
Land at Greenacres, Hoopers Pool, Southwick

Preliminary Ecology Appraisal

September 2026

Client: Dr C Firmin
Report Ref: SEB3340_01
Author:
Kate Hayward MCIEEM
www.seasonsecology.co.uk

Non-Technical Summary

Site and Proposal	The application site extends to approximately 0.14ha at Greenacres, Hoopers Pool and comprises modified grassland and an existing gravel access. The proposals comprise the construction of two holiday lodges with associated access and landscaping.
Habitats	The application site is of relatively low intrinsic ecological value. The principal ecological features are associated with the site boundaries and adjoining land and comprise a species-rich native hedgerow, shallow ditches, mature trees, a standing dead oak and a pond immediately north of the site.
Protected Species	The retained hedgerow, trees, ditches and adjacent pond provide suitable habitat and connectivity for bats, nesting birds, amphibians and other fauna. The site lies within an Amber Great Crested Newt Risk Zone; however, no positive great crested newt records were identified within 2km and no specific survey or licensing requirements are considered necessary for the current proposals.
Recommendations	The retained hedgerow, ditches, mature trees, standing dead oak and adjacent pond should be protected during construction. Precautionary measures should be implemented for amphibians, reptiles and other fauna, including maintaining grassland at a short sward prior to works, careful clearance of potential refuges, covering or providing escape routes from open excavations, and stopping works and seeking ecological advice should a protected species be encountered.
Lighting	External lighting should be designed to maintain dark conditions along the retained hedgerow, trees, ditches and adjacent pond, with low-level, warm-white and fully shielded lighting used where required.
Ecological Enhancements	Enhancements should include species-rich grassland or wildflower margins, strengthening of the retained hedgerow with native planting, wildlife-friendly landscaping, provision of log or brash piles and suitable bird and bat boxes.
Biodiversity Net Gain	The application site is approximately 0.14ha and no Priority Habitat will be affected. The proposal is therefore exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement.
Conclusion	Subject to retention and protection of the principal ecological features, sensitive lighting and implementation of the recommended precautionary and enhancement measures, no significant adverse ecological effects are anticipated.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 In August 2026, Seasons Ecology was instructed by the landowner, Dr C Firmin, to undertake a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal of land at Greenacres, Hoopers Pool, Southwick, Trowbridge, BA14 9NG (central grid reference ST 82837 54055).
- 1.1.2 The site is the subject of a planning application for the construction of two holiday lodges with associated access and landscaping.

1.2 Scope and Objectives of Survey

- 1.2.1 The survey was undertaken to identify and record the habitats on site and to assess the potential of the site to support protected/notable species. The purpose of the survey is to make known any ecological constraints or considerations that may be relevant to the proposal and to inform biodiversity enhancements.
- 1.2.2 This report is based on the findings of a survey undertaken on 3rd September 2026.
- 1.2.3 The report is supported by the following:
- Annex 1: Summary of Legislation and Planning Policy.
 - Annex 2: UKHab Habitat Plan.
 - Annex 3: Site Photographs.

1.3 Personnel

- 1.3.1 The site survey was undertaken by Emma Shaw, Senior Ecologist at Seasons Ecology. The report was prepared by Kate Hayward MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist and Director of Seasons Ecology, who has over 25 years' experience as a professional ecological consultant. Kate is a Level 2 licensed bat surveyor (Class Licence Registration Number: 2025-84486-CL18-BAT) and also holds a survey licence for great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. Kate is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM)

2. Legislation and Planning Policy

- 2.1.1 This report has been compiled with reference to relevant legislation and national planning policies, which protect wildlife. Annex 1 provides a brief summary of this legislation and policy.

3. Desk Study

3.1 Method

3.1.1 A web-based desk study was undertaken in September 2026 prior to the survey to provide local information that may be relevant to the proposal. The following online resources were consulted:

- The MAGIC website¹, to obtain information on:
 - Statutory designations within 2km of the site and within 4km for designations with bats as a primary feature.
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones and Bat Consultation Zones relevant to the site
 - Habitats on or adjacent to the site listed on the Priority Habitats Inventory.
 - European Protected Species licences issued within 2km.
 - Other relevant species information.
- Google Maps², to view aerial photographs, maps and mapnik data, to assess the ecological context of the site.

3.2 Results

Statutory Designations

3.2.1 There is one statutory nature conservation designation within 2km of the site. This is Southwick Country Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located approximately 2km to the north-east.

3.2.2 There are no statutory designations for bats within 4km of the site.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones and Bat Consultation Zones

3.2.3 The site itself is not subject to any statutory nature conservation designation but lies within three Impact Risk Zones associated with nearby SSSIs. The development types identified within these Impact Risk Zones relate to infrastructure, air pollution, combustion and waste discharge and are not relevant to the current proposal. Consultation with Natural England on this basis is therefore not considered necessary.

3.2.4 The site does not lie within a Bat Consultation Zone.

Priority Habitats Inventory

3.2.5 There are no Priority Habitats listed on the Priority Habitats Inventory on or adjacent to the site. The nearest is Deciduous Woodland located approximately 1.3km to the south.

¹ <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

² <http://acme.com/planimeter/>

European Protected Species Licences

- 3.2.6 There is one European Protected Species mitigation licence record within 2km of the site. This is located approximately 1.6km to the north-east, within the village of Southwick, and relates to common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, serotine *Cnephaeus serotinus* and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*

Other Relevant Species Information

- 3.2.7 One great crested newt pond survey record (Natural England 2017–2019) occurs within 2km of the site. This is located approximately 400m to the north and recorded absence of the species.
- 3.2.8 The site lies within an Amber Risk Zone for great crested newt under the Natural England District Level Licensing (DLL) scheme for Somerset. Amber Risk Zones identify areas where great crested newts and suitable supporting habitat may occur and where development impacts on the species may require further consideration.

Ecological Context

- 3.2.9 The application site is located at Greenacres within a predominantly rural landscape comprising agricultural fields divided by mature hedgerows and frequent mature trees. The surrounding land is principally pasture and arable farmland, with scattered rural properties, farm buildings and small areas of commercial and agricultural development. The network of hedgerows, mature trees and field boundaries provides good ecological connectivity through the surrounding countryside, with areas of woodland also present within the wider landscape.
- 3.2.10 The site forms part of a wider area of managed land associated with Greenacres and is bordered by agricultural fields and established boundary vegetation. Ponds are also present within the surrounding landscape, together with hedgerows, trees and grassland providing suitable terrestrial and connecting habitat for a range of wildlife, including bats, birds, amphibians and small mammals.

4. Survey

4.1 Method

Habitat Survey

- 4.1.1 A systematic walkover of the site was undertaken on 3rd September 2026. Notes were taken on the habitats present, and their suitability to support protected and notable species. Any incidental evidence of protected and notable species was noted. The survey was carried out with reference to UKHab Classification (2023)³, CIEEM 2018⁴ and BS 42020:2013 *Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development* (BSI 2013).

Daytime Bat Walkover and Roost Assessment

- 4.1.2 A Daytime Bat Walkover of the site was carried out to observe, assess and record any habitats suitable for bats to roost, commute and forage both on site and in the surrounding area.
- 4.1.3 Trees on and immediately adjacent to the site were subject to a Ground Level Tree Assessment to identify Potential Roosting Features (PRF) on the exterior of trees. The trees are then assessed as follows:
- PRF – I: PRF(s) only suitable for individual bats or a very small number of bats either due to their size or a lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
 - PRF – M: PRF(s) suitable for multiple bats and could be used by a maternity colony.
- 4.1.4 The site is assessed as either having no habitat features, or *Negligible, Low, Moderate* or *High* suitability to roosting, foraging and commuting bats.
- 4.1.5 The walkover and roost assessments were undertaken with reference to BCT, 2023⁵.

Constraints to Survey

- 4.1.6 The survey provides a snapshot of ecological conditions at the time of the site visit. Seasonal variations may therefore mean that some plant or animal species present at other times of year were not recorded during the survey.

³ UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification, Version 2.0 at <https://ukhab.org/>

⁴ CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

⁵ BCT (2023): Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

4.2 Site Description

- 4.2.1 The application site extends to approximately 0.14ha and comprises an existing gravel access track and adjoining modified grassland associated with Greenacres. A species-rich native hedgerow extends along the southern side of the access track and continues south along the eastern boundary of the grassland. Shallow drainage ditches occur alongside sections of the access track and boundary vegetation.
- 4.2.2 The site lies within a predominantly rural setting and forms part of a wider area of grassland enclosed by established hedgerows and trees. A large pond is located immediately north of the site on neighbouring land, beyond the northern boundary.
- 4.2.3 Habitats are mapped on the habitat plan at Annex 2 with Target Notes highlighting features of interest. Site photographs are provided at Annex 3.

4.3 Habitat Descriptions

- 4.3.1 *Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface* – An existing gravel access track extends east to west along the northern part of the application site before turning south. The track is unvegetated and includes two localised piles of rubble and stored materials.
- 4.3.2 *Modified Grassland* – Modified grassland occurs south of the access track and within the south-western part of the application site. The sward varies from short to locally tall and disturbed, with at least 20% bare ground in places and scattered rubble, brash and stored materials (Target Note 1, Annex 2). Species recorded include perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, mayweed species, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, common knotgrass *Polygonum aviculare*, dock *Rumex* species, greater plantain *Plantago major*, bristly ox-tongue *Helminthotheca echioides*, red goosefoot *Oxybasis rubra* and occasional bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.
- 4.3.3 *Species-rich Native Hedgerow* – A species-rich native hedgerow extends along the southern side of the access track and continues south along the eastern boundary of the grassland. The hedgerow is approximately 2m high and 1.5m wide and is generally dense, although a gap of approximately 0.5m occurs between ground level and the base of the hedge along the Greenacres property boundary. A gateway provides access through the hedgerow to the adjoining field to the south. Woody species include elm *Ulmus* species, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, field maple *Acer campestre*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and field rose *Rosa arvensis*.
- 4.3.4 A mature standing dead English oak *Quercus robur* occurs within the hedgerow where the hedgerow turns south along the eastern boundary (Target Note 2, Annex 2). Part of the main trunk has recently fallen into the neighbouring field. No Potential Roost Features suitable for bats were identified within the remaining standing trunk or branches.
- 4.3.5 Two small mammal holes were recorded at the base of the hedgerow along the southern boundary of the south-western field unit (Target Note 3, Annex 2). Both were too small to be attributable to badger, and rabbit droppings recorded at one entrance indicate that they are most likely associated with rabbit.
- 4.3.6 *Ditches* – Shallow ditches occur alongside sections of the access track and boundary hedgerow. They were dry at the time of survey and measured approximately 0.5m deep and 1m wide. Vegetation was generally tall and unmanaged and included perennial rye-grass, Yorkshire-fog, false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, soft rush *Juncus effusus*, hard rush *Juncus inflexus*, greater willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, common knotgrass, pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*,

yellow flag iris *Iris pseudacorus*, mayweed species, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, spear thistle, dock species and occasional self-seeded goat willow *Salix caprea*.

- 4.3.7 **Adjacent Pond** – A large pond is located immediately north of the application site on neighbouring land. Access to the pond was not available during the survey and its aquatic habitat could therefore not be assessed in detail. The raised banks support extensive bramble and willowherb, while recent mechanical clearance was evident along part of the eastern margin, including fresh spoil and exposed tree roots.

5. Evaluation

- 5.1.1 The application site is not subject to any statutory nature conservation designation and contains no mapped Priority Habitat. Habitats within the site comprise modified grassland, artificial unvegetated unsealed surface, a species-rich native hedgerow and shallow ditches. A large pond is located immediately north of the site on neighbouring land.
- 5.1.2 The modified grassland and gravel access are of relatively low ecological value, reflecting the disturbed and managed nature of these habitats. The species-rich hedgerow and associated ditches are of greater ecological value, providing habitat connectivity through the site and into the surrounding agricultural landscape. The adjacent pond adds further habitat diversity and may provide suitable habitat for amphibians and other wildlife.
- 5.1.3 A mature standing dead oak occurs within the eastern boundary hedgerow and is identified at Target Note 2. No Potential Roost Features suitable for bats were recorded within the remaining standing trunk or branches. The tree does however provide deadwood habitat of value to invertebrates and forms part of the established boundary habitat.
- 5.1.4 The boundary hedgerow, mature trees and adjacent pond provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats, while the hedgerow also provides suitable nesting habitat for birds and shelter and movement opportunities for a range of other fauna. The two small mammal holes recorded along the southern boundary and identified at Target Note 3, were too small for badger and, based on associated field signs, are considered most likely to be associated with rabbit.
- 5.1.5 The site lies within an Amber Great Crested Newt Risk Zone and a pond occurs immediately north of the application site. However, no positive great crested newt records were identified within 2km, with the nearest Natural England pond survey record, approximately 400m to the north, recording absence of the species. The proposed development does not directly affect the adjacent pond or boundary ditches and is focused on habitats of relatively low terrestrial suitability. On this basis, specific great crested newt survey or licensing requirements are not considered proportionate, although precautionary measures for amphibians and other fauna should be implemented during construction.
- 5.1.6 Overall, the principal ecological considerations relate to retention and protection of the species-rich hedgerow, ditches, standing dead oak and adjacent pond, together with implementation of proportionate precautionary measures for fauna during construction. Subject to these measures, significant adverse ecological effects are not anticipated.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1.1 The site is the subject of a planning application for the construction of two holiday lodges with associated access and landscaping. With consideration to the proposed development, the following recommendations are made.

6.2 Protection of Retained Habitats

- 6.2.1 The species-rich hedgerow, associated ditches, standing dead oak and adjacent pond should be retained and protected throughout construction. Construction activity, storage of materials, soil or spoil and movement of plant and machinery should be confined to the defined working area and should avoid encroachment into retained boundary habitats.
- 6.2.2 The standing dead oak identified at Target Note 2 should be retained and protected where safe and practicable. Any necessary arboricultural works should be limited to those required for safety and undertaken sensitively to retain deadwood habitat wherever possible.
- 6.2.3 Measures should be implemented to prevent sediment, fuels, cement washings or other pollutants entering the adjacent pond or boundary ditches. Potentially polluting materials should be stored securely and away from these features.

6.3 Precautionary Measures for Fauna

- 6.3.1 Grassland within the working area should be maintained at a short sward in the period leading up to construction to reduce its suitability for sheltering amphibians, reptiles and other fauna.
- 6.3.2 Any vegetation clearance, removal of brash, rubble or stored materials (Target Note 1), or works to other features capable of providing refuge for wildlife should be undertaken carefully, with hand searches undertaken where appropriate before removal or disturbance. Any animals encountered should be allowed to move into suitable retained habitat away from the works.
- 6.3.3 Any excavations or trenches left open overnight should either be securely covered or provided with a suitable means of escape for wildlife and checked each morning before works recommence.
- 6.3.4 Should a protected species be encountered unexpectedly during construction, works in the immediate area should cease and advice should be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist before works recommence.

6.4 Nesting Birds

- 6.4.1 Any necessary removal or cutting back of hedgerow, scrub or other woody vegetation should be undertaken outside the main nesting bird season, generally March to August inclusive, where practicable. Where this is not possible, affected vegetation should first be checked by a suitably experienced ecologist and any active nest retained and protected until nesting has finished.

6.5 Lighting

- 6.5.1 The retained hedgerow, mature trees, boundary ditches and adjacent pond provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats and should remain substantially dark. Any external lighting associated with the proposed holiday lodges and access should therefore be designed and positioned to avoid illumination of these features.

- 6.5.2 Where lighting is required, luminaires should be mounted as low as practicable, fully shielded and directed downwards, with light spill towards the retained boundary habitats and pond avoided. Warm-white lighting with a colour temperature no greater than 2700K should be used, and lighting should operate only when required, using timers or motion sensors where appropriate.

6.6 Ecological Enhancements

- 6.6.1 The application site extends to approximately 0.14ha and no Priority Habitat will be affected by the proposals. The development is therefore exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement. Nevertheless, proportionate ecological enhancements should be incorporated into the scheme to provide measurable benefits for biodiversity.
- 6.6.2 Suitable enhancement measures include:
- establishment of species-rich grassland or wildflower margins around the proposed lodges and access, using an appropriate native seed mix and managed to encourage greater botanical diversity;
 - infill planting and strengthening of the retained hedgerow using locally appropriate native woody species where opportunities arise;
 - planting of native and wildlife-friendly shrubs and herbaceous species around the development to provide additional nectar, pollen and berry resources;
 - creation of a log or brash pile within an undisturbed part of the site to provide refuge and hibernation opportunities for amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates and small mammals; and
 - installation of suitable bird and bat boxes on retained mature trees or the proposed buildings, positioned away from artificial lighting.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1.1 The application site is of relatively low intrinsic ecological value, comprising predominantly modified grassland and existing gravelled access. The principal ecological features are associated with the site boundaries and immediately adjoining land and comprise the species-rich native hedgerow, shallow ditches, mature trees, standing dead oak and adjacent pond.
- 7.1.2 The proposed development can be accommodated without significant adverse ecological effects, provided that these retained habitats are protected, sensitive lighting is incorporated and the recommended precautionary measures for fauna are implemented during construction. Specific survey or licensing requirements for great crested newt are not considered necessary on the basis of the current proposals and available evidence.
- 7.1.3 The proposal is exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement as the application site is approximately 0.14ha and no Priority Habitat will be affected. Proportionate ecological enhancements are however recommended to improve the value of retained and created habitats within the site.

Annex 1: Legislation and Planning Policy

A summary of relevant legislation and national planning policy is provided below. For each individual case, the relevant legislation and policy should be consulted in full and legal advice obtained where appropriate.

The principal legislative provisions relevant to ecological assessment in England are summarised below. European legislation has not been separately included where its relevant provisions are implemented through domestic legislation.

The Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 provides a legislative framework for environmental protection and improvement in England, including provisions relating to biodiversity, environmental targets, Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

The Act introduced a statutory framework for BNG through amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Subject to the relevant statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements, qualifying development is required to achieve a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity value compared with the pre-development baseline. Biodiversity value is calculated using the statutory biodiversity metric, with significant on-site habitat enhancements and off-site biodiversity gains secured and managed in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements.

The Act also strengthened the biodiversity duty placed upon public authorities and introduced measures intended to support nature recovery and the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations, provide a legislative framework for the conservation of habitats and species of international importance. The Regulations transpose the land and inshore marine provisions of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and certain provisions of the Wild Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC) into domestic legislation.

The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and afford strict protection to certain species, including all species of bat, great crested newt, dormouse and otter.

Following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 amended the Habitats Regulations to ensure that the existing system of protection continued to operate effectively. SACs and SPAs within the UK no longer form part of the European Union's Natura 2000 network and instead form part of the UK's national site network.

Under the Habitats Regulations, a competent authority must consider whether a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a protected site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Where a likely significant effect cannot be excluded, an Appropriate Assessment may be required before the plan or project can be authorised.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides the principal legislative framework for the protection of wild animals, plants and birds in Great Britain and for the designation and protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

The Act provides varying levels of protection for species listed within its Schedules. Amongst other provisions, it makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or to take, damage or

destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built, or to take or destroy its eggs. Species listed on Schedule 1 receive additional protection from intentional or reckless disturbance while nesting.

Certain wild animal species listed on Schedule 5 and plant species listed on Schedule 8 are afforded specific protection under the Act. The level of protection varies according to the species and the relevant provisions of the Act.

The Act also provides protection for SSSIs and controls the release or introduction into the wild of certain non-native or otherwise specified species listed under Schedule 9.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) introduced provisions relating to public access to the countryside and strengthened existing legislation for the conservation and protection of wildlife and habitats.

Part III of the Act strengthened the protection afforded to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, including provisions relating to their notification, management, protection from damaging activities and enforcement.

The Act also strengthened protection for certain wildlife species by introducing provisions relating to reckless disturbance and damage, and made further provision for the recognition and protection of Ramsar sites, designated as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is a material consideration in planning decision-making. It should be read alongside relevant Planning Practice Guidance. The current NPPF was published in August 2026 and replaces the previous December 2024 Framework.

Chapter 19, *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*, requires development to conserve and enhance existing natural features, strengthen ecological networks and minimise adverse impacts on biodiversity, including through Biodiversity Net Gain where applicable. Policy N2 requires significant harm to biodiversity to be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for. Policy N6 provides additional protection for designated sites and irreplaceable habitats.

Protected species and their habitats are a material consideration where development has potential to affect them. ODPM Circular 06/2005: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System* remains relevant and provides administrative guidance on the application of nature conservation legislation within the planning system.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended)

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act), as amended by the Environment Act 2021, places a duty on public authorities in England to consider what action they can take to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity when exercising their functions.

Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. These are a material consideration in the planning process and include many habitats and species formerly identified as priorities under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Protected and Notable Species

A range of wild plants and animals are protected under UK legislation, principally the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and, in the case of badgers, the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. The level of protection varies between species and may include protection from killing, injury, capture, disturbance and/or damage or destruction of places used for shelter, protection or breeding.

Bats, dormice and otters receive strict protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The legislation protects the animals themselves and their breeding sites and resting places. Activities that would otherwise constitute an offence may require an appropriate licence from Natural England.

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is an offence, amongst other matters, to wilfully kill, injure or take a badger, or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett.

Water voles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which protects the animals and their places of shelter or protection from specified activities including killing, injury, capture, damage, destruction, obstruction and disturbance.

Wild birds, their eggs and active nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take a wild bird, to take, damage or destroy its nest while in use or being built, or to take or destroy its eggs. Species listed on Schedule 1 receive additional protection from intentional or reckless disturbance while nesting.

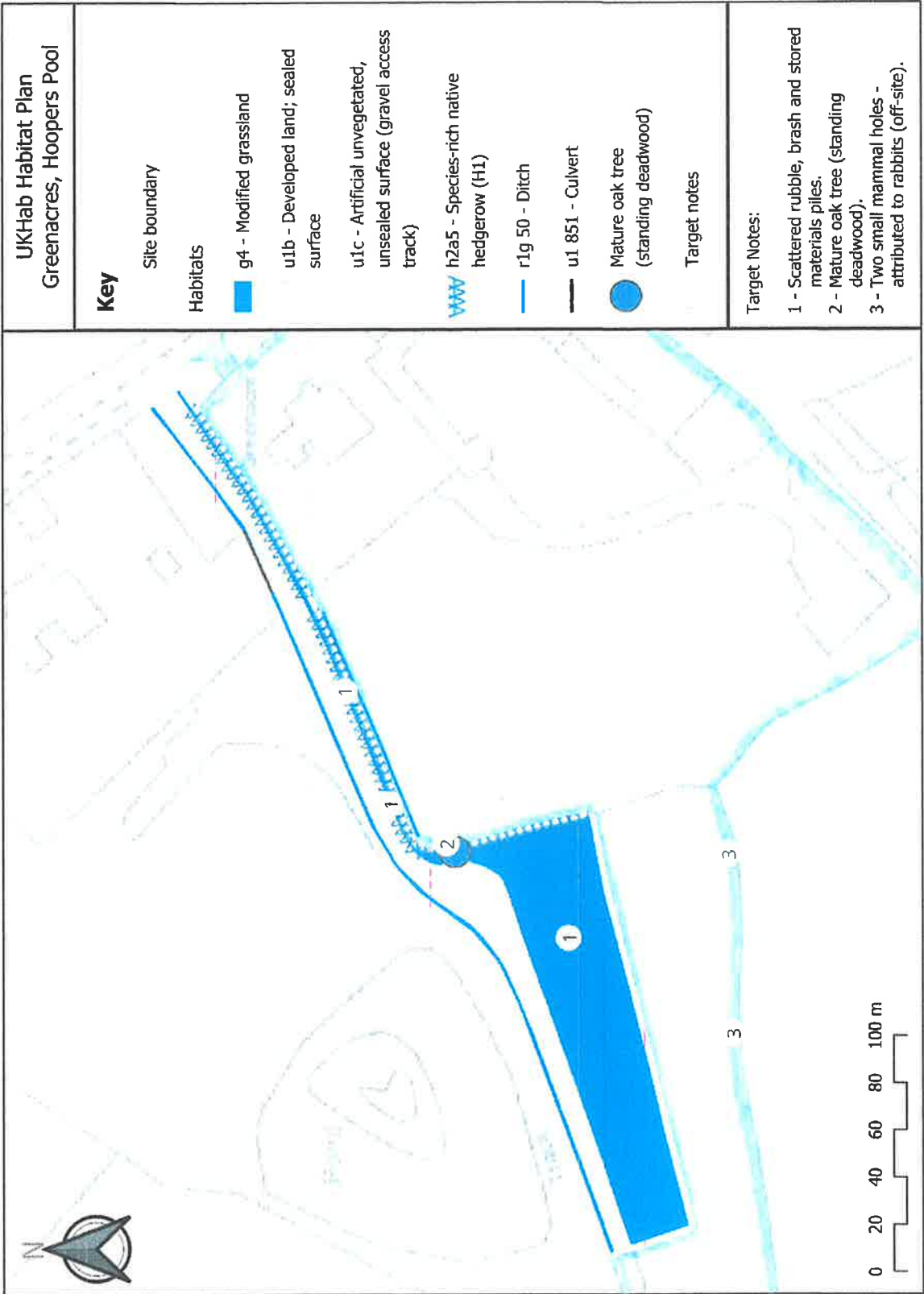
Reptiles receive varying levels of protection. The widespread species – slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and adder *Vipera berus* – are protected against intentional killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* and smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* receive additional protection under both the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* and **natterjack toad** *Epidalea calamita* receive strict protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), including protection of the animals and their breeding sites and resting places. Other amphibians receive varying levels of protection.

A number of **plants and invertebrates** are afforded protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), with certain species also protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The precise level of protection varies according to the species.

In addition to legally protected species, a range of species are identified as **Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended)**. These include species that may not receive specific legal protection, such as hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and brown hare *Lepus europaeus*, but which remain relevant to ecological assessment and the planning process.

Annex 2: UKHab Habitat Map (September 2026)



Annex 3: Site Photographs (September 2026)

Photograph 1: The site entrance and gravelled access track, facing west, showing the species-rich native hedgerow (left) and ditch (right) lining the track.



Photograph 2: The gravelled access track, facing east, showing the species-rich native hedgerow (right) and rubble pile (Target Note 1).



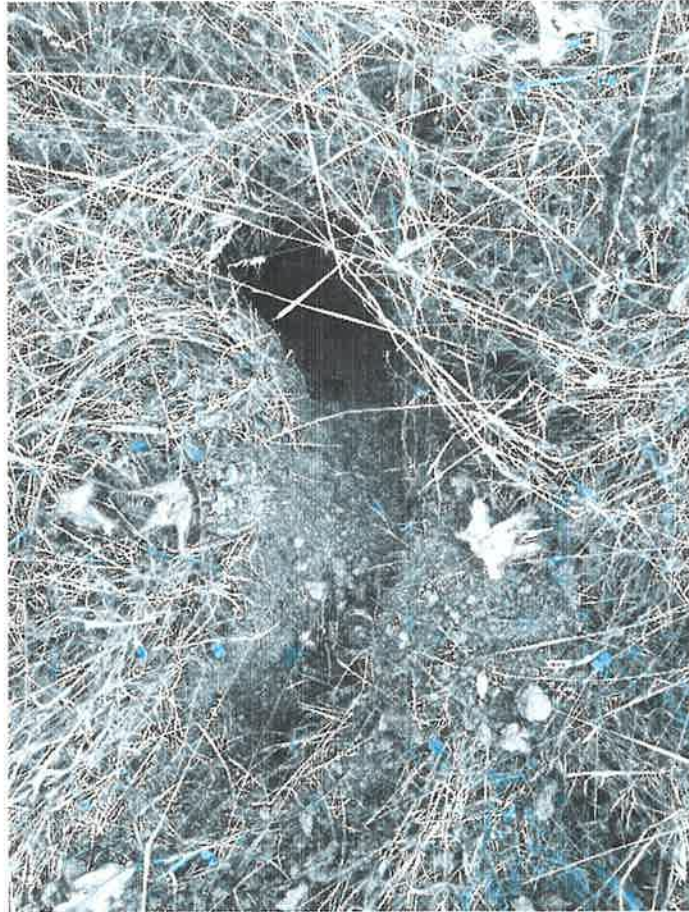
Photograph 3: The grassland field unit in the south-west of the site, facing south, showing the scattered bare ground coverage and standing deadwood oak tree (left – Target Note 2). This area will house the proposed two holiday lodges.



Photograph 4: The standing deadwood oak tree (Target Note 2) present within the species-rich native hedgerow length.



Photograph 5: A small mammal hole found at the south boundary of the grassland field unit (off-site), attributed to rabbits.



Photograph 6: The neighbouring north field unit, showing the adjacent pond (off-site) surrounded by bramble, with recently clearance present across the east banks.

