proposed mitigation and compensation measures no significant impacts are anticipated for on reptiles.

6 Summary of Assessment and Mitigation

Figure 7 summarises and illustrates the avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures required to minimise significant impacts to ecological features. This demonstrates that the mitigation hierarchy has been adhered to by focusing on the **avoidance** of ecological features of greatest importance, mitigating unavoidable impacts and, as a last resort, providing **compensation**.

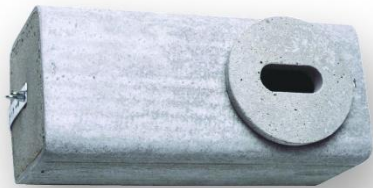
7 Biodiversity Net Gain

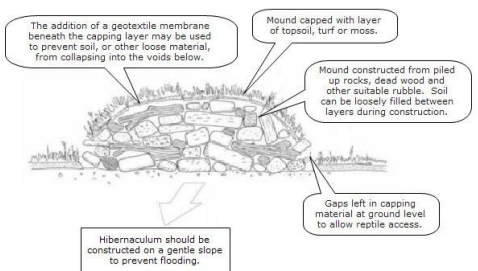
The baseline units for the Site comprise 8.63 habitat units, 3.12 hedgerow units and 0 watercourse units. An indicative BNG assessment suggests that offsetting is likely to be required. Further details are provided in the BNG Statement and Assessment Report (GE Consulting, 2025a), which provides the BNG information required to support the planning application under Article 7 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 as well as local information required by Wiltshire LPA, and in the submitted statutory biodiversity metric (GE Consulting, 2025b).

8 Protected/Notable Species Features

The following enhancements/ mitigation features detailed in **Table 3** are recommended in line with national guidance and local planning policy. Locations are shown in **Figure 7**.

Table 3: Enhancement and Mitigation Features

Quantity & Type	Illustrations	Description & Installation
4 no. externally mounted bird boxes	 Schwegler 17 Swift Box  Action for Swifts Brick Red Polymer Nest Box	- Installed in pairs c.50cm apart - Swift boxes are recommended as they are considered a universal box suitable not only for swifts but also for house sparrows and other small birds (CIEEM, 2021). - Use woodstone/ woodcrete boxes that are more durable than wooden boxes. - Suitable models include Vivara Pro WoodStone Swift Façade Nest Box or Schwegler 17 Swift Box. Suppliers include www.nhbs.com, www.wildcare.co.uk and www.actionforswifts.com/ - Install at the highest point of the building, ideally at least 5m above ground level. - To be sited under the shelter of eaves or overhanging roofs where possible. - Entrance out of direct sun and the prevailing weather and away from perches/ledges where birds are at risk from predators. See swift-conservation.org for additional advice.
3no. building/ tree mounted bat box	 Schwegler 2F bat box  Low Profile WoodStone Bat Box	- To be externally mounted on trees/ buildings at a height of at least 3m above ground level. - Fix securely to an open section of wall/ tree trunk. - Boxes are to be made of a durable material such as woodstone or woodcrete. - Suitable models include the Schwegler 2F bat box, Low Profile WoodStone Bat Box or similar approved. Suppliers include www.nhbs.com and www.wildcare.co.uk. - Locate where there is a clear, unlit flight path for bats to linear vegetation (e.g. hedgerows) and away from windows. Install away from any artificial light sources, to prevent light spill illuminating the boxes.

Quantity & Type	Illustrations	Description & Installation
2no. hibernaculum/ habitat piles	 The addition of a geotextile membrane beneath the capping layer may be used to prevent soil, or other loose material, from collapsing into the voids below. Mound capped with layer of topsoil, turf or moss. Mound constructed from piled up rocks, dead wood and other suitable rubble. Soil can be loosely filled between layers during construction. Gaps left in capping material at ground level to allow reptile access. Hibernaculum should be constructed on a gentle slope to prevent flooding. Example hibernaculum design	- Provide hibernacula/ resting places for fauna such as reptiles, mammals and invertebrates. - Constructed from dead wood and rubble, topped with loose soil and turf. Dimensions to be a minimum of 2m length x 1m width x 1m height. Located in suitable locations such as within the undisturbed eastern area where habitat enhancements are proposed.
4no.dormouse nest boxes		- Dormouse box with removable lid to enable monitoring. - Attach to suitable trees in hedges. - Boxes should be attached at minimum height of 1.5m, with the hole facing the trunk. - Boxes to be positioned where disturbance by humans is likely to be minimal, including the eastern hedgerow. - Providing dormouse boxes will increase potential for dormice to colonise habitat as known to be present in local area. - Installation and number of boxes will be a condition of a Natural England licence.

9 Monitoring

Monitoring should be undertaken to ensure that the mitigation described in this report has been undertaken to a satisfactory standard. This applies to both the construction and operation phases of the development.

Monitoring of the dormouse population through the dormouse boxes will occur on two occasions once the development is complete in years 1 and 3.

10 Conclusions

In summary the Site was considered to be of moderate ecological interest. Avoidance, mitigation and compensation have been incorporated into the design to ensure that the proposal and work programme is designed to minimise adverse impacts on ecological features.

Enhancement features have also been described with the aim of providing an increase in wildlife opportunities on Site post-development, contributing to the aims of National Planning Policy Framework and local policy. An indicative Biodiversity Metric has been supplied which shows the offsetting is likely to be required. The assessment will be updated based on final plans for the development, as part of the pre-commencement BNG condition.

11 References

- Bat Conservation Trust (2014) *Artificial lighting and wildlife. Interim Guidance: Recommendations to help minimise the impact artificial lighting.* Available from http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats_and_lighting.html
- Bat Conservation Trust/ Institute of Lighting Professionals (2023) *Guidance Note 08/23, Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night.* Available from: <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>
- Bibby C.J., Burgess N.D., Hill D.A. and Mustoe S.H. (2000) *Bird Census Techniques, 2nd Edition.* Academic Press, London.
- Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group. (2023). *Bird Survey Guidelines for assessing ecological impacts, v.1.1.1.* <https://birdsurveyguidelines.org>
- Bright P.W., Morris P.A. and Mitchell-Jones A. (2006) *Dormouse Conservation Handbook, 2nd Edition.* English Nature, Peterborough.
- British Ornithologists' Union (BOU). 2013. The British List: a checklist of birds of Britain. 8th ed. Ibis 155: 635–676.
- British Ornithologists' Union. 2022. The British List: A Checklist of Birds of Britain (10th edition). Ibis 164: 860–910.
- BSI (2010) *BS3998:2010 Tree work. Recommendations.* British Standards Institution, London, UK.
- BSI (2012) *BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations.* British Standards Institution, London, UK.
- Bullion S., Wolton R., and White I. (2025) *Hazel Dormouse Conservation Handbook – Third Edition.* The Mammal Society. ISBN: 978-1-0687982-3-8.
- Butcher B., Carey P., Edmonds R., Norton L. and Treweek J (2020) *The UK Habitat Classification User Manual V1.1*
- Butcher B., Carey P., Edmonds R., Norton L. and Treweek J (2020) *UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V1.1*
- CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine, version 1.3.* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Survey for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition).* The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition).* The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Defra (2007) *Hedgerow Survey Handbook. A standard procedure for local surveys in the UK.* Defra, London.
- EAD Ecology (2023a) Environmental Statement Appendix 10.5 – Great Crested Newt Survey
- EAD Ecology (2023b) Environmental Statement Appendix 10.10 – Bat Roost Survey
- GE Consulting (2026a) 3074-BNG-AG BNG Statement – Land at Eastern Way, Melksham – Lidl 07.01.26

GE Consulting (2026b)3074-SBM-AG BNG Metric – Land at Eastern Way, Melksham – Lidl – 07.01.26

Gilbert G., Gibbons D.W. and Evans J. (1998) *Bird Monitoring Methods: A manual of techniques for key UK species*. RSPB, Sandy.

JNCC (2004) *Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Birds, Version August 2004*. JNCC, Peterborough.

Marchant J.H. (1983) *BTO Common Bird Census Instructions*, BTO Tring

QGIS (2025). *QGIS Geographic Information System*. QGIS Association. Available from: www.qgis.org.

R Core Team (2021). *R: A language and environment for statistical computing*. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. Available from: www.R-project.org/.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2025). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation, and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.2*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

RHS (2025) *RHS Plants for Pollinators*. Available from: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/research/plants-for-pollinators>.

Russ, J.M. (2012) *British Bat Calls: A Guide to Species Identification*. Pelagic Publishing, Exeter.

Wells D., Chanin P. and Gubert L. (2025) *Hazel Dormouse Mitigation Handbook*. The Mammal Society. ISBN: 978-1-0687982-2-1.



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Native Hedgerow
- Native Hedgerow with trees
- g3c - Other neutral grassland
- g4 - Modified grassland
- u1b - Developed land, sealed surface
- Rural Tree (Broadleaved)
- Urban Tree (Broadleaved)



Imagery ©2026 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Maxar Technologies. Map data ©2026 Google

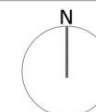
Figure 1:
UK Habitat Classification Survey and Protected Species Findings

Project:
Land at Eastern Way, Melksham - Lid

Client:
Lidl

Date:
6/1/2026
Ref:
3074-EclA-F1

Drawn:
AG
Revision:
-





Key:

- Site Boundary
- Wider Survey Area
- ★ Confirmed Roost (2023) EAD Ecology
- ★ Confirmed Roost (2021) EAD Ecology

Transect Start Points

- 1 April
- 2 June
- 3 September

← Bat Transect

Night-time Bat Walkover Survey Results

- Common pipistrelle
- Soprano pipistrelle
- Nathusius' pipistrelle
- Serotine
- Nyctalus species
- Myotis species



Imagery ©2026 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Maxar Technologies. Map data ©2026 Google

Figure 2:
Night-time Bat Walkover Survey Results

Project:

Land at Eastern Way, Melksham - Lidl

Client:

Lidl

Date:

9/1/2026

Ref:

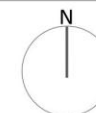
3074-EclA-F2

Drawn:

EEB

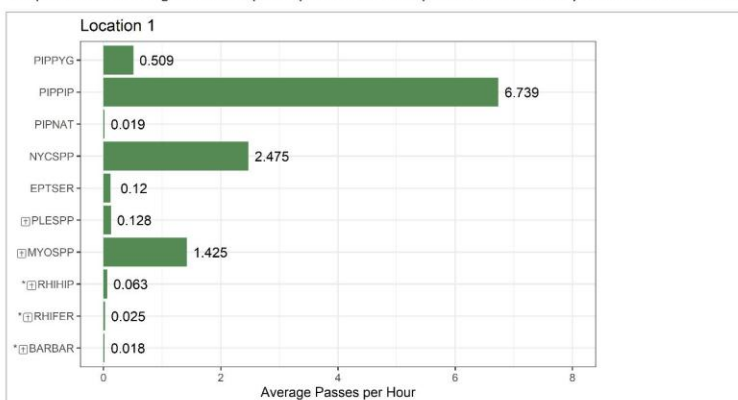
Revision:

-





Graphs show the average number of passes per hour for each species across the survey season at each location. Annex II bat species are indicated with an "H".



Key:

Site Boundary

Static Locations

Static Results

All Bats

Annex II

Light averse species

Excluding Pipistrelle species

Circles are indicative of the average number of bat passes per hour for monthly surveys conducted between April and October

Figure 3:

Automated Bat Detector Survey Results

Project:

Land at Eastern Way, Melksham - Lidl

Client:

Lidl

Date:

6/1/2026

Ref:

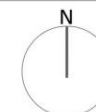
3074-EclA-F3

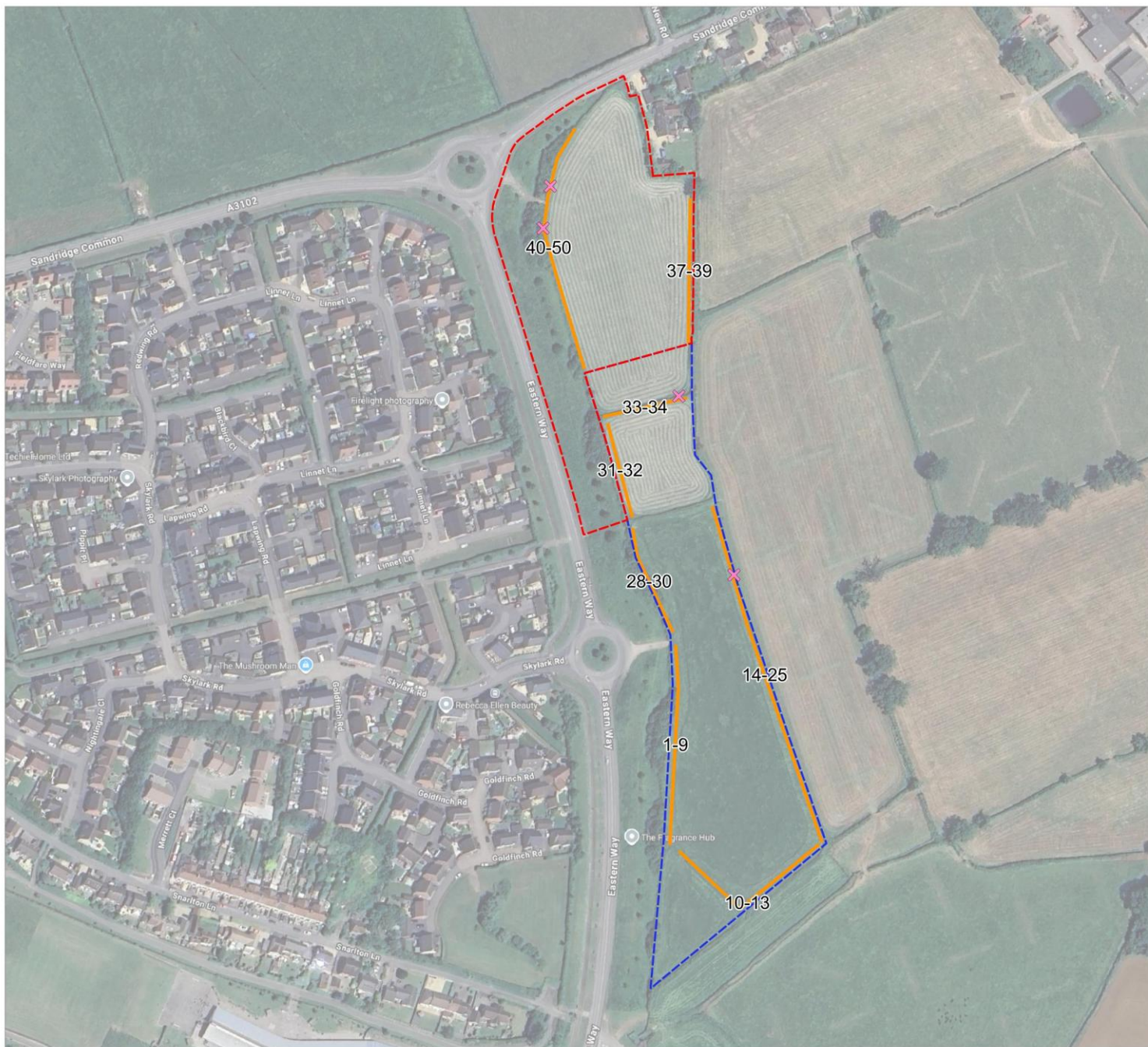
Drawn:

EEB

Revision:

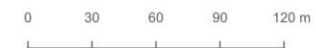
-





Key:

- Site Boundary
- Wider Survey Area
- Dormouse Tubes
- ✕ Dormouse Nest



Imagery ©2026 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Maxar Technologies. Map data ©2026 Google

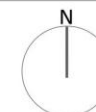
Figure 4:
Dormouse Tube Locations and Results

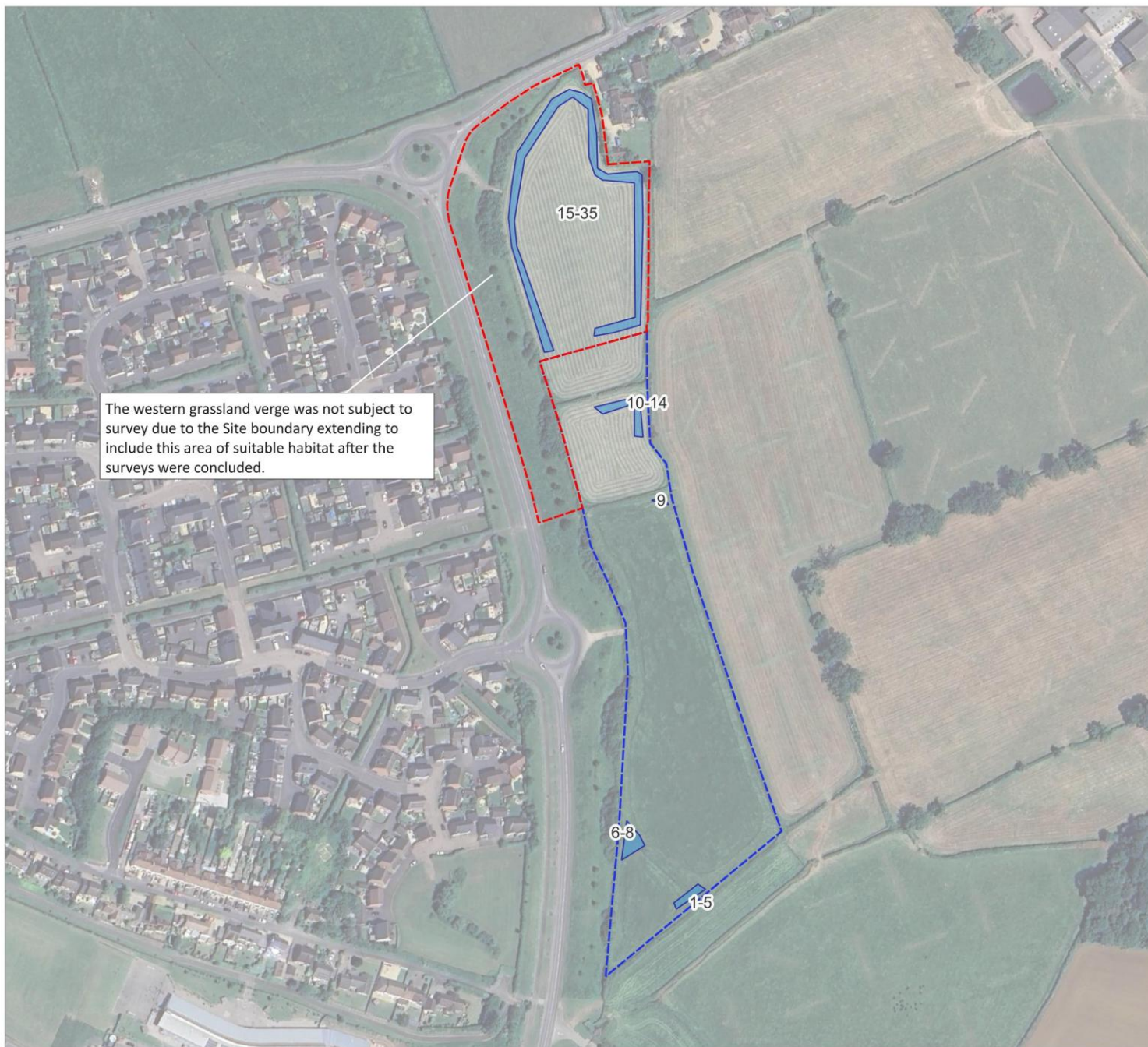
Project:
Land at Eastern Way, Melksham - Lidl

Client:
Lidl

Date:
6/1/2026
Ref:
3074-EclA-F4

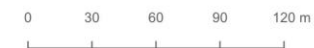
Drawn:
AG
Revision:
-





Key:

- Site Boundary
- Wider Survey Area
- Reptile Felt



Imagery ©2026 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Maxar Technologies. Map data ©2026 Google

Figure 5:
Reptile Felt Locations and Results

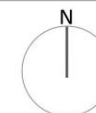
Project:
Land at Eastern Way, Melksham - Lidl

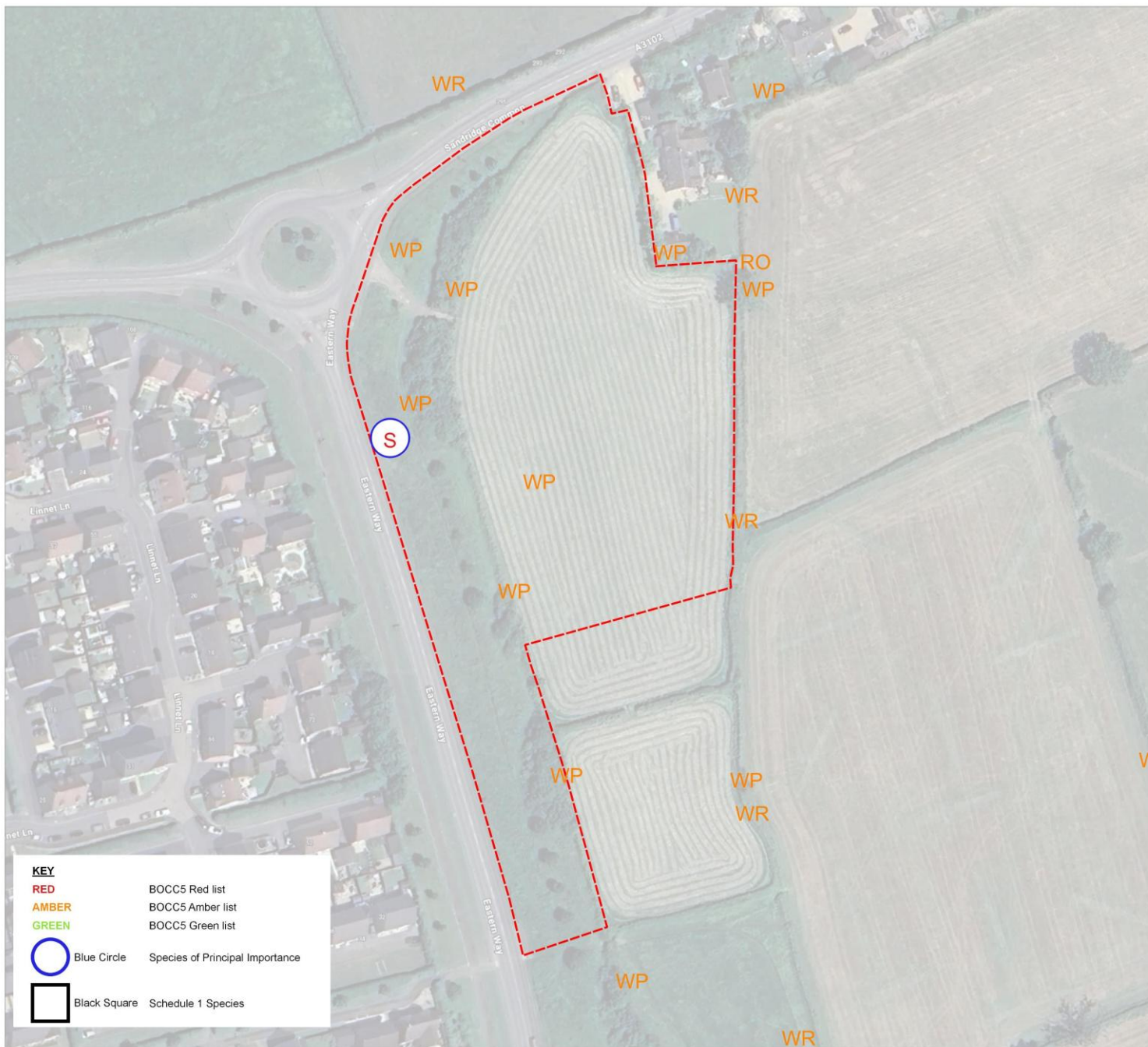
Client:
Lidl

Date:
9/1/2026

Ref:
3074-EclA-F5

Drawn:
AG
Revision:
-





KEY	
RED	BOCC5 Red list
AMBER	BOCC5 Amber list
GREEN	BOCC5 Green list
	Species of Principal Importance
	Schedule 1 Species

Key:

 Site Boundary

RO Rook

 Skylark

WP Woodpigeon

WR Wren



Imagery ©2026 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Maxar Technologies. Map data ©2026 Google

Figure 6:
Breeding Bird Survey Results

Project:
Land at Eastern Way, Melksham- Lidl

Client:
Lidl

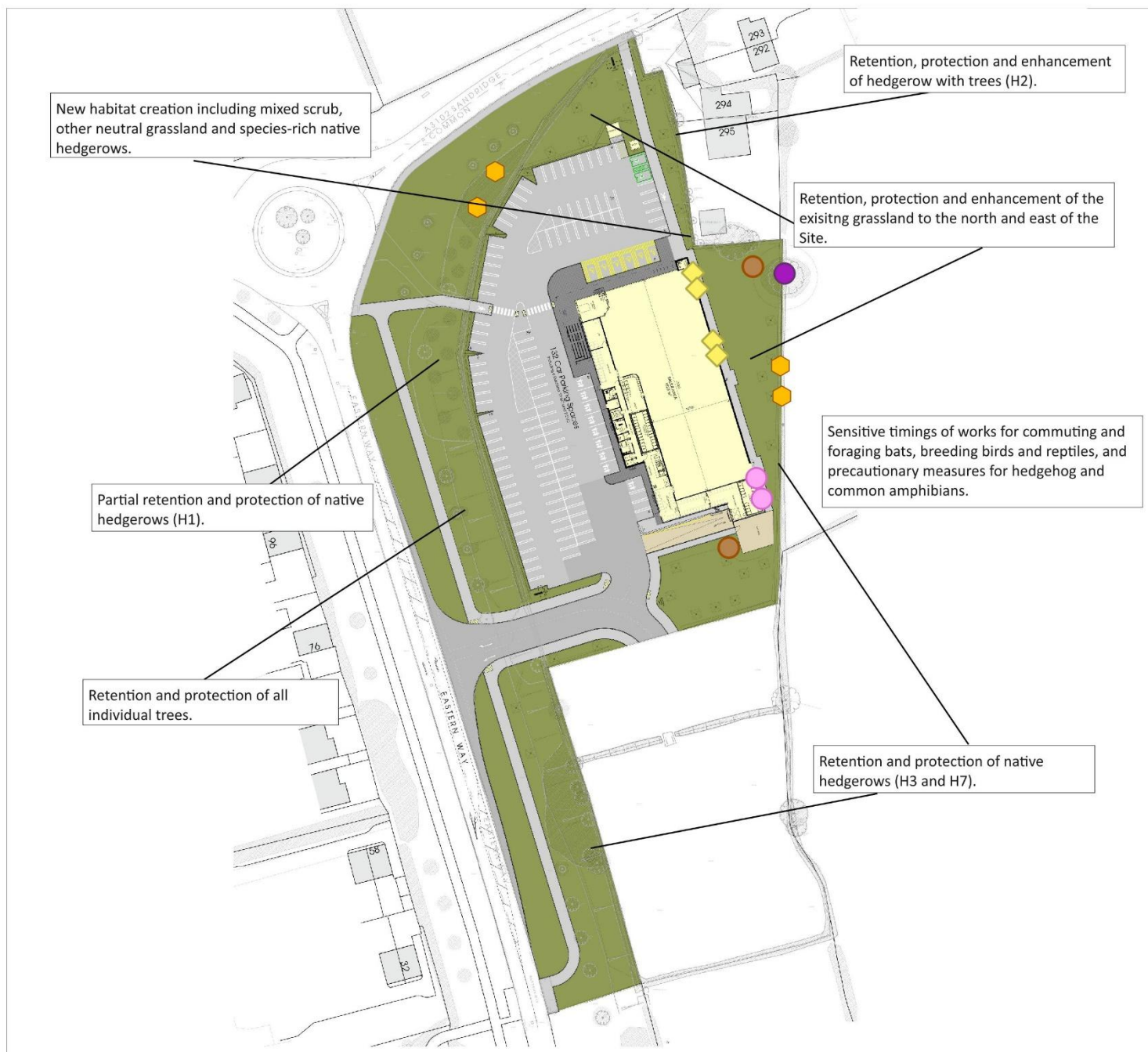
Date:
6/1/2026

Ref:
3074-EclA-F6

Drawn:
ET

Revision:
-





Key:

- Dormouse Box
- Habitat Piles
- Tree Mounted Bat Box
- Retrospectively Fitted Bat Box
- Retrospectively Fitted Bird Box



4034 P403A Proposed GA Site Plan (HTC Architects)

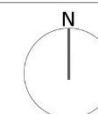
Figure 7:
Enhancements and Mitigation

Project:
Land at Eastern Way, Melksham - Lidl

Client:
Lidl

Date:
9/1/2026
Ref:
3074-EclA-F7

Drawn:
AG
Revision:
-



Appendix 1 – General Glossary of Terms

Annex I	Threatened bird listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive/ Habitats listed on Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive
Annex II	Species of community interest whose conservation requires the designation of SACs
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BMCL	Bat Mitigation Class Licence
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
BoCC	Bird of Conservation Concern
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CWS	County Wildlife Site
DBW	Daytime Bat Walkover
EPS	European Protected Species
GLTA	Ground Level Tree Assessment
HPI	Habitat of Principal Importance required under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006
HSI	Habitat Suitability Index
HMMP	Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone
GCN	Great crested newt
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LEMP	Landscape and Ecology Management Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MMU	Minimum Mapping Unit
NBW	Night-time Bat Walkover
NE	Natural England
NERC Act	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NVA	Night Vision Aid
NVC	National Vegetation Classification Survey

OSWI	Other Site of Wildlife Interest
pCWS	Potential County Wildlife Site
POS	Public Open Space
PRA	Preliminary Roost Assessment
PRF	Potential Roost Feature
Ramsar	A wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention
RPA	Root Protection Area
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPI	Species of Principal Importance required under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
UKHab	UK Habitat Classification System
UWS	Unconfirmed Wildlife Site
WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended)
ZOI	Zone of Influence

Appendix 2 – Planning Policy and Legislation

Habitat and Species Legislation

Species and habitats receive legal protection in the UK under various legislation, including:

- 👉 The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
- 👉 The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
- 👉 The Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
- 👉 The Hedgerows Regulations 1997;
- 👉 The Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and
- 👉 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Where relevant, this report takes into account the legislative protection afforded to specific habitats and species.

Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 operates as the UK's legal framework for environmental protection and provides legislation on environmental governance, principles, targets and improvement plans, waste and resource efficiency, nature protection, and water and air quality.

Part 6 of the Environment Act 2021 requires a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain for all new developments (with specified exemptions), and amends Schedule 7a (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) to mandate this in England. This will apply to most major developments from 12th February 2024 and to small sites from 2 April 2024.

The biodiversity net gain regulations most directly relevant to planning are:

- 👉 The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No. 8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (2024)
- 👉 The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations (2024)
- 👉 The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations (2024)
- 👉 The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2024).

In addition, there are regulations for the Biodiversity Gain Site register established under section 100 of the Environment Act 2021 for registered off-site biodiversity gains.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how local planning authorities should incorporate them into their own policies and plans. Section 15 of the NPPF contains several policies targeted at enhancing the natural environment and requires local authorities to consider how impacts on biodiversity can be minimised and provide net gains in biodiversity. Paragraph 187 (a-f) states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

In addition, paragraph 192 (b) ensures that to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

“b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.”

Additional Planning Practice Guidance (PPGs) supports the NPPF and includes guidance on:

-  Agricultural land, soil and brownfield land of environmental value;
-  Green infrastructure;
-  Biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystems; and
-  Landscape.

Regional/ Local Planning Policy

The Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document ('the plan') was formally adopted in January 2015. The plan provides a positive and flexible overarching planning policy framework for Wiltshire for the period up to 2026. It contains the relevant planning policies:

-  Core Policy 50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
-  Core Policy 52 – Green Infrastructure

UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) was succeeded in 2012 by the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework' which demonstrates a whole-environment strategy on how the UK contributes to achieving the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In England, 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' (Defra, 2011) sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy in the future. The former UK BAP was used to draw up lists of species and habitats of 'principal importance' which continue to be regarded as priorities under the Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework and are identified under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006; these species have been considered throughout this report.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

The latest available Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was produced by the Wiltshire Biodiversity Partnership in 2008. The plan includes a Generic Action Plan, ten Habitat Action Plans and a Bat Species Action Plan, which covers all bat species in Wiltshire. The Wiltshire and Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group have since published Landscape Biodiversity Areas which provides an additional framework for landscape-scale conservation with which to coordinate conservation efforts in Wiltshire and Swindon. The



Site lies within Area 4: Cotswolds Limestone Lowlands, which highlights woodland, limestone grassland, neutral grassland and rivers as priorities for conservation.

Appendix 3 – Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey

Method

A site walkover was undertaken on 05 June 2025 by Anna Galvin BSc MSc when weather conditions were wet but good visibility.

A verification survey was undertaken on 02 December 2025 when weather conditions were dry with good visibility.

All habitats within the Site were identified, described and mapped during the field survey in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) (UKHab Ltd., 2023 (V2.0) and Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2024) classifications for hedgerows), with other linear and point features mapped using Phase 1 Habitat Survey symbology (JNCC, 2010).

Primary habitats have been mapped to a minimum mapping unit (MMU) of 25m², although where features of note of a smaller scale are present, these have also been recorded and mapped. Any habitats (e.g. traditional orchard) with no appropriate primary habitat label were assigned a secondary habitat code. Other secondary UKHab codes were recorded where relevant, although they are described qualitatively within this report for ease of reading. A non-exhaustive botanical species list was compiled, with plant names following Stace (2019).

Hedgerow species richness was defined in accordance with the Hedgerow Survey Handbook (Defra, 2007).

A walkover of each grassland parcel was undertaken, followed by detailed sampling using 1m² quadrats, to collect detail on species and sward composition, the number of which was determined by the characteristics of each parcel. Where it became rapidly apparent that grasslands were clearly species poor modified grassland, three quadrats per parcel were sampled to evidence this. In parcels which were more diverse, six quadrats were sampled. For any parcel which could have potentially qualified as a HPI, ten quadrats were sampled.

Estimated percentage cover of the below features were assessed based on a qualitative overall assessment of each parcel, along with data collected from quadrats:

-  Ryegrass and white clover;
-  Herbs, sedges and rushes;
-  'Undesirable species' (as defined within Defra, 2024a); and
-  Bare ground.

Frequency of species was defined using the DAFOR methodology, adapted from that detailed within the Farm Environment Plan (Natural England, 2010):

-  Dominant: Recorded to cover a majority of the ground in all quadrats and qualitatively assessed as dominating the sward;
-  Abundant: Recorded in all quadrats, and qualitatively assessed as comprising a significant proportion of the sward;
-  Frequent: Recorded in >50% of quadrats;
-  Occasional: Recorded in 20-50% of quadrats; and
-  Rare: Recorded in <20% of quadrats.

The survey was extended to highlight the potential presence of protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM's Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017). This involved a search to identify the presence or potential presence of species such as breeding birds, bats, badger, dormouse, reptiles and amphibians. Target Notes (TNs) were used to record any features or habitats of ecological interest. Where

access allowed, adjacent habitats were also considered in order to assess possible impacts of the proposal in a wider context.

A digital map was produced using QGIS (QGIS.org, 2024. *QGIS Geographic Information System*. QGIS Association. Available from: www.qgis.org). The habitat map is shown in **Figure 1**. Common names for flora and fauna are given in the body of the report with scientific names provided in **Appendix 4**.

Results

Desk study

Table 4.1 summarises the desk study records for notable plants returned by WSBRC. None of these species were identified during the walkover.

Table 4.1: Notable plant records provided by WSBRC.

Species	Conservation Status	Record Details
Bluebell	Sch8	Three records to the south and east of the Site.
Spiked Star-of-Bethlehem	NS	A single record, on the western side of Melksham.
Gold-of-Pleasure	NS	A single record to the west of the Site.
Rye brome	NS	A single record to the southeast of the Site within LWS Eight Acre Plantation.
Annual beard-grass	NS	A single record to the southeast of the Site.
Stinking hellebore	NS	A cluster of records to the northwest and a single record to west of the Site.
Welsh poppy	NS	Two records to the west and south of the Site.

Sch8= Plant listed on Schedule 8 of Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Prohibits picking, uprooting, destruction and sale; **Sch9** = Invasive non-native plant listed on Schedule 9 of Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); **NS** = Nationally Scarce, occurring in 16 – 100 hectads in the UK; **SPI**= Species of Principal Importance under S41 of NERC Act 2006.

Habitat Descriptions

The Site comprised a single modified grassland field bound by species-poor hedgerows and species-poor hedgerow with trees, multiple individual trees and a roadside grassland verge.

Photographs and brief descriptions are provided below, including a list of dominant vegetative species within each habitat.

Table 4.2: Habitat Summaries

Habitat Summary	Photograph
Modified Grassland The single field consists modified grassland, grazed by cattle. Combined white clover and perennial rye-grass comprised approximately 20% of the sward. Grasses dominated the sward with herbs comprising ~20% cover. The sward was uniform c.50cm during the initial survey and 5cm during the update survey, with a very minimal bare ground and no obvious poaching. No scrub encroachment was present. Perennial rye-grass and Yorkshire-fog dominated with sward with frequent creeping buttercup, crested dog's tail and meadow buttercup along with rarely recorded hogweed and dock.	
Other Neutral Grassland The roadside verge parallel to Eastern Way falls within the Site boundary. This has been assigned as other neutral grassland on a precautionary basis until the grassland type and condition can be assessed at the appropriate time of year.	
Species-poor native hedgerow Two species-poor native hedgerows bounding the Site. Species within the hedgerow include hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, rose species.	

Habitat Summary	Photograph
Species-poor native hedgerow with trees A single species-poor native hedgerow with trees. Species within the hedgerow include blackthorn, elder and honeysuckle.	
Individual trees A single oak tree on the eastern boundary as well as some small trees along the roadside of Eastern Way of a variety of species such as lime and cherry sp.	

Appendix 4 – List of Flora and Fauna Mentioned in Text

Flora

Common name	Scientific name	Recorded on Site?
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	✓
Annual-beard Grass	<i>Polypogon monspeliensis</i>	
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	✓
Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	✓
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	✓
Elm species	<i>Ulmus sp.</i>	✓
Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	✓
Gold of Pleasure	<i>Camelina sativa</i>	
Grey Willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>	✓
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	✓
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	✓
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	✓
Lime	<i>Tilia x europaea</i>	✓
Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	✓
Oak sp.	<i>Quercus sp.</i>	✓
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	✓
Rose species	<i>Rosa sp.</i>	✓
Rye Brome	<i>Bromus secalinus</i>	
Spiked Star of Bethlehem	<i>Ornithogalum pyrenaicum</i>	
Stinking Hellebore	<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	
Welsh Poppy	<i>Papaver cambricum</i>	
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	✓
Wild Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	✓
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	✓

Fauna

Common name	Scientific name	Recorded on Site?
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	
Barbastelle	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	✓
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	
Bechstein's bat	<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	
Brandt's bat	<i>Myotis brandtii</i>	
Brown long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	✓
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	✓
Common toad	<i>Bufo Bufo</i>	
Dormouse	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	✓
Eurasian Beaver	<i>Castor fiber</i>	
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	
Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>	
Grass snake	<i>Natrix helvetica</i>	

Common name	Scientific name	Recorded on Site?
Great crested newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	
Greater horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	✓
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	
Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	
Hobby	<i>Falco Subbuteo</i>	
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	
Lesser horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	✓
Lesser Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>	
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	
Long-eared bat species	<i>Plecotus sp.</i>	
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	
Myotis bat species	<i>Myotis sp.</i>	✓
Nathusius' pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	✓
Noctule	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	
Nyctalus bat species	<i>Nyctalus sp.</i>	✓
Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	
Serotine	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	✓
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	✓
Slow worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>	
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	✓
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓
Water Vole	<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	
Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	

Appendix 5 – Bat Activity Surveys

Methods

Survey Effort

During the walkover the Site was assessed as having moderate suitability for bats in accordance with best practice guidance (Collins, 2023), based on the presence of continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape providing shelter and/or invertebrate prey sources such as tree lines, scrub, water courses, linked back gardens and grassland.

Considering the predicted impacts of the proposed development on bats it was therefore proportionate to undertake automated detector surveys once a month between April and October 2025, in accordance with Collins (2023) and BS42020 (BSI, 2013). These surveys were supplemented by three seasonal night-time bat walkover surveys.

Night-time Bat Walkover Surveys

Night-time bat walkover (NBW) surveys comprised two experienced surveyors observing and recording bat behaviour on Site. Surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset, with surveyors positioned on potential flyways, or close to potential roost features, previously identified as part of the walkover survey. Starting locations were altered between surveys to assess the importance of different features to bats. Surveyors initially remained in place to record early emerging behaviour and commuting bats - tracking the bat movement towards a roost, if appropriate. After 30 minutes to an hour from sunset, surveyors then walked a pre-defined transect route (no more than 3km) covering all suitable foraging and commuting habitats within the Site. During the walked survey surveyors responded dynamically to bat activity on Site, occasionally stopping or detouring to observe bat behaviour. The survey concluded two hours after sunset/ when it became too dark to see bat activity.

Surveyors were equipped with a manual hand-held detector and recorder (Elekon Batlogger M2). When a bat was encountered the time, species and flight behaviour, direction and height was noted.

Surveys were completed during optimal weather conditions, as detailed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Bat activity transect survey dates and personnel

Date	Start time	End time	Transect length (time)	Weather	Personnel
15/04/2025	19:49	22:04	2.25 hours	Dry, 12 – 9°C, 95-100% cloud cover (cc), wind (Beaufort) 2 – 1.	EEB, JJ
11/06/2025	21:09	21:24	2.25 hours	Dry, 19-15°C, 15-10% cc, wind 0.	EEB, CD
03/09/2025	19:35	21:50	2.25 hours	Dry, 17-15°C, 50-30% cc, wind 3-0.	EEB, JH

EEB = Eliane Bornoff BSc MbyRes, JJ = James Buckle BSc, CD = Callum Daglish BSc, JH = Josh Hooker MA.

Automated Detector Surveys

Night-time bat walkover surveys were supplemented with the use of static automated detectors to increase survey effort.

This involved the deployment of one static detector (Wildlife Acoustics Song Meter SM2), in hedgerows. Locations were chosen through a “*judgmental*” strategy, considering features of greatest interest and those most likely to be impacted by proposals. Detectors were positioned on the leeward side of hedges and habitats, facing into the field, to avoid noise from wind and vegetation. Statics were deployed for a minimum of five nights per month between April and October 2025, on the following dates:

- 🦇 15th – 23rd April 2025
- 🦇 8th – 12th May 2025
- 🦇 11th – 15th June 2025
- 🦇 10th – 15th July 2025
- 🦇 7th – 11th August 2025
- 🦇 3rd – 7th September 2025
- 🦇 1st – 5th October 2025.

Bat Data Analysis

Recordings from NBW surveys were analysed through Wildlife Acoustics Kaleidoscope Pro software and processed through Microsoft Excel, R Statistical Software (R Core Team, 2021) and QGIS to produce a point map showing locations at which bat passes were recorded. The map was annotated to provide qualitative information about bat use of the Site, including key foraging areas and commuting routes.

The latest version of Wildlife Acoustics Kaleidoscope Pro software was used for processing and analysing static bat data. The confidence settings used were “liberal (this will produce more identifications but have more false positives)” with an audit of all recordings, including “noise” files. Batches of noise files and pipistrelle calls were checked depending upon their characteristics which are grouped by a range of variables including background noise and strength of calls. *Myotis*, long-eared (*Plecotus*) and *Nyctalus* species were identified to genus level. All bat calls other than common, soprano pipistrelle and *Nyctalus* species were verified manually in full, with at least 10% of calls checked again to confirm verification. A three-stage quality assurance process was undertaken, focusing on cryptic species. Where necessary further identification of more cryptic species such as *Myotis* and long-eared was undertaken using Titley Scientific Analook software.

Data from the automated surveys was then analysed and presented, using R Statistical Software (R Core Team, 2021). A bat pass is defined as a sequence of echolocation calls separated from another call by a minimum of 2 seconds. The number of bat passes per hour for each species was calculated (bat pass/night length), allowing comparison between different seasons and locations on Site. The time of calls relative to sunset/sunrise was also calculated, using the ‘bioRad’ R package, and considered in relation to expected emergence times for each species (Andrews and Pearson, 2022)

QGIS was used to produce a map showing static locations and Euler graphs of bat activity showing the passes per hour for all bat species, all bat species excluding pipistrelles, light averse species and Annex II species. Light averse species are defined as showing no positive or negligible effect from artificial light at night as shown in Table 1 of Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night Guidance Note 08/23 (ILP, 2023).

As they are a cryptic species, and are not recorded in proximity to the Site, any potential Bechstein’s have been aggregated with the other *Myotis* species and are not considered along with the Annex II species.

Results

31 records of bat roosts were provided by WSBRC from the last ten years within 2km of the Site, a summary of the species and their legal/ conservation status is provided in **Table 5.2** below.

Table 5.2: Summary of bat roost records within 2km of Site (provided by WSBRC)

Species	Status/ Distribution in South-west England & South Wales ¹	Record Summary
Common pipistrelle	EPS. Widely distributed.	20 records, the closest located 246m west from the Site.
Soprano pipistrelle	EPS, SPI. Widely distributed.	2 records, the closest located 688m east from the Site.
Brown long-eared bat and long eared species.	EPS, SPI. Widely distributed.	7 records, the closest located 1,677m east from the Site.
Serotine	EPS. Rare but widespread.	2 records, the closest located 682m east from the Site.

EPS = European Protected Species; **Annex II** = species listed in the Habitat Directives Annex II; **SPI**= Species of Principal Importance under S41 of NERC Act 2006.

¹ Status/distribution according to the UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason and Wray, 2025).

MAGIC provided four records of roosting bats as shown in the table below.

Table 5.3: Bat Mitigation Licences Granted Within 2km of the Site (MAGIC)

Licence No.	Species	Impact/ Roost Type	Dates of Licence	Distance from Site
2015-13904-EPS-MIT-1	brown long-eared (EPS, SPI).	Destruction of a resting place	12/06/2017 – 18/08/2025	320m east
2019-42098-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle (EPS), Soprano pipistrelle (EPS, SPI), brown long-eared (EPS, SPI), Serotine (EPS), Whiskered bat (EPS).	Affecting a breeding place, damage of a breeding place, damage of a resting place, destruction of a resting place.	24/09/2019 – 23/09/2024	1,271m east
2015-14789-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle (EPS).	Destruction of a resting place	25/09/2015 – 01/12/2020	1,841m south
2016-20145-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle (EPS).	Affecting a breeding place, destruction of a breeding place, destruction of a resting place.	15/03/2016 – 02/2026	1,915m northeast

Night-time Bat Walkover Survey Results

During the NBW surveys, common pipistrelle (67.1%) was the most frequently recorded species, followed by *Nyctalus* species (18.7%) and *Myotis* species (7.6%). Relatively high numbers of Soprano pipistrelle (5.9%) passes were recorded. Other species recorded on Site in low numbers include serotine (0.35%) and Nathusius' pipistrelle (0.35%) (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Summary of total bat passes recorded during NBW surveys

Survey Month	PIP PIP	PIP PY G	MY OS PP	NY CS PP	EP TS ER	PIP NAT	Grand Total
April	129	4	11	1	0	0	145
June	33	1	3	4	1	1	43
September	32	12	8	49	0	0	101

Survey Month	PIP PIP	PIP PY G	MY OS PP	NY CS PP	EP TS ER	PIP NAT	Grand Total
Grand Total	194	17	22	54	1	1	289

PIPIPI = common pipistrelle; PIPYGP = soprano pipistrelle; PIPNAT = Nathusius' pipistrelle; NYCSPP = *Nyctalus* species; EPTSER = Serotine; MYOSPP = *Myotis* species.

Bat activity was primarily concentrated along the northeastern and northwestern site boundaries (see **Figure 2**). Pipistrelle activity was focused along the northeastern boundary, which adjoins pastureland and a single residential property. High levels of pipistrelle foraging activity were recorded along the hedgerow during the spring survey, with bats foraging along this feature. Foraging *Myotis* species were also observed along the northeastern boundary during the spring survey.

90.7% of *Nyctalus* activity occurred during the autumn survey, which was predominantly recorded along the northwestern boundary, adjacent to the road. Serotine activity recorded during the summer survey was also confined to the northwestern boundary. *Myotis* species and soprano pipistrelle were only recorded sporadically across the site and did not exhibit a clear spatial pattern.

Automated Detector Survey

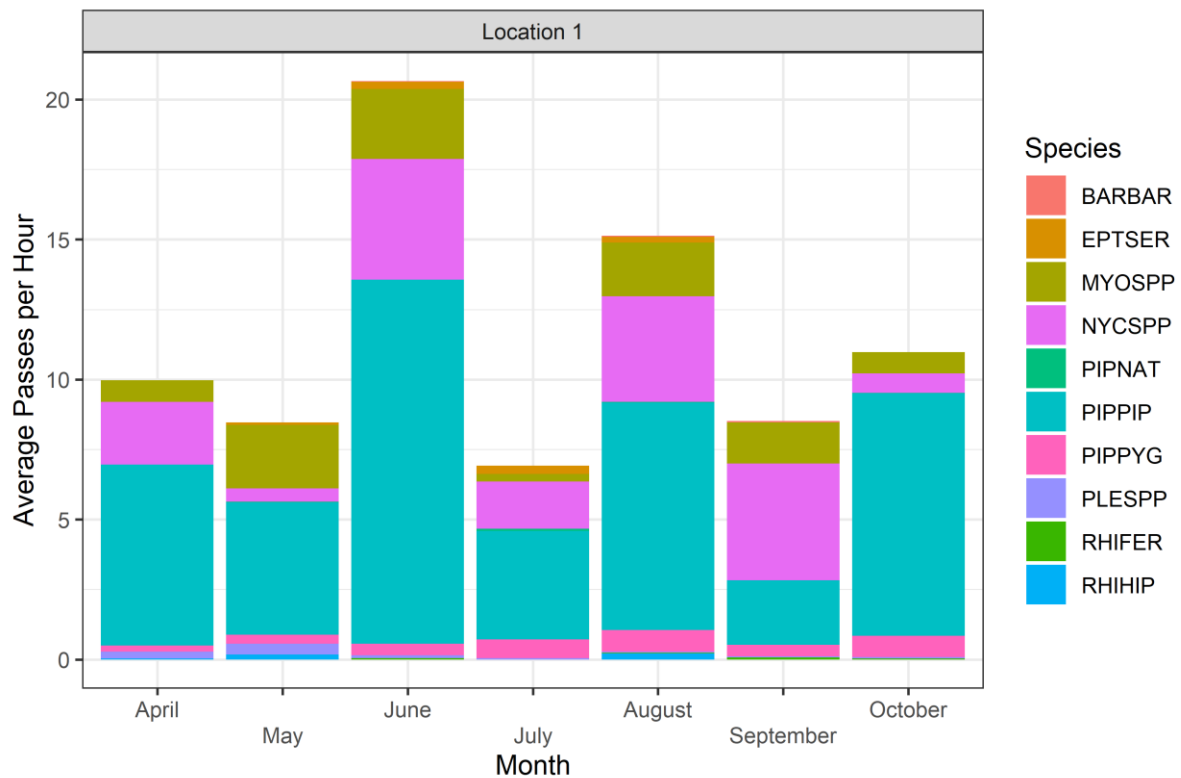
During the automated detector surveys, a static detector was placed within the northwestern hedgerow (illustrated in **Figure 3**).

Graph 1 below illustrates the relative abundance of bat activity recorded during the survey period.

Common pipistrelle was the most frequently recorded bat species (58.49% of recorded bat passes; 6.74 passes per hour across all surveys), followed by *Nyctalus* species (21.48%; 2.48 passes/hour). However, it should be noted that due to the strength of noctule calls, this species can be detected from >100m and they also commute and forage over open habitat; therefore, it indicates that bats are using this general area of the Site, not necessarily the hedgerow itself.

Soprano pipistrelles were occasionally recorded (4.42%; 0.51 passes/hour) and low levels of Nathusius' pipistrelle (0.16%; 0.019 passes/hour) were recorded on Site.

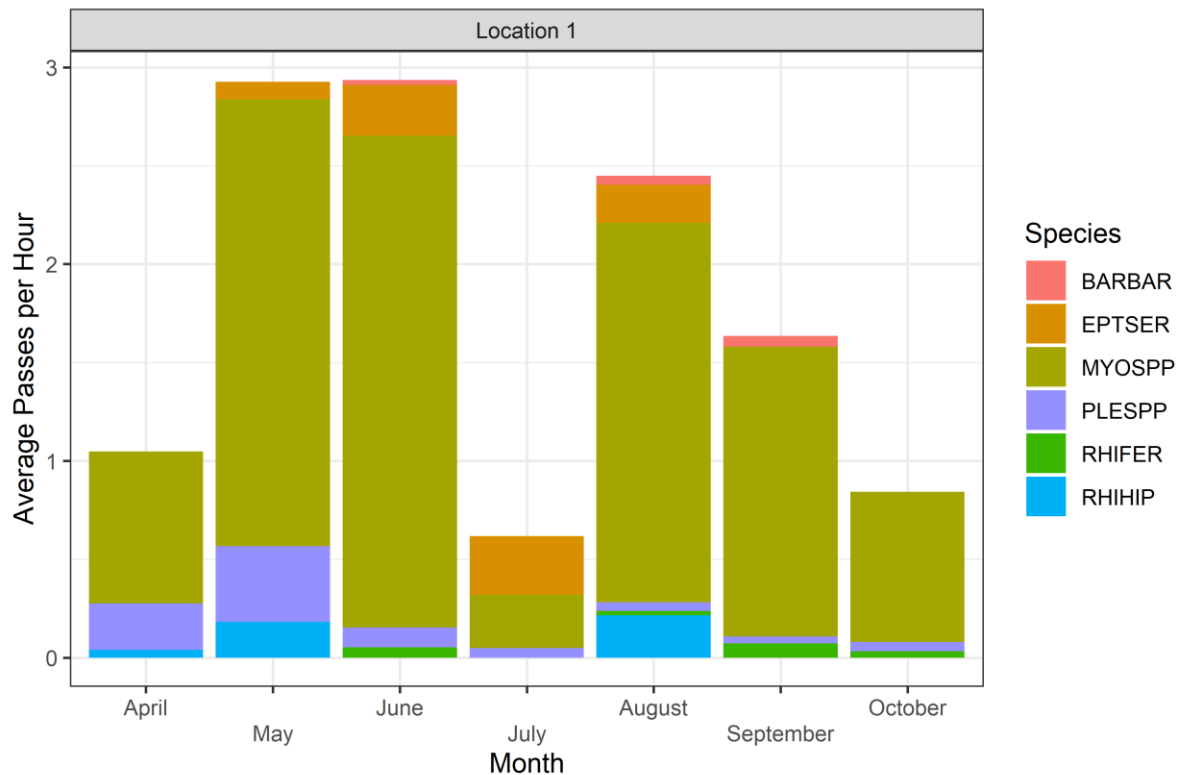
Graph 1: Average bat passes per hour during the automated detector survey period



PIPPIP = common pipistrelle; **PIPPYG** = soprano pipistrelle; **PIP NAT** = Nathusius' pipistrelle; **NYCSPP** = *Nyctalus* species; **EPTSER** = Serotine; **MYOSPP** = *Myotis* species; **RHIHIP** = lesser horseshoe bat.; **RHIFER** = greater horseshoe bat; **BARBAR** = barbastelle; **PLESPP** = Long-eared bat species.

Graph 2 below excludes pipistrelles and noctules for a clearer picture of activity for other species². *Myotis* species (12.37%; 1.42 passes/hour), which are considered to be more light averse, was the third most frequently recorded bat species. Serotine (1.04%; 0.12 passes/hour) and long-eared bats (1.11%; 0.13 passes/hour) were also recorded occasionally on Site.

Graph 2: Average bat passes per hour during the automated detector survey period, excluding pipistrelles and *Nyctalus* sp.

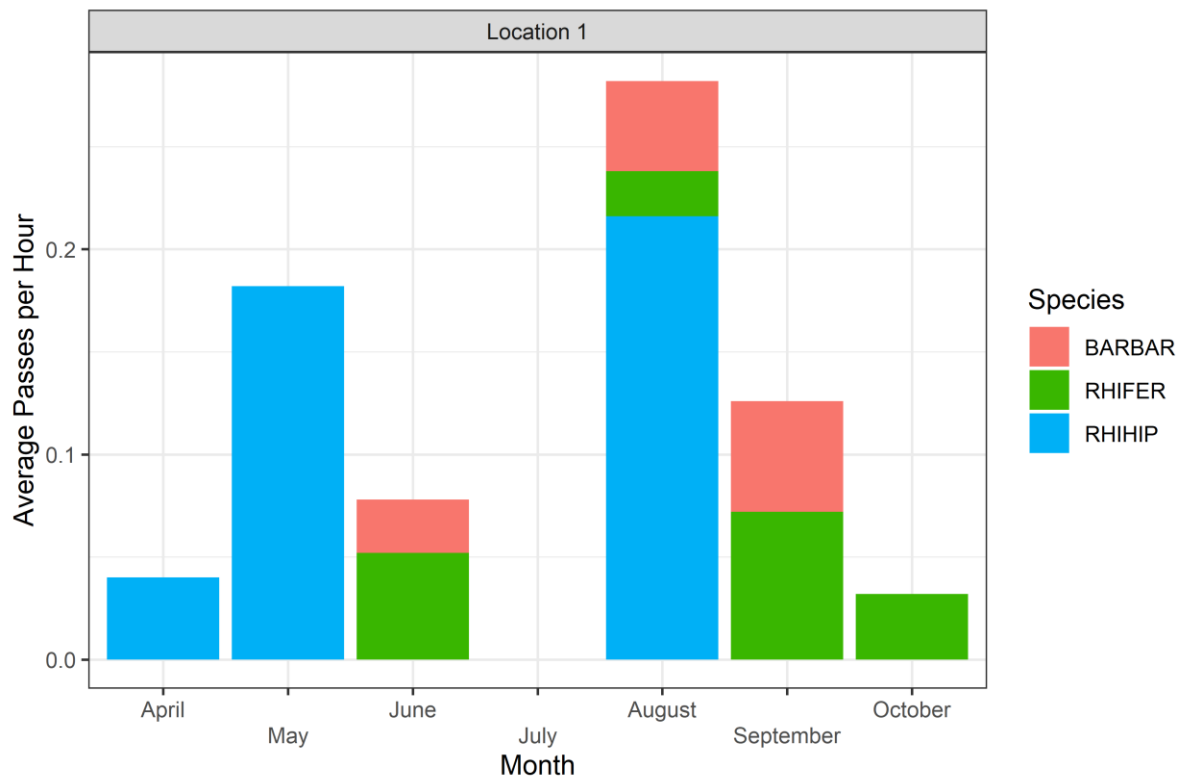


NYCSPP = *Nyctalus* species; **EPTSER** = Serotine; **MYOSPP** = *Myotis* species; **RHIHIP** = lesser horseshoe bat.; **RHIFER** = greater horseshoe bat; **BARBAR** = barbastelle; **PLESPP** = Long-eared bat species.

² Pipistrelles are excluded due to the abundance of calls recorded, and noctule are excluded as they have strong calls that can be detected from >100m away and therefore do not specifically reflect levels of bat activity at the specific location of the detector.

Graph 3 illustrates the abundance of activity by Annex II species only. Low levels of activity by barbastelle (0.16%; 0.018 passes/hour), greater horseshoe (0.22%; 0.025 passes/hour) and lesser horseshoe bats (0.55%; 0.063 passes/hour) were recorded on Site.

Graph 3: Average bat passes per hour during the automated detector survey period, for Annex II species



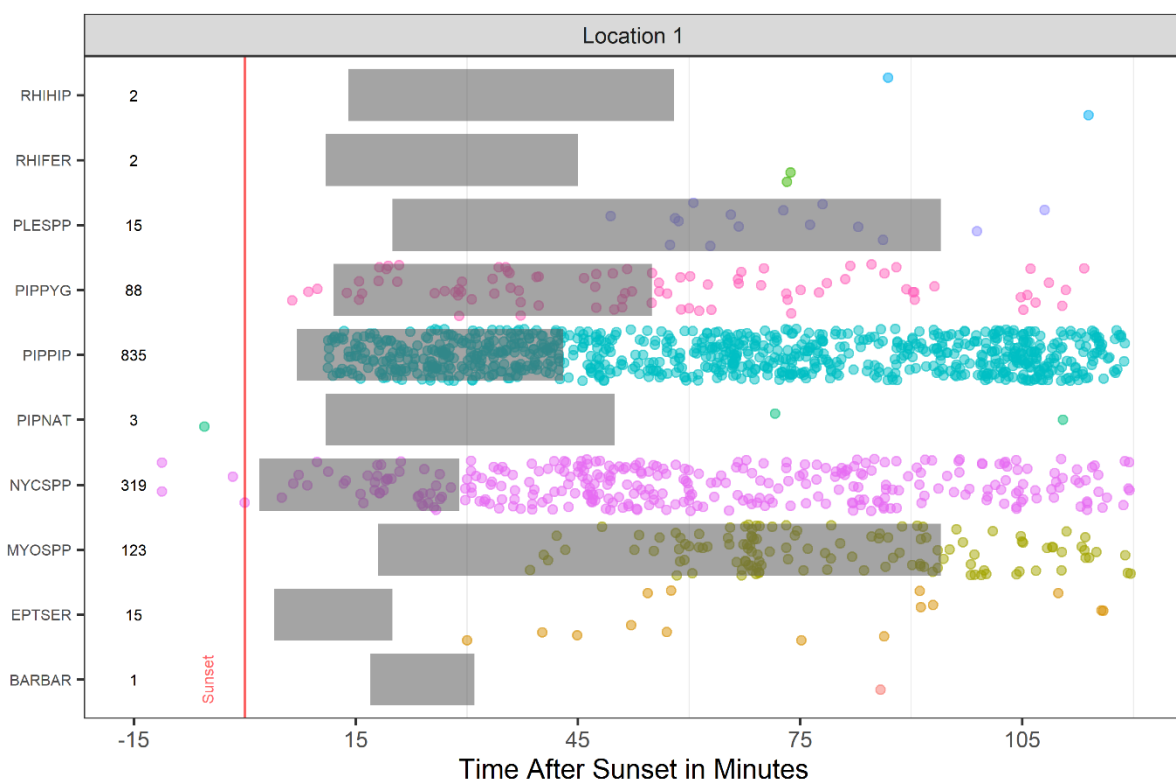
RHIHIP = lesser horseshoe bat.; **RHIFER** = greater horseshoe bat; **BARBAR** = barbastelle.

Graph 4—shows passes of species in relation to expected emergence times from Andrews and Pearson 2022, included on pg. 34-35 in the BCT survey guidelines. The graph shows that common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule and *Myotis* species were recorded on Site during their expected emergence period and therefore may be emerging from a roost nearby and commuting through the Site. These species are highly likely to be using the Site for foraging close to their roosting site/ commuting through the Site before heading further afield.

The emergence surveys conducted in 2021 and updated in 2023 by EAD Ecology (EAD Ecology, 2023b) for habitats adjacent to the Site recorded roosts within seven trees for common pipistrelle, noctule and *myotis* species, all of which have been recorded using the Site at expected emergence times, and may be where the early recorded bats were commuting from.

Low numbers of long-eared species at emergence indicates that there may be a roost in the vicinity, but that the Site does not appear to be of high importance as a commuting route. No greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, serotine, barbastelle at emergence indicates that there is not a roost in the vicinity of Site.

Graph 4: All bat passes in relation to emergence periods for each species

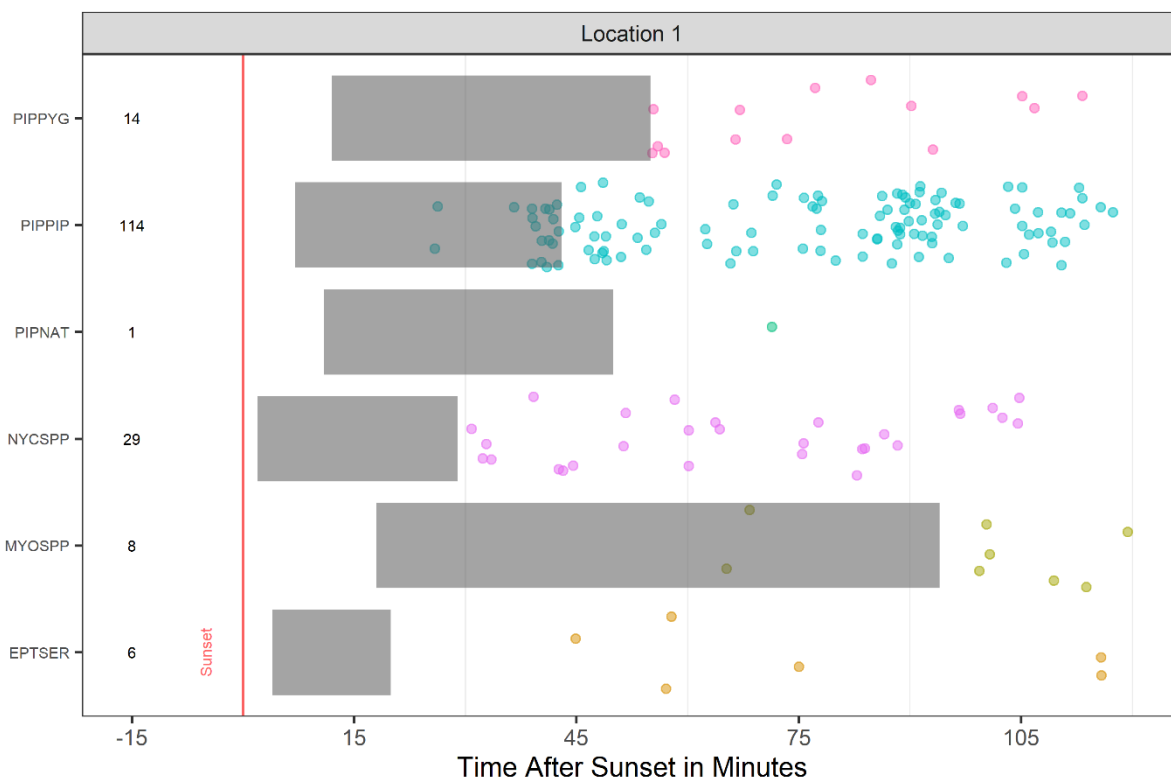


PIPPIP = common pipistrelle; **PIPPYG** = soprano pipistrelle; **PIP NAT** = Nathusius' pipistrelle; **NYCSPP** = *Nyctalus* species; **EPTSER** = Serotine; **MYOSPP** = *Myotis* species; **RHIHIP** = lesser horseshoe bat.; **RHIFER** = greater horseshoe bat; **BARBAR** = barbastelle; **PLESPP** = Long-eared bat species.

Graph 5 - shows passes of species in relation to expected emergence times from Andrews and Pearson 2022, included on pg. 34-35 in the BCT survey guidelines during the maternity period of 15th June – 30th July. The graph shows that low numbers of passes by common pipistrelle and *Myotis* species were recorded on Site during their expected emergence period during the maternity period and may indicate that there may be a maternity roost in the vicinity or the numbers could be attributed to a non-breeding summer roost, however in comparison to **Graph 4** the number of passes has reduced significantly. This shows that the Site does not appear to be of high importance as a commuting route.

No soprano pipistrelle, Nathusius' pipistrelle, *Nyctalus* species, serotine or long-eared species were recorded on Site during their expected emergence period during the maternity period and therefore indicates that there is not a maternity roost nearby or on Site.

Graph 5: All bat passes in relation to emergence periods for each species within the maternity period (15th June – 30th July)



PIPPIP = common pipistrelle; **PIPYPG** = soprano pipistrelle; **PIP NAT** = Nathusius' pipistrelle; **NYCSPP** = *Nyctalus* species; **EPTSER** = Serotine; **MYOSPP** = *Myotis* species; **RHIHIP** = lesser horseshoe bat.; **RHIFER** = greater horseshoe bat; **BARBAR** = barbastelle; **PLESPP** = Long-eared bat species.

Summary

During automated surveys, the majority of passes were from widespread species common pipistrelle (58.49% of activity) and noctule (21.48%), which are relatively accustomed to lighting. Surveyors recorded concentrated pipistrelle activity along the north-eastern hedgerows adjacent to pasture, while noctule activity was highest along the north-western boundary near the road.

Light-averse species accounted for 14.4% of automated activity, and Annex II species represented only 0.92% of activity. *Myotis* species, which are considered more light averse, were frequently recorded on



site during automated surveys, accounting for 12.37% of activity. During night-time bat walkover surveys, *Myotis* species were recorded across the site with no clear spatial pattern.

Appendix 6 – Dormouse Survey

Methods

A dormouse tube survey was undertaken in accordance with The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bright *et al.*, 2006). 50 tubes were deployed on 15 April 2025 by Eliane Bornoff MbyRes at approximately 20m intervals. Tubes were checked on 7 August 2025, 6 October 2025 and 10 December 2025 by Elaine Bornoff MbyRes, Emma Thornton BSc and Asher Rees BSc. The final check was conducted by Meike Simms BSc working under Ryan Yeates' NE Class 1 Dormouse Licence (CL10a).

A survey must score a minimum probability score of 20 to provide sufficient survey effort to determine presence/likely absence of the species on a given site (based on 50 tubes). **Table 6** details the months in which tubes were in-situ and the probability score.

Table 6: Index of probability of finding dormice present (based on best practice guidelines) and months nest tubes were present

Month	Index of Probability (Bright <i>et al.</i> , 2006) for 50 tubes	Probability Score for Site
April	1	-
May	4	4
June	2	2
July	2	2
August	5	5
September	7	7
October	2	2
November	2	2
TOTAL SCORE		24

Results

Dormouse was confirmed along the northwestern and eastern boundaries at hedgerows H1 and H3 in the form of confirmed nests within nest tubes, see **Figure 4**. As such this species is present at the Site and considered likely to make use of all the hedgerow habitat at the Site. Additionally, within the wider survey area dormouse were found in the offsite hedgerow to the south.

Appendix 7 – Reptile Survey

Methods

Surveys to ascertain the likely presence/ absence of reptiles were undertaken following current good practice methodologies (Froglife, 1999). This involved the deployment of 20 0.5m² artificial refuges (roofing felt) on 23 April 2025 by Harry Dyer BSc in areas of suitable habitat, an additional 15 0.5m² artificial refuges (roofing felt) were deployed within the wider survey area.

Refuges were left to ‘bed-in’ for two weeks prior to a series of seven visits in which a search for reptiles was made both under/ on-top of refuges and within open habitats. Dates, personnel and weather conditions for visits are detailed in **Table 7**.

Table 7: Reptile survey dates and weather conditions

Visit	Date	Time	Surveyor	Temperature (°C)	Weather
1	08/05/2025	15:00	AJ	21	20-50% cloud cover, calm, dry and sunny.
2	13/05/2025	15:30	AJ	19	On and off rain, sunny.
3	11/06/2025	18:00	CD/EEB	18	Dry, sunny, 0% cloud cover.
4	10/07/2025	10:00	NC	16	Dry, sunny, 0% cloud cover.
5	16/07/2025	10:00	AJ	18	Sunny, 10% cloud cover.
6	07/08/2025	11:30	ET/AR	19	90% cloud cover, moderate wind.
7	12/08/2025	09:30	AJ	21	Sunny, dry and 0% cloud cover.

Results

During the 6th survey visit it was noted that the majority of the artificial refuges were destroyed. Those that were not destroyed were checked (c. 10) on this visit. A 7th visit was conducted to collect the mats that remained, these were subsequently checked again. No reptiles were recorded on Site during the surveys. Therefore, reptiles are considered to be absent from Site. It should be noted that the addition of the grassland verge parallel to Eastern Way was not surveyed due to it not being included within the original red line boundary. However, this area of grassland may be suitable for common species of reptiles.

Appendix 8 – Breeding Bird Survey

Methods

A breeding bird survey was undertaken in spring 2025 according to an adapted Common Bird Census (CBC) methodology (Bibby *et al*, 2000; Gilbert *et al*, 1998), consisting of a walked transect route encompassing the entire Site, starting within 30 minutes of sunrise in suitable weather conditions (avoiding cold, windy and wet days, although showery days make acceptable survey weather). Survey dates and weather conditions are summarised in **Table 8.1**.

Table 8.1: Dates, times and weather conditions for breeding bird survey

Visit	Date	Surveyor	Time	Weather
1	15/04/25	HD	06:40-07:50	Dry, 8-9°C, 6-7 Oktas cloud cover, Beaufort 1, 2km+ visibility
2	28/05/25	HD	05:30-06:38	Drizzle, 12-13°C, 3-6 Oktas cloud cover, Beaufort 3, 2km+ visibility
3	04/07/25	ET	05:23-06:38	Dry, 12-14°C, 4-7 Oktas cloud cover, Beaufort 1, 2km+ visibility

HD = Harry Dyer BSc; ET = Emma Thornton MBiol

Notable bird species were recorded during the breeding bird survey, including WCA 1981 Schedule 1 species, birds listed on the UK Red-list of Birds of Conservation Concern 5 (BoCC; Stanbury *et al*, 2021), listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and Local BAP species. During the survey, information on species, their locations and behaviour was mapped and recorded.

Breeding probability of each species is assigned based on the BTO breeding status codes³.

Results

There were 450 records of notable birds within 2km of the Site boundary. These were widely distributed but with particularly dense numbers of records in the arable fields to the south of the Site, west Eastern Way and just north of Melksham Town Football Club, and along the River Avon running through the town of Melksham. A summary of the most relevant notable species is provided in **Table 8.2**. Wetland species are not included as there is no suitable habitat on Site.

Table 8.2: Notable bird species within 2km (provided by WSBRC)

Species	Conservation Status	Record Details
Hen harrier	Red, S41, Sch 1, WBAP, Annex I	1 record (2021) on the west side of Melksham
Swift	Red, WBAP	30 records (2017-2021) to the west of the Site, across the town of Melksham
Cuckoo	Red, S41, WBAP	1 record (2017) northwest of the Site
Peregrine	Sch1, Annex 1	14 records (2019-2021) to the west of the Site
Hobby	Sch1	4 records (2019-2020) to the west of the Site
Lesser redpoll	S41, WBAP	1 record (2020) northeast of the Site

³ <https://www.bto.org/get-involved/volunteer/resources/guidance-for-volunteer-fieldworkers> Accessed on: 19/12/2025.

Skylark	Red, WBAP	S41,	13 records (2020-2022) 700m south of the Site
Yellowhammer	Red, WBAP	S41,	1 record (2020) 700m north of the Site
Reed bunting	Amber, WBAP	S41,	10 records (2022-2023) southwest of the Site
Linnet	Red, WBAP	S41,	6 records (2019-2022), closest 250m west of the Site
Grasshopper warbler	Red, WBAP	S41,	1 record (2020) south of the Site
Spotted flycatcher	Red, WBAP	S41,	1 record (2020) northeast of the Site
House sparrow	Red, WBAP	S41,	27 records (2016-2023), closest 500m south of the Site
Black redstart	Amber, WBAP	Sch1,	2 records (2021) west of the Site
Marsh tit	Red, WBAP	S41,	1 record (2020) northeast of the Site
Bullfinch	Amber, WBAP	S41,	1 record (2023) southwest of the Site
Firecrest	Sch1, WBAP		3 records (2015-2020) southwest of the Site
Barn owl	Sch1, WBAP		3 records (2020-2021) north of the Site

Red = Red listed Bird of Conservation Concern 5 (BoCC5) (Stanbury et al., 2021); **SPI** = Species of Principal Importance under S41 of NERC Act 2006; **Amber** = Amber listed BoCC5; **Sch1** = listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). **WBAP** = Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan species

A total of 19 species were recorded during the breeding bird survey of the Site. Of these, 7 were notable species (at least Amber-listed BoCC 5, SPI, Local BAP or Sch1 WCA). Results of notable species are detailed in **Table 8.3**, and a full species list is provided in **Table 8.4**.

The notable species recorded as possible or probable breeders within the Site were mostly recorded in association with the Site hedgerows.

The only ground nesting species was skylark (Red, S41, WBAP), recorded offsite both to the north and the west of the Site. Hence Skylark are **possible** breeders on the agricultural fields within and surrounding the Site.

The notable species recorded as **probable** breeders on Site were woodpigeon (Amber) and Wren (Amber), both of which were recorded showing breeding behaviour (singing males) across multiple surveys.

There was a rookery offsite to the east of the Site, confirming breeding rook (Amber) and supporting over 30 birds.

The diversity and abundance of recorded breeding birds is typical of the habitats described, and therefore the Site is considered to be of no more than **Local** importance for breeding birds. **Figure 6** illustrates the areas of the Site used by each notable species during the breeding season.

Table 8.3: Breeding bird survey results – notable species

Species and Status				Number of birds				
Species	Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Breeding Status	15/04/25	28/05/25	04/07/25	Peak Count	Recorded within Site Boundary
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber, S41	Possible	0	1	0	1	✓
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Red	Possible	1	0	0	1	
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Amber	Confirmed	20+	24	30+	30+	Offsite rookery
Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	Amber	Possible	0	1	0	1	
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Red, S41, WBAP	Possible	0	2	0	2	
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber	Probable	8	5	9	9	✓
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber	Probable	3	3	3	3	✓

Red = Red listed Bird of Conservation Concern 5 (BoCC5) (Stanbury et al., 2021); **SPI**= Species of Principal Importance under S41 of NERC Act 2006; **Amber** = Amber listed BoCC5; **Sch1**= listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). **WBAP** = Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan species

Table 8.4: Breeding bird survey results – complete species list

Common Name	Scientific Name
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>
Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>

Website: www.ge-consulting.co.uk
Phone: 01647 253652
Email: info@ge-consulting.co.uk

GE Consulting is a trading name for
GE Consulting Services (UK) Ltd
registered number 08435536

Registered office: Unit 11A, Gidleys
Meadow Business Park, Christow,
Devon, EX6 7QB.
VAT Number 160595992

Ecology
Arboriculture
Land Management

