



My Ref: 2026_010_AS

Alex Orttewell
AssetSphere
5 Hound Street
Sherborne
Dorset
DT9 3AB

16th August 2026

Dear Alex,

Re: PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL at DOWN DAIRY FARM, HINDON, WILTSHIRE, SP3 6EF

I am writing to let you know the results of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal that was recently undertaken at Down Dairy Farm, Hindon, Wiltshire.

BACKGROUND & UNDERSTANDING OF BRIEF

Based on our correspondence, I understand that your client is seeking planning permission to construct a covering over part of an existing agricultural yard. The work is supported by the local Catchment Sensitive Farming adviser and a Capital Grant to fund the project has been approved by the Rural Payments Agency. The aim of the project is to cover the dairy yard to prevent slurry leaching into the surrounding countryside and allow better separation of slurry and 'greywater' (ie clean water that runs off of roofs). The proposed site plan is provided at **Annex I**.

PLANNING POLICY & LEGISLATION

As a single unitary authority, Wiltshire Council is currently preparing a new 'Wiltshire Local Plan'. Until such time as this plan is adopted, development at the site's location is guided by the *Salisbury District Local Plan 2011* which contains the saved *Policy C11: Nature Conservation*. This report has been prepared with due consideration to that policy, as well as Chapter 15 of the NPPF. Relevant legislation includes the '*Environment Act 2021*', '*Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)*', the '*Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*' and the '*Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*'.

METHODS

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

UKHab Survey

A survey was undertaken in accordance with the UK Habitat (UKHab) Classification Guidelines v2.01 on 15th August 2026. All habitats within the application site boundary were surveyed and an assessment of the site for the potential presence of notable/protected species was also undertaken.

Survey Limitations

The survey was undertaken within the recognised survey season and all parts of the site could be accessed. It is therefore considered to have been undertaken without any constraints that could affect the validity of any conclusions drawn.

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RESULTS

Desktop Study

The application site falls entirely within the '*Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape (NL)*'. There are no other statutory designated sites located within 1 km of the application site. Given that the proposals would only affect an existing built yard, no impacts on protected sites are predicted.

Habitats

Site photographs are provided at **Annex II**.

The location of the proposed yard covering (**Photographs 1, 2 & 3**) comprises entirely '*Developed Land; Sealed Surface*' (ie concrete). There are no natural, semi-natural, irreplaceable or priority habitats present on site or immediately adjacent. The project is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements, as it is: a) under the 0.2 ha BNG threshold; and b) does not impact any priority habitats. The existing site contains 0 no. biodiversity units and the construction of a yard covering (to reduce slurry/nutrient runoff) is likely to have positive impacts on surrounding habitats.

Species

The application site has no potential to support protected and/or notable species. It is an area of hardstanding that is used as a collecting yard for dairy cattle. It is washed and scraped daily which makes it unsuitable to support wildlife species.

The adjacent barn to the west was surveyed for bats (under NE bat licence 2015-13625-CLS-CLS) and was found to comprise a single-skin corrugated sheet roof (unlined) atop a timber frame. There are no walls, gaps, cavities or voids that could provide roosting opportunities for bats. No evidence of, or potential for, roosting bats was recorded.

It is therefore concluded that there would be no negative impacts on notable/protected species. Indeed, the construction of a yard covering is likely to result in minor off-site enhancements through the reduced/cessation of slurry spill.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The drive of this project is to better manage farmyard slurry and reduce the volume of nutrients that leave the yard and leak into adjacent habitats. It is supported by the local CSF Adviser and has already secured a grant to enable the works to proceed. This demonstrates its overall positive environmental impact. At a site level, the survey did not record any natural or semi-natural habitats and recorded no suitability for the site to support protected/notable species of flora or fauna. It therefore complies fully with the requirements within both local and national planning policies.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With kind regards,

Pete Etheridge BSc MCIEEM
Owner & Principal Ecologist

ANNEX I: SITE PLAN



ANNEX II: SITE PHOTOGRAPHS





Photographs 1, 2 & 3: The location of the proposed yard covering, showing the lack of habitats and highly disturbed conditions.