Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

LAND OFF BETHANIA ROAD, ACREFAIR.

MAP REF: SJ 27930 43317.

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL.

Ref No: **260339/3.**

Date: **3rd September 2026.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. An outline planning application is to be submitted for the development of an area of land off Bethania Road, Acrefair, North Wales with residential dwellings.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed development.

1.3. Previous surveys have been undertaken by others but Whitcher Wildlife Ltd carried out a more recent survey on 13th March 2026.

1.4. This report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations, amended in line with comments received from the planning ecologist.

1.5. Appendices I and II of this report provide additional information on specific species and are designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.2. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the UK Habitat Classification methodology to identify the broad habitat types throughout the survey area.

2.3. The survey area and immediate surrounding area was thoroughly searched for evidence of [redacted]) activity by looking for the following signs in line with Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D (1989). *Surveying*[redacted] Society: -

[redacted]

2.4. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Rob Strachan, Tom Moorhouse and Merryl Gelling (2011). *Water Vole Handbook: Third Edition*: -

* Water vole burrows.
* Water vole faeces and latrines.
* Water vole feeding stations.
* Water vole runs.
* Water vole prints in areas of soft mud.
* Water vole lawns.
* Predator field signs.

2.5. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of otter (*Lutra lutra*) activity by looking for the following signs

in line with the P Chanin (2003). *Monitoring the Otter* and *Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Monitoring Series No10 Guidelines: -*

* Otter prints in soft mud.
* Otter spraints.
* Otter Holts.

2.6. The survey area was searched for watercourses and waterbodies. Where found, and where safe to enter the water, all were thoroughly searched for the presence of crayfish, for approximately 50m in each direction of the site, by searching under rocks and logs. Where stated, crayfish traps were also deployed into the watercourse. All survey work was carried out in accordance with the *Conserving Natural 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 1, Protocol for Monitoring the White Clawed Crayfish*.

2.7. The survey area was searched for mature trees and derelict buildings and where found these were checked for potential bat roosting sites in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)* by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat Droppings.

2.8. The land immediately adjacent to the survey area was assessed for bat roosting potential and bat foraging potential. Connective routes and flight lines were also assessed whilst on site and using maps of the area.

2.9. The area within 500m of the survey site was cross referenced to maps to highlight all ponds close to the site. Where possible, all ponds identified were accessed using agreed access or public rights of way to assess the potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) to be present.

2.10. The survey area was assessed for the potential for reptiles and suitable reptile habitats. Where applicable the area was also searched for the presence of reptiles.

2.11. Where appropriate, the habitat within and surrounding the survey area was searched for species such as hazel, oak, honeysuckle, bramble and other species which may provide potential habitat for hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Field signs such as feeding remains and nests were also searched for where possible, in line with P Bright, P Morris and T Mitchell-Jones *the Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition*.

2.12. Where appropriate, the area within and surrounding the survey area was assessed for its potential to house habitat for red squirrels. Field signs of red squirrels were searched for at least every 50m, looking for any dreys, feeding signs or sightings of red squirrels.

2.13. All surveys were carried out in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) survey standards and advice.

2.14. This document is prepared in line with Net Benefit for Biodiversity. (NBB)
National Planning Policy in Wales requires that every development delivers a net benefit for biodiversity. It states that 'development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity. In doing so planning authorities must also take account of and promote the resilience of ecosystems.' (from Planning Policy Wales 11, 2021).

2.15. This report is prepared in line with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

2.16. This survey was carried out by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years' experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance on a wide range of training courses through CIEEM, FSC and BCT. As a member of CIEEM he is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership. He holds current Natural England survey licences for barn owl, bat, great crested newt and white clawed crayfish.

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3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to Cofnod for existing records of designated sites and protected species within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. Cofnod returned records of six non-statutory and two statutory sites within the 2km search area, although no records within or immediately adjacent to the surveyed area.

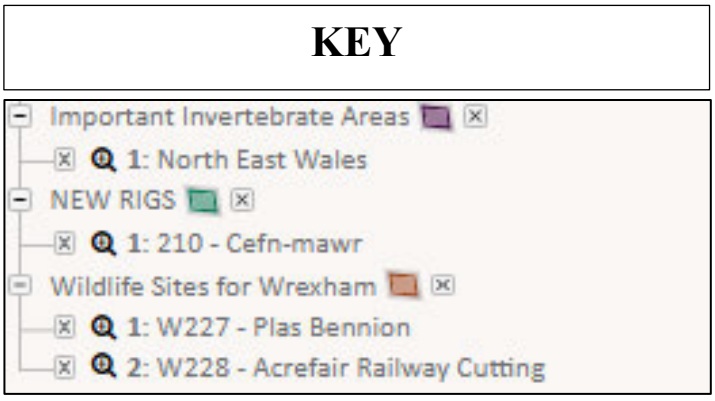
3.1.3. The following non-statutory site records lie within 2km of the survey area.

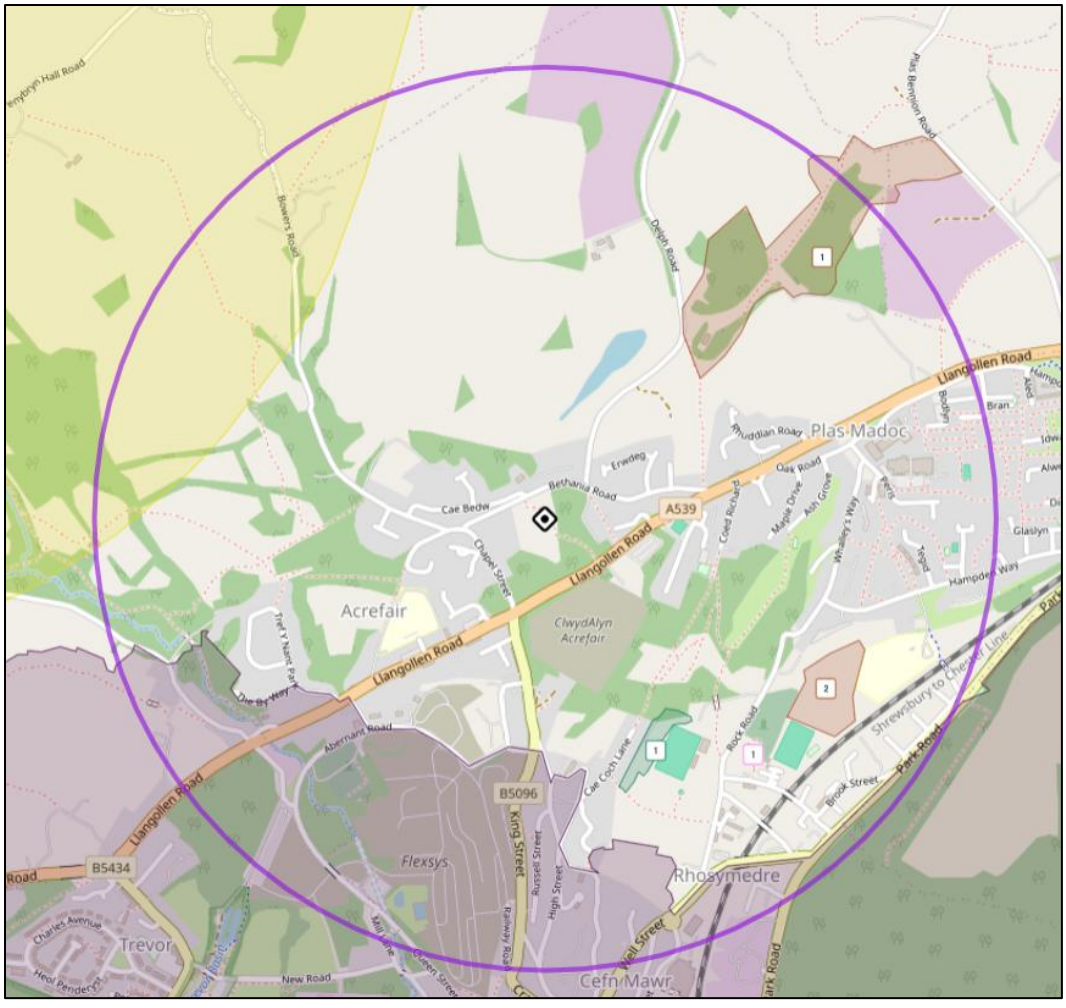
Site Name.	**Designation**	**Reason for designation**	**Distance from survey area.**
Plas Bennion	LWS	Habitats – grassland and scrub	450m NE
Cefn-mawr	RIGS	Unknown	500m S.
Acrefair Railway Cutting	LWS	Habitats – grassland	650m SE
Ty Mawr & Tan Y Cut Wood	LWS	Unknown	1.5km S
Australia Quarry	RIGS	Unknown	1.5km SE
Gardden Wood/Rocky Wood	LWS	Habitats – woodland	1.75km NE

3.1.4. The following statutory site records lie within 2km of the survey area.

Site Name.	**Designation**	**Reason for designation**	**Distance from survey area.**
Afon Dyfrdwy (River Dee)	SSSI	River habitat and supported flora and fauna	1.5km S
River Dee and Bala Lake	SAC	River habitat and supported flora and fauna	1.5km S.

3.1.5. These sites are shown on the map below.





3.1.6. There are occasional records of amphibian species within the 2km search area, although no records close to the survey area. The records include great crested newt with the closest record 380m to the east, smooth newt common frog and common toad.

3.1.7. [redacted].

3.1.8. There are abundant records of bat species within 2km of the survey area, although no records within the survey area. The closest records refer to the presence of common pipistrelle and whiskered bats at Trefynant Park, 420m to the southwest of the survey area

3.1.9. The records included abundant bird species within 2km of the survey area, although no records within the survey area.

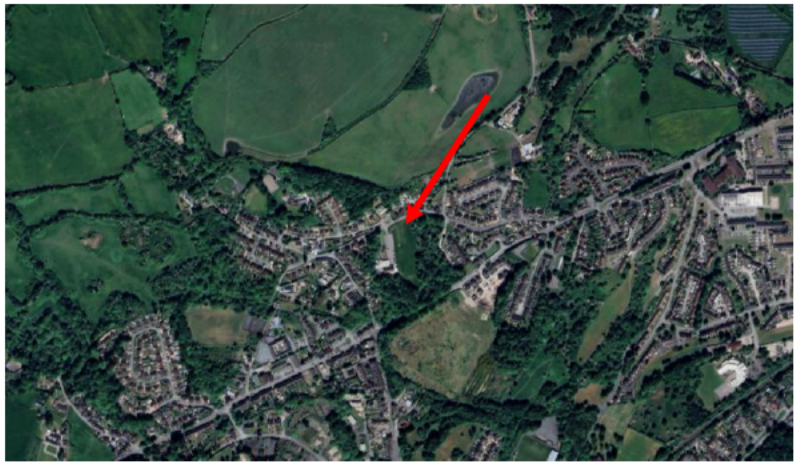
3.1.10. There are occasional records of hedgehog within 2km although no records specific to the surveyed area.

3.1.11. There are occasional records of reptile species within the 2km of the survey area, although no records within the survey area. The records are predominantly slow worm with the closest record 400m to the south.

3.1.12. The data search results are available to the client on request but must not be placed in the public domain.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The aerial photograph below shows the location of the site off Bethania Road, Acrefair, marked with a red arrow and the surrounding area. The site is located in the town of Acrefair surrounded by residential areas and farmland. Directly to the west of the site is a sports and social club and car park and to the east a wooded valley with a residential estate beyond.



3.2.2. The survey area is shown below shaded in yellow.



3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix III of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats that are on the site. The primary habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- g4 – Modified grassland.
- w1g - Other broadleaved woodland.
- u1e – Built linear feature.

3.3.2. g4 - Modified Grassland.

Secondary code – 32 – Scattered trees.

3.3.2.1. The majority of the site comprises a flat plateau of open grassland with a fairly short sward and crossed by well-worn paths, the result of pedestrian and dog walking activities.



3.3.2.2. Species present include perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), Cocks foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale),* white clover *(Trifolium repens*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), thistle (*Cirsium* sp(p)) and dock (*Rumex* Sp) with occasional common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), birds foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) and cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*).

3.3.2.3. Around the edges there is becoming encroachment of scrub species including gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and clematis (*Clematis vitalba*).



3.3.2.4. Down the western site boundary there are seven small feature trees that appear to have been planted in connection with the development of the car park on the adjacent land. These are ornamental species.





3.3.2.5. There is also a grass covered bund across the southern end of the site that appears to be a safety feature preventing access to the steep drop off the site into the woodland at this end of the grassland.





3.3.3. w1g – Other Broadleaved Woodland.

3.3.3.1. The land at the eastern and southern sides of the site, outside the proposed development area, drops down steeply into what appears to be an old railway cutting and quarry area that supports open broadleaved woodland.



3.3.3.2. There is a set of concrete steps that lead down into the woodland where there is a public footpath. The woodland soils appear to be quite shallow in this area as there are a number of wind-blown trees present.

3.3.3.3. The woodland comprises broadleaved woodland and the species present include willow (*Salix* sp.), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior)*. Beneath the trees there is an understorey of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), clematis (*Clematis vitalba*), ivy (*Hedera helix*), bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), nettles (*Urtica dioica*) and hart's tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*).

3.3.4. u1e – Built linear feature.

Secondary code 612 - Fence.

3.3.4.1. There are fences along the northern and western site boundaries comprising a mixture of timber fences and metal mesh fences with concrete posts.




3.3.4.2. There is ivy (*Hedera helix*) and clematis (*Clematis vitalba*) growing over the northern fence in places.




3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. There were no [redacted] present anywhere within the survey area. The data search included [redacted]

3.4.2. There is no watercourse on or close to the survey area and therefore there will be no impact on water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish.

3.4.3. The are four ponds shown on maps of the surrounding area within 500m of the survey area.

3.4.3.1. Pond 1 is located in a grazing pasture 400m to the northwest of the site. At the time of this survey the pond was a large expanse of open water in a grazing pasture with some emergent reedmace and an abundance of wildfowl including mallard and Canada geese.



3.4.3.2. Pond 2 is reported to be 450m southwest of the survey area in the grounds of Acrefield Primary School. The pond was not visible from public land and there was no authorised access onto the school site.

3.4.3.3. Pond 3 is a large pond, located in open grazing land approximately 240m northeast of the survey area. This area was extensive and this is probably due to recent heavy rainfall. There was no emergent vegetation but there was an abundance of wildfowl including mallard and Canada geese.





3.4.3.4. Pond 4 is shown on maps 340m to the east of the site. This pond was not visible from areas of public access but appears to be the pond referred to in the existing records for the area, which confirm the presence of great crested newts in the pond.

3.4.3.5. No Habitat Suitability Index was undertaken as the water levels in each pond are not typical. However, neither of the ponds viewed contained emergent or perimeter vegetation other than grazed grassland and both supported abundant wildfowl.

3.4.3.6. There was abundant terrestrial habitat and barriers to movement between the ponds and the survey area that would ensure any great crested newts that may be present in any of the ponds would be very unlikely to travel into the survey area.

3.4.4. There are no buildings present in the survey area to provide opportunities for roosting bats.

3.4.5. Previous surveys by others identified two trees in the woodland area with Potential Roost Features but both were in the adjacent woodland away from the proposed development area where they will be retained unaffected by the proposed development.

3.4.6. The woodland adjacent to the proposed development includes open glades throughout and this is assessed to potentially be high value bat foraging habitat. A previous transect bat survey undertaken by others identified three brown long-eared bat

passes along the woodland edge at the southern end of the site. It also identified noctule, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle passes along the northern and western site boundaries where it also reported high light levels from the adjacent illuminated car park.

3.4.6.1. Static surveys identified bat activity at two locations. One was in the bottom of the wooded ravine to the east of the proposed development area where the highest levels of bat activity were recorded at fifty-three passes per night. The other was at the woodland edge in the south-western corner of the site with ten passes per night recorded. The species mix was similar for each location, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule and myotis.

3.4.7. There are opportunities for nesting birds in the woodland to the east of the proposed development area but there is little potential within the grassland areas, particularly due to the levels of human activity.

3.4.8. The site is assessed to have no potential for reptiles. The site is surrounded by roads and the grassland on the proposed development area provides no shelter for reptiles. In addition, the human activity and dog walking on the site will deter reptiles.

3.4.9. The site is assessed as an unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse as it lies well outside of their natural range and the habitat is totally unsuitable.

3.4.10. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for red squirrels, located outside the natural range for the species.

3.4.11. There were no alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act present on the site although some such species would not be visible at the time of year the survey was carried out.

3.4.12. The site has some suitability for hedgehogs although there is a lack of shelter within the grassland and the human activities and dog walking will be a major deterrent to their presence.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. There are no international or nationally designated sites or Local Wildlife Sites close enough to the survey area to be impacted by the proposed development.

4.2. The survey area lies within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone but does not meet the requirement for notification.

4.3. The habitat on the site that will be impacted by the proposed development will be predominantly modified grassland of low biodiversity value.

4.4. [redacted]

4.5. There is no watercourse on or close to the survey area and therefore there will be no impact on water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish.

4.6. The are four ponds shown on maps of the surrounding area within 500m of the survey area. Only two could be visited during this survey and both are flooded areas within grazing land that were assessed to have minimal potential for the presence of amphibians.

4.6.1. It is unlikely that any amphibians would travel from the four ponds to the survey area as there are roads, residential areas and watercourses between the ponds and the survey area that act as barriers to movement. Therefore, with precautionary measures in place during site clearance, there will be no negative impact on amphibians.

4.7. There are no buildings present in the survey area and therefore, the proposed development will have no negative impact on roosting bats in buildings.

4.8. There is an area of woodland adjacent to the proposed development site and there are trees present in that woodland with potential roost features for bats although none of those trees will be directly affected by the proposed development. Therefore, there will be no impact on bats roosting in trees.

4.9. The area adjacent to the proposed development site is woodland with open glades that will provide potentially high value bat foraging habitat. Surveys carried out by

others have identified bat activity in that woodland and along the woodland edge. The surveys also show that the bats already forage in areas where there are high light levels from the adjacent car park. Therefore, provided the proposed development does not cause direct illumination to the woodland and woodland edge, there will be little impact on foraging bats.

4.10. There are opportunities for nesting birds in the woodland to the east of the proposed development area but there is little potential within the grassland areas, particularly due to the levels of human activity. Therefore, the proposed development may impact nesting birds if site clearance and works are carried out between March and August, during the nesting bid season.

4.11. The site is assessed to have no potential for reptiles. The site is surrounded by roads and the grassland on the proposed development area provides no shelter for reptiles. In addition, the human activity and dog walking on the site will deter reptiles. Therefore, with precautionary measures in place during site clearance, there will be no negative impact on reptiles.

4.12. The site is assessed to be an unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse, located outside the natural range for the species. The proposed development will have no negative impact on the species.

4.13. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for red squirrels, located outside the natural range for the species. The proposed development will have no negative impact on the species.

4.14. There were no alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act present on the site although some such species would not be visible at the time of year the survey was carried out. It is unlikely that the proposed development would cause the spread of Schedule 9 plants in the wild.

4.15. The site has some suitability for hedgehogs although there is a lack of shelter within the grassland and the human activities and dog walking will be a major deterrent to their presence. Therefore, with precautionary measures in place during site clearance, there will be no negative impact on hedgehogs.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. It is recommended that the final development plan for the site retains the woodland area adjacent to the proposed development site and protects the root zone of the trees.

5.2. It is recommended that the development aims to ensure that there is no loss of biodiversity as a result of the development in line with the policy of Net Benefit for Biodiversity in force in Wales.

5.3. It is recommended that a sympathetic planting scheme be devised that will utilise locally sourced native species to enhance and complement the existing retained woodland.

5.4. It is recommended that all trenches that are to be left open overnight be furnished with a sloping end that will enable any animals that fall into the trench to safely escape. Similarly, all open pipe ends should be capped to avoid any animals entering and becoming trapped.

5.5. As the site has been assessed to provide opportunities for nesting birds, it is recommended that site clearance be undertaken outside the nesting season, which extends from March to August. In the event vegetation clearance does need to be undertaken during the nesting season, it is recommended that a survey for nesting birds is undertaken immediately prior to works commencing by a suitably experienced ecologist. Should any active nests be identified, they must remain undisturbed until the young have fledged from the nest.

5.6. It is recommended that a precautionary method of working is employed during site clearance to avoid harm to amphibians, reptiles and small mammals.

5.6.1. All personnel working on the site should be briefed on the potential presence of amphibians, reptiles and small mammals on the site, how to identify the species and what to do if animals are found.

5.6.2. Vegetation clearance work should be carried out with care with the initial vegetation clearance being undertaken using had tools to no lower than 150mm, to allow any animals present to escape.

5.6.3. This should be left for a period of two days before further site clearance is undertaken and any animals encountered should be carefully moved to a place of safety outside the work area.

5.6.4. Where possible, materials should be stored off the ground, on pallets, to avoid animals seeking shelter underneath. Those pallets should, be lifted cleanly and not dragged and the area beneath checked.

5.6.5. In the event that large numbers of common amphibians or reptiles (5+) or any great crested newts are encountered works on site should cease and further advice should be sought. A toolbox talk is appended to this report to aid in species identification.

5.7. In the unlikely event any trees do need to be felled or heavily pruned back, a further inspection for Potential Roost Features is undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist before works commence. That survey will determine whether further surveys are necessary.

5.8. It is recommended that a sympathetic lighting scheme be adopted for the site that ensures minimal light interference along the woodland edges.

5.9. It will be necessary to incorporate biodiversity enhancements in the new buildings on the site in line with the PPW. To achieve this, it is recommended that bat roosting opportunities and nest boxes be provided in the new dwellings on the site.

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6. NET BENEFIT FOR BIODIVERSITY.

A net benefit for biodiversity will be achieved by applying the DECCA step-wise approach, as outlined below.

6.1. Avoid.

The development will be confined to the grassland areas and avoids, as far as practical, disturbance to the trees and woodland.

6.2. Minimise.

The development will cause the loss of an area of modified grassland. Impact on the woodland will be minimised. One goat willow tree will be lost, T8 in the arboricultural report and two trees will need to be crown lifted, T3 and T6, a clump of scrub, G2, will require crown lifting and one tree, T7, will require a reduction in the crown. Other trees are recommended for removal but not in connection with this development. All other habitat will be retained.

6.3. Mitigate/Restore.

The grassland area at the southern end of the proposed development will be utilised as a mitigation area. Thirty-two new trees are to be planted within that area.

6.4. On Site Compensation.

6.4.1. The grassland at the southern end of the site will be enhanced by overseeding with a suitable grass and wildflower mix and will be managed to enhance biodiversity. Access around the site will be maintained by providing mown pathways but the majority of the grassland will be mown only once each year, in late summer or autumn.

6.4.2. Additional enhancement will be achieved by sympathetic management within the woodland area by removing dense scrub and by planting additional specimen trees.

Prepared by:	
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Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou, BSc, MCIEEM	Date: 25th August 2026.

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Appendix I. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub, but others are ground nesting or prefer man- made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Appendix II. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Many species appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATS agreement. Numerous species are also listed

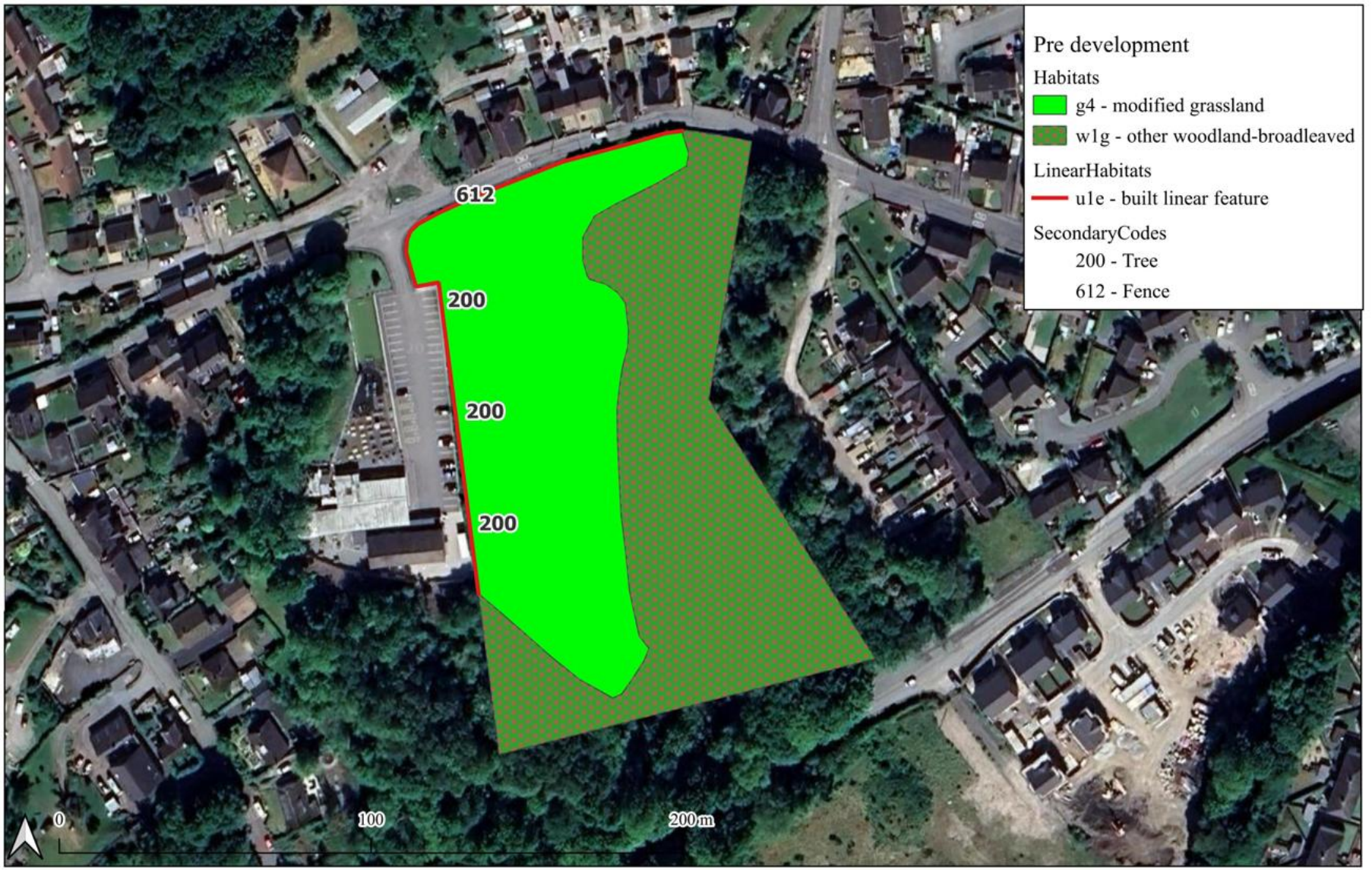
under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number of bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Appendix III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA PRE DEVELOPMENT.



Site: Land at Bethania Road, Acrefair

Reference: 260338

Date: 13.03.2026

Produced by: Jess

Appendix IV. PROPOSED SITE PLAN.



Toolbox Talk: Amphibians

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

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Identification: Smooth Newts.

Smooth newts can grow to around 10cm in length. They are usually brown in colour, often with visible black spots on the upper body. Their belly is pale orange with black spots fading away to the sides. The males have a wavy crest running from head to tail, although this can sometimes only be visible in water.



Identification: Palmate Newts.

Palmate newts are very similar to smooth newts but are usually smaller, to around 9cm. Their throat is usually pink and unspotted. The males often have webbed back feet and a fine filament at the end of the tail during the breeding season.



Identification: Common Frogs.

Common frogs are one of the more common amphibians in the UK. They have smooth skin with a distinctive patch behind their eyes. They are predominantly green or brown with black patches although their colour can vary through orange, red or black.



Identification: Common Toads.

Common toads are a Species of Principal Importance in the UK.

Common toads have rough warty skin with two distinctive lumps behind the eyes. When disturbed they have a tendency to remain still, when moving they crawl rather than hopping.



Other Amphibians.

In addition to the common amphibians listed adjacent there are also three other species present in the UK, those being great crested newts, natterjack toads and pool frogs. These species are less common.

The species are also afforded a higher level of protection because they are European Protected Species.

Habitat.

Amphibians predominantly live on land but breed in ponds. The aquatic requirements for each species vary slightly although the presence of one species does not rule out the potential presence of the other species.

When not in their ponds amphibians require a variety of refugia for shelter and can therefore be found under log piles, in rubble, under tree roots or within areas of scrub or rough grassland. Amphibians hibernate, spending the winter in burrows or under logs protected from the cold and predators.





Legislation.

The common amphibians listed above are protected only by Section 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This section prohibits sale, barter, exchange, transporting for sale and advertising to sell or to buy. Collection and keeping of these amphibians is not an offence.

The common toad is also listed as a Species of Principal Importance in the UK.

If amphibians are identified during works, allow them to move away of their own accord.
If large numbers or amphibians (5+) are identified stop works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 07947 828137 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk

Identification: Great Crested Newts

If newts are identified during works the following document can be used to identify whether the newts are likely to be Great Crested Newts.

The newts should also be photographed and professional advice should be sought on the way forward.

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Great crested newts can grow up to 15cm in length. They are dark, nearly black in colour with a speckled belly which is distinctly orange in colour and with orange stripes across their toes.









Great crested newts and other amphibians will often be found underneath refugia such as logs, stones and other rubbish on the ground. They will also often be found in railway ballast and in cable troughs.



If great crested newts are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 07947 828137 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk