



TECHNICAL NOTE:

- (BASIC LEVEL) PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL
- BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

SITE NAME & ADDRESS	The Village Hall, Brockhall Village, BB6 8AY
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL	Extension to building and car park
PLANNING REFERENCE	Not yet registered
DATE	19 September 2025
AUTHOR	Ryan Knight BSc (Hons) MCIEEM - Principal Ecologist

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Knight Sky Ecology Ltd was commissioned to provide ecological consultancy services to support the proposed development at the Village Hall, Brockhall. The commission included a basic level Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (including desk study and site-based assessment) and a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment which included the following documents:

- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool (hereafter referred to as ‘the metric tool’)
- Habitat condition assessment
- UK Habitat Classification map – Baseline (Figure 1)
- UK Habitat Classification map – Post-development (Figure 2)

This technical note has been produced to accompany the above listed information and provide an overview of the BNG assessment results along with a baseline of all relevant ecological information for the site.

In England, the primary legislation for the statutory framework for BNG is principally set out under Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This legislation was inserted into the 1990 Act by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, and was amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Under the statutory framework for BNG, subject to some exceptions, every planning permission is subject to a condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met (“the biodiversity gain condition”). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat. This increase can be achieved through on-site biodiversity gains, registered off-site biodiversity gains or through statutory biodiversity credits.

Since the advent of mandatory net gain, every development proposal which is not exempt from BNG requires a certain level of ecological information to feed into the metric tool and ensure compliance with both national and local policy frameworks. This obligation extends to certain minor developments that would often not have previously required ecological input.

A small sites metric (SSM) tool was developed for such sites and for use by applicants without input from ecologists. However, the SSM tool remains little used.



In response to the unprecedented demand for ecological services driven by BNG, Knight Sky Ecology has developed an appropriately scaled survey approach tailored to minor development proposals. The level of ecological information presented in this document is considered proportionate to the scale of the project, the existing site conditions and the limited complexity of potential impacts that may arise as a result of the construction of the development. A bat survey report for the building has been submitted separately.

METHODS

The ecology data including the metric tool along with the pre and post development habitat maps have been based on the red line planning boundary provided by the agent. All land within the red line boundary is referred to as 'the site'.

The latest version of the metric tool and User Guide (3 July 2025) have been accessed from:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

Desk Study

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) mapping tool (Available from: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) was used to search for ecological information contained within the following datasets:

- Statutory designated sites for nature conservation (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) including SSSI Impact Risk Zones - to assess for likely impacts on SSSI.
- Priority habitats (as listed within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) within a 250m radius.

Geospatial datasets for Biological Heritage Sites and the Lancashire Ecological Network were accessed from [here](#).

Basic initial information about the site and surrounding area was also obtained from aerial imagery and Ordnance Survey maps in order to provide further contextualised information to the site survey findings.

Site Surveys

General Walkover and Habitat Survey

A site walkover was undertaken on 9th May 2025 by Ryan Knight MCIEEM (Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management).

The aim of the site visit was to gather sufficient baseline information of the habitats within the site and to identify any habitats or features of potential ecological significance. All habitats within the site were described and mapped using UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Version 2 definitions (UKHab Ltd, 2023).

In addition, the site visit included a search for incidental evidence of protected / notable species and an assessment of the sites potential to support protected / notable species.



RESULTS

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Nationally / Internationally Designated Sites

There are no internationally / nationally designated sites for nature conservation within a 2km radius of the site. In addition, the site is not within the impact zone for any SSSI located in the wider area.

Locally Designated Sites

The nearest locally designated site is Great Wood and Mill Wood Biological Heritage Site (BHS) located 180m west. The BHS has been designated for its woodland interests (including ancient woodland components) and for its flowering plants and ferns. There are no conceivable linkages between the development site and this BHS. No significant impacts to the BHS are anticipated as a result of the proposed development.

Priority & Irreplaceable Habitats

There are no priority or irreplaceable habitats within the site. The nearest priority habitat comprises a deciduous woodland located 35m north. There are not considered to be any potential pathways for significant adverse impacts to occur on this priority listed habitat or any other such habitats located in the wider area including the ancient woodland area of Great Wood located 180m west.

Lancashire Ecological Network

The site is not within the ecological network.

Habitat Degradation

No habitat degradation was identified within the area of the proposed development.

Habitats

Photos which provide a general overview of the site and supporting data for the metric tool are provided in Appendix A. Figure 1 in Appendix B provides an overview of the habitat baseline as existing in May 2025.

u1b6 – Other developed land

The red line boundary for the site includes the existing building and car park area.

g4 – Modified grassland

The extended building and car park will impact the rye grass dominated amenity grassland areas on the site margins. All such areas of grassland were managed and cut on a regular basis. The grassland contained a typical (low) diversity of forbs associated with such conditions (i.e., frequent daisy and dandelion with occasional creeping buttercup and broad-leaved plantain). The grassland was within a poor condition.

The combined biodiversity value of the existing habitats within the development boundary is **0.09 units**.

Hedgerows

Non-native and ornamental hedgerows are located on the site entrance and the north and east boundaries. These hedgerows comprise cherry laurel, conifer and silverthorn. The combined biodiversity value of the existing hedgerows within the development boundary is **0.07 units**.

Watercourses

There were no watercourses within the site or within 10m.



Protected and Notable Species of Fauna

The development proposals do not require the removal of any hedgerows and therefore, no potential nesting bird habitats will be affected. There are no waterbodies with typical suitability for great crested newts within 250m and the site presents suboptimal conditions for amphibians due to an absence of cover and refuge features. A bat report has been submitted separately.

Based on the data obtained, no other ecological constraints are likely to be encountered. This is due to the likely absence of certain species from the site or it has been assessed that the works will not significantly affect the distribution or abundance of any notable species or result in actions that may be in breach of the relevant legislation.

HABITAT ENHANCEMENTS AND / OR CREATION

Habitats

Figure 2 in Appendix B provides a UK Habitat Classification map of the site as proposed. The development layout includes the extended building and car park.

The combined value of the created habitats post-development would be **0.05 habitat units**. No hedgerows are proposed to be planted.

EVALUATION AND SUMMARY

HABITATS

The development proposals will result in:

- A net loss of biodiversity value for habitats comprising **0.03 habitat units (minus 37.45%)**.
- No net loss or gain in biodiversity value for hedgerows.

The assessment can confirm that no designated sites, irreplaceable habitats, priority habitats or habitats of medium or high distinctness will be impacted. The biodiversity loss is very small in relative terms and only extends to modified grassland habitat only.

The development will therefore not meet the biodiversity net gain condition for habitats and hedgerows as the 10% net gain would not be achieved. A total of 0.04 habitat units are required to achieve a 10% net gain and a total of less than 0.007 hedgerow units are required.

Given the limited green space available within the site boundary to achieve next gain, the applicant has expressed that off-site credits will be sought. Recommendations relating to this are provided below. Such recommendations are considered sufficient to suggest that the biodiversity net gain condition is more than capable of being discharged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

POST-CONSENT REQUIREMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to meet the BNG condition, the following option is advised:

Set up a purchase agreement for the required biodiversity units from a third-party provider (e.g., the Environment Bank (EB)). This is considered a simple purchasing process which works as follows:

- The existing metric tool (showing a deficit for habitats and hedgerows) is forwarded to the EB.
- The EB provides a broken-down quote for supplying the required biodiversity units.
- In line with the requirements of Section 100 Environment Act 2021, EB's Habitat Banks are governed under a standalone Conservation Covenants with a Responsible Body, as designated by Defra/Natural England.



- The quote represents the full cost of the units over the required 30-year period, and the EB would take on the liability for all of the maintenance and management. There are no additional charges (e.g. no legal, agency costs) and there are no ongoing recurring payments. The purchase price would be a one-off payment and would provide the applicant with a “clean break”.
- The biodiversity units are fully purchased following planning permission. There is an option to reserve the units via a deposit prior to planning consent. The reservation fee is not refundable if planning permission is refused.
- Once purchased, the applicant would receive a reference number and a proof of purchase. This proof of purchase and the number of units would be inputted into the Biodiversity Gain Plan. The Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted prior to commencement (as stated in a mandatory planning condition).

With respect to the post-development habitats within the site, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is not required.

Enhancements for bats in the form of bat boxes are included in the bat report.

APPENDIX A: PHOTOS

Photo 1.
View of building,
car park and
surrounding
modified
grassland.





Photo 2.
Conifer hedge on
north boundary.



Photo 3.
Silverthorn hedge
on east boundary.





Photo 4.
Site entrance.





APPENDIX B: FIGURES (NEXT PAGE)

- **FIGURE 1. UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION MAP (BASELINE)**
FIGURE 2. UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION MAP (POST-DEVELOPMENT)



Survey Information

Site boundary (941.3m²)

UKHab Habitat Survey

g4 - Modified grassland (434.4m²)

u1b6 - Other developed land (506.9m²)

h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (74.1m)

02.5510152025

Metres

PROJECT TITLE

THE VILLAGE HALL, BROCKHALL VILLAGE

DRAWING TITLE

Figure 1: UK Habitat Classification Map (Baseline)

VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
1.0	11/06/25	UKHab	MP	RK

DRAWING NUMBER:

KSEcology/BrockhallVillage /UKHab

SCALE	1:300	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM	OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG
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KNIGHT SKY ECOLOGY



Survey Information	
	Site boundary (941.3m ²)
UKHab Habitat Survey	
	g4 - Modified grassland (271.7m ²)
	u1b6 - Other developed land (669.6m ²)
	h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (74.1m)



PROJECT TITLE				
THE VILLAGE HALL, BROCKHALL VILLAGE				
DRAWING TITLE				
Figure 2: UK Habitat Classification Map (Post-Development)				
VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
1.0	11/06/25	Post-Development	MP	RK
DRAWING NUMBER:				
KSEcology/BrockhallVillage/Post-Development				
SCALE	1:300	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM
		OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG
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