



## Lower Moor Farm replacement educational building Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Version: 1.0

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> September 2026

Main contributor: Fern Kenyon-Hamp, Senior Ecologist (MSc, ACIEEM)

Reviewed by: Daisy Huxter, Ecology Lead (MSc, ACIEEM)

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## Non-Technical Summary

|                          |                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Purpose of the Report    | To support a planning application for a replacement educational building and visitor toilets at Lower Moor, Oaksey. |
| Surveys Undertaken       | Desk study, UKHab                                                                                                   |
| Conclusions              | No impacts are anticipated to statutory and non-statutory sites, priority habitats or species, or on-site habitats. |
| Further Surveys Required | N/A                                                                                                                 |
| Mitigation               | A precautionary method of works is proposed to mitigate any potential impacts to Great Crested Newts (GCN).         |
| Data Valid Until         | August 2027                                                                                                         |



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## 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) Nature Recovery Team were commissioned by the WWT Engagement and Fundraising team to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land at Lower Moor Farm, Somerford Keynes Rd, Oaksey, Wiltshire, SN16 9TW (SU007938) - hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.

This PEA sets out the results of a desk-based study and a UKHab survey of the Site undertaken on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2026. The desk study, UKHab survey and PEA were completed by Fern Kenyon-Hamp, Senior Ecologist (MSc, ACIEEM).

The Site is a 161m<sup>2</sup> flat parcel of land containing gravel recently colonised by ruderal plants and grasses, with 32m of hedgerow on the north and west boundary of the Site. The south and east boundary of the Site are enclosed by a wooden fence. See Site Location Plan and Photo 1 appended below.

### Figure 1: Site Location Plan

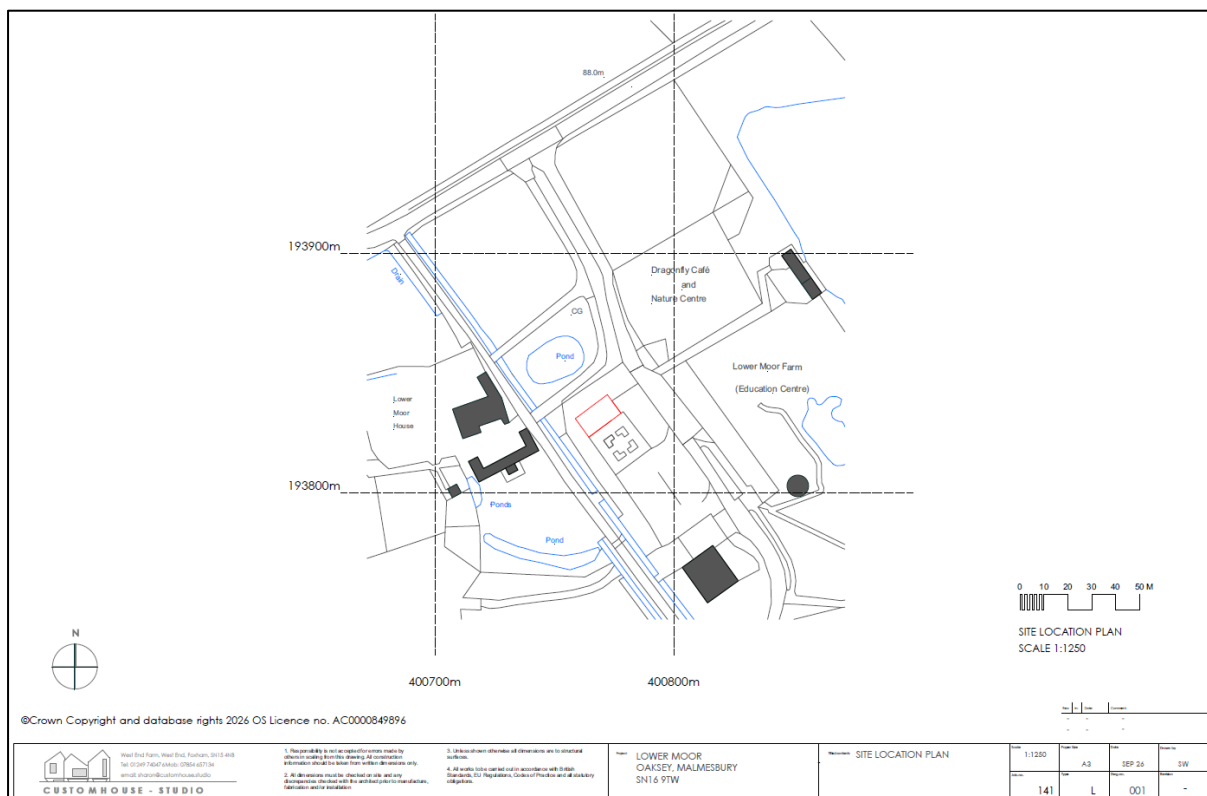




Photo 1: The Site



## 1.2 Summary of Proposals

This report has been produced to support a planning application for the installation of a replacement 116m<sup>2</sup> educational building and visitor toilets at Lower Moor at Lower Moor Farm, Oaksey (SU007938), adjacent to the existing car park.

The new building will be constructed on/using the existing block foundations that have remained on Site following the removal of the previous building. There will be no ground disturbance necessary to construct the building as the block foundations have remained in-situ.

## 1.3 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to:

- To collate and present the relevant ecological data including an appraisal of the ecological features present
- To describe the habitats on Site and then identify the scoping of their potential to support protected or notable species
- To allow likely mitigation or compensation measures to be developed.



## 2. Planning policy and legislation

### 2.1 Local Planning Policy

The Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document ('the plan') was formally adopted on 20th January 2015 (Wiltshire County Council, 2015). The plan provides a positive and flexible overarching planning policy framework for Wiltshire for the period up to 2026. The Plan is currently under review by Wiltshire County Council, who have commenced plan preparation and are currently carrying out a scoping consultation for the new Local Plan. The below policies are therefore extracted from the Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan as the most current planning policies relevant to this proposed development:

#### **Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and geodiversity**

##### *"Protection*

*Development proposals must demonstrate how they **protect features of nature conservation** and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be **retained, buffered, and managed favourably** in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource, and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.*

*All development proposals shall incorporate **appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development.***

*Any development potentially affecting a Natura 2000 site must provide avoidance measures in accordance with the strategic plans or guidance set out in paragraphs 6.75-6.77 above where possible, otherwise bespoke measures must be provided to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effect upon the Natura 2000 network. Any development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.*

##### *Biodiversity enhancement*

*All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Major development in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services. Such enhancement measures will contribute to the objectives and targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or River Basin/ Catchment Management Plan, particularly through landscape scale projects, and be relevant to the local landscape character.*

##### *Local sites*

*Sustainable development will avoid direct and indirect impacts upon local sites through **sensitive site location and layout, and by maintaining sufficient buffers and ecological connectivity with the wider environment.** Damage or disturbance to local sites will generally be unacceptable, other than in exceptional circumstances where it has been demonstrated that such impacts:*

- i. cannot reasonably be avoided*
- ii. are reduced as far as possible*
- iii. are outweighed by other planning considerations in the public interest*
- iv. where appropriate compensation measures can be secured through planning obligations or agreements.*

*Development proposals affecting local sites must make a reasonable contribution to their favourable management in the long-term."*



## Core Policy 52 Green infrastructure

***“Development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire’s green infrastructure network, and shall ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained. Where development is permitted developers will be required to:***

- i. retain and enhance existing on site green infrastructure*
- ii. make provision for accessible open spaces in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Wiltshire Open Space Standards*
- iii. put measures in place to ensure appropriate long-term management of any green infrastructure directly related to the development*
- iv. provide appropriate contributions towards the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy*
- v. identify and provide opportunities to enhance and improve linkages between the natural and historic landscapes of Wiltshire.*

*If damage or loss of existing green infrastructure is unavoidable, the creation of new or replacement green infrastructure equal to or above its current value and quality, that maintains the integrity and functionality of the green infrastructure network, will be required.*

*Proposals for major development should be accompanied by an audit of the existing green infrastructure within and around the site and a statement demonstrating how this will be retained and enhanced through the development process.*

*Development will not adversely affect the integrity and value of the green infrastructure network, prejudice the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, or provide inadequate green infrastructure mitigation.*

*Green infrastructure projects and initiatives that contribute to the delivery of a high quality and highly valued multi-functional green infrastructure network in accordance with the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy will be supported. Contributions (financial or other) to support such projects and initiatives will be 272 required where appropriate from developers.”*

## 2.2 National Planning Policy

The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government’s planning policies for plan-making and for making decisions on development proposals in England and how these are expected to be applied (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2026). The new NPPF replaces the previous NPPF published in March 2012, revised in July 2018, February 2019, July 2021, September 2023, December 2023 and December 2024.

Policies N1 and N2 within Chapter 19 “Conserving and enhancing the natural environment” of the NPPF 2026 aim to “drive nature’s recovery and contribute to wider environmental outcomes, safeguarding our most important habitats, species and landscapes and recognising the centrality of natural capital to delivering sustainable growth.”

### Policy N1

*“Safeguard and enhance the natural environment, and reflect the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, by using Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Protected Landscape Management Plans, River Basin Management Plans, National Forest Strategies, Community Forest Plans and other relevant evidence at the most appropriate level to: Identify opportunities for the conservation, enhancement and recovery of landscapes, sensitive waterbodies, habitats and priority or threatened species, including through habitat restoration, the use of nature-based solutions, and the creation and strengthening of ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures (including opportunities which exist at a catchment or landscape scale across plan boundaries)”*

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*"Development plans should only set local standards for biodiversity net gain which are in excess of the statutory net gain requirement where this is for specific site allocations, and is fully justified and deliverable. Local standards should not extend to categories of development which are exempt from statutory biodiversity net gain."*

## Policy N2

*"To contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature's recovery, development proposals should: Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced (including through requirements for biodiversity net gain where these apply); Take suitable opportunities to connect to and strengthen ecological networks that extend beyond the site, drawing on the measures proposed by Local Nature Recovery Strategies, National Forest Strategies and Community Forest Plans, where present, and other relevant assessments; and Minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use, or would make them ineffective".*

*"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 the development should be refused. Development proposals may incorporate biodiversity enhancements which exceed the statutory objective for biodiversity net gain, but this should only be a requirement where it is set out in up-to-date development plan policies for specific site allocations. Decision makers should not give weight to other development plan policies which require biodiversity gains which go beyond the statutory framework, including where a policy requires gains for development proposals which are exempt."*

## 2.3 Protected species legislation

### Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2017 (as amended)

Section 43 of Part 3 of this legislation makes it an offence to do any of the following with regards to European Protected Species (animals) as listed on Schedule 2:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species.
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species.
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute this activity).

Section 43 of Part 3 of this legislation makes it an offence to do any of the following with regards to European Protected Species (plants) as listed on Schedule 5:

- Deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy a wild plant of a European Protected Species.
- Be in position of or to transport said plant.

### Protection of Badgers Act 1992

Under this legislation it is an offence to (or intend to, or to be reckless as to whether your actions would have these consequences):

- Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger (or attempts to do so).
- Damage or destroy any part of a badger sett. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).
- Obstruct access to a badger sett. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).
- Disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).

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## Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

Part 1 of this act makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild bird, to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built, and/or to take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Part 1 also makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird included in Schedule 1 of the act, and to take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird included in Schedule ZA1.

Schedule 5 list non-avian species that are afforded various protections under Sections 9.1a, 9.1b, 9.2, 9.4a, 9.4a (Whales), 9.4b, 9.4c, 9.5a and 9.5b.

Schedule 8 lists plant species that are protected from intentionally picking, uprooting or destroying under Section 13.

Schedule 9 lists non-native invasive plants for which it is an offence under Section 14 to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any part of said plants. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Desk Study

A desk-based assessment was conducted by:

- Contacting the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) and Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records (GCER) to supply biological records of protected, priority, notable and invasive species within 5km of the Site. Both records centres were contacted as a 5km radius around the Site covers both Wiltshire and Gloucestershire.
- Using DEFRA's online MAGIC tool (Natural England, 2026) to identify and assess statutory designated sites, non-statutory designated sites within 3km of the Site, and priority or irreplaceable habitats located within 1km of the Site.
- Using DEFRA's online MAGIC tool to identify and assess any waterbodies within 500m of the Site that could potentially house Great Crested Newt.
- Using DEFRA's online MAGIC tool to identify and assess any European protected species licenses located within 1km of the Site.
- Using the Ancient Tree Inventory to identify and assess any ancient or veteran trees within 1km of the Site (Woodland Trust, 2026)

### 3.2 Field Survey

A UKHab survey of the Site was conducted on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2026 by Senior Ecologist Fern Kenyon-Hamp, a suitably qualified ecologist (MSc, ACIEEM).

The on-site habitats were identified and assessed in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.1 (UKHab Ltd, 2026). The Site was also assessed for its suitability for protected and notable species.

UKHab maps were produced using ArcGIS Pro Online (ESRI, 2026).

### 3.4 Limitations

The survey of the Site was conducted in August 2026, within the optimal botanical assessment period and habitat survey season (April-September inclusive). Thus, it is considered that an accurate baseline ecological condition of the Site was captured at the time of survey.



## 4. Results

### 4.1 Desk Study

#### 4.1.1 Biological records within 5km of the Site

A summary of the biological records search returned by WSBRC can be found below:

WSBRC returned records for three species of amphibian recorded within 5km of the Site in the last 10 years. This included Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* recorded on Lower Moor Farm.

WSBRC returned records for 130 species of bird recorded within 5km of the Site in the last 10 years. This included multiple species recorded on Lower Moor Farm. Of these, 82 species are of conservation concern or have additional legal protections. A table showing the WSBRC Schedule 1, Red List and Amber list species records on Lower Moor Farm can be found in Appendix 1.

WSBRC returned records for 57 species of flowering plants recorded within 5km of the Site in the last 10 years. This included multiple species recorded on Lower Moor Farm, of which 1 is Schedule 8 species, Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*.

WSBRC returned records for 67 species of insects recorded within 5km of the Site in the last 10 years. This included multiple species recorded on Lower Moor Farm.

WSBRC returned records for three species of reptile recorded within 5km of the Site in the last 10 years. This included Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis*, Grass Snake *Natrix helvetica* and Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara* all recorded on Lower Moor Farm.

WSBRC returned records for 31 species of terrestrial mammal recorded within 5km of the Site in the last 10 years. This included multiple species of bat (*Myotis*, *Nyctalus*, *Pipistrellus*, *Plecotus* and *Phinolophus*) and Otter *Lutra lutra* recorded on Lower Moor Farm.

A summary of the biological records search returned by GCER can be found below:

GCER returned records for four species of amphibian recorded within 5km of the Site in the last 10 years. This included Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* recorded on Lower Moor Farm.

GCER returned records for 124 species of bird recorded within 5km of the Site in the last 10 years. This included 34 species recorded at Lower Moor Farm. Of these, 33 species are of conservation concern or have additional legal protections. A table showing the GCER Schedule 1, Red List and Amber list species records on Lower Moor Farm can be found in Appendix 1.

GCER returned records for 23 species of insect recorded within 5km of the Site in the last 10 years.

GCER returned records for two species of reptile recorded within 5km of the Site in the last 10 years. This included Grass Snake *Natrix helvetica* and Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara* all recorded on Lower Moor Farm.

GCER returned records for 18 species of terrestrial mammal recorded within 5km of the Site in the last 10 years. This included four species of bat (*Myotis*, *Nyctalus*, *Pipistrellus* and *Plecotus*), and Otter *Lutra lutra* recorded at Lower Moor Farm.

#### 4.1.2 Statutory Designated Sites, Non-Statutory Designated Sites, priority and irreplaceable habitats

The below table and map set out the results of the desk study search for Statutory Designated Sites, Non-Statutory Designated Sites, priority and irreplaceable habitats.



**Table 1: Desk study results for Statutory Designated Sites, Non-Statutory Designated Sites, priority and irreplaceable habitats.**

| Site and Designation                        | Distance from the Site | Connectivity (High/Medium/Low)                                                                                        | Description and Ecological features                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cotswold Water Park SSSI                    | 105m north-east        | Low – the Site is enclosed by a wooden fence and is not terrestrially or hydrologically connected to the SSSI.        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breeding great crested grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>; little egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i> and little ringed plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>; • a diverse assemblage of breeding birds of lowland open waters, their margins and scrub; • non-breeding shoveler <i>Spatula clypeata</i>; gadwall <i>Mareca strepera</i>; pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>; tufted duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>; great crested grebe; coot <i>Fulica atra</i>; green sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i> and lesser black-backed gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>; • an assemblage of over 20,000 waterbirds during the non-breeding season; and • populations of the aquatic plants starry stonewort <i>Nitellopsis obtusa</i>, lesser bearded stonewort <i>Chara curta</i>; pointed stonewort <i>Nitella mucronata</i> and clustered stonewort <i>Tolypella glomerata</i>.</li> </ul> |
| North Meadow & Clattinger Farm SSSI and SAC | 279m south             | Low – the Site is enclosed by a wooden fence and is not terrestrially or hydrologically connected to the SSSI or SAC. | <p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this Site as an SAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6510 Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)</li> </ul> <p>Clattinger Farm comprises a series of meadows and pastures which display a wide range of unimproved grassland types and an outstanding meadow flora. It constitutes the only lowland farm in Britain known to have received absolutely no agricultural chemicals.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Acres Farm Meadow SSSI                      | 1.8km south-east       | Low – the Site is enclosed by a wooden fence and is not                                                               | Acres Farm Meadow is a botanically diverse field of unimproved neutral grassland                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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|                                                                                                                              |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                              |            | terrestrially or hydrologically connected to the SSSI.                                                                                                                                                                                    | in the Upper Thames Basin. The site comprises a herb rich hay meadow surrounded by a tall, species-rich hedge. The meadow is representative of a nationally important habitat which has largely been lost due to the intensification in methods practised in modern farming operations.                                                                                                             |
| Pike Corner SSSI                                                                                                             | 2.6km east | Low – the Site is enclosed by a wooden fence and is not terrestrially or hydrologically connected to the SSSI.                                                                                                                            | This site consists of two low-lying meadows in the flood plain of the Swill Brook, a small calcareous tributary of the River Thames which is situated only half a mile to the north. The meadows have been grazed for many years without ploughing or any use of artificial fertilisers. They support a very rich flora with several plant species which are rare in Wiltshire and southern England |
| Priority Habitat Inventory - Pond                                                                                            | 98m east   | Medium – the Site is enclosed by a wooden fence and is not terrestrially or hydrologically connected to this waterbody, but species using the waterbody could feasibly use the Site for commuting or foraging due to its close proximity. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Priority Habitat Inventory - Pond                                                                                            | 485m east  | Low – the Site is enclosed by a wooden fence and is not terrestrially or hydrologically connected to this waterbody.                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Meadows (green on Figure 3)                                                             | 232m west  | Low – the Site is enclosed by a wooden fence and is not terrestrially or hydrologically connected to this grassland.                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Meadows (green on Figure 3) and Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (blue on Figure 3) | 236m south | Low – the Site is enclosed by a wooden fence and is not terrestrially or hydrologically connected to this grassland.                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Priority Habitat Inventory - Good quality                                                                                    | 534m south | Low – the Site is enclosed by a wooden fence and is not                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|                                                                          |                                                 |                                                                                                                     |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| semi-improved grassland (purple on Figure 3)                             |                                                 | terrestrially or hydrologically connected to this grassland.                                                        |  |
| Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (dark green on Figure 3) | 14 parcels between 350m north-east and 1km east | Low – the Site is enclosed by a wooden fence and is not terrestrially or hydrologically connected to this woodland. |  |

Figure 2: MAGIC map results for Statutory Designated Sites and Non-Statutory Designated Sites

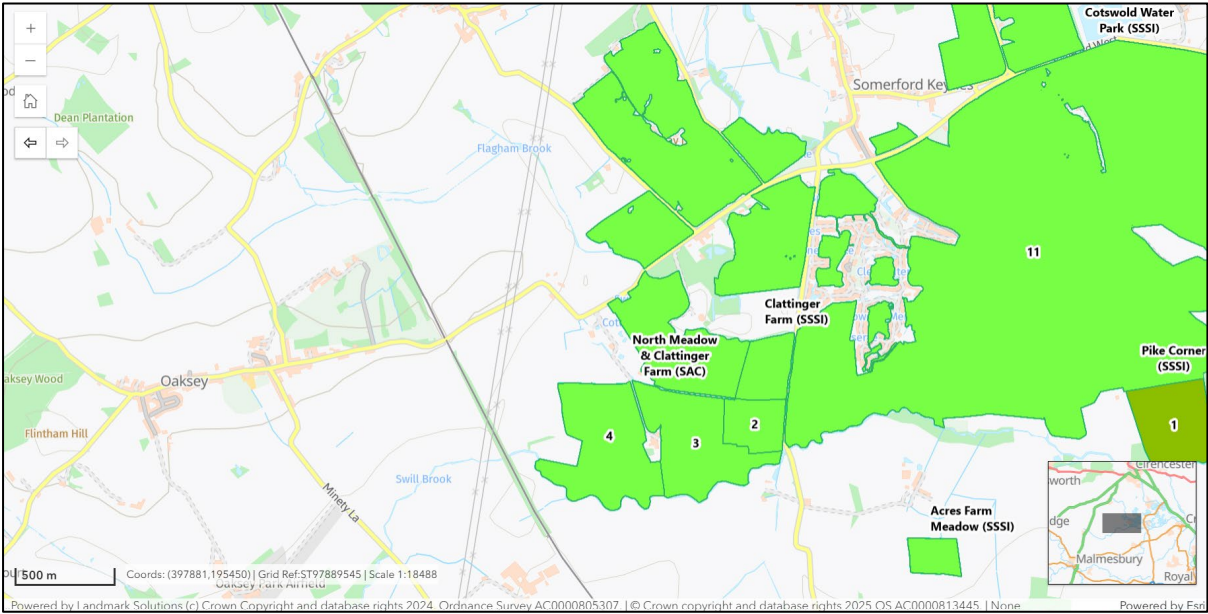
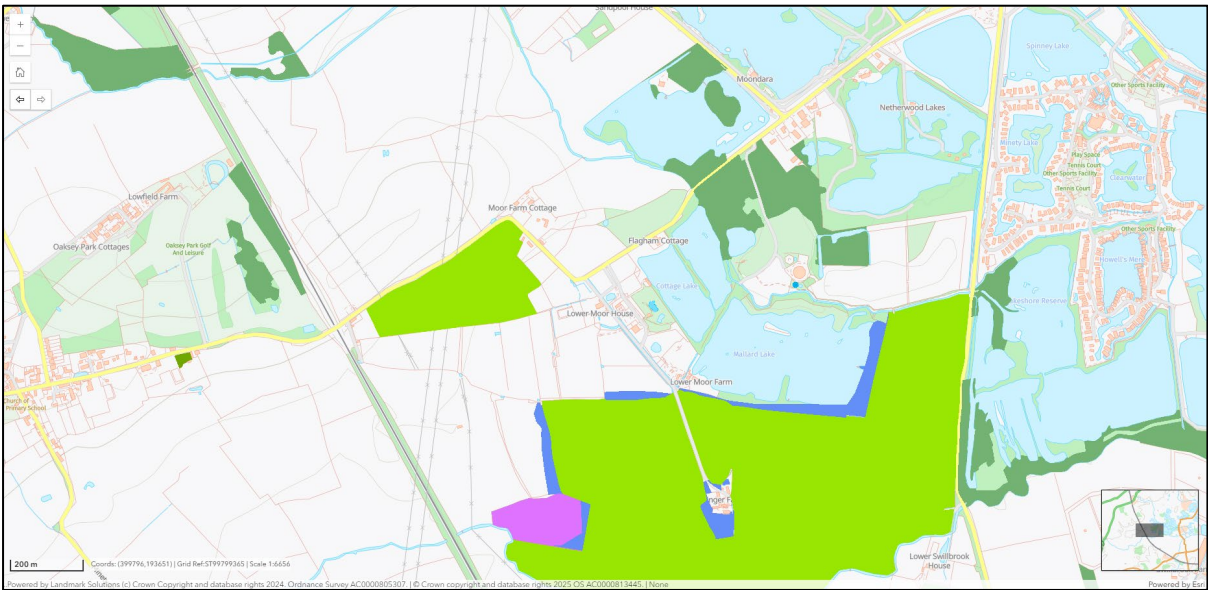


Figure 3: MAGIC map results for priority and irreplaceable habitats (green represents Lowland Meadow, Blue CFGM, and purple good quality semi-improved grassland).

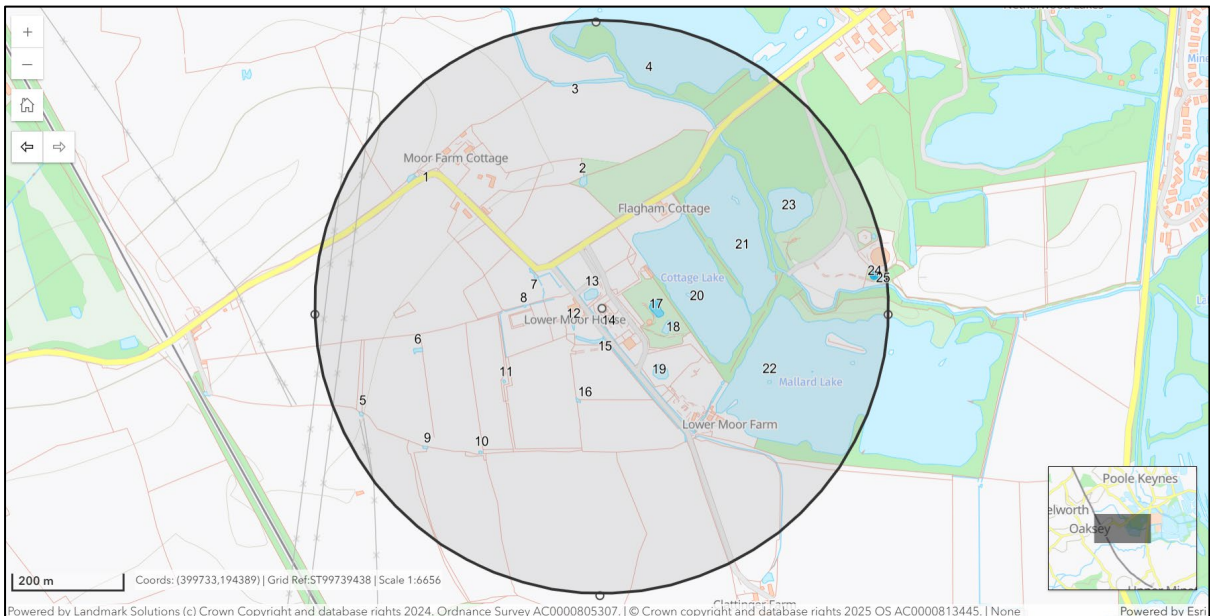




## 4.1.3 Waterbodies within 500m of the Site

The below map shows the location of waterbodies within 500m of the Site that could potentially house Great Crested Newt.

**Figure 4: Waterbodies within 500m of the site**



There are 25 waterbodies within 500m of the Site.

All waterbodies apart from water body 14 (a ditch) are functionally separated from the Site by either a road or farm track. Potential impacts to GCN and proposed mitigation are discussed in section 5.2 below.

## 4.1.4 European protected species licenses located within 5km of the site

The below table set out the results of the desk study search for granted European protected species licenses located within 5km of the Site.

**Table 2: Desk study results for granted European protected species licenses located within 1km of the site**

| European protected species licenses                                     | Distance from the Site |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence Returns (England) 2016          | 101m north-west        |
| Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence Returns (England) 2014 and 2017 | 43m south              |
| Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence Returns (England) 2014          | 80m west               |
| Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence Returns (England) 2016          | 531m east              |

## 4.1.5 Ancient or veteran trees within 1km of the site

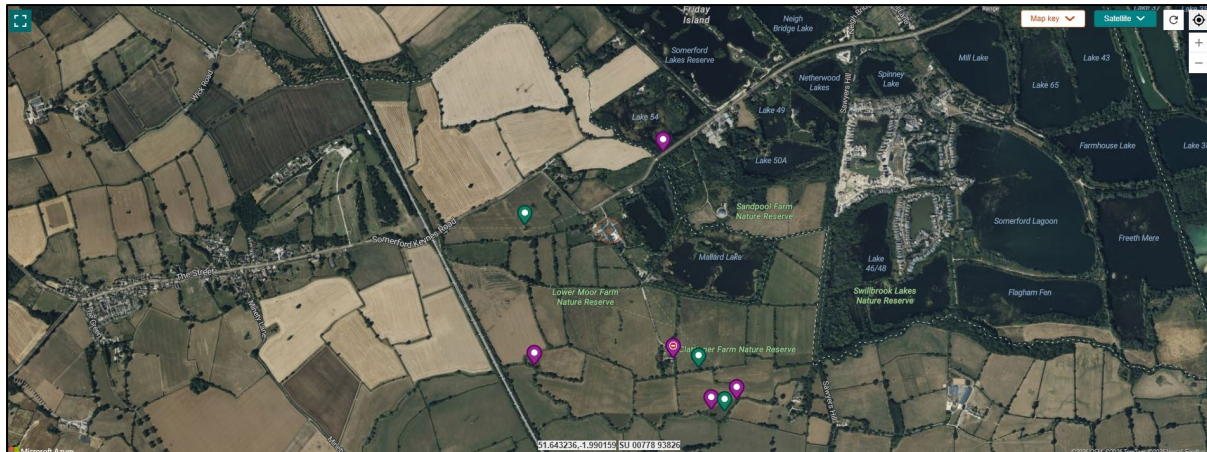
The below map shows the location of Ancient or veteran trees within 1km of the Site.

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Figure 5: Ancient or veteran trees (purple) within 1km of the site



There are 3 veteran trees within 1km of the Site, shown by purple symbols. Green symbols indicate notable trees, which are outside of the scope of this PEA.

## 4.2 Field Survey

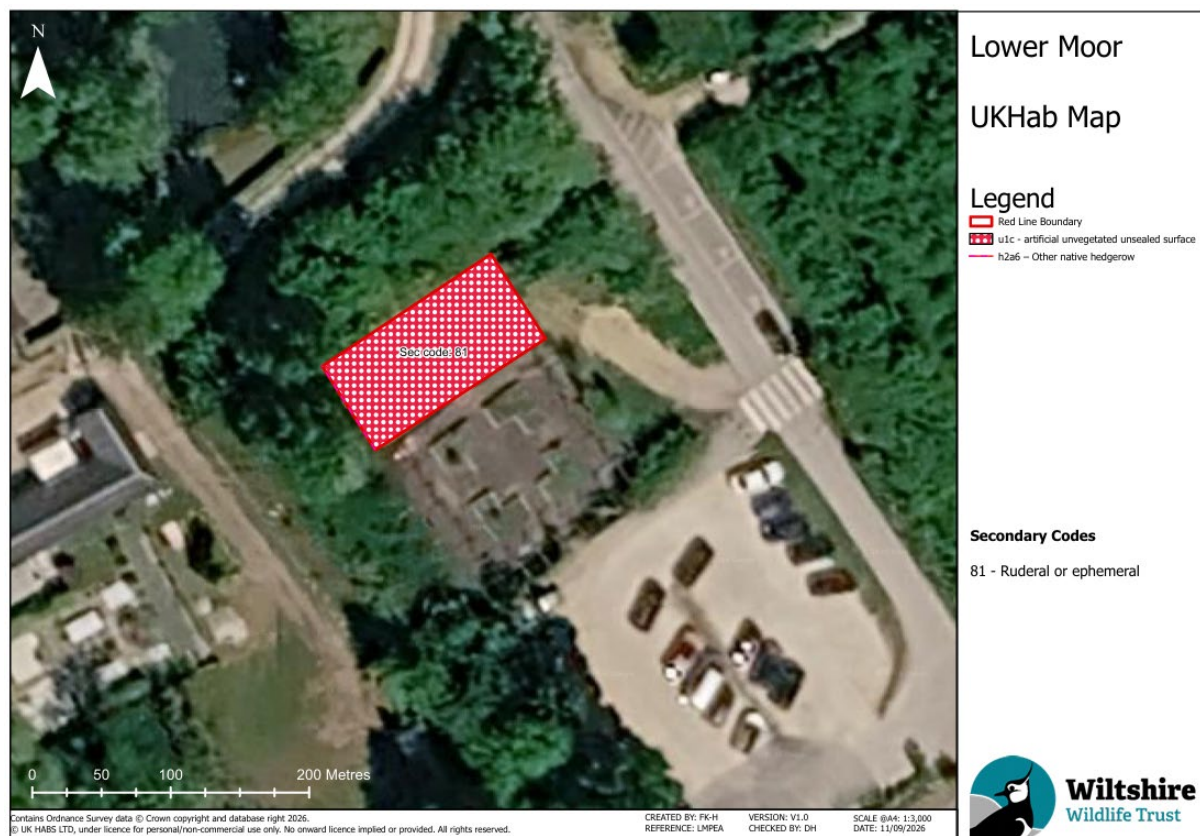
### 4.2.1 UK Habitat Survey

UKHab habitats identified on site included:

- u1c – Artificial unvegetated – unsealed surface. Secondary code: 81 – Ruderal or ephemeral.
- h2a6 – Other native hedgerow

A plan depicting these habitats is shown below.

Figure 6: UKHab map of the Site





Additional photos of the Site are shown in Appendix 2.

The main habitat within the Site boundary was identified as u1c – Artificial unvegetated – unsealed surface, which is considered to be common and of low intrinsic ecological value.

Some emerging ruderal vegetation and grass species identified on Site included: Curled Dock *Rumex crispus*, Rosebay Willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium*, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*, Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, False Oat Grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and Cock's-foot Grass *Dactylis glomerata*.

A native hedgerow (h2a6 – Other native hedgerow) was identified along the western perimeter of the Site. Hedgerow species included: Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Field Maple *Acer campestre*, Cherry sp. *Prunus* sp., Silver Birch *Betula pendula* and Ivy *Hedera helix*.

## 4.2.2 Protected and notable species

The below table sets out the Site's assessment for its suitability for protected and notable species.

**Table 3: The Site's assessment for its suitability for protected and notable species.**

| Protected and/or notable species         | Site suitability (High/Medium/Low) |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Amphibians                               | High                               |
| Reptiles                                 | Low                                |
| Breeding birds                           | High                               |
| Bats                                     | Medium                             |
| Badgers                                  | Low                                |
| Dormouse                                 | Medium                             |
| Otter                                    | Low                                |
| Other mammals (e.g Water Vole, Hedgehog) | Low                                |

## 5. Evaluation and proposed mitigation

Table 4 below sets out an evaluation of the likely impacts to ecological features related to the Site as a result of this proposed development, further consideration required, rationale, and any proposed mitigation.

**Table 4: Evaluation and proposed mitigation for all ecological features related to the Site**

| Ecological feature         | Likely impacts/further consideration | Rationale                                                                                                                                                                              | Mitigation (if required) |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Statutory Designated Sites | No                                   | The Site is not terrestrially or hydrologically connected to the statutory designated sites within 3km and is not likely to impact any of the species connected to their designations. | N/A                      |
| Priority Habitats          | No                                   | None present on Site or likely to be impacted by the works.                                                                                                                            | N/A                      |
| Irreplaceable Habitats     | No                                   | None present on Site or likely to be impacted by the works.                                                                                                                            | N/A                      |

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|                                          |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                       |
|------------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Waterbodies within 500m                  | No | None present on Site or likely to be impacted by the works.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | N/A                   |
| Ancient or veteran trees                 | No | None present on Site or likely to be impacted by the works.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | N/A                   |
| Amphibians                               | No | The Site is suitable for GCN to use terrestrially for foraging, resting and hibernation, given the proximity of the Site from nearby waterbodies, nearby license returns for GCN, and local records returns (Section 4.11). Impacts are likely to be negligible given the methodology for this proposed development (see section 1.2).                                                                                                                         | See section 5.2 below |
| Reptiles                                 | No | No suitable habitat present on the Site and no field signs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | N/A                   |
| Birds                                    | No | The Site is suitable for breeding birds using the adjacent hedgerow and nearby trees and woodland for foraging, nesting and commuting. Impacts are likely to be low given the proposed methodology for this proposed development (see section 1.2).                                                                                                                                                                                                            | See section 5.2 below |
| Bats                                     | No | The Site is moderately suitable for bats to use for foraging and commuting given the presence of a hedgerow. However, it is highly likely bats will be preferentially using the nearby waterbodies for commuting and foraging and any temporary disturbance from this proposed development is likely to have minimal impacts.                                                                                                                                  | N/A                   |
| Badgers                                  | No | No suitable habitat present on the Site and no field signs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | N/A                   |
| Hazel Dormouse                           | No | The Site is moderately suitable for Dormouse to use for foraging and commuting given the presence of a hedgerow. However, the nearest record of Hazel Dormouse returned in the biological records search was located in Minety, with no functional connectivity to the Site. The hedgerow present on Site will also remain unaffected by the development therefore any temporary disturbance from this proposed development is likely to have minimal impacts. | N/A                   |
| Otter                                    | No | No suitable habitat present on the Site and no field signs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | N/A                   |
| Other mammals (e.g Water Vole, Hedgehog) | No | No suitable habitat present on the Site and no field signs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | N/A                   |

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|                                                             |    |                                                                                       |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| On-site habitat - Artificial unvegetated – unsealed surface | No | The onsite vegetation does not consist of any notable species or species assemblages. | N/A |
| On-site habitat – Other native hedgerow                     | No | The hedgerow on Site will not be impacted by the proposed development.                | N/A |

## 5.2 Proposed mitigation: Great Crested Newt and breeding birds

Impacts to GCN are likely to be negligible from this proposed development given the proposed methodology (see section 1.2). However, due to the proximity of nearby waterbodies, nearby licence returns for GCN, and local records returns, mitigation measures are proposed to eliminate the risk of negative impacts to GCN during the proposed development. These measures are captured in the following 'Precautionary Method of Works':

- Immediately prior to works commencing, a suitably qualified and licensed Ecologist will attend Site and carry out fingertip searches of all refugia onsite deemed to be suitable for the GCN.
- All site contractors must be reputable and should be inducted on the potential presence of the species, their legal responsibilities and working limits by a qualified Ecologist.
- If GCN are located in/under any refugia, all works will cease so that the onsite Ecologist can obtain an appropriate license from Natural England to remove GCN and translocate to a nearby suitable terrestrial habitat with adequate shelter in close proximity to a suitable breeding pond, in accordance with the licence requirements and best practice guidance.
- A copy of correspondence and the licence issued by Natural England will be submitted to Wiltshire County Council in the event that a GCN is located on Site and licensing is required.

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust are prepared to submit a 'Precautionary Method of Works' statement as a pre-commencement condition if required by Wiltshire County Council.

Impacts to breeding birds are likely to be negligible from this proposed development given the proposed methodology (see section 1.2) and hedgerow retention. However, due to the existing hedgerow on Site, mitigation measures are proposed to eliminate the risk of negative impacts to breeding birds during the proposed development. These include:

- The proposed works will not be carried out during the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive).
- If the programme of works requires commencement during the breeding bird season, immediately prior to works commencing, a suitably qualified Ecologist will attend Site and carry out a breeding bird check of the hedgerow. This will involve searching for nests, using binoculars to inspect dense vegetation for nests, and observing breeding pairs of birds in the vicinity for behaviour that indicates attendance on a nest.
- If breeding birds are located on Site, all works will cease and the suitably qualified ecologist will return to Site to carry out Site checks until chicks have fledged. Works will only recommence if/when there is a total absence of breeding birds on Site.

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust are prepared to submit a 'Breeding Bird Report' (or other suitably worded report) to Wiltshire County Council following nesting bird checks if required.

## 6. Conclusions

The proposed replacement educational building and visitor toilets are considered unlikely to result in impacts to statutory or non-statutory designated sites, priority or irreplaceable habitats, or protected and notable species. This is primarily due to the nature and methodology of the proposed works: the new building will be constructed using the existing block foundations, meaning that no ground disturbance is required, and the existing hedgerow will be retained and unaffected. The habitats within the development footprint are limited to ruderal vegetation and grasses and are not considered to be of notable ecological value.

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Although the Site has some potential to support GCN and breeding birds, impacts are considered negligible due to the proposed methodology and precautionary mitigation. A fingertip search of suitable refugia by a suitably qualified and licensed ecologist will be undertaken immediately prior to works to minimise any risk to GCN. Works will also be undertaken outside the breeding bird season wherever possible, with a pre-commencement nesting bird check required if works must take place during this period. These measures, together with the retention of the existing hedgerow, will ensure that the risk of harm to protected species is avoided.

The Site is also not terrestrially or hydrologically connected to the nearby statutory designated sites, including Cotswold Water Park SSSI and North Meadow & Clattinger Farm SSSI and SAC, and no impacts to these sites are anticipated. Overall, subject to the implementation of the proposed precautionary mitigation, the development is considered unlikely to result in significant adverse ecological impacts and is consistent with relevant policies seeking to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity and protected species.

## 7. References

- UK Habitat Classification Version 2.1 (UKHab Ltd, 2026)
- National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2026)
- The Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Wiltshire County Council, 2015)
- DEFRA's online MAGIC tool (Natural England, 2026)
- Ancient Tree Inventory (Woodland Trust, 2026)
- ArcGIS Pro Online (ESRI, 2026)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2017 (UK Government)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2017 (UK Government)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (UK Government)

## 7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Table 1. WSBRC Schedule 1, Red List and Amber List bird species records for Lower Moor Farm, and Table 2. GCER Schedule 1, Red List and Amber List bird species records for Lower Moor Farm

**Table 1. WSBRC Schedule 1, Red List and Amber List bird species records for Lower Moor Farm**

| Schedule 1                              | Red List                                   | Amber List                                   |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Marsh Harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> | Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>         | Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>                      |
| Red Kite <i>Milvus milvus</i>           | Goshawk <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>          | Barnacle Goose <i>Branta leucopsis</i>       |
| Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>         | Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>          | Gadwall <i>Mareca strepera</i>               |
| Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>        | Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>               | Shoveler <i>Spatula clypeata</i>             |
| Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>     | Wigeon <i>Mareca penelope</i>              | Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>   |
| Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>      | Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>            | Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i>               |
| Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>  | Swift <i>Apus apus</i>                     | Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> |
| Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>       | Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> | Great White Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>          |

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|                                           |                                                     |                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>           | Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> | Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>                              |
| Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>           |                                                     | Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>                                |
| Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i>         | Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>                    | Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>                             |
| Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>               | Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>                | Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>                |
| Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>       | Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus michahellis</i>         | Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>                           |
| Brambling <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i> | Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>                      | Whitethroat <i>Curruca communis</i>                            |
| Firecrest <i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>      | Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>                  | Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>                       |
| Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>             | Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>                   | Wheatear <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>                              |
| Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>           | Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>                    | Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>                        |
| Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>                 | Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>                     | Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>                   |
|                                           | Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>          | Northern Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus acredula</i> |
|                                           | Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>                       | Duncock <i>Prunella modularis</i>                              |
|                                           | Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>                    | Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>                             |
|                                           | Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>                             | Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>                            |
|                                           | Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>                  | Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>                           |
|                                           | Common Redpoll <i>Acanthis flammea</i>              |                                                                |
|                                           | Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>                   |                                                                |
|                                           | Rook <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>                       |                                                                |
|                                           | House Martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i>                |                                                                |
|                                           | Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>             |                                                                |
|                                           | Pied Flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>           |                                                                |
|                                           | Linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>                     |                                                                |
|                                           | Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>        |                                                                |
|                                           | Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>               |                                                                |
|                                           | Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>         |                                                                |
|                                           | House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>              |                                                                |
|                                           | Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>                 |                                                                |
|                                           | Marsh Tit <i>Poecile palustris</i>                  |                                                                |
|                                           | Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>                    |                                                                |
|                                           | Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>                    |                                                                |
|                                           | Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>              |                                                                |
|                                           | Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>                |                                                                |
|                                           | Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>       |                                                                |
|                                           | Tawny Owl <i>Strix aluco</i>                        |                                                                |

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**Table 2. GCER Schedule 1, Red List and Amber List bird species records for Lower Moor Farm**

| Schedule 1                                | Red List                                    | Amber List                                          |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>          | Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>                | Wigeon <i>Mareca penelope</i>                       |
| Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>       | Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>          | Gadwall <i>Mareca strepera</i>                      |
| Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>           | Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>               | Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>                             |
| Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>               | Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>      | Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>                   |
| Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i>         | Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i> | Shoveler <i>Spatula clypeata</i>                    |
| Firecrest <i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>      | Linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>             | Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>                  |
| Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>       |                                             | Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>                  |
| Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>           |                                             | Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>          |
| Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>             |                                             | Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>                   |
| Brambling <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i> |                                             | Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> |
|                                           |                                             | Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus michahellis</i>         |
|                                           |                                             | Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>                    |
|                                           |                                             | Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>                  |
|                                           |                                             | Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>        |
|                                           |                                             | Whitethroat <i>Curruca communis</i>                 |
|                                           |                                             | Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>                   |
|                                           |                                             | Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>                  |

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## Appendix 2: Additional site photos



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