

## Ysgol Rhostyllen – Proposed Enhancements (Associated with Demolition of ‘The Bungalow’)

### Introduction

The text below in black type has been extracted from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report. This report should be consulted for further detail. The red text provides further details on the proposed enhancements and are linked to the associated hand-annotated plan.

### Habitat

A soft landscaping plan should be developed for the Ysgol Rhostyllen site which would provide further detail on the proposed planting. A suitably qualified ecologist should be involved with the development of this plan. The enhancements proposed below have provisionally been discussed and agreed with the Head-teacher. The proposed enhancements are as follows:

- A strip of uncut grassland (shown in blue on hand-annotated plan) will be allowed to develop adjacent to, and parallel with, the northern site boundary. This strip will be as wide as possible within the site limitations, particularly the football pitch to the south. A fence will be erected along the southern boundary of this grassland to define the area, reduce the amount of access/ trampling, and avoid inadvertent cutting as far as is possible. Type of fence to be agreed. This feature would provide an enhanced habitat corridor across the site as well as certain species of grass favoured by some butterflies such as the Gatekeeper.
- The northwest corner of the field (shown in yellow on hand-annotated plan) should also be allowed to develop as uncut grassland and be defined with a protective fence. Type of fence to be agreed. It is proposed to undertake wildflower planting in this area. This may be best achieved through the use of plug-plants, selecting species of flower suited to grassland that is not the subject of regular management. Such species might include *Primula veris* (Cowslip), *Agrimonia eupatoria* (Agrimony), *Leucanthemum vulgare* (Oxeye Daisy), *Centaurea nigra* (Common Knapweed), *Rumex acetosa* (Common Sorrel), etc. There are a number of companies that can supply UK native wildflowers including Meadowmania<sup>1</sup>, Landlife Wildflowers<sup>2</sup> and Naturescape<sup>3</sup>. Plugs to be used as follows: 10 no. Cowslip, 20 no. Agrimony, 20 no. Common Sorrel, 20 no. Oxeye Daisy, 20 no. Common Knapweed. It is possible that these areas of grassland may need periodic cutting (perhaps once every couple of years in September) to reduce any incursion by shrub seedlings, Bramble, etc. Cut grass should be removed.
- The creation of a bee bar (shown in red on hand-annotated plan) towards the northeast corner of the site (south of a small area of planted trees). A bee bar at this location would essentially be a new perennial flower border stocked with perennial plants of known value for pollinating insects. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) provides lists of plants that are of value for pollinating insects<sup>4</sup>. Plants to be used to be agreed with school and selected from RHS list.
- The provision of a small number of bird-boxes and bat-boxes. Further information on these is provided below in the relevant sub-sections.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.meadowmania.co.uk/wildflower-plug-plants/wild-flower-plug-plants.htm?gclid=EAlalQobChMIqbWn4fqA\\_QIVQdDtCh3ELgDUEAAYAAEgK9Y\\_D\\_BwE](https://www.meadowmania.co.uk/wildflower-plug-plants/wild-flower-plug-plants.htm?gclid=EAlalQobChMIqbWn4fqA_QIVQdDtCh3ELgDUEAAYAAEgK9Y_D_BwE)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wildflower.co.uk/products/wildflower-plugs-and-plants/perennial-wildflower-plug-plants/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.naturescape.co.uk/product-category/wildflowers/perennial-biennial-wildflowers/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators>

## Bats

Marches Ecology (2022) includes enhancements for (roosting) bats. It recommends the installation of at least four bat-boxes within the school grounds, either attached to trees or the building itself. Further to the issue of the bat report the school building was inspected to consider its suitability/ feasibility for attaching bat-boxes. Due to a number of issues – external lights, orientation of elevations, windows, split level roofs, *etc* – attaching bat-boxes to the building would be difficult. It is therefore proposed to attach the bat-boxes to large trees within the northeast corner of the school grounds and or a mature *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam) towards the southwest corner. These boxes should either be installed by a suitably qualified ecologist or otherwise under their instruction.

The following text is taken from the bat report:

In order to enhance the wider area for bats, it is recommended that at least four bat-boxes (*i.e.*, Vincent Pro Bat Box<sup>5</sup>, 1FF Schwegler Bat Box<sup>6</sup> and 2F Schwegler Bat Box<sup>7</sup>) suitable for crevice dwelling bats are erected onto trees within the grounds of Rhostyllen Primary School or onto the building itself. These bat-boxes should be installed in accordance with Collins (2016); at between 3-4 m in height and positioned two per tree with a clear flight-path and orientated between east and west.

Two Vincent Pro Bat-boxes and two 2F-DFP Schwegler Bat-boxes are to be used.

## Birds

It is proposed to attach four double chamber Vivara Pro Woodstone House Sparrow nest-boxes<sup>8</sup> to the existing school building. Locations for these nest-boxes are limited but one or two may, for example, be attached to a small north-east facing gable end above the first floor slate-tiled roof (see photo below). The other boxes would be attached at a similar location where safe access allows. This would provide potential nesting opportunities for up to eight pairs of House Sparrow: an enhancement for a priority species. Two boxes to be provided on northeast gable and two boxes on southeast face, on brick above sloping slate-tiled roof.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nhbs.com/vincent-pro-bat-box>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nhbs.com/1ff-schwegler-bat-box-with-built-in-wooden-rear-panel>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nhbs.com/2f-schwegler-bat-box-general-purpose>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-woodstone-house-sparrow-nest-box>



**Northeast gable end.**

It is also proposed to install three 1B Schwegler nest-boxes<sup>9</sup> with 26mm and 32 mm diameter entrance holes on trees around the existing school grounds including the cluster of trees in the northeast corner. All bird-boxes should either be installed by a suitably qualified ecologist or otherwise under their instruction. This should offset the loss of potential nesting opportunities. It is considered unlikely that the proposed demolition would give rise to a significant impact on local bird populations.

The nest-boxes will be sited out of reach (though accessible for maintenance), 3 m or more off the ground ideally on large tree trunks. All of the nest-boxes will be located somewhere between (facing) north through east to southeast; avoiding prevailing winds and direct sunlight where possible.

All bird-boxes should be maintained and monitored in the same way as that proposed for the Sparrow boxes to be attached to the new building.

### Hedgehog

It is also suggested that a Hedgehog box be provided in a secluded, secure area of the site – perhaps within the northwest corner of the school grounds, in the area proposed as uncut grassland. A suitably qualified ecologist can provide further details as part of the soft landscaping proposals.

The Hedgehog box should be obtained from Green Feathers<sup>10</sup> or Ark Wildlife<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nhbs.com/1b-schwegler-nest-box>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.green-feathers.co.uk/products/eco-friendly-hedgehog-house>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.arkwildlife.co.uk/product/hedgehog-house-with-inspection-roof/>