

Environmental Statement

Appendix 8.1: Ecological Impact Assessment

Gundrys Farm Caravan Park

On behalf of Royale Parks (Dorset) Limited

March 2026



Gundry's Farm

Ecological Impact Assessment

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REPORT

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Prepared for:

AR (New Forest Court) Limited

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- RPS Tetra Tech were commissioned by AR (New Forest Court) Limited to undertake a range of recommended Phase 2 protected species surveys of the land at Gundrys Farm, Three-Legged Cross, Wimborne, Dorset, following a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by RSK in January 2025.
- Following the updated UKHabitat and ecological scoping surveys, a number of further ecological surveys were carried out including botanical UK Habitat surveys, reptile surveys, great crested newt (GCN) surveys, badger surveys, breeding bird and species-specific nightjar surveys and bat surveys (night-time walkover, emergence and static detector).
- The site includes the appeal site (6.69 ha) and the application site (1.12 ha) boundary. The appeal site covers the majority of the site boundary comprising a mixture of grassland, scrub, internal tracks, caravans, fencing and individual trees. The application site includes a smaller area to the north, comprising several abandoned buildings and associated hardstanding, scrub, treelines, and a ditch, connected to the appeal site by a strip of grassland.
- Surveys were undertaken over the entire site, across an area totalling 7.81 ha. It is bordered to the north by residential and commercial properties; to the west and east by other areas of the wider caravan park; and to the south by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) West Moors Depot.
- The site is adjacent to the Dorset Heathlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site to the south. Given the close proximity of the Dorset Heathlands SAC / SPA / Ramsar, a Habitat Regulations Assessment has been completed alongside this report in order to help the local planning authority determine whether or not the proposals will have any impact on the integrity of the European designated sites.
- The site is also adjacent to the Holt and West Moors Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south. A Construction Environmental Management Plan will ensure that this designated site does not experience any negative impacts as a result of the development.
- Scrub, ditches and areas of less intensively managed grassland were considered to offer suitable habitat for common reptile species. Reptile surveys identified a low proportion of grass snake and a good population of slow worm and common lizard. A number of mitigation measures have been proposed in this report to manage impacts on reptiles within the site.
- Six waterbodies identified within 500 m of the site were subject to a GCN (HSI) assessment by RPS Tetra Tech. Dry weather conditions in the preceding weeks to the survey meant eDNA surveys could not be conducted. The presence or likely absence of GCN at the site could not be confidently determined from the desk study or survey results, therefore a number of precautionary mitigation measures have been proposed to manage impacts on potential GCN within the site.
- No badgers, setts or signs of badger were identified during the site walkover and therefore no specific mitigation is needed. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- Breeding bird surveys identified a local level of geographical importance of breeding populations of conservation interest, bar woodpigeon and wren which were identified at site level. The other exception to this was nightjar, which is of international interest due to its designation as a qualifying feature of the Dorset Heathlands SPA under Article 4.1 of the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC). Whilst the majority of species are common and widespread in the context of Dorset and the wider region, the habitats within the survey area do provide breeding and foraging habitat for an assemblage of notable species. A number of mitigation

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measures have been proposed in this report to manage impacts on breeding birds within the site.

- As nightjar is a qualifying species of the Dorset Heathlands SPA, nocturnal nightjar surveys were also undertaken within approximately 300 m of the site boundary. Churring males were identified immediately south of the site boundary, within the SPA, with individuals also recorded in-flight over the site. Whilst breeding nightjar were not identified onsite, territories adjacent to the site are likely to be impacted by the proposed works, with individuals most likely foraging and roosting within the grassland, scattered trees and ditches onsite. A number of species-specific mitigation measures have been proposed in this report to manage impacts on nightjar within and adjacent to the site.
- No bat roosts were identified during the 2025 bat emergence surveys.
- Bat activity surveys confirmed the site was of moderate suitability for commuting/foraging bats. The site offered good connectivity to the surrounding area with scrub and lines of trees connecting the site to suitable offsite habitats. At least nine species of bat were recorded foraging/commuting onsite during the surveys undertaken between May and October 2025, including: Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Noctule *Nyctalus noctule*, Leisler's *Nyctalus leisleri*, Serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, long-eared *Plecotus* sp., *Myotis* sp., barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus* and Greater Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*.
- A number of mitigation measures have been proposed in this report in order to protect foraging/commuting bats within the site, which has included a series of bat box installations, attractive planting and a sensitive lighting scheme to encourage the roosting, foraging and commuting, post-development.

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- Appendix A** GCN HIS Assessment Results
- Appendix B** GCN Survey Waterbody Photographs
- Appendix C** Bird Species List
- Appendix D** Plant Species List

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and scope of this report

- 1.1.1 RPS Ecology were commissioned by AR (New Forest Court) Limited to undertake Phase 2 Protected Species Surveys and prepare the associated Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of the land at Gundry's Farm Caravan Park, Wimborne, Dorset (hereafter referred to as 'the site').
- 1.1.2 A Preliminary ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site was undertaken by RSK in January 2025 to undertake an initial assessment of the potential ecological impact of the proposals. RPS then completed an updated desk study, UK Habitat Survey, and a preliminary protected species assessment carried out in accordance with CIEEM (2017), to update the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR) already completed for the site (RSK, 2025).
- 1.1.3 Following the updated UK Habitat Survey and ecological scoping surveys, a number of further ecological surveys were undertaken for the site:
- Botanical surveys;
 - Reptile surveys;
 - GCN (HSI) surveys;
 - Badger surveys;
 - Breeding bird surveys;
 - Species-specific nightjar surveys; and
 - Bat surveys (night-time walkover, emergence and static device).
- 1.1.4 This report aims to:
- Undertake a desk-based review of designated sites and records of protected species and other species that could present a constraint to development;
 - Map and assess the habitats present onsite;
 - Assess the site for potential to support protected species or other species that could present a constraint to development, and make appropriate recommendations for further survey work;
 - Report on the additional surveys undertaken;
 - Provide outline options for mitigation measures as appropriate; and
 - Make recommendations for appropriate biodiversity enhancements in-line with national and local planning policy.
- 1.1.5 This report pertains to these results only; recommendations included within this report are the professional opinion of an experienced ecologist and therefore the view of RPS. The surveys and desk-based assessments undertaken as part of this review and subsequent report including the Ecological Appraisal Notes are prepared in accordance with the British Standard for Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BS42020:2013).

1.2 Study area and Zone of Influence

- 1.2.1 The site is located southeast of the Three-Legged Cross in Wimborne, Dorset, and measures approximately 7.81 ha in size. The National Grid coordinates for the centre of the site are SU 08615 05149.
- 1.2.2 The site is split into two connected parcels of land: the 'appeal site' (1.12 ha) and the 'application site' (6.69 ha), to the north. The appeal site covers the majority of the site boundary comprising a mixture of grassland, scrub, internal tracks, caravans, fencing and individual trees. The application site includes a smaller area to the north, comprising several abandoned buildings and associated hardstanding, scrub, treelines, and a ditch, connected to the appeal site by a parcel of grassland.
- 1.2.3 The site is bordered to the north by residential and commercial properties; to the west and east by other areas of the wider caravan park; and to the south by designated sites which form part of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) West Moors Depot.
- 1.2.4 The whole site location is shown in **Figure 1.1**. Aerial imaging available via Google Earth Pro was also reviewed to assess the site in relation to its context in the wider landscape.
- 1.2.5 The term Zone of Influence is used to describe the geographic extent of potential impacts of a proposed development. The Zone of Influence is determined by the nature of the development and also in relation to designated sites, habitats or species which might be affected by the proposals.
- 1.2.6 For this site, the Zone of Influence is considered to be land on and immediately adjacent to the site including an assessment of linked functional land for breeding birds, plus an approximate 300 m buffer for nightjar, [REDACTED] and a 500 m buffer for suitable habitat for great crested newt (GCN).

Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan.



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LEGEND
 Site Boundary



			
Client	AR (New Forest) Limited		
Project	Gundrys Farm, Dorset		
Project No.	22139		
Title	Site location		
Drawing No.	Figure No. 1.1	Revision 01	Status FINAL
Date OCT 2025	Drawn By OW	Checked By MM	Revision By -
Scale @ A3 1:2,500		Datum OSGB 1936	

1.3 Development proposals

The Appeal Site

- 1.3.1 The development at Gundrys Farm is subject to an appeal (ref: APP/D1265/C/22/3313965) against the Enforcement Notice (ref: ENF/17/0094) issued by Dorset Council in October 2022 under Regulation 37 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. This notice stated the following unauthorised development was carried out in breach of planning control in Section 3 of the EN:

Without planning permission, the unauthorised change in the use of the Land (Planning Unit A):

- a) *the unauthorised material change in the use of the Land from a lawful mixed use of agriculture and a caravan site for exempt organisations to a mixed use of agriculture and an authorised caravan site consisting of:*
 - i. *The stationing of caravans (with and without awnings), motorhomes, campervans, trailer-tents and tents for the purpose of human habitation; and*
 - ii. *The storage of caravans.*
 - iii. *The keeping of donkeys;*
- b) *the carrying out of unauthorised operational development which facilitates the unauthorised material change in use of the land alleged in section A above. The unauthorised operational development consisted of the following:*
 - i. *Hard standings and tracks;*
 - ii. *Toilet and shower blocks;*
 - iii. *Septic Tanks*
 - iv. *Electrical hook-up points*
 - v. *Fire Hydrants*
 - vi. *A water/wastewater facility*
 - vii. *Location signs.*
 - viii. *Animal shelter and concrete base”*

- 1.3.2 The appeal addresses the unauthorised development and subsequent changes in the use of land at Gundrys Farm (hereafter referred to as ‘the appeal site’). The appeal site red line boundary (RLB) is shown in more detail in **Figure 3.2** in the results section of this report.

The Application Site

- 1.3.3 It is understood that the proposed development will include some vegetation clearance and demolition of several buildings to create an access road connecting the caravan park (the appeal site) to Ringwood Road. This will be submitted as a separate planning application for the proposed access route (hereafter referred to as the ‘application site’). The application site blue line boundary (BLB) is shown in more detail in **Figure 3.2** in the results section of this report.

1.4 Aims, Objectives and Legislation

1.4.1 Relevant legislation, policy guidance and both Local and National Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) are referred to throughout this report where appropriate. Their context and application is explained in the relevant sections of this report.

1.4.2 The relevant articles of legislation are:

- The Environment Act, 2021;
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2025);
- ODPM Circular 06/2005 (retained as Technical Guidance on NPPF 2025);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (EU Exit Amendment);
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997;
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
- Dorset Council Local Plan 2018-2038 – Policy ENV2 (Wildlife Habitats and Species); and
- Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 – Policy ME1 (Safeguarding Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and Policy ME2 (Protection of Dorset Heathlands).

Botanical (UKHab) Survey

1.4.1 The objective of the botanical survey was to identify the habitats currently present within and around the site to UKHab standard in order to obtain baseline ecological information for the site. The aim of the survey was to:

- Carry out an updated assessment the areas of land to be developed;
- Identify any priority habitats present (i.e., those listed as habitats of principal importance in England);
- Undertake a UKHab survey where confirmation of a habitat type is required; and
- Provide a full species list for each area and identify the presence of any notable (rare or invasive) species.

Reptile Survey

1.4.2 The surveys aimed to determine the presence/absence of any reptiles within suitable areas of habitat onsite and to estimate the population size for each species.

1.4.3 All common UK reptile species (Adder *Vipera berus*, Grass Snake *Natrix Helvetica*, Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis*) are protected through part of Section 9(1 and 5) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This prohibits:

- Intentional or reckless injuring or killing;

- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, or having in possession or transporting for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild animal or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal; or
- Publishing or causing to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying buying or selling, or intending to buy or sell, any of those things.

GCN Surveys

- 1.4.4 Great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which affords the species protection under Section 9. The species is also listed on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. In combination, this makes it an offence to:
- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.) a great crested newt;
 - possess a great crested newt; and
 - intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by great crested newt for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.
- 1.4.5 Great crested newts are also listed on the UKBAP as a Priority Species and are listed as a species of principal importance for biodiversity in England & Wales under Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act (2006).

Badger Surveys

- 1.4.6 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This act is based on the need to protect badgers from baiting and deliberate harm or injury. The act makes it an offence to:
- Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so; and
 - Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access routes.
- 1.4.7 A sett is defined as “any structure or place that displays signs indicating current use by a badger”.

Breeding Bird Surveys

- 1.4.8 The aims and objectives of the survey for breeding and wintering bird surveys were to:
- identify whether the site supported any specially protected species or species of particular conservation concern; and
 - provide information on potential impacts of the development proposals to the breeding bird community identified in the study area.
- 1.4.9 All birds, their nests and eggs are afforded protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as updated by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It is an offence to:
- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
 - intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and

- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

1.4.10 Schedule 1 birds cannot be intentionally or recklessly disturbed when nesting and there are increased penalties for doing so. Licences can be issued to visit the nests of such birds for conservation, scientific or photographic purposes but not to allow disturbance during a development even in circumstances where that development is fully authorised by consents such as a valid planning permission.

Nightjar Survey

- 1.4.11 Nightjars are crepuscular and nocturnal birds that arrive in the UK between late April and mid-May before returning to Africa in August or September. They hunt at dusk and dawn for larger moths around heathlands, open areas of woodland or clear-felled conifer plantations and scrubby vegetation. They traditionally nest in lowland heath and require an area of at least 2 ha but can forage up to 3 km from their nest sites. Nightjar are very well camouflaged when on the nest or roosting. However, their distinctive call or 'churring' identifies their location, along with wing claps and contact calls.
- 1.4.12 Nightjar, their nests and eggs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) (WCA). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure, or take a nightjar, or take or destroy an egg. It is also an offence to damage or destroy the nest of a nightjar whilst being built, or in use.
- 1.4.13 Nightjar are also listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC); on Schedule 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006, making them a priority species; and are included on the Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Amber List due to historic and current population changes.
- 1.4.14 Nightjar are a designated feature of the Dorset Heathlands SPA, immediately adjacent to the site boundary, under Article 4.1 of the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC). Whilst no records of nightjar were identified in the PEAR (RKS, 2025), it was deemed necessary to conduct species-specific nightjar surveys within approximately 300 m of the site boundary, with any breeding individuals in this area likely to be affected by the proposed development.
- 1.4.15 The objective of the survey was to identify the presence or likely absence of breeding nightjar in suitable habitat that may be affected by the proposed Scheme. If nightjar presence was confirmed, the results would enable the potential effects of the proposed Scheme to be established, and measures required to mitigate or compensate for significant adverse effects to be determined.

Bat Surveys

- 1.4.16 The objective of bat emergence, night walkover and static device surveys were to determine the current use of the site by bats, to inform the future development of the site. The study aimed to determine the potential impacts (if any) of the development by establishing:
- the general level of bat activity on the site;
 - the range of species using the site; and
 - the best course of action to minimise the impacts of the development on the local bat population.
- 1.4.17 All British bat species are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. All bat species are also included on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017. Taken together, these pieces of legislation make it an offence to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture bats;
- deliberately or recklessly disturb bats (whether in a roost or not); and
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.

- 1.4.18 A roost is defined as '*any structure or place which [a bat] uses for shelter or protection*'. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, it is considered within the legal opinion that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time of the survey.
- 1.4.19 Barbastelle bats *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* are also listed as being species of principle importance to the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- 1.4.20 Barbastelle, Bechstein's, greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe bats are also listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. As such a site may be designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) due to the presence of these species.

2 METHODS

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 Ecological records within a 2 km radius of the whole site were requested by RPS from Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC, 2025). Data requests were limited to records for protected species recorded within the last ten years and sites of nature conservation interest within 2 km of the site. This included a review of existing statutory sites of nature conservation interest, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Area of Conservation (SACs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), and non-statutory sites, such as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs).
- 2.1.2 Locations of statutory designated sites were accessed via the government 'MAGIC' website (MagicMap, 2026).
- 2.1.3 A 1:25,000 OS map was used to identify nearby features such as ponds or green corridors that could provide habitat or connectivity to other areas.

2.2 Botanical (UKHab) Survey

- 2.2.1 A botanical survey was undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist on the 9th May 2025. The whole site was split into eight areas to identify habitats and vegetation present to a UKHab standard. Area 6 and a small parcel of land between the northern region of the application site and Area 2 were not surveyed due to accessibility issues.
- 2.2.2 A full species list was undertaken for each development area. Subjective estimates of the relative abundance of species in selected habitat parcels were added to the plant species list using a modified DAFOR scale. The DAFOR scale ranks species according to their relative abundance in a given parcel of land as follows: d – dominant, a – abundant, f – frequent, o – occasional, r – rare.
- 2.2.3 Plant nomenclature in this report follows Stace (2010) for native and naturalised species of vascular plant. Plant names in the text are given with the English name first, followed by the scientific name, which is only given on the first use.
- 2.2.4 The Domin-scale represents estimates of cover by numbers as given below in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: NVC DAFOR Values

DAFOR Value	Description
D	Dominant
A	Abundant
F	Frequent
O	Occasional
R	Rare

UK Habitat Classification

- 2.2.5 The different types of habitats were keyed out using the UK Habitats Classification (UKHab Ltd, 2023). UKHab works at two levels: a hierarchical primary habitat classification and a list of secondary codes. The primary classification builds on existing habitat and botanical classifications. Habitats are described through an increasingly detailed hierarchy until a match is found.

2.3 Reptile Survey

- 2.3.1 An eight-visit presence/absence reptile survey was carried out between March and June 2025 within areas of suitable habitat in accordance with good practice guidelines outlined in the Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (JNCC, 2003) and Froglife, Advice Sheet 10 (1999). This is considered a sufficient number of visits in order to meet the survey objectives of determining the presence or likely absence of reptiles within a site.
- 2.3.2 The survey was conducted using artificial refugia made from roofing felt measuring 50 cm x 50 cm. These provide shelter and basking opportunities for reptiles, which can be recorded on or under the refugia during suitable weather conditions, i.e., avoiding periods of strong wind, heavy rain, or extreme temperatures; typically, surveys are undertaken when the air temperature is between 9 and 18°C.
- 2.3.3 A total of 66 refugia were placed around the whole site on the 3rd March 2025 and left to bed in for over two weeks. During this time, they develop favourable conditions (e.g., suitable humidity and temperature gradient) and the reptiles become more familiar with them.
- 2.3.4 The surveys began in March 2025 and concluded in June 2025. All reptile species present were recorded. Any reptiles observed whilst walking between refugia were also recorded. The location of the mats is shown in the results section of this report.
- 2.3.5 The dates and weather conditions during the surveys are shown in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Reptile Survey Dates and Weather Conditions

Date	Temperature (°C)	Cloud (cc)	Wind	Weather
25/03/2025	14	1/8	0	Dry, no rain
07/04/2025	12	0/8	1	Dry, no rain
11/04/2025	13	0/8	1	Dry, no rain
22/04/2025	12	2/8	1	Dry, no rain
02/05/2025	18	1/8	2	Dry, no rain
07/05/2025	15	2/8	2	Dry, no rain
29/05/2025	18	4/8	3	Dry, no rain
04/06/2025	14	6/8	0	Dry, no rain

- 2.3.6 The surveys were undertaken by experienced RPS ecologists. Each survey comprised the surveyor walking around the site checking the refugia for reptiles basking on top of or sheltering under the refugia.
- 2.3.7 Population size class estimates were undertaken using Froglife Advice Sheet 10 (1999) which is based on the maximum number of adults seen by one person on one survey visit as detailed in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Reptile Population Size Class Estimates

Species	Low Population Score 1	Good Population Score 2	Exceptional Population Score 3
Adder	<5	5 - 10	>10
Grass snake	<5	5 - 10	>10
Common lizard	<5	5 - 20	>20
Slow worm	<5	5 - 20	>20

* Population Score refers to maximum number of adults seen by observation onsite and/or refugia (density of up to 10 per hectare) by one person in one day.

2.4 GCN (HSI) Survey

- 2.4.1 A site visit to carry out HSI assessments and eDNA sampling of waterbodies within 500 m of the whole site was conducted on 14th May 2025 by Tetra Tech on behalf of RPS. Natural England (NE) Class 1 GCN Licenced surveyors Associate Ecologist Kevin Wood (2018-34021-CLS-CLS) and Project Ecologist Izzy Frey were the surveyors. The weather was clear with no rain, a light breeze and an ambient temperature of approximately 20°C.

Habitat Suitability Index Assessment

- 2.4.2 A HSI Assessment is traditionally used as an objective method for assessing the suitability of a waterbody as habitat to support GCN (Oldham et al., 2004). The system provides an index between 0 and 1, with 0 indicating likely unsuitable habitat and 1 indicating optimal habitat. Ten suitability indices are used to calculate the index score, each representing a factor considered to affect GCN. These factors are listed and briefly explained below:

- Location: i.e. where the pond is located in the British Isles. Lowlands are generally thought to be most suitable; suitability declines with increases in altitude;
- Pond area: i.e., the water surface area of a pond. Suitability peaks at approximately 800m²;
- Pond drying: how often a particular pond dries out. Ponds which dry out more frequently are less suitable;
- Water quality: an indication of water quality based on the invertebrate diversity present. High invertebrate diversity indicates high water quality and suitability;
- Shade: an estimate of the total shaded perimeter of a pond. Shoreline shade below 60% is optimal;
- Fowl: indication of impact by waterfowl. High waterfowl numbers are generally considered detrimental;
- Fish: indication of fish abundance. High fish numbers are generally considered detrimental;
- Pond count: based on the density of ponds occurring within 1km of a particular pond. Suitability is positively correlated with pond density;
- Terrestrial habitat: based on the availability of suitable habitat in the pond vicinity, e.g. rough grassland, scrub and woodland. For this assessment, the categories provided in the NARRS Survey Pack (Herpetological Conservation Trust, 2008)⁵ were used. This differs from the assessment criteria by Oldham et al. (2000), and is based on work by Lee Brady (unpublished); and
- Macrophytes: based on an estimate of the percentage cover by emergent and aquatic vegetation. Suitability peaks at between 70% and 80% cover.

- 2.4.3 The results are then compared against a categorical scale developed by Lee Brady (unpublished) to give an overall rating as follows:

- <0.5 = Poor
- 0.5 – 0.59 = Below Average
- 0.6 – 0.69 = Average
- 0.7 – 0.79 = Good
- >0.8 = Excellent

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- 2.4.4 Provisional HSI scores were undertaken on each of the six waterbodies although these were dry at the time of the survey, which is discussed within the limitations of this report. A summary of HSI scores for each waterbody is given in Table 1 in the Results section. The full results of the HSI assessments are presented in Appendix B, with photographs of each waterbody provided in Appendix C.

eDNA Sampling and Testing

- 2.4.5 No water samples were collected as all accessible waterbodies were dry at the time of the visit.

2.5 Badger Survey

2.5.1



Field Observations

- 2.5.2 The survey area was searched for badger sett entrances and field signs of badger activity. Observed field signs were recorded, and an assessment was made of any sett entrances, noting the signs of level of activity.
- 2.5.3 Where sett entrances were identified, the sett status was determined as one of the following listed below, the field signs recorded included:
- **Active sett** – A well-used sett entrance in current or regular use. The entrance is clear of debris and may have been recently excavated with associated spoil. Other signs associated with use may also be present such as footprints, hairs, and latrines;
 - **Partially active setts** – Sett entrances are not in regular use, may contain debris, and there may be moss or other plants growing in or around the sett entrance which would not be removed with infrequent use.
 - **Disused setts** – Sett entrances are clearly not in current use and have not been used in some time. The tunnels may be partially or completely blocked, and the entrance and associated spoil piles may be vegetated.
 - **Dung Pits** - The normal method of excretion for badgers is to defecate into a small scrape or pit, which is left uncovered.
 - **Latrines** - Collective names for a series of dung pits within an area. These are used by badger social groups to demarcate their territory and may be used for other behavioural purposes/latrines are therefore an important part of badger social life.
 - **Track** - A main arterial route frequently used by badgers, which may be clearly visible over a considerable distance.
 - **Run** - A less frequently used route, which may only be visible where it crosses some obstacle, such as a bank, a hedge or a fence. badger hair can sometimes be collected along tracks where they have pushed under barbed wire fences.
 - **Foraging Area** - An area which shows signs of foraging activity. Most often occurs as some form of “snuffle holes” and rooting up of turf or ground cover, overturning of dried cow manure, when in search of earthworms. Other foraging evidence may appear as holes left from digging out wasp or bees’ nests, or in arable areas, “rolling” of cereal crops.

- **Prints** - Can be detected where badgers have crossed areas of bare ground and are easily distinguishable from other mammal prints.

Sett Assessment

2.5.4 A badger sett is any structure or place, in which the badger social group lives and shelters through the day. Setts can be classified into four main categories, defined by the degree of use, context with other setts and number of holes present (number of holes in and of itself is not a completely reliable indicator of sett status). Within a territory there can be several badger setts that are categorised in the following ways (Neal and Cheeseman, 1996):

- **Main sett:** There will normally be one main sett in a territory. This will generally be the largest sett in the territory, typically with five or more entrances, and will be permanently occupied throughout the year and used as a breeding sett.
- **Annexe sett:** A sett of intermediate size located close to the main sett (usually less than 50m away) and connected by well-defined paths. These are occupied for prolonged periods and may be used as a second breeding sett if there are two breeding sows in the clan.
- **Subsidiary sett:** A sett of intermediate size, similar to an annexe sett but located at some distance from the main sett (at least 150m away) and not connected to the main sett by defined paths. These setts are sometimes used for breeding but are not always active.
- **Outlier sett:** These are the smallest setts with generally only one or two entrances. They are intermittently occupied and there can be any number in a territory.

2.6 Breeding Bird Survey

- 2.6.1 Breeding bird surveys were undertaken by BiOME Consulting Ltd (2025) on behalf of RPS. The breeding bird survey undertaken was based on a standard territory mapping methodology as outlined in Gilbert et al. (1998), Bibby et al. (2000) and Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group (2025).
- 2.6.2 This method is based on the principle that the majority of species are territorial during the breeding season. This results in birds occupying discrete territories and displaying various behaviours (e.g. conspicuous song, visual display and periodic disputes with neighbouring individuals) allowing their location and abundance to be estimated.
- 2.6.3 The survey area plus a 50 m buffer was walked at a slow pace in order to locate and identify all individual birds. Four visits were undertaken early in the morning, finishing before midday, and two visits were undertaken at dusk with the intention of identifying species not readily recorded early in the morning.
- 2.6.4 Suitable optical equipment was used to observe bird behaviour, and all accessible parts of the survey area were approached to within a buffer zone of 50 m. Survey routes were mapped and the direction walked alternated on each visit, to ensure that all areas were covered at various times of morning across the duration of the survey. All species encountered within the survey area were recorded and mapped.
- 2.6.5 Six survey visits were undertaken in spring/summer 2025 with the dates and weather conditions detailed in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4: Breeding Bird Survey dates and weather conditions

Visit	Date	Surveyor	Temperature (°C)	Cloud (cc)	Wind	Weather
1 (Dawn)	26/03/2025	James Grundy	7	4-7/8	0	Dry, no rain
2 (Dawn)	16/04/2025	James Grundy	6-10	1-8/8	2-4 SSW	Light showers
3 (Dusk)	01/05/2025	James Grundy	9-17	1-3/8	0-2 ENE	Dry, no rain
4 (Dawn)	20/05/2025	James Grundy	8-12	0/8	0-2 NE	Dry, no rain
5 (Dusk)	10/06/2025	James Grundy Ralf Butchers Marion Peskett	15-17	2-4/8	0-1 WNW	Dry, no rain
6 (Dusk)	23/06/2025	James Grundy Ralf Butchers Marion Peskett	16-20	0/8	0-3 SW	Dry, no rain

- 2.6.6 On each visit, registrations were recorded directly into ESRI GIS software loaded on handheld tablet devices. A fresh map was used for each survey. Registrations of birds were recorded using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) two letter species codes (BTO 2009). Specific codes were also used to denote singing, calling, movement between areas, flight, carrying food, nest building, aggressive encounters and other behaviour.
- 2.6.7 The expected outcome of a territory mapping survey is that mapped registrations fall into clusters approximately coinciding with territories. A cluster is generally a spatially distinct group of registrations that represent the activity of not more than one territorial male or pair. Ideally, clusters include registrations of territorial behaviour across all visits and are clearly demarcated from adjacent clusters by simultaneous recording of neighbouring birds. Where a species exhibits high territory density, the mapping of simultaneously singing birds becomes essential. Territory boundaries are assumed to be between such birds.

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- 2.6.8 Territory mapping methods produce analysis maps of non-overlapping ellipses encircling clusters of records thought to relate to separate territorial males or breeding pairs. These ellipses may not show the entire extent of a pairs' actual breeding territory, which may be significantly larger, however, they are likely to show those areas in which the pair is most active.
- 2.6.9 On completion of the surveys, analysis maps were produced for each species, consisting of all registrations recorded during the survey. From these species' maps, the number of territories was calculated by identifying the number of clusters present.
- 2.6.10 Standard registration mapping techniques were also used to record non-breeding species.
- 2.6.11 The following definitions have been used to identify the breeding status of the species recorded:
- **Confirmed breeding:** includes species for which territories were positively identified as a result of the number of registrations, the location of an active nest, and the presence of recently fledged young or downy young.
 - **Probable breeding:** includes a pair observed in suitable nesting habitat in breeding season, or agitated behaviour / anxiety calls from adults indicating the presence of nest or young nearby. Behaviour was observed on insufficient occasions to confirm the presence of a territory.
 - **Possible breeding:** includes species observed in breeding season in suitable nesting habitats or singing male present (or breeding calls heard) in breeding season in suitable breeding habitat however records to determine a confirmed breeding either limited or sporadic.
 - **Non-breeding:** fly-over species observed but suspected to be on migration, or species observed but suspected to be summering non-breeder.

Assessment criteria

- 2.6.12 The assessment of the breeding bird community of the Haven Church Farm study site includes a focus on species that are afforded special statutory protection or those included on one, or more, of the lists of species of conservation interest, these include:
- Species listed on Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC).
 - Species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
 - Species included on the Section 41 list of Species of Principal Importance of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
 - Species included in the Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red and Amber Lists (Stanbury et al. 2021).
 - Species occurring in nationally, regionally or locally important numbers.
- 2.6.13 Annex 1 species are those for which the UK Government are required to take special measures, including the designation of Special Protection Areas, to ensure the survival and reproduction of these species throughout their area of distribution.
- 2.6.14 Schedule 1 species are those which, along with their nests, eggs and dependant young, are afforded additional protection during the breeding season.
- 2.6.15 The NERC list of Species of Principal Importance is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006; under Section 40 every public authority (e.g. a local authority or local planning authority) must, in exercising

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its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. In addition, with regard to those species on the list of Species of Principal Importance prepared under Section 41, the Secretary of State must:

“(a) take such steps as appear to the Secretary of State to be reasonably practicable to further the conservation of the living organisms and types of habitat included in any list published under this section”, or

“(b) promote the taking by others of such steps.”

- 2.6.16 Species listed on the BoCC Red List are those that have declined in numbers by 50% over the last 25 years, those that have shown an historical population decline between 1800 and 1995 and species that are of global conservation concern. The 70 species on the Red List are of the most urgent conservation concern.
- 2.6.17 Species listed on the BoCC Amber List, of which there are currently 126, include those that have shown a moderate decline in numbers (25%-49%) over the last 25 years and those with total populations of less than 300 breeding pairs. Also included are those species which represent a significant proportion (greater than 20%) of the European breeding or wintering population, those for which at least 50% of the British population is limited to 10 sites or less, and those of unfavourable conservation status in Europe.
- 2.6.18 The remaining species are placed on the Green List, indicating that they are of low conservation priority. These species still receive full protection through the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended.

2.7 Nightjar Survey

- 2.7.1 Species-specific nightjar surveys were also undertaken within approximately 300 m of the site boundary. Surveys were undertaken in line with best practice guidelines (Conway et al., 2007) in order to identify churring males.
- 2.7.2 Three surveys were carried out in the between May and June at dusk (between 21:00 and 23:30). As recommended in the best practice guidelines, each of the surveyed areas were less than 80 hectares and transect routes were predetermined to reach within 100 m of all suitable habitats (Conway et al., 2007). This was to ensure full coverage of the survey area within the recommended survey timing parameters.
- 2.7.3 Surveys began approximately twenty minutes after sunset and all positions of churring males, calls and associated flight paths were marked on maps. Surveys were carried out in suitable weather conditions by an experienced ornithologist. Dates and weather conditions for each survey are shown in Table 2.5 below.

Table 2.5: Breeding Bird Survey dates and weather conditions

Visit	Date	Surveyor	Temperature (°C)	Cloud (cc)	Wind	Weather
1 (Dusk)	14/05/2025	Nick Goldsmith	17	0/8	0 E	Dry, no rain
2 (Dusk)	28/05/2025	Nick Goldsmith	14	1/8	2 W	Dry, no rain
3 (Dusk)	11/06/2025	Nick Goldsmith	19	0/8	3 W	Dry, no rain

2.8 Bat Activity Surveys

Emergence Surveys

- 2.8.1 Seven of the eight buildings onsite had suitable features present to support roosting bats and therefore were subject to further bat emergence surveys. In line with best practice

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guidelines (Collins 2023), buildings with high potential will be subject to three surveys, moderate two surveys and low one survey. **Table 2.6** shows the roosting suitability for the buildings onsite.

Table 2.6: Summary of bat roost suitability of structures onsite.

Structure	Site reference	Description of Structure	Suitability Category
B1	Application site	5 m high building on a concrete base with wooden shutters and breezeblock walls that are clad with sheets of corrugated metal Flat roof Derelict	Low bat roosting suitability
B2	Application site	2.5 m high single-storey garage-style building on a concrete base with breezeblock walls Flat roof Derelict	Moderate bat roosting suitability
B3	Application site	Static caravan Flat roof and broken windows Derelict	Low bat roosting suitability
B4	Application site	Single storey 2m high outbuilding Breeze block building with metal cladding on a concrete base Large wooden doors	Moderate bat roosting suitability
B5	Application site	Main building Single-storey bungalow Rendered cavity walls Glass conservatory on southern elevation Pitched clay tiled roof	Moderate bat roosting suitability
B6	Appeal site	Small, single storey metal units on wooden decking Previous use as toilet block	Negligible bat roosting suitability
B7	Application site (immediately adjacent to appeal site)	A large building with breezeblock walls clad with corrugated metal Pitched tiled roof	Low bat roosting suitability
B8	Appeal site	Small wooden shed Pitched felt bitumen roof	Low bat roosting suitability

- 2.8.2 The aim of these surveys was to determine the use of the buildings (if any) by roosting bats, the species assemblage onsite and the egress locations of any bats emerging from the trees.
- 2.8.3 Surveyors and infra-red cameras will be situated at strategic locations around the buildings to allow for maximum cover of the building. All surveyors should be suitably qualified to undertake this type of survey.
- 2.8.4 Time-expansion bat detectors (Elekon Batlogger) and frequency division bat detectors (Batbox Duet) will be used to record bat echolocation calls of any emerging bats and identify species where possible. Recordings will be made using Edirol recording devices (R-09HR and R-05) and built in recorders within the detectors, which will later be analysed using the computer software BatSound and Kaleidoscope (Wildlife Acoustics).
- 2.8.5 All surveys will be undertaken in line with best practice guidelines (Collins, 2024) with emergence surveys commencing 15 minutes before sunset and continuing for a minimum

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of 90 minutes after sunset. All surveys should be undertaken in good weather conditions at appropriate times of the year.

- 2.8.6 The timings and weather conditions for surveys undertaken to date are outlined in Table 2.7 below.

Table 2.7: Emergence survey dates and weather conditions

Building number	Visit number	Date	Sunset	Start time	End time	Weather
B1	1	16/06/2025	21:22	20:07	22:52	18°C, 50% Cloud Cover, BF 0-1
B2	1	18/06/2025	21:22	21:09	22:54	22°C, 10% Cloud Cover, BF 0-1
	2	05/08/2025	20:45	20:30	22:15	18°C, 20% Cloud Cover, BF 1
B3	1	03/07/2025	21:22	21:07	22:52	18°C, 12.5% Cloud Cover, BF 0-1
B4	1	23/06/2025	21:23	21:08	22:53	21°C, 80% Cloud Cover, BF 2
	2	04/08/2025	20:43	20:28	22:13	17°C, 100 Cloud Cover, BF 0-1
B5	1	02/07/2025	21:24	21:09	22:54	19°C, 12.5% Cloud Cover, BF 1
	2	11/08/2025	20:35	20:20	22:05	23°C, 100% Cloud Cover. BF 0-1
B7	1	15/07/2025	21:15	21:00	22:45	18°C, 40% Cloud Cover, BF 3
B8	1	21/07/2025	21:08	20:53	22:38	18°C, 90% Cloud Cover, BF 1-2

Night-time Bat Walkover Surveys

- 2.8.7 Three bat activity Night-time Bat Walkover (NBW) surveys are required during 2025. A survey visit was completed per season, (spring – April/May, summer – June/July-August, autumn – September/October). Surveys were spaced at least 3 weeks apart. Each survey commenced at or before sunset and the surveyor did not start walking around the site until at least 30 minutes after sunset. The survey then continued for approximately 2-3 hours following sunset.
- 2.8.8 A NBW route was devised to cover a range of habitat types present within the site boundary, focusing on those likely to be of greatest value to bats. These habitats included tree lines, hedgerows and scrub. The routes taken are shown in the results section of the report.
- 2.8.9 The surveys were carried out following current guidelines (Collins, 2023).
- 2.8.10 The surveyors were equipped with Bat Logger for identification of bats in the field and with the capability to record bat calls for later sonogram analysis. All bat passes, including species and time, were recorded. The behaviour of the bat was also recorded if possible, including commuting and feeding behaviour. Bat recordings were later analysed using the computer software Kaleidoscope (Wildlife Acoustics).
- 2.8.11 The timings and weather conditions for surveys undertaken to date are outlined in **Table 2.8**, below.

Table 2.8: Night-time Bat Walkover survey dates and weather conditions

Visit number	Date	Sunset	Start time	End time	Weather
1 (Spring)	04/06/2025	21:27	21:27	23:27	10-17°C, moderate cloud, dry, light breeze
2 (Summer)	13/08/2025	20:29	20:29	22:29	16-22°C, overcast cloud, dry, light breeze
3 (Autumn)	25/09/2025	18:58	18:58	20:58	7°C, partly cloudy, dry, light breeze

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- 2.8.12 The surveyors were equipped with an Elekon Bat Logger M for identification of bats in the field and with the capability to record bat calls for later sonogram analysis. All bat passes, including species and time, were recorded. The behaviour of the bat was also recorded if possible, including commuting and feeding behaviour. Bat recordings were later analysed using the computer software Kaleidoscope (Wildlife Acoustics).

Automated (Static) Device Surveys

- 2.8.13 Five static detectors were deployed for a minimum of five consecutive nights per month in 2025 (May, June, July, August, September, October), in good weather conditions.
- 2.8.14 Two detectors were positioned within treelines along the southeastern boundary of the appeal site, one along the offsite mature treeline located along the north-western corner of the appeal site, and a further two detectors were positioned along the eastern and southern treelines of the application site. The exact locations are shown in the results section of this report.
- 2.8.15 The automated surveys focused on areas of higher-value habitats which were identified as being most suitable for foraging and commuting bats. These locations were also covered during the transect surveys.
- 2.8.16 The automated bat detectors were programmed to commence recording approximately 15 minutes before sunset and terminating 15 minutes after sunrise. This period covered the peak time bats would be commuting to and from their roosts.
- 2.8.17 The static detectors used were Elekon Batlogger. Recorded calls were analysed using BTO Acoustic Pipeline (British Trust for Ornithology).

Data analysis

- 2.8.18 Recordings from the bat activity surveys were analysed with specialised software (Kaleidoscope Pro, Version 5.4.8) by an experienced ecologist to confirm the bat species present.
- 2.8.19 Kaleidoscope Pro software compares the echolocation pulses to an integrated library of bat calls and automatically identifies to species. Following the batch analysis of all calls, 10% of all *Pipistrellus* spp. calls and noise files were manually checked. All calls of *Myotis* spp., *Nyctalus* spp. and calls with no auto-identification or with multiple bats within the same call were checked manually to confirm identification.
- 2.8.20 During manual analysis, calls were assigned to species according to their key parameters and where applicable their peak frequency, as shown in **Table 2.9** (Russ, 2021).

Table 2.9: Bat Species and their Call Frequency Parameters

Species	Latin Name	Call Frequency
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	FM/qCF calls above 52 kHz
<i>Pipistrellus</i> spp.	-	FM/qCF calls between 40 and 42 kHz; and, 48 and 52 kHz
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus</i>	FM/qCF calls between 40 kHz and 48 kHz
Nathusius' pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	FM/qCF calls below 40 kHz
Natterer's bat	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	FM call with wide range between 23 and 107 kHz
Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	FM call with wide range between 30 and 81 kHz
<i>Myotis</i> spp.	-	FM calls greater than 30 kHz
Brown Long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	FM calls greater than 30 kHz with two harmonics
Noctule	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	FM/qCF calls below 23 kHz

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Leisler's bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	qCF calls between 23 and 28 kHz
<i>Nyctalus</i> spp.	-	Low (less than 30 kHz) qCF or FM calls

FM – Frequency modulated call; CF – constant frequency call; qCF – quasi-constant frequency call. Bats combine variation within their echolocation pulses to create different call 'shapes'. These call shapes can be described in terms of the degree of FM, CF and qCF components they contain.

- 2.8.21 Not all calls could be positively assigned to species. Call frequencies and shapes can be shared by bat species within the same genus and can change according to the habitat they are flying in, i.e.: open areas with no trees or structures such as moorlands; cluttered environments which contain trees, areas of scrub; or linear features such as burns and conifer plantation/woodland edge. Bats adapt their call patterns within their habitats to enable prey detection and navigation and as such, the recordings may differ in parameters. For example, both Leisler's bat and noctules can echolocate at the same frequency and with the same call shape and therefore, where not possible to distinguish species they have been assigned to the *Nyctalus* spp. category and not identified to species level. Similarly, a bat was classified as *Myotis* spp. if differences in call shape and frequency between Daubenton's bats and Natterer's bats (most likely *Myotis* spp. bat to be found in the area) could not be discerned.

2.9 Constraints and Limitations

Desk Based Assessment

- 2.9.1 The desk study data is third party controlled data, purchased for the purposes of this report only. RPS cannot vouch for its accuracy and cannot be held liable for any error(s) in these data.

General Survey

- 2.9.2 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation can ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment.
- 2.9.3 The protected/notable species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of these species occurring on the site, based on the suitability of the habitat, known distribution of the species in the local area provided in response to our enquiries and any direct evidence on the site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected/notable species group.
- 2.9.4 There was small section of inaccessible land associated with the application site boundary, located between a treeline and the buildings to the north of the site. The presence of barbed wire fencing and dense bramble scrub prevented any access at the time of survey.

GCN (HSI) Survey

- 2.9.5 The survey visit fell within the recommended period to conduct GCN surveys (mid-March to the end of June); however, it was completed following an extended period of dry weather. The HSI scores were predicted for each waterbody based on the visible evidence during the survey with an assumption made of water quality based on the context of each i.e. shading, sediment and estimated frequency of desiccation. It is recognised that these scores should therefore be treated as provisional.
- 2.9.6 It was not possible to access many of the waterbodies outside of the site boundary, notably those located within the adjacent Fire and Rescue compound (such as WB4) as this was fenced and permission for access was not granted at the time of the survey. From a review of aerial imagery and a view of those waterbodies which could be seen from the site

boundary it is considered likely that the waterbodies within the compound hold water more regularly or even permanently and thus provide greater suitability for GCN than the ditches and ponds closer to the site itself which were accessible. The lack of access for water sample collection is recognised as a potential limitation and therefore a precautionary approach is recommended in the report discussion. Waterbody 3 (WB3) was identified within the PEA report but could not be found or accessed during the survey due to overgrown surrounding vegetation. This waterbody is in the same habitat and mapped as a ditch of similar length to WB2 and therefore is likely to be dry and of lower suitability for GCN.

- 2.9.7 The results of the GCN (HSI) survey will remain valid for a period of 12 months from the date of the survey (i.e. until May 2026) (CIEEM, 2019), after which the validity of this assessment should be reviewed to determine whether further updates are necessary. As GCN are a mobile species, advice from an ecologist should be sought regarding the validity of this report after the initial 12 months has passed. Note that the recommendations within this report should be reviewed (and reassessed if necessary) should there be any changes to the red line boundary or proposals upon which this report is based.

Breeding Bird Survey

- 2.9.8 Access within the 50 m buffer zone was limited to public rights of way only. In addition, a small part of the application site in the northwest could not be accessed. However, available access within the site and buffer zone was considered sufficient to detect the great majority of territorial activity in those areas which were not directly accessible, and access is not considered a significant limitation on the survey results.

Badger Survey

2.9.9



Bat Survey

- 2.9.10 It should be noted that bats are a group of species with a range of dynamic behaviours and as such, bats can roost in different locations, forage in different areas and preferentially commute along different routes in response to a number of changing physical and environmental factors. Bats exhibit seasonal use of buildings, built structures and trees, and being so mobile may arrive and start using a site after it has been surveyed or be roosting somewhere else during the period it was surveyed. Therefore, this survey provides a snapshot of ecological constraints found to be present at the time and should not be relied upon as evidence of presence / absence for periods longer than one year from the most recent bat survey.
- 2.9.11 The bat data presented in the tables detailing results of the bat surveys shows the number of contacts for different bat species. It is important to note that the number of contacts does not equate to number of individual bats, as several contacts can be generated by one bat flying past the surveyors several times. Instead, the number of contacts provides an index of bat activity, which can be used to identify areas of habitat of greater or lesser importance for bats.
- 2.9.12 Species identification by sonogram is limited to a certain extent by similarities in call structure parameters for certain species. All bats modulate their calls according to the

habitats they are navigating and their behaviour. This imposes limitations on reliable identification of bats to species level for species of the same genus, and specifically for *Plecotus sp.*, *Myotis sp.* and *Nyctalus sp.* bats.

- 2.9.13 Long-eared bats and some bats within the genus *Myotis* echolocate quietly and are therefore less likely to be picked up by the bat detectors and recording equipment. These species are often under-recorded on surveys.

Bat activity (Static) Surveys

- 2.9.14 It should be noted that some statics after deployment experienced a technical failure and therefore this limits the accuracy of any population estimates made.
- 2.9.15 Whilst every effort is taken to ensure the devices are recording when deployed, technological failures cannot be avoided all together. Where recordings failed and there was enough time, statics were re-deployed to cover the missed survey period.

Accurate Lifespan of Ecological Data

- 2.9.16 The majority of ecological data remain valid for only short periods due to the inherently transient nature of the subject. The survey results contained in this report are considered accurate for two years, assuming no significant considerable changes to the site conditions.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Designated Sites

- 3.1.1 There are seven statutory designated sites of international and national importance for nature conservation and seven non-statutory designated sites of local importance for nature conservation within 2 km of the site boundary.
- 3.1.2 These sites are listed in **Table 3.1** in order of proximity to the site, with the location of each site detailed in **Figure 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Designated sites within 2 km of the study area

Site name	Type	Approx. area (ha)	Interest Features	Distance from redline site (km)
Statutory Sites				
Dorset Heathlands	SAC	5719.54	An extensive complex mosaic of dry and wet heathlands and associated habitats. The site supports nationally scarce populations of plants such as <i>Crassula tillaea</i> (Mossy Stonecrop) and important assemblages of invertebrates, all six species of native British reptile and GCN. Qualifying habitats: Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens; Calcium-rich fen dominated by <i>Cladium mariscus</i> (Great Fen-sedge); Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i>; European dry heaths; <i>Molinia caerulea</i> (Purple Moor-grass) meadows; Wet heathland with <i>Erica tetralix</i> (Cross-leaved Heath); and Dry oak-dominated woodland. Qualifying species: GCN and Southern damselfly (<i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i>).	0 S
	SPA/Ramsar	5719.54	Comprises of 40 SSSI sites across Dorset that are of ornithological importance to the area. The site is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain population of five species listed in Annex 1 in any season. This site qualifies as a Ramsar site due to meeting the following criteria: 1a, 1b, 2a and 2b. Qualifying species: Dartford warbler (<i>Sylvia undata</i>); nightjar (<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>); Woodlark (<i>Lullula arborea</i>); Hen harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>); and Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>).	0 S
Holt and West Moors	SSSI	767.23	Areas of heathland lying on acidic sands, clays and gravels between the Upper Moors River and its tributaries Mannington Brook and Uddens Water. The habitats support a	0 S

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			rich and typical fauna including Hobby, Nightjar and Stonechat, Dartford warbler, Woodlark, Sand lizard (<i>Lacerta agilis</i>) and Smooth snake (<i>Coronella austriaca</i>). The invertebrate fauna include strong populations of Heath grasshopper (<i>Chorthippus vagans</i>), Large marsh grasshopper (<i>Stethophyma grossum</i>) and also the uncommon Bog bush-cricket (<i>Metrioptera brachyptera</i>) and Long-winged conehead (<i>Conocephalus discolor</i>). A range of butterfly, dragonfly and damselfly species have been recorded here.	
Moors River System	SSSI	293.05	A small lowland river which supports an exceptional diversity of aquatic and wetland plants. The site supports a diverse array of wildlife including dragonfly species, breeding birds, wintering birds, Water vole, Otter and Water shrew (<i>Neomys fodiens</i>).	1.25 E
Holt Heath	NNR	486.14	A mosaic of habitats that is legally underpinned by the Holt and West Moors SSSI.	1.41 SW
Horton Common	SSSI	20.52	The site supports a range of heathland types from dry heath to wet heath and bog, with plants and animals typical of these habitat types. A wide range of invertebrates have been recorded, including the rare Heath grasshopper and the extremely localised Long winged conehead. The undamaged dry heathland with warm south-facing banks and patches of bare sand provides excellent habitat for the rare Sand lizard. Some rare heathland birds still use this site.	1.50 NW
Lions Hill	SSSI	43.09	The site is a heathland area to the east of the Moors River. Its varied plant communities, which include dry and wet heath, bog, pine and birch woodland have a rich associated fauna. The fauna includes the rare reptiles, Smooth snake and Sand lizard. Heath Grasshopper, a rare restricted species, has also been recorded here.	1.55 SW
Non-statutory Sites				
The Nursery	SNCI	NS	Coniferous plantation over relic heathland and acid grassland	0.08 SW
Lower Common	SNCI	NS	Heathland and woodland habitats	0.12 N
West Moors Petroleum Depot	SNCI	NS	A large area of heathland habitats	0.42 N
Mannington Sub-station	SNCI	NS	Varied habitats	0.44 W
Barewood Copse	SNCI	NS	Two semi-natural woodlands	0.83 W
Biddles Meadow	SNCI	NS	Damp woodland with dry and damp acid grassland	0.96 NW

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Moors Valley	Country Park	NS	A mixture of habitats including coniferous forest, deciduous woodland, lakes, ponds, rivers, meadows and heathland. This site supports some wintering birds, over 20 species of dragon flies and damselflies, reptiles and bats.	1.68 E
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Abbreviations used in Table 3.1; SAC: Special Area of Conservation; SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest; NNR: National Nature Reserve; LNR: Local Nature Reserve; LWS: Local Wildlife Site; SINC: Site of Importance for Nature Conservation; LGS: Local Geological Site NS: Not supplied; km: kilometre and ha: hectare.

Figure 3.1: Designated sites within 2 km of the site

3.2 Species

- 3.2.1 Records of protected species were obtained from DERC. A number of species of conservation importance or otherwise notable were recorded within the 2 km search radius of the site. A summary of these records is provided in **Table 3.2**.
- 3.2.2 In order to simplify the results, only records of species from the last 10 years are shown. In addition, only data with a 6-figure grid reference resolution or higher are provided since locations given at a lower resolution do not allow accurate calculation of distance to the site boundary.
- 3.2.3 No records were found within the site itself, with the closest record being Hairy Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus subbiflorus* located approximately 0.13 km from site.

Table 3.2: Species records from the last 10 years within 2 km of the site

Common name	Scientific name	Nearest distance from site (km)	Year of most recent record	Conservation Status
Plants				
Hairy Bird's-foot-trefoil	<i>Lotus subbiflorus</i>	0.13	2022	Priority Species
Common Cudweed	<i>Filago germanica</i>	0.19	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng, NT-GB
Small Cudweed	<i>Logfia minima</i>	0.19	2020	
Western Gorse	<i>Ulex gallii</i>	0.19	2020	
Allseed	<i>Linum radiola</i>	0.19	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-GB, VU-Eng
Pale Dog-violet	<i>Viola lactea</i>	0.27	2022	NERC (2006), S41, Priority Species, EN-Eng, VU-GB
Meadow Thistle	<i>Cirsium dissectum</i>	0.53	2015	
Oblong-leaved Sundew	<i>Drosera intermedia</i>	0.64	2020	S41, Priority Species, VU-Eng
Bell Heather	<i>Erica cinerea</i>	0.66	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng
Bog-myrtle	<i>Myrica gale</i>	0.67	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng
Common Eyebright	<i>Euphrasia nemorosa</i>	0.67	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng, NT-GB
Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>	0.67	2020	S41, Priority Species, VU-Eng
Heath Speedwell	<i>Veronica officinalis</i>	0.67	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng
Marsh St John's-wort	<i>Hypericum elodes</i>	0.67	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng
Creeping Willow	<i>Salix repens</i>	0.67	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng
Cross-leaved Heath	<i>Erica tetralix</i>	0.82	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng
Heather	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	0.89	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng
Heath Dog-violet	<i>Viola canina</i>	0.92	2022	S41, Priority Species, NT-GB
Marsh Pennywort	<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>	0.96	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng
Lesser Bladderwort	<i>Utricularia minor</i>	0.96	2020	S41, Priority Species, VU-Eng
Smooth Cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris glabra</i>	0.98	2020	S41, Priority Species, VU-Eng, VU-GB
Slender Bird's-foot-trefoil	<i>Lotus angustissimus</i>	1.01	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng, NT-GB
Heath Pearlwort	<i>Sagina subulata</i>	1.16	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago virgaurea</i>	1.18	2020	
Heath Milkwort	<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>	1.18	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng

A lichen	<i>Cladonia grayi</i> s. lat.	1.23	2020	NR
Tubular Water-dropwort	<i>Oenanthe fistulosa</i>	1.27	2018	NERC (2006), S41, Priority Species, VU-Eng, VU-GB
Coral-necklace	<i>Illecebrum verticillatum</i>	1.32	2020	NERC (2006), S41, Priority Species, EN-Eng, VU-GB
Smith's Pepperwort	<i>Lepidium heterophyllum</i>	1.35	2020	Priority Species
Round-leaved Sundew	<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	1.35	2020	S41, Priority Species, NT-Eng
Sheep's-bit	<i>Jasione montana</i>	1.43	2020	S41, Priority Species, VU-Eng
Common Cow-wheat	<i>Melampyrum pratense</i>	1.45	2020	S41, Priority Species
Southern Marsh-orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza praetermissa</i>	1.48	2018	
Ragged Robin	<i>Silene flos-cuculi</i>	1.48	2018	
Green-winged Orchid	<i>Anacamptis morio</i>	1.52	2023	S41, Priority Species, NT-GB, VU-Eng
Devil's-bit Scabious	<i>Succisa pratensis</i>	1.82	2016	
Marsh Gentian	<i>Gentiana pneumonanthe</i>	1.84	2015	Priority Species
Marsh Clubmoss	<i>Lycopodiella inundata</i>	1.94	2022	NERC (2006), S41, Priority Species, EN-Eng, EN-GB
Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	2.42	2016	W&C (1981)
Invertebrates				
Raft Spider	<i>Dolomedes fimbriatus</i>	0.58	2019	NS
Stag Beetle	<i>Lucanus cervus</i>	0.61	2022	Hab An II (1992), W&C (1981), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007)
Silver-studded Blue	<i>Plebejus argus</i>	0.99	2023	W&C (1981), NERC (2006), UK (2007), VU-GB
a spider	<i>Araneus angulatus</i>	1.52	2019	NS
a spider	<i>Nigma puella</i>	1.52	2019	NS
a spider	<i>Drassyllus praeficus</i>	1.52	2019	NS
a spider	<i>Pardosa tenuipes</i>	1.52	2019	NS
a spider	<i>Xerolycosa nemoralis</i>	1.52	2019	NS
a spider	<i>Ero aphana</i>	1.52	2019	NS
a spider	<i>Evarcha arcuata</i>	1.52	2019	NS
a spider	<i>Thomisus onustus</i>	1.52	2019	NS
a spider	<i>Uloborus walckenaerius</i>	1.52	2019	NT-GB, NR
a beetle	<i>Nicrophorus interruptus</i>	1.81	2022	NS(B)
Scarce Chaser	<i>Libellula fulva</i>	1.93	2023	NT-GB
a beetle	<i>Hydroporus necopinatus</i>	1.99	2023	EN-GB, NR
Grayling	<i>Hipparchia semele</i>	2.41	2020	NERC (2006), UK (2007), VU-GB
Amphibians				
Common toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	0.89	2017	W&C (1981), NERC (2006), Dorset Priority Species
Reptiles				
Grass snake	<i>Natrix helvetica</i>	0.50	2018	W&C (1981), NERC (2006)
Adder	<i>Vipera berus</i>	0.55	2019	W&C (1981), NERC (2006)
Common Lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	0.55	2022	W&C (1981), NERC (2006)

Slow-worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>	0.55	2022	W&C (1981), NERC (2006)
Mammals (excluding bats)- terrestrial				
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	0.91	2018	PBA (1992)
Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	1.01	2021	Hab An II (1992), Hab An IV (1992), HR (2017), W&C (1981), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007)
Hazel Dormouse	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	1.49	2018	Hab An IV (1992), HR (2017), W&C (1981), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007), VU-Eng
Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	1.80	2021	NERC (2006), UK (2007), VU-Eng
Bats				
Brown Long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	0.14	2022	Hab An IV (1992), HR (2017), W&C (1981), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007)
Whiskered Bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	0.67	2022	Hab An IV (1992), HR (2017), W&C (1981), EPS, DD-GB
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	0.67	2022	Hab An IV (1992), HR (2017), W&C (1981), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007)
Bechstein's Bat	<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	0.71	2024	Hab An II (1992), Hab An IV (1992), HR (2017), W&C (1981), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007)
Noctule	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	0.97	2021	Hab An IV (1992), HR (2017), W&C (1981), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007)
Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	0.97	2021	Hab An IV (1992), HR (2017), W&C (1981), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007)
Serotine	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	1.35	2022	Hab An IV (1992), HR (2017), W&C (1981), EPS, VU-Eng, VU-GB
Greater Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	1.52	2019	Hab An II (1992), Hab An IV (1992), HR (2017), W&C (1981), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007)
Barbastelle	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	1.52	2019	Hab An II (1992), Hab An IV (1992), HR (2017), W&C (1981), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007), VU-Eng
Birds				
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	0.49	2022	EN-GB, RED
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	0.55	2016	AMBER
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	0.55	2020	RED, VU-GB
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	0.56	2022	NERC (2006), UK (2007), AMBER
Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	0.57	2019	RED, VU-GB
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	0.62	2019	NERC (2006), UK (2007), NT-GB, RED
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	0.67	2022	AMBER
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	0.67	2021	Bird (1979), W&C (1981), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007), VU-GB, RBBP
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	0.92	2022	NERC (2006), UK (2007), RED

Wheat Ear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	1.27	2017	AMBER
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	1.35	2016	W&C (1981)
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	1.35	2018	RED, VU-GB
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	1.41	2021	NERC (2006), UK (2007), RED, VU-GB
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	1.52	2019	NERC (2006), UK (2007), RED
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	1.57	2018	NERC (2006), UK (2007), AMBER
Dartford Warbler	<i>Curruca undata</i>	1.74	2020	Bird (1979), W&C (1981), EPS, AMBER, VU-GB, RBBP
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	1.84	2016	NERC (2006), UK (2007), AMBER
Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	1.92	2020	Bird (1979), EPS, NERC (2006), UK (2007), AMBER
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	2.31	2018	W&C (1981)

Abbreviations used in Table 3.2: EPS: European Protected Species includes species from Bird (1979), Hab An II (1992), Hab An IV (1992), and HR (2017); W&C(1981) or WCA: species included in the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) Schedules 1 (birds), 5 (animals), and 8 (plants); Hab An II(1992) or Hab An IV(1992): European Protected Species from Habitats and Species Directive Annexes II and IV; HR(2017) or Hab 2/4: Habitats Regulations (1994) updated to European Protected Species from Habitats and Species Regulations (2017); PBA(1992): Badgers protected by the Protection of Badgers Act (1992); S41: NERC(2006): Species of Principal Importance in England, NERC Act (2006) Section 41 list; UK(2007): listed by the UK Steering Group with a UK action plan or species statement; Dorset: species with a current action plan or initiative in Dorset following Dorset Biodiversity Partnership (2003); CR: National Red Data Book Critically Endangered; EN: National RDB Endangered; VU: National RDB Vulnerable; LR: National RDB Lower Risk, including Near Threatened (NT) and Data Deficient (DD); NT: National RDB Lower Risk, including Near Threatened (NT); DD: Data deficient; EX: Extinct as a native species; RE: Regionally Extinct; NR: Nationally Rare - occurring in less than sixteen 10km squares nationwide; NS: Nationally Scarce - occurring in sixteen to one hundred 10km squares nationwide; IR: International Responsibility; DR: Dorset Rare - species found in three or fewer sites in Dorset since 01/01/1990; DS: Dorset Scarce - species found in four to ten sites in Dorset since 01/01/1990; DN: Dorset Notable - indicators of good quality habitat; IAS: Invasive Animal Species - listed in DEFRA (2010); IPS: Invasive Plant Species - listed in relevant documents; NNA: Non-native Animal listed in DEFRA (2010); NNP: Non-native Plant listed in DEFRA (2010); RED: Red List species – birds of high conservation concern in Europe; AMBER: Amber List species – birds of medium conservation concern in Europe; NR: Nationally Rare; NS: Nationally Scarce Species.

3.3 Botanical (UKHab) Survey

- 3.3.1 For the purpose of the botanical surveys and mapping the site to UKHab standard to feed into the BNG assessment for both the appeal site and application site, the vegetated habitats at the site could be separated into three habitat types: modified grassland, other neutral grassland and scrub.
- 3.3.2 As the individual parcels of these habitats were largely uniform in species composition and condition across the site, they have been grouped into their respective habitat type, and one description has been provided below for each. Habitat descriptions are defined by broad habitat types (UKHabs, 2024).
- 3.3.3 The location of the areas surveyed and the results of the UKHab survey (including Target Notes) are shown in **Figure 3.2**. A full species list is included in **Appendix D**.
- 3.3.4 No species of nationally rare or scarce status were recorded at the time of the survey. Due to the nature of the site as managed grassland, it is considered unlikely rare plants would occur on site.
- 3.3.5 A small area of *Rhododendron* sp. and a *Cotoneaster* sp were recorded along the northern edge and the southern line of trees of the application site, respectively (TN9). They were not identified to species level; however, some species in both genera are listed as INNS in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The Appeal Site

- 3.3.6 The appeal site is shown by the red line boundary (RLB) on **Figure 3.2**.

Area 1 – g4 (Modified grassland)

- 3.3.7 Area 1 comprised modified grassland, frequently mown and sward heights ranging from 3 cm to 15 cm. Adjacent to the compacted gravel track, there was some ruderal vegetation present with rare patches of bare soil. The vegetation under the tree line was dominated by bramble, ivy *Hedera helix*, nettle *Urtica* and cleavers *Galium aparine*, with occasional gorse *Ulex europaeus*. Along the south-facing slope there was a section of decaying vegetation (TN14).
- 3.3.8 There was a small wooden shed located in Area 1 (B8).

Area 2 – g3c (Other Neutral grassland)

- 3.3.9 Area 2 was located to the north of the appeal site and extended the southwestern boundary of the application site. It comprised a section of neutral grassland with a small area of dense bramble scrub. Ruderal vegetation was present along the southern edge of this section. Species composition was similar to that of Area 1, with a longer sward height that varied 30 to 40 cm.

Area 3 – g3c (Other neutral grassland)

- 3.3.10 Area 3 comprised a section of neutral grassland. Sward height varied between 0 to 20 cm, with occasional areas reaching 25 to 30 cm. The plant assemblage was similar to the modified grassland adjacent and to the east of this habitat with mostly five to six species per m².

Area 4 – g4 (Modified grassland)

- 3.3.11 An area of modified grassland in poor condition. It appeared less frequently mown than Areas 1 and 7, with a sward height that varied between 0 to 20 cm and fewer than five species per m².

Area 5 – g4 (Modified grassland)

- 3.3.12 Area 5 comprised a small area of modified grassland adjacent to Area 4, separated by a fence line. The sward height varied between 0 to 20 cm with flower heads extending up to 25 cm, and an average of five species per m². There was an area of grassland with rougher appearance and longer sward and depressed grass (TN3). Additionally, there were small, localised areas of bare ground present (TN4).

Area 6 – h3e (Gorse scrub) and h3d (Bramble scrub)

- 3.3.13 The majority of Area 6 included a large section of dense gorse and bramble scrub. There were large amounts of dead leaves and grass clippings deposited around the tree in the southeastern corner of the site, extending westwards (TN4a).
- 3.3.14 There were small parcels of gorse and bramble scrub present along the northern and southern boundaries of Area 8.
- 3.3.15 Areas of dense bramble scrub were present within the neutral grassland area of the application site.

Area 7 – g4 (Modified grassland)

- 3.3.16 Area 7 was a large area of modified grassland with a strip of sparsely vegetated land running across the centre, likely used as a vehicle access route. The grassland was closely mown and currently being used for storage of static caravans. Sward height ranged from 0 to 5 cm, but up to 20 cm around the areas of fencing.

Area 8 – g3c (Other neutral grassland)

- 3.3.17 Area 8 was a large area of neutral grassland, separated from Area 3 by a barbed wire fence. It was similar to Area 3 but contained more tussocky grassland with heavy thatch in some areas. There was evidence of waterlogging in the past although it was very dry at time of survey. Soil in the wet areas may have been compacted, leaving some bare areas. Sward height varied between 30 to 40 cm.

Scattered Trees – g32

- 3.2 Three trees were recorded along the southern edge of Area 6, including a mature ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, mature silver birch, and a semi-mature pedunculate oak.

Sparsely vegetated urban land – u1f

- 3.3.1 A mud/tarmac track ran comprising mostly a mixture of either perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* or Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* throughout the main site across Area 3, 7 and 8, with evidence of use for vehicle access.

The Application Site

- 3.3.2 The application site is shown by the blue line boundary (BLB) on **Figure 3.2**. This includes the parcel of land to the northeast of the site boundary and a small area adjacent to the northern boundary of the appeal site.

Area 2 continued –g3c (Other Neutral grassland)

- 3.3.3 Area 2 was located to the north of the appeal site and extended the southwestern boundary of the application site. It comprised a section of neutral grassland with a small area of dense bramble scrub. Species composition was similar to that of Area 1, with a longer sword height that varied 30 to 40 cm.
- 3.3.4 The application site also included a small area of dense bramble scrub which surrounded a large building with corrugated metal roof (B7), adjacent to the appeal site boundary.
- 3.3.5 A parcel of land to the north of Area 2 of the application site was connected by an area of inaccessible grassland.

u1b5, 82 (Buildings, Derelict)

- 3.3.6 There were five buildings located to the north of the application boundary, all of which were derelict and in poor condition at the time of survey. Building numbers and descriptions can be found in **Table 2.6**, with building locations shown on **Figure 3.8**.

u1b (Other developed land) and

- 3.3.7 The surrounding building area comprised hardstanding, in poor condition with lots of refuse and building waste material (TN8) scattered around buildings. Small clusters of *Bambusa* sp. (Bamboo species) were present in the northwest corner (TN7) alongside a stand of *Cotoneaster* sp. and *Rhododendron* sp (TN9).

g3c (Other neutral grassland)

- 3.3.8 A small area of neutral grassland with scattered bramble *Rubus fruticosus* scrub was located between the hardstanding and inaccessible area of the application site. In the southeast corner a small section of grass is growing over rubble (TN5).

Non-native and ornamental hedgerow - h2b

- 3.3.9 There was one Leyland Cypress *Cupressus x leylandii* hedgerow located along the western boundary of the application boundary. The hedge was circa 3.5 m high and 2.5 m wide.

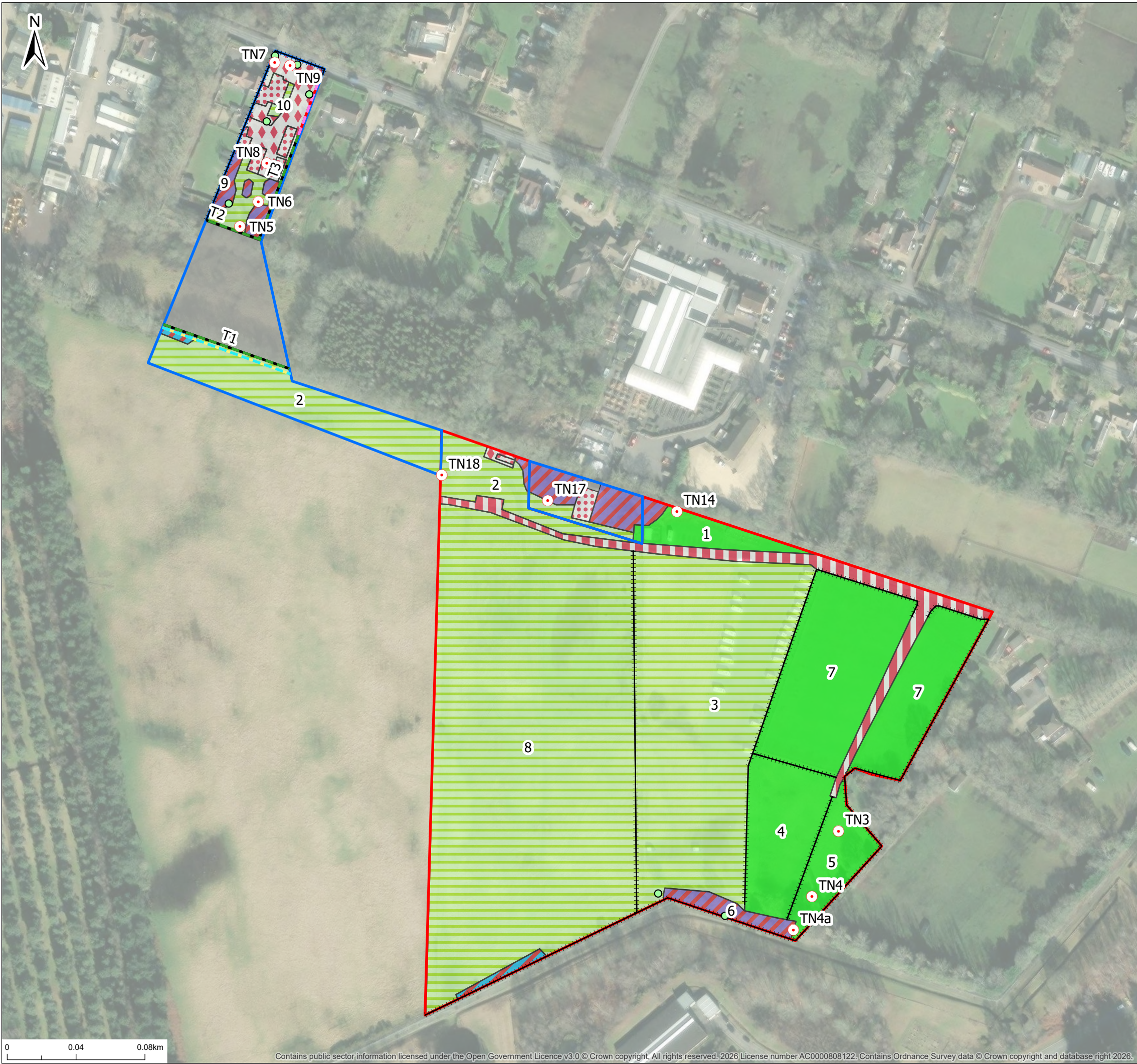
Line of Trees – w33

- 3.3.10 Treeline 1 ran along the northern boundary of Area 2 (offsite), but intersecting the application boundary. The treeline included a good mixture of age classes (mature, semi-mature, young and dead) and species including silver birch *Betula pendula*, pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, hazel *Corylus avellana* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*.
- 3.3.1 Treeline 2 ran along the southern boundary of the application boundary, adjacent to the small parcel of inaccessible land. It comprised mostly mature pedunculate oak.
- 3.3.2 Treeline 3 was a similar composition to Treeline 2, running along the eastern edge of the application boundary adjacent to residential land.

Ditch – w33.50

- 3.3.3 A ditch ran along the the northern boundary of Area 2 alongside a line of trees (Treeline 1) intersecting the application boundary. At the time of survey it comprised a dry shallow, continuous ditch with several large overgrown areas. It was heavily shaded with scrub encroachment and little aquatic vegetation.

Figure 3.2: UK Habitat Results Map



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LEGEND

Appeal Boundary (RLB)
Highway Access Boundary (BLB)

Habitat

- g4 Modified Grassland
- g3c Other Neutral Grassland
- h3d Bramble Scrub
- h3e Gorse Scrub
- u1f Sparsely Vegetated Urban Land
- u1b5 Buildings
- u1 Built-up Areas and Gardens
- Inaccessible Area
- h2b Non-Native and Ornamental Hedgerow
- 33 Line of Trees
- Ditch
- Fence
- Scattered Tree
- Target Note

TETRA TECH

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Client	AR (New Forest) Limited		
Project	Gundrys Farm, Dorset		
Project No.	22139		
Title	UKHab Habitat Map		
Drawing No.	Figure No.	Revision	Status
ECO22139-0011-02	3.2	01	FINAL
Date	Drawn By	Checked By	Revision By
JAN 2026	OW	DL	-
Scale @ A3 1:2,200		Datum OSGB 1936	

3.4 Ecological Scoping Survey

Plants

- 3.4.1 The desk study returned records of 27 notable plant species within 2 km of the site boundary. These records were largely associated with chalk grasslands, marshes, bogs, salt flats, wet and dry heaths, woodlands and/or coastal habitats (e.g. sand dunes), none of which occur onsite. The site is only likely to mostly support widespread assemblages of plants typical of the habitats recorded.
- 3.4.2 A small area of *Rhododendron* sp. and a *Cotoneaster* sp were recorded along the northern edge and the southern line of trees of the application site boundary, respectively (TN9). They were not identified to species level; however, some species in both genera are listed as INNS in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Amphibians

- 3.4.3 The desk study did not return any records of GCN or records of mitigation licences within 2 km of the site. A total of 34 waterbodies were located within 500 m of the site that could provide potential breeding habitat for GCN in the wider landscape. The closest of these was the ditch (WB1) located alongside the northern boundary of Area 8 (**Figure 3.2**).
- 3.4.4 Longer areas of grassland and scrub provided suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN and other amphibians. Features such as log and brash piles and decaying vegetation were considered suitable for shelter and/or hibernation.

Reptiles

- 3.4.5 Suitable areas of habitat (the rough grassland, scrub and hedgerow understorey across much of the site) offered suitable habitat for common species of reptiles.
- 3.4.6 Records for common reptiles including grass snake, adder, common lizards and slow-worm were returned within 2 km of the site in the desk study. The closest of these being for grass snake approximately 0.50 km from the site boundary.

Badger

- 3.4.7 
- 3.4.8 
- 3.4.9 Results of the badger survey are included in Section 3.7.

Birds

- 3.4.10 The desk study returned records of six bird species afforded additional protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and 15 species listed as Red or Amber in the Birds of Conservation Concern.
- 3.4.11 Scrub, grassland and trees within the Site provide suitable nesting and foraging opportunities for breeding birds (including red kite *Milvus milvus*, cetti's warbler *Cettia cetti* and barn owl *Tyto albus*), whilst grassland provide nesting, foraging and sheltering opportunities for ground-nesting bird species such as skylark *Alauda arvensis*.

Bats

Roosting

- 3.4.12 The buildings onsite were assessed for potential to support bat roosts, and this is reported in **Section 3.11** with locations shown in **Figure 3.8**.

Foraging and Commuting

- 3.4.13 The closest records returned from the data search were for brown long-eared bat, whiskered bat and soprano pipistrelle, located approximately 0.14 km and 0.67 km from the site boundary (respectively).
- 3.4.14 In addition, records for greater horseshoe bat and barbastelle bat were returned from the data search, located 1.52 km from the site boundary in 2019.
- 3.4.15 The site offers moderate suitability commuting and foraging habitat for bats in the form of habitats along the boundaries including scrub and treelines which provides good connectivity to other features within the wider landscape that bats may use for roosting.

Hazel dormouse

- 3.4.16 The desk study returned one record of hazel dormouse located within 2 km of the site. This record was of a nest in woodland habitat circa 800 m west of the site in 2019. Connectivity between the record and the site is limited due to West Moors Road, residential settlements and gardens, grassland, and a coniferous woodland plantation located inbetween.
- 3.4.17 Areas of scrub were too sparse to be of any significant value to dormice. Lines of trees were too exposed and lacked structural diversity and fruit-bearing species which dormice are typically associated with. Therefore, dormice are unlikely to be using any habitat within the site for foraging, nesting or commuting and no further survey work is required.

Hedgehog

- 3.4.18 The grassland, treelines and mixed scrub onsite offer suitable foraging and hibernation habitat for hedgehog.
- 3.4.19 Records for hedgehog were returned within 2 km of the site in the desk study.

3.5 Reptile Survey

- 3.5.1 The habitats onsite such as the grassland and scrub were considered to offer suitable habitat for common reptile species, as well as the proximity of the site to nearby waterbodies (ditches and ponds).
- 3.5.2 One adult grass snake was recorded on the 2nd May 2025.
- 3.5.3 One juvenile grass snake was recorded on the 4th June 2025.
- 3.5.4 A total of six adult slow worms were recorded as a result of the reptile surveys. The peak count of adult slow worms was two, recorded on the 29th May 2025 and the 4th June 2025.
- 3.5.5 One subadult slow worm was recorded on the 22nd April 2025.
- 3.5.6 A total of seven juvenile slow worms were recorded as a result of the reptile surveys. The peak count of juvenile slow worms was six, recorded on the 4th June 2025.
- 3.5.7 A total of two adult common lizards were recorded as a result of the reptile surveys. The peak count of adult common lizards was one, recorded on the 10th April 2025 and the 22nd April 2025.
- 3.5.8 One subadult common lizard was recorded on the 11th April 2025 next to the mat.
- 3.5.9 A total of two juvenile common lizards were recorded as a result of the reptile surveys. The peak count of juvenile common lizards was one, recorded on the 10th April 2025 and the 22nd April 2025.
- 3.5.10 One subadult common toad was also seen on the 4th June 2025.
- 3.5.11 The results of the reptile surveys are summarised in **Table 3.3** below with the reptile refugia placement and locations of sightings shown in **Figure 3.3**. The majority of reptiles were observed along the appeal site boundary features, within grassland in close proximity to the scrub.

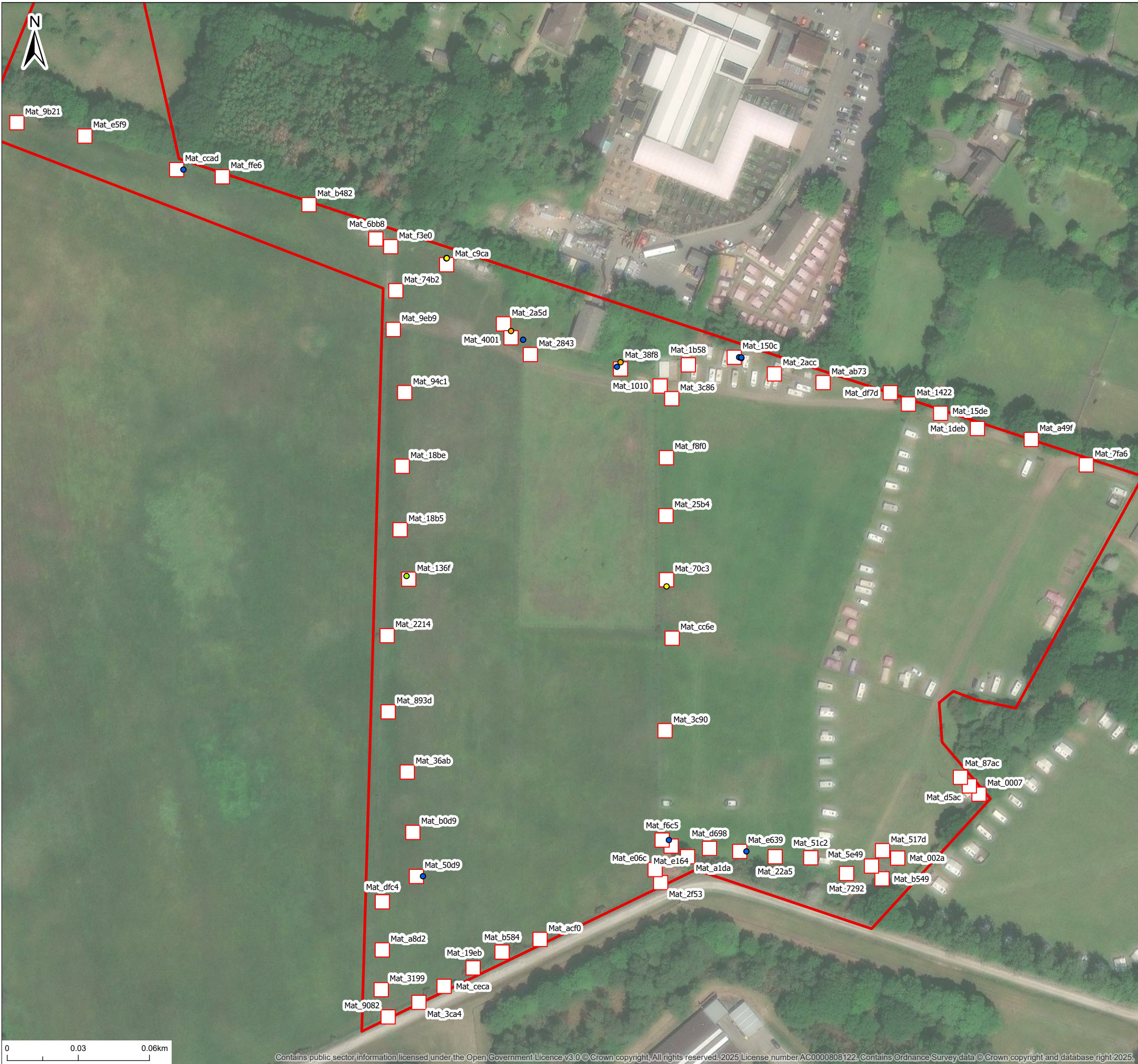
Table 3.3: Reptile survey results

Date	Grass snake		Slow worm			Common lizard			Other (Common toad)
	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Subadult	Juvenile	Adult	Subadult	Juvenile	Subadult
10/04/2025			1M			1F		1U	
11/04/2025							1U		
22/04/2025			1F	1F	1U	1F		1U	
02/05/2025	1U								
29/05/2025			1M 1U						
04/06/2025		1U	1M 1F		6U				1M
Total	1	1	6	1	7	2	1	2	1

Key: F: female, M: male, U: undetermined

Figure 3.3: Reptile Survey Results.

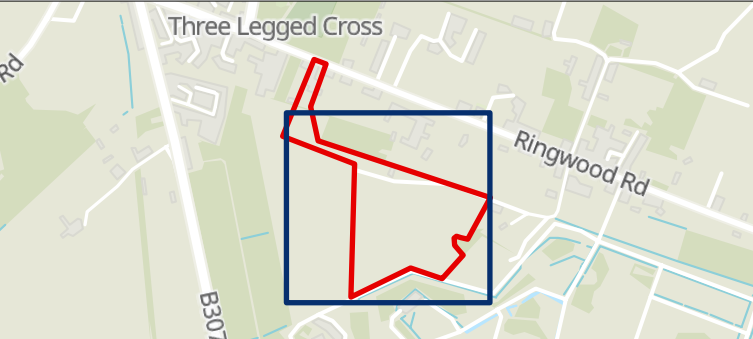
U:\Ecology\Projects\794-ENV-ECO-22139 Gundrys Farm, Dorset\Tech\ECO22139-0003-00 - Reptile survey mats and results.aprx - A3 - Landscape



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- LEGEND**
- Site Boundary
 - Reptile Mats**
 - identified
 - Reptile Results**
 - Common lizard
 - Grass snake
 - Other (add note)
 - Slow worm



			
Client	AR (New Forest) Limited		
Project	Gundrys Farm, Dorset		
Project No.	22139		
Title	Reptile Survey Mats and Results		
Drawing No.	Figure No. 03	Revision 01	Status FINAL
Date OCT 2025	Drawn By GNL	Checked By HK	Revision By -
Scale @ A3 1:1,600		Datum OSGB 1936	

3.6 GCN (HSI) Survey

- 3.6.1 Details of all waterbodies identified within 500 m of the site and the results of the HSI assessments are outlined in **Table 3.4** below and Appendix A. Photographic plates for each waterbody are provided in **Appendix B**. **Figure 3.4** shows the results of the field survey results for all waterbodies, and their locations relative to the site boundary.
- 3.6.2 A total of six waterbodies were surveyed in 2025 and are shown as WB1 to WB6 within **Figure 3.4**. WB1 and WB2 comprised shallow ditches which were dry at the time of survey and WB3 was not able to be surveyed as this was located behind a barbed wire fence and dense vegetation, restricting access. WB4 was located on neighbouring land and could be seen to be dry from the site boundary, and WB5 and WB6 were also dry. WB6 comprised a shaded overgrown woodland pond and presence of mud suggested this waterbody was likely to dry less frequently however the HSI scores for WB5 and WB6 were both 'below average'.
- 3.6.3 HSI assessments were made using a conservative estimate of water quality, however all other aspects of the HSI assessment could be inferred during the site visit. For instance, where waterbodies were dry this allowed presence of fish to be ruled out and other evidence such as waterfowl presence and macrophyte vegetation was assessed visually.

Table 3.4: Waterbody Descriptions and HSI Scores

Waterbody	Description	HSI Score
1	Dry shallow, continuous ditch running parallel to the northern treeline, intersecting the application site. Large areas overgrown. Heavily shaded and scrub encroachment, little aquatic vegetation.	0.61 – Average
2	Dry ditch running westward away from site boundary. Shallow with lots of leaf litter, located within woodland, largely shaded, little vegetation within understorey.	0.49 – Poor
3	Unknown - Ditch	N/A – Not accessible
4	Dry – Behind security fencing. Surrounding habitat comprising short mown grassland and little shade or other vegetation.	0.55 – Below average
5	Very shallow pond with small feathers present around edge, potentially used by waterfowl/ducks. Some shading by trees, surrounded by mown grassland.	0.51 – Below average
6	Heavily overshadowed woodland pond. Some evidence of partially dry mud at bottom.	0.55 – Below average

3.7 Badger Survey

Initial Walkover

3.7.1

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sett Monitoring

3.7.8 Three camera traps, one at each suspected badger hole, were deployed on 8th August 2025 and left for a period of 21 nights.

3.7.9 No badgers were recorded using the holes during the monitoring period, with a rabbit recorded within one of the holes. A fox was recorded inspecting another hole, but it did not enter.

3.7.10

[REDACTED]

3.8 Breeding bird survey

- 3.8.1 A total of fifty-six species were recorded within the survey area during the six site visits. Of these species, eleven were identified as breeding. Two bird boxes were also identified on the edge of a woodland adjacent and to the east of the site boundary.
- 3.8.2 **Table 3.5** provides a summary of the breeding and conservation status of the species recorded during the course of the survey, with the numbers of territories identified (or estimated in the case of probable and possible records). A full list of species recorded with scientific names is presented in Appendix C.

Table 3.5: Breeding status, abundance and conservation status of birds recorded

Species	Breeding status onsite	No. of territories	BoCC5 Red and Amber	Schedule 1/Annex 1	NERC Species of Principle Importance
Canada Goose	Non-breeding	0			
Mallard	Non-breeding	0	Amber		
Nightjar	Confirmed breeding	4	Amber	Ann1	Sec41
Swift	Non-breeding	0	Red		
Feral Pigeon	Non-breeding	0			
Stock Dove	Confirmed breeding	3	Amber		
Woodpigeon*	Confirmed breeding	14	Amber		
Collared Dove	Non-breeding	0			
Woodcock	Non-breeding	0	Red		
Herring Gull	Non-breeding	0	Red		Sec41
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Non-breeding	0	Amber		
Grey Heron	Non-breeding	0			
Sparrowhawk	Non-breeding	0	Amber		
Goshawk	Non-breeding	0		Sch1	
Buzzard	Non-breeding	0			
Tawny Owl	Confirmed breeding	1	Amber		
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Non-breeding	0			
Green Woodpecker	Non-breeding	0			
Jay	Non-breeding	0			
Magpie	Non-breeding	0			
Jackdaw	Non-breeding	0			
Rook*	Non-breeding	0	Amber		
Carrion Crow	Non-breeding	0			
Coal Tit	Non-breeding	0			
Blue Tit	Non-breeding	0			

Great Tit	Non-breeding	0		
Swallow	Non-breeding	0		
House Martin	Non-breeding	0	Red	
Long-tailed Tit	Non-breeding	0		
Chiffchaff	Non-breeding	0		
Blackcap	Non-breeding	0		
Firecrest	Confirmed breeding	4		Sch1
Goldcrest	Non-breeding	0		
Wren*	Confirmed breeding	17	Amber	
Nuthatch	Non-breeding	0		
Treecreeper	Non-breeding	0		
Starling	Confirmed breeding	2	Red	Sec41
Song Thrush	Confirmed breeding	8	Amber	Sec41
Mistle Thrush	Confirmed breeding	2	Red	
Redwing	Non-breeding	0	Amber	Sch1
Blackbird	Non-breeding	0		
Fieldfare	Non-breeding	0	Red	Sch1
Robin	Non-breeding	0		
Stonechat	Non-breeding	0		
Dunnock	Confirmed breeding	11	Amber	Sec41
Grey Wagtail	Non-breeding	0	Amber	
Pied Wagtail	Non-breeding	0		
Meadow Pipit	Non-breeding	0	Amber	
Tree Pipit	Non-breeding	0	Red	Sec41
Chaffinch	Non-breeding	0		
Bullfinch	Non-breeding	0	Amber	Sec41
Greenfinch	Confirmed breeding	4	Red	
Crossbill	Non-breeding	0		Sch1
Goldfinch	Non-breeding	0		
Siskin	Non-breeding	0		
Budgerigar	Non-breeding	0		
Canada Goose	Non-breeding	0		

Note 1 = All species not listed as red or amber are on the green list and are species that occur regularly in the UK and do not qualify under any of the above BoCC criteria.

Note 2 = * species recently added to BoCC but with significant UK and county populations.

3.8.3 The locations of territories of NERC Species of Principal Importance, Schedule 1 species, Annex 1 species and BoCC Red and Amber listed species recorded breeding within the survey area are shown in **Figure 3.6**. Confidential results are presented in a separate appendix for the RSK (2025) report.

Figure 3.6: Breeding Bird Territories for all Species of Conservation Concern.