

## Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**Survey site:**

Brookfield Farm, Old Wokingham Road, RG40 3BU

**Client:**

Stuart Brooks

**Survey date:**

9<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Project:**

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Wokingham Borough Council. The proposal is described as:

Change of use of land to a natural burial ground to include parking area, single storey pavilion and landscaping to include a new tree planting, ponds and wildflower meadow.

[Unsubmitted]

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

*The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.*

| Site Location and Context                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                  |              |                 |             |      |
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| <p>The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SU 83705 66550 and has an area of approximately 5.24ha.</p> <p>The site comprises a large agricultural field seasonally used for grazing horses, a small section of native hedgerow, a line of cypress trees, and a small parcel of broadleaved woodland. It is situated just outside the towns of Wokingham and Bracknell, Berkshire. There are scattered trees within the site that connect into the local landscape. Aerial imagery shows the local landscape to have a woodland character, with several small copses and woodland swathes in close proximity to the site as well as the Swinley forest located to the south-east of the site. Small water bodies such as ponds and lakes can be found nearby, such features likely enhance the area for a variety of species, including bats, amphibians and reptiles.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                  |              |                 |             |      |
| Survey Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                  |              |                 |             |      |
| <p>The site survey was undertaken by Phillip Wooding BSc (Hons) MSc, Graduate Ecologist, Accredited to Class 1 on Class 2 Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2024-12356-CL18-BAT.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                  |              |                 |             |      |
| Date of survey                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Temperature (°C) | Humidity (%) | Cloud Cover (%) | Wind (km/h) | Rain |
| 09/01/2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 1                | 82           | 10              | 6           | None |
| 17/06/2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 22               | 57           | 60              | 8           | None |
| Survey limitations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                  |              |                 |             |      |
| <p>It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood, and the known distribution of species as recovered during the searches of historical biological records.</p> <p>A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.</p> <p>The original survey was completed outside of the optimal survey period (April to October) for ground flora, and as such the accuracy of botanical assessment and condition assessment data was limited in terms of species visible and ground conditions at the time of survey. On the updated site visit on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, it was evident that the habitat that was originally classed as modified grassland was in fact other neutral grassland due to a much larger species diversity that had become visible.</p> |                  |              |                 |             |      |

| <b>Ecological Survey Factor</b><br><br><b>Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <b>Habitats and plants (see habitat map in appendix 1, location plan in appendix 2, proposal plan in appendix 3 and photos in appendix 4).</b><br><b>Botanical species are described with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i><br><br><i>(UKHab codes used)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>The site does not contain any habitats listed as a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). All habitats within the site are common and widespread and have low ecological value. Notable habitats are present within 2km.</p> <p><b>On-site habitat descriptions</b><br/> <b><u>g3c – Other neutral grassland [Horse grazed 103. Scattered trees 32]</u></b><br/> The majority of the site is comprised of other neutral grassland that is seasonally grazed by horses, species present within the habitat comprise; Yorkshire fog (D), perennial ryegrass (A), common bent (A), white clover (F), yarrow (F), creeping buttercup (F), meadow buttercup (F), ragwort (F), ribwort plantain (F), Hawkbit (F), curled dock (O), wild mustard (O), common storks-bill (O), garden sorrel (O), selfheal (O), dandelion (O), bracken (O), bramble (O), poppy (O), red clover (O), Hare's foot clover (O), common nettle (R), gorse (R), and small bugloss (R). There are 10 or more vascular species present per m<sup>2</sup> of the site. Across the habitat, at least 20% is above 7cm sward length and at least 20% is under 7cm, with less than 5% of the total area covered by scrub, less than 20% cover of bracken, no invasive species present, however, cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition accounts for over 5% of the habitat area. Cover of bare ground is between 1 and 5% and the habitat parcel represents a good example of its habitat type. There is also a dead wood pile present at the north-west corner of the site.</p> <p>Other neutral grassland achieves a condition assessment score of <b>good</b>.</p> <p>Scattered trees and their diameters at breast height (DBH) present within the other neutral grassland habitat are listed below</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sawara cypress – 28cm</li> <li>2. Sawara cypress – 19cm</li> <li>3. Sawara cypress – 18cm</li> <li>4. Sawara cypress – 8cm</li> <li>5. Sawara cypress – 31cm</li> <li>6. Sawara cypress – 7cm</li> <li>7. Lawsons cypress – 18cm</li> </ol> |

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|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>8. Sawara cypress – 26cm</li><li>9. Lawsons cypress – 27cm</li><li>10. Lawsons cypress – 13cm</li><li>11. Sawara cypress – 16cm</li><li>12. Sawara cypress – 16cm</li><li>13. Sawara cypress – 14cm</li><li>14. Sawara cypress – 28cm</li><li>15. Sawara cypress – 22cm</li><li>16. Sawara cypress – 23cm</li><li>17. Sawara cypress – 20cm</li><li>18. Sawara cypress – 19cm</li><li>19. Sawara cypress – 21cm</li><li>20. Sawara cypress – 8cm</li><li>21. Sawara cypress – 13cm</li><li>22. Sawara cypress – 16cm</li><li>23. Sawara cypress – 8cm</li><li>24. Sawara cypress – 24cm</li><li>25. Sawara cypress – 36cm</li><li>26. Sawara cypress – 14cm</li><li>27. Sawara cypress – 22cm</li><li>28. Sawara cypress – 24cm</li><li>29. Sawara cypress – 22cm</li><li>30. Sawara cypress – 20cm</li><li>31. Sawara cypress – 26cm</li><li>32. Sawara cypress – 29cm</li><li>33. Sawara cypress – 37cm</li><li>34. Lawsons cypress – 45cm</li><li>35. Lawsons cypress – 55cm</li><li>36. Lawsons cypress – 53cm</li><li>37. Lawsons cypress – 62cm</li><li>38. Lawsons cypress – 57cm</li><li>39. Lawsons cypress – 53cm</li><li>40. Lawsons cypress – 63cm</li><li>41. Lawsons cypress – 48cm</li><li>42. Lawsons cypress – 57cm</li><li>43. Lawsons cypress – 62cm</li><li>44. Lawsons cypress – 53cm</li></ol> |
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|  | <p>45. Lawsons cypress – 40cm<br/> 46. Lawsons cypress – 48cm<br/> 47. Lawsons cypress – 27cm<br/> 48. Lawsons cypress – 50cm<br/> 49. Lawsons cypress – 48cm<br/> 50. Lawsons cypress – 47cm<br/> 51. Lawsons cypress – 46cm</p> <p>Individual trees condition assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None of the trees are native species</li> <li>• Less than 50% within the block are mature</li> <li>• The trees retain 75% of their expected canopy for their age ranges and height</li> <li>• Loose bark is present on the trees providing natural ecological niches</li> <li>• More than 20% of the canopy is oversailing vegetation beneath</li> </ul> <p>Individual trees achieve a condition assessment score of <b>moderate</b>.</p> <p><b><u>h2a – Native Hedgerow</u></b></p> <p>Along the western border of the site is a line of very young hawthorn hedgerow. The hedgerow was planted very recently and shows evidence of grazing by the horses so the average height is ~50cm and the average width is ~30cm. There are gaps present between each of the hawthorn shrubs equating to ~60% of the length, with gaps between the ground and the base of the canopy also, however, these gaps are less than 50cm. There is no undisturbed ground either side of the hedgerow. There are no invasive species present, and the hedgerow is unaffected by human activities.</p> <p>The native hedgerow achieves a condition assessment score of <b>poor</b>.</p> <p><b><u>w1g – Other broadleaved woodland</u></b></p> <p>At the south-east corner of the site is a small patch of other broadleaved woodland, this woodland is comprised solely of silver birch and is ~0.05ha in size. Ground level species comprise; bramble (F), common bent (O), Yorkshire fog (O), yarrow (O), and ivy (O). One age class is present within the woodland parcel, with no significant browsing evident, no invasive species present, and only one native tree or shrub species present. &gt;80% of both canopy trees and understorey shrubs are native, no temporary open space present, no classes or coppice regrowth are present within the woodland, tree mortality is at 10% or less, no recognisable NVC woodland plant community present, and only one storey is present within the survey plot. No veteran trees are present, less than 25% of the survey plot has dead wood, and no nutrient enrichment or damaged ground present.</p> <p>Other broadleaved woodland achieves a condition assessment score of 25, which equates to <b>poor</b>.</p> |
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|                                      | <p><b>Local notable habitats</b></p> <p>Notable habitats are present within 2km of the site with the closest being deciduous woodland ~40m south of the site, with other habitats including; lowland heathland ~870m east, ancient woodland ~530m west, traditional orchards ~810m west, and woodpasture and parkland ~140m north-east. Between the site and the closest notable habitat is a residential development with associated garden and trees, as such the deciduous woodland has suitable connectivity to the site. Additionally, other notable habitats are separated from the site by roads, residential developments and agricultural landscape, as such, the other notable habitats are considered to have limited connectivity to the site.</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i>              | <p><b>On-site habitats</b></p> <p>The proposed development will result in the loss of large areas of other neutral grassland. This could result in a net loss in biodiversity at the site.</p> <p><b>Notable habitats</b></p> <p>No direct impacts to any notable habitats will occur as a result of the proposed development. However, due to the proximity of the site to deciduous woodland (~40m south), indirect effects (e.g. pollution, dust, litter, surface run off, etc.) could occur during construction.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Recommendations</i>               | <p><b>On-site habitats</b></p> <p>None.</p> <p><b>Notable habitats</b></p> <p>Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution affecting the nearby ancient woodland must be implemented during construction. A Construction Ecology Management Plan (CEMP) may be required for this.</p> <p><b>Biodiversity net gain</b></p> <p>The Environment Act (2021) requires all developments (excluding exemptions) to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity. Therefore, the planning application must be accompanied by a landscaping/habitat creation and enhancement strategy, biodiversity net gain calculations and a habitat management and monitoring plan to ensure the proposed development delivers a 10% net gain.</p>                     |
| <b>Locality and Designated Sites</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>    | <p><b>On-site designations</b></p> <p>The site is not subject to any designation.</p> <p><b>Statutory designated sites (within 2km)</b></p> <p>There are three statutory sites within 2km of the site, as detailed below:</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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|                         | <p><u>Heathlake LNR and SSSI ~1070m south-west</u><br/> Heath Lake is a 6-hectare (15-acre) biological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in Berkshire. The SSSI is part of the 22.3-hectare (55-acre) Heathlake Local Nature Reserve, which is owned and managed by Wokingham Borough Council. Most of the 2.8-hectare (7-acre) lake is less than 1-metre (3-foot) deep. It is the only acid lake in the county which retains its characteristic plants, such as alternate water-milfoil and six-stamened waterwort. The banks are peaty and marshy in some areas. There are also small areas of woodland, dry heath and acid grassland.</p> <p><u>Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths SSSI ~1800m south-east</u><br/> This area has an extensive mosaic of broadleaved woodland, coniferous plantation, dry and wet heathland, valley mire, a series of base-poor ponds and a scarce breeding invertebrate assemblage (topsoil and plants). In particular, the heathland and coniferous plantation supports internationally important populations of woodlark, Eurasian nightjar and Dartford warbler, and have a nationally important dragonfly and damselfly population. The site includes the peatland valley bogs of Broadmoor Bottom and Wishmoor Bottom which form the most important remaining examples of this type of habitat in the region.</p> <p><u>Thames Basin Heaths SPA ~1800m south-east</u><br/> The Thames Basin Heaths SPA is a network of heathland sites that provides a habitat for important ground-nesting bird species. It was designated as a Special Protection Area in March 2005 and is protected from adverse effects by law.</p> <p>The site lies within the impact risk zone for Heathlake SSSI and Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths SSSI.</p> <p><b>Non-statutory designated sites</b><br/> The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | <p><b>On-site designations</b><br/> No impacts foreseen.</p> <p><b>Statutory and non-statutory designated sites</b><br/> No impacts to designated sites are anticipated due to the small scale and distance of the proposed development from such sites (where known) as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers.</p> <p>The site lies within the impact risk zone for Heathlake SSSI and Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths SSSI. The proposed development type is not listed as a possible high risk for this designation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Recommendations</i>  | <p><b>On-site designations</b><br/> None required.</p> <p><b>Statutory and non-statutory designated sites</b><br/> None required.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

| Invasive / Non-native species |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           |                                                  |
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| Summary of Survey Findings    |  | No problematic invasive and non-native species recorded on site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                           |                                                  |
| Foreseen Impacts              |  | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                           |                                                  |
| Recommendations               |  | No further surveys but remain vigilant.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                           |                                                  |
| Invertebrates                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           |                                                  |
| Summary of Survey Findings    |  | The habitats present on-site, including other neutral grassland, scattered trees, native hedgerow, and broadleaved woodland, likely provide common invertebrates with opportunities to forage and shelter. The site contains no further notable habitats which may provide niches for specialised or protected invertebrates.                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                           |                                                  |
| Foreseen Impacts              |  | Other neutral grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local invertebrate populations owing to the presence of more extensive habitat locally.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                           |                                                  |
| Recommendations               |  | No further surveys.<br><br><b>Suggested biodiversity enhancements</b><br>The site will be enhanced via the provision of native wildflowers or wildflower turf, which will provide foraging opportunities for invertebrates.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                           |                                                  |
| Bats                          |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           |                                                  |
| Summary of Survey Findings    |  | <b>EPSL data</b><br>A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roosts sites in close proximity to the licensed site. There are two EPSLs within a 2km radius of site as detailed below: |                                                                                           |                                                  |
|                               |  | <b>EPSL reference</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Bat species affected</b>                                                               | <b>Distance from site</b>                        |
|                               |  | 2014-4527-EPS-MIT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Brandts bat, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, whiskered bat | ~520m south-west                                 |
|                               |  | 2014-4527-EPS-MIT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle                                                   | ~1830m south                                     |
|                               |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Destruction of a breeding site and resting place |
|                               |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                           | Destruction of a resting place                   |

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|                         | <p><b>Foraging and commuting habitat</b><br/>Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the form of other neutral grassland, native hedgerow, scattered trees, and broadleaved woodland. These habitats are likely to provide micro-climatic conditions that support invertebrates that will in turn provide foraging opportunities for local bat populations. The hedgerow on site is very young and does not yet provide connectivity between habitats of importance due to the size and density of it. Bats are well known to utilise linear features to aid navigation whilst travelling between foraging resources and roost sites, therefore the hedgerow may be used for this purpose.</p> <p><b>Roosting habitat</b><br/>There are no buildings or trees on site and therefore there is no chance that roosting bats will be present on site</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | <p><b>Roosting habitat [Buildings]</b><br/>None foreseen.</p> <p><b>Roosting habitat [Trees]</b><br/>None foreseen.</p> <p><b>Foraging and commuting habitat</b><br/>The proposed development will result in the loss of other neutral grassland but given the presence of more extensive areas of foraging and commuting habitat in the locality and the extent and purpose of the proposed development, this is likely to be inconsequential for bats.</p> <p><b>Artificial lighting</b><br/>The proposed development may lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting of surrounding habitats or the retained building. Without mitigation, this may disturb commuting bats.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Recommendations</i>  | <p><b>Roosting habitat [Buildings]</b><br/>None.</p> <p><b>Roosting habitat [Trees]</b><br/>None.</p> <p><b>Foraging and commuting habitat</b><br/>No further surveys are required.</p> <p><b>Artificial lighting</b><br/>A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. Parameters can be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website:</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

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|                                   | <a href="https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting">https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting</a> . Any new lighting will be positioned away from hedgerows and trees to avoid disturbance on foraging and commuting bats.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Birds</b>                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | <p><b>Buildings</b><br/>There are no buildings on site.</p> <p><b>Trees and vegetation</b><br/>As the hedgerow will grow denser, it will become suitable and provide suitable habitat for nesting birds.</p> <p><b>Barn owls</b><br/>The site does not provide any suitable nesting sites for barn owls.</p> <p><b>Overwintering birds</b><br/>Due to the small size of the site and the extent and type of the habitats recorded, the site not considered suitable to support a significant assemblage of protected and/or notable birds.</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i>           | <p><b>Buildings/trees</b><br/>No impacts are anticipated on nesting birds as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p><b>Barn owls</b><br/>None foreseen.</p> <p><b>Overwintering birds</b><br/>None foreseen.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Recommendations</i>            | <p><b>Buildings/trees</b><br/>None.</p> <p><b>Barn owls</b><br/>None required.</p> <p><b>Overwintering birds</b><br/>None required.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Reptiles</b>                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | <p><b>EPSL data</b><br/>A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for protected reptiles within 2km of the site.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|                                   | <p><b>Habitat suitability</b></p> <p>The habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide optimal foraging and commuting opportunities for reptiles in the form of varying sward length other neutral grassland. The grassland onsite is considered suitable for common species of reptiles due to the tussocky matted nature providing refuge and foraging opportunity, particularly around the edges that are close to the nearby woodland habitats, and also in and around the gorse on the northern and eastern borders of the site. There is also good connectivity between the site and habitats in the wider landscape.</p> <p><b>Wider landscape</b></p> <p>The nearby areas of woodland are of elevated ecological value within the wider landscape and may represent important resources for local reptile populations. These nearby habitats provide optimal foraging, commuting, and refuge opportunities for reptiles and are well connected to further suitable habitat in the wider landscape. The presence of reptiles utilising these adjacent habitats cannot be discounted.</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i>           | <p>The proposed development could cause disturbance, harm or even death of reptiles if present at the time of construction. Additionally, the proposed development may result in the loss of significant reptile habitat causing a reduction in the carrying capacity of the surrounding landscape and potential fragmentation of connected habitats suitable for reptiles.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Recommendations</i>            | <p>Reptile surveys will be required to determine presence or likely absence of reptiles on the site. This will comprise the deployment and monitoring of artificial refugia over seven visits and such surveys must be undertaken between April, May and September, in accordance with current survey guidelines (Gent &amp; Gibson, 2003).</p> <p><b>Suggested biodiversity enhancements</b></p> <p>The site could be enhanced for reptiles post-development with the inclusion of log piles and planting of areas of native shrubs, to provide sheltering opportunities.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Amphibians</b>                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | <p><b>EPSL and survey data</b></p> <p>A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for great crested newts within 2km of the site. Further, no positive class survey licence return or DLL historic survey data (2017 – 2019) were present within 2km of the site.</p> <p><b>Aquatic habitat suitability (including ponds within 500m)</b></p> <p>Great crested newts (GCN) exist in metapopulations and are known to utilise ponds and their connecting terrestrial habitat during their life cycle; great crested newts are typically found within terrestrial habitats up to 500m from breeding ponds (Langton et al. 2001).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|                                   | <p>There are no ponds on the site, but a review of the Magic.gov.uk database and aerial imagery indicates that there are six ponds located within 500m of the site, located 30m east (P1), 170m north (P2), 170m east (P3), 260m north (P4), 280m northwest (P5), and 480m north-east (P6). The pond 30m east is the only pond that is considered to have potential terrestrial connectivity to the site due to proximity to the site. All other ponds are assessed to have limited connectivity due to separation by extensive areas of suboptimal habitat including intensely managed agricultural land in addition to tarmac roads. These landscape features combined are assessed to represent a significant barrier to dispersal limiting access from these ponds to the site for great crested newts.</p> <p><b>Terrestrial habitat suitability</b></p> <p>The site provides suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians given the tussocky nature of the grassland that will provide refuge and shelter for foraging and commuting amphibians, the small patch of woodland on site with associated scrub may provide further refuge for amphibians and the proximity of the site to the nearby ponds further increases the chances that they will be present on site.</p> |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i>           | <p>When georeferencing the proposed development plans over scaled mapping of the site, it is noted that the development area is likely to result in the loss or significant disturbance of 5.24ha of other neutral grassland. If great crested newts are present within the pond 30m to the east of the site, when completing the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015), the proposed development produces a <b>Red risk score</b>, which states: <b>Offence Highly Likely</b>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Recommendations</i>            | <p>Environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys will be required of pond P1 (where accessible) to determine the presence or absence of great crested newts. This will comprise collecting water samples and sending them off for laboratory analysis and such surveys must be undertaken between mid-April and June, in accordance with current survey guidelines (Biggs et al, 2014). The surveys are likely to be required before planning permission can be granted.</p> <p><b>Suggested biodiversity enhancements</b></p> <p>The site could be enhanced for amphibians post-development through creation of amphibian hibernacula using rubble and logs from site clearance. Information on how to construct a hibernaculum can be found here:<br/> <a href="https://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/hibernaculum">https://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/hibernaculum</a></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Badger</b>                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | <p>No badger setts were noted on site or within a 30m radius of the site. The site is considered unsuitable for badgers given the flat topography of the ground and lack of suitable sett excavation areas/ground. Further, there is limited suitable badger foraging habitat on site given the lack of fruiting trees/scrub. However, due to the presence of a small patch of woodland on site and nearby woodland areas and bordering fences with large gaps, there is a chance that commuting badgers could be present on-site foraging for invertebrates.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

|                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i>           | No works will be undertaken within 30m of a badger sett. Other neutral grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local badger populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Recommendations</i>            | <p>A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.</li> <li>The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which badgers could use.</li> <li>Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.</li> </ul> <p>In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.</p> <p><b>Suggested biodiversity enhancements</b><br/>Planting fruit bearing trees and species-rich grassland to increase foraging opportunities for badgers.</p> |
| <b>Riparian animals</b>           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for otters or water voles within 2km of the site. There are no water courses on or connected to the site. There are also no riparian habitats present on site or within an influencing distance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i>           | No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Recommendations</i>            | None required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Hazel dormouse</b>             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | <p><b>EPSL data</b><br/>A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for hazel dormice within 2km of the site.</p> <p><b>Habitat suitability</b><br/>Dormice typically utilise a three-dimensional habitat structure as to commute between feeding and breeding sites whilst avoiding predation. As such the hedgerow on site is considered unsuitable for hazel dormice and therefore the likelihood of this species being present on site is considered acceptably low.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i>           | No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Recommendations</i>            | None foreseen.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Other e.g. hedgehog</b>        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> | The site provides foraging opportunities for hedgehogs in the form of other neutral grassland and broadleaved woodland, the gaps in the fencing also provide access onto the site for hedgehogs and therefore it may also be used by commuting hedgehogs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Foreseen Impacts</i> | Other neutral grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Recommendations</i>  | <p>Similar to the badgers, a precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.</li><li>• The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use.</li><li>• Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.</li></ul> <p>If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.</p> <p><b>Suggested biodiversity enhancements</b></p> <p>The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for hedgehogs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planting fruit bearing trees and species-rich grassland to increase foraging opportunities.</li><li>• Creation of brash piles or installation of hedgehog houses in shady areas.</li><li>• Installation of gaps under boundary fencing to enable hedgehogs to move freely through the site.</li></ul> |

Appendix 1: Survey/Habitat map



**Appendix 2: Location map**



Appendix 3: Pond map



## Appendix 4: Proposed plan



**Brookfield Farm, Natural Burial Site**  
Harper Landscape Architecture LLP

**Landscape Masterplan**

Draw No. NLS 021 02 March 2025 1:750 @ A1 1:1500 @ A3



Appendix 5: Habitat Photos

| Other neutral grassland                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Photograph                                                                                                                                                                | Description                                                     |
| <br> | <p>Figure 1 and 2: other neutral grassland habitat on site.</p> |

| Native hedgerow                                                                     |                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Photograph                                                                          | Description                                                               |
|   | <p>Figure 3: hawthorn hedgerow on the western border of the site</p>      |
| Scattered trees                                                                     |                                                                           |
| Photograph                                                                          | Description                                                               |
|  | <p>Figure 4: Scattered cypress trees along the eastern site boundary.</p> |

| Other broadleaved woodland                                                         |                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Photograph                                                                         | Description                                                                   |
|  | <p>Figure 5: Birch woodland located at the south-east corner of the site.</p> |

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