



**Land at Sonning Golf Club, Duffield Road,
Sonning-on-Thames, Reading, Berkshire RG4 6GJ**

Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

August 2026

on behalf of Sonning Golf Club Limited

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Report Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Site Description & Context	1
1.2	Background	1
1.3	Aims of Study	1
2	Biodiversity Enhancement Measures	1
2.1	Bat Roosting Opportunities	1
2.1.1	Management	2
2.2	Bird Nesting Opportunities	2
2.2.1	Management	3
2.3	Hedgehog Access.....	3
3	Appendix 1. Biodiversity Enhancement Plan	5

1 Introduction

1.1 Site Description & Context

The land at Sonning Golf Club, referred to as the 'site' for the purpose of this report, is located to the north of Duffield Road, to the east of the village of Sonning-on-Thames in Berkshire RG4 6GJ. The approximate Ordnance Survey grid reference for the site is SU 7649 7482 (see Appendix 1 for location plans and Appendix 2 for the photographs of the site).

The site comprises modified grassland, other woodland; broadleaved, gorse scrub, developed land; sealed surface, artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface, bare ground, hedgerows and individual trees.

The site is located to the east of the village of Sonning-on-Thames. To the north of the site are residential dwellings and Rams Rugby Club. To the east and south is Sonning Golf Club. To the west of the site is a field with approved planning for a 13-unit development. The wider landscape surrounding the village is residential with arable farmland to the north and Caversham Lakes to the west.

1.2 Background

The planning application (Reference 223458) for "Outline planning permission for the proposed erection of up to 50 no. dwellings with public open space and revised access of Duffield Road, plus associated modifications to Sonning Golf Club including reconfiguration of golf club car parking areas and conversion of the west wing of the existing clubhouse to accommodate a new golf simulator practice facility, including removal of external staircase and changes to fenestration. (All matters reserved except for access. As shown on plan PL 002 dated March 2025)." at Sonning Golf Club within Sonning-on-Thames in Berkshire RG4 6GJ.

This report has been prepared to discharge Condition 23 which states that:

"Prior to the commencement of development hereby permitted within each phase, a strategy for biodiversity enhancements and ecological permeability in respect of that phase shall be provided to the local authority for its approval. This strategy shall be prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist and appropriate to the local ecological context, providing a mix of feature such as bat and bird boxes at a ratio of at least one per dwelling. Once approved the strategy shall be implemented in full in respect of that phase unless otherwise agreed by the local authority in writing."

1.3 Aims of Study

The aims of this study are to provide information to discharge Condition 23 for planning application (Reference: 223458). Condition 23 requires a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy (BES).

2 Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

Please see Appendix 1 for the locations and elevations of the proposed species-specific biodiversity enhancement measures.

2.1 Bat Roosting Opportunities

2.1.1 Enhancement

One integrated bat tube (Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone Bat Box, or similar) will be incorporated into the external walls of each of the proposed dwellings, see Figure 1 and Appendix 1 shows the indicative locations of the integrated bat tubes. The tube will be positioned at a minimum height of 3m with a clear flight path to the entrance. The bat tube will be installed on the south or south-western elevation of the proposed elevations and will not be installed above a door or window to avoid accumulation of droppings.

Bat tube features (sometimes also referred to as 'bat bricks') can be obtained prefabricated and integrated directly into the fabric of the exterior walls of a building. The bricks/tubes have an external entrance slot which leads to an internal cavity for roosting.

The brick/tube can be concealed behind external cladding, brickwork, hanging tiles, stonework or render. For example, bat bricks/ bat tubes can easily be installed into traditional or modern buildings with external wooden weatherboarding; the brick/tube being concealed behind the overlapping wooden boards with access via a gap under a lifted board which leads to the entrance slot of the brick/tube. Bats can fit through very small gaps and so a crevice of 2-2.5cm should be sufficient to allow access to the slot of the bat brick/tube.

The Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone Bat box is of Woodstone® (a mix of concrete and FSC wood fibres) construction. This material is strong and highly insulating, which helps to provide a thermally stable environment within the box. The bat tube will be installed during construction of the dwellings.

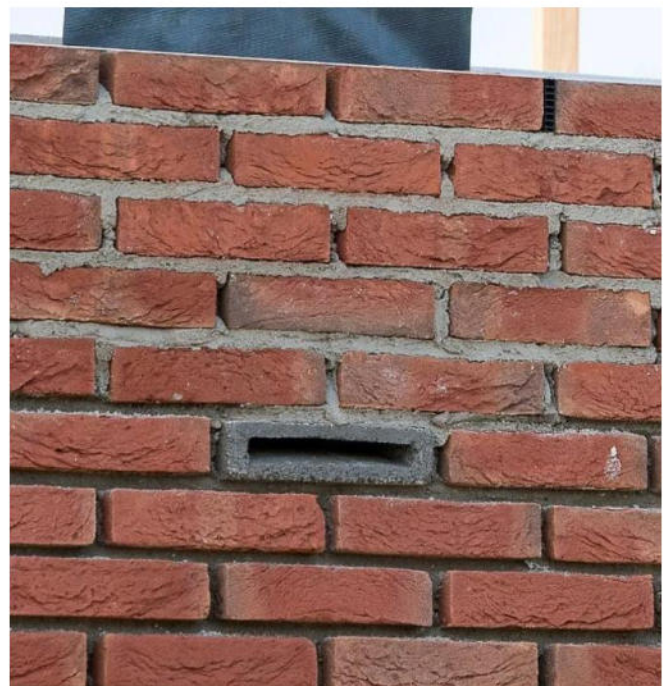


Figure 1. Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone Bat Box, showing how the box can be integrated into a wall. Source: www.nhbs.com.

2.1.2 Management

The bat tube will be externally checked annually in the period May to August to determine its condition. If it is found to be damaged or blocked, it will be fixed/replaced or unblocked.

If the tube requires an internal inspection, this will be undertaken by a suitably qualified and licenced bat surveyor. **If roosting bats or evidence of roosting bats are found within the bat tube, a suitably qualified and licenced bat surveyor should be contacted before any alterations take place.**

The bat tube will require no maintenance or management beyond this check.

2.2 Bird Nesting Opportunities

One integrated house sparrow bird box (Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box, or similar) will be incorporated into the external walls of each of the proposed dwellings, see Figure 2 and Appendix 1 shows the indicative locations of the integrated bird boxes.

The bird box will be placed at a height of at least 3m on an eastern or northern aspect, with a clear flight path to the entrance.

The Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box is of Woodstone® construction. This material is strong and highly insulating, which helps to provide a thermally stable environment within the box. The house sparrow bird box will be installed during construction of the dwellings.

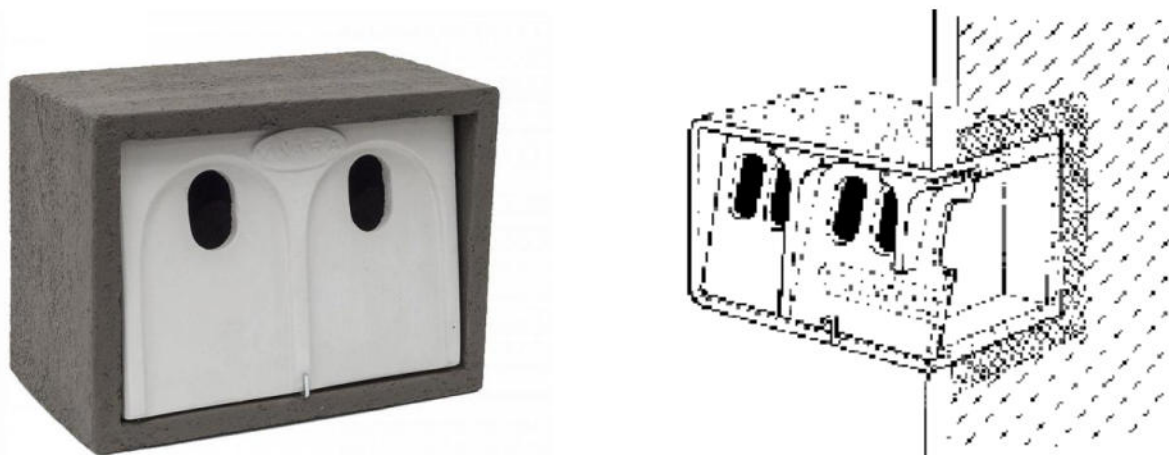


Figure 2. Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box, showing how the box can be integrated into a wall.
Source: www.nhbs.com.

2.2.1 Management

The bird boxes will be surveyed once a year in May. The survey will be a daytime inspection to look for active birds' nests within the boxes.

If the bird boxes are found to be damaged, fallen or blocked, they will be replaced or unblocked.

Annual cleaning of the boxes is recommended to remove any parasites and material built up from the previous occupants. Annual cleaning is best carried out in October and November when there is no chance of disturbing the previous occupants. Nest cups will be cleaned in the following way:

1. Remove all used nesting materials* (if there are unhatched eggs or dead in the nest see note below).
2. Clean using boiling water to kill any remaining parasites and their eggs. You may also want to use a specialist disinfectant such as Ark-Klens. Insecticides and flea powders must not be used.
3. Allow sufficient time to dry thoroughly. Do not use any wood preservatives, these may be toxic to birds.

*Under the terms of the 'Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981', if unhatched eggs are found in the box, they can only legally be removed from October to January and they must be destroyed. It is illegal to keep them.

The bird boxes will require no maintenance or management beyond this check and cleaning.

2.3 Hedgehog Access

Garden fences or walls erected within the development (that could act as a barrier to hedgehog movement) will be made permeable for hedgehogs. This can be achieved by cutting or leaving a 13cm-by-13cm hole within the fence or wall; this is sufficient for any hedgehog to pass through, and this is too small for nearly all pets (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. An example of a hole cut within a fence, creating a 'hedgehog highway'.

3 Appendix 1. Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

