CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

THE GUILDHALL, CHIPPING NORTON, OXFORDSHIRE OX7 5NJ

TEL: 01608 642341 Fax: 01608 645206
Email: townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk
Office Hours: Mon – Fri 9am – 1pm

ACTING TOWN CLERK and CEO: Katherine Jang

5th November 2024

SUMMONS TO ATTEND A MEETING OF STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

TO: All Members of the Strategic Planning Committee

VENUE: Council Chamber, Chipping Norton Town Hall

DATE: Monday 11th November 2024

TIME: 6:30pm

Katherine Jang
Acting Town Clerk and CEO

K. Jang

Recording of Meetings
Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography.

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for absence**
   To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

   Committee members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Town Clerk (townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk) prior to the meeting, stating the reason for absence.

2. **Declaration of interests**
   Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct

3. **Minutes**
   a. To approve the minutes of the Committee meeting held on the 16th September 2024.
   b. To note the minutes of the Traffic Advisory Sub-Committee held on the 3rd October 2024.

4. **Public Participation**
   The meeting will adjourn for this item
   Members of the public may speak for a maximum of five minutes each during the period of public participation.

5. **Committee action plan**
   To note committee action plan.

6. **East Chipping Norton Development**
   To receive any updates

7. **Cemetery**

To receive an update report on Worcester Road Cemetery and the Closed Churchyard at St Mary the Virgin Church.

8. **Pool Meadow restoration project**
   To receive an update from Beaumont Rivers.

9. **Climate and Ecology Emergency**
   a. To receive a proposal from Cllr Festa regarding the establishment of a Climate and Ecology working group.
   b. To receive an update on Town Council initiatives such as the Living Moss Filter.

10. **Committee Budget 2025/26**
    To receive a report from the Responsible Finance Officer and agree committee spending priorities for 2025/26 to help inform the overall budget.

11. **Planning Applications**
    To receive a schedule of planning application from West Oxfordshire District Council

12. **Date of Next Meeting** – Monday 27th January 2025

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Minutes of a Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on Monday the 16th September 2024 at 6:30pm, in the Council Chamber, Chipping Norton Town Hall

Present: Cllrs Mike Cahill (Chair), Jo Graves, Sharon Wheaton, Ian Finney, Tom Festa, Alex Keyser, Dom Rickard, Sandra Coleman

Also present:
Katherine Jang, Deputy Town Clerk and Estates Manager
1 Member of the public

SPC15	**Apologies for absence** Apologies were received from Cllr Walker
SPC16	**Declaration of interests** None received
SPC17	**Minutes** a. **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the committee meeting held on the 1st July 2024 were signed by the chair as an accurate record. b. Members noted the minutes of the Cycling Action on the 15th July 2024. c. Members noted the minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee meeting on the 14th August 2024.
SPC18	**Public Participation** None received
SPC19	**Committee Action Plan** Members received and received the committee action plan for the municipal year 2024/25.
SPC20	**East Chipping Norton Development** No updates received
SPC21	**Cemetery** Members received a written report from the Deputy Clerk noting ongoing maintenance at Worcester Road Cemetery and the Closed Churchyard at St Mary the Virgin Church.
SPC22	**Pool Meadow restoration project** No updates received. Members agreed to bring this item to the next relevant meeting to discuss.
SPC23	**Living Moss Filter** No updates received. Members expressed disappointment that no communication had been received thus far from OCC.

	Members discussed and raised disappointment with the pollution monitoring update received from the WODC Executive meeting held on the 11th September 2024, which purported decreasing levels after the COVID pandemic. Councillors were skeptical about this as they noted that Horsefair shops are inundated with dust and particulate matter from passing vehicle traffic. Members discussed the proposed alternative location for the Moss Air Filter, and Cllr Festa stressed that the Air Filter should be located directly where the air quality monitor was located to target the area in Chipping Norton with the highest recorded rates of air pollution. Cllr Wheaton shared a verbal report on the Shopwatch initiative. The latest initiative includes radios connecting shopkeepers in town and the police person on shift, funded by the Shopwatch initiative. The new PCSO has been appointed for Chipping Norton and has been getting to know the town. The shops have given extremely positive feedback about the Shopwatch initiative, and members thanked Cllr Wheaton and Cahill for their work in putting this in place.
SPC24	**Rusty Riders Initiative** Members received an update from Cllr Festa. The sessions have remained well attended and the rides have become longer, now ending at a café. Cllr Festa reported that October's session will be the last session for the year, with a break over the winter months to reopen in the Spring.
SPC25	**Middle Row Trees** The Chair thanked Cllr Keyser's work with tidying up Spring Street, Market Street and areas close to the Guildhall with the volunteer group. Members received a report from the Town Clerk regarding the tree health of the Chestnut tree on Middle Row closest to the Guildhall. The Town Council's arboriculturists have noted that this tree has a dense amount of deadwood in the crown and rot penetrating into the heart of the tree, making the tree dangerous and recommending removal. Members noted that the roots of the tree should be considered prior to planting another tree to replace it within close proximity. Cllr Coleman proposed that a quote is brought to the next relevant meeting for a replacement tree planting. All members in agreement that the tree work costs at £950 + VAT is taken from the contingency fund. **RESOLVED:** That the chestnut tree on Middle Row is felled at a cost of £950 + VAT, and that a quote to replace this tree with a suitable species is brought to a future meeting.
SPC26	**Chipping Norton Markets Consultation** Members discussed the challenges facing the Chipping Norton Markets. Some specific challenges mentioned included vehicles being in close proximity to the stalls, the dwindling number and variety of stall holders, and the timing of the

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	markets during a weekday which makes it difficult for those with full-time jobs to attend. The Chair requested that members complete the WODC Chipping Norton Markets Consultation survey, which is open to responses until the 30th Sept 2024.
SPC27	**Draft Community Infrastructure (CIL) Charging Schedule** Members agreed to delegate the response on the consultation from West Oxfordshire District Council on the draft CIL charging schedule to Cllr Cahill and the Deputy Clerk. Subject: Response to Draft Community Infrastructure (CIL) Charging Schedule Chipping Norton Town Council is writing in response to the Draft Community Infrastructure (CIL) Charging Schedule. In principle, Councillors are supportive of the CIL in conjunction with S106 funding, recognizing that each serves different but complementary purposes in funding local infrastructure. However, the following points are raised for clarification and consideration: 1. **Definition of "Commencement"** In paragraph 5.1, it states, “CIL payments must be made within 60 days of the commencement of any chargeable development.” Councillors would like clarification on the definition of "commencement," as it appears ambiguous. The Town Council is particularly concerned given the experience with the Old Hospital site, where the development has lingered in an unfinished and deteriorating state for years. Councillors believe that clearer wording or criteria for "commencement" could help encourage developers to begin work more promptly, especially if payments are required at an earlier stage. 2. **Definition of Terms in Section 3.5** Councillors seek clarification on the definition of “Large format stores” and “all other non-residential development.” There is concern that certain lucrative businesses, such as veterinary practices, may be nil rated under the current definitions despite being quite profitable. The Town Council suggests reviewing these categories to ensure fairness and consistency in the application of the charges. 3. **Allocation and Transparency of CIL Funding** Chipping Norton Town Council would appreciate further detail on how the 75% of CIL funds, which is not allocated to the Town Council, will be spent. Additionally, Councillors request more transparency regarding how CIL funding is being allocated and suggest that regular reports be provided to the Town Council. 4. **Section 6.4 Discrepancies** The Town Council notes that the figures provided in Section 6.4 do not add up to 100%. Could you please review and correct this section to ensure clarity and accuracy? Chipping Norton Town Council appreciates your attention to these matters and looks forward to your response. It is important that the CIL charging schedule is implemented fairly and transparently to ensure it delivers the maximum benefit to our community.

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SPC28	**Planning Applications** 1. **APPLICATION NO:** 24/02124/HHD **PROPOSAL:** Proposed garage conversion to single-storey rear extension **LOCATION:** 1 The Green, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire RESOLVED: No comment, no objection 2. **APPLICATION NO:** 24/02237/HHD **PROPOSAL:** Replacement windows and front door **LOCATION:** 44 New Street, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire RESOLVED: Support, the alteration to restore the character to the house is welcomed. 3. **APPLICATION NO:** 24/02168/FUL **LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION No:** 24/02169/LBC **PROPOSAL:** Construction of an external staircase, increase in the depth of a proposed lightwell, elevation repairs to No. 1-4 Hitchman Mews, the re-roofing of No. 2-3 Hitchman Mews and fabric alterations to the basement of No. **LOCATION:** Hitchman Mews, Albion Street, Chipping Norton RESOLVED: No objection, no comment
SPC29	**Date of Next Meeting** Monday 11th November 2024

The Chair closed the meeting at 7:40pm.

Signed as an accurate record.....

Date.....

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MINUTES OF A TRAFFIC ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THE 3rd OCTOBER 2024, ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS AT 2PM

PRESENT: Cllrs Steve Akers (Chair), Sandra Coleman, Alex Keyser.

ALSO PRESENT:
Luci Ashbourne, Town Clerk
Nigel Rose, Representative for Chippy News
Cllr Geoff Saul, OCC and WODC
Natalie Moore, OCC
Odele Parsons, OCC

TAC13	**Opening words** The Chair noted that this meeting would be the last one that the current Town Clerk and CEO would attend due to the fact she is leaving in November. Members thanked the Town Clerk for her work on the committee and wished her the best for her new role.
TAC14	**Apologies for absence** Apologies were received from Cllr Jo Graves, Cllr Tom Festa, Cllr Walker, Maria Wheatley (WODC), Lee Turner and James Wright (OCC). Members noted that Mike Dixon has resigned from the sub-committee as the bus users rep and noted thanks for his work on the committee over the past few years.
TAC15	**Declarations of Interest** There were no declarations
TAC16	**Minutes** a. **RESOLVED:** That pending correction of three grammatical errors the minutes from the sub-committee meeting held on the 27th June 2024 will be signed as an accurate record by the Chair at the earliest convenience. b. Members noted the minutes of the Cycling Action Group meeting held on the 15th July 2024.
TAC16	**Public Participation** None received
TAC17	**Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)** Natalie Moore (OCC) noted that she is working on network for walking and the cycling scheme. A number of site visits have taken place in Chipping Norton to help shape these schemes. A draft LWCIP should be ready for public consultation in early January. Officers will keep members of TAC appraised as things progress with this. Cllr Akers asked about the 4-6 week consultation time, and time for Cabinet approval and enquired about time for completion. Officers confirmed that the document should be presented to Cabinet for Approval in April.

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TAC18	**County Officer's Report** Cllr Sandra Coleman asked if the traffic cameras in town were part of this scheme. Officers and Cllr Geoff Saul confirmed that they're HGV monitoring cameras for the Windrush Valley study area and will be in place for two days. Cllr Coleman also asked if there is any need for extra support re the anti social behaviour reported in back alley in the report. Officers confirmed that the reports are of general anti social behaviour and not specific incidences. Members and officers discussed the New Street/High Street/West Street Options Appraisal. Cllr Akers enquired as to whether there is a recommendation regarding a specific option. Officers confirmed that the consultants are assessing each scheme under the designated criteria and that while it is looking likely that recommendation will be option 2b, it will be a few weeks before this is final. Odele Parsons presented an overview of option 2b which includes: • Installing zebra crossings • Remove central refuge at the top of New Street and widen the one further down • Widen the footway • Built out curb line to slow vehicles down turning into west street • Vegetation cut back to improve visibility • Remove left turn on West Street The Chair asked members to feedback and ask questions. Cllr Alex Keyser enquired as to whether the access from the new street car park would be dangerous for pedestrians. Cllr Alex Keyser also noted that a full one way system would address the issue more comprehensively and noted that the road markings are worn out and there are no markings the let drivers know who has priority at the top of New Street, and also that he would support pelican crossings instead of zebra crossings. The Chair noted that the Guildhall staff have written to OCC re the road markings and have not heard back. Officers confirmed they will chase this up. Cllr Geoff Saul asked if there is room for a small path between the town hall and the pelican crossing. Cllr Saul also noted that while he supports Cllr Keyser's comments that it is important to focus on this junction. Nigel Rose raised the point that when the MOP fair was there was a near miss with a HGV an several pedestrians at that junction because there is not enough space for the HGV to swing round without the rear of the HGV mounting the pavement. Officers noted this and will feedback to the consultants. The Chair noted the proposal of one lane in one direction and how helpful that will be for safety reasons.

	The Chair asked if there was time line for next steps with this proposal. Officers confirmed that this is the concept design stage, then a feasibility design will take place. After that a preliminary design will take place, the a consultation before final detailed design for engineers. Cllr Sandra Coleman noted support for many aspects but is concerned that taking out a lane may increase the traffic coming up West Street and that the zebra crossing being further away from the top of the junction may mean drivers and pedestrians take more risks than they currently do. Officers confirmed there are physical conditions that mean the crossing cannot be where the current central refuge is. Cllr Alex Keyser noted that he works in an industry with HGVs and confirmed that building up the footways may make the HGV swing more exaggerated and agreed that the zebra crossing may be less safe than a pelican crossing. Officers confirmed that the positioning of the zebra crossing is designed so that motor vehicles can see it, that funding is a consideration and that zebra crossings promote the 20mph scheme. Cllr Alex Keyser noted that he has witnessed motorists ignoring zebra crossings and feels that lights are respected by drivers more. Officers confirmed that safety assessments will be carried out on any proposed action. Cllr Geoff Saul noted that the proposals are all pro pedestrian safety and not about traffic management. He asked if removing the central refuge at the top will help HGVs navigate the turn easier. Officers confirmed that this could be helpful indeed. Cllr Sandra Coleman asked about trees being taken down on the Leys and if any will be replacing them. OCC Officers confirmed that trees are generally replaced, but they will put members in touch with the tree team at OCC.
TAC19	**District Officer's Report** No written reports were received.
TAC20	**Update from Cllr Saul on OCC Highways matters including the HGV working group** Members received a progress report from Cllr Saul. Cllr Saul confirmed that data collection is being carried out for the Windrush Valley HGV study area. Once this is complete it will take ten weeks to collate data into results. Officers confirmed that a steering group will take place in the first half of 2025 to discuss the outcomes. Cllr Geoff Saul noted that a resident has asked if there is going to be a review of the 20mph scheme and asked if officers could investigate if this will be happening and if so what that will look like.

	Cllr Saul also noted that he has had reports of vehicles speeding from Salford into Chipping Norton into the Worcester Road and wondered if a speed indicator device could be put up, but noted that these devices aren't usually installed in national and 50mph speed zones. Officers confirmed they will consult the safety team and come back with information about this.
TAC21	**Cycling** The Town Clerk noted that the Rusty Riders initiative has been paused now until March 2025.
TAC22	**Pedestrian and Road Safety** Members received a data analyses report from the speed indicator device (SID) on Churchill Road. The report shows that the average incoming speed is 25.84mph, with the average outgoing speed at 31.59mph. The Chair noted that the SID has improved the speed at which traffic is entering the town. The Chair also noted that there is now an active Speedwatch team that work within Churchill Road. Members noted thanks to Cllr Geoff Saul for the funding.
TAC 23	**Parking** No updates have been received from WODC re car parks. Cllr Sandra Coleman noted that when the Town Council close the road outside the Town Hall for community events that a levy has now been placed on road closures with parking spaces which means a cost circa £1000 per event and that this feels unreasonable and costly, and is a policy that works for roads in general but not for areas where "off road parking" is more like a large car park. Cllr Geoff Saul confirmed he will look into it and report back. Cllr Keyser left the meeting at 3:31pm
TAC24	**Air Quality** The West Oxfordshire Air Quality Action Plan have been approved by cabinet. Cllr Saul confirmed that many of the action points lie with other authorities. The levels at the moment are below the national thresholds, and if they stay at that rate for three years then there will be no need for an air quality action plan. The reason for the improvement seems to be largely due to modern less-polluting diesel vehicles. Members noted that the improvement in air quality is welcome. The Chair noted that the Town Council has been considering installing a living moss air filter and enquired as to whether that formed part of the action plan. Cllr Saul confirmed that it does contain that as am aspiration but that it would be unlikely to receive any grant funding due to the safe levels now being reported.

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	The Chair noted that the Council are running events in town for Road Safety Week which runs 17th-23rd November and invited County Officer along.
TAC25	**Date of the next meeting** Thursday 16th January 2025, 2pm via TEAMs.

The Chair closed the meeting at 3:39pm

Agenda item 5 – Committee action plan

For committee to review for the new municipal year

Action	Whose involved?	Budget	Commencement	Completion	Notes/Comment
Undertake an audit and needs assessment of sports provision across the Town and then feed this into WODC's planning needs assessment	CNTC/ Staff / Clubs/ Associations/WODC	N/A	Sep-21	Ongoing	WODC's sports and pitch provision strategy has been approved and is in the public domain. Jan 2022. Exec member for stronger, healthy communities is now Chipping Norton Ward member Cllr Rachel Crouch.
Promote active travel and transport in the Town	CNTC/Transition CN/Working group/TAC		Ongoing	Ongoing	LCWIP in progress. A Cycling Action group has been established by the Traffic Advisory Sub-Ctte. Rusty Riders initiative runs first Sat of each month (Winter break)
Delivering the East Chipping Norton Development Vision Statement	CNTC/OCC/WODC//working group/Community First		Ongoing	Ongoing	Part of the ECN site is registered as an ancient scheduled monument. This has been appealed. The outcome of this appeal will be decided by Historic England in due course. The Chipping Norton Community Land Trust has been set up as a formal group independent of the Town Council.
Restoring the town's municipal and memorial benches	CNTC staff/contractors	£500 from Street Furniture budget	July 24	March 25	The metal benches in town are now part of the works schedule. TBC this year.
Reducing HGV's in the town centre	CNTC/OCC/TAC/working group	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	Working with OCC to help identify safer HGV routes.
Pedestrian and Road Safety	CNTC/OCC/TAC	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	OCC consultation on London Road/New Street junction commenced June 2024. Proposed improvements for Albion Street junction have been approved and should be installed this year. SID for Churchill Road is installed and operational.
Improving access and biodiversity at Pool meadow Large Project	CNTC/Approved consultants	24/25 EMR £25,000	2020	Sept 25	Feasibility study complete. Awaiting final reports to support the planning application.
Improving access, information and biodiversity in Chipping Norton Cemetery	CNTC/Contractors	£4000 from repairs and maintenance budget	Ongoing	Ongoing	New regulations approved. New noticeboard has been installed. Second stage memorial safety testing complete - safety works complete. Awaiting final section safety testing. Wildflower meadow complete. Yellow rattle growing well. Traditional Wildflower mix has been sewn to enhance the wildflower area.

Encouraging cycling and active travel: Rusty Riders Initiative	CNTC/Community/OCC	n/a	March 2024	Ongoing	The Rusty Riders cycling clinics take place on the first Saturday of each month (weather depending) and will encourage people to bring their bikes to be checked using the public bike repair station at the leisure centre; to receive proficiency training and to take part in a group ride. This initiative is going well.
Improving Air Quality: Living Moss Filter Clean Air Day	CNTC/WODC	Needs to be identified	Sept 2023	TBC	Council are working through a proposal to install a living moss filter in Chipping Norton to improve air quality. An update to be received at this meeting (11th November 24). The Council promotes clean air initiatives as part of the clean air day campaign https://www.actionforcleanair.org.uk/campaigns/clean-air-day
CCTV for Chipping Norton	CNTC/WODC/TVP	TBC	June 2024	June 2025	WODC and TVP plan to upgrade the CCTV across West Oxfordshire. This includes planned installation of five cameras in Chipping Norton at key locations designed to prevent crime.
Community Safety and supporting local businesses	CNTC/TVP	n/a	May 2024	Ongoing	Cllr Sharon Wheaton has been approved by Council as the CNTC/TVP liaison in order to meet and share information about local crime and community safety.
Town Centre flower beds	CNTC/WODC/OCC	TBD	May 2024	May 2026	The Town Council own the beds along Middle Row and by the Town Hall. A budget should be set aside beyond the scope of the current GM contract which includes only minimal maintenance. WODC own the other beds and there may be opportunities for CNTC to take them on with permission. For Committee to consider and agree before a conversation is initiated with WODC

Item 7: Cemetery Report

Worcester Road Cemetery:

No major updates to note for this meeting. Pest control continues regularly and will have a separate budget code for FY 2025/26.

St Mary the Virgin Closed Churchyard Incident Update

On Wednesday, October 23, at 3:00 p.m., the (Acting) Town Clerk received a notification from the grounds maintenance contractors that their equipment had become lodged in a hole that had suddenly opened in the Closed Churchyard. Upon visiting the site immediately, it was evident that the hole was substantial and required urgent safety measures.

Our primary goal is to ensure the safety of the site while managing costs effectively.

Incident Timeline:

- Wednesday, October 23
    - 3:00 p.m.: Grounds maintenance contractors report a large hole in the Closed Churchyard.
    - 4:00 p.m.: Town Clerk conducts an initial assessment on-site.
    - 4:30-5:00 p.m.: Town Clerk and the outgoing Town Clerk arrange for Heras fencing to secure the area.
    - 6:00 p.m.: Site is fully enclosed and secured.

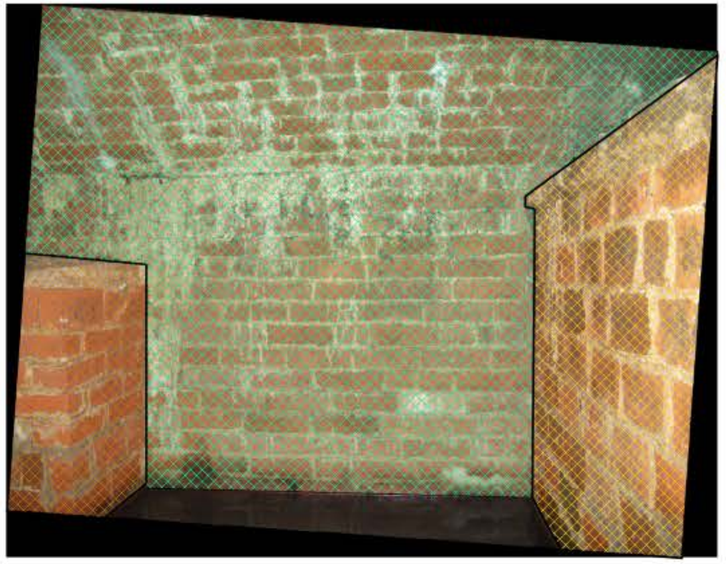
- Thursday, October 24
    - 8:00 a.m.: Structural engineer visits the site for an assessment.
    - 12:00 p.m.: Heras fencing is expanded per structural engineer's guidance; additional signage is posted.
    - Town Clerk briefs the Oxfordshire Diocese and St Mary's Church on the situation. The Diocese's approval is required for any intervention, and the approval process has begun.

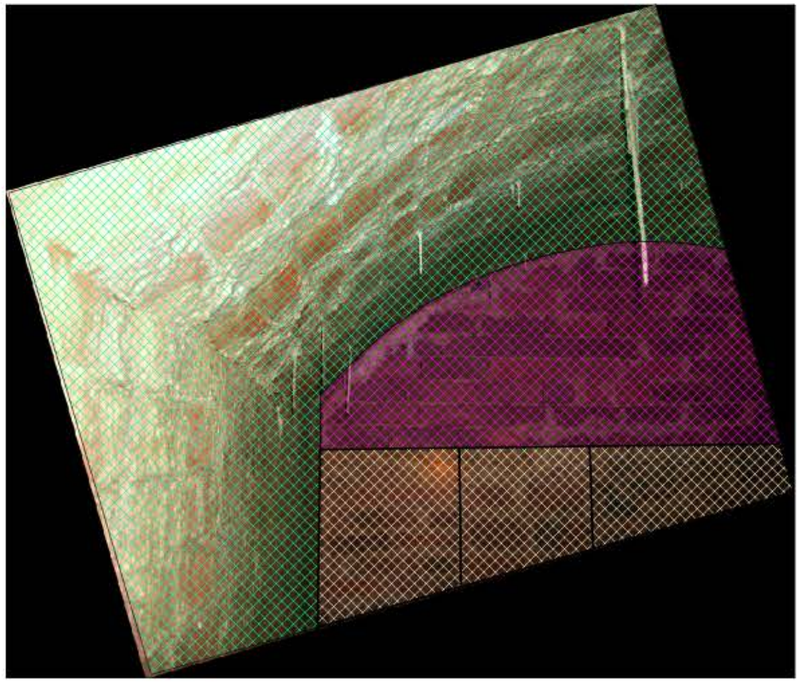
- Wednesday, October 30
    - Town Clerk and TigerGeo conduct a site survey. TigerGeo captures internal photographs of the structure (see next page for structural details).

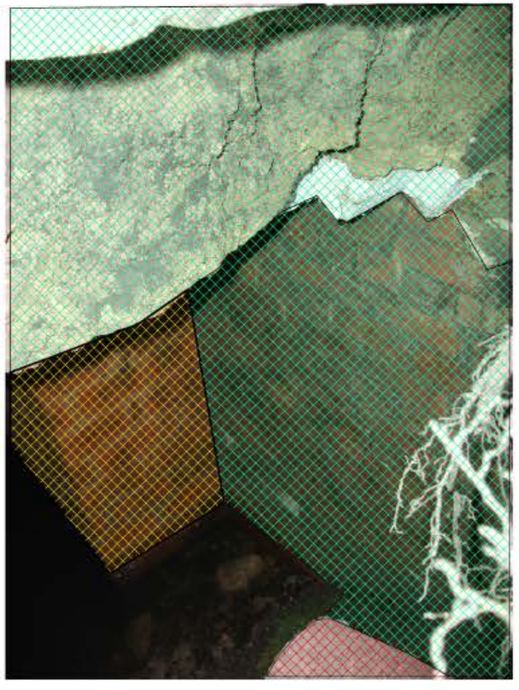
Next Steps:

- Town Clerk: Will continue to coordinate with TigerGeo and structural engineers to assess additional survey needs before beginning mitigation work. An underground camera inspection may be required before the Diocese grants permission.
- Town Clerk: Will seek funding options once estimates for the mitigation work are obtained.
- John Marshall, Faculty Member: Will work with the Oxfordshire Diocese to secure necessary permissions for the mitigation work.

This report is to note only.







Vault construction

Side of Beck vault

Southern grave stack

South wall of steps

Capping stones over steps

Eastern grave stack

Northern blocking

Northern graves end on

Northern grave stack

TIGERGEO

Item 8: Pool Meadow Restoration Project

Beaumont Rivers has given the Town Clerk a short update on the progress for the Pool Meadow Restoration project. The flow control structures have now been designed by an engineer and are ready to be submitted for relevant permitting. Beaumont Rivers has also received the relevant findings from the external Biodiversity Net Gain study, which has determined that no additional habitat, hedgerow or watercourse units are required to meet the targets.

Please find the full Ecological Impact Assessment report following this update. The project is anticipated to result in a **biodiversity net gain of 10.16% for area habitats and 4.83% for watercourses**. Improved wetland conditions are expected to increase habitat quality for various species, especially invertebrates, amphibians, and birds.

Next steps:

- Beaumont Rivers will be applying for all relevant permits on/around Friday 15th November 2024.
- The final design for the footpath needs to be drawn up on CAD. Beaumont Rivers to send the final footpath design for committee approval once finished.

This report is to note only.

BSG | ecology

Pool Meadow Restoration Project

Ecological Impact Assessment

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BSG | ecology

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Client	Chipping Norton Town Council
Project	Pool Meadow Restoration
Version	FINAL
Project number	P24-027 Pool Meadow Restoration

	Name	**Position**	**Date**
Originated	Kai Hayes	Ecologist	04 July 2024
Reviewed	Tom Flynn	Principal Ecologist	22 July 2024
Approved for issue to client	Tom Flynn	Principal Ecologist	07 September 2024
Issued to client	Tom Flynn	Principal Ecologist	07 September 2024

Contents

1 Summary

1.1 BSG Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Beaumont Rivers on behalf of Chipping Norton Town Council in February 2024 to carry out an Ecological Impact Assessment for a habitat restoration project at Pool Meadow, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. This report sets out the methods and results of this assessment. It is based on a desk study, an extended habitat survey and a watercourse condition assessment. It includes a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. This report builds on a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal produced in 2023 (Lucas, 2023).

1.2 Pool Meadow is approximately 0.5 km northwest of Chipping Norton town Centre, at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 30927 27936. It is a narrow plot of low-lying damp land adjacent to a small stream, ca. 1 ha in extent, dominated by herbaceous vegetation, particularly great horsetail *Equisetum telmateia.*

1.3 Habitats at the site are dominated by low-lying swamp and scrub adjacent to a stream at the base of a shallow valley. It is the site of the former Victorian reservoir pond. The current landscape has likely resulted from gradual infilling of the pond through the deposition of river silt and the build-up of organic matter from the growth of vegetation.

1.4 Pool Meadow is proposed, by Chipping Norton Town Council, for ecological restoration via re-wetting: a nature-based solution to flood risk mitigation that has been developed by Jonny Ackroyd of Beaumont Rivers. This will involve the restoration of an inflow weir in the stream towards the upstream end of the Site, and an overflow into the stream at the downstream end. The project will also involve in-channel enhancements to the stream in the reach adjacent to Pool Meadow via the installation of leaky dams, constructed of natural timbers. Paths at the site will be resurfaced.

1.5 This report was produced by Kai Hayes, Ecologist at BSG Ecology, and Tom Flynn, Principal Ecologist BSG Ecology. There were no significant limitations to this assessment.

1.6 A habitat survey of the site, carried out in May 2024, found it to be dominated by fen habitat. This is in poor condition, due primarily to the lack of a year-round high water-table. The site also supports woodland, and tall forb vegetation. It is bordered on the northwest by a stream and has various paths. The fen is dominated by the competitive species great horsetail, great willowherb and common nettle, likely indicating high soil nutrient levels, and consistent with the wetland origins of the soil. The site provides habitat likely to be of value at the local level for bats, birds, amphibians, invertebrates and reptiles. Hedgehog could be present. Badgers, roosting bats, great crested newts, otter and water vole are unlikely to be present or affected by the proposed works. However, precautionary measures to be adopted during construction are set out to ensure legal compliance.

1.7 The key benefit of the proposed works would be to enhance the ecological condition of the fen habitat from poor to moderate condition through rewetting. The works will achieve biodiversity net gain for area habitats and watercourses, will reconnect pool meadow and the adjacent stream, and will provide additional benefits to bats, birds, amphibians, and reptiles, and to invertebrates such as dragonflies. Plant diversity is likely to increase at the site, but no major change in vegetation or habitat type is proposed, expected, or feasible at the site, given the soil conditions.

1.8 This approach supersedes a previous proposal: to attempt to replace the existing vegetation with meadow via herbicide treatment. Given the hydrological and soil conditions, and the wetland habitat on and adjacent to the site, this former approach is not recommended.

1.9 If the recommendations of this report are fully implemented, the proposed works are not likely to have any significant adverse ecological impacts and are likely to significantly enhance the ecological and biodiversity value of Pool Meadow as a wetland site. Additional ecological enhancement measures are recommended, comprising: supplementary planting with native species, habitat pile creation, and the installation of bat and bird boxes.

2 Introduction

Background to commission

2.1 BSG Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Beaumont Rivers on behalf of Chipping Norton Town Council in February 2024 to carry out an Ecological Impact Assessment for a habitat restoration project at Pool Meadow, Chipping Norton.

2.2 This report sets out the methods and results of this assessment. It identifies ecological impacts and makes recommendations on appropriate mitigation measures to address these impacts. This report is based on a desk study, an extended habitat survey and a watercourse condition assessment. It includes a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and shows how the habitat restoration project will achieve a biodiversity net gain.

2.3 This report builds on a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the proposed project, produced by Frank Lucas in March 2023 (Lucas, 2023).

Site description

2.4 Pool Meadow (also referred to here as the 'site' and the 'meadow') is situated at the end of a track leading from Church Lane, off Spring Street, in the town of Chipping Norton in West Oxfordshire District. It is approximately 0.5 km northwest of the town centre, at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 30927 27936.

2.5 Pool Meadow is a narrow plot of low-lying damp land adjacent to a small stream, ca. 1 ha in extent, dominated by herbaceous vegetation, particularly great horsetail *Equisetum telmateia*. There is broadleaved woodland, dominated by sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, at its northern end and on its boundaries.

2.6 Soils in the river valley are dominated by clay, with a mix of clay, loamy, and shallow limestone soils in the wider area (Soilscapes, 2024). The underlying geology is Cotswold limestone, visible in parts of the stream. A species-rich flush to the north-west of the stream shows the high calcium content of local groundwater through the presence of tufa deposits.

2.7 Pool Meadow is owned by Chipping Norton Town Council, open to the public, and has a footpath around its perimeter. The footpath connects to the public right of way along Church Lane to the north, and to paths connecting to Chipping Norton Playing Field at the east and continuing down the river valley at the southwest.

2.8 The stream that forms the northwestern boundary of Pool Meadow is shallow with a stony base and set within sycamore woodland. It originates near Great Rollright, to the north of Chipping Norton, and flows southwest, joining the River Evenlode near Bledington. Beyond the site to the northeast is a pasture field which lies at the foot of Chipping Norton Castle, the site of a motte and bailey castle. To the northwest is a species-rich grassland meadow with a flush and associated wetland which feed into the stream. To the southwest there is rough pasture and woodland along the river valley, and to the east is a mature wooded residential garden.

2.9 All of Pool Meadow forms part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument called *Chipping Norton motte and bailey castle and fishpond*. Pool Meadow itself is the site of a former pond, likely to be a Victorian reservoir used to store water and regulate the water flow to Bliss Mill, a former cloth mill located ca. 1 km downstream on the southwestern edge of Chipping Norton.

2.10 The pond was created by damming the shallow river valley, and water levels were likely regulated by inflow and outflow structures, evidenced by some remaining brickwork on sections of the stream. A medieval fishpond is likely to have been located further up the valley, north of Pool Meadow, rather than at Pool Madow itself, but this is not certain.

2.11 The current landscape at Pool Meadow has likely resulted from gradual infilling of the pond through the deposition of river silt and the build-up of organic matter from the growth of shallow water and marginal vegetation since Victorian times. The inflow and outflow structures have also been lost and Pool Meadow is currently disconnected from the adjacent stream by an embanked path which runs along the northwestern boundary. The meadow has variable water levels but only consistent standing water in small areas in its southwestern-most corner. The soils within the meadow appear peaty, consistent with infilling by organic matter and the wet conditions, and are likely to be rich in plant nutrients, consistent with the dominance of great horsetail and the abundance of common nettle *Urtica dioica* and great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum.*

2.12 The site is subject to management activities by the Chipping Norton Green Gym, arranged through the Town Council. Activities include removal of the invasive plant Himalayan balsam *Impatiens balsamifera,* path maintenance, and vegetation management. Cleared vegetation is, or was, sometimes burned at a location in the northeast of the site.

Description of project

2.13 Pool Meadow is proposed, by Chipping Norton Town Council, for ecological restoration via re-wetting: a nature-based solution to flood risk mitigation that has been developed by Jonny Ackroyd of Beaumont Rivers. This will involve the restoration of an inflow weir (ca 0.8 m deep) in the stream towards the upstream end of the site, and an overflow into the stream at the downstream end.

2.14 The project will result in increased and more stable water levels and a greater area of open water at the site. In addition to enhancing downstream water quality, reducing downstream flooding, and helping to stabilise water in the adjacent stream, this project has the potential to enhance the ecological value of Pool Meadow by improving the condition and variety of the habitats present.

2.15 The project will also involve in-channel enhancements to the stream in the reach adjacent to Pool Meadow via the installation of leaky dams, constructed of natural timbers. These will improve the habitat quality and diversity of the stream through diversifying bed and flow conditions and through maintaining areas of water for longer during conditions of low flow. They will increase the permanent water storage capacity of the river, and temporary water storage capacity after heavy rainfall, thereby reducing the potential for downstream flooding.

2.16 The project will also involve the restoration and resurfacing of footpaths at the site, which become muddy and impassable in wet weather, and resurfacing of the path to the site from Church Lane, which has suffered from gully erosion. The resurfacing will be with natural compacted gravel, known as hoggin.

2.17 The detail of the proposed works is set out in a feasibility study produced by Beaumont Rivers in November 2023 (Ackroyd, 2023).

Scope of study

2.18 This Ecological Impact Assessment updates the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of Pool Meadow (Lucas, 2023), sets out the results of ecological surveys conducted in 2024, and provides an assessment of the ecological value of the site and its potential for enhancement. It also provides information on the potential of the site to support protected and notable species, sets out the ecological impacts of the proposed works, and makes recommendations for appropriate mitigation measures to address these impacts and for ecological enhancements. This assessment includes a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment using Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric to confirm that the project will deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain.

3 Methods

Desk Study

3.1 Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) was contacted for records of non-statutory designated sites and records of protected and notable species within a 1 km radius of the site boundary. The data was returned on 29 November 2022 and was initially reviewed by Frank Lucas in March 2023 (Lucas, 2023).

3.2 The DEFRA MAGIC website (MAGIC, 2024) was consulted to establish whether any statutory designated sites for nature conservation occur within the vicinity of the site. Internationally designated sites were considered up to 10 km from the site, and nationally designated sites were considered up to 2 km from the site.

3.3 Additionally, the DEFRA MAGIC website was used to search for registered ancient woodland and for European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licenses granted within 2 km of the site.

3.4 Online aerial imagery and Ordnance Survey mapping (MAGIC, 2024) was consulted to identify any ponds within 500 m of the site (in order to assess its suitability for amphibians such as the protected species great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*) and to gain an understanding of the site's context and habitat connectivity to the wider area.

Habitat Survey

3.5 An update UK Habitat Classification survey of the site was conducted on 17 May 2024 by Dr Tom Flynn and Kai Hayes, of BSG Ecology. This survey covered the full extent of the site shown within the boundary shown on Figure 1. The survey included the stream on the north-western boundary of Pool Meadow, and, for the purposes of the river habitat condition assessment, habitats 10 m beyond this to the northwest.

3.6 The habitat survey follows a habitat survey conducted by Frank Lucas in August and December 2022 (Lucas, 2023). The time of year and weather conditions during the 2024 site visit were suitable for the survey (dry, calm, and sunny, with no recent precipitation, temperature ca. 18^{o}C).

3.7 The UK Habitat Classification survey was undertaken with reference to current guidance (UKHab, 2023). Habitat names follow UKHab (2023) and Defra (2024a). Where there is disagreement between these two habitat classification systems (such as for fens) they follow the latter, to allow the habitat data to be used in a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment. Surveyors carried out a walkover of the site, mapping the habitats present. Indicative lists of plant species were recorded for each habitat type, including an estimate of relative abundance using the DAFOR[1] scale. Photographs were taken to provide supporting evidence.

3.8 During the habitat survey, habitat condition assessments were undertaken for each habitat type, based on current guidance (Defra, 2024b). This allowed the habitats to be classified into good, moderate or poor condition. For some habitats, this required recording lists of plant species present in a number of 1 m by 1 m areas of vegetation, known as quadrats. Quadrat locations are shown on Figure 1.

3.9 The survey was extended to include an assessment of the potential of the site to support protected, notable and/or invasive non-native species. This assessment included an onsite assessment by the surveyors, and a desk-based consideration of desk study data. The site and accessible areas within 30 m of the site were searched for signs of badgers.

[1] The DAFOR scale is frequently used to characterise vegetation during habitat surveys, the categories are: D: dominant; A: abundant; F: frequent; O: occasional; R: rare.

River Condition Assessment

3.10 To inform the BNG assessment, a river condition assessment (RCA) was completed for the stream on the northwestern boundary of the site during the site visit on 17 May 2024. The survey was undertaken by Tom Flynn who is trained and certified in River Condition Assessment. The survey followed standard guidance (Gurnell et al., 2021).

3.11 The survey employed one group of five samples, with each sample being 10 m in length, in line with the guidance. The total survey length, 50 m, represents ca. 20% of the ca. 1 km length of the stream along the site boundary.

3.12 The five sample points were contiguous 10 m stretches (in line with guidance) and the 50 m sample stretch was located at the northeastern end of the stretch of the stream adjacent to the site. This location was selected (in line with the guidance) because it showed more evidence of modification than other stretches (e.g. a culverted section to the north, an inflowing drainage pipe, a potentially artificially straightened and deepened section, and area of child and dog access).

3.13 For each of the five sample points, the Cartographer app (www.cartographer.org.uk) was used on an iPad to record a set of geomorphological data, such as bank width, water depth, bed material bank material, and bank and in-stream vegetation. This was then uploaded on to the Cartographer website for comparison with a desk-study-based River Type assessment, and with a post-works scenario based on adding in the proposed concrete weir and proposed woody dams.

Assessment Process

3.1 The evaluation and assessment within this report has been undertaken with reference to relevant parts of the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (developed by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2022)).

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

3.2 In order to demonstrate that the Proposed Development can deliver a measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2024a) has been used to calculate the biodiversity value of the site. Condition assessments used current guidance (Defa, 2024b). Condition assessments were carried out onsite on 17 May 2024.

3.3 The habitat survey information was used to complete the baseline calculation. Baseline habitat type and habitat condition inputs are shown in the results section. Proposed habitats in the calculation were based on professional interpretation of the proposed works set out in Ackroyd (2023).

Personnel

3.4 Desk study information was collated by Toby Rudling, Seasonal Ecologist at BSG Ecology. It was reviewed by Kai Hayes, Ecologist at BSG Ecology and Dr Tom Flynn MCIEEM, CEcol, Principal Ecologist at BSG Ecology. Kai and Tom have extensive experience of undertaking ecological desk studies.

3.5 The habitat survey and condition assessment were undertaken by Kai Hayes and Dr Tom Flynn. Kai and Tom have extensive experience of habitat survey and condition assessment. Tom has particular knowledge of habitats and plants, and has a BSBI FISC level 5 certificate in plant identification.

3.6 The river condition assessment was undertaken by Dr Tom Flynn. He has received formal training and certification in this type of survey (Modular River Survey River Condition Assessment certificate awarded August 2022) and has experience carrying out this type of survey.

3.7 Tom Flynn is a resident of Chipping Norton and regularly visits Pool Meadow. Therefore, he has been able to supplement this assessment with his knowledge of the condition of the site throughout the year and over the years since 2012.

Consideration of Limitations to methods

3.8 Areas of dense vegetation within the site could not be fully accessed in all areas during the habitat survey due to the density of vegetation. However, the habitat type and condition could be clearly determined, and levels of access were considered by the surveyors to be sufficient for the purpose of the survey. Therefore, this limitation is not considered a significant constraint to this assessment.

3.9 Given the access limitations, not all areas of the site could be thoroughly searched for signs of badgers. However, given the lack of any signs of badger in the areas that were accessible (the majority of the site) and the low lying and damp nature of much of the site (unsuitable for badger setts), badger setts are considered unlikely to be present on or adjacent to the site. Therefore, this limitation is not considered a significant constraint to this assessment.

3.10 There are no other significant limitations to the survey or assessment work.

4 Results and Evaluation

Statutory Designated Sites

4.1 Pool Meadow is situated within the Cotswolds AONB. It is not within or adjacent to any other statutory designated sites for nature conservation. It is within *Chipping Norton motte and bailey castle and fishpond* which is designated for historic rather than nature conservation reasons.

4.2 One Site of Special Scient if Interest (SSSI), Glyme Valley, is present within 2 km of the site. There are no other Statutory designated sites within the 2 km search aera, and no sites of international importance within the 10 km search area.

Cotswolds AONB

4.3 The site is located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). AONBs are afforded statutory protection to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, including their nature conservation value. The Cotswolds AONB was designated as an AONB in 1966 and is the largest AONB in England, covering 790 square miles. There is a Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan (CNRF & CNL, 2021); one of its objectives is the creation of 1,600 ha of wetlands within river valleys.

Glyme Valley SSSI

4.4 The site is ca. 2 km from Glyme Valley SSSI, which is notified for its unimproved limestone grassland which supports the protected plant species meadow clary *Salvia pratensis*. Flushes of marshy grassland and areas of more neutral and acidic grassland are present, as are areas of fen and wet woodland. The SSSI supports various farmland birds.

4.5 The SSSI surrounds the upper reaches of the River Glyme, which originates east of Chipping Norton and flows west from Chipping Norton towards Enstone and joins the River Evenlode downstream of Blenheim Palace. The Glyme is not hydrologically connected to Pool Meadow, but separated from it by the town of Chipping Norton which sits near the summit of a ridge.

Non-statutory designated sites

4.6 There are no non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation at Pool Meadow or within the 1 km search area.

Habitats

4.7 The habitats present at Pool Meadow are described in Table 1 below and shown on Figure 1. Habitat names follow UK Hab (2023) and Defra (2024a). Where there is disagreement between these two habitat classification systems (such as for fens) they follow the latter. Accompanying photographs are provided in Section 10. Completed Defra habitat condition assessment sheets are provided in Appendix 1 and plants species lists are in Appendix 2. Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs; as designated by Natural England in line with Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) have been identified with reference to the JNCC Priority Habitat Descriptions (BRIG, 2011).

Table 1: Habitats at Pool Meadow

Habitat	Description
Fens (upland and lowland)	Pool Meadow is dominated by herbaceous vegetation on damp silt/peat soils which fits into the broad category of Wetlands and the specific habitat category of *Fens (upland and lowland)*, due to the vegetation present and the damp conditions. See Photograph 1. This habitat is also considered to meet the JNCC description of the *Lowland fens* priority habitat (BRIG, 2011), making it a Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI). The origin of this habitat is likely to be from natural infilling of the Victorian reservoir that occupied the site. Due to this origin, the soils here are likely to be high in plant nutrients, resulting in the abundance of highly competitive and nutrient-demanding plant species that

	are present throughout, such as great horsetail, common nettle, reed sweetgrass *Glyceria maxima,* and great willowherb. There are other wetland species present, in the lower lying areas, including yellow flag iris *Iris pseudacrous,* wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria.* Dryer areas have rough-stalked meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, lesser celandine *Ranunculus ficaria* and common hogweed *Heracleum sphyondylium*) and some Himalayan balsam *Impatiens balsamifera*. The dominant bryophytes (mosses) are pointed spear-moss *Calliergonella culpidata* in wetter areas, and *Kindbergia praelonga* in dryer areas. Most of the boundaries of this habitat are formed by the embanked path around the periphery of the site. However, the northeastern boundary is formed by a distinct ground level change away from any path. The area southwest of this bank is considered to be fen (due to wetter soils and the presence of some wetland species, in addition to ruderal species) whereas the vegetation to the northeast is considered to be *Tall Forb* habitat (see below). This bank is likely to demarcate vegetation where the water table is generally below the vertical root zone, from the lower fen vegetation where the water table is generally within the vertical root zone. The average number of higher plant species in 1 m^2 is 5.5 (ascertained from 10 quadrats during the survey). Over the majority of this habitat, the water table is not considered to be at or above the surface throughout the year, and there is very little extent of open water present through the year. For this reason, and due to the extent of leaf litter, the dominance of common nettle and great horsetail, and the presence of Himalayan balsam, this habitat is currently in poor condition.
	A small further area of fen is also present to the northwest side of the stream on a low-lying marshy area. See Photograph 2. This area supports a more diverse vegetation than the larger area discussed above, with abundant yellow flag iris, meadowsweet and wild angelica, with some three nerved sandwort *Moehringia trinervia*, whitish feather moss *Brachythecium albicans,* marsh marigold *Caltha palustris,* pendulous sedge *Carex pendula,* creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, lesser pond sedge *Carex acutiformis*, and water mint *Mentha aquatica.* This habitat meets all wetland condition assessment criteria except one (because Himalayan balsam is present) and is therefore in good condition.
Tall Forbs	There are three areas of grassy vegetation with abundant tall forbs. This is vegetation dominated by competitive nutrient-demanding (i.e. 'ruderal') species such as common nettle and cleavers, growing on drier areas, where the vertical root zone is above the water table. (Areas of ruderal plants on wetter soils at the site are considered part of the fen habitat described above). The largest area of tall forb vegetation is present in the northern part of the site (see Photograph 3). This area is dominated by nettle, great willow-herb and several grass species. This vegetation extends north into the woodland at the north of the site, where it is joined by woodland species such as herb Robert *Geranium robertianum* and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* surrounding an area of woodchip (see Photograph 4). Further areas are present at the southeast of the site (Photograph 5) and alongside the footpath around much of the site (Photograph 6). These areas are dominated by common nettle, with cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris,* willowherb species *Epilobium* spp., and grasses such as cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, meadow fox-tail *Alopecurus pratensis* and common couch *Elymys repens*. These habitats are currently in moderate condition.
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	The northwestern edge of the site supports lowland mixed deciduous woodland along the river. See Photograph 7. The canopy is dominated by sycamore, with occasional ash *Fraixnus excelsior* and horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum.* The understory includes dog rose *Rosa canina,* hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, hazel *Corylus avellana,* blackthorn *Prunus spinosa,* elm *Ulmus* sp*.* and sycamore. Ground flora species include ash and sycamore seedlings, bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta,* broad buckler fern *Dryopteris dilatata,* cleavers, cow parsley, dog's mercury, enchanter's nightshade *Circaea leutetiana*, false brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum,* hart's-tongue fern *Asplenium scolopendrium,* hawthorn, hedge woundwort *Stachys sylvatica*, herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, ivy *Hedera helix*, male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas,* rough-stalked meadow-grass, sanicle *Sanicula europaea,* soft shield fern *Polystichum setiferum,* and wood avens *Geum urbanum.* This woodland has informal paths through it and some litter (e.g. drink cans and bottles), and along with the stream, is used by local children for informal play. Although the canopy is dominated by the non-native species sycamore, the presence of an understorey layer and a native ground flora, including ancient woodland indicators (i.e. sanicle) means that this woodland has a considerable semi-natural element. It is therefore considered to be the HPI habitat *Lowland mixed deciduous woodland*. The condition assessment indicates that this woodland is currently in moderate condition.

Other woodland; broadleaved	Broadleaved woodland is present along the northern and eastern edges of Site, and in the mature garden offsite to the east. See Photograph 8. The canopy is dominated by mature sycamore and by semi-mature hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*, with some whitebeam *Sorbus aria*, silver birch *Betula pendula* and blackthorn also present. There is a limited understorey of hawthorn and elder *Sambucus nigra*. Ground flora consists of abundant nettle, ash seedlings, lesser celandine, and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, with ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea,* blackthorn seedlings, Himalayan honeysuckle *Leycesteria formosa*, herb Robert, foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, black bryony *Dioscorea communis*, bittersweet *Solanum dulcamara*, garlic mustard *Allaria petiolata*, several willowherbs *Epilobium* spp., bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, ivy, cultivated daffodil *Narcissus* sp., enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*, yellow flag iris *Iris pseudacorus*, three nerved sandwort *Moehringia trinervia*, wild angelica, cleavers *Galium aparine*, dog's mercury, false brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, great horsetail, greater plantain *Plantago major*, great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum,* hedge woundwort *Stachys sylvatica*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, rough-stalked meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, and welted thistle *Carduus crispus.* Cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus,* a non-native invasive evergreen shrub, is present in woodland along the eastern border of the site, and within the margins of the site in this area. The woodland is currently in moderate condition due to the lack of diversity in the understory and the presence of non-native species.
Other rivers and streams	A small stream forms the north-western boundary of Pool Meadow. See Photographs 9 and 10. The channel is ca. 1 to 3 m in width, and ca.10 cm to 40 cm in depth. The section of stream adjacent to Pool Meadow emerges from a raised pipe culvert at its immediate upstream end (see Photograph 11). The flow is fast and rippled in shallow areas. The bed is stony in parts, with silt in deeper areas and natural woody debris in several small pools. The banks are generally steep 0.2 to 1.5 m deep, of clay. There is some litter, the area is used for informal play by local children, and an informal child-built low leaky stone dam is sometimes present in a wide shallow area toward the north. The habitat condition of the stream is fairly good.
Bramble scrub	There is a small patch of bramble scrub on the boundary between the fen habitat and the footpath, on the east side of the site. Bramble scrub has a default habitat condition of poor under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.
Blackthorn scrub	There are two patches of tall blackthorn scrub on the boundary between the fen habitat and the footpath on the south-west side of the site, and another patch on the opposite side of the footpath. See Photograph 12. This scrub is even-aged, dense with little ground flora. It is therefore currently in poor condition.
Willow scrub	There is a small patch of scrub (with goat willow *Salix caprea*, elder and crack willow *Salix fragilis*) in the east of the site, bordering the woodland and the fen habitat. This habitat is currently in moderate condition.
Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface.	There is a footpath around the periphery of the site (see Photograph 13) and from Church Lane (see Photograph 14). In parts this has a compacted stone (hoggin) surface and in parts is it soft disturbed ground. Parts of this path become muddy and impassable in winter and/or wet weather. There is also an area of woodchip surfaced ground in the north of the site where some scrub has been cleared. Habitat condition for these areas is N/A.
Individual trees	There are four semi-mature trees outside areas of woodland at the site, a sycamore and three silver birches. These are small and in moderate condition.

Protected and notable species

Badgers

4.8 The data search returned four records of badger from within the search area, all from between 2017 and 2020. This indicates the general presence of this species in the vicinity of the site. Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

4.9 The damp low-lying ground that dominates the site is not suitable for badger setts. Drier areas at the north could be suitable for badger setts. The site contains suitable habitats for foraging badger. However, no evidence of badger activity was observed during the habitat survey and this species is considered likely to be absent from the site and immediately adjacent areas.

Bats

4.10 The data search returned 113 records of bats from the search area, for 11 species: brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii,* grey long-eared bat *Plecotus austriacus*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*, Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*, noctule *Nyctalus noctua*, serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus.*

4.11 Bats and their roosts are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Certain species of bats are also Species of Principal Importance, as listed by Natural England in accordance with Section 41 of the Natural Environment at Rural Communities Act 2006.

4.12 A search of the MAGIC database identified that four European Protected Species licences for bats have been granted within 2 km of the Site, all of which relate to roosts of common pipistrelle.

4.13 The site contains highly suitable habitat for foraging bats, including wetland and woodland adjacent to a stream. The site is unlit and dark, which is important for bats. The larger trees may also provide roosting opportunities. This site is likely to be of value to bats at the local level.

Otter and water vole

4.14 The data search did not return any records of otter *Lutra lutra* or water vole *Arvicola amphibia* from the search area.

4.15 The stream at the site has some suitability for water vole, but is likely to generally be too shallow, and to have too little marginal vegetation to support this species. The seasonal standing water at the site is unlikely to provide suitable habitat. The report author has regularly visited Pool Meadow and the stream since 2012 and has never observed signs of this species. A detailed examination of the stream was undertaken during the river habitat condition assessment in May 2024 and no signs of water vole were seen. Therefore, this species is considered unlikely to be present.

4.16 The stream is unlikely to form part of an otter territory due to its small size and limited potential to support prey items. It is possible that the stream and/or meadow are occasionally used as a dispersal route by this species.

Hedgehog

4.17 The data search returned four records of hedgehogs *Erinaceus europaeus* within the search area indicating the general presence of this species in the vicinity of the site. Its presence is well recorded in parts of Chipping Norton.

4.18 Hedgehogs are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it illegal to kill or capture them using certain methods. They are also listed under the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996), which prohibits cruel treatment.

4.19 The habitats at the site provide suitable foraging habitat and cover for this species. Dryer areas could be used for hibernation.

Birds

4.20 The data search returned 1,173 records for 58 bird species within the search area. Of these records, 12 species are listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended: peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus*, redwing *Turdus iliacus*, barn owl *Tyto alba*, black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*, brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*, corncrake *Crex crex*, fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*, hobby *Falco subbuteo*, quail *Coturnix coturnix*, and wryneck *Jynx torquilla*.

4.21 There were record of 23 SPI birds from the search area: corn bunting *Emberiza calandra,* corncrake *Crex crex* (1 record from 2000), cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*, hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*, lapwing Vanellus vanellus, lesser redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*, lesser spotted woodpecker *Dryobates minor*, linnet *Linaria cannabina*, marsh tit *Poecile palustris*, reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus,* skylark *Alaudia arvensis*, tree sparrow *Passer montanus*, willow tit *Poecile montanus*, willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*, yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, grey partridge *Perdix perdix,* house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, dunnock *Prunella modularis* and bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula.*

4.22 All wild birds and their eggs and active nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act also receive protection from disturbance whilst breeding.

4.23 Of the species above, the site has particular suitability to support barn owl, cuckoo, reed bunting, song thrush, starling and dunnock. A population of swifts that breeds at Chipping Norton is known by the author of this report to frequently forage over Pool Meadow, and it may provide a valuable source of aerial insects as prey for this population.

4.24 The wetland and woodland habitats on site provide suitable foraging and nesting habitat for a wide range of tree, shrub and wetland bird species.

Amphibians

4.25 The data search returned records of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* from four locations in the search area. Two are ponds located to the north of the site (stream-fed ponds ca. 250 m and 350 m upstream of Pool Meadow) and two were from more distant locations (one from around 350 m south and one from around 850 m east of the site).

4.26 Great crested newts and their habitats are fully protected under UK legislation. This includes protection against disturbance. They are also listed as a Species of Principal Importance (SPIs; as designated by Natural England in line with Section 41 of the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006). Like other amphibians, this species breeds in ponds and forages and hibernates in nearby terrestrial habitat. It may travel up to 500 m from breeding ponds, but most individuals are found much closer.

4.27 Ordnance Survey mapping indicates two further ponds within 500 m of the site: one ca.140 m northwest of the site near Elmsfield Industrial Estate and one ca. 290 m north-east of the site near Church Lane.

4.28 The site provides suitable terrestrial habitat for this species. The lack of sufficient standing water throughout the year means that it is unlikely, currently, to provide breeding habitat for this species.

4.29 Given the presence of this species in the local area, and the suitability of terrestrial habitat at the site, it is possible, that this species is present there. However, given the distance of the site to known populations, even considering the potential for dispersal via the stream, this is considered unlikely, and if present at the site, numbers there are likely to be small.

4.30 There were also records of common frog *Rana temporaria* and of smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris* from the search area. The author has observed common toad *Bufo bufo* around 300 m east of Pool Meadow in 2024, and common frog at the site itself (once during the May 2024 survey, and once in the stream in 2021).

Reptiles

4.31 The desk study returned one record for grass snake *Natrix helvetica* within the search area. The wetland and other habitats at the site are suitable for this species. The site has some suitability for other reptile species such as common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, but the damp conditions are sub-optimal for these species.

4.32 All native reptile species in the UK (including the more common species such as grass snake, common lizard, and slow-worm) are protected against killing and injury under UK legislation. All native reptiles are also listed as SPIs.

Fish

4.33 No records of fish were returned in the desk study. Fish have not been noted in the stream or in the wet area of Pool Meadow. However, the author has observed stickleback *Gasterosteus aculeatus* to be present near a footpath crossing over the stream around 160 m downstream of the site. It is considered likely that stickleback, and possibly bullhead *Cottus gobio* and other small fish species are present in the stream, and at times of flood, within the wet areas within Pool Meadow.

Invertebrates

4.34 The data search did not return any records of invertebrates from the search area. However, because of the habitats present, the site is likely to support a wide range of terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates. Due to the absence of lighting, it is likely to be of value to night-flying species such as moths.

Plants

4.35 The data search returned records of 17 species of plants from the search area. Two of these were recorded at the site during the habitat survey in May 2024: the woodland indicator species sanicle and bluebell. Both were recorded from the woodland northwest of the stream.

4.36 Three non-native invasive plant species were recorded at the site during the habitat survey in May 2024: Himalayan balsam, present on the stream banks, and within ruderal and fen vegetation, is mainly in the north of the site; variegated yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum* is present in the woodland at the north of the site (both of these species are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to plant or otherwise cause them to grow in the wild); and cherry laurel is present on the eastern site boundary.

4.37 Records of two further invasive plant species were returned in the desk study (buddleia *Buddleija davidii* and Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*). The latter is also listed on Schedule 9. Neither were observed at the site during the habitat survey.

5 Potential Impacts and Benefits

Designated Sites

5.1 The project involves enhancing a wetland habitat (which is in line with the former (i.e. 20th century) state of the habitat at Pool Meadow and in line with a Natural Conservation objective of the Cotswolds AONB) and resurfacing existing paths there. Given this, and the distance to any statutory or non statutory designated sites, it is not considered likely that the proposed works will have significant adverse impacts on any statutory or non-statutory designated sites.

Habitats

Fen

5.2 The primary purposes of the proposed works are to re-wet the fen habitat at the site for reasons of natural flood management and to enhance the fen habitat. The work will require very localised digging work on and around the artificial embankment at the inflow and outflow. The area of fen on the north-west side of the stream will not be adversely affected. The benefits will be an increase in water levels within the fen habitat occupying the main site, which is likely to enhance the condition of this habitat from poor to good. It is likely to increase the diversity of plant species in this habitat (especially if supplemented by seeding of appropriate native species), increase the structural habitat diversity, and increase the habitat value for a range of animal species (see Bats, Birds, Amphibians, Reptiles, and Invertebrates below). Overall, the works are likely to result in a significant positive effect on wetland habitat at the local level.

5.3 The previous ecology report (Lucas, 2023) suggested treatment of the current vegetation at the site with herbicide and conversion to open water and meadow habitats. However, this current report suggests that attempts to shift the fen vegetation to meadow are unlikely to be successful at the site, because the vegetation type is fundamentally determined by the soil conditions (i.e., high-fertility accumulated silt and organic matter). It therefore recommends a less interventionist approach to habitats at the site, on the understanding that the vegetation there will be driven by the underlying soil and hydrological characteristics of the site.

5.4 It is suggested in the current report that the benefits of the project derive fundamentally from the re-wetting of the fen habitat. It will remain as fen habitat, but its ecological condition will be enhanced due the water table being closer to the surface (or above the surface in some areas, creating areas of open water). This will offer the habitat benefits for the various species mentioned above, creating freshwater habitat with high resident biodiversity (e.g., higher population size and diversity of dragonflies, other invertebrates and amphibians) and also a more valuable food resource for local bat and bird populations, including Chipping Norton's swifts. The rewetting should also increase plant diversity in the vegetation and should lead to a reduction in the dominance of common nettle and great horsetail in the wetter areas.

5.5 The enhanced ecological condition is reflected in the BNG calculation presented in this report, in which the area of fen at the site is maintained, but its condition improves from poor to at least moderate. This is in line with habitat condition assessment that was carried out. The re-wetting project will allow the fen habitat to meet criterion 1 (see condition assessment for fen in Appendix 1), relating to the water table being at or near the surface throughout the year. This is the most fundamental habitat quality criterion for fen habitat, which is currently not being met. There may also be a vegetation shift with an increase in the diversity and cover of wetland species, allowing criterion 2 to also be met. Via these changes, the proposed works will likely result in the habitat condition of the site increasing from poor to at least moderate condition, because four or five of the habitat condition criteria will be met, as opposed to the current three (see Appendix 1).

5.6 The habitat which dominates the site will continue to be fen, however, this will also include significant areas of open water. Open water typically forms a component of fen habitat (McBride et al, 2011), so this will not be a habitat replacement but an enhancement.

5.7 Under the proposed re-wetting of the fen, competitive species such as great horsetail, great willowherb and common nettle will still form a significant component of the vegetation. This is considered unavoidable without wholesale soil removal or replacement which would not be viable or desirable. The proposed approach works with the site characteristics and is pragmatic about the vegetation changes that are achievable at Pool Meadow. It offers a number of advantages over the previous scheme, including avoiding the introduction of chemical treatments (such as herbicide), which could have harmful local or downstream impacts, avoiding the need for intensive and costly annual mowing management, avoiding replacing the local and ecologically appropriate species mix with a seed-packet mix of plants, and avoiding raising expectations over the extent of changes that can be effected at this site, given its soil and hydrological characteristics.

5.8 This EcIA (and BNG assessment) has assumed that this fen enhancement approach will be adopted, rather than fen replacement.

5.9 There is scope for introducing additional native plant species through seeding or plug plants. This is set out in the Recommendations section. This planting would be supplementary and is not expected to cause significant vegetation change at the site.

Woodland

5.10 The proposed works will not involve any tree removal. Ground disturbance within woodland will be limited to the south-eastern bankside near the inflow weir structure and the outflow, and not in proximity to valuable woodland ground flora such as the woodland indicator species sanicle (which is on the north-western bank). The proposed works are therefore not likely to have an adverse effect on woodland habitat.

5.11 Historic England have required that there should not be any tree planting within the Scheduled Ancient Monument Site because of the potential for roots to damage historic features at the site.

5.12 The BNG assessment therefore assumes no change in the habitat condition for woodland at the site.

Stream

5.13 The proposed works will involve the installation of an inflow channel, and weir/dam structure (ca. 0.8 m deep) to raise the water level at this inflow, and an outflow structure. For location see the feasibility study (Ackroyd, 2023). These works will involve localised ground disturbance. The permanent footprint will essentially be limited to an area below the resurfaced path, and so will occupy an insignificant area. The ground disturbance will be temporary and will be offset by the enhanced condition of wetland habitat adjacent to the stream (due to the rewetting of Pool Meadow) and the installation of the 2 or 3 (or so) leaky dam structures downstream. The latter will increase habitat diversity, water storage and drought resilience in the stream.

5.14 Without appropriate protection measures during construction (such as appropriate timing of work to avoid very wet periods, and measures to prevent accidental incursion beyond the work area) there is some potential for additional disturbance. See protection measures in the Recommendations section. However, any such disturbance would be temporary and, given the limited scale of the works, is unlikely to be significant.

5.15 The River Condition Assessment and BNG assessment work has incorporated the proposed weir/dam by including one artificial major weir in the post-works scenario (which reduces the condition score, and two natural woody dams, which increase the condition score). Overall, the condition score changes from 1.67 (baseline) to 1.72 (post-works), which is a slight enhancement in condition. The overall condition category, however, does not change from the baseline condition of fairly good.

5.16 The BNG calculation also factors in a reduction in the level of riparian encroachment that will result from the restoration scheme. This is because the wetland habitat (fen) which occupies the majority of Pool Meadow is currently in poor condition and is disconnected from the river by an artificial embanked footpath which runs along the south-eastern side of the stream. Under the proposed

works, the wetland at Pool Meadow will be reconnected to the watercourse (through the inlet and outlet which will run under the path), and the condition of the fen will be enhanced from poor to at least moderate.

5.17 The baseline level of riparian encroachment has been set to none/moderate, to reflect the absence of any encroachment on the northwest bank (i.e., none) and the presence of a footpath and poor-condition disconnected wetland on the southeast bank (i.e., moderate). Under the post-development scenario, this has been set to none/minor, to reflect the fact that the wetland habitat condition will be enhanced, and it will be re-connected to the watercourse (it is not set to 'none' because the footpath, representing a small level of encroachment, will still be present).

Other habitats

5.18 The paths at the site will be resurfaced with compacted stone (hoggin). There will be no permanent effects of this beyond the footprint of the paths. There is some potential for temporary impacts beyond this area, from soil disturbance, storage of materials, etc.

5.19 Without appropriate protection measures during construction (such as appropriate timing of work to avoid very wet periods, and measures to prevent accidental incursion beyond the work area) there is some potential for additional disturbance; see protection measures in the Recommendations section. However, any such disturbance would be temporary and is unlikely to be significant.

5.20 No significant adverse impacts are anticipated in the other habitats at the site, such as scrub, and individual trees, since the proposed works will not directly affect these. It is assumed in this assessment that the area of wood chip in the woodland at the north of the site will be retained as-is.

Biodiversity Net Gain

5.21 The Biodiversity Net Gain assessment indicates that the proposed works will result in a biodiversity net gain at the site of 10.16 % for area habitats and 4.83% for watercourses. These are significant ecological benefits of the project. The figure for area habitats should be considered as a precautionary minimum, given the precautionary assumptions about habitat enhancement that have been made in this assessment.

Protected and Notable Species

Badgers

5.22 The proposed work will not significantly change the value of the site for this species. The increase in open water habitat will reduce the extent of suitable foraging area at wet times, but this is likely to be compensated for by the increased soil moisture in adjacent areas during summer which would increase the quality of this habitat for foraging (because prey such as molluscs and other invertebrates are more abundant and more easily accessible in moist rather than dry soils).

5.23 Impacts of the works on individual animals are considered unlikely (since there are no badger setts on or near the site). However, badgers can construct setts in new locations in a short space of time. Therefore, to ensure legal compliance, appropriate precautionary measures prior to and during the works are set out in the Recommendations section.

Bats

5.24 The proposed works are likely to increase the habitat quality and food availability at the site for bats, by providing open water areas and by increasing the abundance and diversity of invertebrates such as beetles and moths.

5.25 Given that there will be no tree works, or lighting, no impacts of the works on individual bats or bat roosts are anticipated.

Otter and water vole

5.26 The proposed works will not significantly change the value of the site for these species. They may enhance the value of the fen and stream by increasing their water holding capacity and their resilience to drought conditions.

5.27 Impacts of the works on individual animals are considered unlikely (since these species are unlikely to be present at the site). However, to ensure legal compliance, appropriate precautionary measures prior to and during the works are set out in the Recommendations section.

Hedgehog

5.28 The proposed work will not significantly change the value of the site for this species. The increase in open water habitat will reduce the extent of suitable foraging area at wet times, but this is likely to be compensated for by the increased soil moisture in adjacent areas, as noted under *Badgers* above.

5.29 Impacts of the works on individual animals are considered unlikely (since these species are unlikely to be present at the site). However, to avoid such impacts appropriate precautionary measures prior to and during the works are set out in the Recommendations section.

Birds

5.30 The proposed works are likely to increase the habitat quality and food availability at the site for birds, by providing open water areas and by increasing the abundance and diversity of invertebrates. This is likely to benefit the population of birds foraging or nesting within the site, and also bird populations, such as Chipping Norton's swifts, which utilise insects originating from the site.

5.31 Given that there will be no tree works, impact of the proposed works on individual birds and their nests are not anticipated. However, given that some very localised vegetation clearance and/or disturbance will be necessary (e.g. during the installation of the inlet dam, outlet and during path resurfacing), appropriate precautionary measures prior to and during the works are set out in the Recommendations section.

Amphibians

5.32 The proposed works are likely to increase the habitat quality at the site for amphibians, by providing open water areas suitable for breeding and by increasing the extent of damp wetland habitats suitable for foraging. This is likely to benefit the known local populations of smooth newt, common frog and common toad, and could also benefit the local population of great crested newt.

5.33 Impacts of the works on individual animals are considered unlikely, given the very limited footprint of the works beyond the existing paths. However, to ensure legal compliance, appropriate precautionary measures prior to and during the works are set out in the Recommendations section.

Reptiles

5.34 The proposed works are likely to increase the habitat quality at the site for grass snake, by providing open water areas suitable for foraging, and increased populations of prey items such as common frog.

5.35 Impacts of the works on individual animals are considered unlikely, given the very limited footprint of the works beyond the existing paths. However, to ensure legal compliance, appropriate precautionary measures prior to and during the works are set out in the *Recommendations* section.

Fish

5.36 Downstream of the weir, the proposed works are likely to enhance the habitat value of the stream for fish, through increasing its water storage potential and its resilience to drought conditions. This also applies to the deeper water created immediately upstream of the dam and woody dams. The dam itself will present a barrier to fish movement upstream, However, given that the section of stream adjacent to Pool Meadow emerges from a raised pipe culvert at its immediate upstream end, which already represents a significant barrier to upstream fish movement, the addition of the dam is not considered to cause a significant additional impact.

5.37 The re-wetting of the fen habitat at Pool Meadow itself could enhance the value of this habitat for fish, providing breeding habitat and benefiting species which feed on fish such as grey heron *Ardea cinerea* and potentially attracting kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*.

5.38 Given that the fen is likely to dry out completely in dry years, the fish population is likely to vary over the course of time. There is likely to be a level of competition between fish and amphibians at the site (as is likely currently the case) but given the habitat complexity there (including highly vegetated areas offering amphibian larvae cover), the likely shifting patchwork of wet and dry areas over much of the site, and the variation in water levels between years, it is considered likely that amphibians and fish will be able to co-exist. The wetland system will be dynamic, driven by variability of rainfall, rather than static and so variation in the populations of both over time is to be expected.

Invertebrates

5.39 The re-wetting of the fen habitat at Pool Meadow is likely to enhance the value of this habitat for invertebrate populations and diversity, for species such as dragonflies, damselflies, beetles, water bugs, moths and hoverflies. This will be through increasing the extent of open water, increasing wetland plant diversity and through re-wetting the dryer parts of the fen. The site will maintain areas of drier habitat in its northern section, and so will retain species more adapted to drier conditions.

5.40 The proposed stream works are likely to enhance the habitat value of the stream for invertebrates, through increasing its habitat diversity, water storage potential and resilience to drought conditions. This also applies to the deeper water created immediately upstream of the dam.

Plants

5.41 The re-wetting of the fen habitat at Pool Meadow is likely to enhance the diversity of the site for plants, by increasing the extent of open water and wetland habitats, and, in areas that become wetter, by shifting the competitive advantage away from common nettle and great horsetail. The woodland associated plants (such as sanicle) will not be affected because they are away from the area to be re-wetted.

6 Recommendations

Designated Sites

6.1 There are no recommendations relating to designated nature conservation sites.

Habitat protection measures

6.2 Protective and precautionary measures before and during construction are recommended to avoid accidental damage to the stream banks and bed, and to adjacent vegetation and soils outside the immediate footprint of the works areas. These measures are to include:

- A walkover of the site by an ecologist prior to the start of work to identify any significant changes at the site that may need to be taken into account during the works, and to carry out the precautionary checks listed under Species below.
- A 'Toolbox Talk' to the works team by an ecologist prior to the start of works and prior to the start of each separate work phase or type (e.g. inlet river works, outlet river works, installation of the main inlet dam and leaky timber dams, and path re-surfacing), to walk over the works area with the team, point out any ecology issues and any sensitive features.
- Limiting storage of materials to defined areas and short periods (up to 1 month), with locations agreed by an ecologist, with underlying soils protected via a tarpaulin or similar.
- Temporary fencing or marking of any sensitive features at the works sites to avoid accidental incursion. For example, of banks or habitat piles that could support hibernating reptiles or hedgehogs.

Supplemental plant introductions

6.3 Wholesale vegetation change at the site is not considered possible or desirable. However, the re-wetting of the fen is likely to enhance the diversity of plant species. This could be further enhanced through careful planting or seeding of selected appropriate plant species. These are species which are not currently present or abundant and may be unlikely to colonise the site without assistance, but which would be appropriate to this type of habitat (and would have been expected to have colonised or re-colonised the site if wetland habitats across the wider landscape were more extensive and better connected).

6.4 Such supplemental planting may not be necessary, and it is recommended that no planting is undertaken in the first growing season after the works, to allow natural colonisation to take place and to avoid unnecessarily introducing plants that have already become established. Non-native, invasive or garden varieties of plants should not be introduced to the site under any circumstances. For example, reedmace *Typha latifolia* and pond sedges *Carex acutiformis* and *Carex riparia* should not be introduced as although native, they can be highly invasive. It is possible that they will colonise or spread naturally.

6.5 Suitable species for introduction by seed or plug plants include the following:

Wetland/marginal plants

- Amphibious bistort *Persicaria amphibia*
- Bittersweet *Solanum dulcamara*
- Common club-rush *Scirpus lacustris*
- Common sedge *Carex nigra*
- Cyperus sedge *Carex pseudocyperus*
- False fox sedge *Carex otrubae*

- Greater bird's foot trefoil *Lotus conrniculatus*
- Hairy sedge *Carex hirta*
- Hemp agrimony *Eupatoria cannabina*
- Jointed rush *Juncus articulatus*
- Bottle sedge *Carex rostrata*
- Brooklime *Veronica beccabunga*
- Lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*
- Marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre*
- Marsh woundwort *Stachys palustris*
- Marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica*
- Marsh helleborine *Epipactis palustris*
- Pink water speedwell *Veronica catenata*
- Purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*
- Ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*
- Reed canary grass *Phalaris arundiancea*
- Small teasel *Dipsacus pilosum*
- Tubular water dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*
- Water forget-me-not *Myositis scorpioides*
- Water plantain *Alisma planrtago-aquatica*

Aquatic plants

- Curled pondweed *Potamogeton crispus*
- Frogbit *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*
- Hornwort Ceratophyllum demersum
- Shining pondweed *Potamogeton lucens*
- Water starwort *Callitriche stagnalis*
- Water crowfoot *Ranunculus aquatilis*

6.6 The above list covers a wide range of species, so that some would be expected to become established at the site. Not all would be expected to become established, but planting/seeding a wide range will increase the number that do become established.

6.7 Any plants or seed to be used should be of UK provenance, and plants should be UK-grown. Chemical treatments should be avoided during growing. Community growing via seed supplied by the Freshwater Habitats Trust (based in Wallingford) may be a viable approach.

6.8 The above planting is regarded as supplemental, and no planting has been assumed in the BNG calculation or elsewhere in this EcIA. Planting is not necessary for the scheme to be successful.

6.9 There should be no planting or seeding of the stream or stream banks.

6.10 There should be no general clearance of vegetation at the site. Planting or seeding should be done carefully by hand trowel (for plug plants) or hand scattering (of seed) within the existing vegetation that is present.

Site safety

6.11 The safety implications of the proposed work, both during construction and once the works are complete, will need to be taken into consideration by the project manager, landowner and works contractor. Primarily, this relates to the re-wetting of Pool Meadow causing larger and deeper areas of open water and soft ground to be present at the site, the presence of dam infrastructure, deeper river pools immediately upstream of dams, and any uneven ground or drops that may result from path resurfacing or other works. Appropriate measures to identify and control any increased risks should be taken.

On-going Monitoring

6.12 It is recommended that the site is subject to regular monitoring during the first three years following the works, to ensure that the infrastructure is having the desired hydrological effects, and that no unforeseen consequences are occurring.

6.13 It is recommended that an ecologist walks the site in mid-winter and in mid-summer every year over this period and follows this up with a brief email report to the Town Council to comment on habitat changes, indications of the success (or otherwise) of the scheme, and recommendations for any remedial actions that might be necessary. Detailed ecological monitoring (e.g., of plants, invertebrates, amphibians, dragonflies, etc) is not considered necessary or proportionate for this scheme and is not likely to be affordable. However, if local organisations or individuals are interested in carrying these types of activities out on a voluntary basis, this should be encouraged by the Council. Species records should be submitted to the Town Council and to the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.

On-going management

6.14 The proposed enhancement works are intended to create long-term sustainable features and habitats at the site that do not demand high levels of regular management input. However, occasional management works by the Town Council, their contractors, or the Chipping Norton Green Gym, as appropriate, are likely to be necessary. This would include clearing excessive vegetation growth, fallen trees or branches that are blocking paths, work parties to remove invasive non-native species such as Himalayan balsam, or to clear excessive shrub or tree growth.

6.15 The vegetation at Pool Meadow is currently occasionally subject to mowing/strimming. The need for this following re-wetting is likely to be reduced across the southern part of the site, but this management may still be appropriate in the north of the site, in the dryer area. Rotational cutting in late summer or early autumn, where alternating parts are cut every year, may be the most appropriate approach to adopt. This would retain some undisturbed dry habitat overwinter. Vegetation clearance in the more densely shaded (i.e. woodland) areas is not likely to be useful and could cause ecological damage to the developing woodland flora.

6.16 It is acknowledged that funds and/or voluntary work may not allow mowing or cutting to take place every year, but this should not affect success of this project.

6.17 A proposed management schedule is set out in Appendix 4. Note that this management plan should be adapted based on the findings of the ecological monitoring.

Species

Protection measures during construction

6.18 Although impacts from the proposed works on protected animal species are considered unlikely to occur, to ensure that works proceed in line with nature conservation legislation, it is recommended that the following precautions are taken.

6.19 The habitat protection measures listed above should be expanded to take into account consideration of badger, otter, water vole, nesting birds, amphibians and reptiles. The ecologist

should check areas that are to be disturbed prior to any works, to check that there are no signs of these species.

6.20 Works that could affect suitable hibernation sites for amphibians and reptiles, such as stone walls, piles of stone, rubble or logs, should be cleared outside the hibernation period (which is typically November to February inclusive, depending on weather conditions). Any clearance or disturbance of vegetation, soil, stones, leaf-litter, logs, etc. should be kept to the absolute minimum required for the works. There should be no 'tidying up' of natural features.

6.21 Works that could affect nesting birds (e.g. tree and shrub removal) should take place outside the bird breeding season (which is typically March to August, inclusive), or should be preceded by checks for nesting birds by a suitably experienced ecologist. If active nests are present, works in the vicinity of the nest will need to stop until the nest is no longer in use.

6.22 If protected species such as great crested newts are encountered during the works, then works should stop and a professional ecologist should be consulted on appropriate procedures (and the need for any Natural England licensing) to complete the works.

Additional enhancements

Habitat piles

6.23 Plant material arising from vegetation management at the site should be used to create habitat piles in the northern third of the site (i.e., the drier area). If excessive amounts are produced (e.g., more than two 3 m x 3 m x 1.5 m piles) then proper offsite disposal at a council waste site will need to be arranged. Woodpiles and piles of herbaceous material (or mixture) will all provide habitat of value to amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates and mammals.

6.24 Invasive non-native plants (such as Himalayan balsam and variegated yellow archangel) should not be used for this purpose but should be double bagged in black waste bags and disposed of as landfill waste at a council waste site.

Bat and bird boxes

6.25 Given the limited number of mature trees at the site that could provide roosting and nesting sites, yet the high habitat value of the site for birds and bats, there would be ecological benefits to local populations of these species if bat and bird boxes were provided on trees at the site. This would need careful consideration of appropriate locations and attachment fixings to limit risks to the public from falling boxes. Woodcrete boxes offer better thermal properties and longevity than wooden boxes and are recommended. The Schwegler 1B nest box and 1F bat box are suitable (and are used at the local Wildlife Trust site at Foxholes Wood).

Conclusion

6.26 If the above recommendations are fully implemented, the proposed works are not likely to have any significant adverse ecological impacts and are likely to significantly enhance the ecological and biodiversity value of Pool Meadow as a wetland habitat site.

7 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Baseline habitats

7.1 The baseline habitat types and conditions used in the biodiversity net gain calculation are shown in Table 1 above. These total 1.35 ha. The habitat types follow the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric. This information is based on the habitat survey carried out on 17 May 2024. Condition assessment information is provided in Appendix 1.

Post-works habitats

7.2 The post-works habitat types are identical to those shown in Figure 1. This is because the works will comprise re-wetting the main area of fen at the site, which will enhance its condition but will not change the habitat type. The paths will be re-surfaced on their current footprints. The inflow and outflow works will have a negligible footprint, as they will be situated under existing paths.

7.3 The post-works habitat conditions will be the same as the baseline conditions, except for the main area of fen habitat, which will be enhanced from poor to at least moderate condition. This condition enhancement is considered feasible, as described in Sections 5 and 6.

Key results – area habitats

7.4 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric yields the following key results for area habitats:

- Onsite baseline: 8.75 biodiversity units
- Onsite post-works: 9.64 biodiversity units
- Difference (i.e. biodiversity gain or loss) +0.89 biodiversity units (i.e., a 10.16% net gain)

7.5 The proposed enhancements will result in a clear biodiversity net gain for area habitats. The calculation is precautionary regarding the habitat condition enhancement. Therefore, the 10.16% net gain is a likely minimum, and the there is potential for the project to deliver more than this (i.e. up to 15.18% if the fen habitat can be enhanced to good rather than moderate condition).

Key results – watercourses

7.6 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric yields the following key results for watercourses:

- Onsite baseline: 2.93 biodiversity units
- Onsite post-intervention: 3.07 biodiversity units
- Difference (i.e. biodiversity gain or loss) +0.14 biodiversity units (i.e., a 4.83% net gain)

7.7 The proposed enhancements will result in a clear biodiversity net gain for watercourse habitats. This results from a reduction in riparian encroachment rather than a change in watercourse habitat condition.

7.8 Since there are no hedgerows at the site, there is no requirement for a net gain in hedgerows and hedgerows have been excluded from the BNG calculation.

7.9 The completed Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric spreadsheet has been submitted to WODC.

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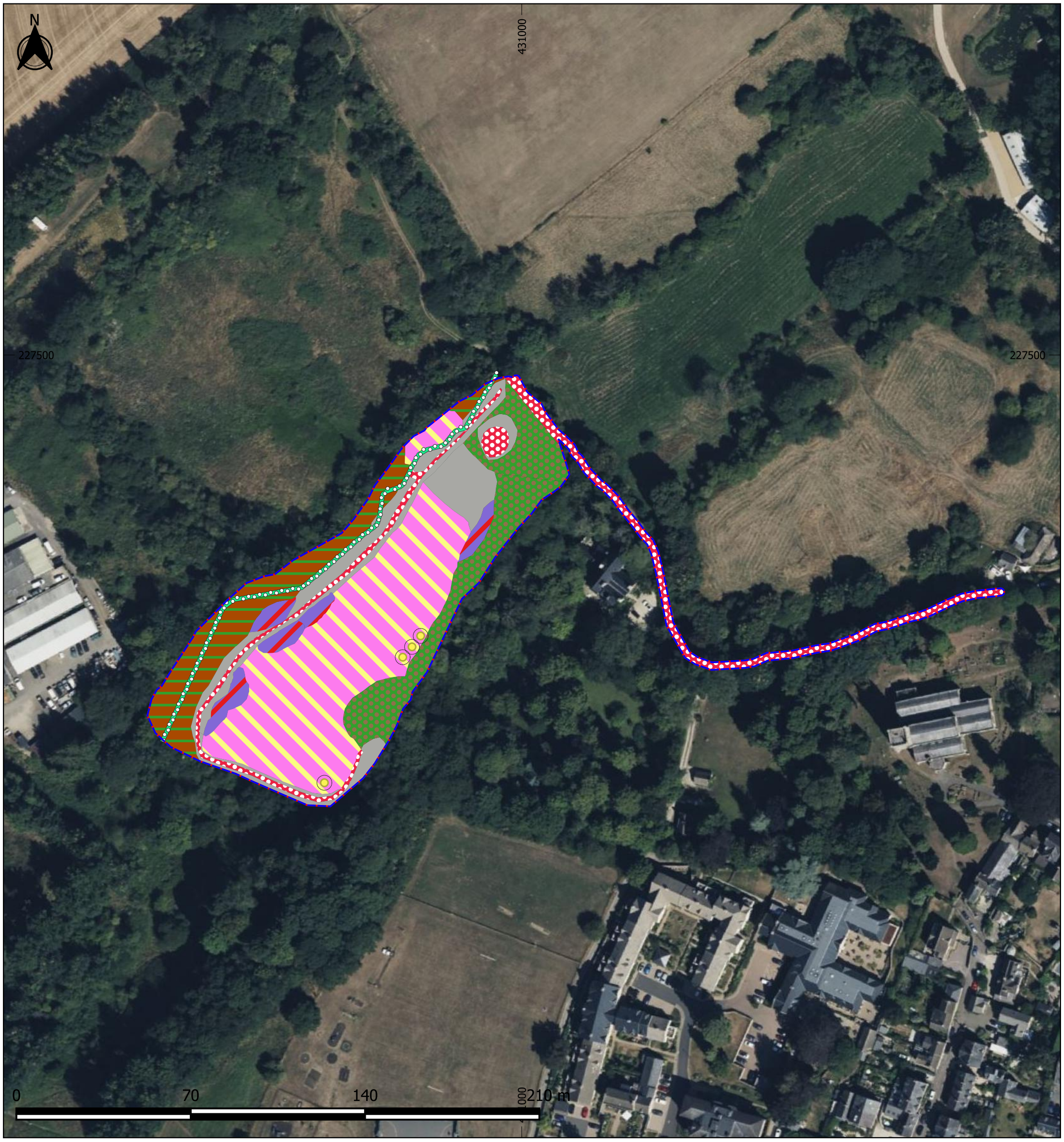
9 Figures

Figure 1: Baseline Habitat Plan

NB Proposed habitat types are the same as the baseline habitat types. Only habitat condition is proposed to change.



BSG | ecology

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JOB REF: P24-027

PROJECT TITLE

POOL MEADOW RESTORATION PROJECT
CHIPPING NORTON

DRAWING TITLE

Figure 1: Baseline Habitats

DATE: 14/08/2025	CHECKED: KH	SCALE: 1:1,500
DRAWN: CF	APPROVED: KH	VERSION:1.5

Projection: OSGB 1936/British National Grid - EPSG 27700

Sources: BSG Ecology survey data

Legend

- Existing Small Rural Tree
- Other Rivers and Streams
- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
- Blackthorn scrub
- Bramble scrub
- Fens (upland and lowland)
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Other woodland; broadleaved
- Tall forbs
- Willow scrub
- Survey boundary
- Site boundary

Graphics Ref. No.: 06842

10 Photographs

Photograph 1. Fen in poor condition which dominates the site due primarily to the dominance of competitive species such as a common nettle and great horsetail, and due to drying out over the summer season.

Photograph 2. Small area of fen in good condition to the north-east of the stream. This area has a higher water table than the other fen, and a more diverse plant species assemblage.

Figure 3. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland along the stream with semi-mature sycamore canopy and native understorey and ground flora.

Figure 4. Broadleaved woodland at the north of the site with mature sycamores. Little understorey. Ground flora dominated by common nettle. Tall forbs and woodchip area in the foreground.

Figure 5. Tall forb vegetation within abundant nettles on raised area in the north of the site (left side of photograph), mapped as tall forbs because it is too dry to be considered fen. Some great horsetail present.

Figure 6. Tall forb and grassy vegetation alongside the footpath in the west of the site.

Figure 7. Woodland at the northwest of the site.

Figure 8 Woodland at the north and east of the site.

Figure 9: Stream on the northwest boundary. Shallow stony section in the north.

Figure 10: Stream on the northwest boundary. Deeper silty section in south, with woody debris.

Figure 11: Stream emerging from culvert pipe at north.

Figure 12: Blackthorn scrub in west of site.

Figure 13: Footpath within the site.

Figure 14: Footpath to the site from Church Lane.

Appendix 1: Habitat Condition Assessment Information

Refer to Defra (2024b) for full criteria and condition category thresholds.

Condition Assessment is N/A for bramble scrub and artificial unvegetated unsealed surface.

Fens (upland and lowland)

Wetland condition assessment criteria (Defra, 2024b)		
Parcel (refer to GIS mapping data)	**East of Stream**	**West of Stream**
Habitat	**Fens (upland and lowland)**	**Fens (upland and lowland)**
A: The water table is at, or near the surface throughout the year - this could be open water or saturation of soil at the surface. There is no artificial drainage, unless specifically to maintain water levels	No	Yes
B: The parcel is a good representation of the wetland habitat type it has been identified as, based on its UKHab description - as in, the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches the characteristics of the specific habitat type. Indicator species for the specific wetland habitat type1 listed by UKHab are consistently present	No	Yes
C: The water supplies (groundwater, surface water and or rainwater) to the wetland are of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution	Yes	Yes
D: Cover of scrub and scattered trees are less than 10%	Yes	Yes
E: Cover of bare ground is less than 5%	Yes	Yes
F: There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species and species indicative of sub-optimal condition make up less than 5% of ground cover*	No	No
G: No more than 25% of the habitat area has a continuous cover of litter preventing regeneration (Fen and Purple moor grass only)	No	Yes
Number of criteria passed	3	6
Condition category	**Poor**	**Good**

Tall Forbs

Sparsely vegetated land condition assessment criteria (Defra, 2024b)	
Parcel (refer to GIS mapping data)	**2, 4, 14, 101, 103**
Habitat	**Tall Forbs**
A. The parcel represents a good example of its specific sparsely vegetated habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description, with characteristic indicator species consistently present.	Yes
B. The cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, scrub and trees is less than 25%.	Yes
C. There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and species indicative of suboptimal condition make up less than 5% of vegetated ground cover.	No
D. Vegetation cover of vascular and non-vascular plants is between 5 and 50%.	No
E. Number of criteria passed	3
Condition category	**Moderate**

Woodland

Woodland condition assessment criteria (Defra, 2024b)			
Parcel (refer to GIS mapping data)	**9 (north)**	**10 (east)**	**16 (west, along stream)**
Habitat	**Other Woodland; Broadleaved**	**Other Woodland; Broadleaved**	**Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland**

A: Age distribution of trees Good: Three age-classes, Moderate: Two age-classes, Poor: One age-class	2	2	2
B: Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage Good: No significant browsing damage evident in woodland, Moderate: Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or less of whole woodland, Poor: Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland	3	3	2
C: Invasive plant species Good: No invasive species present in woodland, Moderate: Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* or cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* not present, other invasive species <10% cove., Poor: Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species >10% cover	2	1	3
D: Number of native tree species Good: Five or more native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel, Moderate: Three to four native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel, Poor: Two or less native tree or shrub species across woodland parcel	2	2	2
E: Cover of native tree and shrub species Good: >80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native, Moderate: 50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native, Poor: <50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native	2	1	1
F: Open space within woodland Good: 10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space, unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted, Moderate: 21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space, Poor: <10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space, but if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category	3	3	3
G: Woodland regeneration Good: All three classes present in woodland; trees 4 - 7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth, Moderate: One or two classes only present in woodland, Poor: No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland	2	1	2
H: Tree health Good: Tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback, Moderate: 11% to 25% tree mortality and or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present, Poor: Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present	3	3	3
I : Vegetation and ground flora Good: Recognisable NVC plant community10 at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists., Moderate: Recognisable woodland NVC plant community at ground layer present., Poor: No recognisable woodland NVC plant community at ground layer present	2	1	2
J: Woodland vertical structure Good: Three or more storeys across all survey plots, or a complex woodland, Moderate: Two storeys across all survey plots, Poor: One or less storey across all survey plots	2	1	2
K: Veteran trees Good: Two or more veteran trees per hectare, Moderate: One veteran tree per hectare, Poor: No veteran trees present in woodland	1	1	1
L: Amount of deadwood Good: 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an	2	1	3

abundance of small cavities, Moderate: Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities, Poor: Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities			
M: Woodland disturbance Good: No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident, Moderate: Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground, Poor: More than 1 hectare of nutrient enrichment and or more than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground	2	2	2
Total score	28	22	28
Condition category	**Moderate**	**Poor**	**Moderate**

Scrub

Scrub condition assessment criteria (Defra, 2024b)			
Parcel	**8**	**6**	**11**
Habitat	**Blackthorn scrub**	**Willow scrub**	**Blackthorn scrub**
A: The scrub is a good representation of the habitat type it has been identified as. At least 80% of scrub is native, and there are at least three native woody species, with no single species comprising more than 75% of the cover (except hazel, common juniper, sea buckthorn or box)	No	Yes	No
B: Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran) shrubs are all present	No	No	No
C: There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species and species indicative of sub-optimal condition make up less than 5% of ground cover	Yes	Yes	Yes
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	No	No
E: There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges	No	No	No
No of criteria passed	1	2	1
Condition category	**Poor**	**Poor**	**Poor**

Individual Trees

Individual Tree condition assessment criteria (Defra 2024b)		
Tree species	**3 x silver birch**	**1 x sycamore**
A. The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Yes	No
B. The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Yes	Yes
C. The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature)1.	No	No
D. There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Yes	Yes
E. Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	No

F. More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Yes	Yes
No. of criteria passed	4	3
Conditions category	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
Size class	Small	Small

Stream

Stream condition assessment summary (from Cartographer online database. Full Spreadsheet for the 5 sample points provided to WODC).		
Variable	**Baseline**	**Post Works**
Project Code	PM1	PM2
A1: Braiding Index	1	1
A2: Sinuosity Index	1.0727273	1.0727273
A3: Anabraching Index	1	1
A4: Level of Confinement	Confined	Confined
A5: Reach Valley Gradient	0.018181818	0.018181818
A6: Bedrock Reach	False	False
A7: Coarsest bed material	Cobble	Cobble
A8: Average bed material	Gravel-Pebble	Gravel-Pebble
Calculated	F	F
Overridden	NA	NA
Final River Type	F	F
Survey Type	Pre-project	Scenario
Shape	1.8842365	1.643145
Average Width	1.53	1.63
Prelim Condition Score	1.67	1.72
Final Condition Class	Fairly Good	Fairly Good

Appendix 2: Plant species lists

DAFOR scores indicate relative abundance estimated in the field by the surveyor: D: dominant; A:abundant; F: frequent; O: occasional: rare.

Fen (at Pool Meadow)

Galium aparine	Cleavers	A
Urtica dioica	Common nettle	A
Epilobium hirsutum	Great willowherb	F
Equisetum telmateia	Great horsetail	F
Filipendula ulmaria	Meadowsweet	F
Heracleum sphondylium	Common hogweed	F
Poa trivialis	Rough-stalked meadow-grass	F
Brachythecium albicans	Whitish feather-moss	O
Calliergonella cuspidata	Pointed spear-moss	O
Impatiens balsamifera	Himalayan balsam	O
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow flag iris	O
Kindbergia prealonga	Common feather-moss	O
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved dock	O
Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow parsley	R
Caltha palustris	Marsh marigold	R
Carex pendula	Pendulous sedge	R
Geranium robertianum	Herb Robert	R
Moehringia trinervia	Three-nerved sandwort	R
Ranunculus repens	Creeping buttercup	R

Fen (north-west of stream)

Equisetum telemateia	Great horsetail	A
Impatient balsamifera	Himalayan balsam	A
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow flag iris	A
Carex riparia/acutiformis	Pond sedge	F
Filipendula ulmaria	Meadowsweet	O
Galium aparine	Cleavers	O
Mentha aquatica	Water mint	O
Urtica dioica	Common nettle	O
Angelica sylvestris	Wil angelica	R
Moehringia trinervia	Three-nerved sandwort	R

Tall Forbs (north of main fen)

Epilobium hirsutum	Great willowherb	A
Equisetum telmateia	Great horsetail	A
Galium aparine	Cleavers	A
Ficaria verna (formerly *Ranunculus ficaria*)	Lesser celandine	A

Urtica dioica	Common nettle	F
Glyceria maxima	Reed sweetgrass	O
Heracleum sphondylium	Common hogweed	O
Kindbergia praelonga	Common feather-moss	O
Angelica sylvestris	Wild angelica	R
Anthirscus sylvestris	Cow parsley	R
Bromus sterilis	Barren brome	R
Cardamine flexuosa	Wavy bittercress	R
Geranium dissectum	Cut-leaved crane's-bill	R
Iris pseudacrous	Yellow flag iris	R
Poa trivialis	Rough-stalked meadow-grass	R
Rumex crispus	Curled dock	R

Tall Forbs (elsewhere, e.g. along paths and in woodland clearing at north)

Epilobium hirsutum	Great willowherb	A
Galium aparine	Cleavers	A
Ranunculus acris	Meadow buttercup	A
Urtica dioica	Common nettle	A
Equisetum telmateia	Great horsetail	F
Alliaria petiolata	Garlic mustard	O
Alopecurus pratensis	Meadow foxtail	O
Anthirscus sylvestris	Cow parsley	O
Broad-leaved dock	Rumex obtusifolius	O
Carduus crispus	Welted thistle	O
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's foot	O
Geranium robertianum	Herb Robert	O
Hedera helix	Ivy	O
Heracleum sphondylium	Common hogweed	O
Lamiastrum galeobdolon ssp. *argentatum*	Variegated yellow archangel	O
Mercurialis perennis	Dog's mercury	O
Poa trivialis	Rough meadow-grass	O
Ranunculus repens	Creeping buttercup	O
Rubus fruticosus agg.	Bramble	O
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved dock	O
Taraxacum officinalis agg.	Dandelion	O
Alopecurus pratensis	Meadow foxtail	R
Angelica sylvestris	Wild angelica	R
Arctium minus	Lesser burdock	R
Brachythecium albicans	Whitish feather moss	R
Bromus ramosus	Hairy brome	R
Cirsium arvense	Creeping thistle	R
Cirsium vulgare	Spear thistle	R
Dryopteris filix-mas	Male fern	R
Elymus repens	Common couch grass	R
Epilobium ciliatum	American willowherb	R
Geum urbanum	Wood avens	R

Iris pseudacorus	Yellow flag iris	R
Jacobaea vulgaris	Common ragwort	R
Lamium album	white dead nettle	R
Myositis arvensis	Field forget-me-not	R
Phleum pratensis	Timothy	R
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn (seedling)	R
Ficaria verna	Lesser celandine	R
Thamnobryum alopecurum	Fox-tail feather-moss	R

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	D
Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore (seedling)	F
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	F
Hedera helix	Ivy	F
Aesculus hippocastanum	Horse chestnut	O
Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow parsley	O
Asplenium scolopendrium	Hart's-tongue fern	O
Brachypodium sylvaticum	False brome	O
Circaea leutetiana	Enchanter's nightshade	O
Corylus avellana	Hazel	O
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	O
Dryopteris filix-mas	Male fern	O
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash	O
Galium aparine	Cleavers	O
Geranium robertiiaum	Herb Robert	O
Geum urbanum	Wood avens	O
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell	O
Mercurialis perennis	Dog's mercury	O
Poa trivialis	Rough-stalked meadow-grass	O
Polystichum setiferum	Soft shield-fern	O
Rosa canina	Dog rose	O
Stachys sylvatica	Hedge woundwort	O
Ulmus procera	English elm	O
Dryopteris dilatata	Broad bucker fern	R
Fagus sylvatica	Beech	R
Sambucus nigra	Elder	R
Sanicula europaea	Sanicle	R
Ulmus sp.	Elm (seedling)	R

Other woodland, broadleaved

Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	D
Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam	A
Mercurialis perennis	Dog's mercury	A
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	A

Ficaria verna	Lesser celandine	A
Urtica dioica	Common nettle	A
Fraxonis exclesior	Ash	F
Stachys sylvaticum	Hedge woundwort	F
Alliaria petiolata	Garlic mustard	O
Betula pendula	Silver birch	O
Brachypodium sylvaticum	False brome	O
Carduus crispus	Welted thistle	O
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	O
Epilobium hirsutum	Great willlowherb	O
Gelchmoa hederacea	Ground ivy	O
Geranium robertianum	Herb Robert	O
Hedera helix	Ivy	O
Plantago major	Greater plantain	O
Poa trivialis	Rough meadow-grass	O
Rubis fruticosus agg.	Bramble	O
Rumex sanguineus	Wood dock	O
Angelica sylvestris	Wild angelica	R
Digitalis purpurea	Foxglove	R
Epilobium ciliatum	American willowherb	R
Epilobium parviflorum	Hoary willowherb	R
Equisetum telmateia	Great horsetail	R
Galium aparine	Cleavers	R
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire fog	R
Leycesteria formosa	Himalayan honeysuckle	R
Moehringia trinervia	Three nerved sandwort	R
Ranunculus acris	Meadow buttercup	R
Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet	R
Sorbus aria	Whitebeam	R
Tamus communis	Black bryony	R

Appendix 3: Summaries of Relevant Policy, Legislation and Other Instruments

This section briefly summarises the legislation, policy and related issues that are relevant to the main text of the report. The following text does not constitute legal or planning advice.

National Planning Policy Framework (England)

The Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2023. Text excerpts from the NPPF are shown where they may be relevant to planning applications and biodiversity including protected sites, habitats and species.

The Government sets out the three objectives for sustainable development (economy, social and environmental) at paragraphs 8-10 to be delivered through the plan preparation and implementation level and 'are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged' (paragraph 9). The planning system's environmental objective is 'to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity…'(paragraph 8c).

In conserving and enhancing the natural environment, the NPPF (Paragraph 180) states that 'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment' by:

- Protecting and enhancing...sites of biodiversity value... '(in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)'.
- Recognising the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services… including… trees and woodland.
- Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- Preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.

In respect of protected sites, at paragraph 181, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to distinguish, at the plan level, '…between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value...take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.' A footnote to paragraph 181 refers to the preferred use of agricultural land of poorer quality if significant development of agricultural land is to take place.

Paragraph 185 refers to how plans should aim to protect and enhance biodiversity. Plans should: 'identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity [a footnote refers to ODPM Circular 06/2005 for further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity in the planning system], wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation;' and to 'promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.'

Paragraph 186 advises that, when determining planning applications, '…local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments)

should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

- development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.'

In paragraph 187, the following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.'

In paragraph 188 the NPPF refers back to sustainable development in relation to appropriate assessment and states: 'the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site'.

In paragraph 189, the NPPF refers to planning policies and decisions taking account of ground conditions and risks arising from land instability and contamination at sites. In relation to risks associated with land remediation account is to be taken of 'potential impacts on the natural environment' that arise from land remediation.

In paragraph 191 the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that development is appropriate to the location and take into account likely effects (including cumulative) on the natural environment and, in doing so, they 'should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation' (paragraph 191c).

Government Circular ODPM 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (England only)

Paragraph 98 of Government Circular 06/2005 advises that "the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Local authorities should consult Natural England before granting planning permission. They should consider attaching appropriate planning conditions or entering into planning obligations under which the developer would take steps to secure the long-term protection of the species. They should also advise developers that they must comply with any statutory species' protection provisions affecting the site concerned..."

Paragraph 99 of Government Circular 06/2005[2] advises that "it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted".

[2] *ODPM Circular 06/2005. Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impacts within the Planning System* (2005). HMSO Norwich.

Standing Advice (GOV.UK - England only)

The GOV.UK website provides information regarding protected species and sites in relation to development proposals: 'Local planning authorities should take advice from Natural England or the Environment Agency about planning applications for developments that may affect protected species.' GOV.UK advises that 'some species have standing advice which you can use to help with planning decisions. For others you should contact Natural England or the Environment Agency for an individual response.'

The standing advice (originally from Natural England and now held and updated on GOV.UK3) provides advice to planners on deciding if there is a 'reasonable likelihood' of protected species being present. It also provides advice on survey and mitigation requirements.

When determining an application for development that is covered by standing advice, in accordance with guidance in Government Circular 06/2005, local planning authorities are required to take the standing advice into account. In paragraph 82 of the aforementioned Circular, it is stated that: 'The standing advice will be a material consideration in the determination of the planning application in the same way as any advice received from a statutory consultee…it is up to the planning authority to decide the weight to be attached to the standing advice, in the same way as it would decide the weight to be attached to a response from a statutory consultee.'

The Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act includes the requirement for mandatory biodiversity gain for all qualifying developments in England through an amendment to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which came into force on 12 February 2024. For all qualifying developments in England, The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No. 8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2024 (SI44) at Regulation 3 advises in relation to planning applications that '*the biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to a planning permission within the scope of regulation 2 (2) of these Regulations, where the application for planning permission was made before 12th February 2024*'. From 12 February 2024, the Act and associated secondary Regulations (SI2024 No's 44- 50) insert amendments into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which in summary require the following for all qualifying developments in England:

- The provision of a required percentage of biodiversity gain, currently set nationally to be at 10%, as a general condition of planning permission,
- The use of the statutory Biodiversity Metric to calculate the biodiversity gain,
- Submission to and approval by the planning authority, of a Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) for the development before the development may be begun; the BGP is to be prepared using a template prepared by Defra to demonstrate how biodiversity gain will be delivered on and / or off-site and how the biodiversity gain hierarchy has been applied so that the local planning authority can take account of the approach taken when deciding whether to approve the BGP,
- Significant on-site biodiversity gain and all offsite biodiversity gain to be secured for a fixed period, currently nationally set at 30 years,
- Alternative arrangements to be made for the purpose of minimising the adverse effect of development to habitats deemed to be irreplaceable habitat (see NPPF),
- Demonstration of how the biodiversity gain will be secured, typically through planning obligations in a section 106 agreement,
- Registration of offsite biodiversity gain and allocation of relevant biodiversity units to a given development in a national register for which Natural England is the Register Operator,
- Use of statutory biodiversity credits through the Secretary of State, which is considered to be a last resort, if onsite and/or offsite biodiversity gains cannot achieve the required percentage.

[3] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-species-how-to-review-planning-applications#standing-advice-for-protected-species

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 – Habitats and species of principal importance (England)

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force on 1st October 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act require the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England as required by the Act. In accordance with the Act the Secretary of State keeps this list under review and will publish a revised list if necessary, in consultation with Natural England.

The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local authorities and utilities companies, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions, including development control and planning. This is commonly referred to as the 'Biodiversity Duty.'

Guidance for public authorities on implementing the Biodiversity Duty[4] has been published by Defra. One of the key messages in this document is that 'conserving biodiversity includes restoring and enhancing species populations and habitats, as well as protecting them.' In England the administration of the planning system and licensing schemes are highlighted as having a 'profound influence on biodiversity conservation.' Local authorities are required to take measures to "promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species. The guidance states that 'the duty aims to raise the profile and visibility of biodiversity, clarify existing commitments with regard to biodiversity, and to make it a natural and integral part of policy and decision making.'

In 2007, the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Partnership published an updated list of priority UK species and habitats covering terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity to focus conservation action for rarer species and habitats in the UK. The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework[5], which covers the period from 2011 to 2020, now succeeds the UK BAP. The UK priority list contained 1150 species and 65 habitats requiring special protection and has been used as a reference to draw up the lists of species and habitats of principal importance in England.

In England, there are 56 Habitats of Principal Importance and 943 Species of Principal Importance on the S41 list. These are all the habitats and species found in England that were identified as requiring action in the UK BAP and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities in the subsequent UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

European protected species (Animals)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidates various amendments that have been made to the original (1994) Regulations which transposed the EC Habitats Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into national law.

"European protected species" (EPS) of animal are those which are shown on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). They are subject to the provisions of Regulation 43 of those Regulations. All EPS are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, these pieces of legislation make it an offence to:

a. Intentionally or deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal included amongst these species

b. Possess or control any live or dead specimens or any part of, or anything derived from these species

c. deliberately or recklessly disturb wild animals of any such species

d. deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal, or

e. intentionally, deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, or obstruct access to such a place

For the purposes of paragraph (c), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

[4] Defra, 2007. *Guidance for Public Authorities on Implementing The Biodiversity Duty*. (http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb12585-pa-guid-english-070516.pdf)

[5] JNCC and Defra (on behalf of the Four Countries' Biodiversity Group). 2012. *UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework*. July 2012. (http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6189)

a. to impair their ability—

   i. to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or

   ii. in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or

b. to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Although the law provides strict protection to these species, it also allows this protection to be set aside (derogated) through the issuing of licences. The licences in England are currently determined by Natural England (NE) for development works and by Natural Resources Wales in Wales. In accordance with the requirements of the Regulations (2017, as amended), a licence can only be issued where the following requirements are satisfied:

a. The proposal is necessary 'to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'

b. 'There is no satisfactory alternative'

c. The proposals 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Definition of breeding sites and resting places

Guidance for all European Protected Species of animal, including bats and great crested newt, regarding the definition of breeding and of breeding and resting places is provided by The European Council (EC) which has prepared specific guidance in respect of the interpretation of various Articles of the EC Habitats Directive.[6] Section II.3.4.b) provides definitions and examples of both breeding and resting places at paragraphs 57 and 59 respectively. This guidance states that 'The provision in Article 12(1)(d) [of the EC Habitats Directive] should therefore be understood as aiming to safeguard the ecological functionality of breeding sites and resting places.' Further the guidance states: 'It thus follows from Article 12(1)(d) that such breeding sites and resting places also need to be protected when they are not being used, but where there is a reasonably high probability that the species concerned will return to these sites and places. If for example a certain cave is used every year by a number of bats for hibernation (because the species has the habit of returning to the same winter roost every year), the functionality of this cave as a hibernating site should be protected in summer as well so that the bats can re-use it in winter. On the other hand, if a certain cave is used only occasionally for breeding or resting purposes, it is very likely that the site does not qualify as a breeding site or resting place.'

Birds

All nesting birds are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition to this, for some rarer species (listed on Schedule 1 of the Act), it is an offence to disturb them whilst they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) places duties on competent authorities (including Local Authorities and National Park Authorities) in relation to wild bird habitat. These provisions relate back to Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the EC Directive on the conservation of wild birds (2009/147/EC, 'Birds Directive'[7]) (Regulation 10 (3)) requires that the objective is the 'preservation, maintenance and re-establishment of a sufficient diversity and area of habitat for wild birds in the United Kingdom, including by means of the upkeep, management and creation of such habitat, as appropriate, having regard to the requirements of Article 2 of the new Wild Birds Directive…' Regulation 10 (7) states: 'In considering which measures may be appropriate for the purpose of security or contributing to the objective in [Regulation 10 (3)] Paragraph 3, appropriate account must be taken of economic and recreational requirements'.

[6] Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (February 2007), EC.
[7] 2009/147/EC Birds Directive (30 November 2009. European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

In relation to the duties placed on competent authorities under the 2017 Regulations, Regulation 10 (8) states: 'So far as lies within their powers, a competent authority in exercising any function [including in relation to town and country planning] in or in relation to the United Kingdom must use all reasonable endeavours to avoid any pollution or deterioration of habitats of wild birds (except habitats beyond the outer limits of the area to which the new Wild Birds Directive applies).'

Badger

Badger is protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is not permitted to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so; or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it. A badger sett is defined in the legislation as "a structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by a badger".

ODPM Circular 06/2005[8] provides further guidance on statutory obligations towards badger within the planning system. Of particular note is paragraph 124, which states that "The likelihood of disturbing a badger sett, or adversely affecting badgers' foraging territory, or links between them, or significantly increasing the likelihood of road or rail casualties amongst badger populations, are capable of being material considerations in planning decisions."

Natural England provides Standing Advice[9], which is capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions. Natural England recommends mitigation to avoid impacts on badger setts, which includes maintaining or creating new foraging areas and maintaining or creating access (commuting routes) between setts and foraging/watering areas.

Reptiles

All native reptile species receive legal protection in Great Britain under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Viviparous lizard, slow-worm, grass snake and adder are protected against killing, injuring and unlicensed trade only. Sand lizard and smooth snake receive additional protection as "European Protected species" under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

All six native species of reptile are included as 'species of principal importance' for the purpose of conserving biodiversity under Section 41 (England) of the NERC Act 2006 and Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Current Natural England Guidelines for Developers[10] states that 'where it is predictable that reptiles are likely to be killed or injured by activities such as site clearance, this could legally constitute intentional killing or injuring.' Further the guidance states: 'Normally prohibited activities may not be illegal if 'the act was the incidental result of a lawful operation and could not reasonably have been avoided'. Natural England 'would expect reasonable avoidance to include measures such as altering development layouts to avoid key areas, as well as capture and exclusion of reptiles.'

The Natural England Guidelines for Developers state that 'planning must incorporate two aims where reptiles are present:

- To protect reptiles from any harm that might arise during development work;
- To ensure that sufficient quality, quantity and connectivity of habitat is provided to accommodate the reptile population, either on-site or at an alternative site, with no net loss of local reptile conservation status.'

[8] *ODPM Circular 06/2005. Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impacts within the Planning System* (2005). HMSO Norwich.
[9] http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/spatialplanning/standingadvice/specieslinks.aspx

[10] English Nature, 2004. *Reptiles: guidelines for developers.* English Nature, Peterborough. https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20150303064706/http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/76006

Water vole

Water vole is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any water vole, damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place of shelter or protection that the animals are using, or disturb voles while they are using such a place. Water vole is listed as a Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the NERC Act 2006 in England and under the provisions of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Wild mammals in general

The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 (as amended) makes provision for the protection of wild mammals from certain cruel acts, making it an offence for any person to intentionally cause suffering to any wild mammal. In the context of development sites, for example, this may apply to rabbits in their burrows.

Invasive non-native species

An invasive non-native species is any non-native animal or plant that has the ability to spread causing damage to the environment.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to release, or to allow to escape into the wild, any animal which is not ordinarily resident in and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state or is listed under Schedule 9 of the Act.

It is an offence to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild invasive non-native plants listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Appendix 4: Proposed Monitoring and Management Schedule

The following schedule should be subject to amendment and updating following the ecological monitoring which occurs in years 1 to 3 and following onsite observations by a suitably experienced person thereafter.

Activity	Year after completion of works					Timing
	1	2	3	Every 2-3 years thereafter	As needed	
Mid-summer ecologist walkover and email report	✓	✓	✓	✓		June
Mid-winter ecologist walkover and email report	✓	✓	✓	✓		January
Vegetation clearance to keep path clear and as needed for safety	✓	✓	✓		✓	As needed
Fen vegetation clearance (limited to a maximum half of drier area in any one year). Vegetation clearance in wetter areas may not be required, to be agreed with a suitably experienced ecologist.				✓		January

Terms of Reference for the Climate & Ecology Working Group

Adopted: XX/XX/XXXX
Next Review: XX/XX/XXXX

Chipping Norton Town Council Climate and Ecology Working Party: Terms of Reference

1. Purpose
The Climate and Ecology Working Party is established to support Chipping Norton Town Council in advancing its response to the climate and ecological emergency. The group will facilitate the creation, implementation, and monitoring of strategies to promote environmental sustainability and climate resilience within the community.

2. Objectives
The Working Party will:

- Develop a detailed action plan aimed at reducing the Town Council's carbon footprint and mitigating negative environmental impacts.
- Identify and implement initiatives that contribute to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- Collaborate with residents, businesses, and organisations to increase community-wide awareness and engagement in climate actions.
- Monitor, assess, and report on progress made toward meeting environmental targets.

3. Scope of Work
The Working Party will focus on:

- Evaluating current Town Council operations for environmental impact and recommending sustainable practices.
- Engaging with local planning authorities to align planning and infrastructure decisions with ecological sustainability goals.
- Advocating for and implementing measures that protect local biodiversity, enhance habitats, and prevent degradation of natural resources.
- Supporting community initiatives that promote public transport, cycling, and reduced vehicular congestion in Chipping Norton.
- Regularly reporting on progress, challenges, and future actions to the Town Council.

4. Membership
The Working Party will consist of:

- A minimum of three Town Councillors.
- Community representatives, including residents, business owners, and local environmental organisations.
- Experts or advisors, as needed, with knowledge of climate science, ecology, and sustainability practices.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Chair**: A Chair of the Working Party will be elected annually and coordinate meetings, set agendas, and lead discussions.
- **Members**: All members will contribute expertise, attend meetings, and assist in executing the action plan.

6. Meetings and Quorum

- Meetings will be held quarterly, with additional meetings scheduled as required.
- Agendas and meeting materials will be circulated in advance.
- Decisions will be made by consensus, with minutes recorded.
- As Working Party meetings are not Town Council meetings, Standing Orders of the Council do not apply.
- Working Party meetings are not required to be held in public.
- Quorum: Two Town Councillors required at each meeting

7. Budget

- The Working Party will not be set a budget.
- The Working Party will not make final decisions on behalf of the council or commit the council to any financial outlay.
- Any funding requests can be submitted to the Parent Committee (Strategic Planning Committee) or Full Council for consideration and a decision by resolution.

8. Reporting

The Working Party will:

- Submit biannual reports to the Town Council detailing actions taken, progress made, and future objectives.
- Prepare annual recommendations for the Council on further measures to address climate and ecological goals.

9. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with evolving environmental goals and community needs.

Strategic Planning Committee 11th Nov
Active Moss Filter Update
Written by Cllr Festa 29/10/24

A Teams meeting was held on 28/10/24 with Cllr Festa, OCC Highways Engagement team Chris Grain and his manager Matthew Timms, who happens to live in Chippy and is aware of the Air Quality issues.
The principle of the Active Moss Filter was supported - particularly during the next 10years as we transition to a greater number of EVs.
Location update

1. The installation in the original location is deemed too big and would obscure the highways signage.
2. It was agreed that the filter located nearer to Middle Row would be ineffective and little point in doing it.
3. The proposed location on the sloping pavement between A44 and High St was deemed a possibility and would be discussed with the numerous stakeholders. Incidentally, the Highways Team explained it's proposed to remove the paving in this area and plant it to improve the health longevity of the existing trees.

The Highways Engagement Team have been pointed to the https://greencitysolutions.de/en/ website who have installed these filters.
Matthew said that he would be happy to support a stand-alone solar powered / rain-catcher irrigation solution which is technically possible.

Next OCC Highways Engagement team update is promised mid-Nov.
Funding status – not yet established.

Agenda item 10 – Committee budget 2025/2026

Attached is a draft committee budget for 2025/26. This has been informed by previous spend, as well as current projects that the Committee are working on. The following points should be noted:

- The War Memorial budget line has been decreased as the required repairs to the war memorial have now been completed.
- The contract budget is no longer required as the ground's maintenance service will be in house and covered in the Finance and Resources budget.
- The maintenance budget has been decreased due to the implantation of the in-house service which will reduce the need to employ contractors to carry out as many tasks.
- The interments and memorials income line has been decreased as current income suggests this is too high.

Recommendation:

As part of the budget setting process, the committee should agree a draft budget for 2025/26 to help inform the final draft budget for Full Council to approve. It is important to note that this will be subject to change depending on the overall picture.

STRATEGIC PLANNING		2023/2024 Budget	Actual	2024/2025 Agreed	EMR	Total	Actual YTD	2025/2026 Proposed
130	**Cemetery**							
3190	Interments & Memorials	14000	7034	15000	0	15000	1800	7000
3191	Grave Purchase	4000	645	4500	0	4500	650	1000
3290	Miscellaneous Income	0	75	0	0	0	150	0
	Total Income	**18000**	**7754**	**19500**	**0**	**19500**	**2600**	**8000**
6130	Water & Sewerage	100	85	100	0	100	37	100
6210	Rates	1500	3458	3500	0	3500	1909	2000
6400	Repairs and Maintenance	10000	9982	12500	0	12500	3234	10000
6417	Maintenance	0	57	0	0	0	28	0
6465	Contract	10000	7447	10000	0	10000	3814	0
6471	Skips for cemetery	600	635	600	0	600	235	700
7650	Insurance	500	374	0	0	0	0	0
new code	Pest Control							1500
7720	Other Miscellaneous Expenses	500	1565	500	0	500	856	250
	Total Expenditure							**14550**
140	**Closed Churchyard**							
6400	Repairs and Maintenance	3000	5013	5000	0	5000	2100	2500
6417	Maintenance	0	1560	0	0	0	0	0
6465	Contract	2000	1950	2000	0	2000	999	0
	Total Expenditure							**2500**
180	**Pool Meadow**							
6417	Maintenance	5000	0	2500	0	2500	3900	500
6430	Restoration Project	25000	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Expenditure							**500**
185	**Millennium Garden**							
6417	Maintenance	1000	1144	1200	0	1200	0	250
6465	Contract	500	300	500	0	500	153	0
	Total Expenditure							**250**
186	**War Memorial**							
6417	Maintenance	0	32	0	0	0	0	0
6470	War Memorial	2500	0	5000	0	5000	0	500
	Total Expenditure							**500**
	TOTAL INCOME							**8000**
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE							**18300**
	NET INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE							**-10300**

Item 11: Planning Applications

1. APPLICATION NO: **24/02367/HHD**
   PROPOSAL: Erection of rear extensions to create additional ground and first floor living space, along with construction of a front porch.
   ADDRESS: 26 Walterbush Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

2. APPLICATION NO: **24/02518/CLP**
   PROPOSAL: Certificate of lawfulness (to allow the installation of air source heat pumps).
   ADDRESS: Chipping Norton Library, Goddards Lane, Chipping Norton

3. APPLICATION NO: **24/02582/HHD**
   PROPOSAL: Single storey rear extension.
   ADDRESS: 12 Coopers Square, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

4. APPLICATION NO: **24/02546/LBC**
   PROPOSAL: External alterations to replace damaged stone and repointing.
   ADDRESS: 26 High Street, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

5. APPLICATION NO: **24/02554/HHD**
   PROPOSAL: Conversion of store and stables to gym, guest bedroom and studio annex.
   ADDRESS: The Elm, Church Lane, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

6. APPLICATION NO: **24/02594/HHD**
   PROPOSAL: Erection of infill and first floor extensions. Works to include alterations to fenestration, construction of a flat roof dormer extension and installation of roof lights.
   ADDRESS: The Cottage, 33 West Street, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

7. APPLICATION NO: **24/02614/ADV**
   PROPOSAL: Installation of flat cut aluminum letters applied to existing non-illuminated fascia board (painted white)
   ADDRESS: 12 High Street, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

8. APPLICATION NO: **24/02729/LBC**
   PROPOSAL: External alterations to change the signage on front elevation.
   ADDRESS: 12 High Street, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

9. APPLICATION NO: **24/02701/FUL**
   PROPOSAL: Erection of a summerhouse on land adjacent to Albion Place
   ADDRESS: 4 Albion Place, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

10. APPLICATION NO: **24/02649/FUL**
    PROPOSAL: First floor extension to existing bar area and ground floor extension to function suite with roof terrace over
    ADDRESS: Cotswolds Club, Chipping Norton, Southcombe, Chipping Norton

Updates to note:

- **Replacement windows and front door**

44 New Street Chipping Norton Oxfordshire OX7 5LJ
Ref. No: 24/02237/HHD | Validated: Wed 04 Sep 2024 | Status: Approve
CNTC comment: No comment

- **Construction of an external staircase, increase in the depth of a proposed lightwell elevation repairs to No.1-4 Hitchmans Mews, the re-roofing of no. 2-3 Hitchman's Mews and fabric alterations to the Basement of No.5 Hitchmans Mews**

Hitchmans Mews Albion Street Chipping Norton Oxfordshire
Ref. No: 24/02169/LBC | Validated: Wed 11 Sep 2024 | Status: Approve
CNTC comment: No comment

- **Proposed garage conversion and single storey rear extension**

1 The Green Chipping Norton Oxfordshire OX7 5DH
Ref. No: 24/02124/HHD | Validated: Mon 02 Sep 2024 | Status: Approve
CNTC comment: No comment

- **Conversion of existing dwelling to form two flats with associated internal alterations (additional info submitted)**

22A High Street Chipping Norton Oxfordshire OX7 5AD
Ref. No: 24/00944/FUL | Validated: Wed 24 Apr 2024 | Status: Approve
CNTC comment: No comment

Planning Appeal to note:

Original Application Number: **24/01730/PIP**
PROPOSAL: Permission in principle for the construction of up to 7 dwellings.
Site Address: Land at (E) 429862 (N) 226882 Kennels Lane, Chipping Norton