

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	07/10/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/05310
Proposal:	Change of use of land to allow agricultural and / or equestrian use
Site address:	Land northeast of Heath Cottage, Moor Lane, Garsdon, Malmesbury, SN16 9NW
Case officer:	Alex Edge

Recommendations:

☐	No Comment
☐	Support
☐	No objection
☒	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
☐	Objection - further information required
☐	Objection in principle
☐	HRA completed

Thank you for consulting Ecology. I have reviewed the application and supporting documents against OS Maps, aerial photography of the site and surrounding area, together with GIS layers of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and existing records of protected species.

Information considered:

- Letter Re: Biodiversity Net Gain, Bengrove Ltd, August 2026
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Cotswold Environmental, August 2025
- Planning Statement, RCC Town Planning Consultancy, August 2026
- Combined Plans, A M Design, March 2026
- Location Plan, A M Design, March 2026

The site comprises a section of field, bordered by trees and hedgerows. It is proposed to change the use of this field from grazing to equestrian/agricultural use. This application is one of four applications recently submitted to support the change of use, and the creation of access, a track and barns. The site connects to further fields in all directions, with some dwellings to the northeast and southwest, and woodland parcels in the wider landscape. The site does not fall within any designated sites or associated consultation zones.

COMMENTS:

Protected species

The red line boundary appears to exclude the bordering hedgerow and contain only an internal area of the arable field. No habitat loss is proposed, and the change of use is not likely to adversely affect protected wildlife.

The surrounding hedgerow was found to contain a number of potential bat roosting features. Given the suitability of the site and surrounding landscape for use by bats, a condition should be applied to ensure that any new lighting scheme is submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to implementation.

Biodiversity Net Gain

From 12 February 2024 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Based on the information available the biodiversity gain planning condition is not considered to apply to this application as the development meets the following criteria and is therefore below the de minimis threshold, meaning the development:

- o does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
- o impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric). In this case, it is understood that there will be no loss of habitat to accommodate this change of use application.

The applicant should note that whilst this proposal does not involve any direct loss of hedgerow, it is understood that field access is being proposed under application PL/2026/05311 which will require the removal of a section of hedgerow (thereby, that application is not exempt from BNG). If said application is *not* permitted, BNG condition not discharged, and/or access is required to be created at another location to accommodate the current proposal, then BNG will need to be re-addressed for such a scenario and Ecology consulted.

Note to case officer: you should be satisfied that the proposals meet the above criteria and act accordingly. Further information will be required from the applicant prior to determination in the event the application is considered to be subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain.

CONDITIONS:

1. Lighting

No external light fixture or fitting will be installed within the application site unless details of existing and proposed new lighting have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details will demonstrate how the proposed lighting will impact on bat habitat compared to the existing situation. The plans will be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes on the Avoidance of Obtrusive Light (GN 01/2021) and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

REASON: To avoid illumination of habitat used by bats and other wildlife.

Sign off by WC Ecologist will only be given once ALL outstanding information has been submitted and agreed sufficient.

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 07/10/2026
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