



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

**LAND AT THE VINES,
RIBCHESTER, LANCASHIRE**

APRIL 2026



Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Land at The Vines, Ribchester, Lancashire

A report for

David Gradwell

Report by



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PENNINE Ecological were commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment of the land at The Vines, Ribchester Road, Ribchester, PR3 3XL. The assessment is required to support an application for the construction of a new building and associated forecourt.

The assessment includes the use of Natural England's/Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (version 1.0.4 published in July 2025) to determine whether the proposals would result in a biodiversity net gain or loss. The assessment was completed using standard methodologies and there was no deviation from the recognised guidance.

The baseline habitats recorded on site are of low and very low distinctiveness and have a baseline habitat value of 0.07. The total number of habitat units lost (before mitigation) is 0.06.

The proposed habitats include a new building with associated forecourt (developed land) and six individual trees.

The current proposals would result in a + 18.94 % habitat net loss. The habitat trading rules have been satisfied (see Tables 4.1 below).

	Habitat Units	Habitat Units % Change
On-site Baseline	0.07	-
On-site Post-intervention	0.09	-
On-site Net Change	+ 0.01	+ 18.94 %
Trading Rules Satisfied	Yes	

This report and supporting documentation provides the LPA with sufficient evidence that this proposal can achieve the required 10% net gain in line with local and national policies.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

PENNINE Ecological were commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of the land at The Vines, Ribchester Road, Ribchester, PR3 3XL (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). Appendix A, Figure 1 provides the site's red line application boundary and the results of the UKHabs survey.

The assessment has been undertaken to support an application for the construction of a new stable building and associated hard standing.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT AND BNG BACKGROUND

As of 12th February 2024 BNG became mandatory (unless exempt) under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10% unless otherwise agreed with the relevant Local Authority.

The BNG assessment is required at this site due to the anticipated loss of low distinctiveness habitats. The BNG assessment has been undertaken to determine whether or not the proposal demonstrates an overall net gain or loss of biodiversity, in line with the current National Planning Policy Framework, 2021.

Through site selection and layout, applicants should avoid or reduce any negative impact on biodiversity. They must deliver at least 10% BNG (unless agreed otherwise with the Local Authority), as measured by the statutory biodiversity metric. There are three ways an applicant can achieve BNG.

1. They can create biodiversity on-site (within the red line boundary of a proposal site).
2. If the applicant cannot achieve all of their BNG on-site, they can deliver through a mixture of on-site and off-site. Applicants can either make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the proposal site, or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market.
3. If the applicant cannot achieve on or off-site BNG, they must buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government. This should be a last resort. The government will use the revenue to invest in habitat creation in England.

1.3 SITE LOCATION

The site is located at The Vines along Ribchester Road, Ribchester, Lancashire, PR3 3XL. The site is located 500m northwest of the approximate central point of Ribchester.

The Ordnance Survey central grid reference for the site is SD 64623 35744.

Figure 1.1: Site Location and red line boundary



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION BASELINE SURVEY

For a BNG assessment to be completed a UK Habitat Classification (UKHabs) Survey (UKHab Ltd, 2023) has to be undertaken of the site's baseline habitats. The UKHabs surveys, and habitat condition assessments were undertaken by Luke Pilling in March 2026. This BNG assessment has also been undertaken by Luke Pilling. The survey results and report have been reviewed by Patrick Letham (refer to Section 2.3).

2.2 BIODIVERSITY METRIC CALCULATOR TOOL

All habitats recorded within the footprint of the site during the field survey were included in the Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (version 1.0.4 published in July 2025). The statutory biodiversity metric is a way of measuring biodiversity value for the purposes of BNG.

This metric calculation has been undertaken following the standard methodology (DEFRA, 2025) and in accordance with CIEEM good practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2019).

2.2.1 Strategic Significance

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Lancashire has been published¹. As the LNRS has been published, all baseline habitats have a strategic significance of low. The strategic significance for each proposed habitat parcel on site was determined using the guidance table below (DEFRA, 2025).

¹<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/92a5cd8951b84c65b9cd842f5ffc2333/page/Habitat-Map>

Table 7 Strategic significance categories applied to post-development interventions where a LNRS has been published.

Category	Score	Description
High (Formally identified in local strategy)	1.15	<p>This category can only be applied to post development interventions when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the location of the habitat parcel has been mapped in the Local Habitat Map⁴ as an area where a potential measure has been proposed to help deliver the priorities of that LNRS; and the proposed intervention is consistent⁵ with the mapped potential measure in the LNRS for the habitat parcel <p>You should record that you have applied the published LNRS in your gain plan.</p>
Medium (Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy)	1.10	This category cannot be applied.
Low (Area / compensation not in local strategy)	1	<p>Where the definitions for high strategic significance are not met.</p> <p>Even if your project is in an area mapped with a potential measure, if the proposed intervention is not consistent with a potential measure proposed by the LNRS for that location, you should record strategic significance as low.</p>

2.3 SURVEYOR EXPERIENCE

This surveyor and BNG assessment has been undertaken by Luke Pilling who is a Qualifying Member of CIEEM. Luke's key skills include;

- Three seasons assisting botanical surveys and undertaking condition assessments on a wide range of habitats. Competent botanist in identifying common and widespread habitats.
- Three years' experience of writing technical reports including Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and Biodiversity Net Gain reports.
- Three years' experience bat surveyor of three years undertaking Preliminary Roost Assessments and dusk emergence surveys.
- Experience in Ecological Clerk of Works.

- Experienced in a wide range of ecological surveys including great crested newts, reptiles, badger, and riparian mammals.

The survey findings and report has been reviewed by Patrick Leatham. Patrick is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and has over 14 years' experience in ecological survey and evaluation. The report has also been reviewed by Patrick. Key skills include the following.

Key skills include the following;

- Over 13 years completing Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey / UKHabs Survey and River Corridor Surveys on both small planning applications and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).
- Proficient field botanist, including some difficult plant groups.
- MoRPh rivers certified ecologist able to undertake river condition assessments for BNG.

2.4 LIMITATIONS

The survey was undertaken on 26th March 2026 which is a sub-optimal time for habitat surveys.

However, given the nature of the sites habitats (dominated by highly modified grassland), this is not considered a significant constraint. All the habitats within the survey area have been defined / classified accurately and sufficiently assessed. All parts of the site were accessible.

There are considered to be no survey constraints, and an appropriate assessment of the habitats associated with this site has been completed.

3. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The following section details the baseline habitats, along with habitats to be created, enhanced and retained within the proposal site (where applicable).

3.1 HABITATS BASELINE

The habitats recorded on-site were of the following distinctiveness’;

- Low – Modified grassland.
- Very low – Developed land; sealed surface, and Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface.

3.1.1 Strategic Significance

The strategic significance applied to all habitats at baseline is low (area not in local strategy).

As There is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) established for Lancashire (Lancashire’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy), however, the site does not lie within any current priority measure areas.

The site falls within a measure outlined for pollinator wildflower-rich habitats. As the current and proposed habitats are not consistent with any priority measures, the habitat baseline and creation strategic significance is therefore low.

3.1.2 Habitat Baseline Results Summary

In total, the baseline habitats surveyed have a total habitat value of 0.07 habitat units.

A summary of the baseline habitat information is shown in Table 3.1 below.

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Table 3.1: Summary of the Baseline Habitats and Habitat Value

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Habitat Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Total Habitat Units (Ecological Baseline)	Retained - units	Enhanced – units	Units Lost (before mitigation)
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.0221	V.Low	N/A - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Urban	Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface	0.0324	V.Low	N/A - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.0305	Low	Poor	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.06
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.0054	Low	Poor	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
TOTAL		0.09ha			0.07	0.01	0.00	0.06

3.2 HABITATS CREATED

The habitats to be created on site (Table 3.2) are of the following distinctiveness':

- Medium; Individual trees.
- Very low; Developed land; sealed surface.

The total number of habitat units delivered is 0.07.

The habitats and their respective areas, distinctiveness, condition etc. are included in Table 3.2 below.

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Table 3.2: Summary of the On-Site Habitat Creation and Habitat Value

Broad Habitat	Habitat	Habitat Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Habitat Units Delivered
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.0305	V.Low	N/A	0.00
Individual trees	Urban tree	0.0244	Medium	Moderate	0.07
TOTAL		0.03ha*			0.07

**Tree area not included within habitat area as tree area is calculated on canopy biomass rather than footprint.*

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 CONCLUSION AND BNG ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The following section summarises the Biodiversity Net Gain assessment results.

Baseline habitats of low distinctiveness were assessed as being present within the site in March 2026.

The proposal design has ensured the mitigation hierarchy has been followed. Consultation with Pennine ecological has been ongoing throughout the design stage to minimise impacts to biodiversity.

- Avoiding impacts on notable habitats: There are no notable habitats on site. Notable habitats are considered to be of medium distinctiveness or higher, the baseline habitats comprise modified grassland and urban habitats which are of low and very low distinctiveness.
- Minimise impacts on site: The proposal is for a small stable building, impacting low distinctiveness grassland habitats only. There are very limited impacts on site from the proposals.
- Restoring habitats on site: There are no notable habitats on site and restoring any of the existing habitats is not considered appropriate. The proposals include the planting of six new trees within the same field parcel and land ownership, ensuring mitigation is achieved on site where possible.

The current proposals would generate a +18.94 % habitat net gain. The habitat trading rules have been satisfied (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below).

Table 4.1: Summary of the Biodiversity Net Gain Results

	Habitat Units	Habitat Units % Change
On-site Baseline	0.07	-
On-site Post-intervention	0.09	-
On-site Net Change	+ 0.01	+ 18.94 %
Trading Rules Satisfied	Yes	

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Table 4.2: Extract of BNG Headline Results

On-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.07			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
On-site post-intervention <small>(including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Area habitat units	0.09			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
On-site net change <small>(units & percentage)</small>	Area habitat units	0.01	18.94%		
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%		
Off-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.00			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
Off-site post-intervention <small>(including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Area habitat units	0.00			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
Off-site net change <small>(units & percentage)</small>	Area habitat units	0.00	0.00%		
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%		
Combined net unit change <small>(including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Area habitat units	0.01			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Area habitat units	0.00			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
FINAL RESULTS					
Total net unit change <small>(including all on-sites & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Area habitat units	0.01			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
Total net % change <small>(including all on-sites & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Area habitat units	18.94%			
	Hedgerow units	0.00%			
	Watercourse units	0.00%			
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓				
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.07	0.08	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

5. BNG PROPOSALS

This report and supporting documentation provides the LPA with sufficient evidence that this proposal can achieve the required 10% net gain in line with local and national policies.

To ensure the habitat creation is secured, implemented and protected, a Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan (HMMP), along with supporting figures, is recommended. The HMMP will provide the details of the habitat proposals, planting specifications and future monitoring and management requirements. The HMMP will cover areas shown in Appendix A, Figure 2.

The HMMP can be provided as a planning condition to a granted application.

REFERENCES

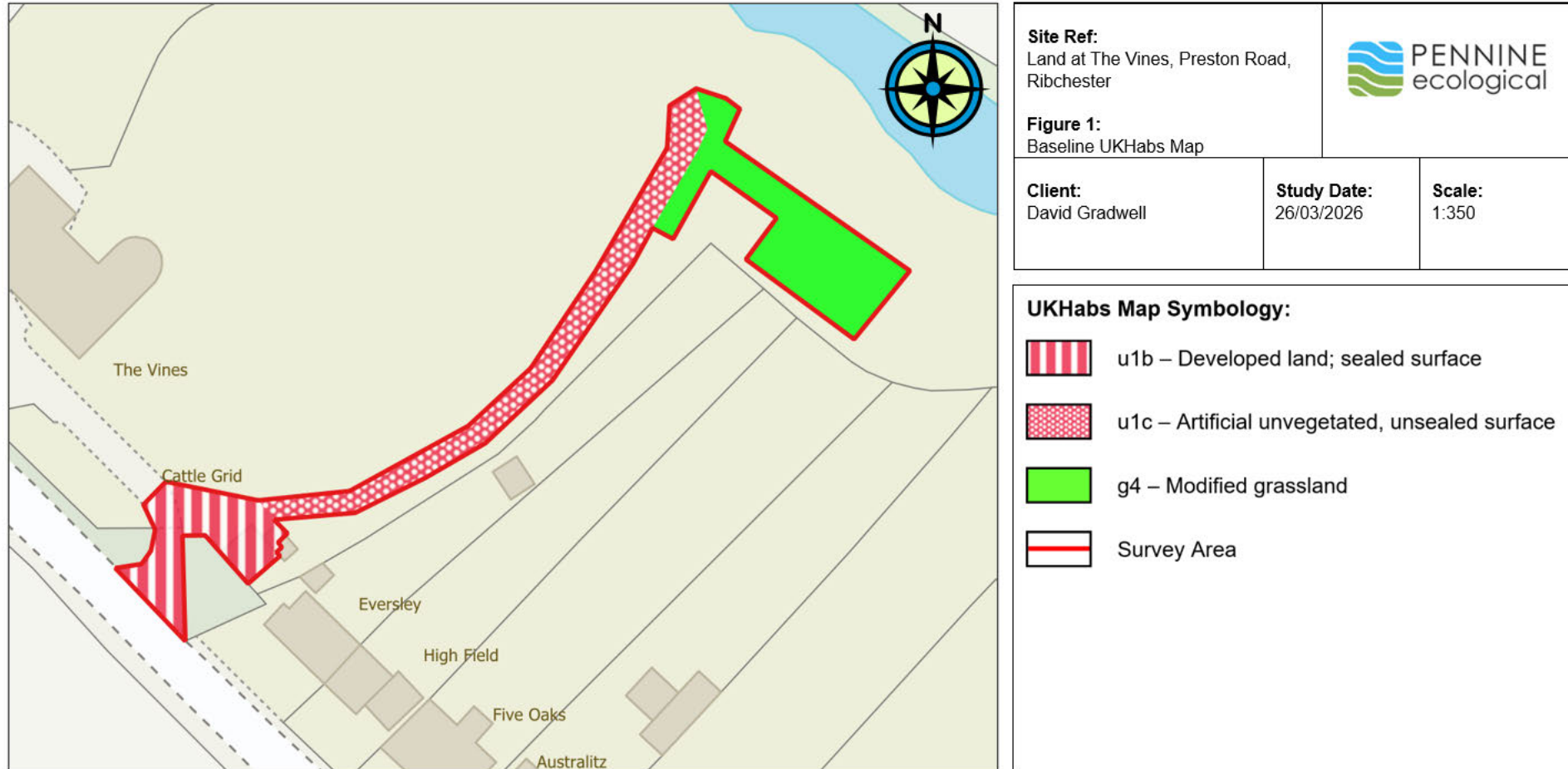
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Appendix A - Figures

Figure 1: Baseline Habitats Map



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Figure 2: Proposed Habitat Map

