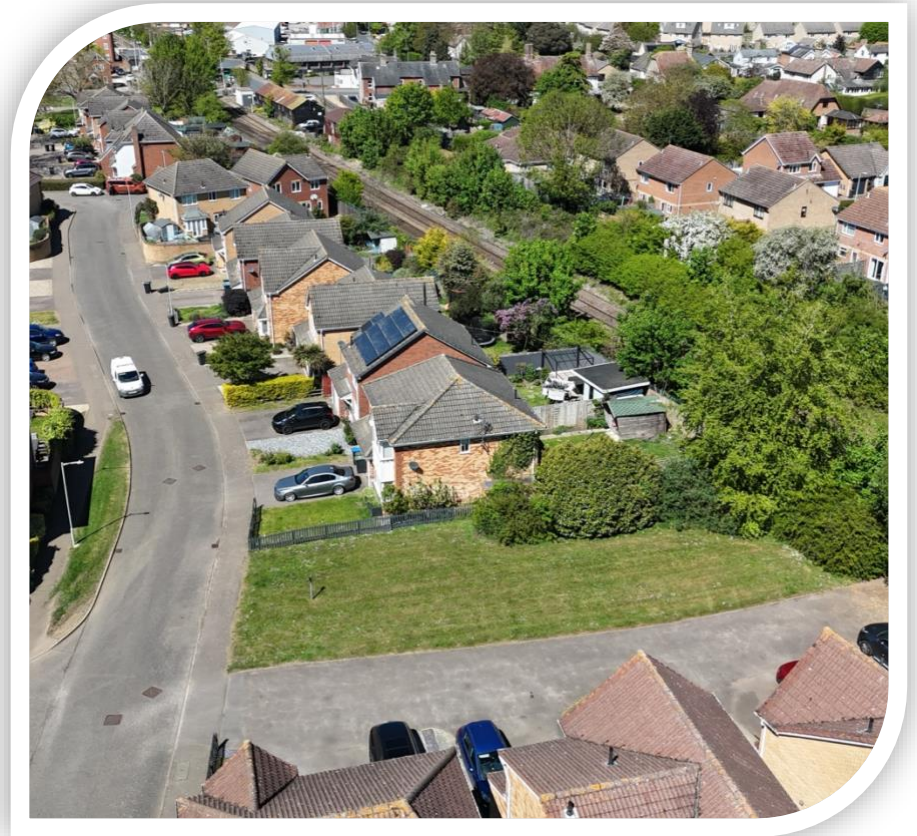


Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Land adjacent Crown Mill

Crown Mill
Elmswell
Suffolk
IP30 9GF

May, 2026



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1. Executive Summary

This report assesses the ecological features that could be affected by the development and recommends appropriate mitigation measures. Immediate risks identified on site include potential impacts on nesting birds. Suitable habitat for other species is present on or adjacent to site.

Key recommendations:

- Install a bat box on the beech tree (ref T2). Southern aspect.
- Install a bird box on the beech tree (ref T2). Northern aspect.
- Provide gaps of at least 13 cm by 13 cm to maintain hedgehog highways.
- Allow grassland habitats outside of the proposed fenced area to establish >15 cm. Cutting regime should be of benefit for wildlife, i.e. limited to late annual cut.
- A nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist is required prior to any clearance of ornamental shrubs or vegetation within 1 m of the shrubs, where clearance is undertaken between March and August, inclusive.
- A check for reptiles and amphibians by a suitably qualified ecologist is required ahead of any vegetation clearance works above 15 cm sward height, i.e. ornamental shrubs and any vegetation within 1 m of the shrubs. Move any animals to a suitable lactation adjacent to site where they will not be disturbed.
- A check for hedgehogs is required ahead of any vegetation clearance works above 15 cm sward height, i.e. ornamental shrubs and any vegetation within 1 m of the shrubs. Move any hedgehogs to a suitable location adjacent to site where they will not be disturbed.
- Material storage and construction waste management should be carried out in line with the recommendations identified within the Precautionary Working Method Statement.
- All excavations should be covered up overnight or means of escape provided. Means of escape could include the provision of an earth ramp or placement of a plank of rough-sawn timber.
- Lighting associated with the proposed Scheme should adhere to guidelines to minimise light spill and protect local bat habitats, as summarised within this report.

The proposed Scheme will not result in the loss of habitats of Principal Importance under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and it will also not affect any designated sites.

By following the recommendations within this report, the risk of harm to wildlife can be minimised, ensuring the project proceeds in line with ecological best practices and legal requirements. The ecological impacts of the proposed Scheme, with mitigation, are negligible. It is considered with the provision of bat and bird boxes and 1 m wide strip of >15 cm sward height grassland along the northern and western boundary of the proposed fence, that the proposed Scheme will deliver a conservation gain.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Connected Ecology Ltd has been commissioned by Elmswell Parish Council to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in support of an application for a pre-school play area on land that is currently laid to regularly mown amenity grassland (Appendix A: Drawings). Associated activities include the installation of play equipment and provision of a perimeter fence and gate. The majority of the area will remain as mowed grassland with limited areas of hard engineering for securing play equipment.

The proposal is located adjacent to Crown Mill, Elmswell, Suffolk, IP30 9GF and centres on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference TL 99211 63896 (Appendix B: Figure 1. PEA overview). The proposal is hereinafter referred to as the proposed Scheme.

On 30 April 2026, a walkover survey was undertaken of the site and the wider area to observe, assess, and record any ecological features present or potentially present that could be affected by the proposed works.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives of the survey and report are these:

- Identify the likely ecological constraints associated with the proposed Scheme; and
- Identify any mitigation measures required, following the mitigation hierarchy; and
- Identify any additional surveys required to complete an ecological assessment; and
- Identify the opportunities offered by the proposed Scheme to deliver ecological enhancement.

3. Methodology

3.1 Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence (Zol) is defined by the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment¹ as: “area(s) over which ecological features may be affected by the biophysical changes caused by the proposed project and associated activities.” The Zol of the activities may be different from the boundary of the proposed Scheme.

3.2 Desk Study

Initial scoping was carried out to assess any buildings and habitats present and their potential to support species of conservation importance within the Zol, and to identify likely impacts the proposed Scheme would have on them. The exercise was conducted using a combination of aerial imagery, Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to identify suitable features.

The purpose of a desk study is to identify any statutory designated sites within 2 km of the proposed Scheme, using Defra Magic Map Application².

A review of the Defra Magic Map Application was also completed to identify any other previously issued Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) Licences and priority habitats within 2 km of the proposed Scheme.

3.3 Surveyor’s Experience

Lee Rudd is a principal ecologist with over 17 years of ecology consultancy experience. He is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and a full member of the Association of Environmental Clerks of Works (MAEnvCoW). Lee holds Natural England licences for bats (2025-86024-CL18-BAT), barn owl (2023-11488-CL29-OWL), great crested newt (2021-53591-CLS-CLS), water vole (CL31/2017/00017) and is a registered user of the badger mitigation class licence (WML-CL35-0201). He has also been a Named Ecologist on badger sett closure and live dig. Additionally, he has also been an accredited agent on various development licences for great crested newt, beaver, water vole and badger.

Ginta Rudd of Connected Ecology is an assistant ecologist with three years’ experience of undertaken ecological walkovers, covering protected species and habitats. She has been an accredited agent on three site-specific (A11) water vole displacement licences.

3.4 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

A walkover survey of the proposed Scheme was undertaken to observe, assess and record any habitats or species of conservation importance within the Zol and to identify the likely impacts of the proposed Scheme. The results are set out in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in accordance with the latest professional guidance published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)³. Habitats on site were recorded in line with the UK habitat classification system⁴.

Habitats and species recorded or species potentially present on site were checked against the list of priority habitats and species under the NERC Act 2006⁵.

¹ CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland. <https://cieem.net/resource/guidelines-for-ecological-impact-assessment-ecia/> (Accessed May 2026).

² Defra Magic Map Application. <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.html> (Accessed May 2026).

³ CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in the UK and Ireland. [Guidelines-for-Preliminary-Ecological-Appraisal-Jan2018-typo-edit.pdf \(cieem.net\)](https://cieem.net/resource/guidelines-for-preliminary-ecological-appraisal-jan2018-typo-edit.pdf) (Accessed May 2026).

⁴ UK Habitat Classification System. [ukhab – UK Habitat Classification](https://ukhab.org.uk/) (Accessed May 2026).

⁵ NERC Act 2006 Habitats and Species of principal importance in England. [Habitats and species of principal importance in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england) (Accessed May 2026).

The DAFOR scale was used to measure abundance of grasses and forbs present on site (see Table 1). DAFOR is an estimate of percentage plant cover in a given area.

Table 1. DAFOR scale.

| Value | Percentage cover |
|----------------|------------------|
| D - Dominant | 76 – 100% |
| A - Abundant | 51 – 75% |
| F - Frequent | 26 – 50% |
| O - Occasional | 11 – 25% |
| R - Rare | 0 – 10% |

3.5 Preliminary Roost Assessment

Inspections were made to observe, assess and record any habitats suitable for bats to roost, commute, and forage on site and in the surrounding area (i.e., ZoI). Connectivity of habitats and how the proposed Scheme would affect them was also recorded. This preliminary roost assessment for bats was carried out following the latest professional guidance as shown in Table 2. All potential roosting habitats within the boundary of the proposed Scheme that could be directly affected were assessed and investigated in line with Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 2. Guidelines for assessing habitat suitability for commuting and foraging bats. *Extracted and adapted from ‘Bat surveys for professional ecologists’⁶.*

| Suitability | Commuting and foraging habitats |
|-------------------|---|
| Negligible | Negligible habitat features on site that are likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats. |
| Low | Habitat that could be used by a small number of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e., not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitats. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by a small number of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub. |
| Moderate | Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water. |
| High | Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape, which is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape, which is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses, and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts. |

⁶ Collins. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition. [Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition - Guidance for professionals - Bat Conservation Trust](#) (Accessed May 2026).

Table 3. Guidelines for assessing roosting habitats within structures. *Extracted and adapted from ‘Bat surveys for professional ecologists’⁶.*

| Suitability | Roosting habitats |
|-------------------|--|
| None | No habitat features suitable for roosting bats. |
| Negligible | Limited habitat features and unlikely to be used by roosting bats. |
| Low | Contains one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). |
| Moderate | Contains one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessment in this table is made irrespective of the species conservation status, which is established once presence is confirmed). |
| High | Contains one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and surrounding habitat. |

Table 4. Guidelines for assessing roosting habitats within trees. *Extracted and adapted from ‘Bat surveys for professional ecologists’⁶.*

| PRF Suitability | Roosting habitats |
|-------------------|---|
| None | No PRFs in the tree. |
| Negligible | Limited habitat features within tree and unlikely to be used by roosting bats. |
| FAR | Further Assessment Required (FAR) to establish if PRFs are present in the tree. |
| Moderate | PRF-I PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats due to size or lack of surrounding habitats. |
| High | PRF-M PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used as a maternity colony. |

3.6 Deviations, Constraints and Limitations

The walkover was carried out in line with the latest professional guidance. There was full access to the footprint of the proposed Scheme and wider site, which allowed data gathering as per survey guidance. There are no deviations, constraints or limitations recorded for the ecology walkover and assessment.

The data derived from the ecological surveys conducted for this proposed Scheme shall remain valid for a period of twelve (12) months from the date of the survey completion. Any use or reliance on the survey data beyond this period shall require a re-assessment and updated survey to ensure accuracy and compliance. The validity of the data is contingent upon no significant environmental changes, disturbances, or alterations in the surveyed area during the 12-month period. If any such changes occur, the data and recommendations made must be reviewed by a suitably qualified ecologist.

4. Results

4.1 Local Context

The survey covered the extent of the proposed Scheme and the wider area, as shown in Appendix B: Figure 1-2.

The proposed Scheme is located within land laid to regularly mown amenity grass. It is located on land adjacent Crown Mill, Elmswell, Suffolk, IP30 9GF.

The proposed Scheme is set within Elmswell, which is a village and civil parish in the county of Suffolk. It is located to the east of Bury St Edmunds, some 13 km away.

The proposed Scheme is set within the Elmswell settlement, surrounded by residential properties. There is a railway track to the north.

The site is located within the National Character Area⁷ (NCA): South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands (ref 83). The whole of the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands NCA is a plateau, dissected by shallow, intimate valleys that are mostly small in scale, especially those fringing the eastern boundary. The streams and rivers that drain the plateau meander slowly between low banks lush with riparian vegetation. The area has little variation in height, although the River Waveney, which forms the Norfolk-Suffolk boundary, and its tributaries have locally pronounced effects. The Waveney with its broad valley is the principal river within the NCA.

The area is predominantly agricultural with arable farming dominating, particularly cereals, sugar beet and rapeseed, whose bright yellow flowers make a dramatic visual statement across the plateau in early summer. Intensive pig and poultry rearing takes place in large units, especially in the areas of lighter soils around the edges of the plateau and sometimes on redundant airfields.

There is a relative lack of woodland across the NCA, although there are some important ancient woods that survive or have since been restored, such as Tyrrels Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

4.2 Desk Survey Results

4.2.1 Protected Sites

The proposed Scheme does not coincide with any statutory designated sites of ecological interest. There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that is approximately 1.83 km to the west of the proposed Scheme, which is named Norton Wood.

Norton Wood SSSI key reason for its designation is because it an ancient woodland. The following abstract is taken from the citation for the woodland. "The wood is situated on a gently sloping plateau and the soils are weakly acid due to a layer of sand and loess over the boulder clays. Much of the wood is acid Pedunculate Oak – Hazel – Ash woodland with abundant Birch but there are also areas of wet Ash – Maple and Pedunculate Oak – Hornbeam woodland. The ground flora includes several uncommon plants and a characteristic flora has developed on a series of wide rides. The wood is bisected by a railway line."

It is considered that the proposed Scheme would not directly or indirectly have a harmful effect on any designated sites due to the location and scale of the proposed works. Therefore, it is concluded that the proposed Scheme will not influence any designated sites and will not be considered any further within this report.

⁷ National Character Area Map. [Natural England - National Character Area Profiles - National Character Area Profiles](#) (Accessed May 2026).

4.2.2 Habitats

There are no priority habitats identified on Magic Map² within the footprint of the proposed Scheme or immediately adjacent to it. The Living England Map database on Magic Map² predicts the majority of the area within the footprint of the proposed Scheme to be built up areas and gardens. A small proportion of the site is predicted to be broadleaf woodland.

There are six ponds recorded on Magic Map² within 500 m of the proposed Scheme, two of which are within 250 m of the proposed Scheme. The nearest pond is located approximately 125 m to the northwest of the proposed Scheme.

4.2.3 Species

Part of the site falls within the Amber Risk Zone⁸ for the likely presence of great crested newt (GCN· *Triturus cristatus*), which is classified as “Amber zones contain main population centres for GCN and comprise important connecting habitat that aids natural dispersal”.

There are no ponds within 2 km of the proposed Scheme that were part of the GCN Newt Pond Surveys 2017-2019 initiative. There is one case where GCN were recorded present in 2017. The pond is approximately 970 m to the southeast near Millsfield on Wetherden Road.

4.2.4 Previous reports

There are no known previous reports for the same land.

4.3 Field Survey Timing

The walkover survey took place on 30 April 2026 by Lee and Ginta. The weather conditions during the time of the survey were 17°C, no rain with full sun and a moderate breeze from the west (circa 16 mph). There had been no rain within the previous 48 hours.

4.4 Field Results

Figures 1 & 2 outline the habitats that were recorded during the walkover, while photographs are provided within Appendix C.

Habitats

Habitats are presented in Figure 2: PEA habitats. The primary habitats recorded on site are presented below along with their UK Habitat Classification code⁴. Natural habitats have their common name of species provided, followed by the scientific name and DAFOR scale score.

4.4.1 Buildings (u1b5)

There are no buildings within the footprint of the proposed Scheme. Residentially dwellings are located to the east and west of the site.

4.4.1 Other developed land (u1b6)

Crown Mill, which is a single carriage way, is surfaced in tarmac and runs along the southern boundary of the site. A tarmac pathway and driveway are present to the immediate southern and eastern boundary of the proposed Scheme.

⁸ Great crested newt risk zones Norfolk [GCN Risk Zones \(Norfolk and Suffolk\)](#) (Accessed 13 May 2026).

4.4.2 Built linear features (u1e)

There are fences recorded along the north boundary of the walkover, alongside the railway line which includes a 6 ft chain link fence and 6 ft panel fencing. To the west there is a 3 ft picket fence that demarks the residential plot and the site.

4.4.3 Built-up areas and gardens (u1)

The site fundamentally falls within the UK habitat classification of built-up areas and gardens. It is an urban parkland. Further detailed description of habitats recorded on site is provided below.

4.4.4 Modified grassland (g4)

The footprint of the proposed Scheme is located wholly within an area of amenity grassland that is regularly mown to <5 cm sward height.

Species present include perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*, A) and annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*, A). Forb species include common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*, F), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*, O), lawn daisy (*Bellis perennis*, F), geranium Spp. (*Geranium pratense*, F), ribbed plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*, R), scarlet pimpernel (*Lysimachia arvensis*, R), white clover (*Trifolium repens*, F) and common speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*, O).

Three quadrats were randomly surveyed across the site to record species richness per square metre. Species richness is relatively low at 6-8 species per square metre. Bare ground and moss covers <5% of the area. Grass clippings were present. The sward height is typically <5 cm across the majority of the area.

Based on the management to short sward at <5 cm height as an amenity grassland, presence of swards palatable to livestock, signs of eutrophication based on species recorded present and typical species richness of <9 species per square metre, this grassland type is very likely modified grassland UKHab primary code g4.

Relevant secondary codes include frequently mown (ref 108).

There will be localised loss of grassland at the base of each piece of play equipment. The rest of the grassland within the enclosed fenced area will continue to be managed to a short sward of <5 cm. It will be mowed and collected on a frequent basis.

Along the immediate boundary of the ornamental shrubs, the vegetation is longer (>15 cm) but limited in extent (< 25 cm width). Species include common cleavers (*Galium aparine*, O), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*, O), dandelion (O), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*, O), geranium Spp. (O), lawn daisy (O) and ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*, O).

The grassland outside of the proposed fenced area on the western and northern boundary (circa 1 m wide strip), will be allowed to grow to >15 cm height. It will have an annual cut. This will likely provide grassland like the current marginal vegetation at the edge of the shrubs, but across a wider width.

4.4.5 Ornamental shrubs (u1)

There are mature ornamental shrubs along the western and northern boundary of the site. Dominant species include cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*) and pyracanthas (*Pyracanthus coccinea*). Occasional species include bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*) and dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*). There are also common oak (*Quercus robur*, R) and common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*, R) saplings.

In places, they overlap the footprint of the proposed Scheme. Some of the shrubs/saplings will be cut back by approximately 1 m.

4.4.6 Tree (secondary code 200)

Two trees were recorded during the walkover, but neither of them are within the footprint of the proposed Scheme. However, due to their proximity they were recorded. The first tree is a semi-mature ornamental birch tree (ref T1, *Betula spp.*). The second tree is a semi-mature common beech (ref T2, *Fagus sylvatica*).

They were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats. The below table outlines the details of the recorded trees. These trees will be retained as part of the proposed Scheme.

Table 5. Tree reference, species, description and bat features recorded. Photographs are provided within Appendix C. Locations are provided in Figure 2.

| Tree ref | Tree description | Bat features and suitability (PRF category) | Photo # |
|----------|--------------------|--|---------|
| T1 | Birch. Semi-mature | No suitable roosting places for bats observed during the ground roost assessment. No suitability for roosting bats. (Negligible) | 10 |
| T2 | Beech. Semi-mature | No suitable roosting places for bats observed during the ground roost assessment. Negligible suitability for roosting bats. (None) | 11 |

Fauna

4.4.7 Amphibians including great crested newt

The site falls within the Amber Risk Zone⁸ for the likely presence of great crested newt (GCN: *Triturus cristatus*), which is classified as “Amber zones contain main population centres for GCN and comprise important connecting habitat that aids natural dispersal”. There is one protected species licence return for GCN within 2 km of the proposed Scheme² and this was approximately 970 m to the southwest.

There are no ponds located on site and the nearest pond is approximately 125 m to the northwest of the proposed Scheme. Most of the site lies within amenity grassland with a sward height of 5 cm, which has negligible value for GCN. There is limited cover along the boundary of the site, which is restricted to the sparsely vegetated areas alongside the ornamental shrubs, and the cover under ornamental shrubs themselves. These habitats are valued as low and the majority of these habitats will be unaffected by the proposed Scheme.

Therefore, there is an overall low risk of harm to GCN due to presence of negligible to low suitability habitats on site, scale of works, absence of confirmed records within 500 m, and the nearest pond being located over 125 m away. It is considered the risk of harm can be managed if undertaken in line with the Precautionary Working Method Statement to manage the low risk of harm to GCN (see Section 5.2). These measures would also cover the risk of harm to other amphibians including frogs, toads and newts.

4.4.8 Reptiles

The suitability of habitats within the footprint of the proposed Scheme is low and restricted to the grassland along the edge of the ornamental shrubs. The majority of the site is an amenity grassland,

mown to <5 cm sward height and is generally unsuitable for reptiles. The habitats in the wider area, primarily alongside the railway track, may provide more suitable habitat.

Overall, it is considered there is a low risk that the site may support an occasional common reptile species, including grass snake (*Natrix Helvetica*), common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and/or slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*). It is highly unlikely to support adder (*Viper berus*).

Due to location and habitats on site, rarer reptiles, including sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) and smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) would not be present on site.

To manage the low risk of harm to reptiles, vegetation clearance should be carried out in line with the Precautionary Working Method Statement (see Section 5.2).

4.4.9 Bats

The location of the proposed Scheme is set within moderate suitability habitat in the form line of trees along railway track and linked back gardens. The site provides low to moderate suitability for commuting and foraging bats on account of the ornamental shrubs and trees.

There are two trees within proximity to the proposed works, neither of them has any suitable features for roosting bats. This tree will be retained with no ground works taking place within the root protection zone.

Therefore, there are no anticipated impacts on roosting bats as a result of the proposed Scheme.

It is understood there will be no lighting as part of the proposed Scheme, but if there is, it should be designed to ensure bats are not indirectly affected by the proposed Scheme.

4.4.10 Birds

There is suitable habitat for breeding birds within or immediately adjacent to the proposed Scheme in the form of ornamental shrubs and trees. Bird species heard or seen on site during the walkover included wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), collared dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*), lesser whitethroat (*Curruca curruca*), blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*), black bird (*Turdus merula*) and house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).

No nests were recorded on site, but there was significant bird activity, with individual black birds and house sparrows carrying food items for their nestlings.

There is a high risk of nesting birds present within the ornamental shrubs. The risk of birds nesting on the grassland is negligible.

There was no evidence of a Schedule 1 species recorded on site and nor were there any suitable features on site to support nesting Schedule 1 Species (i.e. barn owl).

A nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist would be required prior any shrub clearance carried out between March and September inclusive. Outside of this period, birds do not typically nest.

4.4.11 Hedgehog

There is suitable habitat on site and adjacent to site for hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). Suitable habitats on site include the base of shrubs, tree and grassland. If a significant amount of shrub is planned to be cleared, then a check must be carried out by a suitable person prior to any clearance works. It is considered that if checks are done in accordance with the Precautionary Working Method Statement (see Section 5.2), any hedgehogs found would be safely relocated to undisturbed land

adjacent to site. Any fences that are installed should be installed with suitably sized gap to allow them to pass through freely.

5. Discussions and Recommendations

The proposed Scheme involves installation of play equipment for a pre-school playing area on an area of amenity grassland. It will be fenced off. It is assumed there will be no additional lighting required for the play area, beyond that which is already provided by street lighting. If there is, recommendations are provided above.

Generally, the habitats that will be lost as a result of the proposed Scheme are limited and of low value. Species that could be affected by the proposed Scheme and require mitigation measures include amphibians, reptiles, bats, birds and hedgehog.

There were no invasive species identified during the walkover. There will be no loss of habitats that are of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Recommendations for protected species that could be affected as a result of the proposed Scheme are outlined below.

5.1.1 Reptiles and amphibians including GCN

Amphibians (i.e. frogs, toads and newts) and reptiles (i.e. grass snake, common lizard and slow-worm) are protected under section 5 and 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

All species of reptiles and amphibians including GCN are listed as Species of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. It is an offence to kill or cause injury to individuals and in the case of GCN, cause disturbance (see Appendix D: Legislation).

There is a low risk of harm to amphibians and reptiles as a result of the proposed Scheme.

Therefore, works should be carried out in line with the Precautionary Working Method Statement as outlined in Section 5.2.

5.1.2 Bats

All bats are protected under section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), with additional protection extended under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Many of them are also Species of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Therefore, it is an offence to kill or cause injury individuals and to cause disturbance to bats whilst in a roost (see Appendix D: Legislation).

There are no anticipated impacts on roosting bats, and any impacts would be limited to that on commuting and foraging bats. It is proposed that only a small area of shrubs will be cleared, and both trees will be retained. Therefore, there will be negligible habitat lost for bats.

Consideration of foraging and commuting bats in the local vicinity is required to ensure that habitats that are retained are not unnecessarily illuminated. Light pollution can significantly affect the way bats use the space. All lighting should be installed in accordance with Bats and Lighting in the UK, Bats and the Built Environment Series⁹. Temporary lighting associated with construction works should be sensitively designed. Lighting should be of the lowest luminosity necessary for safe delivery of works and on-site security. It should be designed, positioned, and directed to reduce the intrusion into adjacent habitats. As a minimum, any external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and short (1min) timers. The inclusion of baffles, hoods or louvres should be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed.

⁹ Bat Conservation Trust. Guidance Note. Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK. Bats and the Built Environment Series. [Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting | Institution of Lighting Professionals \(theilp.org.uk\)](#) (Accessed May 2026).

It is recommended that a bat box is installed on the beech tree (ref T2) to provide a conservation gain for bats. A bat box should be of a type that does not encourage access by birds. Access apertures should be ≤ 17 mm. Box should be installed at least 3 m above the ground, ideally 4 m or higher above ground on the southern aspect. Avoid a position where foliage obscures the entrance hole as a clear flight path is important. One of the bestselling bat boxes suitable for crevice dwelling species is the 2F Schwegler Bat Box, a general purpose bat box.

5.1.3 Birds

All nesting birds in the wild are protected under section 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Therefore, it is an offence to destroy an active nest or purposely disturb birds whilst nesting. In some cases, incidental disturbance of nesting birds is also unlawful (see Appendix D: Legislation).

Overall, there is a risk of causing disturbance or destruction of a nest due to the proposed works. Without mitigation, a nest could be disturbed or destroyed during works. Any vegetation clearance, including ornamental shrubs should be undertaken outside of the main bird nesting season, which is March - August inclusive, where possible.

If clearance works are undertaken during the nesting period, a check by a suitably qualified ecologist will be required for nesting birds in advance of any vegetation clearance. If an active nest is recorded, all works must cease within 5 m of the nest, until the young have fledged. Any vegetation clearance must be done in accordance with Precautionary Working Method Statement (see Section 5.2).

There will be a small loss of suitable foraging habitat and nesting habitat as a result of the loss of habitats on site. This should be compensated with the provision of a bird box.

Box must be installed at least 3 m above ground. The box should be positioned on the northern aspect to avoid the strong sunlight. Avoid a position where foliage obscures the entrance hole as a clear flight path is important. An example of a suitable bird box is the 1B Schwegler Nest Box (32mm hole).

It is considered, overall, with the mitigation measures adopted, the impact on birds will be negligible.

5.1.4 Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996, but not to the same degree as the aforementioned species. They are, however, Species of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, so there is a duty of care required.

There is suitable habitat on site and in the wider area for hedgehog. Works should be carried out in line with the Precautionary Working Method Statement (see Section 5.2).

It is recommended that there are gaps incorporated into any new fences to maintain hedgehog highways. Holes should be at least 13 cm by 13 cm at the ground level. Further advice on designs and positions can be found at Hedgehog Street¹⁰.

¹⁰ Hedgehog Street [Link your garden with a hedgehog highway](#) (Accessed May 2026).

5.2 Precautionary Working Method Statement

A PWMS approach can be taken for works that are of low impact on nature due to either scale of works or value of habitats on site. Whilst great crested newt (GCN) is unlikely to be present within the footprint of the proposed Scheme, they are included within the measures.

Measures include:

- A check for reptiles and amphibians by a suitably qualified ecologist is required ahead of any vegetation clearance works above 15 cm sward height, i.e. ornamental shrubs and any vegetation within 1 m of the shrubs.
- Should GCN be identified during the works, all works **must stop** immediately, and Natural England must be consulted prior to works re-commencing.
- A nesting bird check is required between March and August, inclusive, prior to any vegetation clearance including ornamental shrubs and any vegetation within 1 m of the shrubs.
- Only after confirming no nesting birds and/or GCN will be disturbed, can the ornamental shrubs be cleared and any vegetation clearance or breaking ground within 1 m of the shrubs take place. Clearance and breaking ground activities must take place within 48 hours of the check.
- All areas within the proposed Scheme and working area should be maintained as unsuitable with no stored materials on the ground or vegetation cover in excess of ≤ 5 cm.
- Where vegetation is allowed to grow above 15 cm, a suitability qualified ecologist must undertake a check prior to any vegetation clearance or breaking ground works as above.
- Construction materials will have to be stored off the ground on pallets and waste materials in skips.
- Trenches that are dug, will be excavated to include a means of escape for any animal falling in (i.e. a 30-45° ramp).
- Night lighting should be minimised as far as possible.

6. Conclusions

The proposed Scheme will not affect any statutory designated sites. Furthermore, there will be no loss of habitats that are of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Key recommendations:

- Install a bat box on the beech tree (ref T2). Southern aspect.
- Install a bird box on the beech tree (ref T2). Northern aspect.
- Provide gaps of at least 13 cm by 13 cm to maintain hedgehog highways.
- Allow grassland habitats outside of the proposed fenced area to establish >15 cm. Cutting regime should be of benefit for wildlife, i.e. limited to annual cut.
- A nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist is required prior to any clearance of ornamental shrubs or vegetation within 1 m of the shrubs, where clearance is undertaken between March and August, inclusive.
- A check for reptiles and amphibians by a suitably qualified ecologist is required ahead of any vegetation clearance works above 15 cm sward height, i.e. ornamental shrubs and any vegetation within 1 m of the shrubs. Move any animals to a suitable lactation adjacent to site where they will not be disturbed.
- A check for hedgehogs is required ahead of any vegetation clearance above works above 15 cm sward height, i.e. ornamental shrubs and any vegetation within 1 m of the shrubs. Move any hedgehogs to a suitable location adjacent to site where they will not be disturbed.
- Material storage and construction waste management should be carried out in line with the recommendations identified within the Precautionary Working Method Statement.
- All excavations should be covered up overnight or means of escape provided. Means of escape could include the provision of an earth ramp or the placement of a plank of rough-sawn timber.
- Lighting associated with the proposed Scheme should adhere to guidelines to minimise light spill and protect local bat habitats as summarised within this report.


By following the recommendations within this report, the risk of harm to wildlife can be minimised, ensuring the project proceeds in line with ecological best practices and legal requirements. The ecological impacts of the proposed scheme, with mitigation, are negligible. It is considered with the provision of bat and bird boxes and 1 m wide strip of grassland along the northern and western boundary of the proposed fence, that the proposed Scheme will deliver a conservation gain.

Appendix A. Drawings

Appendix B. Figures

**Document title: Preliminary Ecological
Appraisal overview of the Land adjacent
Crown Mill**

Key

 Redline boundary

 PEA extent

Address: Crown Mill, Elmswell, IP30 9GF

Client: Elmswell Parish Council

Reference: Figure 1

Version: 1.1

Date: 13/05/2026

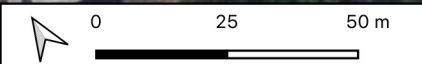
Basemap: Bing Satellite Maps QuickMapServices for QGIS

Originator: Ginta Rudd
Checker: Lee Rudd
Reviewer: Lee Rudd
Approved: Lee Rudd



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Key

-  Redline boundary
-  PEA extent
-  Grassland
-  Ornamental shrubs
-  Tree #
-  Tarmac paving
-  6ft panel fencing
-  6ft chainlink fencing
-  3ft picket fencing



Address: Crown Mill, Elmswell, IP30 9GF

Client: Elmswell Parish Council

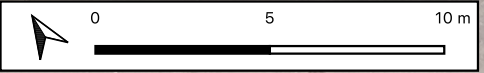
Reference: Figure 2

Version: 1.1

Date: 13/05/2026

Basemap: Aerial photograph by Lee Rudd

Originator: Ginta Rudd
 Checker: Lee Rudd
 Reviewer: Lee Rudd
 Approved: Lee Rudd



Appendix C. Photographs



Photo 1. Aerial view of site. Looking northwest.



Photo 2. Aerial view of site. Looking northeast.

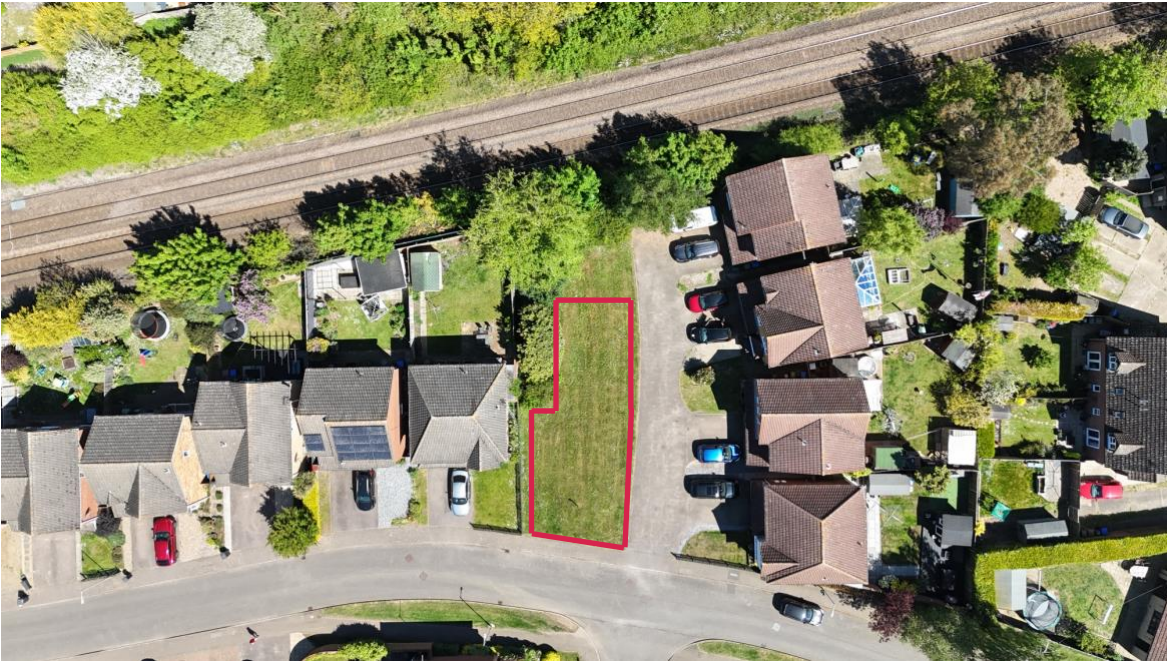


Photo 3. Aerial view of site. Red box shows approximate extent of Proposed Scheme. Looking north.



Photo 4. Taken from tarmac driveway. Looking south.



Photo 5. Taken from tarmac pathway along Crown Mill. Shows picket fencing. Looking east.



Photo 6. Looking across grassland area from Crown Mill. Red box shows approximate extent of proposed Scheme. Looking north.



Photo 7. Looking down between chain link fence and panel fence along northern boundary of site.



Photo 8. View of ornamental shrubs. Looking north.



Photo 9. View of ornamental shrubs and amenity grassland. Looking south.



Photo 10. View of ornamental shrubs and birch tree (ref T1). Looking north.



Photo 11. View of ornamental shrubs and beech tree (ref T2). Looking northwest.

Appendix D. Legislation

Statutory designated sites

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are protected areas in the UK, designated under:

- the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in England and Wales (including the adjacent territorial sea), and
- the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 in the UK offshore area.

Under these Regulations, the UK Government and devolved administrations are required to establish a network of important high-quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving the habitats and species identified in Annexes I and II, respectively, of European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, known as the Habitats Directive. The listed habitat types and species are those considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level (excluding birds). Of the Annex I habitat types, 78 are believed to occur in the UK. Of the Annex II species, 43 are native to, and normally resident in, the UK.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are protected areas for birds in the UK. They are protected through the same regulations as SACs as detailed above.

Ramsar Sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Sites proposed for selection are advised by the relevant statutory nature conservation body (or bodies) within the UK. The designation of UK Ramsar Sites has generally been underpinned through prior notification of these areas as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Accordingly, these receive statutory protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Government have also issued policy statements relating to Ramsar Sites which extend to them the same protection at a policy level as Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

Protected species

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, where it outlines it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird. It is also against the law to damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built. It is also against the law to take, destroy the egg of any wild bird. There is additional protection for schedule 1 species, such as barn owl.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides enhanced protection for **barn owls** and other schedule 1 species. The enhanced protection for schedule 1 species is that they cannot be disturbed whilst nesting.

In Britain, **all bat species** and their roosts are legally protected by both domestic and international legislation. They are protected under both Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended).

Great crested newts are fully protected under the UK and European legislation. They are protected under both the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

White-clawed crayfish is listed under Annex II of the habitats directive, while the areas are designated as Special Areas of Conservation to protect this species. Outside of these, a licence is required to capture this species. It is listed as a priority species under the Biodiversity Action Plan and is a Species of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Reptiles, such as common lizard, slow worm, grass snake or adder, are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) as amended. The legislation makes it illegal to deliberately or recklessly kill or

injure any native reptile. This protection therefore requires that reasonable effort be made to avoid harm to reptiles.

Otters are protected through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and revised by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2004, making it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take an otter; and/or
- Possess or control any (live or dead) otter, or any part of or anything derived from an otter; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by an otter; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb an otter while it is occupying a structure or place for that purpose; and/or
- Sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale any (live or dead) otter or part or
- Derivative of an otter; and/or
- To advertise for buying and selling such things.

Furthermore, otters are included on Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Habitats &c.) Regulations (1994), making it an offence to:

- Deliberately to capture or kill a wild animal of a European protected species; and/or
- Deliberately to disturb any such animal; and/or
- Deliberately to take or destroy the eggs of such an animal; and/or
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

Otters are also listed as a priority species.

Water vole are protected through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), receiving full protection since 2008. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, together with amending legislation, lists the following offences:

- Intentionally killing, taking or injuring a water vole; and/or
- Possessing or controlling any live or dead water vole, or any part or derivative; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly damaging or destroying a water vole's place of shelter or protection; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly disturbing a water vole whilst it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstructing access to a water vole's place of shelter or protection; and/or
- Selling, offering for sale, or possessing or transporting for the purposes of sale, any live or dead water vole, or any part or derivative, or advertising any of these for buying or selling.

Water vole are also listed as a priority species.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992 lists both badgers and their setts as protected. A licence may be obtained from Natural England if disturbance of badgers in their sett cannot be avoided or their sett is to be damaged.

Other protection

The Hedgerows Regulation 1997 aims to protect important hedgerows in the countryside. They make it illegal to remove most countryside hedges without first notifying the local planning authority and provide protection for "important hedgerows".

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 is the principal law relating to animal welfare. Animal cruelty includes causing unnecessary suffering to an animal and poisoning an animal. The 2006 Act applies to all vertebrate animals, including badgers, bats, foxes and rabbits (this is not an exhaustive list).

National Planning Policy - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by "... minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity... if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused."

Natural England Licensing - EPS Mitigation Licensing

Licences can be obtained from the Wildlife Management and Licensing Service at Natural England to allow certain activities that would otherwise constitute an offence for the purposes of development (e.g. destruction of a bat roost, loss of great crested newt aquatic and terrestrial habitat, etc).