

**Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.  
Ecological Consultants.**



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**LAND AT GREEN LANE, CUBLEY.**

**OS REF: SE 25328 02471.**

**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL.**

**Ref No: 230830.**

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023.**

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# **1. INTRODUCTION.**

1.1. There are plans to develop the land adjacent to Green Lane, Cubley.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. That survey was carried out on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023. This report outlines the findings of all surveys and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendices I to IV of this report provides additional information on specific species and are designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

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## 2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.2. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the UK Habitat Classification methodology to identify the broad habitat types throughout the survey area.

2.3. The survey area and immediate surrounding area was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) activity by looking for the following signs in line with Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D (1989). *Surveying Badgers*. Mammal Society: -

- \* Badger setts.
- \* Badger latrines or dung pits.
- \* Badger snuffle holes and evidence of foraging.
- \* Badger paths.
- \* Badger prints in areas of soft mud.
- \* Badger hairs caught on fencing.

2.4. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 100m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Dean M, Strachen R, Gow D and Andres R (2016). *The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series)*. Eds Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin. The mammal Society, London: -

- \* Water vole burrows.
- \* Water vole faeces and latrines.
- \* Water vole feeding stations.
- \* Water vole runs.
- \* Water vole prints in areas of soft mud.
- \* Water vole lawns.
- \* Predator field signs.

2.5. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of otter (*Lutra lutra*) activity by looking for the following signs in line with the P Chanin (2003). *Monitoring the Otter and Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Monitoring Series No10 Guidelines*: -

- \* Otter prints in soft mud.
- \* Otter spraints.
- \* Otter Holts.

2.6. The survey area was searched for watercourses and waterbodies. Where found, and where safe to enter the water, all were thoroughly searched for the presence of crayfish, for approximately 50m in each direction of the site, by searching under rocks and logs. Where stated, crayfish traps were also deployed into the watercourse. All survey work was carried out in accordance with the *Conserving Natural 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 1, Protocol for Monitoring the White Clawed Crayfish*.

2.7. The survey area was searched for trees and structures and where found these were checked for potential bat roosting sites in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* by looking for the following signs: -

- \* Holes, cracks or crevices.
- \* Bat Droppings.

2.8. The land immediately adjacent to the survey area was assessed for bat roosting potential and bat foraging potential. Connective routes and flight lines were also assessed whilst on site and using maps of the area.

2.9. The area within 500m of the survey site was cross referenced to maps to highlight all ponds close to the site. Where possible, all ponds identified were accessed using agreed access or public rights of way to assess the potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) to be present.

2.10. The survey area was assessed for the potential for reptiles and suitable reptile habitats. Where applicable the area was also searched for the presence of reptiles.

2.11. Where appropriate, the habitat within and surrounding the survey area was searched for species such as hazel, oak, honeysuckle, bramble and other species which may provide potential habitat for hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Field signs such as feeding remains and nests were also searched for where possible, in line

with P Bright, P Morris and T Mitchell-Jones *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition*.

2.12. Where appropriate, the area within and surrounding the survey area was assessed for its potential to house habitat for red squirrels. Field signs of red squirrels were searched for at least every 50m, looking for any dreys, feeding signs or sightings of red squirrels.

2.13. All surveys were carried out in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) survey standards and advice.

2.14. This document is prepared in line with The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out the government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation and places a duty on Planning Authorities to give material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications. The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance on “Natural Environment” also promote sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity and that it is conserved and enhanced within the development.

2.15. This report is prepared in line with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

2.16. The initial site survey was carried out by Sam White BSc ACIEEM. Sam has had experience in a professional capacity as an Ecologist focusing primarily on survey work for protected species and Phase 1 Habitat surveys. Sam has a BSc in Environmental Conservation from Sheffield Hallam University and Graduated in 2015. Sam joined Whitcher Wildlife Ltd in May 2018 as an Ecological Consultant. Sam holds a survey licence for Great Crested Newts *Triturus cristatus* and a Level 1 Class Licence for Bats. Sam is an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

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### **3. SURVEY RESULTS.**

#### **3.1. Data Search Results.**

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to South Yorkshire Bat Group and Sheffield Biological Records Centre for records of protected species and designated sites within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. The data search found no designated sites within or adjacent to the survey area.

3.1.3. There are no recent records of great crested newts or reptile species within 2km of the site.

3.1.4. All records of bats returned are historic, the most recent record is from 2008, a pipistrelle species roost located approximately 1.2km to the north.

3.1.5. There are recent records of brown hare (thirteen records) and hedgehog (forty-one records) within 2km of the site. The closest of these is a record of hedgehog 300m to the north of the site.

3.1.6. There are no records directly within the site itself.

#### **3.2. Survey Limitations.**

This survey was undertaken outside of the optimal period for botanical surveys. As such, some species, in particular spring annuals, may have been missed. However given the habitats on site this is not thought to have had a major impact on the results of the survey.

#### **3.3. The Survey Area.**

3.3.1. The survey area comprises an area of land adjacent to Green Lane, Cubley.

3.3.2. The aerial map below shows the approximate location of the survey area, the extent of which is marked in red.



3.3.3. The survey area comprises a grassland field, with occasional patches of scrub and oversailing trees.

3.3.4. The below photograph shows a general view of the survey area.



#### **3.4. Description of Habitats.**

3.4.1. Appendix V of this report contains annotated maps marked up with the varying habitats within the survey area. The habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- g3c – Other Neutral Grassland.

- h3h – Mixed Scrub.
- u1e – Built Linear Feature.

#### **3.4.2. g3c – Other Neutral Grassland**

**Secondary codes: 10 scattered scrub, 16 tall forbs, 81 ruderal/ephemeral.**



The large majority of the survey area comprises a grassland with numerous tall herbs and ruderal species present. The grassland is assessed as neutral given the presence of cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*, white clover *Trifolium repens* and false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* all being neutral indicators. Other species present within the grassland include curled dock *Rumex crispus*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, stinging nettle *Urtica dioica*, broadleaf dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, barren brome *Anisantha sterillis*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and red clover *Trifolium pratense*.

#### **3.4.3. h3h – Mixed Scrub.**

**Secondary codes: 32 scattered trees, 82 ruderal/ephemeral.**



There are areas of dense scrub, predominately surrounding the boundaries of the site and at the base of occasional scattered trees. Some of the species present within these areas include bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, poplar *Populus* sp., willow *Salix* sp., hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Franchet's cotoneaster *Cotoneaster franchetii* and rose spirea *Spirea douglasii*, as well as some of the grassland species in the understory.

#### **3.4.4. u1e – Built Linear Features.**

***Secondary codes: 114 dry-stone wall.***



The survey area is surrounded by dry-stone walls forming the boundaries of the site.

### 3.5. Description of Fauna.

3.5.1. No badger setts or field signs were found within the survey area.

3.5.2. There is no watercourse within the survey area and thus no suitable habitat for otter, water vole or white clawed crayfish.

3.5.3. A review of aerial imagery and Ordnance Survey mapping found there is one pond within 500m of the survey area, located approximately 200m to the south. The location of the pond is shown below.



3.5.3.1. This pond, shown below, was viewed from the roadside. Water fowl were visible on the pond which is also known to be stocked with fish, as such it is entirely unsuitable for great crested newts and there are no records of the species within 2km.



3.5.3.2. The survey area provides very poor habitat for great crested newts, with little refugia present.

3.5.4. There are no structures within the survey area and as such, no potential for roosting bats within structures on the site.

3.5.5. There are no trees within the survey area with potential features for roosting bats. As such, all trees are assessed as having negligible potential.

3.5.6. The survey area comprises grassland with patches of dense scrub, such habitat provides low value to foraging and commuting bats. This habitat will not be fragmented by the proposed development.

3.5.7. The survey area is suitable for nesting birds during the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September each year, primarily within the areas of dense scrub.

3.5.8. The survey area offers very limited potential for reptiles, with a largely uniform sward. This in addition to the absence of records makes it highly unlikely that reptiles are present within the survey area.

3.5.9. The survey area lies outside the known UK distribution of hazel dormouse and therefore there are no hazel dormouse present within the survey area.

3.5.10. No squirrel dreys were found within the survey area. There are no records of red squirrel within 2km of the site, which lies outside of the known UK distribution of the species.

3.5.11. There are no non-native, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) found within the survey area.

3.5.12. The site itself provides suitable habitat for hedgehogs, in particular where dense scrub is present, with the neighbouring habitat also being suitable.

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## 4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The survey area does not lie within any designated sites and is sufficiently distant from any statutory or non-statutory designations. Therefore, the proposed development of the site will have no impact on any such sites.

4.2. The below table shows an approximate biodiversity score from the Small Sites Biodiversity Metric 4.0. This is designed to give an indication of the biodiversity value of the site prior to any development. The conditions of each habitat are predetermined within the Small Sites Metric.

Habitat Type	Extent (m <sup>2</sup> )	Condition	Distinctiveness	Biodiversity units
Mixed Scrub.	172	Moderate	Medium	0.14
Other Neutral Grassland.	2726	Moderate	Medium	2.18
Urban Tree.	407	Moderate	Medium	0.3744
<b>Total (excl trees)</b>	<b>2898</b>			<b>2.6928</b>

4.3. No badger setts or field signs were found within the survey area. Therefore, the proposed development of the site will have no impact on badgers.

4.4. There are no watercourses within the survey area and as such, the proposed works will have no impact on otter, water vole or white clawed crayfish.

4.5. There is one pond within 500m of the survey area visible on Ordnance Survey mapping. This pond is unsuitable for great crested newts being stocked with fish and having water fowl present. In addition there are no records of great crested newts within 2km of the site. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on great crested newts.

4.6. There are no structures within the survey area and therefore, the proposed works will have no impact on roosting bats within structures.

4.7. There are no trees within the survey area with potential features for roosting bats. Therefore, the works will have no impact on roosting bats within trees.

4.8. The habitat on the site provides low quality foraging and commuting habitat for bats, this will not be fragmented by the development. As such, with a sensitive lighting scheme in place, there will be no impacts on foraging and commuting bats by the development of the site.

4.9. There is potential for nesting birds throughout survey area in the vegetation and walls within the survey area. The nesting bird season extends from March to September each year and any works during the nesting bird season could potentially have a high impact on nesting birds.

4.10. The survey area offers very limited suitability for reptile species and there are no records of reptile species within 2km of the site. Therefore, the proposed development of the site will have no impact on reptile species if due care is taken by the workforce.

4.11. The site lies outside the known UK distribution of hazel dormouse and therefore further works will have no impact on the species.

4.12. The site lies outside the known UK distribution of red squirrel with no records of the species within 2km of the survey area. There will therefore be no impact on red squirrel as a result of the proposed works.

4.13. No non-native, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 found within the survey area. Therefore, the proposed works will not cause the spread of such species.

4.14. Given the habitats on site being suitable for hedgehogs, it is possible that the species is present. Therefore, the proposed development may have an impact on hedgehogs.

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## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS.**

5.1. This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report is designed to advise the client of the initial survey results so that they may be considered within the site development plan.

5.2. Once all surveys have been completed and the development plans have been finalised, the report must be converted into an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) where details of further survey results, mitigation and biological enhancements are included, to arrive at an assessment of the residual impact of the proposed development. This format needs to include a final Biodiversity Net Gain calculation and will be suitable to submit to the Local Authority.

5.3. There is a requirement to provide an overall biodiversity net gain. The local authority may require a net gain of at least 10% biodiversity units. Initially, it is recommended that as much of the vegetation is retained to minimise the number of biodiversity units lost in the first instance. Where habitat is to be lost, larger areas of the same value habitats or of higher value on the site will be required.

5.4. If the landscaping plans provided do not provide an overall biodiversity net gain, then discussions will need to be had to try and find a way to maximise the number of biodiversity units that can feasibly be achieved on the site.

5.5. It is recommended that a sensitive lighting scheme is in place to prevent an impact on foraging and commuting bats.

5.6. The survey area falls within a District Licensing Scheme area (Yorkshire). As such, no further great crested newt surveys are required. The process for the licence requires a quote request and commitment to pay prior to submitting for planning, at which point the payment for the licence will be conditioned. Once granted, the licence will detail precautions required to undertake the development with minimal impact on great crested newts.

5.7. Alternatively, an eDNA survey of the pond can be undertaken, if this shows the absence of great crested newts then no licence will be required. Such a survey may only be undertaken between mid-April and June each year.

5.8. It is recommended that vegetation/site clearance works are undertaken outside of the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September each year.

5.9. If any work commences between March and September, this should be immediately preceded by a thorough nesting bird survey carried out by a suitably experienced person. Any nests identified must remain undisturbed until the young have fledged from the nest.

5.10. It is recommended that a precautionary method of working is in place to prevent any impact on reptile species throughout the development. As a minimum this should include:

- All personnel to be briefed on the identification of reptile species. If five or more reptiles or any hibernating reptiles are found works must cease and the undersigned contacted for further advice.
- Vegetation to be cleared no lower than 200mm before being taken to ground level.
- Any potential refugia to be moved by hand.
- Materials to be stored on pallets where possible.

5.11. As an additional recommendation, 13cm x 13cm gaps should be left at the bottom of any fences to encourage the use of the gardens by hedgehogs. As the species may be present in longer vegetation on site, these areas should be cleared in two stages first to 200m before being taken to ground level. No piles of brash should be left on site overnight throughout the site clearance.

5.12. It is recommended both bat boxes and integrated swift boxes are included in the final designs of the buildings on site. This is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to enhance the biodiversity of the site.

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Prepared by:	
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Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou. BSc, MCIEEM.	Date: 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2023

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## **Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.**

### *Ecology*

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

All appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

### *Surveys*

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

### *Legislation*

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATS agreement. Numerous species are also listed

under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

## **Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.**

### *Ecology*

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub, but others are ground nesting or prefer man-made structures or buildings.

### *Surveys*

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

### *Legislation*

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

## **Appendix III. REPTILE INFORMATION.**

### ***Ecology***

There are five main species of reptile that reside in the UK; Common or Viviparous Lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*); Sand Lizard (*Lacerta agilis*); Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*); Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) and Adder (*Vipera berus*). The Adder is the only native species that is venomous although this is rarely harmful to humans.

Reptiles occupy a wide range of habitats including woodland, marshes, heathland, moors, sand dunes, hedgerows and bogs. Sand Lizards are confined to moorland and coastal sand dunes where they lay their eggs in the warm sand. The range of the Sand Lizard in the UK is therefore very limited. Slow Worms can be found in a wide variety of habitats throughout Britain and is the most likely reptile to be found in urban and suburban environments.

Maintaining the right body temperature is vital to reptiles' survival. In the morning, they find a warm basking site to heat up their bodies, then later they may move back into the shade because they do not sweat and have to be careful not to overheat. During hot summers, Adders will try to move to damper, cooler sites.

Over winter reptiles will hibernate in burrows or under logs where they are protected from the cold and predators, emerging from February onwards as the weather warms up.

Reptiles generally begin to mate April to May with young born in late July to September. The Common Lizard gives birth to live young, hence the term viviparous, meaning live bearing.

### ***Surveys***

Reptile surveys involve the searching of refuge such as logs and stones for any animal sheltering below. Artificial refuge may be laid out on site for the purpose of reptile surveys.

### *Legislation*

Reptiles are protected under Appendix II (sand lizards) and Appendix III (common lizard, slow worms, smooth snake, grass snake and adders) of the BERN Convention (1982), partially protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive and are all listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Communities Act (2006) making them a species of principal importance.

This makes it an offence to disturb any reptile while it is occupying a structure or place it uses for shelter or protection or to obstruct access to such a place.

## **Appendix IV. HEDGEHOG INFORMATION.**

### *Ecology*

The hedgehog was a common species once widespread throughout the country but it has suffered a major decline due to loss of habitat. They are now found distributed across the UK, but the population increases to the south and east. Hedgehogs are rare in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The hedgehog is a small, spiny mammal around 20cm long with a long snout. The back and sides of the hedgehog are covered in 25mm (1”) long spines. These are absent from the face, legs and underside, which are covered with coarse, grey-brown fur.

Hedgehogs are highly active and range widely. They need to be able to move freely through a well-connected range of habitats to find food, mates and areas to nest. Studies show that hedgehogs can travel around 2km in a night in urban areas and 3km a night in rural landscapes. A viable population of urban hedgehogs is thought to need 0.9km<sup>2</sup> of well-connected habitat.

Hedgehogs nest year-round and produce different types of nest for daytime resting, breeding and hibernation. Daytime nests are a retreat during the active season, and are often temporary, flimsy and found in areas of rough grassland, loose leaf piles or garden vegetation. Breeding nests are made by females and are used to raise young. They tend to be more robust, like hibernation nests. Winter nests can be used for several months to hibernate through periods of cold weather and low food availability. The sturdiest nests rely on medium-sized deciduous leaves and a structure to hold the leaves in place. Bramble patches, log piles and open compost heaps are common locations for breeding and hibernation.

Hedgehogs are omnivores, but the bulk of their diet consists of macro-invertebrates such as beetles, worms, slugs, earwigs, caterpillars and millipedes. In urban areas, supplementary food in the form of cat, dog or formulated hedgehog food can make up a significant part of their diet. Access to water is also very important.

### *Surveys*

Hedgehogs are nocturnal animals, so despite their spiny appearance they are often difficult to find.

All surveys should be conducted between May and November when hedgehogs are active.

Droppings can be found in grassland, farmland and in gardens. The droppings are crinkly, often studded with shiny fragments due to their diet of insects. They are variable in size, 15-50mm long and 8-10mm thick, blue/black in colour and sweet smelling with a hint of linseed oil.

Footprint tunnels and camera traps can also be used to survey for hedgehogs.

Further survey techniques can also be used to survey for hedgehogs, but these require a survey licence to carry out surveys involving trapping and torch or spotlight searches.

### ***Legislation***

The hedgehog is considered an endangered species, but it benefits only from general protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They are listed under Schedule 6 of the Act, which makes it illegal to kill, trap or capture wild hedgehogs, with certain methods listed. They are also listed under the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996), which prohibits cruel treatment of hedgehogs and they are a species of 'principal importance' under the NERC Act, which confers a 'duty of responsibility to public bodies'.

However, none of these deal with the issues that are a threat to the hedgehog. The main threat is the increasing loss of habitat, the increasing traffic on our roads and the increasing use of herbicides, in particular those used to kill garden slugs.

# Appendix V. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA



Site: Land Adjacent to Green Lane

Date: 15.11.2023

Reference: 230830

Produced by: Sam White



## **Appendix VI. TARGET NOTES.**

T1 – Site entrance

## Toolbox Talk: Reptiles

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

Ecological Consultants



### Identification: Grass Snakes.

The grass snake can be up to 120cm long. It is generally dark green in colour but may occasionally appear grey with vertical black bars and spots that run along its sides. There is usually a yellow marking around the neck.



### Other Reptiles.

In addition to the reptiles outlined on this document, there are also two other reptile species in Great Britain, the smooth snakes and the sand lizard. These reptiles are a lot less common than the four species covered with the smooth snake being predominantly found on heathland in southern England and the sand lizard found throughout Great Britain in coastal dune areas.

These species are also afforded a higher level of protection because they are European Protected Species.

### Identification: Adders.

The adder is the only native species that is venomous, but it is rarely harmful to humans. Adult adders are generally up to 66cm long. Back ground colouration is a light shade of grey or brown with a black zigzag marking along the length of the back. As with all reptiles, colouration varies and becomes duller as sloughing (skin shedding) approaches.



### Habitat.

Maintaining the right body temperature is vital to reptiles' survival. In the morning they find a warm basking site to heat up their bodies and then later they may move back into the shade so as not to overheat. Hence, reptiles require a habitat that provides a range of suitable refugia for shelter such as dense vegetation, rubble or log piles, or crevices and open areas for basking such as bare ground, rocks or railway ballast shoulders. During hot summers reptiles may be found in damper, cooler sites. Reptiles hibernate, spending the winter in burrows or under logs protected from the cold and predators.

### Identification: Slow Worms.

Slow worms grow to around 45cm in length. The males and females display a marked difference in colour when fully grown. In general, the species displays colouring that varies from light brown, dark brown, grey, bronze or brick red with the females often displaying a dark vertebral stripe and both males and females displaying occasional markings on the flanks.



### Identification: Common Lizards.

Common lizards grow to around 16cm. They are grey brown to dark brown, often with a darker streak that may run the entire length of the spine. A continuous dark band bordered by light yellow or white spots is often seen on either side of the body. The underside of the males is egg yolk yellow to orange spotted with black. Females are yellowish grey.



When disturbed in their natural habitat reptiles will usually move away quickly.

### Legislation.

Reptiles are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They received greater protection following reviews of the schedules published in 1988 and 1991. This means they are protected against intentional or recklessly killing and injuring and against sale or transporting for sale.

If reptiles are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at [info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk](mailto:info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk)