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BREEDING BIRD SURVEY

At

Plot 3A

Wrexham Industrial Estate
Bryn Lane
Wrexham
LL13 9UT

NGR: SJ 39340 50457

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toby Hart', is positioned below the 'Approved by:' line.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United Environmental Services (UES) Ltd have undertaken breeding bird surveys at a parcel of land at Plot 3A, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Bryn Lane, Wrexham, between March and August 2022, in order to assess the breeding bird assemblage on site. The development proposals are for the construction of three industrial units with associated parking and access roads.

The survey methods broadly followed the BTO / JNCC / RSPB breeding bird survey technique. A pre-determined transect route was walked throughout the survey area. Any bird species seen or heard was recorded, along with the number, sex, and behaviour where possible.

The land parcel has an area of approximately 25.4ha and was formerly used for industrial and agricultural purposes, prior to being left unmanaged for several years. The site contains large species-rich semi-improved grassland fields interspersed with ponds, small stands of woodland, hedgerows and scattered trees. Large areas of the site have succeeded into dense scrub and areas of bare ground and ephemeral / short perennial are present on previously developed land within the south-eastern section of the site. The south-western section of the site contains an area of amenity grassland and a large hardstanding compound used to store vehicles. A shallow stream runs along the northern site boundary and wet ditches are present along the western and part of the eastern site boundaries. The eastern section of the site comprises two agricultural grassland fields that are divided and bordered by hedgerows and trees. A dry and unvegetated ditch runs along part of the eastern boundary a pond surrounded by willow scrub is present within the northernmost field.

The survey area was found to support a typical bird assemblage (both diversity and density) for the habitats present. Due to the length of time that the site has been left unmanaged, areas of scrub and rank grassland support a high diversity and abundance of invertebrate prey, which supports a wide range of bird species through the breeding season.

A total of 60 species were recorded during the field surveys, of which, 34 were assessed as confirmed or likely breeding within 100m of the red line boundary. A further 14 species were assessed as possible breeding within 100m of the site. The majority of bird activity was associated with the field boundary features such as hedgerows, woodland and scrub, however the grassland areas are considered to be a valuable foraging resource for breeding birds on site.

Whilst the site supports a moderate number of nationally protected breeding bird species and species of conservation concern, most are generalist species that will use other habitats present within the local area. Following territory mapping analysis, the population of notable bird species on site is not considered to be significant on a national or regional level. Suitable foraging and nesting habitats such as trees, hedgerows, scrub, grassland, ponds and small areas of woodland are to be removed to facilitate the development; this will result in loss of territories for some of the species of conservation concern, found on site.

To compensate for the loss of habitats and potential territories, replacement habitats for foraging and nesting birds will be provided including woodland, an orchard, rough tussocky grassland, wildflower grassland, wet ditches, ponds, trees and hedgerows, in addition to the enhancement of retained areas of habitat including the open mosaic and unimproved grassland habitats. A suite of nest boxes will also be included as part of the enhancement measures to provide long term nesting opportunities for a variety of bird species.



In order to ensure that there is no direct loss of bird nests or individuals within nests, site clearance and vegetation removal (including enabling works) should be carried out outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a targeted breeding bird nest scoping survey should be conducted prior to the start on site or an ecological clerk of works appointed.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 4, which provide visual representations of the survey results and statutory and planning context. The report should also be read in conjunction with the preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) prepared for the site by UES (report reference UES03448/18).



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author, surveyors, qualifications and experience

This report is compiled and written by Alasdair Grubb BSc ACIEEM, UES Ecologist. Alasdair is an experienced ecologist and ornithologist, with over 10 years' experience in the ecology and conservation industry. Alasdair is licensed by Natural England to survey and monitor barn owl nest sites, for the purposes of monitoring the presence of the species and effectiveness of conservation efforts, including surveying sites to inform future development proposals under licence number CL29/00253.

Other surveyors include:

- Jacob Miller BSc, UES Graduate Ecologist
- Robert Mooney MSc, UES Graduate Ecologist.

All surveyors have the knowledge, skills and experience to conduct a robust breeding bird survey, or were under the supervision of a surveyor with the required competencies.

1.2 Survey objectives

UES was commissioned in February 2022 to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

- Conduct six survey visits between March and August, based on the BTO / JNCC / RSPB breeding bird survey technique
- Assess the suitability of the site for use by different bird species
- Provide advice on the final scheme design in order to minimise impacts on breeding birds
- Provide advice on any potential requirement for mitigation or compensation

1.3 Proposed development

The development proposals are for the construction of three industrial units with associated parking and access roads.

1.4 Structure of the report

This report sets out the methodology, results, recommendations and compensation measures in relation to a specific farmland bird and barn owl survey. Recommendations are in line with statutory legislation and planning policy objectives.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 4, which provide visual representations of the survey results and statutory and planning context. The report should also



be read in conjunction with the preliminary ecological appraisal prepared for the site by UES (report reference UES03448/18).

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk study

As part of the PEA, a desk study (including a biological records search of designated sites and protected or otherwise notable species within 2km of the proposed development site was undertaken through Cofnod -- North Wales Environmental Information Service); data from the past 10 years have been used to inform this report.

2.2 Field survey

The survey methodology broadly followed the BTO / JNCC / RSPB breeding bird survey technique. This technique records the location and movements of individual birds present within a defined survey area.

Six site visits were undertaken between March and August 2022, in order to undertake population territory mapping of key bird species found on site. All but one of the surveys were started within one hour of sunrise, in order to observe the period of peak bird activity. One survey was undertaken within 1 hour of sunset in order to record species which are more active in the evening and at night. Weather conditions during each survey were recorded and are presented in the table below. Site visits were not undertaken in heavy rain, very poor visibility or strong wind.

Table 1 – Survey dates and weather conditions

Site Visit N°	Date	Temp (c)	Cloud cover (%)	Rain (%)	Wind (0-12-BFS)	Visibility
1	18/03/2022	1-5	0	0	1	Good
2	13/04/2022	11	100	5	2	Good
3	09/05/2022	8-10	90	0	2	Good
4	21/06/2022	10-13	15	0	1	Good
5	19/07/2022	22	15	0	2	Good
6	11/08/2022	10-19	0	0	1	Good

On each survey visit, a pre-determined transect route was walked throughout the survey area by the surveyor, equipped with binoculars. The surveyor stopped at several points during the transect, where a good vantage point of the site was possible; this was done to enable the surveyor to observe bird behaviours. The starting point and route direction were varied during each survey to reduce survey bias (see Appendix 1 -- Site plan, for transect route).

During the survey visits, the following details were recorded:

- Bird species, numbers, age and sex (where possible)
- Bird behaviour (e.g. singing, calling, feeding, territorial aggression)
- Any associations with particular habitat types or locations

These registrations were recorded on a map using the recognised BTO species codes (see Appendix 2- Survey results).

The data collected were then assessed and bird species were categorised according to the following definitions:

- **Confirmed breeding:** Includes species for which territories were positively identified as a result of the number of registrations, the location of an active nest and the presence of recently fledged young.
- **Likely breeding:** Includes a pair observed in suitable nesting habitat in the breeding season, agitated behaviour and / or alarm calls from adults suggesting the probable presence of a nest or young nearby. Behaviour observed on an insufficient number of occasions to confirm the presence of a territory.
- **Possible breeding:** Includes species observed in breeding season in suitable nesting habitat with a singing male present or breeding calls heard.
- **Non-breeding:** Fly over species observed but suspected to be still on migration or summering non-breeders.

In addition to the targeted bird surveys, a suite of ecological surveys have been undertaken on the site by UES throughout 2022 and incidental records of key bird sightings were also recorded; these incidental records contribute to the site species list (Appendix 2) and are included in the discussion in Section 4.

The field survey data were then analysed in relation to the conservation status of each species recorded on site. Species conservation status is based on the following recognised lists:

- Global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: Extinct, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened
- Birds of Conservation Concern 5 List (BoCC): Red, Amber or Green
- Population Status of Birds in Wales list (PSBW): Red, Amber or Green

The data were also analysed against the following articles of legislation

- Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (WCA): Schedule 1 species
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016: Section 7 species
- The EU 'Birds Directive': Annex 1 species
- UK Rare Breeding Birds Panel species

2.3 Survey limitations

The surveys were undertaken at an appropriate time of year, under optimal weather conditions. Sufficient information was ascertained during the surveys to enable full territorial analysis of key bird species. Therefore, there are considered to be no limitations to the survey.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk study

Cofnod (the North Wales Environmental Information Service) was approached for records of protected or otherwise notable species within 2km of the proposed development site in February 2022.

Various species of birds, including several NERC section 41 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 1 species. Records returned from within the proposed development site or within the immediate vicinity are limited to an auditory record of a green woodpecker *Picus viridis* from 2019 and a record of a male and female peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus* from 2016, observed flying over site carrying prey items. Notable bird records from within 500m of the site include barn owl *Tyto alba*, curlew *Numenius arquata*, grasshopper warbler *Locustella naevia*, house martin *Delichon urbicum*, bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* and goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*.

3.2 Field survey

The land parcel has an area of approximately 25.4ha and was formerly used for industrial and agricultural purposes, prior to being left unmanaged for several years. The site contains large semi-improved species-rich grassland fields interspersed with ponds, small stands of woodland, hedgerows and scattered trees. Large areas of the site have succeeded into dense scrub and areas of bare ground and ephemeral / short perennial are present on previously developed land within the south-eastern section of the site. The south-western section of the site contains an area of amenity grassland and a large hardstanding compound used to store vehicles. A shallow stream runs along the northern site boundary and wet ditches are present along the western and part of the eastern site boundaries. The eastern section of the site comprises two agricultural grassland fields that are divided and bordered by hedgerows and trees. A dry and unvegetated ditch runs along part of the eastern boundary a pond surrounded by willow scrub is present within the northernmost field.

A total of 60 species were recorded during the field surveys, including:

- 12 Section 7 species
- 5 BoCC GB Red List species
- 11 PSBW Red List species
- 24 BoCC GB Amber List species
- 18 PSBW Amber List species
- 1WCA Schedule 1 species
- IUCN Near Threatened species

All observations and a full species list are provided at Appendix 2- Survey results.

Of the 60 bird species recorded, 34 were assessed as confirmed or likely breeding within 100m of the red line boundary, including:



- 5 Red listed species (either BoCC or PSBW): Herring gull, willow warbler, whitethroat, house sparrow and bullfinch
- 13 Amber listed species (either BoCC or PSBW): mallard, stock dove, woodpigeon, moorhen, lesser black-backed gull, tawny owl, rook, long-tailed tit, wren, song thrush, dunnoek, pied wagtail and reed bunting

A further 13 species were assessed as possible breeding within 100m of the site., including:

- 4 Red listed species (either BoCC or PSBW): great black-backed gull, kestrel, greenfinch and linnet
- 5 Amber listed species (either BoCC or PSBW): teal, sparrowhawk, green woodpecker and sedge warbler.

Other notable species recorded on site, but are not considered to be breeding include:

- Lapwing: Non-breeding, but possibly use the site for foraging.
- Curlew: Non-breeding, but possibly use the site for foraging.
- Woodcock: Non-breeding, but relatively high numbers use the site through winter. Snipe: Non-breeding, but overwintering species
- Kingfisher: Non-breeding, but use site as winter foraging source

The most common breeding species was chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* with a peak number of 39 singing males.



4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evaluation of results

The survey area was found to support a typical bird assemblage (both diversity and density) for the habitats present. Due to the length of time that the site has been left unmanaged, areas of scrub and rank grassland support a high diversity and abundance of invertebrate prey, which supports a wide range of bird species through the breeding season.

A total of 60 species were recorded during the field surveys, of which, 34 were assessed as confirmed or likely breeding within 100m of the red line boundary. A further 14 species were assessed as possible breeding within 100m of the site. The majority of bird activity was associated with the field boundary features such as hedgerows, woodland and scrub, however the grassland areas are considered to be a valuable foraging resource for breeding birds on site.

Two notable off-site features were identified during the surveys: a large rookery is located immediately adjacent to the northern site boundary, and a breeding gull *Larus* spp. colony is located immediately adjacent to the southern site boundary (large numbers of *Larus* spp. were observed roosting at this location too). Neither of these features will be directly affected by the development proposals, however the potential impacts are discussed below.

The following species assessed as confirmed or possible breeding within 100m of the site are species of conservation concern:

Mallard	Amber (GB, Wales)
Teal	Amber (GB, Wales)
Stock dove	Amber (GB)
Woodpigeon	Amber (GB)
Moorhen	Amber (GB)
Great black-backed gull	Red; (Wales); Amber (GB)
Herring gull	Red (GB, Wales); Section 7 species
Lesser black-backed gull	Amber (GB, Wales)
Sparrowhawk	Amber (GB)
Tawny owl	Amber (GB)
Green woodpecker	Amber (Wales)
Kestrel	Red (Wales); Amber (GB); Section 7 species
Rook	Amber (Wales)
Long-tailed tit	Amber (Wales)
Willow warbler	Red (Wales); Amber (GB)
Sedge warbler	Amber (GB)
Whitethroat	Red (Wales); Amber (GB)
Wren	Amber (GB)
Song thrush	Amber (GB, Wales); Section 7 species
House sparrow	Red (GB); Amber (Wales); Section 7 species
Dunnock	Amber (GB); Section 7 species
Pied wagtail	Amber (GB)
Bullfinch	Red (Wales); Amber (GB); Section 7 species
Greenfinch	Red (GB); Amber (Wales)
Linnet	Red (GB, Wales); Section 7 species
Reed bunting	Amber (GB, Wales); Section 7 species



Other notable species of conservation concern recorded on site, but are not considered to be breeding include:

Lapwing	Red (GB, Wales); Near Threatened; Section 7 species
Curlew	Red (GB, Wales); Near Threatened; Section 7 species
Woodcock	Red (GB, Wales)
Snipe	Amber (GB, Wales)
Kingfisher	Amber (GB, Wales); Schedule 1 species; Annexe 1 species

4.1.1 Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Three breeding pairs of mallards are estimated to breed on site, exclusively associated with the on-site ponds. A greater number of mallards were observed during the latter two surveys, and the individuals observed were in eclipse plumage; indicating that the site is used during the moulting period by a larger number of individuals.

Three of the onsite ponds will be lost in order to facilitate the development proposals, however 13 ponds (of varying size) will be created as an ecological enhancement, and managed specifically for biodiversity; therefore, any loss of habitat for this species will be suitably compensated for, through habitat creation.

4.1.2 Teal *Anas crecca*

No pairs of breeding teal were confirmed; however, a low number of birds were flushed from the onsite ponds during March and April. It is most likely that these are overwintering birds using the relatively undisturbed site for sanctuary, however there is a low possibility that a low number of breeding pairs are present on site, but were undetected due to their inconspicuous nature.

Three of the onsite ponds will be lost in order to facilitate the development proposals, however 13 ponds (of varying size) will be created as an ecological enhancement, and managed specifically for biodiversity; therefore, as with mallards, any loss of habitat for this species will be suitably compensated for, through habitat creation.

4.1.3 Stock dove *Columba oenas*

Up to two pairs of stock dove are estimated to breed on or within the immediate vicinity of the site. They are considered to be using cavities in the mature broadleaved trees in the western section of the site and the northern site boundary for nesting; foraging opportunities are numerous across the site.

Although the mature trees in the western section of the site may be lost to facilitate the development proposals, the trees at the site boundaries will be retained; some nesting opportunities will remain. The wider ecological enhancement measures such as grassland and hedgerow/ scrub creation, will provide foraging opportunities for stock doves in the long term. Some of the nest boxes included in the enhancement proposals will be suitable for use by stock dove (Eco Tawny Owl nest box).



4.1.4 Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

A total of seven pairs of woodpigeons are estimated to breed on site, and a higher number have been observed using the site for roosting / foraging purposes throughout the year. The most valuable habitats onsite are the areas of scrub and woodland for sheltering and nesting, and the more open (less rank) areas of grassland and scattered scrub in the southern section of the site for foraging.

A large part of suitable nesting and foraging opportunities for wood pigeons will be lost in order to facilitate the development proposals, which will potentially reduce the number of available territories for this species. The proposed ecological enhancements include hedgerow, scrub, woodland and tree planting which will provide a number of alternative nesting and foraging opportunities for woodpigeons on site, which will be managed specifically with biodiversity in mind.

4.1.5 Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Two breeding pairs of moorhens are estimated to breed on site, exclusively associated with the on-site ponds.

Three of the onsite ponds will be lost in order to facilitate the development proposals, however 13 ponds (of varying size) will be created as an ecological enhancement, and managed specifically for biodiversity; therefore, any loss of habitat for this species will be suitably compensated for through habitat creation.

4.1.6 Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

This species was not recorded during the breeding bird surveys; however it was recorded flying over the site during other ecological surveys undertaken on site. The habitats on site are considered suitable for nesting lapwing, however no breeding behaviour was observed. The relatively high incidence of generalist predators within the local area is considered to be a limiting factor to any potential breeding lapwing success on site. They may use the site for foraging and roosting throughout winter months.

The proposed ecological enhancements for the site, particularly the pond and grassland creation, will provide enhanced foraging opportunities for lapwings in the long term; however, the remaining high predator pressure in the local area, renders it unlikely that lapwings will successfully breed on site.

4.1.7 Curlew *Numenius arquata*

This species was not recorded during the breeding bird surveys; however it was recorded flying over the site during other ecological surveys undertaken on site. The habitats on site are considered suitable for nesting curlew, however no breeding behaviour was observed. The relatively high incidence of generalist predators within the local area is considered to be a limiting factor to any potential breeding curlew success on site. They may use the site for foraging and roosting throughout winter months.



The proposed ecological enhancements for the site, particularly the pond and grassland creation, will provide enhanced foraging opportunities for curlews in the long term; however, the remaining high predator pressure in the local area, renders it unlikely that curlews will successfully breed on site.

4.1.8 Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

This species was only recorded once during the breeding bird surveys and was not recorded roding during any of the numerous evening (newt and bat) surveys; therefore, it is not considered to be a breeding species on site. Relatively high numbers were recorded during the winter months (January and February); a peak count of 15 birds were flushed during pond assessments in February 2022.

The majority of the suitable habitat for sheltering, overwintering woodcock will be retained (boundary woodland, scrub and ditches), however the loss of grassland in the centre of the site may result in the loss of nocturnal foraging opportunities for this species. The ecological enhancement proposals and habitat creation works in the eastern section of the site should provide superior foraging opportunities as well as offering increased sheltering opportunities for woodcock.

4.1.9 Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

This species was recorded infrequently during the breeding bird surveys, and no drumming was identified during any of the numerous evening surveys (newt and bat surveys); therefore, it is not considered to be a breeding species on site. As with woodcock, higher numbers were recorded during the winter months.

The loss of grassland in the centre of the site and three of the ponds may result in the loss of nocturnal foraging opportunities for this species. The ecological enhancement proposals and habitat creation works in the eastern section of the site should provide superior foraging opportunities as well as offering increased sheltering opportunities for snipe.

4.1.10 Great black-backed gull *Larus marinus*

Up to two pairs of greater black-backed gull were identified to be nesting on the warehouse roof, immediately adjacent to the southern site boundary, alongside other nesting *Larus* species. Higher numbers of this species (and other *Larus* species) were observed roosting on the same warehouse roof later in the breeding season, in the evenings. Greater black-backed gulls were not observed foraging on site, and it is not considered to be a valuable foraging resource for this species.

The nesting site will not be directly affected by the development proposals, though there may be some disturbance afforded to nesting attempts and roosting birds during the construction phase of the development.



4.1.11 Herring gull *Larus argentatus*

Up to five pairs of herring gull were identified to be nesting on the warehouse roof, immediately adjacent to the southern site boundary, alongside other nesting *Larus* species. Higher numbers of this species (and other *Larus* species) were observed roosting on the same warehouse roof later in the breeding season, in the evenings. Herring gulls were only observed foraging on site on one occasion, within the grassland in the northern section of the site; however, it is not considered to be a valuable foraging resource for this species.

The nesting site will not be directly affected by the development proposals, though there may be some disturbance afforded to nesting attempts and roosting birds during the construction phase of the development.

4.1.12 Lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus*

Up to four pairs of lesser black-backed gull were identified to be nesting on the warehouse roof, immediately adjacent to the southern site boundary, alongside other nesting *Larus* species. Higher numbers of this species (and other *Larus* species) were observed roosting on the same warehouse roof later in the breeding season, in the evenings. Lesser black-backed gulls were not observed foraging on site, and it is not considered to be a valuable foraging resource for this species.

The nesting site will not be directly affected by the development proposals, though there may be some disturbance afforded to nesting attempts and roosting birds during the construction phase of the development.

4.1.13 Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Although the species was not confirmed to be breeding on site, there are suitable areas for nesting within the areas of woodland on site and immediately adjacent to the north, and birds were seen irregularly through the surveys. Therefore it is considered possible that one pair of sparrowhawks nest on or within the immediate vicinity of the site.

The majority of suitable nesting and foraging habitats for sparrowhawks (boundary woodland, scrub and hedgerows) will be retained. Furthermore, the proposed woodland planting may provide enhanced opportunities for sparrowhawks.

4.1.14 Tawny owl *Strix aluco*

One tawny owl nest was confirmed within a Lombardy poplar *Populus nigra italica* tree at the north-western boundary of the site.

The mature woodland at the northern site boundary, which is considered to be the main foraging, roosting and nesting resource for tawny owls on site, will be retained and unaffected by the development proposals. The loss of a large part of the grassland may reduce the foraging opportunities for tawny owls on site, however opportunities will be created in the southern and eastern section of the site through the proposed ecological enhancements.



4.1.15 Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

This species is not considered to breed onsite due to lack of presence though the majority of the breeding season. However an individual bird was recorded on the July and August surveys; indicating that the ponds on site are used as a foraging resource for the species.

Three of the onsite ponds will be lost in order to facilitate the development proposals which may reduce the foraging resources for this species on site, however 13 ponds (of varying size) will be created as an ecological enhancement, and managed specifically for biodiversity; therefore, any loss of habitat for this species will be suitably compensated for through habitat creation.

4.1.16 Green woodpecker *Picus viridis*

This species was recorded infrequently during the surveys so is only considered as a possible breeding species on site.

The majority of mature trees will be retained, therefore nesting opportunities are unlikely to be adversely affected by the development, however the loss of grassland habitats may reduce the availability of foraging resources. The proposed ecological enhancements, including grassland creation / enhancement, should offer suitable compensation for this species.

4.1.17 Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Although kestrels were not confirmed to be breeding on site, there are suitable areas for nesting within the scattered mature broadleaved trees both on and immediately adjacent to the site. Birds were seen irregularly through the surveys, and it is considered possible that one pair of kestrels breed within 100m of the site.

The majority of boundary mature trees will be retained, resulting in minimal loss of suitable nesting opportunities for kestrels. The loss of grassland habitats may reduce foraging opportunities, however proposed ecological enhancements, including grassland creation / enhancement, should offer suitable compensation. The installation of suitable kestrel nest boxes will enhance the nesting availability for this species too.

4.1.18 Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

There is a large rookery in the woodland immediately adjacent to the northern site boundary; a peak count of 39 active nests was counted during the April survey, before the leaves reduced visibility. The birds using the rookery were observed foraging onsite occasionally, however they were more frequently observed using off-site farmland for foraging. The woodland and off-site warehouse building to the north of the site are used for roosting rooks and jackdaws *Corvus monedula*.

The rookery will not be directly affected by the development proposals, though there may be some disturbance afforded to nesting attempts and roosting birds during the construction phase of the development.



4.1.19 Long-tailed tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Up to four pairs of long-tailed tit were identified to be nesting on or within the immediate vicinity of the site. The areas of scrub and hedgerow adjacent to grassland are considered to be the most valuable habitats on site for this species.

Some areas of scrub, hedgerows and grassland will be lost to facilitate the development proposals, however the ecological enhancements include woodland, scrub and hedgerow planting which will provide both foraging and nesting opportunities for this species in the long term.

4.1.20 Willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Up to nine singing males were identified on or within the immediate vicinity of the site. The areas of scrub and hedgerow adjacent to grassland are considered to be the most valuable habitats on site for this species.

Some areas of scrub, hedgerows and grassland will be lost to facilitate the development proposals; however, the ecological enhancements include scrub and hedgerow planting which will provide both foraging and nesting opportunities for this species in the long term. Furthermore, the proposed grassland enhancement and creation will provide enhanced foraging opportunities.

4.1.21 Sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

This species was not confirmed to be breeding on site, however one individual was identified to be singing close to one of the ponds in the southern section of the site in April. The habitats on site are suitable for nesting sedge warbler, and it is considered possible that a pair of sedge warblers use the site to breed.

The proposed ecological enhancements, particularly the pond creation and scrub planting in the eastern section of the site, will provide valuable nesting and foraging opportunities for this species.

4.1.22 Whitethroat *Corruca communis*

Up to twelve singing males were identified on or within the immediate vicinity of the site. The areas of scrub and hedgerow adjacent to grassland are considered to be the most valuable habitats on site for this species.

Some areas of scrub, hedgerows and grassland will be lost to facilitate the development proposals; however, the ecological enhancements include scrub and hedgerow planting which will provide both foraging and nesting opportunities for this species in the long term. Furthermore, the proposed grassland enhancement and creation will provide enhanced foraging opportunities.



4.1.23 Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Up to 15 singing males were identified on or within the immediate vicinity of the site. The majority of the site is suitable for wrens, however the areas of woodland, scrub and hedgerow are considered to be the most valuable habitats on site.

Some areas of scrub and hedgerows will be lost to facilitate the development proposals; however, the ecological enhancements include woodland, scrub and hedgerow planting which will provide both foraging and nesting opportunities for this species in the long term.

Furthermore, the woodland in the northern section of the site, and the mature hedgerow /scrub at the eastern site boundary will be retained to provide connectivity throughout the site.

4.1.24 Song thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Up to four singing males were identified on or within the immediate vicinity of the site. The areas of woodland, scrub and hedgerow are considered to be the most valuable habitats on site for song thrushes. These habitats will also provide valuable foraging resources for thrush species throughout the year.

Some areas of scrub and hedgerows will be lost to facilitate the development proposals; however, the ecological enhancements include woodland, scrub and hedgerow planting which will provide both foraging and nesting opportunities for this species in the long term. Furthermore, the woodland in the northern section of the site, and the mature hedgerow /scrub at the eastern site boundary will be retained to provide connectivity throughout the site.

4.1.25 House sparrow *Passer domesticus*

A colony of house sparrows was identified in the residential dwellings adjacent to the eastern site boundary; birds were observed using the eastern section of the site for foraging, however no nesting was observed on site.

The eastern section of the site will be significantly enhanced as part of the development proposals, with tree, woodland and scrub planting as well as improved grassland management; this will improve the value of the habitats on site for house sparrows.

4.1.26 Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

A peak count of 17 singing males were identified during the April survey, however counts were significantly lower during other surveys; estimated to be 8 territories. The majority of the site is suitable for dunnocks, however the areas of scrub and hedgerow are considered to be the most valuable habitats on site.

Some areas of scrub and hedgerows will be lost to facilitate the development proposals; however, the ecological enhancements include woodland, scrub and hedgerow planting which will provide both foraging and nesting opportunities for this species in the long term. Furthermore, the woodland in the northern section of the site, and the mature hedgerow /scrub at the eastern site boundary will be retained to provide connectivity throughout the site.



4.1.27 Pied wagtail *Motacilla alba yarellii*

Up to two pairs of pied wagtails are estimated to be breeding on site. The most valuable habitats for this species is the open mosaic grassland in the southern section of the site.

The proposed ecological enhancements will provide sufficient invertebrate prey for pied wagtails throughout the year. Nesting opportunities may be enhanced through opportunities in the newly constructed buildings.

4.1.28 Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Two pairs of bullfinch were identified on or within the immediate vicinity of the site. The areas of woodland, scrub and hedgerow are considered to be the most valuable habitats on site for bullfinches.

Some areas of scrub and hedgerows will be lost to facilitate the development proposals; however, the ecological enhancements include woodland, scrub and hedgerow planting which will provide both foraging and nesting opportunities for this species in the long term. Furthermore, the woodland in the northern section of the site, and the mature hedgerow /scrub at the eastern site boundary will be retained to provide connectivity throughout the site.

4.1.29 Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

This species was not confirmed to be breeding on site, however one individual was identified to be singing on two occasions. The habitats on site are suitable for nesting greenfinch. The areas of scrub and hedgerow are considered to be the most valuable habitats on site for this species.

Some areas of scrub and hedgerows will be lost to facilitate the development proposals; however, the ecological enhancements include scrub and hedgerow planting which will provide both foraging and nesting opportunities for this species in the long term.

4.1.30 Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Although this species was not confirmed to be breeding on site, birds were recorded calling during all surveys except the July survey. The areas of scrub and hedgerow are highly suitable for nesting and foraging linnets.

Some areas of scrub and hedgerows will be lost to facilitate the development proposals; however, the ecological enhancements include scrub and hedgerow planting which will provide both foraging and nesting opportunities for this species in the long term.

4.1.31 Reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Up to three pairs of reed bunting were identified on or within the immediate vicinity of the site. The areas of scrub and hedgerow adjacent to tall grassland, particularly around the ponds are considered to be the most valuable habitats on site for this species.



Some areas of scrub, hedgerows and grassland, as well as three ponds will be lost to facilitate the development proposals; however, the ecological enhancements include scrub and hedgerow planting, grassland creation / enhancement and pond creation; these enhancements will provide an enhancement for both nesting and foraging reed buntings throughout the year.

4.2 Impacts

Whilst the site supports a moderate number of nationally protected breeding bird species and a high number of species of conservation concern, most are generalist species that will use other habitats present within the local area. Following territory mapping analysis, the population of notable bird species on site is not considered to be significant on a national or county level. Suitable foraging and nesting habitats such as trees, hedgerows, scrub, grassland, ponds and small areas of woodland are to be removed to facilitate the development; this will result in loss of territories for some of the species of conservation concern, found on site.

Furthermore, without mitigation, site clearance and vegetation removal could result in the direct loss of nests, any individuals within the nests and of available nesting territories if conducted during the breeding season.

There may be some increased level of disturbance to the site during the construction phase of the development, particularly to the off-site rookery at the northern site boundary. The impact of disturbance on the off-site breeding gull colony to the south of the site, is considered to be negligible due to the altered scheme layout, which avoids construction works immediately adjacent to the southern site boundary.

4.3 Mitigation and compensation

4.3.1 Site clearance and vegetation removal

Site clearance and vegetation removal (including enabling works) should be carried out outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a targeted breeding bird nest scoping survey should be conducted prior to the start on site or an ecological clerk of works appointed.

Consideration should be given to reducing the impact of disturbance to the off-site rookery, adjacent to the northern site boundary. Initial site clearance and construction works adjacent to the northern boundary should commence outside of the key breeding months for rooks (March -- June inclusive), to reduce the impact on ongoing nesting attempts. The potential disturbance impact to the gul colony to the south of the site has been mitigated for through adjustment of the site layout, to include the southern section of the site in the ecological enhancement zones.

4.3.2 Landscaping and habitat creation

To compensate for the loss of habitats and potential territories, replacement habitats for foraging and nesting birds will be provided including woodland, an orchard, rough tussocky



grassland, wildflower grassland, wet ditches, ponds, trees and hedgerows, in addition to the enhancement of retained areas of habitat including the open mosaic and unimproved grassland habitats.

A suite of bird boxes will be installed on site as further compensation for the loss of nesting opportunities and to provide an enhancement in the availability of nesting opportunities for species that currently aren't using the site for this purpose due to a lack of suitable opportunities. Examples of bird boxes that could be used on site include:

- Schwegler 1B nest boxes (28mm and 32mm entrance holes)
- Schwegler 1MR Avianex
- Schwegler 1SP house sparrow terrace
- Schwegler No. 10 Swallow nest cups
- Eco Barn Owl nest box
- Eco Tawny Owl nest box (also suitable for stock dove and jackdaw)
- Kestrel box

Correct siting of bird nest boxes should be conducted with the aid of the project ecologist.



5 CONCLUSION

The survey area was found to support a typical bird assemblage (both diversity and density) for the habitats present. Due to the length of time that the site has been left unmanaged, areas of scrub and rank grassland support a high diversity and abundance of invertebrate prey, which supports a wide range of bird species through the breeding season.

A total of 60 species were recorded during the field surveys, of which, 34 were assessed as confirmed or likely breeding within 100m of the redline boundary. A further 14 species were assessed as possible breeding within 100m of the site. The majority of bird activity was associated with the field boundary features such as hedgerows, woodland and scrub, however the grassland areas are considered to be a valuable foraging resource for breeding birds on site.

Whilst the site supports a moderate number of nationally protected breeding bird species and a high number of species of conservation concern, most are generalist species that will use other habitats present within the local area. Following territory mapping analysis, the population of notable bird species on site is not considered to be significant on a national or county level. Suitable foraging and nesting habitats such as trees, hedgerows, scrub, grassland, ponds and small areas of woodland are to be removed to facilitate the development; this will result in loss of territories for some of the species of conservation concern, found on site.

To compensate for the loss of habitats and potential territories, replacement habitats for foraging and nesting birds will be provided including woodland, an orchard, rough tussocky grassland, wildflower grassland, wet ditches, ponds, trees and hedgerows, in addition to the enhancement of retained areas of habitat including the open mosaic and unimproved grassland habitats. A suite of nest boxes will also be included as part of the enhancement measures to provide long term nesting opportunities for a variety of bird species.

Site clearance and vegetation removal (including enabling works) should be carried out outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a targeted breeding bird nest scoping survey should be conducted prior to the start on site or an ecological clerk of works appointed.



6 REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan



Site Plan

Site: Plot 3A, Wrexham
NGR: SJ 393 503
Author: Alasdair Grubb
Date: 16/09/2022



KEY:

- Site boundary
- Transect route

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Appendix 2 – Survey results



Bird Survey Map 1

Surveyors: AG

Date: 18.03.2022

Start: 06:00

Finish: 10:30

Temp: 1 to 5 °C
Wind: 1 BFS
Rain: 0 %
CC: 0 %

Notes:

Rookery off site to N Boundary

Regular HG and LB flyovers

0 50 100 m

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Bird Survey Map 2

Surveyors: AG, RM

Date: 13.04.2022

Start: 06:00

Finish: 10:30

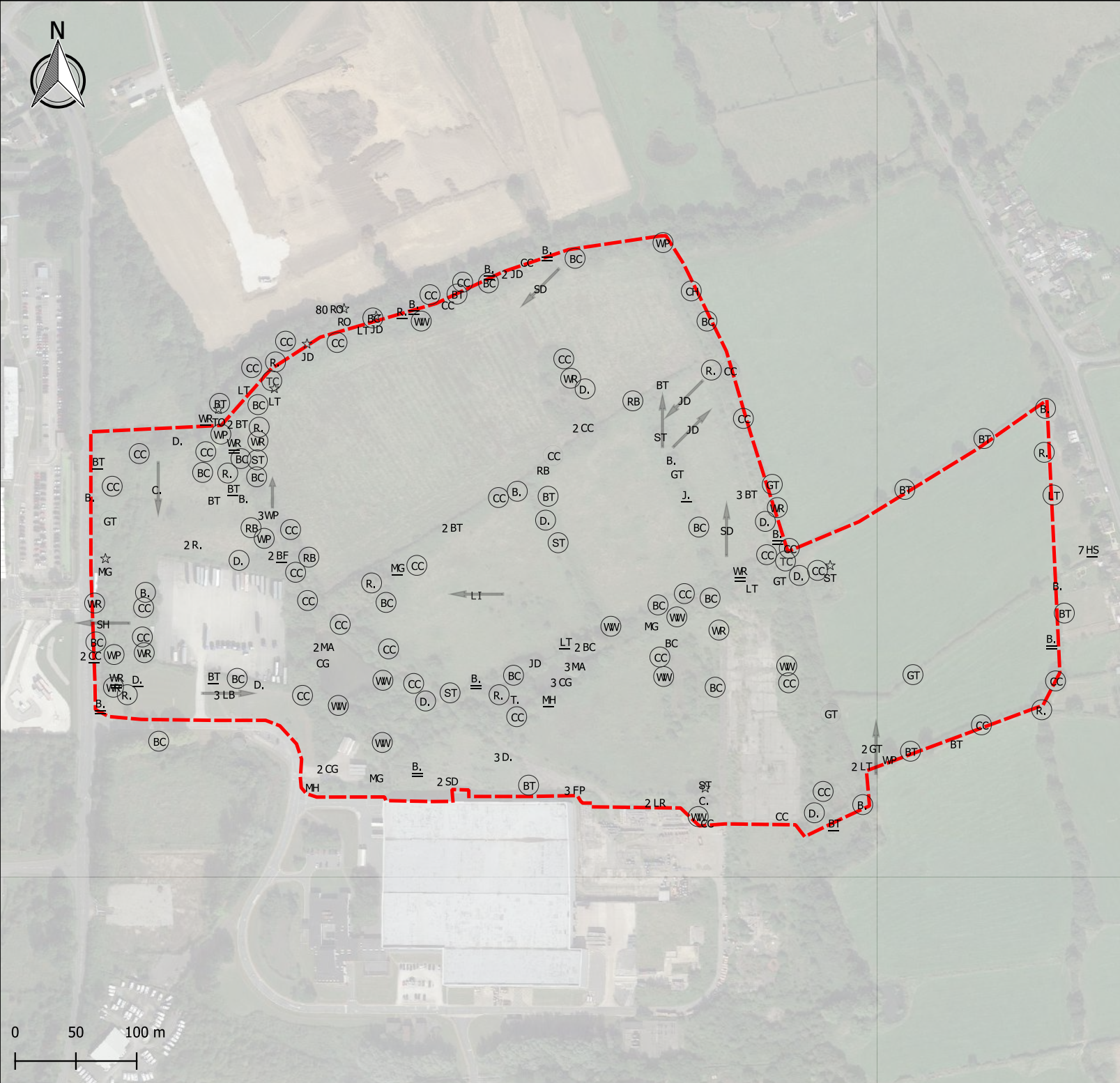
Temp:	11	*C
Wind:	2	BFS
Rain:	5	%
CC:	100	%

Notes:

39 Rook nests counted in rookery on N boundary
Numerous gulls (LB and HG mainly) flying over

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Bird Survey Map 3

Surveyors: AG, JM

Date: 09/05/2022

Start: 0500

Finish: 0930

Temp: 8 - 10

*C

Wind: 2

BFS

Rain: 0

%

CC: 90

%

Notes:

Much of the site has been mown (including some areas of scrub) within the past week. Bird activity is lower than in previous visits as a result (particularly in grassland areas).

0 50 100 m

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Bird Survey Map 4

Surveyors: AG

Date: 21/06/2022

Start: 0500

Finish: 0930

Temp: 10 - 13

*C

Wind: 1

BFS

Rain: 0

%

CC: 15

%

Notes:

Fledged young of BF and LT visible.

0 50 100 m

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Bird Survey Map 5

Surveyors: AG

Date: 19/07/2022

Start: 20:30

Finish: 23:30

Temp: 22

*C

Wind: 2

BFS

Rain: 0

%

CC: 15

%

Notes:

PM survey

Agressive encounter between SH and TO on N boundary. SH was particularly aggitated, indicating potential predation of SH nest by TO

Kingfisher noted calling around pond

Large gull assemblage on the roof of warehouse on the S boundary. High number flew over site towards this area during the survey.

Large RO and JD roost on the roof of the warehouse off site to the N.

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0 50 100 m



Bird Survey Map 6

Surveyors: AG

Date: 11/08/2022

Start: 0530

Finish: 0930

Temp: 10 - 19

*C

Wind: 1

BFS

Rain: 0

%

CC: 0

%

Notes:

Heavy dew early mornig and cold start. Bird activity decreased after 0800

Woodcock flushed from N ditch.

MAs in eclipse plumage

0 50 100 m

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BTO Code	Common name	Scientific Name	Cymraeg	Conservation Status	Notes (Status on / within 100m of the proposed development site)
CG	Canada Goose	Branta canadensis	Gŵydd Canada		Confirmed breeding
MA	Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	Hwyaden Wyllt	Amber (GB, Wales)	Confirmed breeding
T.	Teal	Anas crecca	Corhwyaden	Amber (GB, Wales)	Possible breeding
PH	Pheasant	Phasianus colchicus	Ffesant		Possible breeding
FP	Feral Pigeon	Columba livia	Colomen Ddof	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
SD	Stock Dove	Columba oenas	Colomen Wyllt	Amber (GB)	Confirmed breeding
WP	Woodpigeon	Columba palumbus	Ysguthan	Amber (GB)	Confirmed breeding
MH	Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	Iâr Ddŵr	Amber(GB)	Confirmed breeding
L.	Lapwing	Vanellus vanellus	Cornchwiglen	NT; Red (GB, Wales); Sec7	Non-breeding. Flyover. Possible foraging
CU	Curlew	Numenius arquata	Gylfinir	NT; Red (GB, Wales); Sec7	Non-breeding. Flyover. Possible foraging
WK	Woodcock	Scolopax rusticola	Cyffyllog	Red (GB, Wales)	Non-breeding. Overwintering species.
SN	Snipe	Gallinago gallinago	Giach	Amber (GB, Wales)	Non-breeding. Overwintering species.
BH	Black-headed Gull	Chroicocephalus ridibundus	Gwylan Benddu	Amber (GB); Red (Wales); Sec7	Non-breeding. Flyover
GB	Great Black-backed Gull	Larus marinus	Gwylan Gefnddu Fwyaf	Red (Wales); Amber (GB)	Possible breeding
HG	Herring Gull	Larus argentatus	Gwylan y Penwaig	Red (GB, Wales); Sec7	Confirmed breeding
LB	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Larus fuscus	Gwylan Gefnddu Leiaf	Amber (GB, Wales)	Confirmed breeding
H.	Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	Crêyr Glas	Green (GB), Amber (Wales)	Non-breeding. Flyover. Possible foraging
SH	Sparrowhawk	Accipiter nisus	Gwalch Glas	Amber (GB)	Possible breeding
BZ	Buzzard	Buteo buteo	Bwncath	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
LO	Little Owl	Athene noctua	Tylluan Fach		Possible breeding
TO	Tawny Owl	Strix aluco	Tylluan Frech	Amber (GB)	Confirmed breeding
KF	Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	Glas y Dorlan	Green (GB), Amber (Wales); Sch1.1; Ann	Non-breeding. Foraging.
GS	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopos major	Cnocell Fraith Fwyaf	Green (GB)	Likely breeding
G.	Green Woodpecker	Picus viridis	Cnocell Werdd	Amber (Wales); Green (GB)	Possible breeding
K.	Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	Cudyll Coch	Red (Wales); Amber (GB); Sec7	Possible breeding
J.	Jay	Garrulus glandarius	Sgrech y Coed	Green (GB)	Likely breeding
MG	Magpie	Pica pica	Pioden	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
JD	Jackdaw	Coloeus monedula	Jac-y-do	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
RO	Rook	Corvus frugilegus	Ydfran	Amber (GB)	Confirmed breeding
C.	Carrion Crow	Corvus corone	Brân Dyddyn	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
RN	Raven	Corvus corax	Cigfran	Green (GB)	Non-breeding. Flyover
CT	Coal Tit	Parus ater	Titw Penddu	Green (GB)	Possible breeding
BT	Blue Tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	Titw Tomos Las	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
GT	Great Tit	Parus major	Titw Mawr	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
SM	Sand Martin	Riparia riparia	Gwennol y Glennydd	Green (GB)	Non-breeding. Flyover
SL	Swallow	Hirundo rustica	Gwennol	Green (GB)	Non-breeding. Flyover
LT	Long-tailed Tit	Aegithalos caudatus	Titw Cynffon-hir	Amber (Wales); Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
WW	Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus	Telwr yr Helyg	Red (Wales); Amber (GB)	Confirmed breeding
CC	Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	Siff-siaff	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
SW	Sedge Warbler	Acrocephalus schoenobaenus	Telwr yr Hesg	Amber (GB)	Possible breeding
BC	Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	Telwr Penddu	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
LW	Lesser Whitethroat	Curruca curruca	Llwydfron Fach	Green (GB)	Likely breeding
WH	Whitethroat	Curruca communis	Llwydfron	Red (Wales); Amber (GB)	Confirmed breeding
WR	Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes	Dryw	Amber (GB)	Confirmed breeding
TC	Treecreeper	Certhia familiaris	Dringwr Bach	Green (GB)	Likely breeding
ST	Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	Bronfraith	Amber (GB, Wales); Sec7	Confirmed breeding
B.	Blackbird	Turdus merula	Mwyalchen	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
R.	Robin	Erithacus rubecula	Robin Goch	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding

BTO Code	Common name	Scientific Name	Cymraeg	Conservation Status	Notes (Status on / within 100m of the proposed development site)
W.	Wheatear	Oenanthe oenanthe	Tinwen y Garn	Amber (GB)	Non-breeding. Flyover
HS	House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	Aderyn y Tô	Red (GB); Amber (Wales); Sec7	Confirmed breeding
D.	Dunnock	Prunella modularis	Llwyd y Gwrych	Amber (GB); Sec7	Confirmed breeding
PW	Pied Wagtail	Motacilla alba yarellii	Siglen Fraith	Amber (GB)	Likely breeding
MP	Meadow Pipit	Anthus pratensis	Corhedydd y Waun	NT; Amber (GB, Wales)	Non-breeding. Overwintering species.
CH	Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs	Ji-binc	Green (GB)	Likely breeding
BF	Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	Coch y Berllan	Amber (GB); Red (Wales); Sec7	Confirmed breeding
GR	Greenfinch	Chloris chloris	Llinos Werdd	Red (GB); Amber (Wales)	Possible breeding
LI	Linnet	Linaria cannabina	Llinos	Red (GB, Wales); Sec7	Possible breeding
LR	Lesser Redpoll	Acanthis cabaret	Llinos Bengoch Leiaf	Red (GB); Amber (Wales); Sec7	Non-breeding. Flyover. Possible overwintering
GO	Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	Nico	Green (GB)	Confirmed breeding
RB	Reed Bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	Bras y Cyrs	Amber (GB, Wales); Sec7	Confirmed breeding

Key:	
EX/CR/EN/VU/NT	Extinct, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened on the Global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
Red/Amber/Green (GB)	Red, Amber or Green listed on the Birds of Conservation Concern 5 List
Red/Amber/Green (Wales)	Red, Amber or Green listed on the Population Status of Birds in Wales list
Sch1.1/1.1A/A1/1.2	Schedule 1 part 1, 1 part 1A, A1 or 1 part 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
Sec7	Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016
Ann1	Listed on Annex I of The Birds Directive
RBBP	Listed as one of the species that the UK Rare Breeding Bird Panel reports on; breeding records of these species should be shared with the relevant county recorder



Appendix 3 – Photographs



Photo 1. Showing the agricultural field in the eastern section of the site.



Photo 2. Facing south across the area of hardstanding and scattered scrub in the southern section of the site.



Photo 3. Showing the grassland in the southern section of the site.



Photo 4. Showing the ephemeral / short perennial habitat with scattered scrub in the south-western section of the site.



Photo 5. Showing some of the dense bramble scrub in the western section of the site.

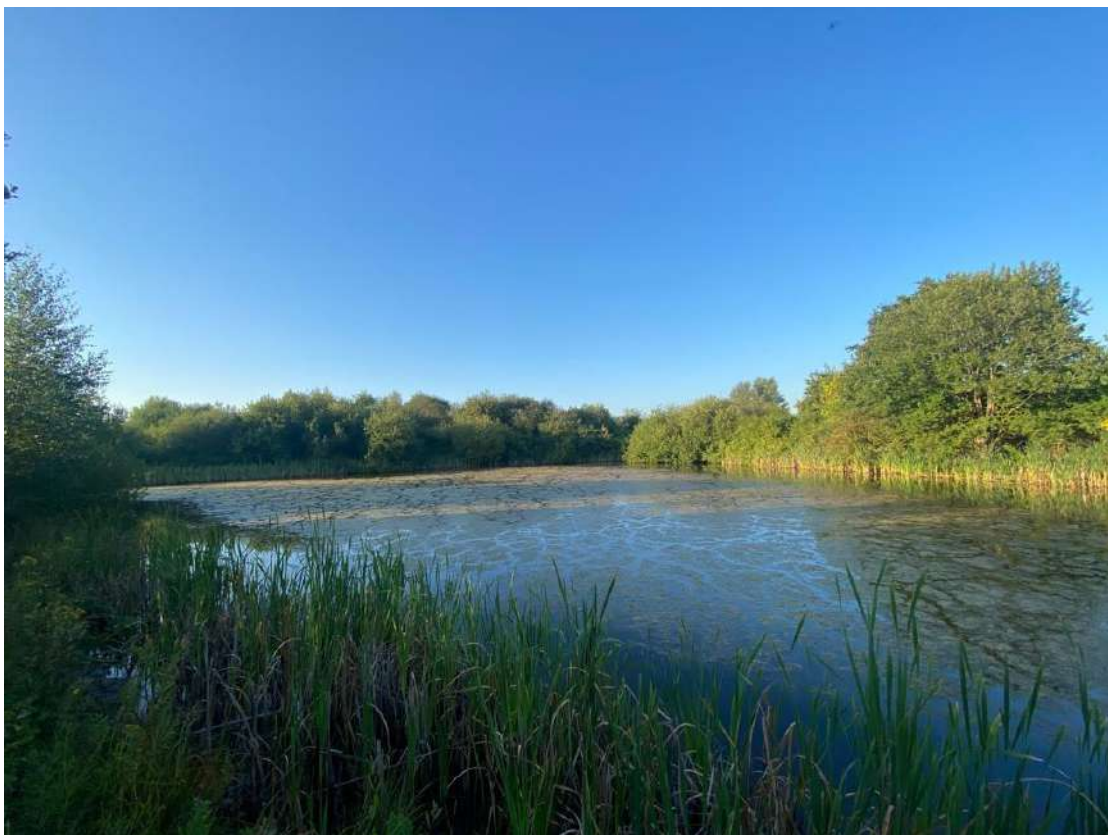


Photo 6. Showing one of the ponds in the centre of the site.



Photo 7. Showing the grassland in the northern section of the site, looking towards the northern boundary of the site and off-site woodland.



Photo 8. Facing south-west from the north-eastern corner of the site, across grassland.



Appendix 4 – Statutory and planning context

STATUTORY AND PLANNING CONTEXT

Ecological assessments

Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of the legislative protection that is relevant to the findings of this report.

Habitats

Section 7 of the Environment Act (Wales) places a duty on Welsh Ministers to publish, review and revise lists of types of habitats and species in Wales which they consider are of key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity. The Welsh Ministers must also take all reasonable steps to maintain and enhance the habitats published in these lists, and encourage others to take such steps.

Birds

All wild birds, their nests and young are protected throughout England and Wales by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to kill, injure or take any wild bird, or damage or destroy the nest or eggs of breeding birds. The legislation applies to all bird species, common and rare.

In addition to the protection afforded to all wild birds, more vulnerable species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act receive enhanced protection when breeding. Schedule 1 species, including their dependent young, are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance whilst at or near the nest, in addition to the protection afforded the more common species.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 offers further protection to the nests of some species that regularly re-use their nests, even when the nests are not in use.

The leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK have reviewed the population status of 244 UK bird species. "Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds" is the most recent publication summarising their findings. Three lists, Red, Amber and Green, have been produced based on the most up-to-date evidence available and criteria include conservation status at global and European levels and, within the UK: historical decline, trends in population and range, rarity, localised distribution and international importance. These lists are a valuable resource when considering conservation priorities.

Planning Policy

National planning guidance is issued in the form of Planning Policy Wales (PPW - 2018). The most relevant sections are included in Chapter 6: Distinctive and Natural Places. This chapter details the policies on issues such as the protection of trees, woodlands, species, and designated sites. The document is free and available to view online.