

Ecological Impact Assessment

Chaldicott Barns, Semley

September 2026

Ecology | Green Space | Community | GIS

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Chaldicotts Limited

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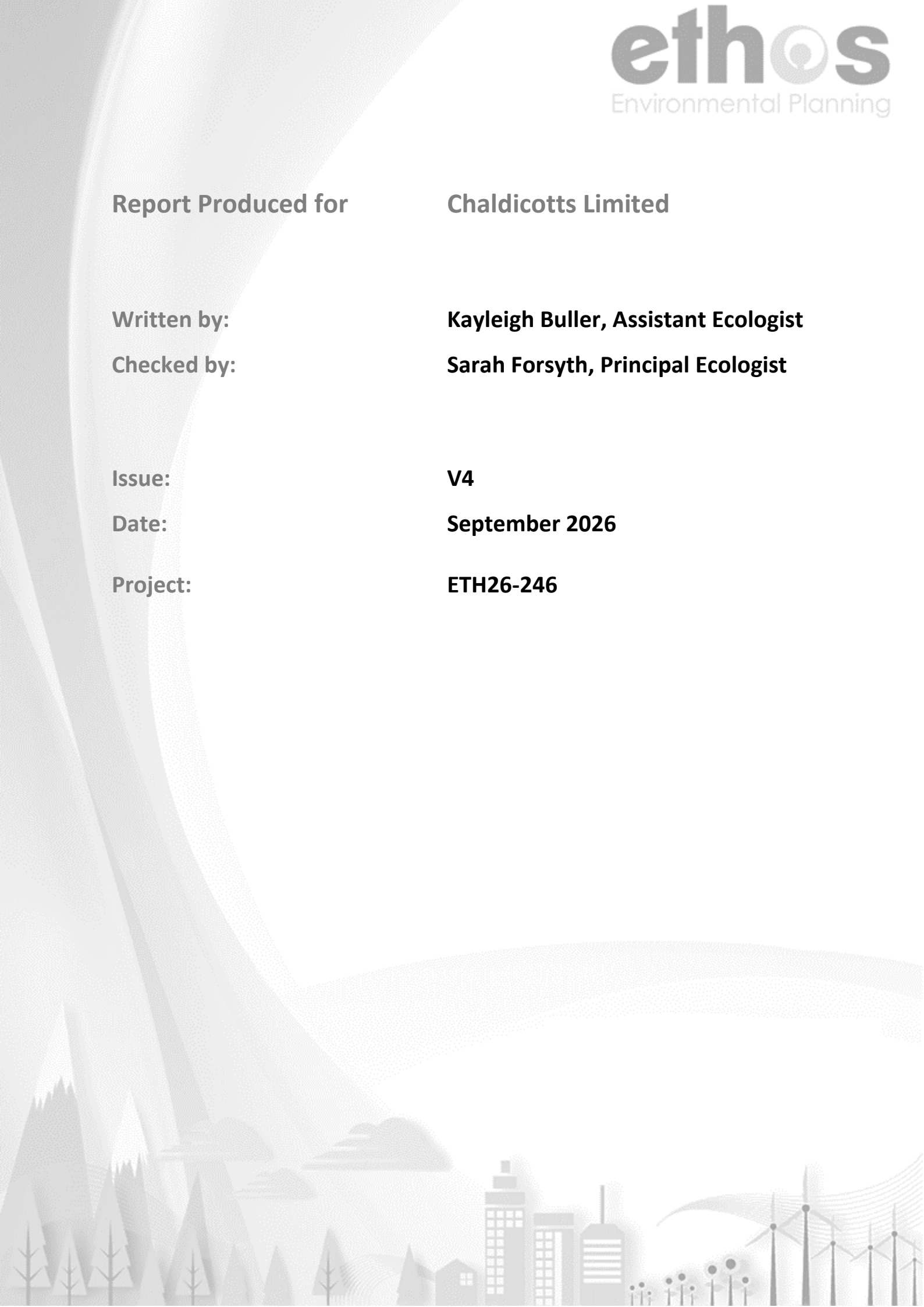
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SUMMARY

Purpose of the Report	This Report has been produced by Ethos Environmental Planning on behalf of Chaldicotts Limited. It provides an assessment of the likely ecological effects associated with the proposed new single building on land to the north of Chaldicott Barns, Chaldicotts Farm, Semley.
Description of the scheme	The development proposals for the site comprise the erection of a single building amounting to 7,448 sqm GIA (Use Class B2) with associated facilities, access with security, parking, hard and soft landscaping, drainage and associated works, as shown on ACS drawing 1624-950-1j.
Methodology	A desk study and UK Habitat Classification survey were undertaken for the site in May 2026. Detailed surveys for bats were undertaken in 2026.
Baseline Ecological Conditions	- The site comprises bare ground with an individual tree; formerly a woodland block that has been felled under licence due to prevalence of ash die back. - The site sits within Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formally Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB) and is 1.9km away from Gutch Common SSSI. - Eleven species of bat were recorded on site, which included low numbers of notable Annex II species. - The current baseline habitat offers negligible suitability to protected species, however the habitats off site including a mature oak (<i>Quercus spp.</i>), native hedgerows and other broadleaved woodland, all of which provide suitable habitat to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats and other species such as birds, badger, and reptiles and amphibians.
Key impacts and mitigation	The development layout has been designed to retain, protect and enhance the most valuable ecological features, namely the hedgerow habitat bordering the north and east boundaries, and the veteran oak (T1) to the south-east beyond the red line boundary, which are valuable for commuting and foraging bats. Mitigation measures are described to ensure compliance with protected species legislation for brown hare, bats, birds and badgers, details of which will be provided within a CEMP. Sensitive design and sensitive lighting plans have been created to avoid impacts on adjacent habitats and features used by bats for foraging and commuting.
Conclusion	Assuming the implementation of effective mitigation measures, as set out in this report, no significant adverse ecological effects are predicted. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with relevant national and local planning policies in relation to nature conservation and relevant wildlife legislation.

plantation and an individual tree. The habitats offsite include a veteran oak (T1) to the south-east beyond the red line boundary, native hedgerows and deciduous woodland adjacent to the site.

- 1.5 The site is proposed for the development of a new building amounting to 7,448 sqm GIA (Use ClasseB2) with associated facilities, access with security, parking, hard and soft landscaping, drainage and associated works.
- 1.6 The aims of this EcIA report are to:
- provide an assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on ecological features on site;
 - identify the measures required to mitigate impacts on site biodiversity;
 - identify opportunities to deliver ecological enhancements and measurable gains for biodiversity as part of the development proposals; and
 - to enable the Local Planning Authority to assess whether the proposals comply with relevant planning policy or legislation.
- 1.7 This Ecological Impact Assessment has been prepared using the ecological information currently available, including the desk study, UK Habitat Classification survey and initial protected species survey findings. Further targeted surveys for bats are ongoing during 2026, and the assessment of impacts, mitigation, compensation and enhancements will be reviewed and updated, if required, once the full survey programme has been completed. Accordingly, the conclusions presented at this stage should be treated as preliminary and subject to review following receipt of the outstanding survey results.
- 1.8 This report has been produced following the approach set out in CIEEM's 'Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing' (CIEEM, 2017).

2 POLICY AND LEGISLATION

2.1 National Policy

- 2.1.1 The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** (published August 2026) sets out national planning policy, including policies of relevance to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Policies of relevance to the proposed development (parts of N2, N3 and N6) are provided in Appendix 1.

2.2 Local Policy

- 2.2.1 The Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015. Relevant policy from the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 is listed below and provided in detail within Appendix 1.

- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 2.2.2 The Wiltshire Core Strategy forms the suite of the current adopted development plans. Wiltshire Council are preparing a new plan for long-term vision, spatial strategy and policies, the emerging 'Wiltshire Local Plan.

Cranborne Chase National Landscape Partnership Plan 2025-2030

- 2.2.3 The Cranborne Chase National Landscape Partnership Plan, a material consideration in planning, highlights notable wildlife species and those suffering decline:

An abundance of both emblematic wildlife species and those suffering decline such as the greater horseshoe bat, Adonis blue and Duke of Burgundy butterflies, tree sparrow and skylark.

The historic status of Cranborne Chase as a royal hunting area is evidenced by its unusually high proportion of ancient woodland within a chalk landscape, boasting assemblages of bats, woodland birds, fungi and rare lichen.

- 2.2.4 Policy NR1 requires biodiversity to be conserved and enhanced at landscape scale, through strategic nature recovery networks. Policy NR2 sets a local biodiversity net gain result in exceedance of the statutory minimum of 10%, targeting 20%. Together these policies are delivering the principle of taking greater and more strategic action in nature recovery for the Cranborne Chase area.
- 2.2.5 Policies DNS1/DNS2 on lighting, directly references the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines, requiring lighting avoidance and minimisation with reference to current guidelines on bats and lighting.

2.3 Relevant Legislation

2.3.1 The following pieces of legislation have been considered within this assessment with an explanation of their relevance provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Relevant legislation

Legislation	Relevance
The Habitats Directive (together with the Birds Directive) forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. It is built around two pillars: the Natura 2000 network of protected sites and the strict system of species protection. All in all, the Directive protects over 1,000 animals and plant species and over 200 "habitat types" (e.g. special types of forests, meadows, wetlands, etc.), which are of European importance. The Habitats Directive and parts of the Birds Directive are transposed into legislation by The Conservation of Species and Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended) .	Presence of foraging and commuting bats on and off site. Network of foraging and commuting habitat in proximity to the site (east), for diverse assemblage of bats, including Annex II species. Potential presence of hazel dormouse species off site.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended, including by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which provides legislative protection for certain species. The Act also prohibits the spread of invasive plant species, as well as providing the mechanism for the designation and protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.	Presence of nesting birds off site. Presence of breeding barn owls off site (north east).
Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 as amended by the Hunting Act 2004 .	Suitable habitat for badger adjacent to site.
The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (the NERC Act) places a duty on all public authorities, including local planning authorities, to consider biodiversity in their work. Local planning authorities are to ensure that there is no net loss of biodiversity on a site, no net loss in habitat connectivity and aims to enhance biodiversity.	Presence of hares on site (commuting). Enhancements for biodiversity.
The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protect 'Important hedgerows' from being removed (uprooted or destroyed). Hedgerows are protected if they are at least 30 years old and meet at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1.	Presence of native hedgerows offsite, but adjacent to north and east boundaries.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of Assessment

3.1.1 This assessment has been undertaken following the approach set out in the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland, 1.3*' (CIEEM, 2018). The assessment has considered 'Important Ecological Features' that are present within the 'Zone of Influence' of the project. Important Ecological Features for this project comprise¹:

- Designated nature conservation sites;
- Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England;
- Legally protected species; and
- Red Listed or rare species (based on Red Data Book lists, Birds of Conservation Concern and species considered to be nationally rare / scarce).

3.1.2 The Zone of Influence (Zoi) is the area over which the project could have an influence on ecological features. The Zoi is likely to vary for different features. However, in general terms the Zoi for this development proposal is considered to comprise the land within the red line boundary as well as immediate adjacent habitat features. It also includes designated nature conservation sites in the surrounding area.

3.1.3 The scope of the assessment was informed by an 'desktop assessment' undertaken in May 2026 plus a review of the previous ecological report from September 2024 (found in Appendix 4) and the felling licence from November 2024 (found in Appendix 5). The purpose of this was to identify the habitats on site, their potential for protected species and to establish the scope of surveys that would be required to inform a future planning application at the site.

3.1.4 The overall assessment has been informed by guidelines provided in CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing.

3.2 Background Data Search

3.2.1 A background data search was received from Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre in June 2026. The search area included records of non-statutory designated sites and protected and notable species within 2km of the proposed development site.

3.2.2 An additional search for statutory designated sites within 2km of the development site and granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences within 2km of the site boundary was undertaken using publicly available information (DEFRA Magic map).

¹ Box 14 in CIEEM's ECiA Guidelines (2018)

3.3 UK Habitat Classification Survey

Preclearance

- 3.3.1 A UKHab survey was undertaken on 9th September 2024 by Chalkhill Environmental Consultants. The survey incorporated detailed assessment of the land within the development boundary, including a description and mapping of all key features and habitat types. The survey was carried out to identify the range of habitats within the site and the predominant and notable species of flora. This survey was informed by the National Vegetation Classification and Phase 1 Habitat Survey techniques.

Current baseline

- 3.3.2 A UKHab survey was undertaken on 12th May 2026 by Ethos Environmental Planning. The survey incorporated detailed assessment of the land within the development boundary, including a description and mapping of all key features and habitat types. The survey was carried out to identify the range of habitats within the site and the predominant and notable species of flora. This survey was informed by the UKHab classification Version 2 (UKHab Ltd., 2023).
- 3.3.3 Further details of UK habitat quadrat methodology are provided in Appendix 2.

3.4 NERC S. 41 Mammals

- 3.4.1 The survey included an assessment of the habitats on site for their potential to support NERC Section 41 species such as hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), polecat (*Mustela putorius*), harvest mouse (*Micromys minutus*) and brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*). This included a search for nests, runs, latrines, paw prints, and live specimens.

3.5 Badger

- 3.5.1 The survey for badger (*Meles meles*) included a search of the development site and surrounding habitats for any evidence including setts, foraging signs (snuffle holes), runs and latrines.
- 3.5.2 Targeted survey methodology for badger is provided in Appendix 2.

3.6 Hazel Dormouse

- 3.6.1 The survey included an assessment of the potential for the site for hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), focussing on the connectivity and suitability of the habitat on site.

3.7 Bats

- 3.7.1 The methodology for the bat survey has been informed by the *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition* (Collins, 2023).
- 3.7.2 Targeted surveys for bats were undertaken as set out in Table 2, with further details of survey methodology provided in Appendix 2.

Table 2 Surveys undertaken for bats

Survey	Description	Date Undertaken
Assessment of habitat suitability	Habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bats.	12 th May 2026
Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)	Potential roosting features on trees were identified and classified in line with guidance (BCT, 2023).	12 th May 2026
Automated/ static surveys	Three static detectors deployed across the site monthly between April and October, in line with guidance for sites with Moderate suitability habitat for bats.	May 2026 June 2026 July 2026 August 2026 Ongoing
Night-time Bat Walkover (NBW) surveys	Three NBWs undertaken across the bat active season following a defined transect route.	Spring – 12 th May 2026 Summer – 8 th June 2026 Ongoing

3.8 Birds

- 3.8.1 The bird survey included an assessment of the habitats on site for their potential to support protected and notable species of bird as well as their potential to support breeding birds.

3.9 Amphibians

- 3.9.1 Surveys for GCN were informed by the *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*, Froglife 2001.
- 3.9.2 The site was examined for suitable waterbodies and for breeding terrestrial habitat. Terrestrial habitats providing sufficiently structured vegetation in which amphibians may forage or hibernate over winter were also surveyed for.
- 3.9.3 In addition to the on-site assessment, *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines* (English Nature, 2001) recommend that a desktop analysis of ponds within 500m of the site be undertaken, to identify any potential breeding ponds which may require further survey. Ponds within 500m of the site were mapped on GIS with an OS OpenData base map at 1:10,000 resolution.

3.10 Limitations

- 3.10.1 The recent clearance on site, under a felling licence to manage the spread of ash dieback, has meant that our assessment has had to make a retrospective assessment of the habitats and species that were likely to have been present. In terms of habitats, the previous ecology report conducted by another company prior to felling was available presenting us with clear evidence that the previous land was an ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) plantation. The surrounding habitats off site also helped with the aforementioned limitation.
- 3.10.2 An assessment is based on results to date (May to August), full bat static analysis will be submitted as an addendum at a later date. Current observations indicate that the habitats adjacent to the site and wider area are likely important commuting and foraging features.

3.11 Evaluation of Ecological Features

- 3.11.1 In line with CIEEMs guidelines on EcIA, this assessment has focused on relevant Important Ecological Features. The scale of importance of these features has been determined based on available contextual information, which for this project are considered only to include:
- **International** – of international importance and protected through international legislation;
 - **National** – of importance in England and protected through national legislation;
 - **County** – of importance to the county (Wiltshire) but not sufficiently important to warrant 'National' scale of importance; and
 - **Local** – of importance to the local area (Semley), but not sufficiently important to warrant County scale of importance.
- 3.11.2 Potential impacts on Important Ecological Features are identified and assessed; likely significant effects are those likely to result in a change to the conservation status of a habitat or species population or undermine/support nature conservation policy. Mitigation measures have been devised following the mitigation hierarchy; appropriate mechanisms for securing mitigation measures have been identified.

3.12 Personnel

- 3.12.1 The surveyors on site have been detailed in Appendix 2 Table 10.

4 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

4.1 Previous Surveys on the Site

- 4.1.1 Previous surveys had been conducted at the current site by 'Chalkhill Environmental Consultants' across September 2024 to assess the ecological impact of felling approximately a 4593 square metre area of young ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees heavily infected with ash dieback disease caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*. Figure 2 indicates the site location with boundaries prior to the felling.



Figure 2 Preclearance site location including red line boundaries (felling licence)

- 4.1.2 Previous 'preclearance' surveys undertaken at the site at this time include:

Table 3 Previous surveys undertaken at site; 'preclearance'

Survey	Description
Desk survey	Information regarding site and habitats with statutory designations within a 2km radius of site were obtained from MAGIC. This included a search for granted EPS licence applications relating to bats. Aerial images were reviewed to assess the degree of connectivity of the site with the wider landscape.
Assessment of habitat suitability	Habitats survey was carried out in accordance with National Vegetation classification and Phase 1 habitat survey techniques by a surveyor also trained, experienced and licensed by Natural England to CLS 19 and 20 levels to survey for bats and who also holds an NVQ in tree and woodland management. Full access to all parts of site was possible. Survey was carried out at a time of year when tall colonising ruderal and shrubby species

Survey	Description
	were in full growth – and although some plant species may have been dormant and not visible above ground, this was not seen as a limitation to the survey.
Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)	A ground level assessment of trees on the site and along the site boundaries was made for the presence of potential roosting features (PRFs). Evidence associated with these features were searched using close focus binoculars.
Automated/ static surveys	One static detector was deployed overnight in the woodland, programmed to begin recording at sunset and finish at sunrise. Results were analysed using AnalookW.

4.1.3 Detailed survey results are set out in a ‘Preclearance Ecology Report’ found in Appendix 4 and also referred to under ‘Preclearance baseline’ sections within the main content of this EclA.

4.2 Designated Sites

Statutory designated sites

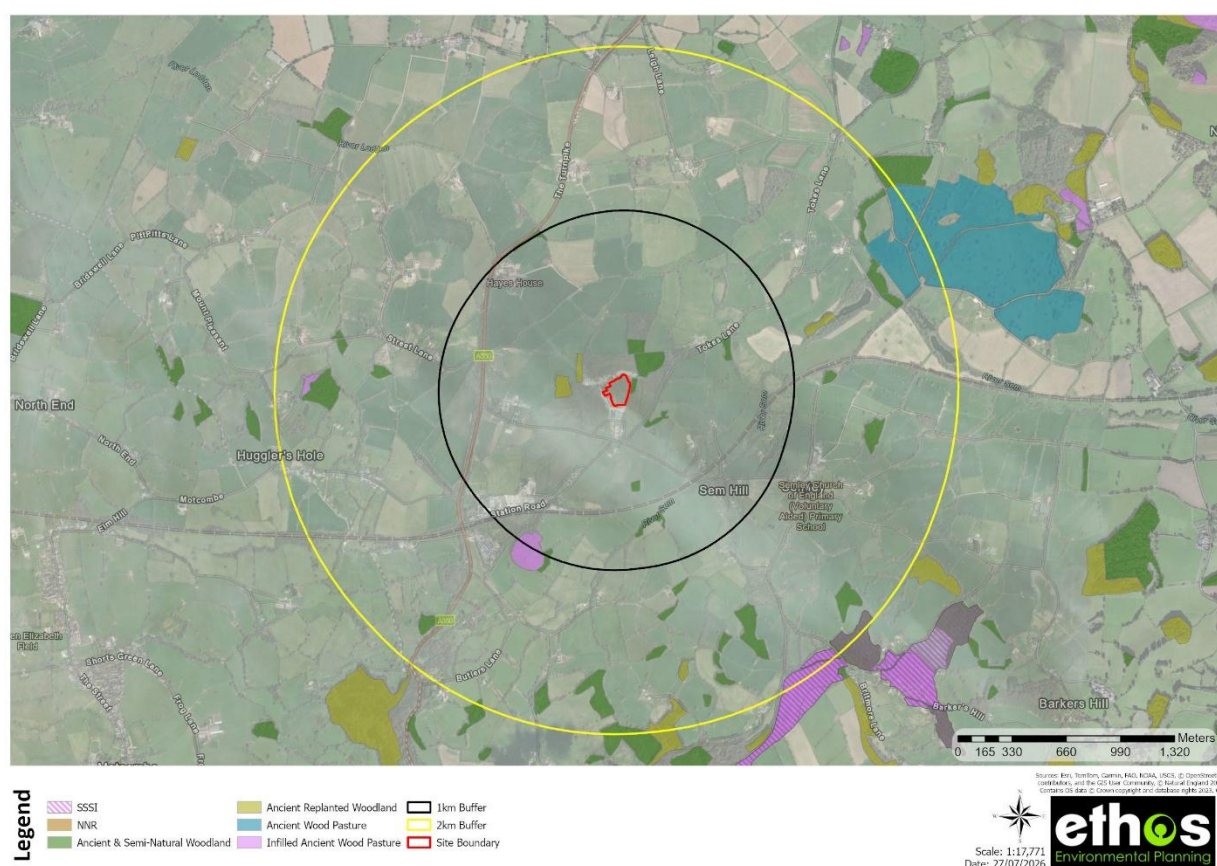


Figure 3 Statutory designated sites

4.2.1 This site is located within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs – a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), known known as Cranborne Chase National Landscape, consisting of chalk grasslands, ancient woodlands and chalk

escarpments, downland hillsides and chalk river valleys. This area is assessed to be of **national** importance.

- 4.2.2 Sitting inside the Cranborne Chase National Landscape approximately 1,904m south-east is Gutch Common SSSI, assessed to be of **national** importance for nature conservation. The area is made up of broadleaved, mixed and yew (*Taxus baccata*) woodland with neutral grassland.
- 4.2.3 Due to the distance between the site and the SSSI designated site, no significant effects through impact pathways (air pollution, hydrological or recreational pressures) are predicted on the sites detailed above. Therefore, the SSSI designated sites is not considered further in this assessment. There are potential effects on functional habitat of Cranborne Chase National Landscape and gains for biodiversity. So impacts will be assessed under the relevant protected species receptor (bats and lighting) and in terms of delivery of enhanced net gain for the biodiversity assessment (reported separately, the in BNG Summary Report, Ethos 2026 with accompanying Statutory Metric v1.0.3 calculations) and with regard for species specific opportunities for enhancement in the wider estate.
- 4.2.4 The Chilmark Quarries SAC comprises a series of disused mines, quarries and man-made follies that are used as important hibernation roosts for internationally designated bat species (Annex II), greater horseshoe bat, lesser horseshoe bat, barbastelle, and Bechstein's bat.
- 4.2.5 The site lies outside of the Chilmark Quarries Bat SAC consultation zone, however, is only ~500m to the SW beyond the Barbastelle 6000m buffer consultation zone (see Figure 4). Given that the site is surrounded by high suitability woodland habitat for this bat species, , the Chilmark Quarries SAC will be a consideration when interpreting the bat survey results, particularly in relation to the potential presence of commuting or foraging Annex II bat species associated with the SAC.

Non-statutory designated sites

- 4.2.6 There are eleven local wildlife sites in total designated within 2km of the site (see Figure 4), with the following four being less than 1km away as shown in Table 4.

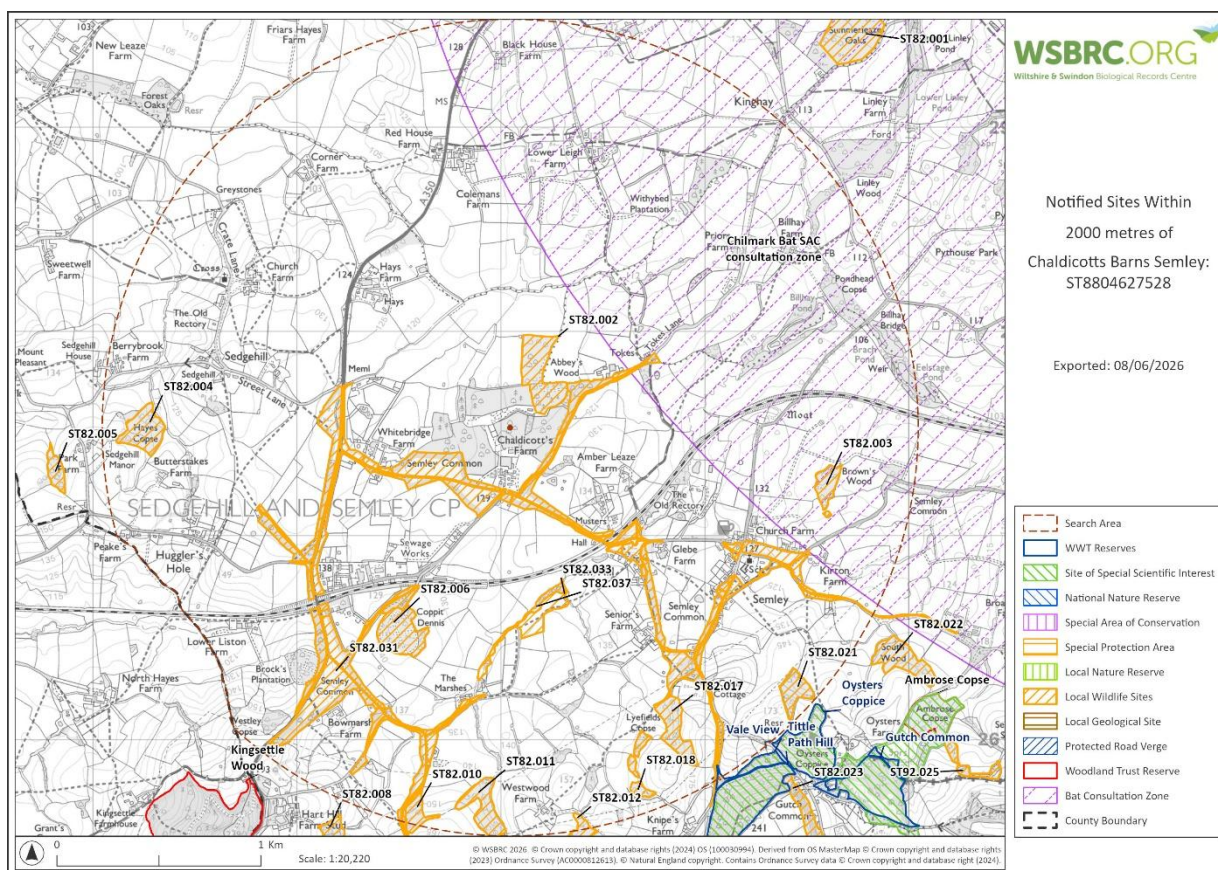


Figure 4 Non-statutory sites

Table 4 Local wildlife sites within 1km

Fig 3 reference	Site name	Distance	Site description
ST82.002	Abbys Wood	0.3km, N of site	A wood with bands of mature Oak (<i>Quercus spp.</i>) woodland over Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) and Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>) surrounding patches of young Oak (<i>Quercus spp.</i>) plantation and a small Ash plantation.
ST82.031	Semley Common	0.8km, W of site	An extensive network of unenclosed habitats, remnants of a much larger common. Includes hay meadows, other neutral grasslands, scrub woodland, small wet areas and ponds.
ST82.037	Upper Marshes Woods	0.9km, S of site	Semi-natural woodland concentrated along tributary of Nadder.
ST82.033	Semhill Meadow	0.9km, S of site	Site consists of two contiguous pastures alongside a small brook.

4.2.7 The remaining seven sites are within a 2km radius and include those listed in Table 5.

Table 5 Remaining local wildlife sites within 2km

Fig 3 reference	Site name	Distance	Site description
ST82.006	Coppit Dennis	1.1km	Ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland on a roughly circular clay mound in a much flatter landscape.
ST82.003	Brown's Wood	1.5km	Semi-natural broadleaved woodland on an ancient site, occupying flat land on clay soils.
ST82.004	Hayes Copse	1.7km	A small stand of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland.
ST82.017	Lyefields Copse	1.7km	Semi-natural broadleaved woodland and wet woodland on an ancient site occupying a narrow, steep-sided valley draining to the north.
ST82.011	Stib Acre Copse	1.8km	A small stand of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland.
ST82.010	Frouds Copse	1.8km	A small ancient woodland now largely planted with sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>).
ST82.021	Semley Copse	1.9km	Recently abandoned hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) coppice with a good ground flora dominated by bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>).

Priority habitats

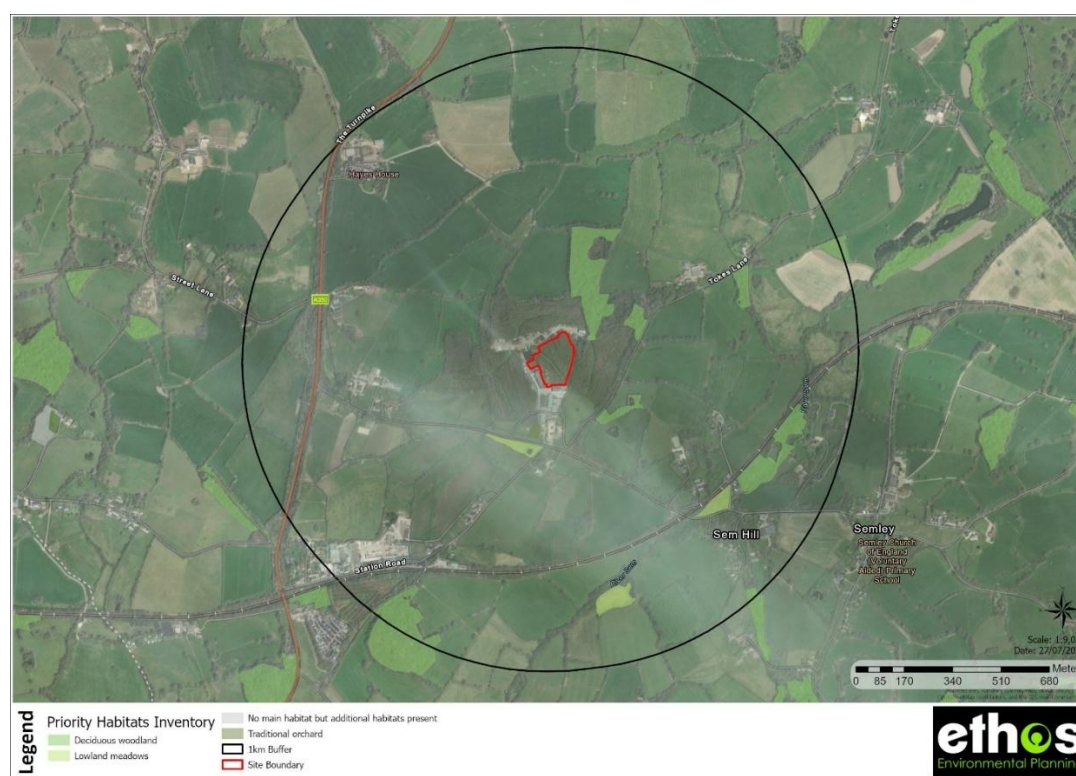


Figure 5 Priority habitats map

- 4.2.8 No priority habitats on site. Within 1km of the site, there are four kinds of priority habitat. These are deciduous woodland, lowland meadow, traditional orchard and an area of no main habitat but additional habitats present (an area where the primary habitat is not designated but there are additional habitats contributing to biodiversity).
- 4.2.9 The closest priority habitat is the deciduous woodland at Abbys Wood that sits directly north of the site.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Ecological networks

- 4.2.10 The Wiltshire and Swindon's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (and interactive map), sets out a framework and strategic guide for restoring nature and biodiversity across Wiltshire; a call for action to be used as a tool for delivering nature-based solutions with greatest effect for biodiversity, climate and people. The LNRS targets 24 priorities for nature recovery, nine strategically mapped habitat priorities, nine species priorities and six countryside priorities.
- 4.2.11 The site is adjacent to 'woodland' habitat with identified measure 'maintain and enhance' and in the wider area, within a 'woodland' priority area, with identified measure to 'create more'.
- 4.2.12 To deliver Biodiversity Net Gain an offsetting site is needed. The opportunity for this has been identified within ownership and it conforms with the LNRS strategic aims of delivering woodland in one of the targeted localities. The applicant has committed to a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, in line with Policy NR2 of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape Partnership Plan. This is covered in more detail in the BNG Summary Report (Ethos 2026).

4.3 Habitats

Preclearance baseline conditions: general site description

- 4.3.1 The site was located to the north of a small light industrial estate in a rural location and within an extensive area of woodland listed on the National Forestry Inventory as young trees (see Photos 1-3).



Photo 1 Preclearance site view through woodland showing impact of ash dieback disease (source: Chalkhill Environmental Consultants)



Photo 2 Preclearance site view through woodland track on eastern edge of woodland looking north (source: Chalkhill Environmental Consultants)



Photo 3 Preclearance site view through woodland track on eastern edge looking south (source: Chalkhill Environmental Consultants)

Current baseline conditions: general site description

- 4.3.2 The site consists of recently felled, bare ground with an individual tree. A second tree and a section of modified grassland used as a dog agility training area lie to the west, outside the red line boundary.
- 4.3.3 The site is located within a business park, bound by an existing commercial unit immediately south of the site and another commercial unit immediately south-west of the site.
- 4.3.4 To the east of the site are young ash and oak plantations and a deciduous woodland with associated ditch bank and rides. Additionally, a notably mature oak tree sits south-east of the site adjacent to the offsite woodland and grassy rides; and an area of hardstanding ground with low units and salvaged materials lies to the north of the site.
- 4.3.5 The site is accessed via the existing Chaldicott Barns estate entrance and internal road network, which connects with the A350 approximately 0.5 km to the west. The surrounding road network comprises narrow rural lanes bordered by hedgerows and mature trees, with scattered residential and agricultural properties. North of the site is a Local Wildlife Site (LWS), Abby's Wood. The River Sem is present approximately 550m of the site, and flows eastwards along the northern edge of Sedgely and Semley parish before joining the River Nadder near Wardour (approximately 2.5km from site).

UKHab survey

Preclearance UKHab survey

- 4.3.6 The site surveyed was a pure stand of young ash trees heavily infected with ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) dieback disease to the extent that some had fallen. These trees were said to have been planted approximately 20 years previously.
- 4.3.7 Woodland canopy cover was scant and tall ruderal vegetation had begun to colonise, likely in response to increased light levels reaching the woodland floor and with areas of tussocky grassland beginning to develop.
- 4.3.8 Soil on the woodland floor was heavy and the site sloped shallowing towards the north and a drainage ditch was present along the eastern boundary track.
- 4.3.9 Fern species were present, likely to have become established when the canopy was denser and prior to the deterioration of the woodland due to disease but perhaps remaining because of the availability of water in the heavy soil. Tussocky clumps of tufted hair grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) were frequent together with soft rush (*Juncus effusus*).
- 4.3.10 Other plant species identified during survey included occasional hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), burdock (*Arctium lappa*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), spiny sow thistle (*Sonchus asper*), willowherb (*Epilobium spp.*), Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), wood avens (*Geum urbanum*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), clustered doc (*Rumex conglomeratus*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), ivy (*Hedera helix*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*).
- 4.3.11 Shrubby species identified during survey included field maple (*Acer campestre*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), and wild privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*).
- 4.3.12 There were no trees of a size or structure which might create potential bat tree roost features, and none were identified.

Current UKHab survey

- 4.3.13 Figure 6 shows the key habitats using the UK habitat classifications. The key features described within this section are:
- Artificial unvegetated – unsealed surface (u1c);
 - Modified (amenity) grassland (g4); and
 - Individual tree.

4.3.14 Off site hedgerows are present adjacent to the site which were considered when surveying for protected species.



Figure 6 Existing habitats on site (hedgerows offsite, but mapped for context)

Artificial unvegetated – unsealed surface

4.3.15 The main habitat on site is artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface. This is a habitat of very low ecological value, and it is not discussed further in this assessment.



Figure 7 Artificial unvegetated – sealed surface (u1c)

Modified (amenity) grassland

- 4.3.16 This habitat comprised of perennial rye (*Secale cereale*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), white clover (*Trifolium spp.*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*).



Figure 8 Modified (amenity) grassland (g4)

- 4.3.17 Such habitat is relatively widespread and common and readily recreated in relatively short periods of time. The grassland is not considered to be of any particular botanical value or notability and therefore is not of significant value to nature conservation and not considered further in this assessment.

4.4 NERC S. 41 Mammals

Data search

- 4.4.1 There were three records of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) returned in the data search within 2km of the site boundary from 2016 to 2026. All records were found in 1.1km west of the site. The most recent record was in June 2025. There were no records of other NERC S. 41 mammals (brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*), harvest mouse (*Micromys minutus*), polecat (*Mustela putorius*)).

Current baseline

- 4.4.2 The majority of the site comprises bare ground, ruderal/ephemeral and unvegetated ground which are unsuitable habitat for NERC S. 41 mammals. However, brown hare

(*Lepus europaeus*) was observed multiple times commuting across the site likely due to the surrounding area containing areas of woodland and arable land.

- 4.4.3 Although hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) may be present and brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) are present, the site is not considered to be of significant nature conservation importance for them, and they are therefore only considered further on a precautionary basis.

4.5 Badger

Data search

- 4.5.1 There are no records for badger (*Meles meles*) returned in the data search within 2km of the site boundary from 2016 to 2026.

Preclearance baseline

- 4.5.2 The habitats that were present on site comprising woodland, grassland and tussocky clumps of grass and scrub were likely to have had some value for badgers

Current baseline

- 4.5.3 The site itself contains habitats which are assessed to contain negligible-low value to badger, including bare ground. There is an area of woodland and scrub adjacent to the site which holds more value to badger for foraging and sett creation. However, no evidence of badger was discovered during a survey on site and surrounding habitats.
- 4.5.4 Badger are not a species of principal importance in England and are only considered further on a precautionary basis.

4.6 Hazel Dormouse

Data search

- 4.6.1 There were two records returned for hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) in the data search between 2016-2026. The closest record was 1.4km east of the site in 2023.

Preclearance baseline

The habitats that were present on site comprising woodland and hedgerow on the eastern boundary were likely to provide sub-optimal habitat for dormouse, given the poor condition of the woodland. The extent of ash dieback would have comprised canopy cover and connectivity.

Current baseline

- 4.6.2 The site is assessed to be unsuitable for hazel dormouse, due to lack of habitat as the site comprises of bare ground. Dormouse need good canopy cover and a diverse food

supply. The woodland habitat adjacent to the site and in the wider landscape offer high suitability habitat. The hedgerows adjacent to site boundary are being retained and protected and the grassland ride acts as a buffer strip to the woodland.

- 4.6.3 Due to the unsuitable habitat on site and grassland buffer to the woodland, hazel dormouse is scoped out from further survey not considered further in this assessment.

4.7 Bats

Data search

- 4.7.1 There were 3014 records returned for bats within 2km of the site, between 2016 and 2026.
- 4.7.2 The total count included 109 records barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), one record for bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*), 445 records for brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), 724 records for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), 108 records for daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), five records for greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), fifteen records for Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*), thirty-nine records for lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), 217 records for *Myotis* species, fifty-seven records for natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), 285 records for noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), 351 records for serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), 593 records for soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), and 29 records for whiskered/brandt's bat (*Myotis mystacinus/brandtii*).
- 4.7.3 There were no bat roost records included in the data search.

Preclearance baseline

- 4.7.4 The habitats that were present on site comprising woodland, hedgerows on the northern and eastern boundaries adjacent and additional woodland off site, were likely to provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats.
- 4.7.5 Overnight acoustic assessment of bats was undertaken overnight in the woodland. Review of sonograms (found in the previous ecology survey in Appendix 4) identified activity by soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*). Identification of activity by long-eared bats, likely brown long eared, was not certain.
- 4.7.6 Bat activity was dominated by soprano pipistrelles, with some social calls detected.
- 4.7.7 Sonograms of a *Myotis* species, likely Natterer's bats, were also recorded.
- 4.7.8 There was a single granted EPS licence application relating to bats within a 2km radius of the site surveyed:
- 2014-3702-EPD-MIT relating to common pipistrelles allowing the destruction of a resting place.

Current baseline

Habitats

- 4.7.9 The main habitat identified on site offer low value to bats, including bare ground. The habitats off site including a mature oak and adjacent hedgerows and woodland would make suitable habitat to support foraging and commuting bats.

Ground Level Tree Assessment

- 4.7.10 Ground level tree assessments were done on 12th May 2026. A total of two individual trees were assessed, with one being off site and a further two tree groups were assessed in the woodland adjacent to the site.
- 4.7.11 The individual tree on site is a semi-mature oak tree leftover from the ash dieback clearance. The tree had no potential roosting features.

The notable tree off site is a veteran oak tree (T1 in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment; stem diameter 1.21 m) south-east of the site near woodland and grassy rides. There were a number of potential roosting features present including cracks, crevices, large knot holes with decaying cavities and splitting of the bark. The tree has been assessed to have PRF-Is and PRF-Ms.

Night-time Bat Walkover

- 4.7.12 The spring and summer walkover surveys are complete, with autumn walkover outstanding.

Static monitoring results

- 4.7.13 Three static detectors were deployed on site, with surveys being undertaken between a period of May through to October 2026. Results are readily available from May through to August, with September and October following as an addendum when results have been analysed.
- 4.7.14 The static monitoring identified eleven species on site, as shown in Table 11, Appendix 3. Common pipistrelle was the most abundant species recorded, comprising 50% of the total calls, followed by soprano pipistrelle (27%). However, when omitting common and soprano pipistrelle calls from the data there is a presence of noctule bat (6.2%) and Leisler's bat (5.83%).
- 4.7.15 Annexe II species were present in the data, although the numbers were relatively low including barbastelle (0.39%), greater horseshoe bat (0.03%) and lesser horseshoe bat (0.02%). See Figure 19.
- 4.7.16 The detector located on the eastern hedgerow (P3) recorded the highest number of total calls, most notably common, soprano and Nathusius' pipistrelle species (see

Figure 15). The woodland adjacent to the hedgerow is likely to be a contributing factor, making this area a suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats.

- 4.7.17 The detectors located at P1 and P2 had much lower total calls, although P1 saw more activity from the Leisler's and noctule bat species. Additionally, when omitting the pipistrelle species from P3 completely (see Figure 16), the most common total calls were the brown long-eared bat, the Leisler's bat and the noctule bat, suggesting that the Leisler's and noctule bat species commute from east to west across the site.
- 4.7.18 In addition, the total calls from the brown long-eared bat, most commonly calling at P3, were happening across the month's but at less notable times of the evening suggesting that these weren't a result of emergences, for example, but occasional commuting along the eastern corridor. See Figures 21a and 21b.
- 4.7.19 The highest number of total calls were recorded during the August surveys, with July closely following (see Figure 17). However, when omitting common and soprano pipistrelle calls there were a higher number of total calls recorded in June by the Leisler's and noctule bat species. See Figure 18.
- 4.7.20 As previously mentioned, there were a low number of Annex II species recorded during the surveys, but the highest number of Barbastelle calls were recorded during the August monitoring period, with 65% being recorded at P3. Due to there being a mature tree just off site and the outer boundary of the Chilmark SAC consultation zone being ~500m away, the results were analysed in further detail. The calls were most active between 00:35am and 04:03am on 14th August indicating that Barbastelle were not using the site frequently and instead the spike in numbers for August was most likely due to sporadic commuting. See Figure 20.
- 4.7.21 Detailed survey results are set out in Appendix 3.

Assessment of importance for nature conservation

- 4.7.22 This assessment is based on results to date and full bat static analysis will be submitted as an addendum at a later date. Current observations indicate that the habitats adjacent to the site and wider area are likely important commuting and foraging features and therefore bats are considered further in this assessment.
- 4.7.23 The bat assemblage present is assessed to be of **Local importance** for nature conservation and impacts on bats are considered further in this assessment.

4.8 Birds

Data search

- 4.8.1 There were fifty-nine records returned for birds from 2016 to 2026. Of these records, there were:

- (i) Twelve records for Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 1 listed species, including barn owl (*Tyto alba*), fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*), firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*), red kite (*Milvus milvus*) and redwing (*Turdus iliacus*).
- (ii) Seven records for NERC Section 41 (S41) species, including cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*) house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), lesser redpoll (*Acanthis cabaret*), skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), wood warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*) and yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*).
- (iii) Eighteen records for RSPB Red Listed birds, including the previously mentioned cuckoo, fieldfare, house sparrow, skylark, as well as corn bunting (*Emberiza calandra*), greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*), house martin (*Delichon urbicum*), marsh tit (*Poecile palustris*) and woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*).

Preclearance baseline

- 4.8.2 The habitats that were present on site comprising woodland, adjacent hedgerows on the northern and eastern boundaries and additional woodland off site, were likely to provide suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for birds.

Current baseline

- 4.8.3 The main habitat identified on site offers low value to birds; the bare ground offers some foraging resource but no suitable breeding habitat. The habitats immediately off site including a mature oak and adjacent hedgerows and woodland offer high suitability habitat to support foraging and nesting birds.
- 4.8.4 During the night-time bat walkover conducted on 8th June the surveyors discovered breeding barn owl (*Tyto alba*) off site, in the reclamation yard north of the site. Additionally, a number of passes were noted during both walkovers – held 12th May and 8th June.
- 4.8.5 The site itself is of limited value to breeding birds due to lack of habitat. There is no vegetation removal on site, (provided the site is maintained in its current state) therefore birds are only considered further for enhancement of nesting opportunities on site

4.9 Amphibians

Data search

- 4.9.1 There was one record returned for great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) in 2025, 1.1km east of the site. Records were typically found around pond habitat. The great crested newt is a Species of Principal Importance (SPI) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Nearby ponds and watercourses provide suitable habitat.

- 4.9.2 There were seven records returned for the common toad (*Bufo bufo*) between 2016 and 2026. The closest record was over 1km north of site. The common toad is protected under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.
- 1.9.3 There were three records for the common frog (*Rana temporaria*) between 2016 and 2026. The closest record was 1.2km south of the site. The common toad falls under Annex 5 of the Habitat Directive.
- 4.9.3 There were no granted EPS licences for GCN within 1km of the site.

Habitats

Ponds within 500m of the site

- 4.9.4 The site does not contain any ponds or waterbodies due to the main habitat on site being bare ground therefore, no breeding habitat for amphibians is present.
- 4.9.5 A desk-based assessment searching for ponds within 500m of the site identified five ponds within the aforementioned radius.

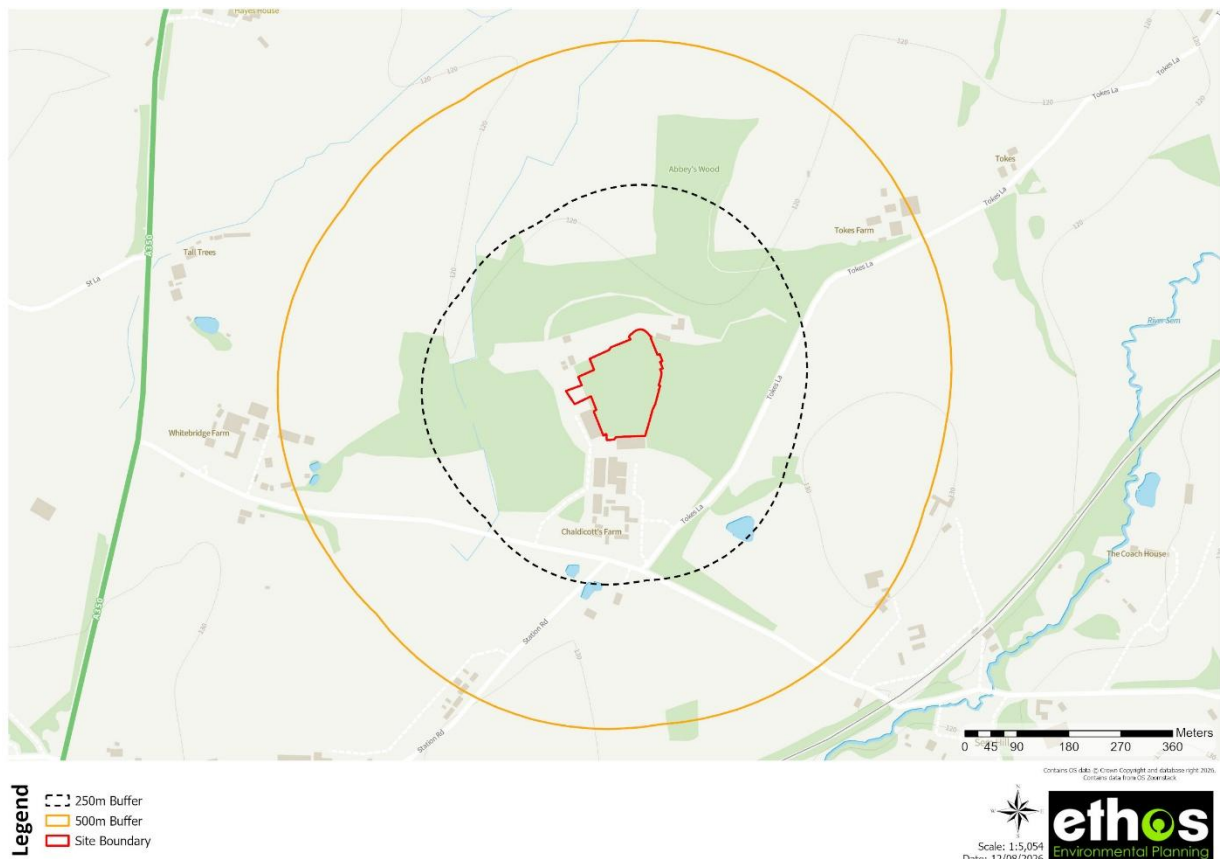


Figure 9 ponds within 500m

Preclearance baseline

- 4.9.6 There is no suitable breeding habitat on site, but the woodland offers suitable terrestrial and hibernation habitat. There is some connectivity to suitable breeding habitat in the wider area.

Current baseline

- 4.9.7 The site itself offers no suitable breeding habitat, and the bare ground provides only limited terrestrial habitat value for great crested newt (GCN), lacking the vegetation cover, foraging resource and humidity associated with good-quality terrestrial habitat
- 4.9.8 GCN typically disperse up to 250m from their breeding ponds, with the presence of high quality habitat between the ponds and site, that offers good cover, foraging resources and humidity conditions favoured by GCN, it is assessed that GCN are unlikely to extend their range to the poor quality bare ground habitat of the site.
- 4.9.9 Therefore it is assessed that GCN are likely absent from the site and not considered further in this assessment.

4.10 Summary

- 4.10.1 A summary of the important ecological features on site and their scale of importance for nature conservation is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Important ecological features on site

Important Ecological Features	Scale of Importance
Native hedgerow (off site, adjacent)	Local
Veteran oak (off site)	National
Bats (off-site Annex II)	County
Badger	Precautionary only
Breeding birds	Precautionary only

5 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 The development proposals at Land at Chaldicotts Farm Semley, comprise the development of a new industrial building (Use Class B2) amounting to 7,448 sqm GIA with associated access, parking, security infrastructure, hard and soft landscaping, drainage and associated works.
- 5.2 The building will be built using materials as specified in the attached word document. The building is specified in the Schedule of Materials and Specification (rev. 07.09.26). It is clad in insulated composite panels with roof-integrated photovoltaics and served by air source heat pumps. For security reasons the building has no windows.

- 5.3 The layout and design of the development has been developed to minimise impacts on site ecology as follows:
- The development footprint is situated on the bare ground which is not assessed to be of importance for nature conservation.
 - The building is windowless, so there is no internal light spill from any elevation onto adjacent bat habitats.
 - The individual tree north-west of the site will be retained. Additionally, the individual tree off-site to the south-east, will be appropriately protected.
- 5.4 Lighting will be designed to environmental zone 0, Bats & Artificial Lighting GN08/23 and take into consideration GN01/26 the avoidance of obtrusive lighting (guidance on how the NPPF should be applied in a lighting context).
- 5.5 The lighting design is primarily to aid wayfinding only to minimise the introduction of lighting. The areas to be lit include pedestrian routes, loading areas and car parking with the exception of the east boundary car parking areas which are in proximity to a sensitive ecological receptor (woodland).
- 5.6 Lighting mitigation measures include the following:
- Downward directional luminaires of 2700K warm light to the facades of the building
 - Bollard luminaires of 1900K LED amber in the car parking areas to the west
 - Use of PIRs and programmable time switches.
- 5.7 Security will be dealt with via a 3m palisade perimeter fence, controlled gates and infrared cameras; therefore, no security lighting is required.

6 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

- 6.1 Potential impacts during construction and the operational phases are considered in the following sections:

6.2 Native Hedgerows (off site)

Construction impacts

- 6.2.1 In the absence of mitigation, potential impacts could include damage to retained offsite hedgerows during construction and impacts of construction pollution, given their proximity to the development site. To avoid impacts on hedgerows, tree protection fencing will be installed, and pollution prevention controls implemented during the construction period. Additionally, no materials are to be stored within the root protection zones. These measures will be set out within a CEMP.

Operational impacts

- 6.2.2 The development proposals have been designed to retain the adjacent existing hedgerows along the northern and eastern boundaries. There will be no significant effects on the native hedgerows as a result of the proposed development.

6.3 Veteran Oak (off-site)

Construction impacts

- 6.3.1 Without mitigation there may be risk of damage to veteran tree from construction activities within the root protection zone, such as compaction from vehicles, storage of materials and pollution incidents. Such damage could compromise the long-term health and structural integrity of the tree, and by extension its value as irreplaceable habitat.
- 6.3.2 To avoid impacts on the veteran tree (T1) protection fencing will be installed, and pollution prevention controls implemented during the construction period. Additionally, no materials are to be stored within the root protection zone. These measures will be set out within a CEMP.

Operational impacts

- 6.3.3 In operation, the key potential effect is light spill from the completed development toward the veteran tree and its immediate surroundings. The lighting strategy has been sensitively designed to minimise introduced lighting on the building and has avoided installation of lighting in the parking areas on the east and southeast boundary. In addition, the landscaping design has incorporated a buffer between the building and the veteran oak, comprising grassland, trees and shrubs. Lighting modelling has

demonstrated that the buffer habitat to the veteran tree will be dark, with light levels below 0.2 lux.

- 6.3.4 Together these measures are assessed to minimise potential effects from lighting during operation, substantially limit direct light spill and sky glow reaching the tree, maintaining suitably dark conditions in its immediate vicinity and preserving its function as valuable, irreplaceable, habitat. Provided these measures are secured and maintained, it is considered that there will be no significant effects during operation.

6.4 Bats

- 6.4.1 The key habitat features for bats is the offsite woodland edge habitat with associated grassy rides, hedgerows and veteran oak, which form a connected network of foraging and commuting (and potential roosting) habitat in close proximity to the site. These features support a bat assemblage of at least 11 species, including the Annex II species barbastelle, greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe bat, together with brown long-eared bat and Myotis species, all of which are recognised as highly light-sensitive.

Construction impacts

- 6.4.2 The offsite hedgerows lie adjacent to the northern and eastern boundaries. The installation of tree protected fencing to incorporate the RPZs, and sensitive construction lighting to avoid any light spill onto these features from security or task lighting that may be needed, will ensure commuting and foraging habitats are retained and protected during the construction period. Loss of continuity along these features, even where partial or temporary, has the potential to disrupt established flight lines and reduce the functional connectivity of the site for foraging and commuting bats, therefore with mitigation bats can continue utilising the offsite hedgerow features and the nearby woodland edge commuting corridors to the east of the site.
- 6.4.3 A sensitive lighting plan will be required to avoid impacts on foraging and commuting bats during construction phase, details of which will be provided within a CEMP. This will include details to ensure that construction lighting, if needed, is directional, low level and avoids light spill onto the offsite hedgerows on the northern and eastern boundaries. Ideally construction will take place during 'daylight hours' to avoid impacts on bats.

Operational impacts

- 6.4.4 The key habitats for bats, the offsite hedgerows along the northern and eastern boundaries, with associated woodland edge habitat with grassy rides, used by foraging and commuting bats will be retained and protected through the operational phase, but careful consideration is needed to the adjacent commuting corridor and woodland east of the site. Static detector surveys recorded higher levels of bat activity associated with the woodland edge in particular, reflecting its importance to species such as barbastelle, a qualifying Annex II species of the Chilmark Quarries SAC (hibernation

site), which show a strong association with woodland habitat. Increased light spill along these features has a well-established potential to cause displacement of light-averse species, severance of commuting routes, and a reduction in the functional value of the corridor for foraging.

- 6.4.5 Lighting positions will include the entrance and loading points, car travel zones and walkways, some of which are located adjacent to the aforementioned boundaries. Due to the location of the development, in the absence of mitigation measures, potential impact of commuting and foraging bats could occur as a result of inappropriate lighting across the scheme.
- 6.4.6 A lighting plan has been designed to environmental zone 0, 'Bats and Artificial Lighting GN08/23, with consideration of GN01/26 'The avoidance of obtrusive lighting'. Furthermore, the security on site will be made up of a perimeter fence and infrared cameras, resulting in no security lighting be needed. The building is windowless, so there is no internal light spill onto adjacent bat habitats from any elevation, and no bollard lighting is proposed in the parking area on the east.
- 6.4.7
- 6.4.8 The lighting strategy and modelling have demonstrated that the offsite hedgerow and woodland edge habitat will be retained dark, below 0.2 lux. With the implementation of mitigation as set out above, no significant impacts on bats are predicted as a result of the development.

6.5 Badgers

- 6.5.1 The site itself which is exposed bare ground with no vegetation cover is assessed to be of low value to badger and likely limited to foraging opportunities. There was no evidence or signs of activity found during the surveys. However, due to the suitability in the wider area a pre-works checks, looking for evidence or signs of badger within 30m of the construction site area, will be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist acting as an Ecological Clerk of Work (ECow).

6.6 Birds

- 6.6.1 Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), so it will be necessary to avoid damage or destruction of nests, or disturbance of nesting birds, during the construction phase. Suitable nesting habitat is not being impacted, however should any works be needed to trees or nearby habitat, in order to mitigate impacts to breeding birds, removal of any suitable bird nesting habitat, namely hedgerow, trees and farm buildings, will either be undertaken outside of the nesting season (March to August inclusive) or be subject to a pre-works check by a suitably qualified ecologist acting as an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECow). The method statement for ensuring the protection of nesting birds will be detailed within the CEMP, to be secured by a planning condition.

6.7 Summary

6.7.1 A summary of the predicted significance of any effects, as well as the proposed mitigation measures and how these may be secured are outlined in Table 7.

Table 7 Summary of significance of effects and mitigation

Ecological Feature	Mitigation	Mechanism for securing delivery	Residual Effects
Hedgerows (off site)	- Provision of protective tree fencing. - Standard pollution prevention controls. - No material storage within RPZ.	Retained habitats protected through Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP).	No significant effects
Veteran Tree (off site)	- Provision of protective tree fencing. - Standard pollution prevention controls. - No material storage within RPZ. - Sensitive lighting strategy – construction and operation. - Visual and physical buffer planting on site.	Retained habitats protected through CEMP. Lighting strategy. Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)	No significant effects
Bats (offsite)	- Sensitive lighting - Protection of hedgerows and post-construction - Management of offsite hedgerows.	Lighting strategy CEMP secured by condition LEMP secured by condition.	No significant effects
Badgers	- Pre works check within 30m, - Good practice measures, including appropriate storage of materials and chemicals. - Sensitive construction lighting plan.	CEMP secured by condition	N/A
Birds	Timing of works or a pre-works check (if any offsite hedgerows or trees require works).	CEMP secured by condition	N/A

6.8 Cumulative Effects

- 6.8.1 Overall, no nearby developments were identified with the potential to result in cumulative effects on important ecological features identified within this EclA.

7 ENHANCEMENTS

7.1 Protected Species

- 7.1.1 The installation of 30 swift boxes on site will provide more valuable nesting opportunities for swift and other birds, including house sparrows, tree sparrows and potentially house martins. Taking the development structure into consideration, integrated boxes are not appropriate because the external walls are insulated composite panels with no masonry cavity into which a swift brick could be built, so AfS Polymer swift boxes or Model 30 swift boxes are recommended due to their rigid, lightweight, waterproof design with no maintenance required. Both are recyclable with the polymer option offering a speckled grey design to match the development material and the Model 30 box offering a uPVC option which contains no plasticizers or environmentally harmful chemicals such as phthalates and BPA. Boxes recommended to be installed high on the two eastern and the two northern elevations, under the eaves; a total of 6 clusters of 5 boxes approximately 1m apart. South-facing installations are to be avoided to prevent overheating. Indicative locations of the clusters are shown in Figure 11.

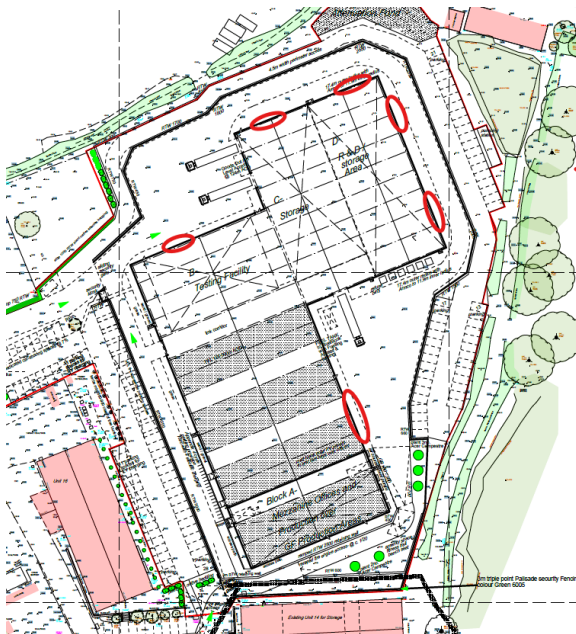


Figure 11 Indicative locations of swift boxes (clusters of 5)

- 7.1.2 The installation of bug hotels and/or log piles incorporated within the landscape buffer surrounding the veteran oak will enhance habitat for invertebrates and benefit prey resources for bats, birds, reptiles and amphibians. These could be premade provisions; or compiled using waste building materials (chemical free) such as pallets infilled with timber cut offs, bricks, twigs, rubble, bark, pipes; or simple log and stone piles with turf covers.
- 7.1.3 The measures set out above can be secured through the requirement for an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP), which can be secured by planning condition.

7.2 Estate Recommendations

7.2.1 In addition to enhancements for the development site the results of the surveys have highlighted opportunities for additional measures in the wider estate site for a range of protected species with the following measures:

- Installation of two Barn Owl Trust Tree Boxes within the veteran tree south-east of the site. This will support the local breeding barn owl found beyond the north of the site. Nest box access hole should be visible by passing owls, even when the tree is in full leaf. It is important that boxes erected in trees are made from waterproof materials and designed for adverse weather conditions as barn owls require dry cavities.
- Installation of Wildlife Open-Front Board Boxes suitable for wren, robin and song thrush. Boxes are recommended to be installed within hedgerows (facing onto the grassy ride) or in scrub habitat within the woodland, avoiding nest entrance facing strong sunlight or prevailing winds.
- Installation of Twin Crevice Bark Boxes suitable for crevice-dwelling species such as pipistrelle bats and are recommended to be installed on trees along the inner woodland ride where bats were observed commuting and foraging along this corridor feature, notably Common and soprano pipistrelle, which were the most common recorded species.

8 MONITORING

- 8.1 Habitat and protected species mitigation measures set out in Section 6 can be subject to a compliance check by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist, which can be secured by condition and provided to the LPA as a Site Note.
- 8.2 Offsetting habitats to be created as part of the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements will be monitored as required across the 30-year period. This will be set out within the LEMP/ HMMP and secured by condition.

9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The site is located within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This designated in part for the quality of its dark night skies and associated nocturnal habitats, and holding International Dark Sky Reserve status. The lighting strategy has been developed with specific regard to this context, and to Policy DNS1/DNS2 of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2025–2030, which requires proposals to avoid, and where avoidance is not possible, minimise lighting, having regard to best practice guidance including that published by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals.
- 9.2 Through the retention of dark boundaries, targeted avoidance of lighting to sensitive receptors (bat habitat) landscape buffering to the veteran tree and lighting design informed by quantitative modelling, the proposed lighting strategy is considered to appropriately conserve the dark night sky and nocturnal habitat qualities that contribute to the special qualities of the National Landscape, while allowing the operational and safety needs of the development to be met. On this basis, the scheme is considered consistent with the aims of Policy DNS1/DNS2, and no significant residual effects on bats (notably Annex II species), veteran tree or their associated habitat are anticipated as a result of lighting during construction or operation.
- 9.3 The site itself does not contain any habitat of importance for nature conservation and overall, contains very low ecological value. However, the offsite boundary habitats and associated connective features including hedgerows with grassy ride; woodland edge habitat with inner grassy ride corridor and a veteran tree; are of notable ecological value as habitats and for the protected species they support. Protected species in the vicinity include a diverse assemblage of bats including Annex II species; barn owl, brown hare and likely other notable wildlife associated with woodland habitats. The key mitigation measures relate to retaining a dark corridor along the north, east and southeast boundary areas. In additional precautionary mitigation measures will safeguard these habitats and associated species during the construction and operational period. Therefore, there are predicted to be no significant impacts on biodiversity as a result of the development.
- 9.4 The development is therefore in accordance with NPPF section ‘N2: Improving the natural environment’, which relates to development proposals being required to be compliant with the mitigation hierarchy. The mitigation measures can be secured through an appropriate planning condition which ensures compliance with the measures set out within this EclA. The development has also been designed with regard to the requirements of Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and lighting policies of Cranborne Chase Landscape Management Plan. The development is considered to protect features of nature conservation value, avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive species and habitats, avoid direct and indirect impacts on ecological connectivity, and secure opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. Through the implementation of sensitive design, a lighting strategy to maintain dark conditions around the offsite ecological features; and precautionary working during construction,

it is concluded that there are no significant residual effects on biodiversity and therefore in accordance with national and local policies.

- 9.5 Suitable enhancements for protected species (birds and invertebrates) have been incorporated into the proposals on site and additional opportunities have been recommended in the wider estate area. These measures support the 'Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015, Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and geodiversity', which relate to providing biodiversity gains proportionate to the development proposals.

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APPENDIX 1 POLICY

National Policy - NPPF

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** (published August 2026) sets out national planning policy, including policies of relevance to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Policies of relevance to the proposed development (parts of N2, N3 and N6) have been summarised below:

N2: Improving the natural environment

1. To contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature's recovery, development proposals should:

- a. 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);*
- c. 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;*
- d. Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible;*
- e. Use green infrastructure provided as part of the scheme and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits: such as for biodiversity; surface water and pollution management (including maintaining flow rates and water quality); climate change mitigation and adaptation, and recreation;*
- f. 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; and*
- g. Ensure that green infrastructure and other features to support nature are located and designed to minimise risk of future failure, and that appropriate measures are in place for any necessary long-term management.*

2. 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.

3. 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.

N3: Trees in new development

1. In recognition of the benefits which trees can provide for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the character and quality of the built environment, development proposals should:

a. Make new streets tree-lined (unless there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate in specific streets), and incorporate trees in other suitable locations, such as in parks and through the provision of community orchards;

c. Make provision for the long-term maintenance of both existing and newly-planted trees which form part of the development.

N6: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity

1. To support the conservation of important habitats, species and sites of geodiversity value, development proposals affecting:

a. A site of international importance, which for the purpose of this policy is a habitats site, should be refused unless:

i. An appropriate assessment has concluded that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site (either individually or in combination with other developments), or the proposal can satisfy the derogation tests; and/or

ii. The impact of development on the relevant protected features of the protected site is being addressed through an Environmental Delivery Plan which has been made and the developer has committed to paying the nature restoration levy.

b. A site of national importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, should only be supported if:

i. There would be no adverse effect (either individually or in combination with other developments) on the site's features of special scientific interest; or

ii. The benefits of development in the location proposed clearly outweigh the likely impact on the features which make the site valuable for nature conservation.

2. Irrespective of a site's status in nature conservation terms, development proposals which would entail the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

3. This policy applies to development on land inside or outside a designated area, if it would have an impact on the identified biodiversity or geodiversity value of the area concerned.

Local Policy

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.

Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2025–2030

Ecology and Lighting Policy Summary

The site lies within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formerly the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB), a designated landscape holding International Dark Sky Reserve status. The Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2025–2030 sets out the policy framework for nature recovery and dark skies within the designated area.

Ecology and Nature Recovery

The Management Plan identifies bats, including the greater horseshoe bat, as one of the National Landscape's special and declining species, and recognises the area's ancient

woodland as supporting notable assemblages of bats, woodland birds, fungi and rare lichen.

Policy NR1 requires biodiversity to be conserved and enhanced through the establishment of a coherent and resilient nature recovery network across the designated area, in line with the Cranborne Chase Nature Recovery Plan. The Plan highlights habitat fragmentation and isolation as a key issue affecting the National Landscape's wildlife, drawing on the Lawton Review principle of securing "more, bigger, better and joined-up" habitats, and sets local biodiversity net gain and habitat restoration targets (**Policy NR2**) that exceed the statutory minimum.

Dark Night Skies

The Management Plan identifies outdoor lighting as a key issue affecting wildlife, noting that nocturnal habitats do not receive the same attention as daytime habitats and that poor lighting can have lethal consequences for wildlife. **Policy DNS1/DNS2** requires development proposals likely to affect dark skies to avoid, and where avoidance is not possible, minimise lighting, having regard to best practice guidance including that published by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals.

APPENDIX 2 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Quadrat Methodology

Grasslands were surveyed using professional judgement using 1x1m² quadrats sample. A minimum of three quadrats were undertaken of each grassland section. The DAFOR scale was used to assess the coverage of each species.

Information collected within each quadrat included aspect, slope, average ground cover, sward variation, species, and their percentage cover.

Where the grassland differed to a certain extent or was divided by field boundary such as hedgerows it was considered that the grassland was a different habitat parcel, and another assessment was undertaken.

Badger

It is important to classify each sett and determine its use by the social group. This involves counting the number of entrances per sett and assessing sett use based on the following criteria:

- **Well-used:** being clear of any debris or vegetation, obviously in regular use and may or may not have been excavated recently;
- **Partially-used:** not in regular use and have debris such as leaves and twigs in the entrance or have moss and/or other plants growing in or around the entrance. Partially-used holes could be in regular use after a minimal amount of clearance; and
- **Disused:** not been in use for some time, are partially or completely blocked and could not be used without considerable amount of clearance. If the hole has been disused for some time, all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be, and the remains of the spoil heap, which may be covered in moss or plants.

Where setts were found, activity levels were scored using the following criteria:

- number of well-used holes (with one or more of the features: well-worn entrance; freshly excavated soil; bedding material);
- number of partially used holes (leaves or twigs in entrance and/or mosses and other plants growing in or around entrance);
- number of disused holes (partially or completely blocked, with considerable amount of excavation required for reoccupation).

The field survey methods described above are consistent with those advocated by (Harris et al. 1989). All field survey work was undertaken between May and August 2026, embracing the period when territorial marking is taking place and badgers are mobile and foraging.

As a guide to classifying each sett the following criteria is followed:

- **Main** – normally the focal sett for a badger social group. Generally always occupied, main setts usually have several well used holes with radiating tracks, latrines and other signs of activity. The actual number of holes can vary greatly, depending on social group size and soil conditions. Several holes with large spoil heaps and obvious paths emanating from and between sett entrances.
- **Annex** – a secondary sett, close to the main sett. Will normally be connected to the sett with very obvious tracks. Annexes may not be occupied constantly, even when the main sett is very active. Normally less than 150m from main sett, comprising several holes.
- **Subsidiary** – occurring at a greater distance from the main sett, and not as clearly linked to it as an annex. These setts will clearly fall within the territory of a social group and may be seasonally used by badgers; and
- **Outlier** – less frequently used, these setts may be colonised by other species when not in use by badgers. Outliers may represent a temporary sett, or a habitation for migrating individuals, or those excluded from a social group.

Bats

Habitat assessment

The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bats. This assessment was also contextualized through examination of suitable habitat and features in the wider landscape and possible flight-lines across the proposed site following natural linear features such as hedgerows.

Ground level Tree Assessment (GLTA)

The methodology draws upon guidance within Collins (2023) and the Bat Tree Habitat Key (2018). The surveys were undertaken using binoculars and a high-powered torch to view features from the ground. Details on the potential roosting features were recorded as well as information to identify the specific trees.

Potential roosting features on trees were identified as any feature within a tree that could provide shelter for a roosting bat. These features result from the following three mechanisms:

- Disease and decay;
- Damage; and,
- Associations.

Tree with no potential roost features were assessed as having ‘negligible’ potential for roosting bats and no further surveys were carried out. Potential features have been categorised following the guidelines set out in table 6.2 (extract below):

Table 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

Trees with features suitable for roosting bats were assessed as having ‘PRF-I’ or ‘PRF-M’ suitability for bats. Trees with ‘PRF-I’ potential for roosting bats were not subject to additional survey, in line with BCT survey guidelines. Justification is provided, in the form of a detailed description and photographic evidence, to demonstrate how the classification of ‘PRF-I potential’ had been made. Recommendations will be made as necessary if any trees with low potential are to be impacted.

Trees assessed as containing PRF-M and considered likely to be impacted by the development (e.g., directly through removal or indirectly from light spill) were subject to further Potential Roost Features (PRF) inspections or Aerial Inspection Surveys as detailed below.

Static bat detector surveys

Bat static surveys were used to provide the composition of bat species present on site. Bat surveys were undertaken between May and October 2026 with three statics deployed over a five-day period each month. Deployment dates are shown in Table 8. The statics were deployed at the same locations each month, shown in Figure 11, to ensure the data was comparable.

The calls were processed and analysed using the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Pipeline. This software provides a confidence score for each species returned and highlights rare species which are unlikely to be detected in the survey area. Results with a low confidence <50% probability were excluded from the analysis.

Table 8 Static monitoring survey dates (to date, September and October pending)

Deployment Date	Collection Date
12 th May 2026	19 th May 2026
8 th June 2026	17 th June 2026
14 th July 2026	20 th July 2026
10 th August 2026	19 th August 2026



Figure 11 Static bat detector positions

Night-time Bat Walkover (NBW) surveys

NBW surveys were undertaken on site to highlight any important commuting or foraging features on site. This included two surveyors walking a planned transect of the site. One survey visit is undertaken per season (spring – April/May, summer – June/July/August and an upcoming survey in autumn – September/October) to gain insight into the importance of habitats for bats across the active season.

At the start of the survey, from sunset until 30 minutes after sunset, surveyors were positioned close to areas considered as likely to be of value to bats, such as on potential flight lines or close to potential roost sources such as buildings or woodland. Surveyors then began a transect of the site recording the following information throughout the survey; bat species, their location, behaviour, and the identification of habitat features which were frequently used by the species. Surveyors were equipped with EMT bat detectors.

The transect is displayed within Figure 12 below and the dates of the surveys are provided in Table 9.



Figure 12 Night-time bat walkover transects

Table 9 NBW dates

Survey	Date
Spring survey	12 th May 2026
Summer survey	8 th June 2026
Autumn survey	Ongoing

Surveyors on Site

Table 10 Site surveyors

Ecologist	Position	Qualifications/ Licences	Experience	Role
Sarah Forsyth	Principal Ecologist	MSc DIC BSc (Hons), ACIEEM Class 2 Bat Licence (NE) Class 1 GCN Licence (NE) Tree Climbing and Rescue, City and Guilds NPTC Level 2 Award (206 and 306)	Sarah has an extensive range of experience in ecological assessment, mitigation and management, having worked in consultancy and the public sector. Sarah is responsible for leading on ecological assessments and overseeing projects through various stages of planning, implementation and post completion management and monitoring.	UKHab survey Bat Activity survey Report checker BREEAM Assessment

Ecologist	Position	Qualifications/ Licences	Experience	Role
Kayleigh Buller	Assistant Ecologist	BA (Hons)	Kayleigh joined Ethos in 2026 as an Assistant Ecologist, supporting a range of protected species surveys, habitat assessments, data analysis and report writing. Kayleigh brings eighteen years' publishing experience, most notably with National Geographic Learning, specialising in commissioning and project managing large-scale, complex projects. She holds an honours degree in Journalism and is currently working towards her Certificate in Conservation Management.	UKHab survey Bat Activity surveys Bat Analysis Report author
Amelia Ball	Assistant Ecologist	BSc (Hons) Qualifying member of CIEEM	Amelia joined Ethos in 2025 and since has had lots of experience assisting with a variety of protected species surveys. She also assists in UK habitat assessments, data analysis using R and ArcGIS and report writing.	UKHab survey Bat activity surveys

APPENDIX 3 BAT SURVEY DATA

Static bat detector surveys

A total of 11 species were recorded during the static bat detector surveys, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11 Total bat calls recorded during static detector surveys

Species	Sum of call	% of total calls
Barbastelle	48	0.39%
Common pipistrelle	6190	50.21%
Greater horseshoe bat	4	0.03%
Leisler's bat	719	5.83%
Lesser horseshoe bat	2	0.02%
Long-eared bat sp.	243	1.97%
Myotis sp.	150	1.22%
Nathusius' pipistrelle	623	5.05%
Noctule	767	6.22%
Serotine	276	2.24%
Soprano pipistrelle	3307	26.82%
Grand Total	12329	

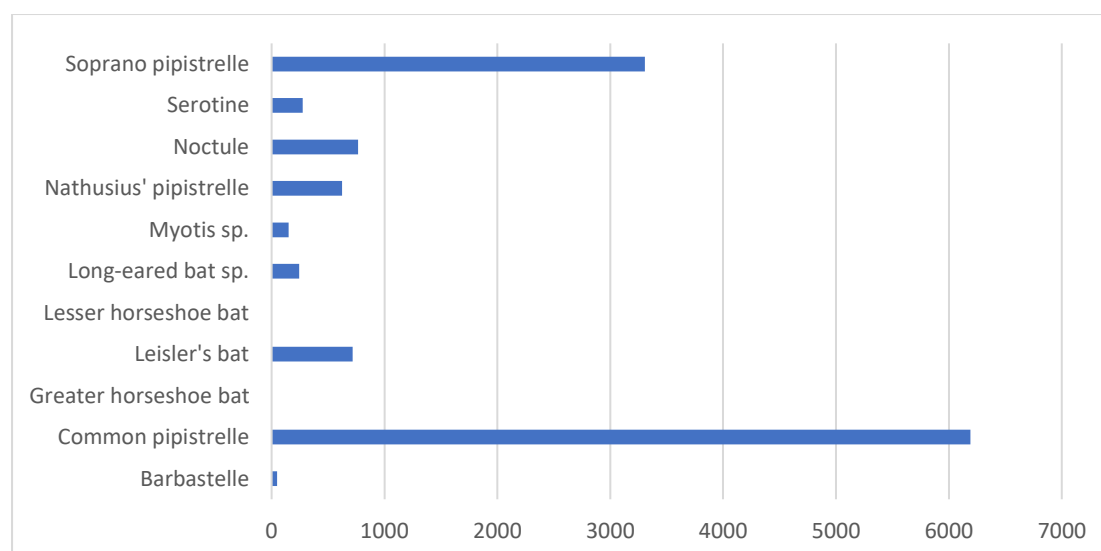


Figure 13 Total bat calls across the site

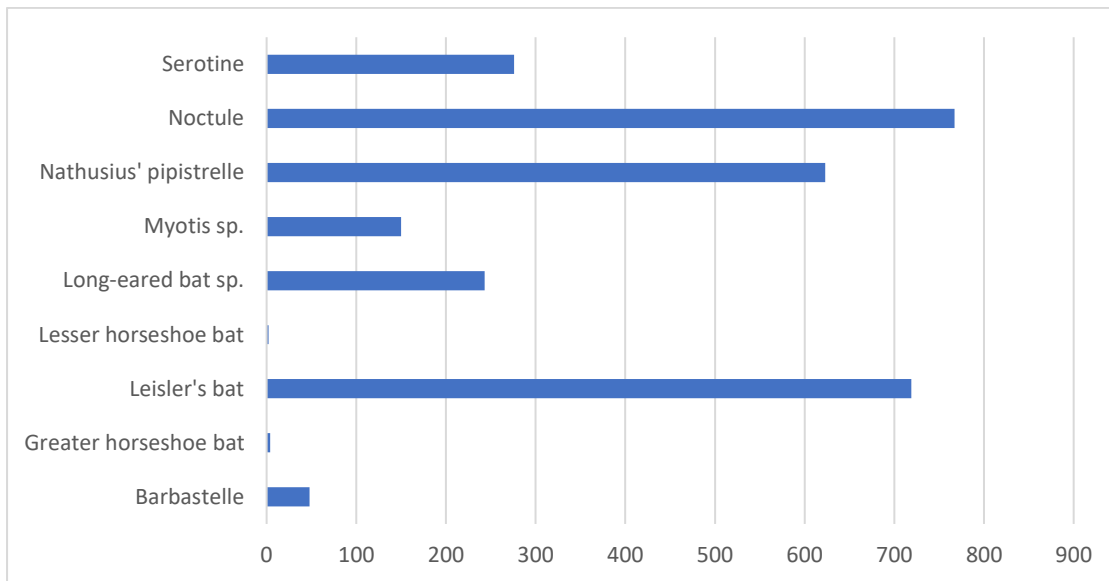


Figure 14 Total bat calls across the site, omitting Common and Soprano Pipistrelle

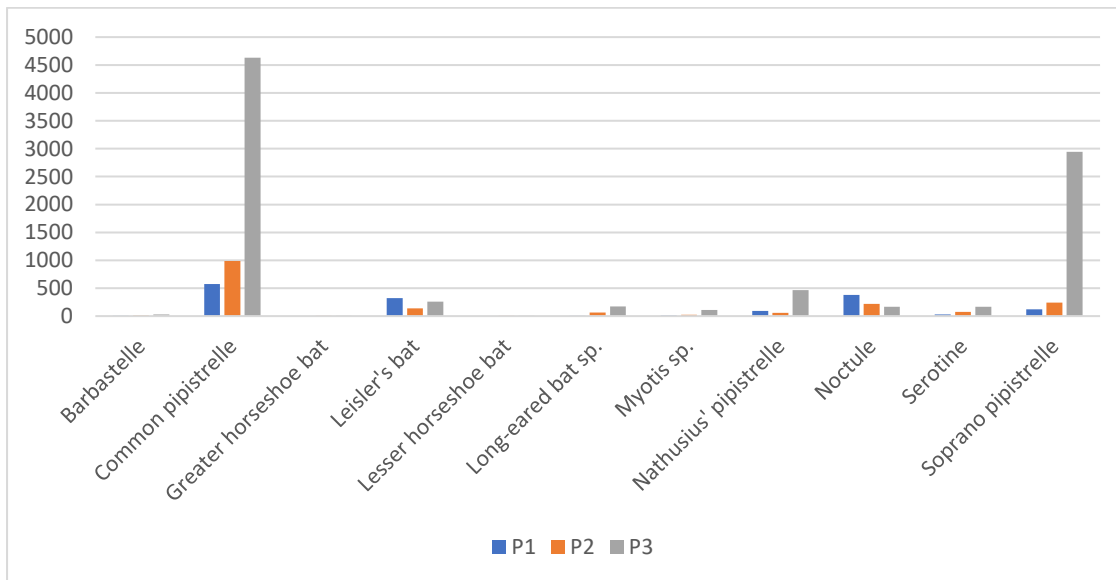


Figure 15 Total bat calls across the site per location

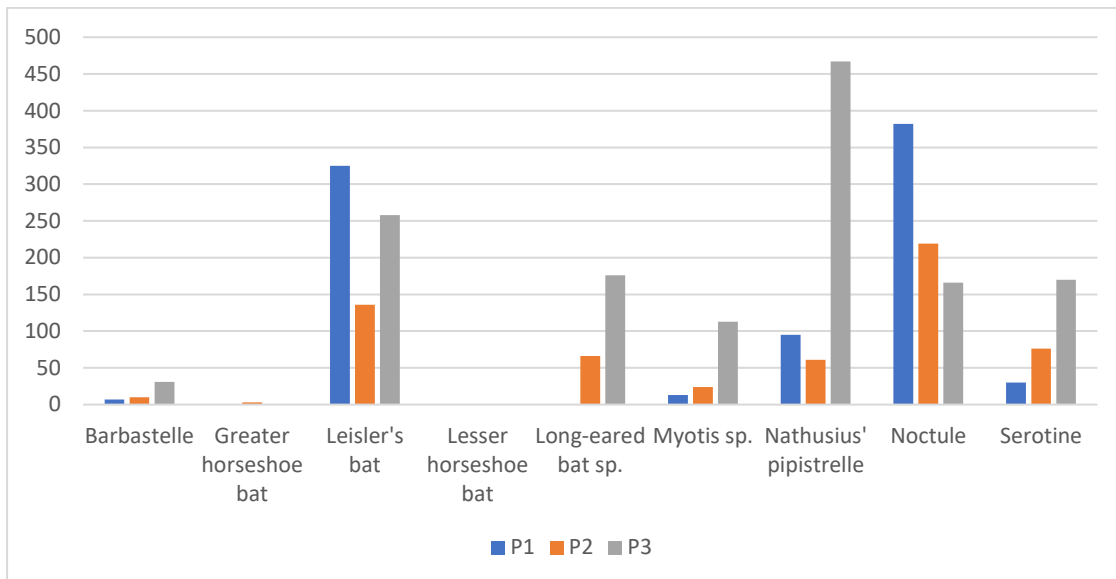


Figure 16 Total bat calls across the site per location, omitting Common and Soprano pipistrelle

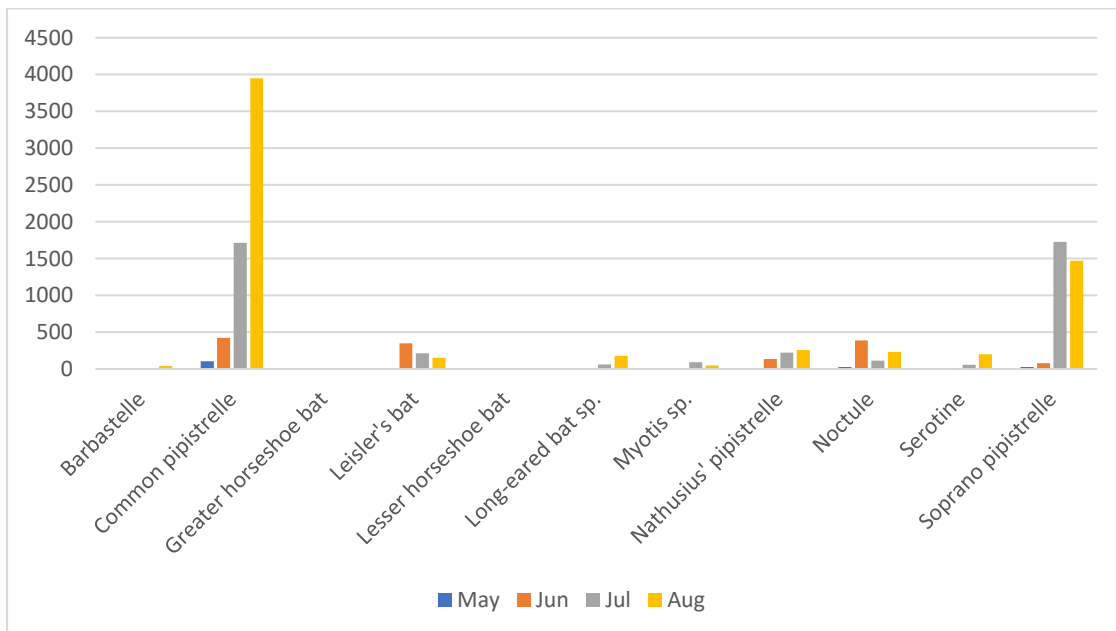


Figure 17 Total bat calls across the site per month

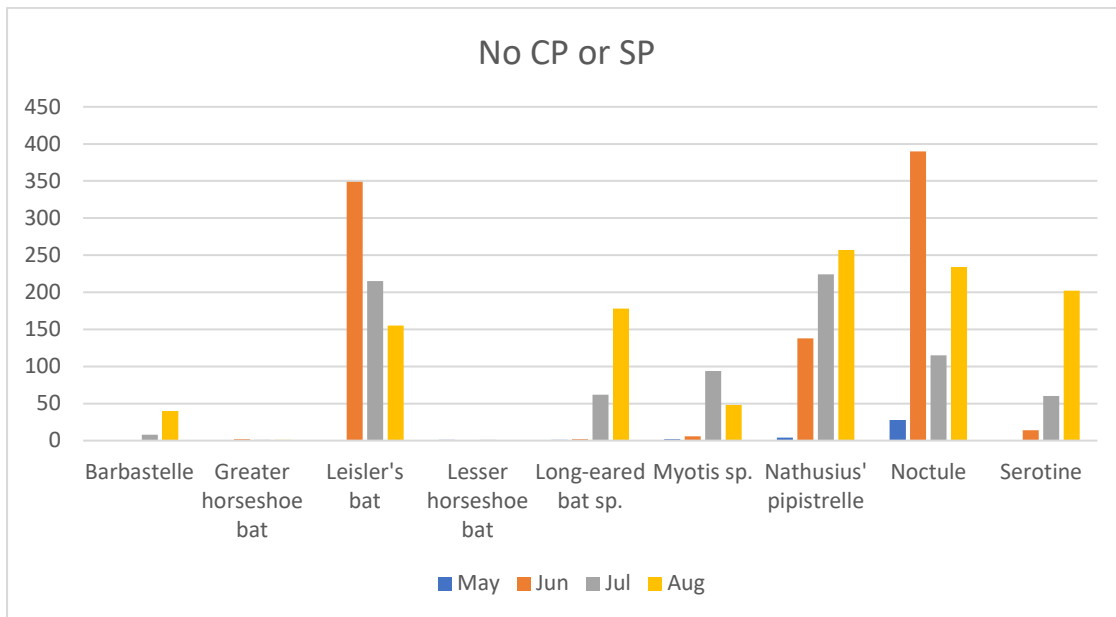


Figure 18 Total bat calls across the site per month, omitting common and soprano pipistrelle

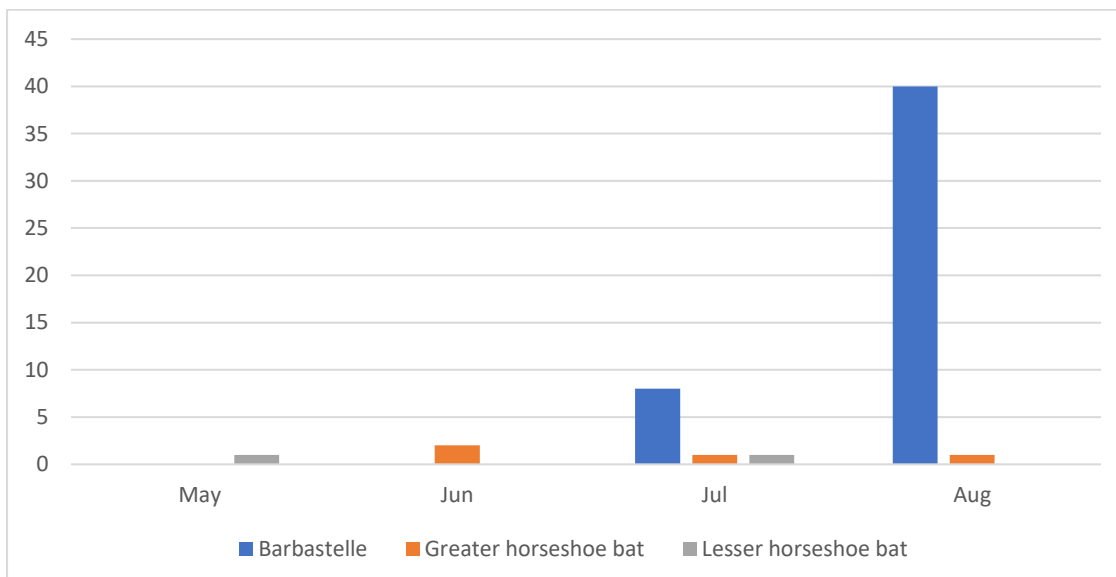


Figure 19 Total Annex II species across the site per month

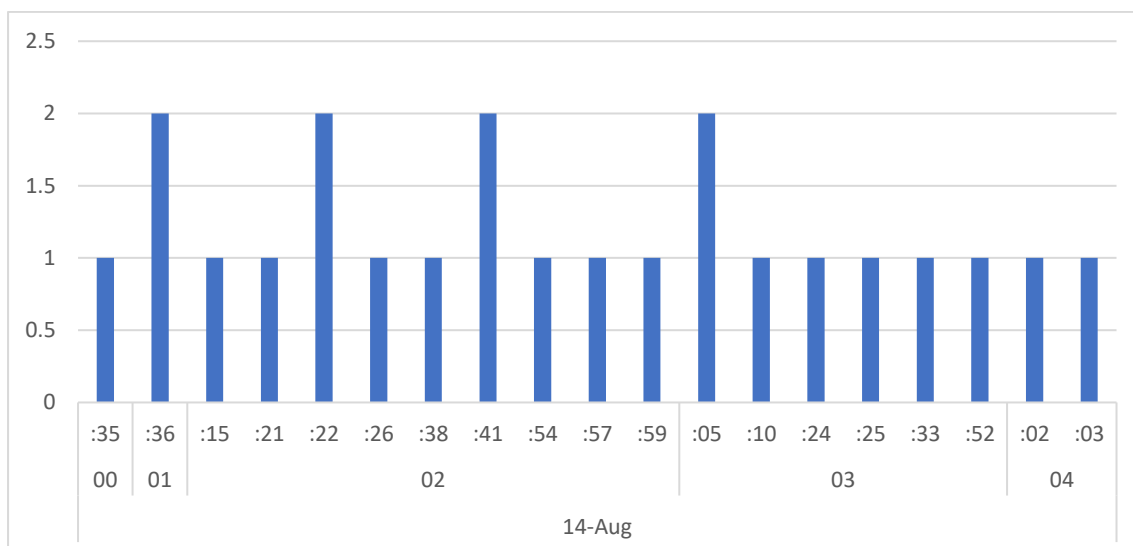


Figure 20 Total Barbastelle bat calls across site on 14th August per location

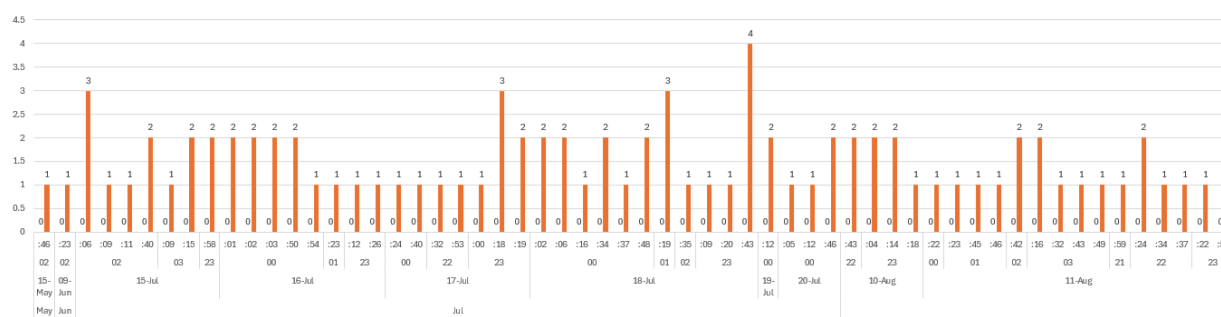
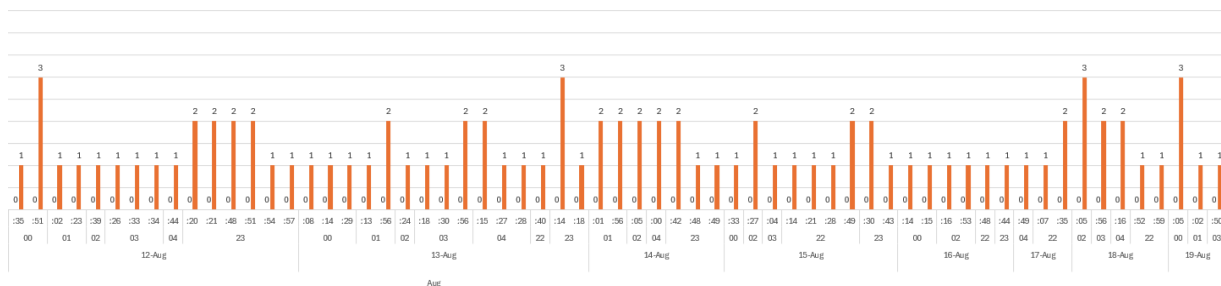


Figure 21a Total Brown Long-eared bat calls across all months



APPENDIX 4 'PRECLEARANCE' ECOLOGY REPORT



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

LAND AT CHALDICOTTS BARNs TOKES LANE SEMLEY SHAFTESBURY SP7 9AW

Project Ecologist:	Jan Freeborn
Contract:	Q893
Survey date:	9 September 2024

Elm Tree Court, Long Street, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1NJ
Mobile 07931 611975 e-mail Janf@wiltshirewildlife.org

Chalkhill is the environmental consultancy of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. All profits are passed by gift-aid to the Trust for its conservation work. Where Chalkhill works on a project this does not imply that the Wildlife Trust either supports or objects to that project. Our aim is to provide sound, independent ecological advice.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Land at Chaldicotts Barns Tokes Lane Semley Shaftesbury SP7 9AW

SUMMARY SHEET	
Date of survey:	9 September 2024
OS grid ref:	ST88142754
Findings:	• It is proposed to fell an approximate 4593 square metre area of young ash trees infected with ash dieback disease and a felling licence from Forestry England has been granted for this work. • This preliminary ecological appraisal was therefore carried out to assess the ecological impact of the proposed work. • The site was located within an area of National Forest Inventory woodland and classified as young trees. • An overnight acoustic bat survey was showed low levels of bat activity by common bat species frequently associated with woodland. • A light industrial estate is present immediately to the south. • Other woodland including Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland and a small area of Ancient Woodland is present in the immediately surrounding area. • No buildings were present on the site. • None of the trees planned felling were of a size or structure likely to create potential bat roost features. • Birds were active within the woodland during daytime survey.
Conclusions:	• There will be no negative impact of the biodiversity of the adjacent areas of deciduous woodland. • No potential bat tree roost features will be destroyed as a result of the proposed work. • The proposed work may result in disturbance to breeding birds.
Recommendations:	• Precautionary guidance should be followed to avoid disturbance to breeding birds during the proposed work. • Any replacement planting should contain a range of tree and shrubby species and other habitats with the aim of creating higher levels of biodiversity.



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

LAND AT CHALDICOTTS BARNs TOKES LANE SEMLEY SHAFTESBURY SP7 9AW

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Methodology**
Figure 2 Site location with boundaries indicated by red line
- 3 Survey results (refer Appendix 1 Site photographs)**
- 4 Overnight acoustic assessment of bat activity (refer Appendix 3 Selected sonograms from overnight acoustic assessment of bat activity)**
- 5 Discussion and analysis of results**
- 6 Conclusions**
- 7 Recommendations**
- 8 Species specific biodiversity net gain**
- 9 Appendices**
Appendix 1 Site photographs
Appendix 2 Designated sites within a 2 kilometre radius of the site surveyed
Appendix 3 Selected sonograms from overnight acoustic assessment of bat activity)
Appendix 4 Summary legislation relating to bats
Appendix 5 Summary of legislation relating to breeding birds

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

LAND AT CHALDICOTTS BARN TOKES LANE SEMLEY SHAFTESBURY SP7 9AW

1 Introduction

Figure 1 Plan of site



- 1.1 A felling licence has been obtained from Forestry England to fell an approximate 4593 square metre area of young ash trees heavily infected with ash dieback disease caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*.
- 1.2 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was therefore carried out to assess the ecological impact of this work.
- 1.3 The site was to the north of a light industrial estate and within an extensive area of woodland listed on the National Forestry Inventory as young trees. Nearby are areas of Priority Habitat Inventory Deciduous Woodland and Ancient Woodland.
- 1.4 Grid reference for the site is ST88142754.

2 Methodology

2.1 Desk study

- 2.1.1 Information regarding sites and habitats with statutory designations within a 2 km radius of the site was obtained from MAGIC. This included a search for granted EPS licence applications relating to bats.
- 2.1.2 Aerial images were reviewed to assess the degree of connectivity of the site with the wider landscape.

2.2 Field survey

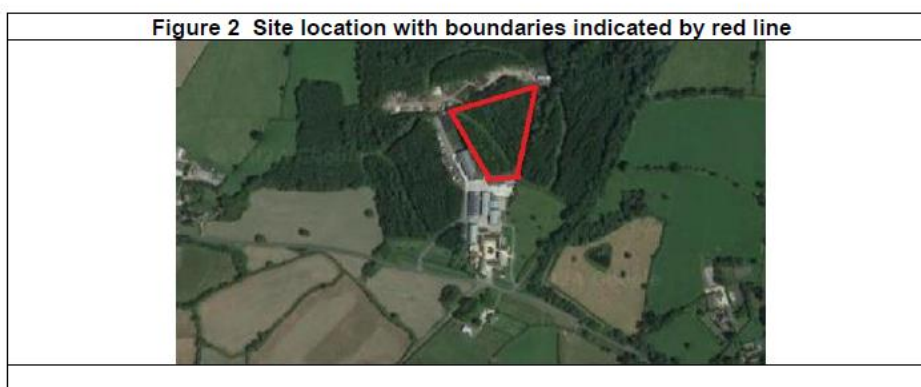
- 2.2.1 Survey was carried out on 9 September 2024 during the daytime in warm and dry weather conditions.
- 2.2.2 Habitat survey was carried out in accordance with National Vegetation classification and Phase 1 habitat survey techniques by a surveyor also trained, experienced and licenced by Natural England to CLS 19 and 20 levels to survey for bats and who also holds an NVQ in tree and woodland management.
- 2.2.3 Full access to all parts of the site was possible.
- 2.2.4 Survey was carried out at a time of year when tall colonising ruderal and shrubby species were likely to be in full growth. Although some plant species may have been dormant at the time of survey and not visible above ground, this was not a limitation to

survey since it was considered that sufficient survey effort would be possible to classify the habitats present on the site.

- 2.2.5** A ground level assessment of trees on the site and along the site boundaries was made for the presence of potential bat roost features, searching for cracks, splits, rot holes, fissures, areas of thick loose bark and crevices formed by interlocking branches. Evidence associated with these features created by occupation by bats was searched for using close focus binoculars. Evidence of use by bats included droppings associated with potential bat roost features, areas of bark worn smooth or roughened by bat access and staining from fur oil. Survey as aided by close focus binoculars.
- 2.2.6** An Anabat Express static bat detector was deployed overnight in the woodland programmed to begin recording at sunset and finish recording at sunrise. Results were analysed using AnalookW.

3 Survey results (refer Appendix 1 Site photographs)

3.2 Desk study



- 3.2.1** The site was located to the north of a small light industrial estate in a rural location and within an extensive area of woodland listed on the National Forestry Inventory as young trees.
- 3.2.2** GB grid reference is ST88142754.
- 3.2.3** Review of an aerial image showed moderate connectivity with a network of hedgelines and small blocks of woodland in the immediate and wider area.
- 3.2.4** The site is included within the area of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and within a 2 km radius of the site surveyed were the following sites and habitats with statutory designations:
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
 - Gutch Common SSSI
 - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Meadows (England)
 - Chalk Rivers
 - Ancient Woodland (England)
 - Unnamed Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 1.610853
 - Unnamed Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 2.260798
 - Unnamed Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 1.404977
 - Unnamed Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 0.567304
 - Unnamed Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 0.370572
 - Unnamed Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 0.48274

- Unnamed Ancient Replanted Woodland Area (Ha) 2.064902
 - Unnamed Ancient Replanted Woodland Area (Ha) 0.743065
 - Coppit Dennis Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 3.558598
 - Crates Wood Ancient Replanted Woodland Area (Ha) 7.570978
 - Hayes Copse Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 3.165993
 - Oysters Coppice Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 10.775916
 - Oysters Coppice Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 5.591316
 - Oysters Coppice Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 1.946068
 - Lyefields Copse Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 2.960718
 - Stib Acre Copse Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Area (Ha) 3.017104
 - Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)
 - Woodland listed on the National Forest Inventory (GB)
 - Priority Habitat Inventory - Traditional Orchards (England)
 - Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat (England)
- 3.2.5** There was a single granted EPS licence application relating to bats within a 2 km radius of the site surveyed.
- 2014-3702-EPS-MIT relating to Common pipistrelles allowing the destruction of a resting place.
- 3.3 Field survey**
- 3.3.1** No buildings or other structures were present on the site.
- 3.3.2** The site surveyed was a pure stand of young ash trees heavily infected with ash dieback disease to the extent that some had fallen. These trees were said to have been planted approximately 20 years previously.
- 3.3.3** Woodland canopy cover was scant and tall ruderal vegetation had begun to colonise, likely in response to increased light levels reaching the woodland floor and with areas of tussocky grassland had beginning to develop.
- 3.3.4** Soil of the woodland floor was heavy and the site sloped shallowing towards the north and a drainage ditch was present along the eastern boundary track.
- 3.3.5** Fern species were present, likely to have become established when the canopy was denser and prior to the deterioration of the woodland due to disease but perhaps remaining because of the availability of water in the heavy soil. Tussocky clumps of tufted hair grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* were frequent together with soft rush *Juncus effusus*.
- 3.3.6** Other plant species identified during survey included occasional hogweed *Heracleum spondylium*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, burdock *Arctium lappa*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, spiny sow thistle *Sonchus asper*, willowherb *sp.*, herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, clustered dock *Rumex conglomeratus*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, nettle *Urtica dioica*, ivy *Helix hedera* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus*.
- 3.3.7** Shrubby species identified during survey included field maple *Acer campestre*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*.
- 3.3.8** There were no trees of a size or structure which might create potential bat tree roost features and none were identified.

- 4 Overnight acoustic assessment of bat activity (refer Appendix 3 Selected sonograms from overnight acoustic assessment of bat activity)**
- 4.1** Review of recorded sonograms identified activity by Soprano pipistrelles, Common pipistrelles and Natterer's bats. Identification of activity by Long-eared bats, likely Brown Long-eared bats, was not certain. These are a quietly echolocating bat species frequently associated with woodland and their echolocation calls not easily detected unless flying close to the detector.
- 4.2** Bat activity was dominated by Soprano pipistrelles, with some social calls detected.
- 4.3** Sonograms of a *Myotis* species, likely Natterer's bats, were also recorded. The echolocation calls of these bats extend across a wide range from 60Khz downwards and are a species frequently associated with woodland.
- 5 Discussion and Analysis of Results**
- 5.1** This is a stand of pure ash woodland planted approximately 20 years ago and all trees are single aged. Infection by ash dieback disease has caused this planting to fail and some have already fallen.
- 5.2** Colonisation by tall ruderal vegetation had begun within the woodland, likely because of release of suppression by the failure of the tree canopy due to ash dieback disease. This has allowed more light to reach the woodland floor favouring the development of the tall ruderal vegetation.
- 5.3** The shrubby species were predominantly present along the woodland edge and at the northern tip. These shrubby species may be remnants of the previous cover on the site or more likely to have colonised from seed sources in the adjacent areas of deciduous woodland.
- 5.4** The biodiversity value of this pure ash woodland is lower than that of the adjacent established deciduous woodland where a higher number of tree species is present with a mixed age range.
- 5.5** Genetic diversity of the planted ash trees is also likely to be low which has resulted in high vulnerability to infection by ash dieback disease.
- 5.6** Dead standing and fallen timber can add to the biodiversity of a woodland by providing opportunities for roosting bats and breeding birds and support a range of invertebrate species dependent on deadwood the size. However, such trees are usually of a greater age and have fallen as a result of natural impacts.
- 5.7** The age and structure of the infected ash trees is unlikely to provide these benefits which would be outweighed by the risk of retaining a potential reservoir of infection by ash dieback disease which would impact on other ash in the adjacent woodland. It accepted however, that some ash have been shown to be resistant to such infection.
- 5.8** An overnight acoustic survey of bat activity within the woodland showed low levels of bat activity dominated by *Pipistrellus* and *Myotis* species. Analysis of sonograms indicated that these were Common and Soprano pipistrelles and Natterer's bats likely benefitting from roost opportunities and feeding areas in the deciduous woodland in the surrounding and wider area and were likely to be commuting or feeding along the woodland edge.
- 5.10** There was no intense focus of bat activity following sunset which suggested that these bats had emerged from roosts within the failed ash woodland or prior to sunrise to suggest that these bats were returning to a roost within this woodland.
- 5.11** It is therefore considered that the necessary felling of this stand of diseased ash will not significantly negatively impact the woodland in the wider area.
- 5.12** It is considered that permitting the ash to decline and fall and to allow natural regeneration to occur is a not feasible option due to the risk of retaining a potential reservoir of infection by ash dieback disease.

5.13 There would be a gain in biodiversity if consideration was given to planting a mixed native species woodland in an appropriate location in the local area.

5.14 There is a low risk of disturbance to breeding birds.

6 Conclusions

6.1 There will be no negative impact on the biodiversity of woodland in the surrounding and wider area as a result of the proposed felling of the woodland.

6.2 There will be no negative impact on bats in terms of loss of roost sites or disruption of commuting routes or feeding areas.

6.3 There will be a positive impact on the surrounding woodland by removing a potential reservoir of infection by ash dieback disease.

6.4 The planting of a mixed native species woodland in the local area would enhance woodland biodiversity by extending the area of similar woodland already present.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Any replacement woodland planting should consist of a mix of native species of trees and shrubs known to grow well in the area and be of local provenance. Ash should not be included within this woodland since future natural colonisation by ash is likely to occur from any ash dieback resistant trees present in the local area.

7.2 To reduce the risk of disturbance to breeding birds climbing and shrubby vegetation on the site necessary for removal as part of the proposed work should be cut back/removed outside of the breeding season for birds. The breeding season for birds is normally regarded as being between and including the months of February to August, although some species will breed outside of this period of time. If this is not possible any shrubby or climbing vegetation which may shelter breeding birds should be checked by an ecologist to ensure that no bird nests are present.

8 Biodiversity net gain (refer Appendix 5 Suggested bird and bat boxes suitable to be built in or fixed to trees)

8.1 Consideration should be given to fixing bat boxes to suitable trees in the local area.

8.2 These should be located within the existing mixed deciduous woodland, ideally on trees which are not yet of a structure to likely to create potential bat roost features.

8.3 Such bat boxes would create opportunities for bats to roost in woodland where these do not currently exist but which bats are likely to use as feeding areas and therefore likely to find, investigate and use these boxes.

8.4 All the species identified on survey are known to roost in bat boxes located in suitable woodland.

9 Appendices

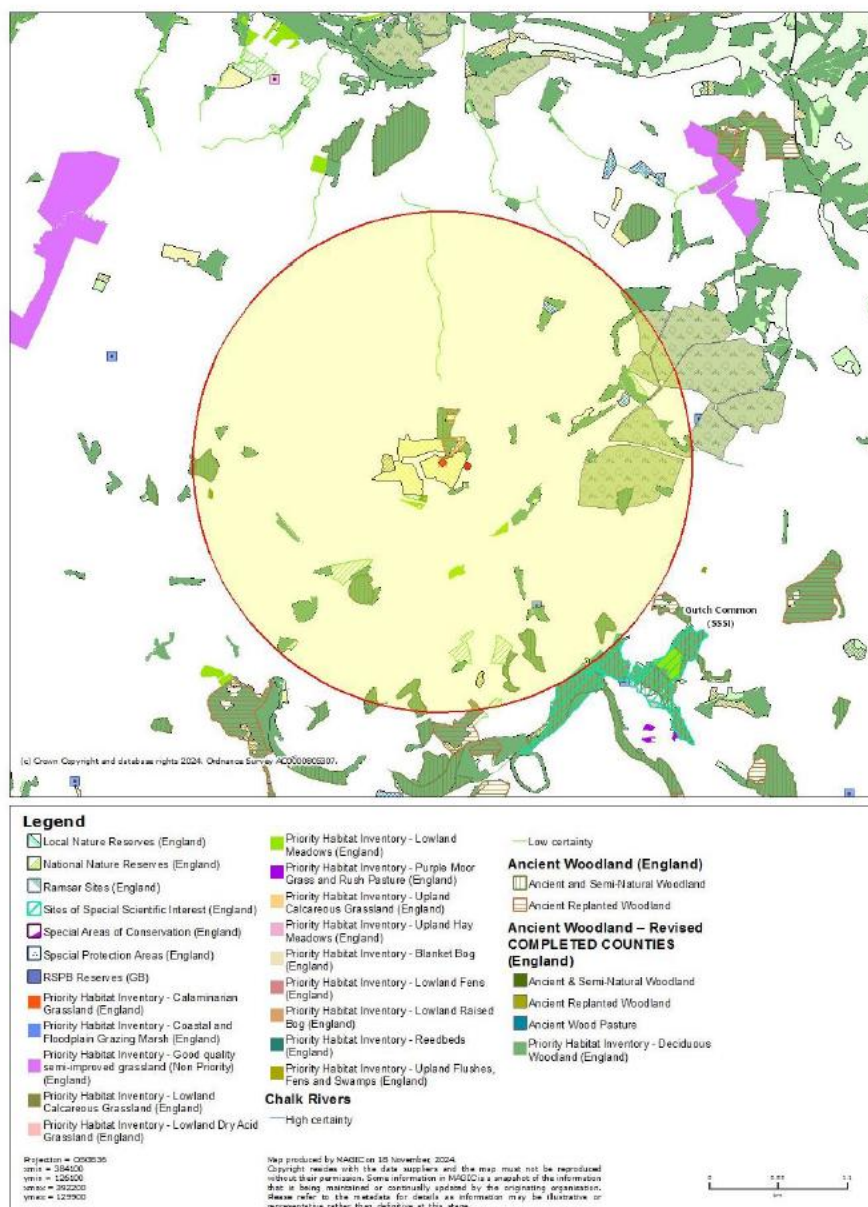
Appendix 1 Site photographs

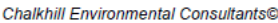


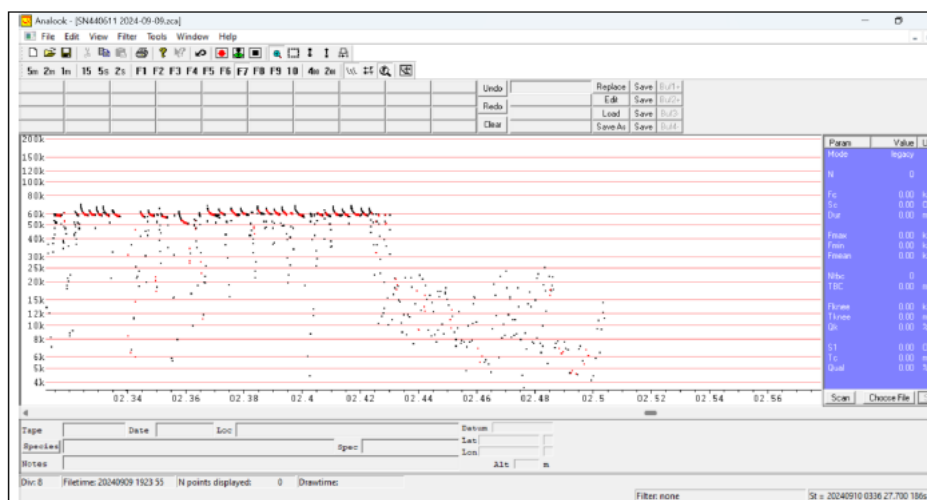


View through woodland track on eastern edge of the woodland looking south

Appendix 2 Designated sites within a 2 kilometre radius of the site surveyed







Appendix 4 Summary of legislation relating to bats

All bat species, their breeding sites and resting places are fully protected by law -from deliberate harm, disturbance and killing and their roosts from damage, disturbance and destruction <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bats-protection-surveys-and-licences>

Appendix 5 Summary of legislation relating to breeding birds

It is illegal to disturb breeding birds, to damage or destroy their nests. Nests are regarded as active whilst being constructed, contain incubating eggs, unfledged young or nest dependent fledged young. Parent and young birds must be allowed to desert nests naturally and not as a result of disturbance. The breeding season for birds is normally regarded as being between and including the months of February to August although some species may breed outside of this period of time.

Disclaimer All reasonable effort was taken to ensure an accurate assessment of the situation at the time of the survey. However, the absence of recorded presence or sign should not be taken as an absolute guarantee that the site was not being used by a particular species. There is also no guarantee that any particular species will not use the site at any time in the future. Survey results may be weather or seasonally dependent. Any interpretation of legislation is based on our understanding and experience of the law. The relevant statutory authority can provide a more definitive interpretation.

This report is the responsibility of Chalkhill Environmental Consultants. It should be noted, that whilst every effort is made to meet the client's brief, no site investigation can ensure complete assessment or prediction of the natural environment.

APPENDIX 5 APPROVED FELLING LICENCE

Felling Licence to fell growing trees



Miss Karen Batten
Unit 8
The Old Dairy
Fonthill Bishop
SP3 5SH

Contact - adminhub.bullershill@forestrycommission.gov.uk

19/11/2024

Application ref: 018/3048/2024

Management Plan Ref:

Felling Licence (Forestry Act 1967)

Woodland Name: Chaldicotts Farm

Please find your approved Felling Licence and associated work area map(s) enclosed. If you are a managing agent receiving this Licence on behalf of the owner / tenant, you must forward a copy of the Licence to the owner / tenant for their attention.

Please note the expiry date for completion of the work.

If this Licence contains conditions for restocking, it is the responsibility of the owner / leaseholder / tenant of the land to ensure that the conditions are met by the required date(s) specified in this Licence. The Forestry Commission may visit the site at any time to inspect compliance of this Licence and its conditions.

Non-compliance with Conditions of the Licence

Failure to comply with the conditions of this Licence may result in an Enforcement Notice being served upon you or any successive owner of the land. Subsequently, failure to comply with an Enforcement Notice may constitute an offence under section 24(4) of the Forestry Act 1967, involving a summary conviction and an unlimited fine. Where an Enforcement Notice is served due to non-compliance with this licence, the Forestry Commission may publish the map attached to this licence (so far as it is replicated within the subsequent Enforcement Notice) upon its publicly facing digital map browser or elsewhere.

Timber Regulations

The Plant Health Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 (PHR) requires the use of Protected Zone plant passports for the movement of all conifers and *Castanea* species (including sweet chestnut) with bark, and standard plant passports for *Juglans*, *Platanus* and *Pterocarya* species (e.g. walnut, plane, wingnut) with or without bark. For these species, a plant passport will be required at each stage of the transport chain where whole or chipped roundwood (including brash) is moved from the harvesting site or site of aggregation, to the processor and the movement of isolated bark whether or not mixed with other materials.

Professional operators must join a register managed by the competent authority, where the professional operator is authorised to issue plant passports. Forest owners will not normally issue passports unless they are responsible for commissioning the movement of timber.

Guidance on how to **Register as a Professional Operator to issue Plant Passports** is available on GOV.UK.

UK legislation governing timber legality prohibits trade of illegally harvested timber and timber products. It requires those responsible for placing UK grown timber onto the market for the first time, the 'Operator', whether they are an owner, contractor or timber merchant, to maintain documentation to prove that the timber is harvested from a legally authorised resource.

A timber regulations Due Diligence checklist is required when placing the timber authorised by this felling licence on the market for the first time. The parties involved will need to complete, and each retain a copy of, the Due Diligence checklist (along with any other documents that demonstrate the timber has been felled in conjunction with all other relevant legislation e.g. Health and Safety). More information on timber regulation is available on GOV.UK by searching '[Regulations: timber and FLEGT licences](#)'.

Protected sites - Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Scheduled Monuments

This Licence only gives you permission to fell the trees specified in the Licence. It does not give you the additional consents that you require in order to conduct works (including felling) within Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Scheduled Monuments (protected sites). These consents may be enclosed with this felling licence, but if they are not, you should not fell trees on protected sites without the formal consent from Natural England or Historic England respectively.

Planning permission

If, after felling trees authorised to be cut down in this Licence, you seek planning permission for any form of development on the felled area, you should be aware that the granting of planning permission will not override the conditions of this Licence or any subsequent Enforcement Notice issued under section 24 of the Forestry Act 1967.

Environmental Information Regulations

Felling Licences are disclosed on request and may be published under the Environmental Information Regulations. Disclosure and publication will take into account the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 in respect to any personal information included in the licence.

Yours sincerely

For the Forestry Commission

Licence to Fell Growing Trees

To: Mr Christopher James
Chaldicotts Farm
Semley
Shaftesbury
SP7 9AW

This Licence gives you permission under section 10 of the Forestry Act 1967 as amended to fell the trees described in Part 1 of this licence and in the areas shown on the appended map(s).

Tree felling under this Licence has been approved by the Forestry Commission as being in accordance with government policy for the sound management of a renewable resource, based on the application made. The Licence issued is intended for use by the person with an interest in the land that enabled them to apply for the licence in the first instance.

The felling permissions in this Licence expire on: 19 Nov 2029

Prior to felling, all parties (agents, contractors, stakeholders) who are involved or affected by the felling must be made aware of this licence and provided with a copy of the Licence and map(s) on request. After enacting any part of this licence, if you sell the land you should also tell the new owner about this Licence.

If a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is placed on these trees after this Licence was applied for or issued, you must contact the Forestry Commission as you will need a new Licence if you wish to fell the protected trees. Without a new felling Licence, you may potentially be committing an offence under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in relation to the TPO. The local planning authority is not empowered to grant you permission to fell protected trees if that felling would ordinarily require a felling Licence.

Tree felling operations must be carried out in a manner that reflects good forestry practice, as set out in the current UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). When preparing tree felling operations, appropriate consideration should always be given for possible impacts on habitats and species, these will include but not limited to:

- Ensuring operations are in compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 relating to European Protected Species (EPS); and
- Ensuring timing of operations (such as in the bird nesting season) are in compliance with the protection of birds under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Any felling operations for 'thinning' approved by this Licence must be implemented evenly across the felling site(s) for thinning identified under Part 1 of this licence. The felling operation for thinning will not exceed 30% of the total number of trees or remove more than 30% of the original canopy cover per operation, unless otherwise agreed by the FC and confirmed in this licence. Note: tree felling operations for 'thinning' that occur at a greater intensity than 30% of the number of trees or area of canopy (in all or part of an operational area) may constitute a breach of the Licence.

Where conditions of the Licence state that restocking is by natural regeneration or by using coppice regrowth, ground conditions must be maintained to facilitate and secure natural regeneration, and coppiced stumps must be retained in situ and be adequately protected to allow site native natural regeneration to occur.

Tree Health

If you have any reason to suspect the presence of tree pests or disease, e.g. *Phytophthora ramorum*, you are obliged to inform the Forestry Commission at the earliest possible opportunity, as per your obligation under article 14 of The Plant Health Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 (PHR).

If larch or other tree species susceptible to *Phytophthora ramorum* included in this licence display symptoms of this disease you must not fell those trees until the FC have had the opportunity to assess their health. If *Phytophthora ramorum* presence is suspected or confirmed, the area will become subject to a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN), the conditions of which will override those contained within this licence.

Sam Negus

Date: 19/11/2024

Signed for and on behalf of the Forestry Commissioners

Part 1 - Description of the trees to be felled

Property: Chaldicotts Farm

Name of wood: Chaldicotts Farm

Local Authority: Wiltshire Council

Approved Felling
Details:

Felling site, subcpt or coupe	Type of operation	Marking of trees	Digitised Area ha	Total number of trees	Estimated volume m³	Species
3	Deforestation	No	1.91		70	ash / mixed broadleaves

Part 2 - Restocking Conditions

Condition B: Restock on alternative area.

The following conditions apply to the licenced felling in D1.

1. Before 30th June 2032 the land marked on the attached map must be:
 - a. adequately prepared for planting
 - b. Planted with 38% mixed broadleaves 13% pedunculate/common oak 13% large leaved lime 13% hazel 13% field maple 10% woody shrubs to achieve not less than 1100 stems per hectare evenly distributed over the site
2. For a period of 10 years from the planting:
 - a. The plants must be protected against damage and be adequately weeded.
 - b. Any failure or losses should be replaced as necessary to provide a stocking of not less than 1100 stems per hectare evenly distributed over the site.
 - c. Any planting must be maintained in accordance with the rules and practice of good forestry.

Advisory information and guidance:

mixed broadleaves to comprise of bird cherry, elm, crab apple & rowan.

Woody shrubs to comprise of hawthorn, blackthorn, guelder rose & dog rose

Part 3 - Supplementary points

ADVISORY NOTES FOR MANAGING ASH:

Reference should be made to Forestry Commission Operations Notes 46, 46a (or revised versions, should these be updated during the lifetime of this felling licence).

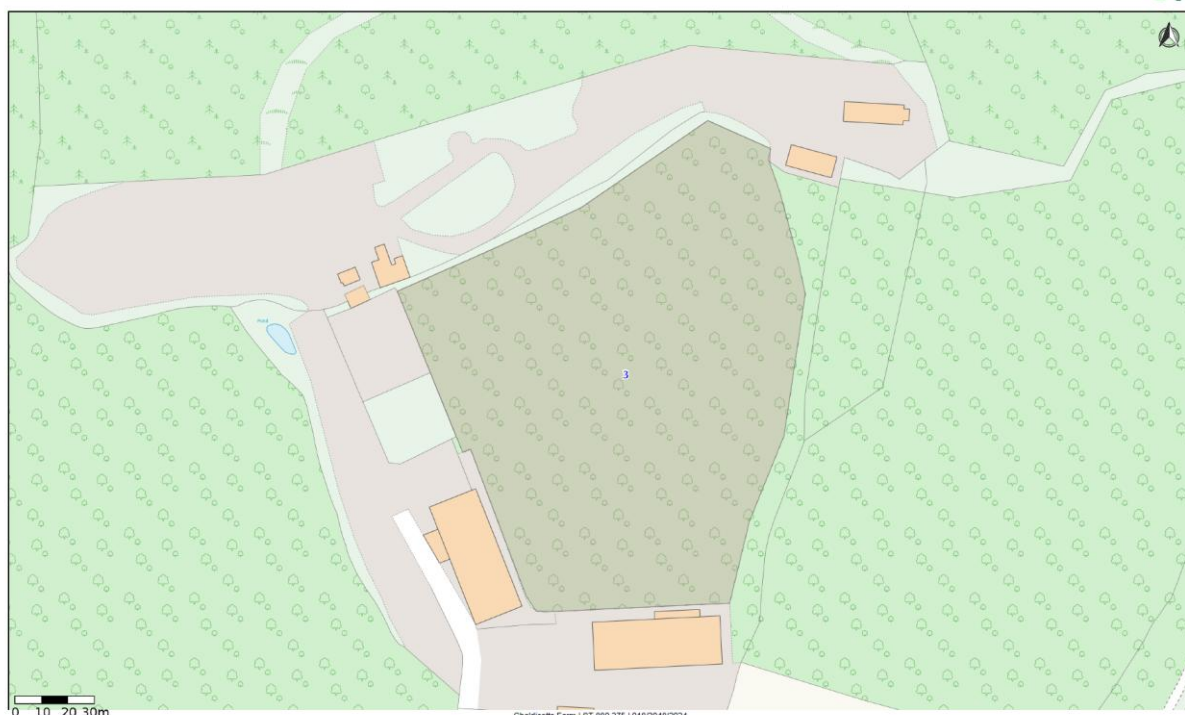
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-ash-in-woodlands-in-light-of-ash-dieback-operations-note-46>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-ash-trees-affected-by-ash-dieback-operations-note-46a>

Restocking Note:

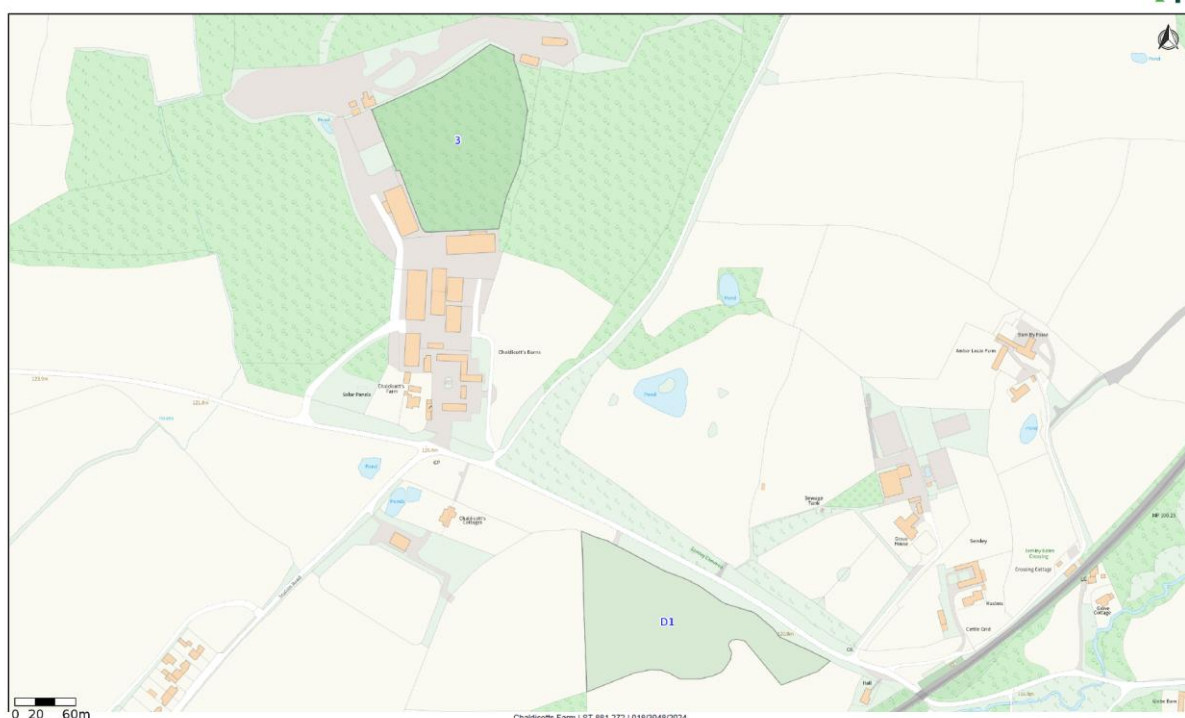
Restocking under this felling licence is to take place on an alternative site (cpt.D1), and is linked to an afforestation EIA (EIA-2024-0587). The FC's EIA decision (consent not required) will expire 5 years from the date of this licence approval - should restocking not have been concluded by this date a new EIA application would need to be made.

Operations Map



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Restocking Map



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