



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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Land Located off Forest Rd, Binfield,
Bracknell

Central Grid Ref: SU 836 709

Report Issue date : Oct 2025
Report Survey date: 26th August / 20th October 2025

Quality Management

Job No			
Project	Construction of small stable block on grazing land off Forest Road, Binfield, Bracknell, RG42 3EB (Grid Ref: SU 836 709).		
Location	Land off Forest Road, Binfield, Bracknell, RG42 3EB (Grid Ref: SU 836 709).		
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Checked by		Signature (for file)	

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1 Contents

Introduction 1

1.1	Background to the scheme.....	
1.2	Site context.....	
1.3	Purpose of this report.....	
2	Methods.....	
2.1	Desk study.....	
2.2	Field survey	
3	Results.....	
3.1	Desk study.....	
3.2	Field survey	
3.2.1	<i>Habitats on site.....</i>	
3.2.2	<i>Habitats off site which require consideration.....</i>	
3.2.3	<i>Species and species groups which may be present</i>	
3.2.4	<i>Species and species groups which are unlikely to be present.....</i>	
3.3	Constraints to the survey.....	
4	Recommendations.....	
4.1	Protected and notable species.....	
4.2	Invasive Species.....	
4.3	General mitigation and opportunities for enhancement.....	
5	Summary	
6	References	

Appendices – 1 Wildlife Legislation – 2 Protected Species Records – 3 Reasonable Measures Great Crested Newt – 4 Habitat Map and Site Photos.	
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the scheme

Environmental Business Solutions was instructed in August 2025 to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for the proposed construction of a small stable block on grazing land off Forest Road, Binfield, Bracknell, RG42 3EB (Grid Ref: SU 836 709).

1.2 Site context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SU 836 709 and comprises of approximately 11,700m² of pasture land and is bordered by mature trees with a small area of scrub (see Figure 1). The Application Site is located in a rural area on the outskirts of Binfield. It is bounded by open countryside and large private gardens. There are a number water bodies within 500m of the site and the site lies within the NatureSpace Great Crested Newt Risk Zones.

Figure 1: Site Extent

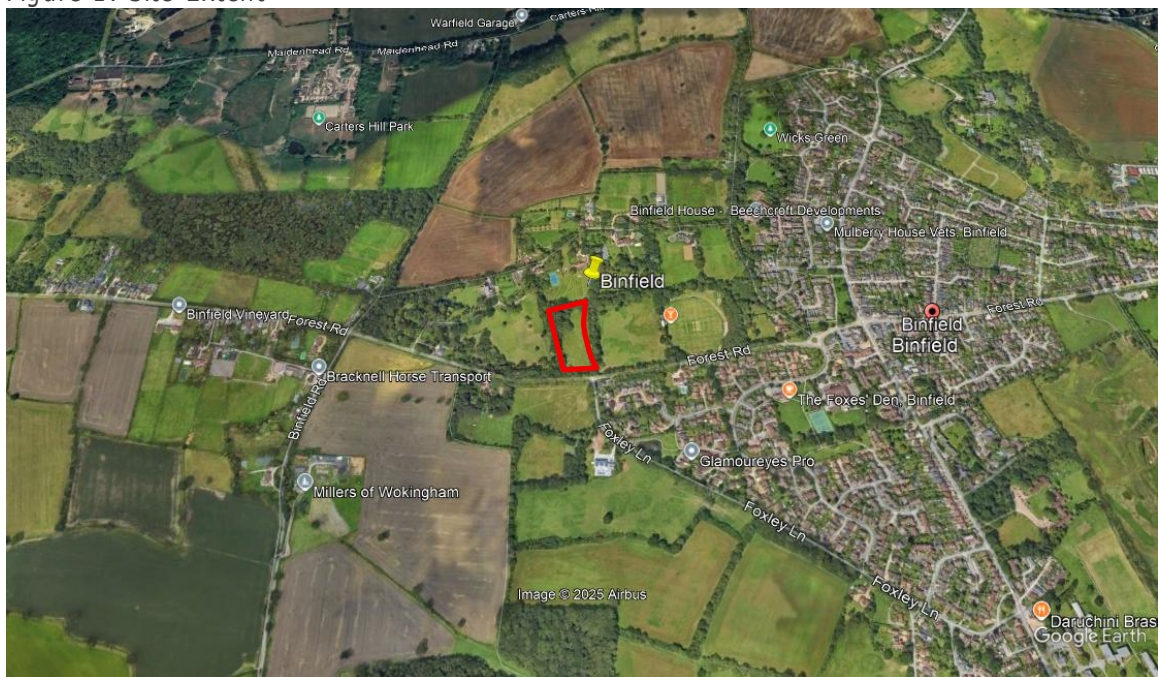


Fig 2: Site in closer context



1.3 Purpose of this report

This report has been produced to set out the methods, results, and conclusions of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). This will inform the need for any further ecological surveys as required in order to fully assess the impacts of the proposals.

For the purposes of this study, the term ‘protected and notable species’ is defined in Appendix 1.

Further information on legal protection of those species which are formally protected is defined in Appendix 2.

2 Methods

2.1 Desk study

Sources of information used in the desk study are presented in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 – Desk study sources of information

Source	Date consulted	Information sought
MAGiC website www.magic.gov.uk	10/25	Locations of statutorily-designated wildlife sites within 1km of the site boundary. Protected Species licensing within 1km of site.
Natural England https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/	10/25	Relevant SSSI citations
JNCC http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/	10/25	Information on European wildlife sites Details of relevant Section 41 species and habitats
OSmaps online www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk	10/25	Ponds and waterbodies within 500m of the site.
Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre (TVERC).	10/25	Protected Species within 1000m

2.2 Field survey

The site was subject to a field survey on 26th of August 2025 and repeated on the 20th October 2025. The weather conditions were mainly clear. The survey was undertaken by Kelly Barker/Bill Gaudie.

Bill Gaudie BSc (Wildlife Conservation), MCIEEM is an ecologist and has 20 years experience in undertaking ecological surveys including Preliminary Ecological Appraisals. Kelly Barker BSc (Wildlife Conservation) has 10 years of experience in assisting in ecological surveys.

The methods were based on the standard 'Phase 1' habitat survey technique (JNCC 2010), which was extended (IEA 1995) to include any relevant information on evidence or suitability for use by protected or notable species.

3 Results

3.1 Desk study

There are no Statutory Sites within 1000m of the Site

There is one area of ancient woodland present within 1km of the proposed development site. Approximately 140m west of the Site.

There are no non statutory wildlife sites within 1km of the Site.

The nearest GCN record is 170m south of the site. The next nearest is 510m north east of the site.

3.2 Field survey

3.2.1 Habitats on site

The habitats on site, and accompanying Target Notes are presented in Appendix 3, and described in more detail below.

The area is dominated by improved grassland (Pasture). A small area of scrub is present in the south west corner of the site. Mature trees border the site including Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Goat Willow.

Scattered Scrub is dominated by Bramble and Goat Willow.

Improved Grassland. This habitat is made up mainly of swards of perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), rough meadowgrass (*Poa trivialis*), and white clover (*Trifolium repens*), with variable amount of other species including Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), sheeps sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), cleavers (*Galium pilosum*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) greater plantain (*Plantago major*) and broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*). Clover (*Trifolium pratense*), vetch (*Vicia sativa*) were also recorded.

Mature Trees. A number of mature trees are close to the boundary of the Site. The majority are oak (*Quercus robur*) along with Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) Ash, Willow and Cherry trees.

3.2.2 Habitats off site which require consideration

Mature trees are found immediately adjacent to the site.

3.2.3 Species and species groups which may be present

Table 3.2.3 indicates the species, species groups, designated sites and habitats which are given further consideration in this appraisal.

Table 3.2.3 Species and species groups requiring further consideration

Species / species group	Field evidence	Rationale for consideration
Birds	Signs of foraging.	There is suitable nesting habitat in scrub and trees on site
Great crested newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>)	None	The site falls within the NatureSpace Great Crested Newt Risk Zones. There are 10 ponds within 500m of the site. See Fig 3.

3.3 Constraints to the survey

The following constraints applied to the survey:

- Site visit occurred over 2 days August / October 2025.

Fig 3. Ponds within 500m of Site boundary. ●



4 Recommendations

4.1 Protected and notable species

Based on the findings of the PEA, the following additional surveys / mitigation may be required to inform a complete ecological baseline.

- Breeding Birds
- Great Crested Newts
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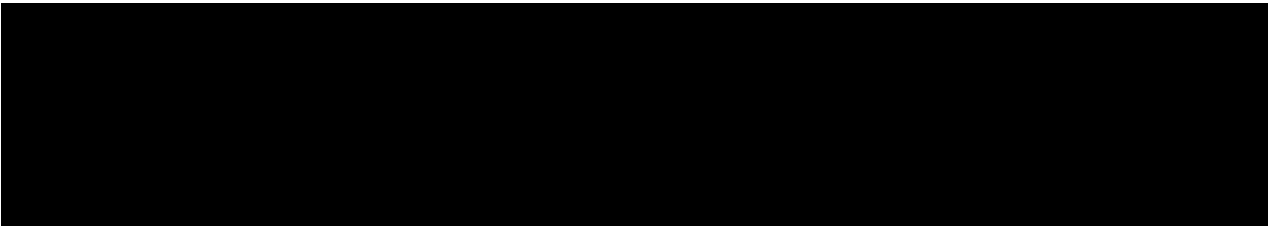
These are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Breeding Birds.

Any tree or scrub clearance will be conducted outside of the breeding bird season (March – September). If this is not possible then a breeding bird survey should be conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist within 28hrs of works commencing. If nesting birds are discovered then the area around the nest shall be isolated and works halted until nesting has finished.

GCN / Amphibians

As there are numerous ponds within 500m of the site of which most are not accessible a set of Reasonable Avoidance Measures should be agreed prior to works commencing. These are covered in Appendix 3.



4.3 General mitigation and opportunities for enhancement

Where possible trees should be retained on site. Suggestions for biodiversity enhancement include the provision of bat and bird nesting boxes (if possible), and the creation of habitats through planting of native trees and hedgerows.

All construction activities should comply with general environmental best practice measures including;

- the measures set out in the Environment Agency's Pollution Prevention Guidelines;
- excavations should be sealed overnight or should have at least one shallow- sloping side allowing animals to escape should they fall in;
- an ecologist should be contacted for advice should any protected species be discovered during construction; and,
- appropriate measures to suppress dust should be put in place during hot, dry, or windy weather.
- broadleaved trees, hedgerows and the ruderal vegetation on site are suitable to be used by nesting birds. Therefore, vegetation removal should be undertaken outside of the breeding

bird season (which is from March to August inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably experienced ecologist should check the habitat for breeding bird activity no more than 48 hours before clearance. If nesting activity is found, it will need to be left in situ until the nesting effort has been completed.

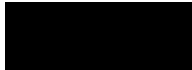
5 Summary

A desk-based study and a field study were conducted in order to identify habitats and determine the suitability for any 'protected and notable' species to occur on site.

The habitats present are common and widespread and are not of significant ecological value in their own right. Notwithstanding this, they are suitable to support a number of protected species.

Further surveys may be required for the following species

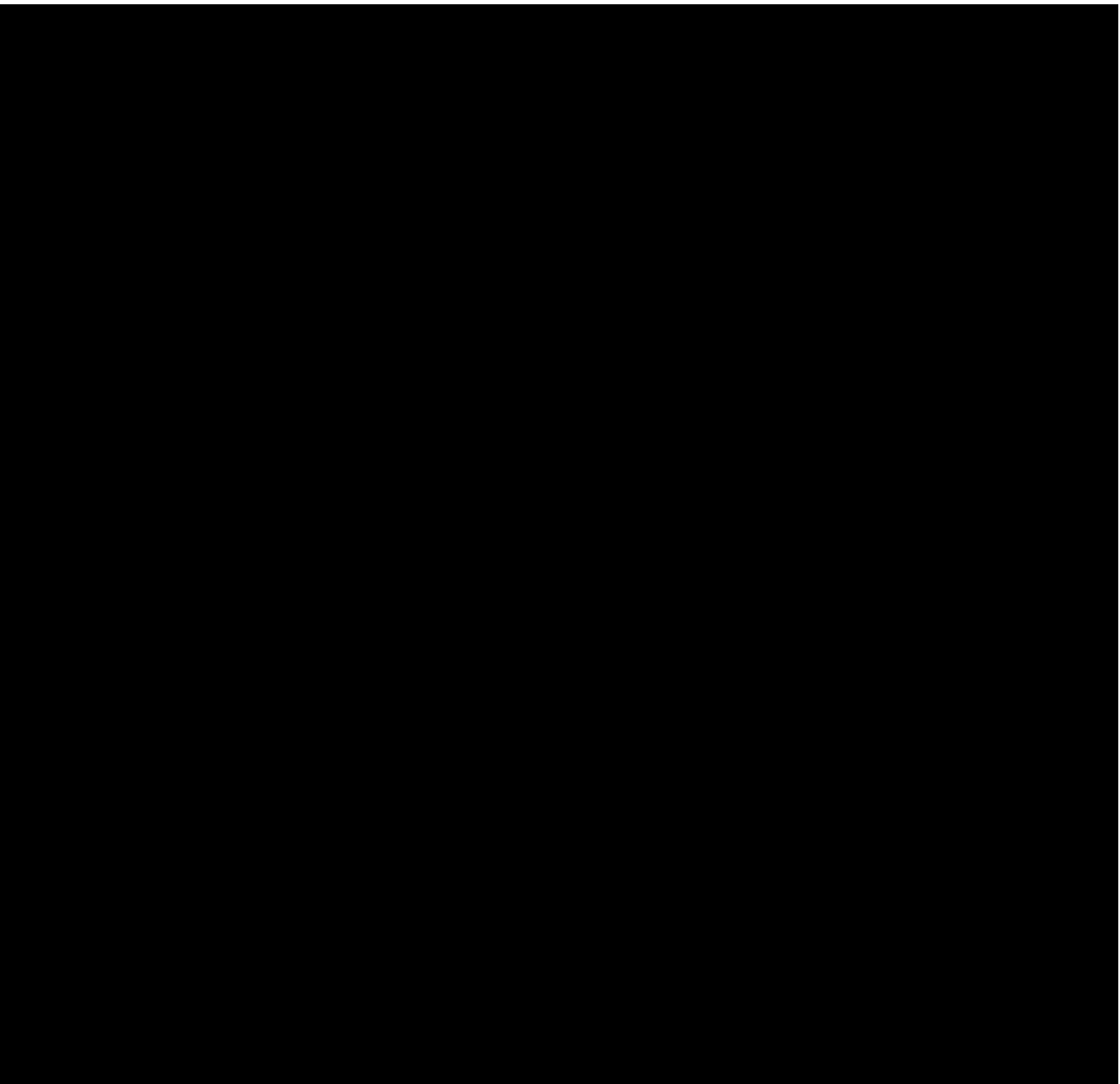
- Breeding birds
- GCN



Suggestions for biodiversity enhancement include the provision of bat and bird nesting boxes (if possible), and the creation of habitats through planting of native trees and hedgerows.

Construction would also need to be managed appropriately to comply with best practice, as well as with any constraints posed by the outcome of further surveys.

APPENDIX 1 – WILDLIFE LEGISLATION & SPECIES INFORMATION



BATS

All 17 species of bat known to breed in England and Wales, and their roost sites, are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, known as the 'Habitats Regulations'. This makes it an offence to deliberately kill or injure a bat, or to deliberately disturb a bat such that its ability to hibernate, breed or rear young, or such that the species' distribution, were significantly affected. It is also an offence to damage or destroy any breeding site or resting place. Intentional or reckless disturbance of bats in their resting places, and damage to or obstruction of resting places are also offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under UK law a bat roost is "any structure or place which any wild [bat]...uses for shelter or protection". As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that the roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time. Penalties for offences against bats or their roosts include fines of up to £5,000 and/or up to six months in prison.

As a result, development works which are likely to involve the loss of or alteration to roost sites, or which could result in killing of or injury to bats, need to take place under licence. Works which could disturb bats may also be licensable, though this

needs to be assessed on a case by case basis, as bats' sensitivity to disturbance varies depending on normal background levels, and the definition of disturbance offences under the Habitats Regulations is complex. In practice this means that works involving modification or loss of roosts (typically in buildings, trees or underground sites) or significant disturbance to bats in roosts are likely to be licensable.

Licences can be obtained from Natural England or the Welsh Government to permit works that would otherwise be illegal, provided it can be demonstrated that the proposed works are needed to protect public health or safety, or for other reasons of overriding public interest including social and economic reasons. It is also necessary to demonstrate that there is no satisfactory alternative to the proposed works, and that the conservation status of bats in the area will be maintained. Appropriate mitigation and post- construction monitoring are therefore a requirement of all licences.

AMPHIBIANS

Great Britain supports seven native amphibian species. The four most widespread species; smooth and palmate newts, common frog, and common toad, receive partial protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which prohibits sale, barter, exchange, transporting for sale and advertising to sell or to buy. The great crested newt, pool frog and natterjack toad are also fully protected in England and Wales under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Penalties for offences against amphibian species include fines of up to £5,000 and/ or up to six months in prison.

Four amphibian species (great crested newt, pool frog, common toad, natterjack toad) are listed as priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, and are therefore considered to be Species of Principal Importance in England and Wales (excluding the pool frog, which does not occur in Wales) under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. All public bodies including local and regional authorities have a duty under this legislation to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity.

GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

Great crested newts are protected in England and Wales under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, known as the 'Habitats Regulations'. This makes it an offence to deliberately kill or injure a great crested newt, or to deliberately disturb a great crested newt such that its ability to hibernate, breed or rear young, or such that the species' distribution, were significantly affected. It is also an offence to damage or destroy any breeding site or resting place for great crested newts. Intentional or reckless disturbance of great crested newts in places of shelter (ponds or terrestrial refuges), and damage to or obstruction of places of shelter are also offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Penalties for offences against great crested newts include fines of up to £5,000 and/ or up to six months in prison.

As a result, development works which are likely to involve the loss of ponds or terrestrial habitat, or which could result in killing of or injury to great crested newts, need to take place under licence. Works which could disturb great crested newts may also be licensable, though this is rarely the case unless loss of great crested newt habitat is

also proposed, and should be assessed on a case by case basis. In practice this means that works involving any removal of or significant modification to ponds or terrestrial habitats (typically rough grassland, scrub, hedgerow bases and woodland) supporting great crested newts are likely to be licensable.

Licences can be obtained from Natural England or the Welsh Government to permit works that would otherwise be illegal, provided it can be demonstrated that the proposed works are needed to protect public health or safety, or for other reasons of overriding public interest including social and economic reasons. It is also necessary to demonstrate that there is no satisfactory alternative to the proposed works, and that the conservation status of great crested newts in the area will be maintained. Appropriate mitigation and post-construction monitoring are therefore a requirement of all licences.

REPTILES

All six native reptile species receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The four more common species (common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, adder *Vipera berus* and grass snake *Natrix natrix*) receive partial protection which makes it an offence to intentionally kill or injure a reptile. The two other reptile species (smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* and sand lizard *Lacerta agilis*), both of which are rare with very restricted UK ranges receive full protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Penalties for offences against reptile species include fines of up to £5,000 and/or up to six months in prison.

Works such as site clearance or topsoil stripping which could result in killing or injury of reptiles could be considered result in an offence unless measures are taken to minimise the risk of this occurring. Any inadvertent impacts on common reptile species despite these mitigation measures being in place would be considered an 'incidental result of an otherwise lawful operation' which 'could not reasonably have been avoided' and therefore not an offence. Works which could affect smooth snakes or sand lizards, or their habitats, would need to take place under licence from Natural England or Natural Resources Wales. However sites supporting smooth snakes or sand lizards are very rarely affected by development proposals.

In practice, mitigation for impacts of development on common reptiles generally comprise one or more of the following techniques: displacement, in which reptiles are encouraged to move to suitable retained habitat by changing the management of areas affected by development; exclusion, where reptile-resistant fencing is provided between a development site and suitable retained habitat allowing reptiles to be trapped from the development footprint and released elsewhere on the site; and translocation, where animals are trapped from a development site and released on another suitable site nearby. Reptile mitigation proposals, particularly those involving translocation of animals, should be agreed in advance with the local planning authority.

BIRDS

All British birds, their nests and eggs (with certain exceptions) are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to:

intentionally kill, injure or take a wild bird; intentionally take, damage or destroy nests which are in use or being built; intentionally take or destroy birds' eggs; or possess live or dead wild birds or eggs. A number of species receive additional protection through inclusion on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act; for these it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb birds while nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or to disturb the dependant young of such a bird. Penalties for offences against bird species include fines of up to £5,000 and/or up to six months in prison.

General licences for control of some bird species are issued by Natural England and Natural Resources Wales in order to prevent damage or disease, or to preserve public health or public safety, but it is not possible to obtain a licence for control of birds or removal of eggs/nests for development purposes. Consequently if nesting birds are present on a development site when works are programmed to start it is usually necessary to delay works, at least in the areas supporting nests, until any chicks have fledged and left the nest. It is usually possible, once chicks have hatched, for an experienced ecologist to predict approximately when they are likely to fledge, in order to inform programming of works on site.

OTTERS

Otters and their holts are protected in England and Wales under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, known as the 'Habitats Regulations'. This makes it an offence to deliberately kill or injure an otter, or to deliberately disturb an otter such that its ability to breed or rear young, or such that the species' distribution, were significantly affected. It is also an offence to damage or destroy any breeding site or resting place. Intentional or reckless disturbance of otters in their holts, and damage to or obstruction of holts are also offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Penalties for offences against otters or their holts include fines of up to £5,000 and/or up to six months in prison.

Any development works which are likely to involve the loss of holts, or which could result in killing of or injury to otters (which are only likely to occur extremely rarely), need to take place under licence. Works which could disturb otters may also be licensable, though this is also rarely the case as the majority of developments on watercourses and coastal areas where otters are present can be carried out in a way which avoids significant disturbance.

Where it is necessary, licences can be obtained from Natural England or the Welsh Government to permit works that would otherwise be illegal, provided it can be demonstrated that the proposed works are needed to protect public health or safety, or for other reasons of overriding public interest including social and economic reasons. It is also necessary to demonstrate that there is no satisfactory alternative to the proposed works, and that the conservation status of otters in the area will be maintained. Appropriate mitigation and post-construction monitoring are therefore a requirement of all licences.

WATER VOLES

Water voles *Arvicola amphibius* receive protection under the Wildlife and

Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to: intentionally kill, injure, or take a water vole; intentionally or recklessly disturb a water vole whilst in its place of shelter; intentionally or recklessly damage, obstruct or destroy a water vole's place of shelter; or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a place of shelter. Penalties for offences against water voles include fines of up to £5,000 and/ or up to six months in prison.

Works such as watercourse re-profiling, installing culverts, or topsoil stripping close to watercourses and ponds which could result in destruction or obstruction of burrows could be considered reckless, and/or could be considered intentional if water voles are killed or injured, unless measures are taken to minimise the risk of this occurring. Any inadvertent impacts on water voles despite these mitigation measures being in place would be considered an 'incidental result of an otherwise lawful operation' which 'could not reasonably have been avoided' and therefore not an offence.

In practice, mitigation for impacts of development on water voles generally comprise one or more of the following techniques: displacement, in which water voles are encouraged to move to suitable retained habitat by changing the management of areas affected by development; exclusion, where water vole-resistant fencing is provided between a development site and suitable retained habitat allowing animals to be trapped from the development footprint and released elsewhere on the site; and translocation, where animals are trapped from a development site and released on another suitable site nearby. Water vole mitigation proposals, particularly those involving translocation of animals, should be agreed in advance with Natural England or Natural Resources Wales.

INVERTEBRATES

A number of invertebrates are protected in England and Wales under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, known as the 'Habitats Regulations' including:

- large blue butterflies (eggs, caterpillars, chrysalises and adults)
- Fisher's estuarine moths (eggs, caterpillars, chrysalises and adults)
- little ramshorn whirlpool snails

A number of other invertebrates are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) from intentional killing, injuring or taking any wild animal.

PLANNING POLICY IN RELATION TO BIODIVERSITY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), was published in March 2012 and revised in July 2018. Additional guidance can be found online at - <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/>. The NPPF simplifies and collates a number of previous planning documents and outlines the government's objective towards biodiversity.

The NPPF identifies ways in which the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment (Paragraph 170), including:

- (a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils

- (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- (d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- (e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should,

wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

- (f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate. protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;

It also emphasises the importance of conserving biodiversity and areas covered by landscape designations (Paragraph 172):

Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.

When determining planning applications, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity (Paragraph 175) by applying principles including:

- (a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- (b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- (c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁶ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- (d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- (a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- (b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- (c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

There is a general presumption in favour of sustainable development within the NPPF. It is noted in Paragraph 177 that this presumption does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitat site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) states that a public authority must, “in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper

exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat". DEFRA issued further guidance on implementation of this act in the document; Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty (May 2007), which notes that "Conserving biodiversity includes restoring and enhancing species populations and habitats, as well as protecting them".

ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) states that a public authority must, "in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat". DEFRA issued further guidance on implementation of this act in the document; Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty (May 2007), which notes that "Conserving biodiversity can include restoring or enhancing a population or habitat" .

In England, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), issued in July 2018, states that the planning system should contribute to "minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; . It also states that "opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity".

UK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) 2011 is a policy first published in 1994 to protect biodiversity and stems from the 1992 Rio Biodiversity Earth Summit. The policy is continuously revised to combine new and existing conservation initiatives to conserve and enhance species and habitats, promote public awareness and contribute to international conservation efforts. Each plan details the status, threats and unique conservation strategies for the species or habitat concerned, to encourage spread and promote population numbers.

Species or habitats identified as priorities under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan receive some status in the planning process through their identification as Species/Habitats of Principal Importance in England and Wales, under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (as amended).

Current planning guidance in England, the National Planning Policy Framework, does not specifically refer to Species or Habitats of Principal Importance, though it includes guidance for conservation of biodiversity in general. Supplementary guidance is available online at -

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/> and this guidance indicates that it is 'useful to consider' the potential effects of a development on the habitats or species on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 section 41 list.

PROTECTED PLANTS

All wild plants receive some protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence for any unauthorised person to intentionally uproot any wild plant. Additionally, certain rare species of plants listed on Schedule 8 of the Act are given greater protection. For these species, it is an offence to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy them, or to possess or sell them (live or dead), or anything derived from them. Penalties for offences under this legislation include fines of up to £5,000 and/ or up to six months in prison.

Schedule 8 of the Act is reviewed every 5 years, but currently it includes 185 species or sub-species of vascular plants, bryophytes (mosses, liverworts and hornworts), lichens and stoneworts (see www.jncc.gov.uk for current list), all protected due to their rarity and/or restricted distributions.

Works which could result in uprooting or destruction of plants listed on Schedule 8 of the Act could result in an offence being committed, unless measures are taken to minimise the risk of this occurring. Any inadvertent impacts on Schedule 8 plants despite these mitigation measures being in place, and impacts on other plant species during development works, would be considered an 'incidental result of an otherwise lawful operation' which 'could not reasonably have been avoided' and therefore not an offence.

In practice, the mitigation measures required on the very rare occasions when Schedule 8 plants are affected by development proposals will be determined by the ecological requirements of the species concerned, and any mitigation strategy should be agreed in advance with Natural England or Natural Resources Wales.

THE HEDGEROWS REGULATIONS

In England and Wales the Hedgerows Regulations (1997) as amended confer a level of protection on hedgerows (though hedgerows within or bordering domestic gardens are excluded), particularly those hedgerows classified as 'important' under the legislation. The Regulations require those wishing to remove hedgerows to submit a Hedgerow Removal Notice to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), which will then determine whether the hedgerow affected is classified as 'important' under the Regulations. If it is, the LPA will either approve the proposed hedgerow removal, or issue a retention notice. It is an offence to remove or destroy a hedgerow which is subject to a retention notice, or to remove one without a removal notice.

Routine management of hedgerows, removal of hedgerows for development which has been granted planning consent, and certain other situations are allowed under the Regulations, which also specifically exclude hedgerows within or bordering domestic gardens. Determination of whether a hedgerow should be classified as 'important' is based on a number of criteria including assessment of its likely historic value (e.g. old parish boundary or part of an ancient monument), ecological value (e.g. presence of protected species, and/or diversity of tree/shrub species in the hedgerow), and landscape value (e.g. associated with a public footpath, or being associated with hedgerow banks, ditches, hedgerow trees etc).

Ancient and species-rich hedgerows are listed as a priority habitat in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (2011)

APPENDIX 2 –
RECORD DATA REPORT – SUMMARY

THIS SUMMARY PAGE MAY BE PUBLISHED. THE FULL REPORT
AND MAPS MAY NOT BE PUBLISHED IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.
THIS DATA SEARCH REPORT IS VALID UNTIL 2026-10-24

TVERC/25/0656 - Land of Forest Road, Binfield

Summary Page

Prepared for: Environmental Business Solutions

By: Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre

<https://www.tverc.org/>

The following dataset were requested:

Protected and Notable Species within 1km search area

The following results are included in this report:

Species:

	No. Taxon Name	No. Records
Protected and Notable Species:	78	631
Invasive Species:	2	5

THIS DATA SEARCH REPORT IS VALID UNTIL 2026-10-24

DUE TO SENSITIVE DATA FULL INFORMATION IS NOT FOR PUBLIC CIRCULATION.
A COPY IS AVAILABLE TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ECOLOGIST UPON REQUEST.

APPENDIX 3

PROPOSED REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES GREAT CRESTED NEWTS – LAND OFF FOREST ROAD, BINSFIELD

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs)

Site Induction: As part of the site induction, all staff working on site during initial clearance will be made aware of the potential for the presence of Great Crested Newts (GCNs) within the site and immediate landscape and of their legal protection and status as European Protected Species through a Toolbox Talk, provided by a qualified ecologist. An illustration of the species (see *Photo 1* in the Appendix) will be displayed in the site office for reference for the duration of the works.

Timing of Clearance Works: All works to prepare the land onsite for development will be undertaken ideally during the spring/summer season (April to mid-June) when GCN enter into / around aquatic habitat to breed, and outside the hibernation period (avoiding November to February, inclusive).

Vegetation / Rubble Clearance: Prior to vegetation / rubble clearance a finger-tip search will be undertaken in a phased manner under the supervision of an ecologist holding a Great Crested Newt Survey Licence. Ground vegetation, and any debris clearance will encompass a finger-tip search around all potential refugia in a careful and controlled manner, with constant vigilance for any sheltering newts and/or any other potential species.

Removal of Rubbish: Waste materials should be removed from site immediately or placed in skips. No piles of rubbish or waste should be allowed to remain on site as this could create a potential shelter for amphibians which could then be disturbed in their removal. This is a precautionary measure only, and the chance of significant numbers of newt moving to shelter under stored materials is considered to be very low.

Where GCN are found: In the unlikely event that any individual GCN is found during development, then all works must cease immediately, and advice sought from an ecologist holding a Great Crested Newt Survey Licence.

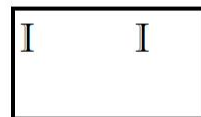
If any evidence of GCN presence is discovered at any time of the operation then works will discontinue immediately, EBS will be informed and will re-assess the situation at once, possible application for a Natural England EPS licence may then be required.

APPENDIX 4
HABITAT MAP AND SITE PHOTO'S



PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP - LAND OF FOREST ROAD, BINFIELD—OCTOBER 2025

Improved Grassland (Pasture) B.4



Semi-Natural Woodland (Broad-leaved A.1.1.1)



Scattered Scrub A.2.2



Site Boundary



Site Photo's

