Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

OLD ANNA LANE, THURLSTONE.

MAP REF: SE 23433 03922.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: **261023/EcIA.**

Date: **26th October 2026.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. A planning application is to be submitted for the construction of a stable block in the western end of the survey area on Old Anna Lane, Thurlstone.

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 21st October 2026. This report outlines the findings of that survey and outlines any issues identified.

1.4. This report has been converted into an Ecological Impact Assessment that includes post development Biodiversity calculations.

1.5. Appendices I and II of this report provide 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 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Rob Strachan, Tom Moorhouse and Merryl Gelling (2011). *Water Vole Handbook: Third Edition*: -

* 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 mature trees and derelict buildings and where found these were checked for potential bat roosting sites in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th 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. This survey was carried out by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years' experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance on a wide range of training courses through CIEEM, FSC and BCT. As a member of CIEEM he is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership. He holds current Natural England survey licences for barn owl, bat, great crested newt and white clawed crayfish.

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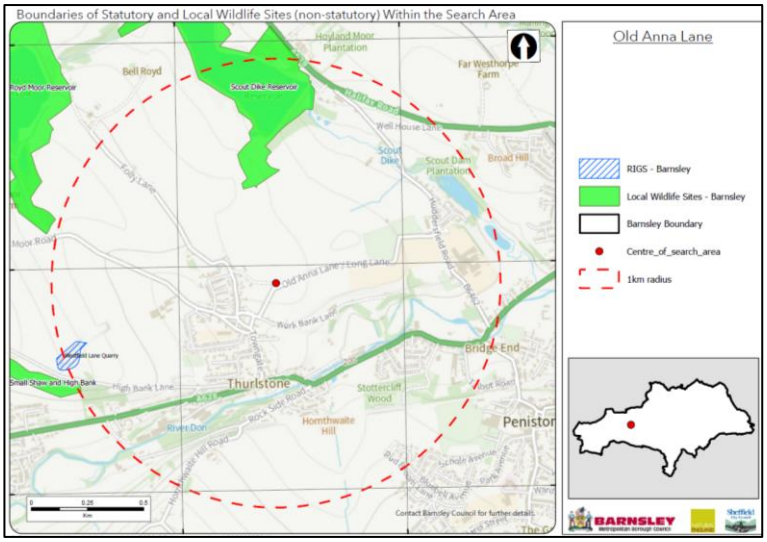
3. ECOLOGICAL BASELINE.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to Barnsley Biological Records Centre for existing records of designated sites and protected species within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. There are no statutory designated sites in the search area.

3.1.3. The map below shows there is only one Local Wildlife Site within the search area, Scout Dyke Reservoir. This is sufficiently distant from the survey area to be unaffected.



3.1.4. The survey area falls within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone but does not qualify for notification to Natural England.

3.1.5. The majority of the species records are for bird species in the surrounding area. There are no significant records and none that refer to the survey area or immediate surrounds.

3.1.6. There are a small number of badger and brown hare records but not close to the survey area.

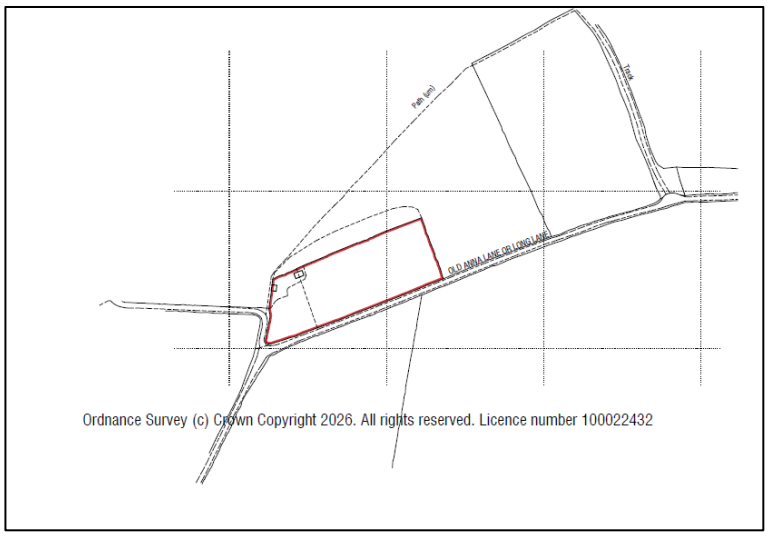
3.1.7. The data search results are available to the client on request but must not be placed in the public domain.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The aerial photograph below shows the location of the survey area, marked with a red arrow and the surrounding area. The site is located to the northeast of the village of Thurlstone and is surrounded by open farmland.



3.2.2. The survey area is shown outlined in red below where the proposed new stable is to be built within the western end of the field.



3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix III of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats that are on the site. The primary habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- g4 – Modified grassland.
- u1e – Built linear feature.

3.3.2. Biodiversity calculations have been calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, the current version at this time.

3.3.3. g4 – Modified grassland.

3.3.3.1. The entire field comprises a field of grass that has been recently mown for either a silage or a hay crop.




3.3.3.2. There is a margin of longer grass that has been missed during cutting, particularly in the corners at the western end of the field, but this has been categorised as part of the same habitat.




3.3.3.3. Species identified include perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris),* white clover (*Trifolium repens*), thistle (*Cirsium* sp(p)), sow thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and dock (*Rumex* sp.).

3.3.3.4. The condition assessment for the grassland is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition assessment of the grassland is poor, passing five criteria but failing the essential criteria.

3.3.3. Secondary code 200 - Individual trees.

3.3.3.1. Within the corner of the site there is one scattered tree, a single elder (*Sambucus nigra).*



3.3.3.2. The condition assessment for the tree is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition assessment of the tree is moderate passing four criteria.

3.3.4. u1b5 – Buildings.

There are three buildings present in the northwest corner of the survey area.

3.3.4.1. The first is an old timber stable with timber walls and a flat timber roof covered with roofing felt. The building is in a poor state of repair with no windows or doors present leaving the building open to the elements, which is currently used for storage.




3.3.4.2. The second is a shed with timber walls and a pitched roof covered with corrugated metal sheets, which is currently empty.




3.3.4.3. The third building is a small and dilapidated timber shed with no door and with a flat, corrugated metal sheet covered roof.



3.3.5. u1e – Built Linear feature.

Secondary code - 114 - Dry stone wall.

3.3.5.1. There is a dry stone wall around the entire perimeter of the survey area.



3.3.5.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. There were no badger setts or badger field signs present anywhere within the survey area.

3.4.2. There is no watercourse on or close to the site and therefore no habitat for water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish.

3.4.3. The closest pond to the site is Scout Dyke Reservoir located 600m to the north of the survey area and a fishing pond 700m to the northeast. There are four historic records of amphibians in the data search results from 2012, two common frog and two smooth newts. There are no great crested newt records in the data search results. Therefore, there is no further assessment for this species.

3.4.4. There are three old timber buildings in the survey area. All are dilapidated and unsuitable for roosting bats.

3.4.5. There is one small elder tree in the survey area but this does not provide opportunities for roosting bats with no PRFs found during the survey.

3.4.6. The site is elevated and exposed and is assessed to be low value habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

3.4.7. There are few opportunities for nesting birds in the survey area except in the tree that is to be retained and the dilapidated buildings. No active or old nests were identified during the site survey.

3.4.8. The site is assessed to have no potential for reptiles as it is an open field in an elevated location and the only shelter would be in the dry-stone walls around the site. There were no reptile records in the data search results.

3.4.9. The site is assessed as an unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse as it lies well outside of their natural range and the habitat is totally unsuitable.

3.4.10. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for red squirrels and is located outside the natural range for the species.

3.4.11. There were no alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act present in the survey area.

3.4.12. The site has low suitability for hedgehogs as the site is open and provides no opportunities for shelter.

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4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS, MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS.

4.1. Designated Sites.

4.1.1. Assessment.

4.1.1.1. There are no statutory designated sites in the search area.

4.1.1.2. There is only one Local Wildlife Site within the search area, Scout Dyke Reservoir and that is sufficiently distant to be unaffected by these proposals.

4.1.2. Mitigation.

No mitigation measures are necessary.

4.1.3. Residual Effects.

There will be no negative residual impact on designated sites as a result of this development.

4.2. Habitats.

4.2.1. Assessment.

4.2.1.1. The survey area comprises a grassland field with three small and dilapidated timber buildings. There is also one small tree that will be retained.

4.2.1.2. The following table outlines the area habitats present on the existing site pre-development. There are no linear habitats present in the survey area.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Modified grassland	0.447	Low	Poor	0.89
Buildings	0.003	V.Low	N/A	0
Individual trees.	0.0041	Medium	Moderate	0.03
Total (Excl trees)	**0.45**			**0.93**

4.2.1.3. There are 0.93BU of area habitat on the site pre-development. There are no linear habitats on the site pre-development.

4.2.2. Mitigation.

4.2.2.1. Most of the existing grassland will be retained except that to be removed to create the new stable block.

4.2.2.2. The one elder tree present on the site will be retained.

4.2.2.3. Four new moderate condition, heavy standard, oak trees will be planted within the survey area.

4.2.2.4. A new native species hedgerow will be planted around the new stable block at the western end of the survey area to provide a screen.

4.2.2.5. The following table outlines the area habitats present post-development.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Modified grassland retained	0.4	Low	Poor	0.80
Buildings	0.021	V.Low	N/A	0
Artificial, unveg, unsealed surface.	0.027	V.Low	N/A	0
Individual tree retained.	0.0041	Medium	Moderate	0.03
4 heavy standard trees	0.0652	Medium	Moderate	0.2
Total (Excl trees)	**0.45**			**1.03**

4.2.2.6 The following table outlines the linear habitats present on the site post-development.

Habitat Type	Length in Km	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Native species hedgerow	0.081	Low	Moderate	0.27
Total (Excl trees)	**0.081**			**0.27**

4.2.3. Residual Effects.

4.2.3.1. The table below shows the BNG results with an increase of 11.33% in area habitats post development that satisfies all trading rules.

FINAL RESULTS			
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.11	
	Hedgerow units	0.28	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	11.33%	
	Hedgerow units	N/A	0 baseline units - % cannot be calculated
	Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓		

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.93	1.02	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

4.2.3.2. The increase of 0.28linear Bu cannot be expressed as a percentage increase as there is no pre-development linear habitat in the survey area.

4.2.3.3. The overall results is a positive residual impact on the site habitats.

4.3. Species – Nesting Birds.

4.3.1. Assessment.

There are few opportunities for nesting birds in the survey area except in the tree that is to be retained and the dilapidated buildings.

4.3.2. Mitigation.

4.3.2.1. Any works to the tree or the demolition of the existing buildings will be carried out outside the nesting bird season.

4.3.2.2. Should any such works be necessary, these will be immediately preceded by a nesting bird survey carried out by a suitably experienced person. Any active nests, plus a buffer zone around them, will be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

4.3.3. Residual Effects.

With these precautionary measures in place, there will be no residual negative impact on nesting birds.

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5. BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT MEASURES.

5.1. To comply with the requirements of the NPPF, one bat box and one nest box will be provided on the new building.

5.2. Due to the design of the new building, these will be surface mounted on the rear of the buildings.

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Prepared by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 28th October 2026.

Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou, BSc, MCIEEM	Date: 11th November 2026.

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Appendix I. 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 II. 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.

Many species 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 of 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 III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA PRE DEVELOPMENT.



Appendix IV. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA POST DEVELOPMENT.



Site: Old Anna Lane

Reference: 261023

Date: 22.10.2026

Produced by: Samuel Bentley

Appendix V. DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

