

Alfred and Trudy Draggon
1 Williamson Close
Winnersh
Berkshire
RG41 5RY

Subject: Letter of Intent to retain and enhance the woodland habitat on the land to the north of Barkham Road

22 June 2026

Dear Alfred and Trudy,

I am writing this letter in relation to your intention to retain, protect, and enhance the existing woodland located on the land north of Barkham Road as part of the proposed development associated with the site.

To date, ecological surveys have been undertaken on the site since 2008 in relation to previous planning applications and the new planning application due to be submitted in 2026. The historic reports will inform future management proposals and will ensure compliance with relevant planning and environmental policies, as well as in accordance with relevant wildlife legislation and best practice standards. A Section 106 agreement was agreed in 2013 securing the long term commitment to retain and enhance the woodland habitat and scattered trees onsite.

The woodland onsite is covered by two TPOs. The TPOs include one woodland TPO which covers the woodland to the north and west of the site (ref: TPO-1597-2017) and an area TPO which covers the eastern side of the site (ref: TPO-1597-2017). The site is therefore recognised as an important environmental and landscape asset that contributes positively to local biodiversity, visual amenity, ecological connectivity, and the character of the surrounding area.

The woodland has been left unmanaged which has resulted in a lack of structural diversity, resulting in the woodland being dominated by single ages of trees with limited diversity of states and sizes. The woodland also lacks understory of shrubs, however it does offer a lot of dead wood providing habitats for wildlife. The woodland would therefore benefit from long term management and enhancement.

The intention is that the woodland will be safeguarded throughout all phases of the project, which involves the building of one dwelling on the site and the woodland will be managed in a manner that supports its long-term ecological health and resilience.

The objectives of the woodland management are to:

- Enhance biodiversity and habitat quality
- Improve woodland resilience to climate change, pests, and disease
- Support native flora and fauna
- Promote sustainable land management practices
- Contribute to local environmental and community priorities

The previous work undertaken on site and key outcomes include the following:

Company:	Year:	Survey undertaken	Key outcomes:
GPM Ecology in 2008	2008	Phase 1 habitat survey	The survey identified the potential for the grassland within the site to support reptiles.
John Wenman Ecological	2008	Reptile Survey	The survey showed that the site supports grass snakes (<i>Natrix natrix</i>) and the survey findings were consistent with a 'good population' being present.

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Consultancy			
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy	2010	Reptile and botanical survey and habitat management proposals	The report covered compensation for the loss of grassland in the longer term, habitat enhancement undertaken in the surrounding land including thinning secondary woodland on the western boundary, blackthorn scrub in the north eastern corner of the site and coppicing alder dominated areas of the woodland to extend grassland habitats. The report also recommended egg laying and hibernation sites for grass snakes to be constructed.
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy	2011	Updated Reptile mitigation, habitat creation and management proposals	An updated report detailing proposals for ecological enhancement of the site, and the adjacent woodland, as part of its long term management. The report adds to the report submitted with the earlier application and should be read in conjunction with the information presented there.
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy	2013	Letter report summarising wildlife mitigation and management strategy.	A summary based on the management recommendations set out in the Updated Reptile mitigation, habitat creation and management proposals (JWEC 2011). The report outlines the habitat protection/enhancement measures that were to be implemented.
Wokingham District Council	2013	Section 106 Agreement	The S106 agreement was signed off by the council in relation to proposed development on the site. mitigation management report undertaken in 2013 and signed off by the council. The agreement was based on the JWEC 2011 report and a further letter report from 2013, summarising the wildlife mitigation and management strategy.
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy	2022	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Feasibility Assessment (Report ref: R3287/a)	The survey found the land to consist of unmanaged grassland surrounded by woodland and dense blackthorn scrub. A native hedgerow was present on the southern boundary along Barkham Road. The grassland was structurally diverse but considered to be of no special botanical interest and the woodland was an example of a habitat of principal importance for conservation (HPI). The habitats on site are of conservation value within context of the site and local level. The previous proposed development would result in the removal of 0.08ha of existing neutral grassland, a habitat of medium distinctiveness and therefore, without appropriate compensation, would have an adverse impact on the ecological value of the grassland onsite and lead to a net loss of biodiversity. Due to the nature of the site, this loss cannot be compensated with the creation of new habitat of the same or greater distinctiveness on site because of the ecological value/distinctiveness of the remaining habitats on site.
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy	2023	Updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (Report ref: R3565/a)	An updated PEA undertaken by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy in August 2023 due to a new planning application. The survey found the site to have become dominated by scrub with small parcels of

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			grassland scattered through the site.
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy	2023	Updated reptile survey (Report ref: R3566a)	An updated reptile survey was undertaken to determine if there have been any changes in the grass snake population on site and to guide recommendations for excluding them from the development footprint. The survey found no evidence of reptiles on site, mostly likely due to the site becoming more overgrown and encroached with scrub.
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy	2024	Updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (Report ref: R2354_UpPEA_a)	The survey confirmed the site to consist primarily of unmanaged, mixed scrub with areas of rank grassland dominated by tussocks of coarse grass such as tufted hair grass, with areas of tall herb and rushes, and scattered trees similar to the previous survey in 2023.
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy	Sept 2024	Supervised scrub removal	Management including the removal of sections of scrub, which was encroaching the site under ecological supervision mid-September 2024 and the removal of some sections of mixed scrub in and the relocation of several trees from the eastern side of the site to the front southern side of the site
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy	2026	Ground level tree assessment (R2354_GLTA_c)	A GLTA was undertaken of numerous trees on the land north of Barkham Road in Barkham (G12, G30, T8, T13, T18, T19, T22, T23, T27, T32, T34 – T37, T41, T44 - T47, T50, T54, T57, T66, T67, T68, T69, T81, T82, T86, T91, T93, T96, T98, T104, T109 -T111, T116, T122, T125, T142, G148 and G150). The GLTA was commissioned in relation to plans shown in the Landscape Sketchbook 06 PAD Landscapes which highlighted trees for potential removal or arboricultural works. Several trees were noted to have features suitable for bats, however, none of the highlighted trees will be removed for the development and further surveys will be undertaken if they are due to be removed in the future for the management of the woodland.
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy	2026	Updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (Report ref: R2354_UpPEA_c)	The habitats within the new proposed development boundary (approximately 0.25 ha) consists primarily mostly of other neutral grassland with areas of blackthorn scrub towards the northern side of the boundary and scattered trees including ash, oak, turkey oak and hawthorn. The habitats on site are of conservation value within context of the site and local level. As the site had undergone management in 2024 the site was more open and was more suitable for reptiles to recolonize the site. Therefore, further reptile surveys were recommended. A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) was carried out for the trees that require arboricultural works or removal in order to allow the development. An endoscopic check is recommend for T122 prior to removal as it had features suitable for use by bats. .
John Wenman Ecological Consultancy	2026	Updated reptile survey	The reptile survey is currently still underway, and a maximum of one sub-adult and two juvenile slow worms have been recorded on site recorded. The survey findings indicates that the site supports a low

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			slow worm population and therefore a programme of capture and translocation to a reptile protection zone on retained land to the north and west of the development site, to maintain the conservation status of local reptile populations.
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This letter considers the details in the statement prepared by John Wenman in June 2011 for the previous application for the land from which Wokingham Council granted the Section 106 agreement, dated September 2013.

The mitigation for the potentially adverse impacts of the proposals on reptiles will be confirmed once the reptile survey has been completed in 2026. The previous report from 2011 recommended that it would be necessary to exclude them from the development site in advance of ground works using reptile proof fencing. Snakes within the fence should be trapped and transferred to safety for a minimum of 70 suitable days between March and September. However, this may not be necessary for the small number of slow worms recorded on the site during updated surveys carried out to date. Non-licensed avoidance measures may be more suitable and will include the avoidance of winter hibernation for site clearance, phased cutting of the vegetation with hand held tool and in a direction so that animals can move freely into the retained woodland and scrub, backfilling of open excavations and trenches and storage of building material raised off the ground.

The purpose of the project is to improve the ecological condition, biodiversity value, resilience, and long-term sustainability of the woodland through a structured programme of enhancement and management activities. To achieve this, the following principles will guide the management and enhancement of the woodland:

- Retention of the existing woodland area wherever practicable.
- Protection of retained trees and root protection areas during construction activities in accordance with relevant arboricultural guidance, including British Standards Institution recommendations where applicable.
- Removal or control of invasive or diseased vegetation where necessary to improve woodland condition.
- Supplementary planting using appropriate native tree, shrub, and ground flora species to strengthen biodiversity and woodland structure.
- Enhancement of wildlife habitats through measures such as fallen and deadwood retention, habitat piles, and improved understory native planting to complement the mature canopy layer.
- Ongoing woodland management and monitoring to ensure the continued establishment and health of the woodland environment, which may include thinning and selective management, the reinstatement of alder coppicing which are over-mature and show signs of decay. The oak dominated secondary woodland and mature woodland should be managed as areas of non-intervention woodland.
- Ongoing grassland management such as hay-meadow style cutting and by creating a mosaic of habitats.
- Ongoing enhancement of the blackthorn scrub with rotational cutting to create a diverse range of age within the scrub.
- Creation or maintenance of wildlife corridors and minimisation of disturbance to protected species and habitats.
- Enhancement of the site for protected species in particular reptiles recorded onsite, by creating compost heaps of cut vegetation in sunny positions on the western and northern boundaries and hibernation sites should be constructed also from logs.
- Improvement of soil and water conservation measures
- Long-term woodland stewardship and monitoring

The commitment through the S106 agreement reflects a long-term objective to preserve and improve the woodland for environmental and ecological benefits. The agreement requires that prior to commencement of development of the land a long term woodland management plan and monitoring plan need to be approved in writing by the Council, as detailed in the Ecological Mitigation Reports. As per the agreement you are also required to meet the Council's voluntary costs in monitoring the implementation of the management and mitigation.

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Where required, we will be happy to provide further ecological assessments and advice to inform detailed management proposals and ensure compliance with relevant planning and environmental policies, and to further develop and implement the proposed woodland enhancement onsite.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Vicky Potts MSc BSc (Hons), MCIEEM
Senior Ecologist

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