26 Wargrave Road
Twyford
Reading
Berkshire
RG10 9PQ

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Report ref.: R2900_PEA_a

Report Quality Control Information	
Author	*Georgia Clifton-Dey*
Reviewer	*John Wenman MCIEEM*

October 2026

JOHN WENMAN ecological consultancy

1 Diesel House, Honey Hill, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 3BL
Telephone: 0118 327 1810 Mobile: 07979 403099 E-mail: info@wenman-ecology.co.uk
www.wenman-ecology.co.uk

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC339057.
Registered office: 1 Diezel House, Honey Hill, Wokingham RG40 3BL where you may look at a list of members' names.

CONTENTS PAGE

CONTENTS PAGE **2**
1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY **3**
2 INTRODUCTION **4**
2.1 Project Background 4
2.2 Site Location and Context 4
2.3 Report Objectives 4
3 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND **5**
3.1 Relevant Legislation 5
3.2 European Protected Species Mitigation Licensing 5
4 PLANNING POLICY **7**
4.1 National Planning Policy 7
4.2 Local Planning Policy 8
5 SURVEY METHODOLOGY **10**
5.1 Desk Study 10
5.2 Field Survey 10
6 DESK STUDY FINDINGS **12**
6.1 Designated Sites and Habitats 12
6.2 Protected and Notable Species 13
6.3 Historic and Current Land Use 17
7 UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION SURVEY **18**
7.1 Overview 18
7.2 510 Bare ground 18
u1c Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface 19
8 DISCUSSION **21**
8.1 Designated Sites for Nature Conservation 21
8.2 Habitats 21
8.3 Bats 22
8.4 Great Crested Newt (and other amphibians) 22
8.5 Hazel Dormouse 23
8.6 Reptiles 24
8.7 Birds 24
8.8 Badgers (and other mammals) 25
8.9 Invertebrates 25
8.10 Invasive Non-native Species 25
9 RECOMMENDATIONS **27**
9.1 Overview 27
9.2 Bats 27
9.3 Amphibians, Reptiles and Mammals (Reasonable Avoidance Measures) 27
9.4 Biodiversity Enhancement Measures 28
10 REFERENCES **29**
APPENDIX 1 – POTENTIAL SUITABILITY CATEGORIES FOR ROOSTING BATS **30**
APPENDIX 2 – DEFINITION OF BAT ROOST TYPES **31**
APPENDIX 3 – FURTHER SURVEY RATIONALE **32**
APPENDIX 4 – LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND **33**

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was instructed by Mr and Mrs Cooper to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for the land at the rear of 26 Wargrave Road in Twyford, Wokingham. The assessment was commissioned to accompany a full planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council for the construction of a new dwelling and associated landscaping onsite on the former rear garden.

1.1.2 The survey methodology included a desk study (comprising a TVERC 1km data search) and a field survey (using UKHab Classification). The desk study revealed that the application site is not statutorily designated for its wildlife interest and therefore is not currently recognised as being of international, national or county level conservation significance. The site falls within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Lodge Wood and Sandford Mill SSSI, but the planning proposals do not fall into any categories specified in the IRZ for the site and therefore no impacts are likely. No adverse effects are anticipated on the nearby locally designated sites.

1.1.3 The application site covers an area of 0.035ha with the following UKHab habitats: with bare ground (510), artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (u1c) and three individual trees (33).

1.1.4 The following recommendations have been made:

- Reasonable avoidance measures for reptiles during site clearance and construction;
- Adhering to sensitive lighting scheme for bats; and
- Biodiversity enhancements.

1.1.5 This report will likely be valid for up to 12 months; after which point a professional ecologist may need to review the report's validity (CIEEM 2019).

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was instructed by Mr and Mrs Cooper to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for the land at the rear of 26 Wargrave Road in Twyford, Wokingham.

2.1.2 The PEA was commissioned to accompany a full planning application to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council for the construction of a new dwelling and associated landscaping onsite on the former rear garden.

2.2 Site Location and Context

2.2.1 The site is a 0.035ha residential plot located to the east of 26 Wargrave Road, between Hermitage Drive and Lincoln Gardens, in a suburban setting north of Twyford (central OS grid reference: SU 78796 76226). The site comprises a residential garden which had been fenced off from the main house with typical garden habitats, including a lawn with a few shrubs and two scattered trees.

2.2.2 The property is in a suburban setting with residential properties on all sides. A tree-lined railway line runs just over 250 metres to the west. The River Loddon - lined with mature trees - is situated 430 metres to the west and it flows adjacent to a network of lakes situated 570 metres to the southwest at Loddon Nature Reserve. Patches of woodland are situated within 800 metres to the west and 940 metres to the northwest, and a couple of lakes and woodland are situated 430 metres to the southwest.

2.3 Report Objectives

2.3.1 The aim of this PEA is to understand the nature of the site and assess its ecological value. The key objectives are to:

- identify any likely ecological constraints associated with the planning proposals;
- establish appropriate mitigation measures in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy (i.e. avoid > mitigate > compensate);
- determine any additional surveys that may be required following on from this preliminary stage; and
- recognise opportunities to deliver ecological enhancements in line with national and local planning policy.

3 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

3.1 Relevant Legislation

3.1.1 The following legislation is considered relevant for the purpose of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA):

- Wildlife and Countryside Act (W&CA) 1981 (as amended)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations ('Habitat') Regulations 2017
- Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

3.1.2 These acts hold relevance to both protected and invasive species, and the degree of protection varies depending on faunal/floral group or species. For example, some species of European importance receive full protection in England and Wales under the Habitat Regulations (e.g. bats), whereas others may only be afforded protection through national legislation such as the W&CA 1981 (as amended) (e.g. common lizard). For a detailed overview of species-specific legislation, please refer to **Appendix 4**.

3.2 European Protected Species Mitigation Licensing

3.2.1 The Government's statutory nature conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences that permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. An EPS mitigation licence can be issued if the following three tests derived from Regulation 55 have been satisfied:

- (2)(e) – the derogation is for the purposes of '*preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.*'

- (9)(a) – there is '*no satisfactory alternative*' to the derogation; and

- (9)(b) – '*the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range*.'

3.2.2 Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3)(e) of the Habitat Regulations consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be

satisfied by planning proposals affected EPS before granted planning permission. If an EPS mitigation licence is necessary, a licence can be sought once all the necessary planning consents have been granted. Natural England aims to issue a decision on licence applications within 30 working days of submission.

4 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 National Planning Policy

4.1.1 The biodiversity duty imposed through the Environment Act 2021 states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) must consider what action they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

4.1.2 The ODPM Circular 06/2005 provides guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation in England, stating that '*the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat*.'

4.1.3 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in August 2026 following the last publication in December 2024, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Section 15 of the NPPF sets out the approach local authorities should adopt to conserve and enhance the natural environment when preparing planning policy and when considering planning applications. Paragraph 193 sets out the principles LPAs should apply when determining planning applications, as follows:

'When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

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 reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity

should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.'

4.1.4 In England, BNG became mandatory for major development from the 12th February 2024 and for minor development (small sites) from the 2nd April 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). In practice, planning permission in England is now subject to a condition to secure a minimum 10% net gain for biodiversity, unless the development is a type that is exempt from mandatory BNG requirements.

4.2 Local Planning Policy

4.2.1 Wokingham Borough Council's development plans are formed of a number of documents including the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) (January 2010), Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan (February 2014), and supplementary planning documents (SPDs), which set out planning criteria used to determine applications for planning permission in the Borough. The Local Plan Update aims to refine the current Core Strategy and provide a strategy for the Borough up to March 2036. The following policies relate to biodiversity:

'Core Strategy DPD: 'Policy CP7 – Biodiversity

Sites designated as of importance for nature conservation at an international or national level will be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted. The degree of protection given will be appropriate to the status of the site in terms of its international or national importance. Development:

A) Which may harm county designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites in Berkshire), whether directly or indirectly, or

B) Which may harm habitats or, species of principle importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors), whether directly or indirectly, or

C) That compromises the implementation of the national, regional, county and local biodiversity action plans will be only permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance, that no alternative site that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need, and:

i) Mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts; or

ii) Appropriate compensation measures to offset the scale and kind of losses are provided.

Core Strategy DPD: 'Policy CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths

Development which alone or in combination is likely to have a significant effect on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.

MDD Local Plan: 'Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development

1. *Sites of national or international importance are shown and sites of local importance are defined on the Policies Map.*
2. *Planning permission for development proposals will only be granted where they comply with policy CP7 – Biodiversity of the Core Strategy and also demonstrate how they:*
   - *a) Provide opportunities, including through design, layout and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing;*
   - *b) Provide appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites as well as habitats and species of principle importance for nature conservation; and*
   - *c) Ensure that all existing and new developments are ecologically permeable through the protection of existing and the provision of new continuous wildlife corridors, which shall be integrated and linked to the wider green infrastructure network.*

5 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

5.1 Desk Study

5.1.1 A desktop study was conducted by assistant ecologist Georgia Clifton-Dey and the study utilised data from the local environmental records centre and open access online resources to acquire information on the nature of the site and its surroundings and highlight any potential ecological features.

5.1.2 Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) was commissioned to undertake a search of pre-existing records of protected and/or notable species and non-statutorily designated wildlife sites held by them within a 1km radius around a central point inside the site.

5.1.3 The DEFRA Data Services Platform was used to obtain geospatial datasets for designated sites (i.e. RAMSAR, SPA, SAC, SSSI) and important habitats (i.e. Priority Habitat Inventory, Ancient Woodland Inventory) to be analysed in QGIS. The Multi-Agency Geographical Information Centre (MAGIC) website was examined for granted European Protected Species (EPS) licence applications. These geospatial datasets and Google Earth satellite imagery were used to determine the extent and connectivity of habitats, how the site is linked to the surrounding landscape and whether the development could have wider scale impacts on biodiversity.

5.1.4 Historical OS maps and Google Earth satellite imagery were consulted to provide insight into historic and current land use; such information helps contextualise the continuity of habitats and determine the importance of existing ecological features on site.

5.2 Field Survey

UK Habitat Classification Survey

5.2.1 A site walkover was undertaken on the 11th August 2026 by John Wenman MCIEEM. The site was surveyed using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) system (UKHab Ltd 2023) in accordance with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2nd Edition) (CIEEM 2017). Attention was given to evidence of protected and priority species (NERC Act 2006 Section 41 species of principal importance) and the site's potential to support such species.

5.2.2 There were no significant survey constraints because full access was available to the site. The survey was subject to seasonal constraints because not all plant and animal species are visible throughout the year and therefore the report represents a snapshot of

the site at the time of the survey only.

5.2.3 This report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for less than 12 months (CIEEM 2019).

6 DESK STUDY FINDINGS

6.1 Designated Sites and Habitats

6.1.1 The desk study showed that there are no internationally designated statutory sites within a 5km radius of the application site, no nationally designated statutory sites within a 2km radius of the application site and seven locally designated non-statutory sites, i.e. Local Wildlife Site (LWS), Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) and Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust Reserve (BBOWT) within a 1km radius - see **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Non-statutorily designated sites within the vicinity of the site (Source: TVERC).

Site name	Designation	Description	Distance from nearest site boundary (m)
Loddon Valley Gravel Pits	Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA)	This 809.25ha area encompasses all the gravels pits at the north end of the Loddon Valley between Winnersh and Twyford and includes various areas of adjacent land with woodland and grassland habitats. The area extends northwards to include riverside land that floods regularly including land within Oxfordshire.	321 SW
Loddon River	Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	A 17km stretch of the river with a diversity of features such as adjacent marsh, islands, inlets, riffles, river cliffs and extensive and varied channel vegetation. This includes the uncommon Loddon Pondweed *Potamogeton nodosus*. Water vole and a variety of dragonflies and damselflies are also found along its length.	430 SW
Twyford Gravel Pits	Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	A 26.26ha area of two gravel pits that lie on either side of one of the channels of the River Loddon. The eastern pit is a nature reserve managed by BBOWT. The pits are important for overwintering and breeding birds.	433 SW
Loddon	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust Reserve (BBOWT)	Loddon Reserve is a 13.69ha area which has an island created for nesting birds which is well used by Common Tern. The site also supports invertebrates such as damselflies. There are small areas of woodland, tall herb fen, scrub and open rough grassland at the edge of the pits. The lakes have some submerged aquatic plants with occasional Broad leaved Pondweed, Nuttall's Waterweed and Duckweed.	444 SW
Charvil Country Park West and Charvil Meadows	Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	41.65ha consists of a variety of grassland habitats with some species of lowland meadow present, acidic and calcareous areas, fen habitats, floodplain grazing marsh, broadleaved semi natural woodland, wet woodland, willow carr on two old gravel pit sites and a third gravel pit in the south. Bittern, reed bunting, linnet and overwintering wildfowl use the site.	772 W
Ruscombe Village Pond	Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	This 0.09ha pond supports populations of great crest newt and common newt.	797 E

Waltham to Binfield Woodlands and Parkland	Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA)	1879.14 ha of scattered ancient woodland with areas of parkland with lowland meadow. Areas of wet woodland and fen long streams. The farmland area south of Littlewick Green supports the last known population of corn bunting in East Berkshire.	855 SE

6.2 Protected and Notable Species

6.2.1 The search of the TVERC database revealed a range of protected and notable species records dating from 1860. Only recent records (defined as fewer than ten years old) are included in this report (see **Tables 2a** & **2b**).

Table 2a. Recent protected and/or notable species records within the vicinity of the site (Source: TVERC).

Common name	Scientific name	No. of records	Most recent record	Nearest record (m)	Precision (m)	Status
Amphibians & Reptiles						
Slow-worm	*Anguis fragilis*	33	2024	441	100	WCA5 NERC S41
Smooth newt	*Lissotriton vulgaris*	13	2020	1243	100	WCA5
Grass snake	*Natrix helvetica*	35	2024	653	100	WCA5 NERC S41
Common frog	*Rana temporaria*	16	2018	602	100	HabDir A5, WCA5
Great crested newt	*Triturus cristatus*	2	2022	700	100	HabReg-Sch2 WCA5 NERC_S41
Birds						
Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*	60	2024	306	1000	
Sedge Warbler	*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*	5	2021	894	1000	
Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*	4	2020	656	1000	
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	96	2023	309	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC_Red
Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	123	2024	517	1000	WACA-Sch1-p1
Pintail	*Anas acuta*	15	2024	617	1000	WACA-Sch1-p2
Teal	*Anas crecca*	83	2024	306	1000	
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	1176	2025	518	1000	
White-fronted Goose	*Anser albifrons*	7	21	1803	1000	BOCC_Red
Greylag Goose	*Anser anser*	443	2025	517	1000	
Meadow Pipit	*Anthus pratensis*	21	2024	306	1000	
Swift	*Apus apus*	78	2024	823	1000	BOCC_Red
Great White Egret	*Ardea alba*	4	2024	656	1000	
Cattle Egret	*Ardea ibis*	1	2020	1803	1000	
Pochard	*Aythya ferina*	150	2023	617	1000	BOCC_Red
Bittern	*Botaurus stellaris*	2	2017	1243	1000	WACA-Sch1-p1 NERC_S41
Brent Goose	*Branta bernicla*	1	2017	1243	1000	NERC_S41
Barnacle Goose	*Branta leucopsis*	20	2022	899	1000	
Goldeneye	*Bucephala clangula*	21	2017	517	1000	WACA-Sch1-p2 BOCC_Red
Cetti's Warbler	*Cettia cetti*	114	2025	656	1000	WACA-Sch1-p1
Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*	186	2023	306	1000	BOCC_Red
Black-headed Gull	*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*	1143	2025	823	1000	
Stock Dove	*Columba oenas*	50	2024	306	1000	
Woodpigeon	*Columba*	349	2023	306	1000	

	palumbus					
Rook	*Corvus frugilegus*	71	2021	306	1000	
Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	20	2021	1459	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC_Red
Whitethroat	*Curruca communis*	85	2024	306	1000	
House martin	*Delichon urbicum*	100	2024	306	1000	BOCC_Red
Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	217	2025	792	1000	
Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	31	2024	306	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC_Red
Reed bunting	*Emberiza schoeniclus*	18	2024	1107	1000	NERC_S41
Hobby	*Falco subbuteo*	15	2022	/	1000	WACA-Sch1-p1
Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	76	2024	894	1000	
Snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*	12	2024	306	1000	
Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*	655	2025	306	1000	
Oystercatcher	*Haematopus ostralegus*	159	2025	739	1000	
Herring gull	*Larus argentatus*	104	202420 23	517	1000	BOCC_Red NERC S41
Common Gull	*Larus canus*	102	2024	823	1000	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	*Larus fuscus*	51	2025	517	1000	
Great Black backed Gull	*Larus marinus*	7	2021	/	1000	
Linnet	*Linaria cannabina*	56	2024	306	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC_Red
Nightingale	*Luscinia megarhynchos*	3	2021	960	1000	BOCC_Red
Wigeon	*Mareca penelope*	619	2025	306	1000	
Gadwall	*Mareca strepera*	741	2025	792	1000	
Smew	*Mergellus albellus*	100	2016	792	1000	BOCC_Red
Red-breasted Merganser	*Mergus serrator*	2	2019	1030	1000	
Redkite	*Milvus milvus*	492	2024	306	1000	WACA-Sch1-p1
Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*	44	2024	636	1000	
Yellow wagtail	*Motacilla flava*	9	2022	/	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC_Red
Yellow wagtail	*Motacilla flava falvissima*	2	2022	/	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC_Red
Spotted flycatcher	*Muscicapa striata*	3	2023	1803	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC_Red
Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe*	8	2024	/	1000	
House sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	134	2022	306	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC_Red
Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus*	1	2016	1107	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC_Red
Redstart	*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*	6	2024	2168	1000	
Willow Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	25	2024	306	1000	
Golden Plover	*Pluvialis apricaria*	6	2021	306	1000	
Marsh tit	*Poecile palustris*	1	2016	1107	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC_Red
Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	221	2021	306	1000	NERC_S41
Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	50	2023	306	1000	NERC_S41

Firecrest	*Regulus ignicapilla*	2	2017	1243	1000	WACA-Sch1-p1
Whinchat	*Saxicola rubetra*	1	2024	/	1000	BOCC Red
Woodcock	*Scolopax rusticola*	1	2019	2168	1000	BOCC_Red
Shoveler	*Spatula clypeata*	373	2025	792	1000	
Common Tern	*Sterna hirundo*	192	2024	823	1000	
Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	177	2022	306	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC Red
Tawny Owl	*Strix aluco*	15	2024	823	1000	
Shelduck	*Tadorna tadorna*	2	2021	1803	1000	
Green Sandpiper	*Tringa ochropus*	5	2022	656	1000	WACA-Sch1-p1
Redshank	*Tringa totanus*	94	2022	656	1000	
Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	262	2023	306	1000	
Redwing	*Turdus iliacus*	136	2024	306	1000	WACA-Sch1-p1
Song thrush	*Turdus philomelos*	166	2024	306	1000	NERC_S41
Fieldfare	*Turdus pilaris*	99	2024	306	1000	WACA-Sch1-p1 BOCC_Red
Mistle thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*	11	2023	306	1000	NERC_S41 WACA-Sch1-p1
Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	137	2024	517	1000	NERC_S41 BOCC_Red
Invertebrates						
Spider wasp	*Auplopus carbonarius*	1	2021	949	1000	
Tree snipefly	*Chrysopilus laetus*	1	2022	475	1000	HDir2, WCA5, NERC-S41
Small heath	*Coenonympha pamphilus*	14	2019	999	1000	NERC_S41
Lobe-spurred furrow bee	*Lasioglossum pauxillum*	1	2021	949	1000	
Stag beetle	*Lucanus cervus*	140	2023	282	1000	HabDir A2np WACA-Sch5-s9.5a NERC_S41
Yellow loosestrife bee	*Macropis europaea*	1	2021	949	1000	
Little mason wasp	*Microdynerus exilis*	1	2021	949	1000	
Six-spotted wasp-cuckoo	*Nysson trimaculatus*	1	2021	949	1000	
Swallowtail	*Papilio machaon*	1	2023	2168	1000	NERC_S41 WCA5
Common darter	*Sympetrum striolatum*	33	2024	603	1000	RL-GB post2001 DD
Feathered gothic	*Tholera decimalis*	1	2020	830	1000	NERC_S41
Terrestrial mammals – Bats						
Bat	*Chiroptera sp.*	22	2025	220	1000	HabReg_2, HDir2, HDir4, WCA5, NERC-S41, RL-EN
Eurasian Serotine	*Cnephaeus serotinus*	8	2023	300	1000	HabReg_2, HDir4, WCA5
Daubenton's bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	2	2018	1459	1000	HabReg_2, HDir4, WCA5
Natterer's bat	*Myotis nattereri*	3	2018	1459	1000	HabReg_2, HDir4, WCA5
Myotis species	*Myotis sp.*	21	2021	63	1000	HabReg_2, HDir2, HDir4, WCA5, NERC-S41

Leisler's bat	*Nyctalus leisleri*	3	2021	63	1000	HabReg_2, HDir4, WCA5
Noctule	*Nyctalus noctula*	62	2025	63	100	HabReg_2, HDir4, WCA5, NERC-S41
Noctule species	*Nyctalus sp.*	1	2020	788	1000	HabReg_2, HDir4, WCA5, NERC-S41
Nathusius' pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus nathusii*	4	2020	429	1000	HabReg_2, HDir4, WCA5
Common Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	109	2025	63	1000	HDir4, HDir2, WCA5
Soprano Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	121	2025	63	1000	HDir4, HDir2, WCA5, NERC-S41
Pipistrelle species	*Pipistrellus sp*	26	2023	120	1000	HabReg_2, HDir4, WCA5, NERC-S41
Brown long-eared	*Plecotus auritus*	55	2024	63	1000	HDir4, HDir2, WCA5, NERC-S41, RL-EN
Long-eared species	*Plecotus sp.*	10	2019	155	100	HDir4, HDir2, WCA5, NERC-S41, RL-EN
Terrestrial mammals (excl. bats)						
Hedgehog	*Erinaceus europaeus*	39	2023	235	1000	NERC-S41
[redacted]						

Table 2b. Species status key.

Abbreviation	Legislation
BOCC_Red	Birds of Conservation Concern Red List.
HabReg_2	Schedule 2 of Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (European Protected Species animal).
HDir2	Habitats Directive, Annex 2 – Species whose conservation requires the designation of special areas of conservation
HDir4	Habitats Directive, Annex IV - Species in need of strict protection
RL-EN	IUCN Red List of Threatened Species – Endangered
S41	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Section 41)
UKBA	RSPB/BTO Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber list (not based on IUCN criteria)
WACA-Sch1-p1	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 - Birds which are protected by special penalties.
WCA5	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5 - Animals which are protected
WCA8	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 8 - Plants which are protected
WCA9	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 9 - Animals and Plants which are established in the wild

6.2.2 Three bat mitigation licences have been granted within a 2-kilometre radius of the application site, covering licensable works affecting the following species: common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus)*. All these species are covered by a licence for the destruction of a resting site approximately 1250 metres to the southwest (Case ref.: 2019-43241-EPS-MIT). The closest licence to have been granted covers the destruction of a *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Plecotus auritus* resting place approximately 560 metres to the north (Case ref.: 2020-44644-EPS-MIT).

6.2.3 Whilst there are no mitigation licences or Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence returns within a 1km radius of the application site, there is one waterbody within a 500m

radius of the application site, situated approximately 480 metres southwest of the site. The application site falls within a 'Amber' GCN Impact Risk Zone (see NatureSpace Impact Risk Maps) – these zones contain suitable habitat where GCN are likely to be present.

6.3 Historic and Current Land Use

6.3.1 Google Satellite imagery dating back to 1985 shows that the application site has not majorly changed beyond landscaping, i.e. removal of individual trees and the creation of a pond between 2020 and 2021.

7 UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION SURVEY

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 The application site covers 0.035 hectares of land. The habitats onsite primarily comprised habitats of very low and low distinctiveness i.e. bare ground (510), artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (u1c) and scattered trees (32) are of medium distinctiveness.

7.1.2 The UKHab primary habitats and secondary codes are described alongside photographs (**Photographs 1 – 12**) and a survey plan (see **Figure 1**) as follows:

7.2 510 Bare ground

21 – Ruderal, 33 – Individual trees

7.2.1 The land comprised of mostly bare ground with sparse ruderal vegetation (approximately 25% cover) (**Photograph 1**). The species within the site included perennial rye grass (*Lollium perenne*), creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), perennial sow thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*), common mallow (*Malva neglecta*), red dead-nettle (*Lamium purpureum*), lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*).

7.2.2 There were two newly planted black hawthorn (*Crataegus douglasii*) trees on the northeastern side of the site (**Photographs 2 & 3**). A more mature holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) tree was situated on the northern boundary (**Photograph 4**). A large sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) tree was present offsite, towards the north of the site.



Photograph 1. Bare ground with sparse ruderal vegetation (510, 21).



Photograph 2. Black hawthorn planted on the northeastern corner of the site (33).



Photograph 3. A second black hawthorn planted on the northeastern side of the site (33).



Photograph 4. A holly planted on the northern boundary of the site (33).

u1c Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

7.2.3 The northern boundary onsite comprised of a loose gravel surface, on previously modified grassland, providing access to the new development. (**Photograph 5**).



Photograph 5. Loose gravel surface on the northern boundary of the site (u1c)



Figure 1. UKHab Survey Plan (Baseline Habitats).

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

Evaluation of Baseline

8.1.1 The desk study revealed that the application site is not statutorily or non-statutorily designated for its wildlife interest and therefore is not currently recognised as being of international, national or county level conservation significance. The site falls within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Lodge Wood and Sandford Mills SSSI situated approximately 2,500 metres to the south.

8.1.2 The desk study data included no internationally designated statutory sites within a 5km radius, no nationally designated statutory sites within a 2km radius, and seven locally designated non-statutory sites within a 1km radius.

Impact Assessment

8.1.3 The proposals (i.e. erection of a single dwelling and creation of a private garden) do not correspond with the categories of development that are likely to have an impact on the nearby SSSI and so consultation with Natural England will not be required as adverse impacts on the SSSIs are highly unlikely. Furthermore, considering the nature, scale and distance of the proposals, i.e. no change in use on site or increase in residential units, no adverse effects are anticipated on the nearby locally designated sites.

8.2 Habitats

Evaluation of Baseline

8.2.1 The application site is characterised by a bare ground with sparse ruderal vegetation, a parcel of artificial unvegetated, sealed surface, and individual trees - habitats of very low to low distinctiveness.

Impact Assessment

8.2.2 It is understood that the proposals are likely to be restricted to the site and so will not result in the loss of any priority habitats or habitats of importance beyond the site level. There may be minimal loss and/or damage to the vegetation during construction activities, but the individual trees will be retained on site.

8.3 Bats

Evaluation of Baseline

8.3.1 The nearby woodland, open grassland and tree lines within the suburban setting resemble high-quality foraging habitats for any bats roosting locally. Furthermore, the search of granted bat mitigation licences identified three species known to be roosting within a 2km radius of the property: common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*). The closest licence to have been granted covers the destruction of a *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Plecotus auritus* resting place approximately 560 metres to the north (Case ref.: 2020-44644-EPS-MIT).

8.3.2 The nearby woodland and grassland parcels to the west and south of the site, offer suitable commuting and feeding habitats. The habitats link to extensive areas of habitat in close vicinity to the site, including woodland, watercourses and grassland forming part of a wider local network of habitats that is considered likely to be ecologically important for bats at the local level. However, the habitats present within the site do not resemble high quality foraging habitat for bats and are unlikely to be of value to bats locally.

Impact Assessment

8.3.3 Based on the proposed loss of habitats of negligible importance to bats, the risk of adverse impact on bats locally is low. No potential bat roosting features or commuting/foraging habitats will be lost by the construction of the new dwelling.

8.3.4 The proposals are likely to include new artificial lighting which may cause disturbance to any commuting and foraging bats, if present, on site (ILP 2023). External lighting should be avoided, or a sensitive lighting scheme should be designed to reduce impacts on bats utilising the adjacent tree lines linking to woodland parcels as a resource for commuting and feeding. Recommendations for avoiding light impacts are detailed in **Section 9.2**.

8.4 Great Crested Newt (and other amphibians)

Evaluation of Baseline

8.4.1 Whilst the desk study data returned no mitigation licences or GCN Class Survey Licence returns within a 1km radius, it did include two recent records of GCN (Protected species and Priority Species (NERC Act 2006 Section 41 species of principle importance) within a 1 kilometre radius of the application site, the closest of which is situated 700 metres to the west.

8.4.2 There is one waterbody within a 500m radius of the application site, which may provide suitable breeding habitats for amphibians. The terrestrial habitat on site, i.e. bare ground on previously modified grassland, was of limited value for GCN and other locally recorded notable amphibians.

Impact Assessment

8.4.3 The proposals will not result in the loss or damage of any breeding habitat or terrestrial habitat suitable for amphibians. The vegetation onsite is sparse and so will not provide adequate shelter, and with reference to the Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment Tool, the loss of this habitat would have no impact on GCN populations, and the risk of impacts on individual newts is very low.

8.4.4 The TVERC database also has records of smooth newt and common frog within the last 10 years. The habitats onsite are unlikely to provide shelter and support these species, but it is possible the site may be used by traversing amphibians and simple precautions should be adopted.

8.4.5 In the absence of precautionary mitigation measures, there would be a small risk of individual GCNs and other amphibians utilising cover e.g. beneath rubble, in the work area, but if simple precautions are adopted, the risk of harming GCNs and other amphibians is low - negligible - refer to recommendations in **Section 9.3**.

8.5 Hazel Dormouse

Evaluation of Baseline

8.5.1 The desk study data included no recent hazel dormouse records within a 1km radius of the site and the search of MAGIC for granted dormouse EPS licence applications also returned none within the same radius.

8.5.2 The woodland within the surrounding area is lowland mixed deciduous woodland and offers suitable habitat for dormice, connecting to further parcels of woodland containing understorey species favoured by dormice such as bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), ivy (*Hedera helix*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). The habitats directly surrounding the existing dwelling offer no suitable habitat for dormice.

Impact Assessment

8.5.3 The proposed development will have no impact on suitable habitat for dormice and therefore no adverse effects on this species are anticipated.

8.6 Reptiles

Evaluation of Baseline

8.6.1 The desk study data included recent records for slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) within a 1 kilometre radius of the application site.

8.6.2 The site mostly comprised bare ground, which lacks the structural diversity suitable for common and widespread reptiles, such as slow-worm and grass snake. Whilst it is unlikely that the site would be support a reptile population, common and widespread reptile species, such as slow-worm and grass snake could opportunistically use the site for basking and traversing if present in neighbouring habitats.

Impact Assessment

8.6.3 The proposed development footprint will have no impact on suitable habitat for reptiles, and so it is considered that the works will not adversely impact any local populations that may be present. However, there remains a low residual risk of harming individual reptiles that may traverse the grassland and so precautionary measures are recommended during construction activities to ensure there are no adverse impacts to individuals - refer to **Section 9.3**.

8.7 Birds

Evaluation of Baseline

8.7.1 The desk study data returned recent records of a variety of notable bird species that have been recorded across the nearby area including woodland and farmland species.

8.7.2 Overall, the site comprised primarily of urban habitats with individual trees at the northern and northwestern boundaries, and as such, the site as whole is unlikely to support a bird assemblage of more than site level ecological value.

Impact Assessment

8.7.3 All individual trees will be retained therefore the proposed development will have no impact on suitable habitat for nesting birds and therefore no adverse effects on this species are anticipated.

8.8 Badgers (and other mammals)

Evaluation of Baseline

8.8.1 [redacted] no evidence of badger activity (i.e. setts, trails, snuffle holes or mammal diggings) was identified within the application site. Therefore, the presence of badger on site is considered highly unlikely.

8.8.2 The desk study data included 39 recent records of the European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) – a priority species (NERC Act 2006 Section 41 species of principle importance) – recently recorded within a 1 kilometre radius of the application site. It is likely that they may forage in the surrounding garden habitats.

Impact Assessment

8.8.3 Habitat of very low suitability for mammals will be impacted during the proposed plans and therefore no adverse effects are foreseen. Some precautions during site clearance to minimise the risk of harming hedgehogs should be taken **Section 9.3**.

8.9 Invertebrates

Evaluation of Baseline

8.9.1 The desk study data included 140 recent records of stag beetle, the closest of which is at a site approximately 282 metres to the south. This species may utilise the areas of ruderal vegetation onsite and surrounding the site, however, suburban setting suggests the site is unlikely to be of importance in isolation, to local stag beetle populations.

Impact Assessment

8.9.2 The loss of a sparse ruderal vegetation that is relatively poor habitats for invertebrates is unlikely to have a significant impact on invertebrates. There is scope to enhance the retained habitat onsite for invertebrate species, such as the stag beetle – refer to recommendations in **Section 9.4**.

8.10 Invasive Non-native Species

Evaluation of Baseline

8.10.1 No invasive non-native species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were found on site.

Impact Assessment

8.10.2 The absence of any non-native species on site means there is no anticipated spread of invasive species by the proposals.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Overview

9.1.1 This chapter provides the details regarding proposed avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures, including measures to enable legislative compliance.

9.2 Bats

9.2.1 During construction, artificial lighting should be avoided and if security lighting is required, this should be controlled by passive infrared motion sensors and directed away from the tree lines to be retained.

9.2.2 The permitted development scheme should avoid external lighting but if essential, the lighting scheme should include measures to reduce the impact on bats and other nocturnal species including measures such as using warm white (2700K) LED lights, directional light fittings to avoid spill above the horizontal, and timer or passive infra-red controls so that lights switch on only when necessary.

9.3 Amphibians, Reptiles and Mammals (Reasonable Avoidance Measures)

9.3.1 The following reasonable avoidance measures should be adopted to minimise the low risk of harming individual amphibians, reptiles and small mammals:

During construction activities

- Any stored building materials or waste, such as bricks or debris etc., that might offer shelter for amphibians, reptiles and small mammals will be kept raised off the ground on pallets or on existing hard standing, and efforts should be made to process and removed from site as soon as possible; and
- Excavation works will be avoided after dusk, and any open excavations or trenches will be backfilled (after a check for amphibian, reptile or mammal presence) or left with escape ramps to prevent amphibians, reptiles and small mammals from becoming trapped.

9.3.2 Adhering to the simple avoidance measures outlined above should ensure that mammals are protected from reckless killing and injury during any subsequent works.

9.3.3 In the unlikely event that an amphibian or reptile is found during construction, works will stop immediately and a licensed ecologist will be called onto site to ensure the amphibian/reptile is not harmed and provide further advice on how to proceed; work will

recommence only once further written advice has been received.

9.4 Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

9.4.1 The planning proposals provide opportunities for the enhancement of the site's biodiversity value. The inclusion of the following recommendations would be of ecological benefit and be in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), local planning policy in addition to the species specific avoidance and mitigation measures.

- Installation of integrated bat and bird boxes in the newly constructed building;
- Creation of partially buried log piles within the wooded areas for stag beetles; and
- Wildlife-friendly, native landscaping that utilises native pollinator plants to benefit invertebrates.

10 REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals (2023). *Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and artificial lighting at night.* ILP, Rugby.

Bright, P., Morris, P. & Mitchell-Jones T. (2006). *The dormouse conservation handbook – second edition*. English Nature.

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester

CIEEM (2019). *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys.* CIEEM, Winchester.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines.* 4th Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

English Nature (2001). *Great crested newt mitigation guidelines.* English Nature, Peterborough.

Froglife (1999). *Froglife Advice Sheet 10: Reptile Survey: An introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation*. Froglife, Halesworth.

Langton, T., Beckett, C. & Foster, J. (2001). *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*. Froglife, Halesworth.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2025). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats.* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition)*. JNCC, Peterborough.

UKHab Ltd. (2023). *The UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 2.0* at http://www.ukhab.org/

APPENDIX 1 – POTENTIAL SUITABILITY CATEGORIES FOR ROOSTING BATS

The categories detailed in **Table 2** below are derived from the '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)'* (Collins 2023) and provide guidance for assessing the potential suitability of buildings (and other structures) for roosting bats. These categories are applied using professional judgement and irrespective of whether the presence of a bat roost has been confirmed during a survey, as additional bat roosts could be present which have not yet been discovered.

Table 2. Categories for potential suitability of buildings (and other structures) for roosting bats.

Potential Suitability	Category Justification
None	A building (or structure) that has no features likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of cracks, crevices or voids that could provide suitable shelter).
Negligible	A building (or structure) that has no obvious features likely to be used by roosting bats, but in this case a small element of uncertainty remains as bats will occasionally use small and apparently unsuitable features. This category may also be used where a bat could potentially roost due to one attribute, but it is considered unlikely due to another attribute (e.g. a feature that is subject to constant illumination from artificial lighting).
Low	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for opportunistic use by individual bats at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites for bats do not provide sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and/or surrounding suitable habitat to be used regularly or by large numbers (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for a maternity colony and not a classic hibernation site).
Moderate	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for regular use by individual bats, or small non-breeding groups, due to sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. However, these potential roost sites for bats are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status with regards to the type of roost only (i.e. maternity colonies and classic hibernation sites).
High	A building (or structure) that has one or more potential roost sites suitable for use by large numbers of bats more regularly and for longer periods of time due to sufficient space, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These potential roost sites for bats are capable of supporting high conservation status roosts (i.e. maternity colonies and classic hibernation sites).

APPENDIX 2 – DEFINITION OF BAT ROOST TYPES

The potential suitability of a building in conjunction with any evidence of bat presence is used to provide an initial assessment of likely roost type and importance. The types of roost considered are based on the following Natural England definitions:

- Day roost – a summer resting place used by individual bats, or small non-breeding groups, during the day;
- Night roost – a resting place used by individual bats on occasion, or by a whole colony regularly, during the night;
- Feeding perch – a resting place used by individual bats, or a few individuals, primarily for short periods of feeding during the night;
- Transitional roost – a place used by a few individual bats, or occasionally small groups, for a short period of time upon waking from hibernation or in the period prior to hibernation;
- Maternity roost – a place used by small to large groups of female bats to give birth and raise their young to independence;
- Hibernation roost – a place used by individual bats, or in groups, during winter where there is a constant cool temperature and high humidity; and
- Satellite roost – a place used by a few individuals to small groups of breeding female bats found in close proximity to the main nursery colony throughout the breeding season.

The importance of a bat roost is underpinned by the conservation status of the suspected species (i.e. the distribution/rarity of a species in a specific geographic location) and the type of roost (i.e. not all roosts have the same level of importance in supporting the local bat population). Further roost characterisation surveys may be required to fully determine the importance of a confirmed roost to allow for a robust impact assessment.

APPENDIX 3 – FURTHER SURVEY RATIONALE

In cases where no evidence of use by bats is found during a building inspection but the possibility of their presence cannot be ruled out, further presence/likely absence survey is likely to be required if the development proposals will impact potential roost sites. Emergence surveys are carried out to establish the presence or likely absence of roosting bats in buildings (and other structures) and these are designed in accordance with the '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)'* (Collins 2023) detailed in **Table 3** below.

Table 3. Recommended further survey for establishing presence/likely absence of roosting bats in buildings (and other structures).

Potential Suitability	Further Survey
None	No further surveys are required.
Negligible	No further surveys are required.
Low	A minimum of one dusk emergence survey visit should be undertaken in the period of May to August. However, if all areas (including cracks, crevices and voids) can be thoroughly inspected and no evidence of use by bats is found, then emergence surveys may not be required. In cases where a complete inspection cannot be carried out, professional judgement and proportionality should be applied when assessing the impacts of the development proposals.
Moderate	A minimum of two dusk emergence survey visits should be undertaken in the period of May to September, with at least one of the surveys between May and August; the survey visits should be spaced at least three weeks apart.
High	A minimum of three separate dusk emergence survey visits should be undertaken in the period of May to September (inclusive), with at least two of the surveys between May and August; the survey visits should be spaced at least three weeks apart.

In cases where the PRA and/or further survey establishes the presence of roosting bats in a building (or structure), this will likely trigger the need for roost characterisation to collect sufficient information to inform the impact assessment and mitigation strategy. The roost characterisation comprises information collected during the PRA, emergence surveys and by other methods, such as DNA analysis of bat droppings, and ultimately aims to determine the bat species roosting; the number of bats the roosts support; the roost access points; the locations of the roosts and the types of roost present. This information is crucial when applying for planning permission and/or a European Protected Species mitigation licence.

APPENDIX 4 – LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Amphibians

The seven native species of amphibian receive protection under the W&AC 1981 (as amended). The four widespread and common amphibians (common frog, toad, smooth newt and palmate newt) receive only limited protection – making their sale illegal.

The great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) receives full protection under the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and under the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended). The combined legislation makes it illegal to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a great crested newt;
- possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt; and
- intentionally or recklessly disturb great crested newts; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating animals, to hibernate or migrate.

Great crested newts (*T. cristatus*) and common toads (*Bufo bufo*) are species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (*'UKBAP Priority Species'*) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Badgers

Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. The Act makes activities such as development that would harm or disturb badgers or damage, obstruct or destroy their setts illegal. If badgers are to be affected by the proposed development, activities can be undertaken only under a licence issued by Natural England.

Bats

All bat species in Britain are fully protected by the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and by the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended). In summary, the combined legislation makes it an offence to:

- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly

obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat;

- deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate; or to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species; and
- deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

Birds

All wild birds are protected under the W&CA 1981 (as amended). The Act makes it an offence to kill, injure or take a wild bird or to damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird whilst in use or being built. Species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act, such as barn owls and kingfishers, are afforded additional protection against disturbance while nesting.

Hazel dormice

Hazel dormice receive full protection under the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and under the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended). These make it illegal to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a dormouse;
- possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a dormouse;
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a dormouse; and
- intentionally or recklessly disturb dormice; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating animals, to hibernate or migrate.

Invasive non-native plants

The W&CA 1981 (as amended) provides the primary controls on the release of non-native species into the wild in Great Britain. It is an offence under Section 14(2) of the Act to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild' any plant listed in Schedule 9, Part II. The species listed in the Act include Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

Otters

Otters are fully protected by the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and by the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended). In summary, the combined legislation makes it an offence to:

- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by an otter;
- deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb otters; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of otters to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species; and
- deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

Reptiles

The four widespread reptiles most likely to be encountered (adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard) are protected under the W&CA 1981 (as amended). The Act makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure, possess or sell any of the species.

The aforementioned species are all listed as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (*'UKBAP Priority Species'*) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Water voles

Since April 2008, water voles have received full protection under Section 9 in Schedule 5 of the W&CA 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take water voles or to possess or control live or dead water voles or derivatives. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection or intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles whilst occupying a structure or place used for that purpose.

The water vole is listed as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (*'UKBAP Priority Species'*) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Wild mammals

Under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 it is an offence to intentionally inflict

unnecessary suffering, as specified by the Act, on any wild mammal.