



Solar Panel Installation at Woodlands (Dineley Farming Company)

UKHAB Assessment and BNG Unit Report

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1.0 Introduction

The following report captures the habitat condition assessment and BNG implications, relating to the proposal to install 36 solar PV panels in a field adjacent to Woodlands, a domestic dwelling in the Cranborne Chase AONB.

1.2 Methodology

Surveys of the baseline habitats were carried out in August 2026 using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) system. UKHab is a comprehensive approach for classifying habitats across the UK, designed to support habitat mapping, monitoring, and ecological assessments. It provides a standardised framework that integrates with other classification systems and is widely used in conservation, land management and ecological research. The system is aligned to Governmental Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and has been designed to provide a more consistent baseline for monitoring land use change. The Natural England statutory Metric tool was used to interpret the data and provide the BNG data output.

2.0 Results

Figure 1 *Habitat assessment map*



Figure 2 BNG Proposal Map



2.1 UKhab condition assessment

The area surveyed was the area of grassland within the whole parcel, with the species listed in table 1 and the UK Habitat assessment captured in annex 1. The sward has been assessed as other neutral grassland, characterised by frequent false oat-grass, cocksfoot and black knapweed, with occasional common neutral-grassland herbs and a small number of rare calcareous indicators. On the available species and abundance data, the habitat is provisionally assessed as being in poor condition; confirmation requires representative quadrat data and completion of the relevant statutory condition assessment sheet.”

Table 1 Grassland species parcel 1

Common name	Latin Name	DAFOR
Cocksfoot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	F
Black Knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	F
False oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	F
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	O
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	O
Rough Hawkbit	<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>	O
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	O
Birds-foot Trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	R
Common Agrimony	<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	R
Wild Carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>	R
Lady's Bedstraw	<i>Galium verum</i>	R
Salad Burnet	<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	R
Germander Speedwell	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	R

Image 1: View of where the development will be positioned panel will be positioned



Image 2: Looking East from proposed development position



3.0 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Implications

Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain¹, [subject to some exceptions](#), every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credit.

The area of other neutral grassland to be removed under the proposed development (74 square metres) will exceed the small site implications for the Biodiversity Net Gain requirement. The statutory biodiversity metric is used to measure the biodiversity value of habitats by calculating the number of biodiversity units. It calculates:

- how many units a habitat contains before development takes place
- how many units are needed to replace the units of habitat lost and to achieve 10% BNG, through the creation or enhancement of habitat

The formula takes different factors into account, including the habitat's:

- size
- condition
- strategic significance

The statutory biodiversity tool was used to calculate the BNG requirements for the Solar array proposal at Dineley Farming Company based on the area of the solar panel infrastructure using the statutory metric tool, which takes the condition of the baseline habitat into account. With the solar panel array being created on grassland habitat, a breakdown of broken down as 90% modified grassland in poor condition and 10% built structure across the array block. As the solar panel array will be constructed on grassland habitat, the array footprint has been recorded in the metric as 90% modified grassland and 10% sealed surface, producing the following results:

Table 2 BNG requirements (statutory metric tool 23/07/2024)

Feature	Baseline Area/length	Habitat	Baseline units	Required units	Required area
Habitat	0.0074ha	Other neutral grassland (poor)	0.03	0.03	Approximately 0.01ha of other neutral grassland in good condition.

Figure 3 Detailed statutory metric results

Solar Panels Installation at Woodlands

Headline Results

Scroll down for final results ▲

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On-site baseline

Area habitat units0.03

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

On-site post-intervention

(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)

Area habitat units0.01

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

On-site net change

(units & percentage)

Area habitat units-0.02

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

-56.31%

Un-site net gain is less than target set ▲

Off-site baseline

Area habitat units0.00

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

Off-site post-intervention

(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)

Area habitat units0.00

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

Off-site net change

(units & percentage)

Area habitat units0.00

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

0.00%

0.00%

0.00%

Combined net unit change

(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)

Area habitat units-0.02

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions

Area habitat units0.00

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change

(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)

Area habitat units-0.02

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

Total net % change

(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)

Area habitat units-56.31%

Hedgerow units0.00%

Watercourse units0.00%

Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲

Trading rules satisfied?

No - Check Trading Summaries ▲

Unit Type

Target

Baseline Units

Units Required

Unit Deficit

Area habitat units

10.00%

0.03

0.03

0.02

Hedgerow units

10.00%

0.00

0.00

0.00

Watercourse units

10.00%

0.00

0.00

0.00

No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓

No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Annex 1

UKhab grassland condition assessment

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type			
Grassland - Modified grassland			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Solar Panel Installation at Woodlands (Dineley Farming Company)	Survey date and Surveyor name	28/08/2026
Limitations (if applicable)	Very dry over last few months	Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	Simon Smart
Grid reference	ST 95181 23178	Habitat parcel reference	ST9523 3910
Habitat Description: Other Neutral Grassland			

UKHAB – UK Habitat Classification:	Other Neutral Grassland	-	-
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description). ¹ Note – this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good	No	

	condition for non-acid grassland types only.		
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	Yes	
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens ² .	Yes	
D	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.	Yes	
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition³ and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA⁵) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	No	A high proportion of False oat grass and <i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i> were present, indicating a lack of grazing.
Additional Criterion – must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types			

F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m ² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnote 3 and 5 cannot contribute towards this count). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	No	
Essential criterion for Good condition achieved (for non-acid grassland) (Yes or No)		No	
Number of criteria passed		3	
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/√	
Acid grassland types (Result out of 5 criteria)			
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)		
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)		
Non-acid grassland types (Result out of 6 criteria)			
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.	Good (3)		
Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate (2)		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor (1)	Poor	

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score
Increase grazing pressure outside of flowering period to reduce false oat grass, <i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>
Notes
Footnote 1 – Professional judgement should be used alongside the UKHab description. Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing for plant colonisation, or localised patches not exceeding 5% cover. Footnote 3 – Species indicative of suboptimal condition for this habitat type include: creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>. There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site. Footnote 4 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, by applying professional judgement. Footnote 5 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).