



BEACON CLOSE, SILKSTONE COMMON.

OS REF: SE 29269 04578

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: 240828/2.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. A planning application (2024/0676) has been submitted to Barnsley MBC for the construction of a new community hall on the previous site at 6 Beacon Close, Silkstone Common. Barnsley MBC have requested that a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment be prepared in support of that application.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was therefore commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site and to prepare this Biodiversity Net Gain assessment of the site to satisfy this request. This has been undertaken using the Statutory Sites Metric.

1.3. A site visit was carried out on 21st August 2024 to gather all relevant baseline information.

1.4. Since that time, the end use for the site has been amended to the construction of a building for social care providing supported employment. The trees and vegetation present on the site have all been removed.

1.5. The findings of the original survey still stand and this must now be classed to be a degraded site in line with the following BNG guidance.

For a degraded site to be considered under the UK's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policy, the baseline for calculating biodiversity gain is the habitat condition before the degradation or destruction took place, not the current degraded state. If a developer removes habitat, they must account for the loss through the statutory biodiversity metric and deliver the required 10% BNG by enhancing on-site habitats, creating off-site units, or purchasing statutory credits

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

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

2.2. A baseline survey was carried out of the site to establish the baseline biodiversity value of the area. 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.

2.3. The survey area was walked where 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.

2.4. The baseline survey was carried out by Derek Whitcher who has over thirty 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 bats and great crested newts.

Natural England Bat Survey Licence Number	2015-13205-CLS-CLS.
Natural England Great Crested Newt Licence Number	2015-06792-CLS-CLS.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION.

3.1. The Survey Area.

3.1.1. The proposed development is located in an urban location in the village of Silkstone Common. The site has residential areas on all sides with a railway line passing to the north. The location is indicated by the white arrow on the aerial map below.



3.1.2. The aerial map below outlines the survey area, shaded in yellow below. The site is a vacant plot that according to Google Earth historic mapping was occupied by the previous community hall until around 2017. Since that time the plot has remained unused.



3.2. Description of Habitats.

3.2.1. Appendix I of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying baseline habitats of the site. These habitats are: -

- g3c – Other neutral grassland
- h3 – Mixed scrub
- Secondary code 200 - Tree

3.2.2. *g3c – Other neutral grassland.*

3.2.2.1. The site appears to have originally been an area of lawn that has been allowed to run wild since the demise of the previous Community Hall. It has now become very overgrown. Species present include Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), False oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), wood avens (*Geum urbanum*), scattered ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) saplings, scattered alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) saplings, scattered goat willow (*Salix caprea*) saplings, broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), thistle (*Cirsium* sp(p)), dock (*Rumex* sp.), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) and cleavers (*Galium aparine*).



3.2.2.2. The condition assessment for this habitat is shown on the accompanying document entitled Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments. The condition assessment for this habitat is poor with only five criteria satisfied and the essential criteria failed.

3.2.3. h3 – *Mixed scrub.*

3.2.3.1. Across the northern end of the site there is a strip of mixed scrub. Species present include holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), variegated holly (*Ilex aquifolium* 'Argenteo marginata'), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) saplings, a large sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and ivy (*Hedera helix*).

3.2.3.2. The condition assessment for this habitat is shown on the accompanying document entitled Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments. The condition assessment for this habitat is moderate with only three criteria satisfied.

3.2.4. Secondary code: 200 – *individual trees.*

3.2.4.1. There are a number of trees present on the site.

3.2.4.2. At the southern end of the site there are two mature sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) trees.



3.4.2.3. There is another mature sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) at the northern end of the site.

3.4.2.4. The condition assessment for this habitat is shown on the accompanying document entitled Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments. The condition assessment for the three sycamores is good with six of the criteria satisfied.



3.4.2.5. There are also two large conifers on the site, one is a Leyland cypress (*Cupressus leylandii*) and the other a Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*), shown below.



3.4.2.6. The condition assessment for this habitat is shown on the accompanying document entitled Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments. The condition assessment for the two conifers is moderate with four of the criteria satisfied.

4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT.

4.1. Baseline Biodiversity Value.

The below tables demonstrate the baseline units of the red line development area using the Statutory Sites Metric.

Area habitats:

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition	Biodiversity units
Other neutral grassland	0.056	Medium	Poor	0.22
Mixed scrub	0.016	Medium	Moderate	0.13
3 x Individual trees	0.1099	Medium	Good	1.32
2 x Individual trees	0.0326	Medium	Moderate	0.26
Total	0.1762			1.93

4.2. Post Development Habitat Creation.

4.2.1. Since the above survey and report were undertaken, the site has been cleared and all trees removed. Therefore, it will be necessary to provide alternative habitat either by an on-site planting scheme or by purchasing off-site Biodiversity units.

4.2.2. The results table below show that 2.12 BU are required to meet the 10% BNG figure required.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-1.93
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-100.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲	

Area created must match area lost for both onsite and offsite ▲

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	1.93	2.12	2.12
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

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Appendix I. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA PRE DEVELOPMENT.

