

Access Lane at Rose Hill Farm, Whalley Old Road, Billington BB7 9JF

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT

August 2026

ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd Reference: 2025-214

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Document Control

Survey Type:	Surveyors ¹	Survey Date(s)
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SUMMARY

Introduction and Scope

- i. This ecological survey and assessment presents the ecological, biodiversity and nature conservation status of land at Rose Hill Farm. The assessment was requested to inform a planning application proposing the creation of a new access lane to the Rose Hill Farm property from Whalley Old Road.
- ii. This report presents the results of a desktop study, data search and extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey carried out between August and September 2025 with an updated walkover carried out in August 2026. The scope of survey undertaken is appropriate to identify potential ecological constraints, the remit of mitigation required and opportunities for biodiversity associated with the development proposals.
- iii. The 0.0826 hectare (ha) site lies within a field of neutral semi-improved grassland which slopes uphill from Rose Hill Farm towards Whalley Old Road. A small (<5m²) area of hardstanding within the curtilage of Rose Hill Farm lies within the site.

Results of Survey and Assessment

- iv. The proposed development must avoid directly and indirectly impacting Smalley's Farm BHS, which is located off-site and to the east, during the proposed development. It is recommended that a suitable buffer is used to avoid direct impacts to the BHS during any proposed construction works. Works should be regulated by the enforcement of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or similar, and appropriate fencing should be used to ensure works do not impact upon the BHS.
- v. Guidance to be implemented for the protection of the BHS during the proposed works is presented at **Section 5.4**. It is otherwise considered that the proposals are unlikely to impact any statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation.
- vi. All recorded plant species at the site are common and widespread within lowland Britain. None of the habitats present are representative of semi-natural habitat or are a Priority Habitat. No irreplaceable habitats are present at the site or will be impacted by the proposals. The National Vegetation Classification (NVC) communities present are typical of the geographical area and conditions present.
- vii. In terms of each habitat's importance in a geographical context, the semi-improved grassland is considered to be of 'local' importance. The hardstanding is not considered to hold any importance on a geographical scale. Measures for the protection of off-site habitats during the proposed works are presented at **Section 5.4**.
- viii. Virginia Creeper and Indian Balsam, both of which are invasive plant species listed under Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), have been detected within close proximity to the site boundary. It is considered that the proposals present an opportunity for the eradication of these species as part of the proposed development. Further guidance is presented at **Section 5.4**.
- ix. The site provides suitable habitat for nesting birds, and for foraging and sheltering hedgehog and brown hare. No badger have been detected within the site, but the site is located within an area

of suitable habitat for badger. Recommendations for the protection of wildlife during the proposed works are presented at **Section 5.4**.

- x. Appropriate survey effort and / or assessment in accordance with standard guidance, has been carried out to reasonably discount adverse effects on other relevant protected species.

Recommendations and Conclusion

- xi. The recommendations in **Section 5.0** outline all the mandatory measures and additional actions to be applied to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and best practice.

Conclusion

- xii. In the presence of the protection measures outlined in **Section 5.0** and the compensatory planting / measures of benefit for biodiversity as recommended in **Section 5.3**, it is concluded that the proposals are feasible and acceptable in accordance with ecological considerations and relevant planning policy.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

- 1.1.1 ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd was commissioned by Zara Moon Architects to carry out an ecological assessment of the field to the south of Rose Hill Farm (also known as Smalley's Farm and hereafter referred to as the 'site'). The Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference at the centre of the site is SD 71673 34528. An aerial image of the site and its surrounding habitats is appended at **Figure 1** (source image: ESRI World Imagery).
- 1.1.2 The assessment was requested to inform a planning application proposing the creation of a new access to the Rose Hill Farm property from Whalley Old Road.

Scope of Works

- 1.1.3 The scope of ecological works undertaken between July and September 2025 and updated in August 2026 comprised:
- A desktop study and data search for known ecological information at the site and the local area;
 - An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and assessment, and assessment of the habitats present at the site using the UK Habitats Classification;
 - Assessment of the ecological value of the habitats within the site with the use of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and the Ratcliffe criteria, as presented in *A Nature Conservation Review* (Ratcliffe, 1977);
 - Survey and assessment of all habitats for relevant statutorily protected species¹ and other wildlife including badger (*Meles meles*), foraging bats, barn owl (*Tyto alba*), great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), bird species and reptiles;
 - The identification of any potential ecological constraints on the proposals and the specification of the scope of mitigation and ecological enhancement required in accordance with wildlife legislation, planning policy guidance and other relevant guidance; and
 - The identification of any further surveys or precautionary actions that may be required to inform the progression of the site through the planning process or prior to the commencement of site preparation and construction activities.

¹ In accordance with *Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact on the Planning System* (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005) developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development. In this instance (for example) there are no water bodies or water courses within or adjacent to the site; there has been no requirement to consider water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) or otter (*Lutra lutra*) as part of this assessment. In addition, the proposed access lane will not impact any buildings, trees or other habitats with suitability for use by roosting bats; survey for roosting bats has been reasonably discounted.

2.0 METHOD OF SURVEY

2.1 Desktop Study and Data Search

2.1.1 The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

- a. MAGiC Maps: A web-based interactive map which brings together geographic information on key environmental schemes and designations, including details of statutory nature conservation sites;
- b. Ancient Tree Inventory (Woodland Trust, 2026): An online database of ancient and veteran trees;
- c. Lancashire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS);
- d. Lancashire Environment Record Network (LERN); and
- e. Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

2.2 Vegetation and Habitats

- 2.2.1 An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site was carried out by Brian Robinson on 26th August and 23rd September 2025. The weather on 26th August was dry and sunny with a light air (Beaufort scale 1) and an air temperature of 21°C. The weather on 23rd September was dry and sunny with a light air (Beaufort scale 1) and an air temperature of 17°C.
- 2.2.2 To validate the relevance of the survey data collated in 2025 an updated walkover was carried out on 20th August 2026 by Victoria Burrows. The weather conditions on this date were overcast after a period of heavy showers with a light air (Beaufort scale 1) and an air temperature of 16°C.
- 2.2.3 A habitat and vegetation map was prepared for the site and the immediate surrounding area and is appended at **Figure 2**. The mapping is based on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC, 2010) with minor adjustments to illustrate and examine the habitats with greater precision.
- 2.2.4 On site habitat mapping was assisted via use of GPS technology and QField on-site mapping software, using *ESRI World Imagery* as a base plan. Mapping collected on site was subsequently assisted by the use of a DJI Mini 3 drone; aerial imagery was collected using WebODM software, which was additionally used to ensure accuracy in the mapping of the site.
- 2.2.5 The plant species within the site boundary were determined with estimates of the distribution, ground cover, abundance and constancy of individual species. The estimation of abundance was based on the DAFOR system, where D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional and R = Rare, this being a widely used and accepted system employed by ecological surveyors. The terms L = Locally and V = Very were additionally used to describe the plant species distributions with greater precision.
- 2.2.6 Stands of vegetation and habitats were described and evaluated using the National Vegetation Classification (NVC). The NVC provides a systematic and comprehensive analysis of British vegetation and is a reliable framework for nature conservation and land-use planning.
- 2.2.7 Habitats within the site were assessed in accordance with *The UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (UKHab Ltd, 2023). The UK Habitat Classification, or 'UKHab' has been designed to function at two scales of minimum mappable unit (MMU): fine scale (25m² or 5 metres length) and large scale

(400m² or 20 metres length). It has been considered for the purposes of this survey that the fine scale of 25m² or 5 metres length MMU is appropriate.

- 2.2.8 Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. Plant nomenclature follows *New Flora of the British Isles 3rd Edition* (Stace, 2010).
- 2.2.9 Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), including Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

2.3 Animal Life

Badger

- 2.3.1 The survey area for badger covered the site (as annotated on **Figure 2**) and extended to accessible land within a radius of 50 metres from the site boundary. Private gardens / land beyond the site boundary were excluded from the survey. The survey was conducted in accordance with guidance presented within *Badgers and Development* (Natural England, 2007) and *Badgers: advice for making planning decisions* (Natural England, 2022).
- 2.3.2 The following signs of badger activity were searched for:
 - a. Set entrances, e.g. entrances that are normally 25 to 35cm in diameter and shaped like a 'D' on its side;
 - b. Large spoil heaps outside sett entrances;
 - c. Bedding outside sett entrances;
 - d. Badger footprints;
 - e. Badger paths;
 - f. Latrines;
 - g. Badger hairs on fences or bushes;
 - h. Scratching posts; and
 - i. Signs of digging for food.
- 2.3.3 Habitats within and surrounding the site were assessed in terms of their suitability for use by foraging and sheltering badger in accordance with their known habitat preferences as detailed in current guidance and *Badger* (Roper, 2010).

Bat Species

Habitat Assessment for Commuting / Foraging Bats

- 2.3.4 Habitats within and adjacent to the site were assessed for their value and suitability for commuting and foraging bats in accordance with Table 4.1 of *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023). Reference has been made to the categories, descriptions and examples presented in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Consideration of Suitability of Foraging and Commuting Habitat for Bats

Suitability	Potential Flight Paths and Foraging Habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade / protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible ^a	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.
^a Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).	

Bird Species

- 2.3.5 Bird species observed and heard during the survey were recorded.
- 2.3.6 Habitats throughout the site and in the immediate surrounding area were assessed for their value to roosting, feeding and nesting birds, as indicated by the amount of shelter, feeding value, woody vegetation structure and species diversity of tree and shrub species in the site.

Great Crested Newt

Desktop Search for Ponds

- 2.3.7 In accordance with *Great crested newts: advice for making planning decisions* (Natural England, 2022) all ponds within an unobstructed 500 metres of a site should be considered for their suitability to support breeding great crested newts. The potential of the proposed development to impact upon any great crested newt population(s) whose breeding ponds are within 500 metres must be considered.
- 2.3.8 The search of habitats in the wider area up to a distance of 500 metres from the site boundary revealed the presence of eight ponds, as detailed in **Table 2.2**. All of the ponds are associated with the golf course to the west of the site.

Table 2.2: Ponds within 500 metres of the Site

Pond Reference	OS Grid Reference	Distance and Direction from Site Boundary (refer to Figure 1)
Pond 1	SD 71384 34523	259 metres to the west
Pond 2	SD 71319 34500	323 metres to the west
Pond 3	SD 71306 34517	336 metres to the west
Pond 4	SD 71301 34631	365 metres to the north-west
Pond 5	SD 71275 34435	371 metres to the west
Pond 6	SD 71193 34390	460 metres to the west
Pond 7	SD 71171 34407	478 metres to the west
Pond 8	SD 71153 34410	495 metres to the west

Consideration of Requirement for Further Survey

2.3.9 The requirement for further survey at each pond was then assessed using the following criteria:

- Presence of dispersal barriers to great crested newt movements between ponds and the site, as detected during the walkover survey;
- Distance of ponds from the site, and the potential influence of the proposed development of the site on any populations of great crested newt (if present at ponds), using the Natural England rapid risk assessment tool; and
- Presence of other ponds which may form metapopulations and / or alter the influence of the site on ponds at greater distances.

Presence of Dispersal Barriers

2.3.10 No significant dispersal barriers are located between the ponds and the site.

Consideration of Distance of Ponds from Site and Relative Size of Site

2.3.11 The Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment tool from *GCN Method Statement WML-A14-2 (Version April 2020)* (Natural England, 2020) has been completed to inform the requirement for further surveys, and is presented in **Table 2.3**.

2.3.12 The tool has been completed based on the distances of the ponds from the site, and the size of the development site (0.0826 hectares, or 'ha'), taking into account the total area of the site within 250 metres of the nearest pond. The rapid risk assessment tool assumes that great crested newt are present.

Table 2.3: Rapid Risk Assessment Result

Component	Likely Effect	Notional Offence Probability Score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 – 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.001
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0.001
Rapid risk assessment result:	Green: Offence Highly Unlikely	

- 2.3.13 The Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment indicates that the site is sufficiently small and distant from all ponds that any proposed development is highly unlikely to impact upon great crested newt populations (if present).
- 2.3.14 No further surveys in respect of great crested newt were considered necessary.

Reptile Species

- 2.3.15 The site and its surroundings were assessed in terms of their suitability for use by reptile species using the important characteristics for reptiles outlined in the draft document *Reptile Mitigation Guidelines* (Natural England, 2011), and the *Reptile Habitat Management Handbook* (Edgar, et al., 2010). These habitat characteristics are outlined in **Table 2.4**.

Table 2.4: Important Habitat Characteristics for Reptiles

1. Location (in relation to species range)	7. Connectivity to nearby good quality habitat
2. Vegetation Structure	8. Prey abundance
3. Insolation	9. Refuge opportunity
4. Aspect	10. Hibernation habitat potential
5. Topography	11. Disturbance regime
6. Surface geology	12. Egg-laying site potential

Other Wildlife

- 2.3.16 Evidence of other wildlife, including Priority Species, observed whilst on site, but for which specific surveys were not made, was recorded and has been included in this report where it is considered of relevance to the planning application.
- 2.3.17 Habitats have been assessed for their suitability for Priority Species identified in the data search results where this is considered relevant to the application.

2.4 Survey and Reporting Limitations

- 2.4.1 The whole site was accessible and surveys were completed at suitable times of year. No significant survey limitations were experienced.
- 2.4.2 All measurements within this report are approximate only, and have been either measured (using QField) or estimated whilst on site or calculated using mapping software (QGIS) or internet-based mapping services such as MAGiC Maps and Google Earth.

2.5 Evaluation Methods

- 2.5.1 The habitats, vegetation and animal life were evaluated with reference to standard nature conservation criteria as described in *A Nature Conservation Review* (Ratcliffe, 1977). These are size (extent), diversity, naturalness, rarity, fragility, typicality, recorded history, position in an ecological or geographical unit, potential value and intrinsic appeal.
- 2.5.2 Habitats have been assessed to determine whether they meet those described in *UK Biodiversity Action Plan: Priority Habitat Descriptions* (Maddock, A (ed), 2008); these lists are used to help draw up the statutory lists of Priority Habitats, as required under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006*. Where suitable, the ecological value of the habitats present has been assessed using the terms outlined in *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* (CIEEM, 2018).

Each habitat and individual trees have been assessed to determine whether they are ‘irreplaceable habitat’, defined in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024)² as ‘Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen’. The further detail presented in *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024* (GOV.UK, 2024) has also been referred to.

- 2.5.3 Government advice on wildlife, as set out in the NPPF and associated government circulars has been taken into consideration. Legislation relating to protected species, such as those listed under Schedules 1, 5, 6 and 8 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*, is referenced where applicable, and any impacts to protected species are evaluated in accordance with current guidance.
- 2.5.4 The presence of any Priority Species, as listed under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006* is noted, and habitats are assessed in terms of their suitability and value for these species. The presence of habitats and / or species listed by the Lancashire BAP has been taken into account in the evaluation of the site.

3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Desktop Study and Data Search

Statutory Designated Sites for Nature Conservation and SSSI Impact Risk Zones

- 3.1.1 The site is not and does not form part of any statutory designated site for nature conservation. The site lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone for the following statutory designated sites for nature conservation:
 - a. Cock Wood Gorge SSSI, which is located 3 kilometres to the east of the site and is designated for its geological interest; and
 - b. Harper Clough and Smalley Delph Quarries SSSI, which is located 2.5 kilometres to the south and is designated for its geological interest.
- 3.1.2 The SSSI Impact Risk Zone requires the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England on likely risks from the following development categories (Natural England, 2026):
 - a. **Infrastructure:** Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.
 - b. **Minerals, Oil and Gas:** Planning applications for quarries, including: new proposals, Review of Minerals Permissions, extensions, variations to conditions etc. Oil and gas exploration / extraction.
- 3.1.3 The proposals do not meet any of the development categories which would require further consultation with Natural England on likely risks from the proposed development to the statutory designated sites for nature conservation present in the wider area.

²Hereafter the NPPF

Non-statutory Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

- 3.1.4 The site is not and does not form part of any non-statutory designated site for nature conservation, called 'Biological Heritage Sites' or 'BHS' in Lancashire.
- 3.1.5 Six BHS are located within a 2 kilometres radius from the centre of the site, and are summarised in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: BHS Within a 2 Kilometres Radius from the Centre of the Site

BHS Name	Distance and Direction from the Site	Reasons for Designation
Smalley's Farm	Adjacent to the Rose Hill Farm site	A complex of approximately 4 hectares of species-rich pastures, bounded by hedgerows, streams and small wooded cloughs, lying immediately to the south of Billington, near Whalley. The fields are predominantly neutral and poorly drained, with some areas of acid grassland, particularly along the field boundaries. Collectively and individually, these fields represent one of the most diverse sites known in the country for grassland fungi. In total, nearly 600 macro-fungi are present, including at least 23 species or varieties of pink-gills (<i>Entoloma</i> spp.), 35 waxcaps (<i>Hygrocybe</i> spp.), 18 fairy clubs (<i>Clavaria</i> spp., <i>Clavulinopsis</i> spp. and <i>Clavulina</i> spp.) and 4 earth tongues (<i>Geoglossum</i> spp. and <i>Trichoglossum</i> spp.).
Cronshaw Chair	0.21 kilometres to the south-west	The BHS is noteworthy for the presence of invertebrates including Green Hairstreak and Birch Sawfly.
Dean Wood and Higher Dean Wood	0.94 kilometres to the east	Two semi-natural ancient woodlands
Dean Clough Reservoir	0.99 kilometres to the south	The BHS is important for the presence of breeding little grebe, a scarce breeding species in Lancashire.
Chew Bank Wood	1.62 kilometres to the north	Woodland which is ancient semi-natural in character.
Banks Wood and Marsh	1.87 kilometres to the east	Ancient semi-natural woodland listed in the <i>Lancashire Inventory of Ancient Woodland (Provisional)</i> , (English Nature, 1994), with flushes and areas of Alder carr, fen and species-rich grassland, along the western banks of the River Calder in Great Harwood. Of particular interest is Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem, a species included in the <i>Provisional Lancashire Red Data List of Vascular Plants</i> .

- 3.1.6 The presence of the six BHS is considered further at **Section 4.2**.
- 3.1.7 The site lies within the Forestry Commission (FC) / British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Wader Zone. The suitability of the site for wading birds is considered further at **Section 4.2**.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- 3.1.8 The southern field within the site is listed as an 'Area that Could Become of Particular Importance' on the Lancashire LNRS. The measure associated with the designation states:

'Create appropriate semi-natural habitats to buffer, expand or connect existing woodland, incorporating natural colonisation wherever possible'.

3.1.9 The ecological value of the southern grassland is considered further at **Section 4.4**.

Priority Habitats Inventory

3.1.10 The Priority Habitats Inventory³ was checked via MAGiC Maps. No Priority Habitats are identified at the site by the inventory.

Ancient Tree Inventory

3.1.11 No ancient or veteran trees are identified at the site by the inventory.

Protected and Notable Species

3.1.12 No records of protected and notable species are held by LERN for the site.

3.1.13 Records of protected and notable species for a 2 kilometres radius from the centre of the site are summarised in **Table 3.3**. Where distance and directional information is not provided this is due to the records for that species being provided to a 1km² level of accuracy (i.e. Monad level) or less.

Table 3.2: Records of Protected Species Within a 2 Kilometres Radius from the Centre of the Site

Taxon Group	Species Name and Designations ¹ and Notes
Amphibians	Common toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>): WCAs5 (sale only), PS & LBAP. 1 record from 2020, located 695 metres to the south-west.
Birds – WCAs1 Species	Black tern (<i>Chlidonias niger</i>): WCAs1 1 record from 2007. Brambling (<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>): WCAs1. 3 records, all from 2007. Common crossbill (<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>): WCAs1. 2 records, both from 2007. Fieldfare (<i>Turdus pilaris</i>): WCAs1. 5 records, dated between 1968 and 2007. Garganey (<i>Anas querquedula</i>): WCAs1. 2 records, dated 1968 and 1990. The closest record is 1350 metres to the south, and from 1968. Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>): WCAs1. 5 records, dated between 1968 and 2007. Green sandpiper (<i>Tringa ochropus</i>): WCAs1. 2 records, dated 1968 and 2007. The closest record is 1350 metres to the south, and from 1968. Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>): WCAs1. 3 records, dated between 1968 and 2007. The closest record is 1350 metres to the south, and from 1968. Greylag goose (<i>Anser anser</i>): WCAs1. 2 records, both from 2007. Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>): WCAs1. 4 records, dated between 1968 and 2007. Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>): WCAs1. 3 records, dated between 1968 and 1990. The closest record is 1350 metres to the south, and from 1968. Quail (<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>): WCAs1 1 record from 2007. Redwing (<i>Turdus iliacus</i>): WCAs1. 5 records, dated between 1968 and 2007. Wood sandpiper (<i>Tringa glareola</i>): WCAs1. 2 records, dated 1968 and 2007. The closest record is 1350 metres to the south, and from 1968. Black-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>): WCAs1, PS & LBAP. 3 records, dated between 1968 and 2007. The closest record is 1350 metres to the south, and from 1968. Common scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>): WCAs1, PS & LBAP. 2 records, both from 2007. Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>): WCAs1 & PS. 4 records, dated between 1968 and 2007. The closest record is 1350 metres to the south, and from 1968. Goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>): WCAs1 & LBAP. 1 record from 2010, located 1915 metres to the north-east. Hobby (<i>Falco subbuteo</i>): WCAs1 & LBAP 1 record from 2007.

³ A spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance.

Taxon Group	Species Name and Designations ¹ and Notes
	Little ringed plover (<i>Charadrius dubius</i>): WCAs1 & LBAP 1 record from 2007 Mediterranean gull (<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>): WCAs1 & LBAP 1 record from 2007 Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>): WCAs1 & LBAP. 1 record from 1990, located 1740 metres to the south. Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>): WCAs1 & LBAP. 3 records, all from 2007. Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>): WCAs1 & LBAP. 1 record from 1968, located 1350 metres to the south. Red kite (<i>Milvus milvus</i>): WCAs1 & LBAP 1 record from 2007. Spotted crane (<i>Porzana porzana</i>): WCAs1 & LBAP. 1 record from 1968, located 1350 metres to the south. Whimbrel (<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>): WCAs1 & LBAP 1 record from 2007. Whooper swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>): WCAs1 & LBAP. 2 records, dated 1968 and 2007. The closest record is 1350 metres to the south, and from 1968.
Birds – PS and LBAP Species	PS & LBAP: Skylark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>), tree pipit (<i>Anthus trivialis</i>), cuckoo (<i>Cuculus canorus</i>), lesser spotted woodpecker (<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>), yellowhammer (<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>), reed bunting (<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>), herring gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>), grasshopper warbler (<i>Locustella naevia</i>), yellow wagtail (<i>Motacilla flava</i>), spotted flycatcher (<i>Muscicapa striata</i>), curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>), house sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>), tree sparrow (<i>Passer montanus</i>), grey partridge (<i>Perdix perdix</i>), wood warbler (<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>), dunnoek (<i>Prunella modularis</i>), bullfinch (<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>), starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>), song thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>), ring ouzel (<i>Turdus torquatus</i>) and lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>). PS Only: Lesser redpoll (<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>), linnet (<i>Linaria cannabina</i>) and marsh tit (<i>Poecile palustris</i>). LBAP Only: Common sandpiper (<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>), shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>), teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>), wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>), pink-footed goose (<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>), meadow pipit (<i>Anthus pratensis</i>), swift (<i>Apus apus</i>), grey heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>), pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>), dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>), ringed plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>), black-headed gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>), raven (<i>Corvus corax</i>), kestrel (<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>), snipe (<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>), oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>), lesser black-backed gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>), great black-backed gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>), red-breasted merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>), willow warbler (<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>), golden plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>), whinchat (<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>), common tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>), shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) and redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>).
Bony Fish	PS & LBAP: European eel (<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>), and brown / sea trout (<i>Salmo trutta</i>). LBAP Only: Bullhead (<i>Cottus gobio</i>) and brown trout (<i>Salmo trutta</i> subsp. <i>fario</i>).
Ferns	Moonwort (<i>Botrychium lunaria</i>): LBAP. 2 records, both from 1899.
Flowering Plants	LBAP Only: Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem (<i>Gagea lutea</i>), Green Hellebore (<i>Helleborus viridis</i>), Herb-paris (<i>Paris quadrifolia</i>), Solomon's-seal (<i>Polygonatum multiflorum</i>), Angular Solomon's-seal (<i>Polygonatum odoratum</i>), Bird's-eye Primrose (<i>Primula farinosa</i>), Dark-leaved Willow (<i>Salix myrsinifolia</i>) and Globeflower (<i>Trollius europaeus</i>).
Butterflies	PS & LBAP: Small heath (<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>) and wall (<i>Lasiommata megera</i>). LBAP Only: Ringlet (<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>) and dark green fritillary (<i>Argynnis aglaja</i>).
Moths	PS Only:

Taxon Group	Species Name and Designations ¹ and Notes
	Grey dagger (<i>Acronicta psi</i>), dusky brocade (<i>Apamea remissa</i>), white ermine (<i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>) and cinnabar (<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>).
Terrestrial Mammals	European otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>): EPS, WCAs5, PS & LBAP. 1 record from 2015, located 1885 metres to the north.
	Pipistrelle bat species (<i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.): EPS, WCAs5 & LBAP. 5 records, dated between 1998 and 2018. The closest record is 1360 metres to the west, and from 2007.
	Common pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>): EPS & WCAs5. 8 records, dated between 1986 and 2020. The closest record is 910 metres to the west, and from 1986.
	European water vole (<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>): WCAs5, PS & LBAP 1 record from 1969.
	Brown hare (<i>Lepus europaeus</i>): PS & LBAP. 10 records, dated between 2007 and 2016. The closest record is 1000 metres to the east, and from 2009.
	West European hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>): PS & LBAP. 5 records, dated between 2010 and 2020. The closest record is 795 metres to the west, and from 2010.
	Eurasian badger (<i>Meles meles</i>): PBA. 3 records, dated between 1989 and 2017. The closest record is 180 metres to the south-east, and from 2000.
¹Key to Designation Codes: EPS = European Protected Species under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. WCAs1 = Species receives full protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). WCAs5 = Species receives full protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). PBA = Protection of Badger Act 1992. PS = Priority Species listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. LBAP = Species listed on the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan.	

3.1.14 The presence of these protected and notable species within the wider area has been taken into account throughout this report.

3.2 Vegetation and Habitats

General Description

- 3.2.1 The site boundary for the Rose Hill Farm access lane covers an area of 0.0826 hectares site. The site is located with rural surrounds and traverses a field of neutral semi-improved grassland bordered by off-site boundary hedgerows and trees. A small (<5m²) area of hardstanding is present at the northern end of the site where the proposed access lane will meet the hardstanding curtilage of Rose Hill Farm.
- 3.2.2 Land to the north and west is occupied by pasture grassland and Mytton Fold golf course to the west. Whalley Old Road with associated housing with gardens and pasture grassland lies to the south. Land further east is occupied by woodland, housing and gardens, and Smalley's Farm BHS.
- 3.2.3 A Phase 1 Habitat Survey map is appended at **Figure 2**. Photographs are appended in **Section 8.1**.

Semi-improved Neutral Grassland

- 3.2.4 Refer to **Photos 1 to 4**. The field of semi-improved neutral grassland to be traversed by the access land is characterised by constant, frequent and locally abundant Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), constant and frequent Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), constant, occasional and locally frequent Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*) and Sweet Vernal-grass

(*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) and occasional and locally frequent Compact Rush (*Juncus conglomeratus*), Soft-rush (*Juncus effusus*), Perennial Rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), Oval Sedge (*Carex ovalis*), Timothy (*Phleum pratense*), Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*) and White Clover (*Trifolium repens*). A plant species list is appended at **Table 8.2**.

- 3.2.5 The grassland holds areas characteristic of the *MG6 Lolium perenne – Cynosurus cristatus* grassland NVC community (Rodwell, 1992) and the *MG10 Holcus lanatus – Juncus effusus* rush-pasture (Rodwell, 1992) and *MG9 Holcus lanatus – Deschampsia cespitosa* grassland communities (Rodwell, 1992) where it is seasonally damp. The habitat is classified as B2.2 Neutral grassland - semi-improved in Phase 1 Habitat Survey terminology, and is described by the UKHab as g3c6 *Lolium-Cynosurus* neutral grassland with the secondary codes 14 scattered rushes and 517 recent management.
- 3.2.6 The southern edge of the grassland supports very locally frequent Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), a species indicative of acidic soils; Oval Sedge can also be indicative of acidic conditions. The grassland was not considered to be species-rich or indicative of a lowland meadow Priority Habitat, but does hold species indicative of only low levels of agricultural improvement. The grassland is considered further at **Section 4.4**.

Hardstanding

- 3.2.7 The area of hardstanding at the northern end of the site, within the curtilage of Rose Hill Farm, is devoid of vegetation.

Invasive Plant Species

- 3.2.8 No Japanese Knotweed is present at the site.
- 3.2.9 Refer to **Figure 2**; stands of Indian Balsam, Virginia-creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) and Montbretia (*Crocasmia crocosmiiflora*) are present at the off-site garden area to the north of the site, and a bed of planted Wall Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*) is located to the south-east of Building 1 (off-site). A shrub of Hollyberry Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster bullatus*) is located within Hedgerow 1 (off-site).
- 3.2.10 These species are listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended); it is an offence to spread or cause their spread in the wild. This is considered further at **Section 4.3**.

3.3 Animal Life

Badger

- 3.3.1 No badger or signs of badger were detected within the site or within the accessible 50 metres around the site. The presence of badger is reasonably discounted. The habitats within and surrounding the site are suitable for use by foraging and sheltering badger however; this is considered further at **Section 4.4**.

Bat Species

Habitat Assessment for Commuting and Foraging Bats

- 3.3.2 The grassland and off-site woodland and hedgerows are suitable for use by foraging bats and provide habitat connectivity across the wider area.

- 3.3.3 The habitats present may be suitable for and contribute to the wider foraging area of common species of edge-feeding foraging bats, such as common pipistrelle, and also low numbers of species known to forage over open habitats and over wide areas, such as noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*). The site and its surroundings are not subject to an abundance of existing artificial illumination.
- 3.3.4 The site is located within a wider area characterised by woodland, small pasture grassland fields and waterbodies. The habitats within the site are assessed to be of 'moderate' suitability for use by roosting bats, and the habitats within the wider area are assessed to be of 'high' suitability.

Bird Species

- 3.3.5 Birds detected in the site and local area in July, August and September 2025 are listed in **Table 3.3**.

Table 3.3: Bird Species Detected on 10th July, 5th August, 26th August and / or 23rd September 2025

Scientific Name	Common Name	BOCC Status ¹
<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Long-tailed tit	Green
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Woodpigeon	Amber
<i>Corvus corone</i>	Carrion crow	Green
<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Jackdaw	Green
<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Blue tit	Green
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Robin	Green
<i>Parus major</i>	Great tit	Green
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House sparrow	Red
<i>Pica pica</i>	Magpie	Green
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Wren	Amber

¹BOCC: Birds of Conservation Concern (Stanbury, et al., 2021). Priority Species are presented in **bold**.

- 3.3.6 No evidence of use of the grassland by nesting birds was detected on the survey dates.

Reptiles

- 3.3.7 There are no piles of garden waste or other suitable debris for use by sheltering or hibernating reptiles, and the site supports no favourable habitat for basking reptiles. The habitats within the site are reasonably unlikely to support a large population or a variety of invertebrate prey.
- 3.3.8 The site is not adjacent or linked to any areas of favourable habitat for reptile species, and there are no records of reptile for the site or the wider area. The presence of reptiles within the site is reasonably discounted.

Other Wildlife

- 3.3.9 The site supports suitable habitat for sheltering and foraging hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*); both are Priority Species. The site is unlikely to form core or important habitat for either species due to its relatively small size, however. The suitability of the site for hedgehog is considered further at **Section 4.4**.

4.0 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

4.1 Introduction and Description of Proposals

- 4.1.1 In accordance with *Rose Hill Farm: Proposed Site Plan 03* (Zara Moon Architects, 2026) it is proposed to construct a meandering single track access lane over the sloping grassland between Rose Hill Farm and Whalley Old Road; the road needs to meander due to the gradient of the slope.
- 4.1.2 **Section 4.2** provides an assessment of any impacts of the proposed development on the designated sites for nature conservation present in the wider area. The ecological value of habitats within the site is evaluated at **Section 4.3**, and protected and notable species are considered at **Section 4.4**.

4.2 Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

- 4.2.1 The proposals are located in proximity to Smalley's Farm BHS, which is located at the eastern site boundary. The proposed development must avoid directly and indirectly impacting Smalley's Farm BHS, located to the south-east of the site, during the proposed development.
- 4.2.2 It is recommended that a suitable buffer is used to avoid direct impacts to the BHS during any proposed construction works. Any operations which could impact the hydrology of the adjacent land, or create dust or other pollutants during the construction phase should be regulated by the enforcement of a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) or similar, and appropriate fencing should be used to ensure works do not impact upon the BHS.
- 4.2.3 It is noted that the BHS is designated for its grassland fungi, and the grassland field at the southern end of the site may also provide suitable habitat for grassland fungi. Works within the southern grassland field should be restricted to as small an area as reasonably practicable to reduce impacts to the wider grassland.
- 4.2.4 Recommendations for the protection of the BHS during the proposed works are presented at **Section 5.4**. It is otherwise considered that the proposals are unlikely to impact any statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation.

4.3 Vegetation and Habitats

- 4.3.1 All recorded plant species at the site are common and widespread within lowland Britain. None of the habitats present within the site are representative of semi-natural habitat or are a Priority Habitat. The NVC communities present are typical of the geographical area and conditions present. Hedgerow 1 immediately adjacent to the site boundary is a Priority Habitat and protection during construction is essential. No irreplaceable habitats are present at the site or will be impacted by the proposals.
- 4.3.2 In terms of each habitat's importance in a geographical context⁴, the semi-improved grassland is considered to be of 'local' importance. The hardstanding is not considered to hold any importance

⁴ Using the terms presented at Section 4.7 of *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* (CIEEM, 2018), i.e. International and European, National, Regional, Local Authority-wide area, River Basin District, Estuarine system / Coastal cell or Local. The term 'site' value is additionally used to highlight ecological features considered to be of importance in the context of the wider site habitats, but which are of negligible value in the context of the local area.

on a geographical scale. Measures for the protection of off-site habitats during the proposed works are presented at **Section 5.4**.

4.3.3 Virginia Creeper and Indian Balsam, both of which are invasive plant species listed under Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), have been detected within close proximity to the site boundary. It is considered that the proposals present an opportunity for the eradication of these species as part of the proposed development. Further guidance is presented at **Section 5.4**.

4.3.4 Measures for the protection of habitats during the proposed works are presented at **Section 5.4**. To mitigate for the loss of approximately 0.0820ha of the semi-improved grassland and to provide benefits for biodiversity, recommendations of compensatory planting and the implementation of conservation management at the remainder of the field of semi-improved grassland (within the same ownership) are outlined in **Section 5.3**.

4.4 Animal Life

Foraging and Commuting Bats

4.4.1 Inappropriate use and siting of artificial lighting at the site has the potential to degrade the value of the retained habitats, habitats in the wider area and the new habitats for use by foraging bats. In the presence of an appropriate lighting strategy, as outlined in **Section 5.2**, it is advised that opportunities for foraging bats will be conserved at the site and adjoining land.

Nesting Birds

4.4.2 The site supports habitats suitable for use by nesting birds. Activities during the construction phase, including the removal of vegetation, have the potential to represent a direct effect on breeding and nesting birds in contravention of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended).

Hedgehog, Brown Hare and Badger

4.4.3 The site supports suitable habitat for foraging and sheltering hedgehog and brown hare, both of which are Priority Species. It is considered unlikely that the site will provide core or important habitat for either species, however, due to the site's small size relative to the typical ranges of these species.

4.4.4 No badgers or signs of badger were detected, however it is recognised that the site and its surroundings are suitable for use by foraging and sheltering badger.

4.4.5 The proposed works have the potential to kill or injure individual hedgehog, brown hare and disturb nesting birds during the construction phase of the proposed development, and disturb badger setts if any are created at or near the site prior to the commencement of works.

4.4.6 Best practice measures for the protection of brown hare, hedgehog, badger and other wildlife during the construction phase of the proposed development are presented at **Section 5.4**.

Other Relevant Protected Species and Animal Life

4.4.7 Appropriate survey effort and / or assessment in accordance with standard guidance, has been carried out to reasonably discount adverse effects on other relevant protected species.

4.5 Consideration of Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

4.5.1 In consideration of the following question at Section 9 of *Application Form for Planning Permission. Town and Country Planning Act 1990*⁵:

‘Do you believe that, if the development is granted permission, the general Biodiversity Gain Condition (as set out in Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)) would apply?’

4.5.2 It is advised that the answer is ‘no’ and the ‘new exemption for development of sites up to 0.2 hectares’ exemption applies in accordance with *The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Amendments and Transitional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2026* (gov.uk, 2026) which came into effect on 6th August 2026.

This exemption states:

‘This instrument introduces a new exemption for development on a site area of 0.2 hectares and below, where no onsite priority habitats are impacted. This only applies to applications for planning permissions made after the instrument comes into force. This exemption does not apply to section 73 planning permissions where the original planning permission to which the section 73 planning permission relates was applied for or granted before this instrument comes into force.’

4.5.3 To support this exemption the following is confirmed:

- a. No irreplaceable habitat⁶ or Priority Habitat is present at the site (or will be adversely impacted by the proposals); and
- b. The site is 0.0826 hectares only (i.e. below 0.2 hectares).

4.5.4 Notwithstanding the above, the recommendations outlined in **Section 5.3** of this report aim to secure measurable gains for biodiversity / ecological enhancement to satisfy the requirements of the NPPF, *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development* (CIEEM, 2016) and best practice.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The recommendations and guidance provided in this section of the report, follow ‘The Mitigation Hierarchy’ (i.e. avoid, mitigate, compensate) to avoid significant effects on identified features of ecological value and minimise impacts where avoidance is not possible. In addition and where possible, opportunities to enhance the ecological interest and habitat connectivity and seek biodiversity gain through appropriate habitat management have been identified to ensure compliance with Chapter 15, paragraph 193(d) of the NPPF which states:

‘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’.

⁵ *Application for Planning Permission. Town and Country Planning Act 1990*

⁶ As defined by *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024* (GOV.UK, 2024)

5.2 Appropriate Use of Lighting

- 5.2.1 Paragraph 198(c) in Chapter 15 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment) of the NPPF states that development should:

“limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation”

- 5.2.2 It is understood that there are no current proposals to install artificial lighting at the access lane. If lighting is proposed it is essential that this involves the use of appropriate products and screening, where necessary, to ensure no excessive artificial lighting shines over the retained vegetation and the habitats outside the curtilage of the lane, as lighting overspill may deter use by wildlife such as foraging bats.
- 5.2.3 The lighting scheme must be designed with reference to current guidance, namely:
- Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night* (Institution of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust, 2023); and
 - Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation guidance (Stone, 2014).

5.3 Habitat Creation and Management Recommendations

Tree and Shrub Planting

- 5.3.1 To enhance habitat connectivity it is recommended that the land each side of the access point at Whalley Old Road is planted with native trees and shrubs to complement the off-site Hedgerow 1 and woodland in the wider area.

Management of Wider Grassland

- 5.3.2 It is considered that the proposals present an opportunity to move the retained areas of neutral semi-improved grassland each side of the access lane into long-term conservation management to benefit biodiversity; it is recommended that the proposals include a long-term Habitat Management Plan for the retained habitats. Grassland management should incorporate either appropriate low levels of seasonal grazing, or a mowing regime designed to encourage the plant species diversity.
- 5.3.3 It is also considered, due to the site’s proximity to Smalley’s Farm BHS and the similarity of the grassland in the site to the habitats described in the BHS, that a study to determine the fungal diversity of the areas of the southern field to be impacted by the proposals may be required. The study may comprise contacting North West Fungus Group to determine their existing knowledge of the field. Subject to the results of the survey a mitigation strategy can be prepared to describe the measures to protect, and conserve in the long-term, the field’s fungal diversity, as needed.

5.4 Protection of Existing Vegetation and Animal Life

Protection of Woodland, Trees, Grassland, Hedgerows and BHS

- 5.4.1 During the construction phase, temporary protective demarcation fencing will be used to demarcate the construction zone. The fencing must be arranged to protect the woodland, trees, grassland and hedgerows to be retained and Smalley’s Farm BHS. The fencing must extend

outside the canopy of the retained trees or shrubs, or at a suitable buffer to the other retained habitats, and must remain in position throughout the construction phase.

- 5.4.2 The fencing will be in accordance with *BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations* (BSI, 2012).

Invasive Plant Species

- 5.4.3 It is an offence under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) to cause the spread of Indian Balsam, Hollyberry Cotoneaster, Wall Cotoneaster Virginia Creeper and Montbretia in the wild.
- 5.4.4 The contractors must be made aware of the proximity of the site to the areas of invasive plant species and a method statement must be prepared and implemented.
- 5.4.5 It is recommended that monitoring is established during the construction period to ensure that these invasive species are not spread within the site or the wider grassland during the construction period.

Protection of Nesting Birds

- 5.4.6 All wild birds are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) while they are breeding. Any works such as vegetation clearance that will affect habitats suitable for use by nesting birds must be scheduled to commence outside the bird nesting season. Commencement of works in the nesting season must be informed by a pre-works nesting bird survey, carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist. The bird breeding season typically extends between March to August inclusive.
- 5.4.7 If breeding birds are detected the ecologist will issue guidance in relation to the protection of the nesting birds in conjunction with the scheduled works. This may involve cordoning off an area of the site until the young birds have fledged.

Protection of Other Wildlife

- 5.4.8 It is recommended that an updated survey for badger is completed prior to the commencement of works, to determine whether any setts have been created within a 50 metre buffer of the site. If setts have been created in this area a Method Statement may be required to inform how works may progress whilst ensuring the protection of badgers and their setts. A licence may be required to complete works if it is considered that works will damage or destroy a badger sett.
- 5.4.9 The following Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) are adopted during the demolition and construction phases of the proposed development.
- All site personnel must be made aware of this RAMs, and the RAMs should be made part of the site induction for all personnel involved in soil strip, ground clearance, or other relevant activities;
 - Prior to any soil strip, vegetation will be strimmed to a height of no less than 0.15 metres and all arisings removed;
 - During construction, any holes, trenches or other pits which hedgehog (or other wildlife) could fall into will be covered overnight, or have sloped banks or ramps to allow escape; and

- d. If any wildlife species (such as hedgehog) is detected it must be carefully picked up by an operative wearing clean gloves, placed in a clean bucket, and moved to an area of suitable habitat beyond the construction zone.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 In the presence of the protection measures outlined in **Section 5.0** and the compensatory planting / measures of benefit for biodiversity as recommended in **Section 5.3** it is concluded that the proposals are feasible and acceptable in accordance with ecological considerations and relevant planning policy.

7.0 REFERENCES

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8.0 APPENDIX 1: TABLES, PHOTOGRAPHS AND FIGURES

8.1 Photographs



Photo 1: View of the neutral semi-improved grassland facing north



Photo 2: View of the neutral semi-improved grassland facing north



Photo 3: View of the neutral semi-improved grassland facing south



Photo 4: View of the neutral semi-improved grassland facing south

8.2 Plant Species List

Table 8.1: Plant Species List for Neutral Semi-improved Grassland

Scientific Name	Common Name	DAFOR	Cover
Woody Species			
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder (sapling)	R	<1%
Herbaceous Species			
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	O	<1%
<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>	Sneezewort	O/LF	<1%
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent	O/LF*	5%
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent	F*	10%
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass	O/LF*	10%
<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	Wavy Bitter-cress	R	<1%
<i>Carex ovalis</i>	Oval Sedge	O/LF	5%
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear	O	<1%
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	R	<1%
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle	O	<1%
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dog's-tail	F*	30%
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Tufted Hair-grass	F/LA*	30%
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	Broad-leaved Willowherb	R	<1%
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue	F*	10%
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	F*	20%
<i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>	Sharp-flowered Rush	LF	<1%
<i>Juncus conglomeratus</i>	Compact Rush	O/LF	5%
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft-rush	O/LF	10%
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	O/LF	10%
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	LF	<1%
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy	O/LF	5%
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	O	<1%
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Smooth Meadow-grass	O	<1%
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil	VLF	<1%
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal	O	<1%
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	O	<1%
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	O	<1%
<i>Ranunculus sceleratus</i>	Celery-leaved Buttercup	O	<1%
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	O	<1%
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed	R	<1%
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	Dandelion	R	<1%
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	LF	<1%
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	O/LF	5%
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	R	<1%
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch	R	<1%
Additional Species Recorded During Walkover on 20th August 2026			
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	R	<1%
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove	R	<1%
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	LF	<1%
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass	F	5%
¹ Key to DAFOR: D=Dominant, A=Abundant, F=Frequent, O=Occasional, R=Rare, V=Very, L=Local and *denotes a constant species			

8.3 Figures

Figure 1: Aerial Image of the Site and its Surroundings

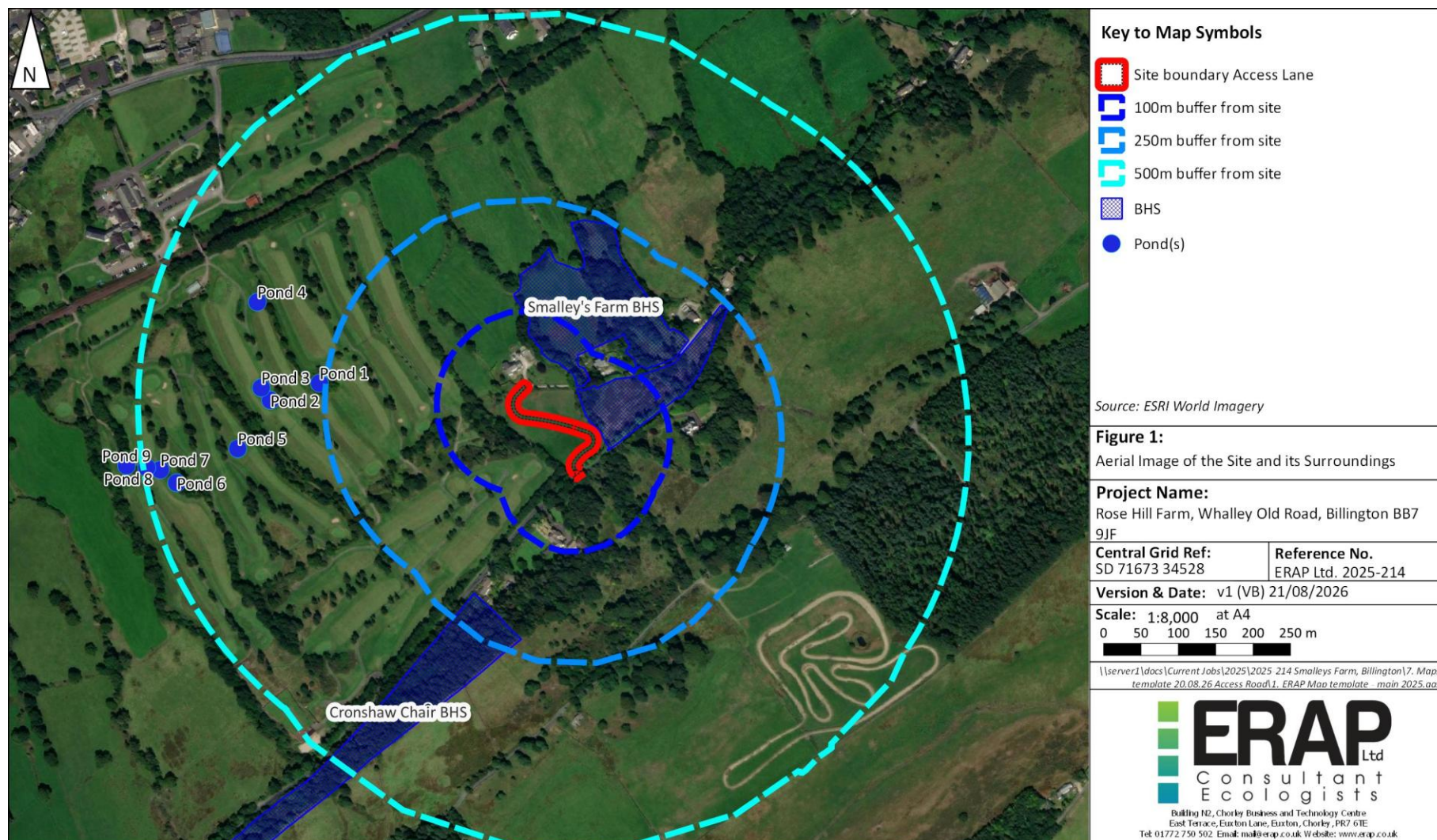


Figure 2: Phase 1 Habitat and Vegetation Map

