Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

MAPPLEWELL MEADOWS HOLIDAY PARK EXTENSION.

OS REF: SE 33679 09158.

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL.

Ref No: **260420.**

Date: **5th August 2026.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. A planning application is being submitted for the extension of the current holiday park at Mapplewell Meadows in the village of Mapplewell. This will include for the provision of new camping plots, an access road and the construction of a new amenity block.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site to establish whether there are any ecological issues that may affect the proposed development and determine the baseline biodiversity value of the site.

1.3. That survey was carried out on 17th April 2025. This report outlines the findings of all surveys and makes appropriate recommendations. This report also includes the baseline biodiversity calculations that will eventually inform a full biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment.

1.4. Appendix I 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 primary habitat types throughout the survey area. All primary habitats are accompanied by secondary codes which are used to add further specific details where necessary. Each primary habitat and unique set off secondary codes will be shown individually in the appended annotated map.

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.) (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 Ruth Georgiou BSc MCIEEM. Since 2004 Ruth has had experience in a professional capacity as a Wildlife Consultant carrying out a variety of surveys including ecology surveys, phase I habitat surveys, preliminary ecological appraisals and species-specific surveys. She also holds a degree in Environmental Science (BSc) and has successfully completed a number of courses run by CIEEM, BCT and FSC in the relative protected species and other aspects of ecology. Ruth is also experienced and trained in Biodiversity Net Gain and is accredited to undertake river condition assessments utilising the MoRPh methodology. Ruth holds Natural England survey licences in respect of bats, great crested newts and white clawed crayfish and has held her own or has been named ecologist on site specific mitigation licences for badgers, great crested newts and bats. As a full member of CIEEM Ruth is subject to peer review on an annual basis.

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3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to Barnsley Biological Records Centre (BBRC) as part of the initial planning application for the current holiday park for records of protected species and designated sites within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. MAGIC website was also consulted for records of any statutory designated sites and records of any European Protected Species (EPS) licences or great crested newt survey data within 2km.

3.1.3. No statutory designated sites were found to be located within 2km. The survey area lies within at least one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) but the proposed activities on site do not match the descriptions of activities that would require the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to consult with Natural England.

3.1.4. The data search results show that there are two Local Wildlife Sites within 1.5km. One of these is Barnsley Canal at Wilthorpe located 440m south and the second is Mapplewell Tip, located 1.2km west.

3.1.3. The results show that there are various bird species in the area but none of any direct relevant to the site.

3.1.4. There are records of common toads in ponds in the area, the closest of which is 105m away. There are a number of records of great crested newts in Barnsley Canal, but these lie just over 500m from the survey area.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The survey area is located on the outskirts of the village of Mapplewell in Barnsley. It is located on a former colliery tip that was historically restored with tree planting, typically birch trees.

3.2.2. The wider surrounding area is a suburban landscape, with horse paddocks , arable fields and residential areas. Beyond the site the land slopes quite steeply to the south towards a fishing lake, woodland and the River Dearne.

3.2.3. The aerial map below shows the location of the survey area, outlined in red, and the surrounding area.



3.2.3. The site itself comprises predominantly an area of well managed grassland that has been closely mown and used for various recreational activities over a number of years. A planning application was submitted in 2022 for a small number of camping plots on this grassland, which was subsequently granted. The proposals will also encroach into an area that was cleared around 2021 / 22. Since then, the area has been mown at least annually, to ensure that scrub does not regenerate, and the area has become a relatively good grassland habitat.

3.2.4. The limits of the survey area are outlined in red in the aerial map overleaf.



3.3. Survey Limitations.

No significant limitations were noted during this survey. The survey was carried out early in the growing season, however, sufficient information was gathered to allow a thorough assessment of the habitats to be made.

3.4. Description of Habitats.

3.4.1. Appendix V of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats across the site. The primary habitats on the site are listed below, followed by descriptions of each habitat.

- g4 Modified grassland
- g3c Other neutral grassland
- h3h Mixed scrub
- u1b Developed land; sealed surface

3.4.2. g4 Modified grassland.

3.4.2.1. The most part of the site is modified grassland that has historically been utilised for recreational activities and regularly mown for a number of years. Historical mapping also suggests that up until around ten years prior to this survey being carried out, this area was utilised for arable purposes, which will have inevitably increased the nutrient levels in the soil. There are some camping plots already on this area, although no holiday makers were present at the time of this survey.

3.4.2.2. A species list for this area can be found appended in this report, but the dominant grass species are annual meadowgrass (*Poa annua*), Cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and fescue (*Festuca* sp.). There are very few flowering species across this area of grassland, white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and mouse-ear chickweed (*Cerastium fontanum*) were the most frequently recorded.





3.4.3. g3c Other neutral grassland.

Secondary Codes: 50 Ditch.

3.4.3.1. There is a parcel of land that was dense scrub habitat, but appears to have been cleared during 2021 / 22. Since then the area has been cut each year, which has kept the scrub at bay. A grassland has regenerated in its place, which differs from the modified grassland in various ways. Although it is cut, it is not as heavily managed as the modified grassland. The topsoil layer appears to be very thin, with patches of exposed coal slag. This area has had very little influence from any kind of management practice other than the occasional cutting of the area.

3.4.3.2. This area of grassland has been categorised as other neutral grassland as quadrat samples identified an average of 8.3 species per square metre, there is a high cover of

broadleaved herbs and sedges, with less than 30% cover of perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*).

3.4.3.3. A species list for this area can be found appended to this report, but the most frequently recorded species were meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), lesser knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), hoary ragwort (*Jacobaea erucifolia*), tare species (*Vicia* sp.), birds-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*).



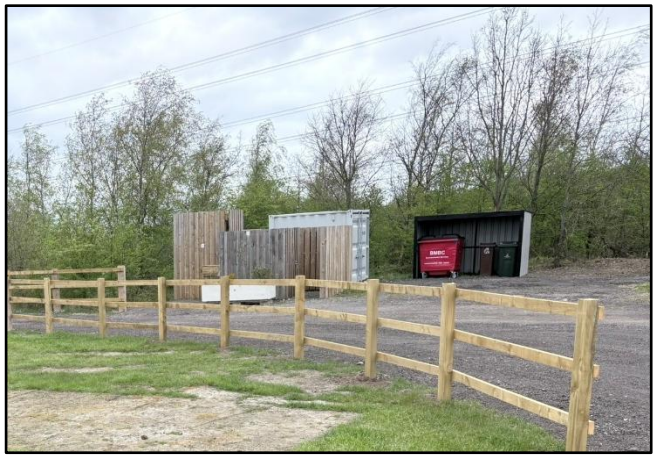


3.4.3.4. Along the north eastern boundary of the other neutral grassland is a dry ditch. The grassland continues along the ditch and its banks. The species composition is similar, with some additional species such as tufted hair grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) and wild carrot (*Daucus carota*). Scrub was also found growing frequently along the ditch, including bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and willow (*Salix* sp.) saplings.



3.4.5. u1b Developed land; sealed surface.

The access track leading up to the holiday park comprises hard standing ground. At the end of this, near the grassland, are some current toilet facilities and bin shelter, shown in the photograph below.



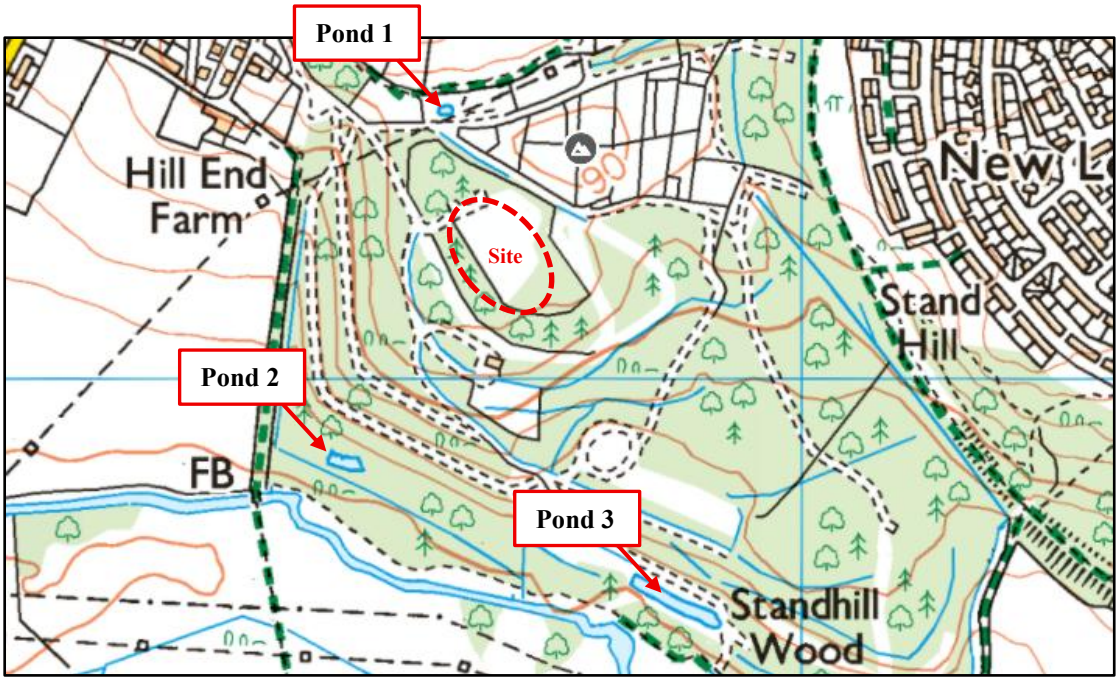
3.5. Description of Fauna.

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

3.5.2. There are no watercourses within the survey area. There is one short section of a ditch, but this was found to be dry with no evidence to suggest that it holds water on any kind of a regular basis and therefore provides no suitable habitat for water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish.

3.5.3. Great Crested Newts.

3.5.3.1. There are three ponds shown on publicly available maps within 500m of the survey area, shown on the pond map overleaf.



3.5.3.2. Pond 1 is located approximately 85m at its closest point from the survey area. This is a small pond, that was assessed as part of the initial planning application for the site and has a Habitat Suitability Index of 0.59, suggesting this has below average suitability for great crested newts. It is a very isolated pond, with no other ponds within 250m and the surrounding habitat is very much disturbed by vehicles, people and horses. The likelihood of great crested newts being present in this pond is low.



3.5.3.3. Pond 2 is located approximately 200m at its closest point from the survey area, but the land slopes steeply up from the pond to the survey area therefore making this distance greater for amphibians to travel. Again, it is an isolated pond with no other ponds within 250m. There is an abundance of woodland and / or scrub habitat between that would make it very unlikely that great crested newts or other amphibians would

commute from the pond to the survey area. There are no records of newts in this pond, but there are records of common toad.

3.5.3.4. Pond 3 is a well stocked commercial fishing pond located approximately 270m from the survey area, but the land slopes steeply up from the pond to the survey area therefore making this distance greater for amphibians to travel. Large fish will easily predate newt efts and eggs, therefore, it is highly unlikely that this pond will support breeding great crested newts.



3.5.3.5. The terrestrial habitats within the survey area are suboptimal for great crested newts as there is no refugia or other opportunities for newts to take refuge in or under.

3.5.3.6. It is therefore assessed that it is highly unlikely that great crested newts are present within the survey area.

3.5.4. There are no buildings within the survey area. There is a small container and welfare facilities, but these are no of a suitable construction for roosting bats to take advantage of.



3.5.5. There are no trees within the survey area therefore there is no potential for roosting bats in trees.

3.5.6. The survey area itself offers moderate potential for foraging and commuting bats. Whilst the grassland habitat is of limited value, it borders scrub that creates sheltered edges that bats may utilise for foraging and commuting, although owing to the size of the survey area this is likely to be limited to very low numbers of bats.

3.5.7. There is limited potential for nesting birds across the survey area. The grassland offers negligible potential due to it being well managed and disturbed. The adjacent scrub habitat offers suitable nesting habitat throughout the nesting bird season.

3.5.8. The survey area offers very limited suitability for reptiles due to the area being well managed and subject to disturbance.

3.5.9. The survey area lies outside of the natural known range of hazel dormouse and red squirrel therefore these species are assessed as absent from the survey area.

3.5.10. The site provides limited suitability for hedgehogs due to a lack of cover and places of shelter, although they may utilise the adjacent scrub habitats and occasionally commute across the site.

3.5.11. No invasive non-native plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) were identified within the survey area.

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4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG) ASSESSMENT.

4.1. Biodiversity calculations have been carried out using the Statutory Metric tool, the current metric at the time of writing this report. The calculations have been completed for habitat units only. There are no linear habitat features on the site.

4.2. Whilst there has been some site clearance since January 2020, this has not resulted in degradation of the biodiversity on the site as the grassland that has regenerated in that area is of the same distinctiveness and in higher condition, therefore has a higher number of biodiversity units afforded to it. For this reason, it is not considered to be habitat degradation and the baseline calculations have been undertaken based on the findings of the survey.

4.3. For clarification, the scrub, prior to clearance, is shown on historic maps to be consistent with the surrounding scrub that still remains. The aerial image below is from 2021, just before the area of scrub was cleared.



4.4. The photograph overleaf shows the remaining scrub around the area that was cleared.



4.5. This scrub comprises predominantly young silver birch (*Betula pendula*) trees and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). These are growing on shallow soils, which does not allow the habitat to develop into anything beyond scrub as the soils cannot support any larger trees.

4.6. A condition assessment has been carried out of the remaining scrub adjacent to the other neutral grassland in the scrub clearing, this has found the scrub to be of poor condition. This is shown overleaf.

4.7. Condition assessments of the existing habitats within the survey area are provided separate to this report. This demonstrates that the grassland that has succeeded in the area of cleared scrub is of moderate condition, with justification for this.

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range).[1] - At least 80% of scrub is native, - There are at least three native woody species[2], - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover (except hazel *Corylus avellana*, common juniper *Juniperus communis*, sea buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* (only in its restricted native range), or box *Buxus sempervirens*, which can be up to 100% cover).	No	Predominantly silver birch and hawthorn.
B	Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran[3]) shrubs are all present.	No	The soils are very shallow which means that it does not allow for a variation in the age range of the scrub and does not allow for scrub to mature.
C	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[4] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[5]) and species indicative of suboptimal condition[6] make up less than 5% of ground cover.	Yes	No such species identified
D	The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.	No	The area in questions borders the modified grassland wihtin the survey area, which is a well mown grassland with camping plots.
E	There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	Yes	The scrub thins out in areas creating these features in the scrub
		Number of criteria passed	

Condition Assessment Result (out of 5 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/✓
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	x

4.8. The baseline area habitat calculations include all habitats that lie within the red line boundary of the site. The habitats baseline on the site was calculated at 1.92 biodiversity units as demonstrated in the tables below.

Habitat Type	Extent (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity units
Other neutral grassland	0.069	Medium	Moderate	0.55
Modified grassland (holiday park)	0.42	Low	Poor	0.84
Developed land; sealed surface	0.25	V.Low	N/A - Other	0.00
Modified grassland (enhancement area)	0.264	Low	Poor	0.53
Total	**1.00**			**1.92**

4.9. The proposals will be to extend the holiday park, including the creation of a more substantial track around the camping plots, and the provision of grassland around the holiday plots that cannot be targeted to anything more than modified grassland in poor condition due to the level of disturbance it will be subject to.

4.10. The remaining area of modified grassland around the holiday park, will be enhanced from modified grassland in poor condition to other neutral grassland in moderate condition. This will be through seeding and appropriate management, as well as protecting the area from disturbance and damaging activities.

4.11. The post development calculations are provided below that reflect the proposals on site.

Habitat Type	Extent (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity units
Retained				
Developed land; sealed surface	0.25	V.Low	N/A - Other	0.00
Enhanced				
Modified grassland enhanced to other neutral grassland	0.264	Low enhanced to moderate	Poor enhanced to moderate	1.64
Created				
Developed land; sealed surface	0.153	V.Low	N/A - Other	0.00
Modified grassland	0.338	Low	Poor	0.65
Total	**1.00**			**2.29**

4.12. This will result in an overall biodiversity net gain of 19.25% in habitat units on the site, and the trading rules will be met. An extract of the final results in provided overleaf.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.37
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	19.25%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

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5. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

5.1. The desktop data search shows that there are no statutory designated sites within 2km and the activities on site do not match any description that would require the LPA to consult with Natural England. Therefore, there will be no impact on any statutory designated.

5.2. There are two Local Wildlife Sites within 1.5km. These are both located sufficient distance from the survey area that there will be no impact on them as a result of the proposed activities on site.

5.3. No badger setts or badger field signs were identified within the survey area and therefore there will be no impact on badgers.

5.4. There are no habitats on the site suitable for water vole, otter or white clawed crayfish. Therefore, the development of the site will have no impact on these species.

5.5. There are three ponds shown on publicly available maps located within 500m of the survey area, although due to the isolated nature of the ponds, the low suitability and / or distance, it is assessed as highly unlikely great crested newts will be present within the survey area. In addition to this, the terrestrial habitats within the survey area are assessed as suboptimal for great crested newt. It is therefore assessed that the proposed works are unlikely to have any impact on great crested newts.

5.6. There are no buildings or structures within the survey area that offer any suitability for roosting bats. Therefore, the proposed works will have no impact on roosting bats.

5.7. There are no trees within the survey area, therefore the proposed works will have no impact on roosting bats in trees.

5.8. The site is assessed to provide moderate value habitat for foraging and commuting bats, although limited to very low numbers. There will be no loss or fragmentation of bat foraging and commuting habitats as a result of the proposed activities on site.

5.9. There is very limited potential for nesting birds within the survey area, although there is potential for birds to nest in the adjacent scrub habitat throughout the nesting bird season, which extends from March to August inclusive each year. Any works

carried out in close proximity to the scrub habitat throughout the nesting season has the potential to impact on any nesting birds present.

5.10. The site is assessed to provide very limited potential for reptiles and it is assessed as highly unlikely that the proposals will have any impact on reptiles.

5.11. The survey area lies outside the natural known rage of hazel dormouse and red squirrel, therefore, the proposed activities on site will have no impact on these species.

5.12. The site provides limited suitability for hedgehog and the proposals are therefore unlikely to have any impact on hedgehogs.

5.14. No invasive non native plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) were identified within the survey area and therefore the proposed works will not cause any such plants to spread into the wild.

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6. RECOMMENDATIONS.

6.1. Where feasible, it is recommended that any physical works on site are carried out outside the nesting bird season to avoid impacting on any nesting birds that may utilise the adjacent scrub habitats. If it is necessary to undertake such works during the nesting season, it is recommended that the works are preceded by a nesting bird survey. In the event that any active nests are found that could be impacted by the proposed works, a suitable buffer around them must be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

6.2. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be an expectation to provide some biodiversity enhancements for fauna species on the site. It is recommended that one bat and one bird box is incorporated onto the site either fixed onto the new amenity block if appropriate or pole mounted boxes around the site. It is also recommended that a bug house is fixed onto a pole, south facing, for solitary bees.

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Prepared by:	
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Checked by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 10th August 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

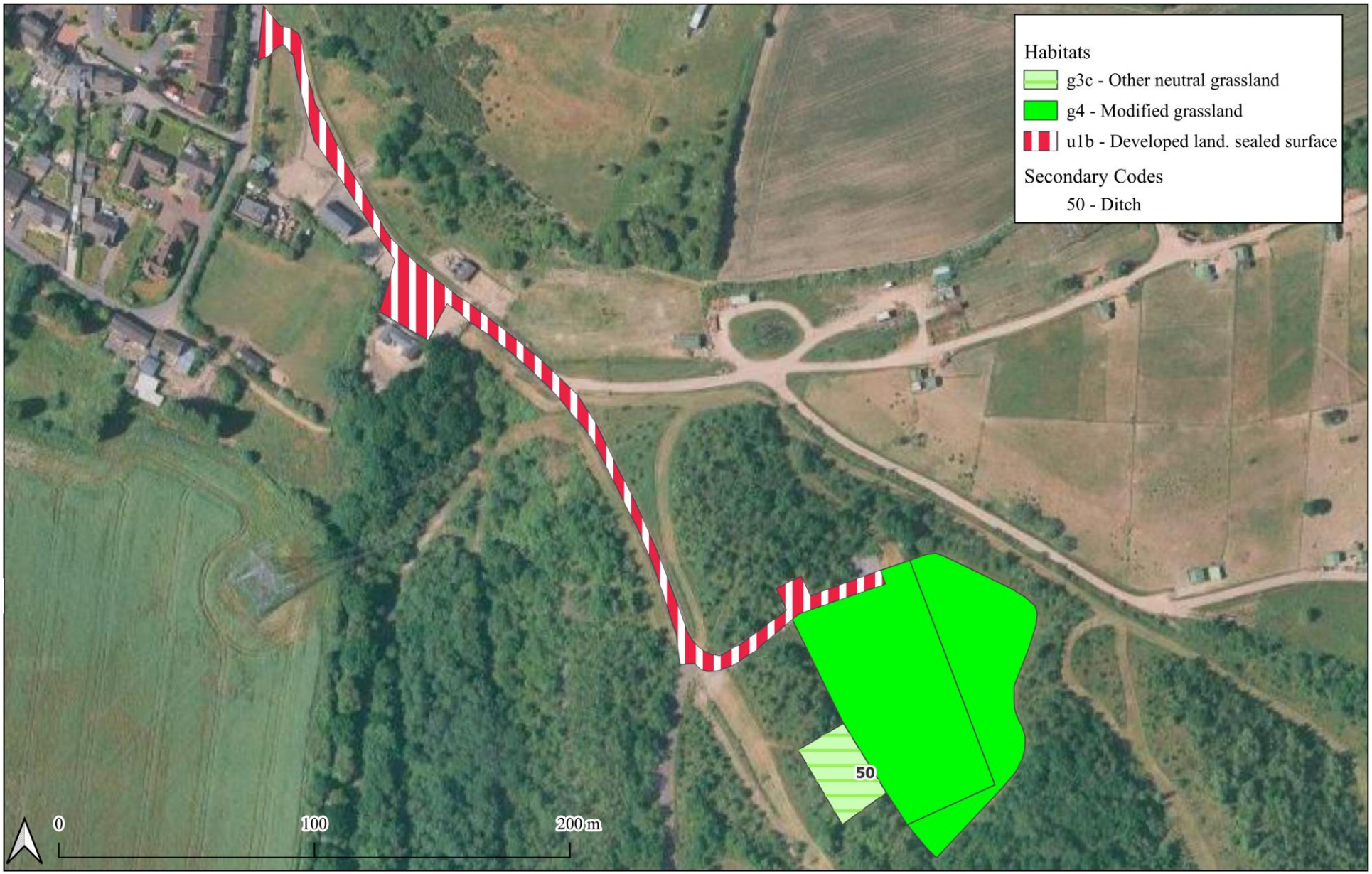
Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

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. BASELINE HABITATS MAP.



Site: Mapplewell Meadows Holiday Park Extension

Reference: 260420

Date: 05.08.2026

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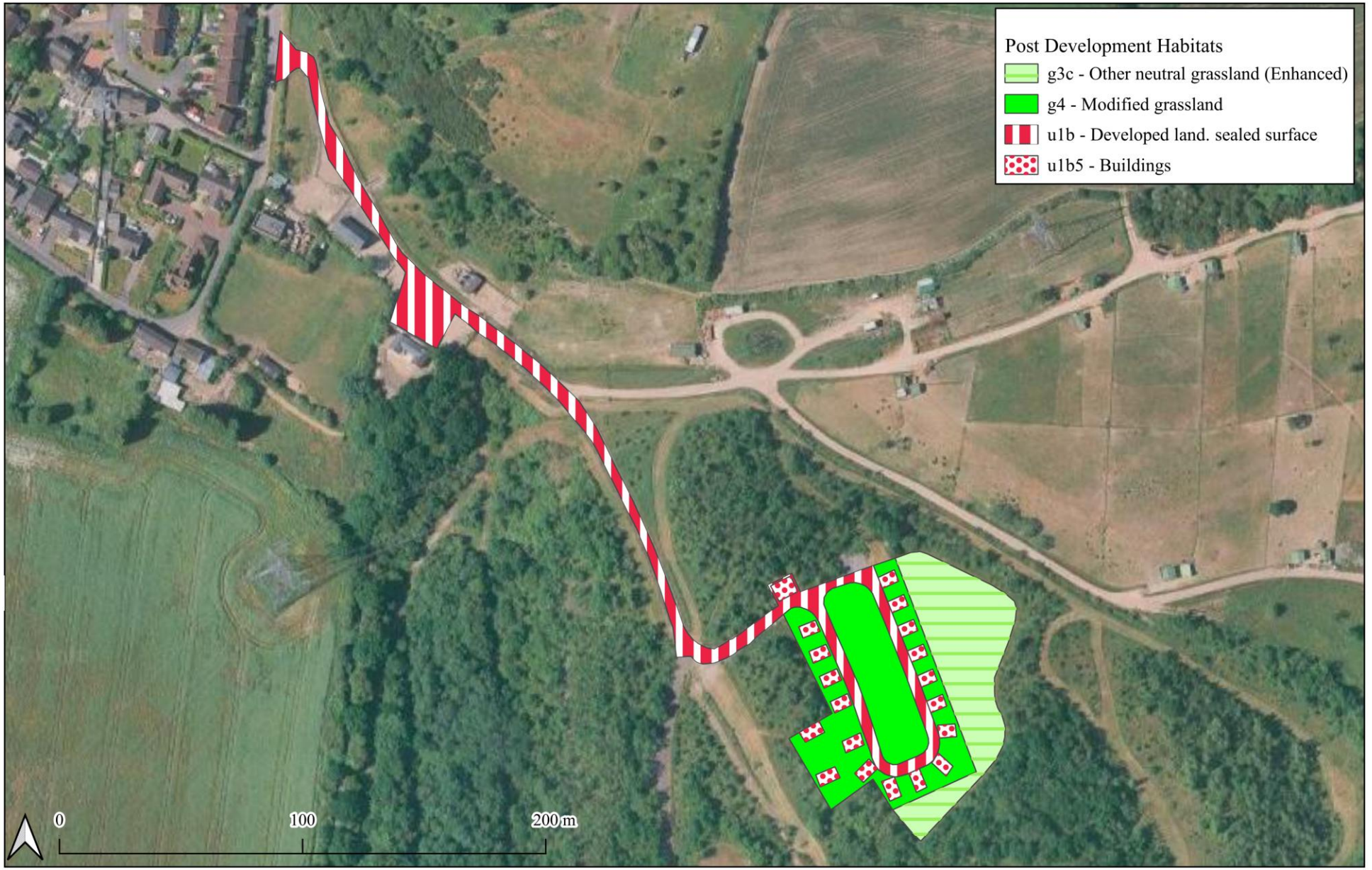
Appendix III. POST DEVELOPMENT HABITATS MAP.



Site: Mapplewell Meadows Holiday Park Extension

Reference: 260420

Date: 05.08.2026

Produced by: Samuel Bentley