Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

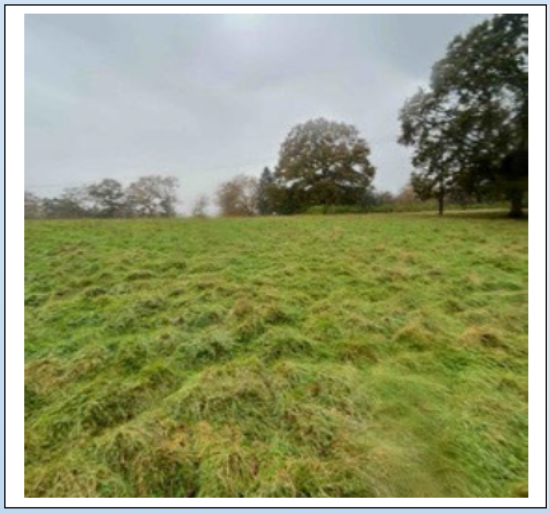
Cotlands Paddock East

Brighton Road

Cowfold

RH13 8AJ

NGR: TQ 21599 23589



4th December 2025

Sylvatica Ecology Ltd

Company Registration Number: 07705793

https://se-planning.com

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It should be borne in mind that the behaviour of animals can be unpredictable and may not conform to standard patterns recorded in scientific literature. Therefore, this report cannot predict with absolute certainty that animal species will occur in apparently suitable locations or habitats, or that they will not occur in locations or habitats that appear unsuitable.

In order to minimise the likelihood of adverse effects on protected animal species over time, it is accepted good practice, in accordance with Natural England (NE) (formerly English Nature) guidance for ecological surveys to be repeated should works be deferred for over 12 - 18 months from the date of initial survey.

It is the duty of the landowner, developer and operations managers to act responsibly and to comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to, or during works.

The recommendations and information contained within this report are based on the information provided on the development works prior to the surveys being carried out. Should the development proposals change then the findings and recommendations contained within would potentially require revision.

The findings within this report do not constitute legal advice. Should this be required, then a suitably qualified professional practitioner should be contacted.

Author	Signed	Contact
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document presents the small sites biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment relating to Cotlands Paddock East, Brighton Road, Cowfold RH13 8AJ, NGR: TQ 21599 2358. This assessment aims to quantify the predicted change in ecological value of the site following the proposed development works to be carried out at this location. The site area was approximately 4950 m2.

1.2 BNG became effective in January 2024 (April 2024 for smaller sites) following the Environmental Act 2021[1], which states that a target of 10% net gain in biodiversity should be achieved, with biodiversity value being maximised on site whenever possible.

1.3 Should any changes to the design of the development be made then the BNG score and metric would need to be updated in-line with any such changes. The measures would be carried forward for a period of 30 years after planning permission has been granted and also during the construction phase.

Previous Surveys

1.4 A site walkover to map the habitats was conducted in accordance with guidance un the UK Habitat Classification System[2] (UKHab) and the Charted Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2017) Guidelines[3].

1.5 A walkover was conducted by Sylvatica Ecology on the 19h November 2024[4].

Development Proposal

1.6 It is proposed that four static caravan pitches are installed within the northeastern section of the site boundary. This will include access track, hard standing for parking and ancillary buildings.

Site Description and Adjacent Habitat

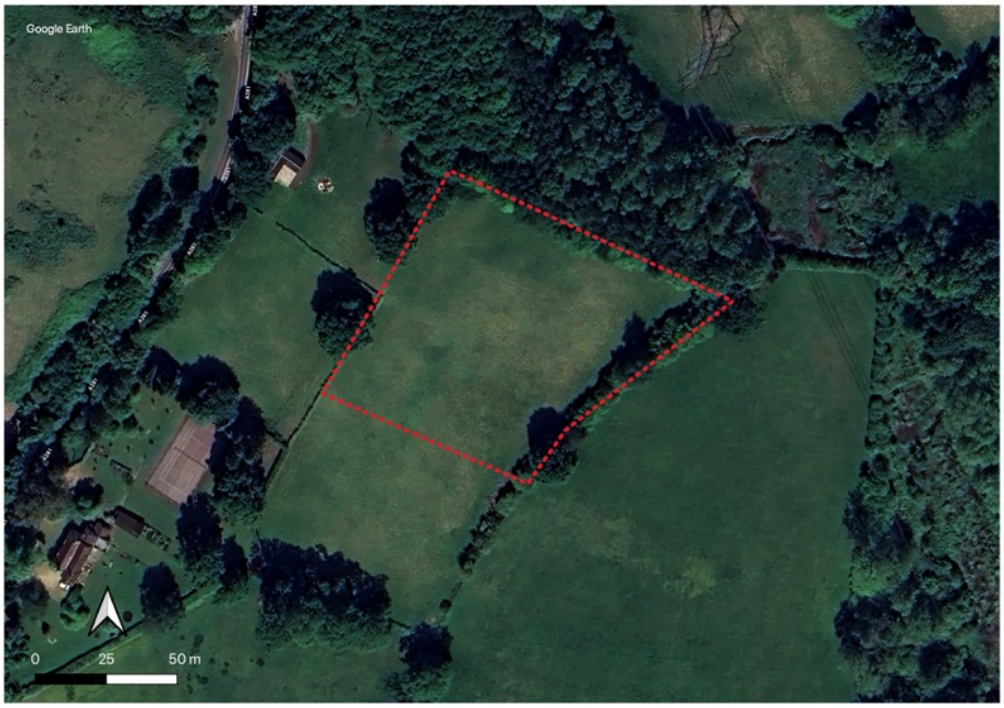
1.7 The site was situated within a semi-rural landscape characterised by a mosaic of modified grassland fields, scattered mature trees and extensive boundary woodland. The surrounding land consisted largely of open pasture framed by well-established hedgerows and treelines, while more substantial blocks of deciduous woodland formed a continuous belt along the northern and eastern edges of the field. Beyond these wooded areas, further pastoral land

[1] http://Legislation.gov.uk
[2] Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2023) The UK Habitat Classification User Manual version 2.1 at https://ukhab.org/
[3] CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd Edition
[4] Sylvatica Ecology Ltd (2025) Preliminary Ecological Assessment: Cotlands Paddock East, RH13 8AJ

and small patches of wet ground or scrub were present, giving the wider setting a varied structure and high degree of enclosure. The site was positioned on relatively level ground within this gently undulating landscape, with clear connectivity to woodland habitats that extended into the broader rural environment.

1.8 There were not any designated sites within the 5.0km and 2.0km search radius. There were blocks of both deciduous and ancient semi-natural deciduous woodland within 500m of the site survey area, but there was not any ancient woodland directly adjacent (within 50m) to the development footprint.

1.9 ***Figure 1: Site Survey Location (Red Line Boundary)***



2.0 METHODOLOGY

Good Practice Principles

2.1 To calculate the ecological value of the pre and post development site, the Department for Environmental, Food & Rural Affaires (DEFRA) Small Sites Statutory Biodiversity Metric (4.0)[5] was used, following best practice from DEFRA[6] and Natural England. The completed statutory biodiversity metric is provided as a separate document and this report provides additional information on how the calculations have been undertaken.

2.2 Good practice guidance from the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) provides a framework that helps to improve the UK's biodiversity by contributing towards strategic principles to conserve and enhance nature while progressing with sustainable development. ***Table 1*** provides additional information on each of these principles and how the development has or can achieve these requirements.

2.3 ***Table 1: Good Practice Principles and Discussion[7]***

Good Practice Principle	Discussion
1: Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy	The habitats present on site are common and widespread, within the red line development boundary it consists entirely of modified grassland.
2: Avoid Losing Biodiversity that Cannot be Offset by Gains Elsewhere	There were not any irreplaceable habitats affected by the proposed development.
3: Be Inclusive and Equitable	Sylvatica Ecology has provided advice on measures to achieve the 10% net gain target.
4: Address Risks	The ecologists at Sylvatica Ecology have provided input to both protect and improve biodiversity. The statutory biodiversity metric also included inbuilt risk factors which contribute towards calculating overall biodiversity value.
5: Make a Measurable Net Gain Contribution	The development is likely to achieve a significant net gain in biodiversity through on-site provision.

[5] Natural England (2023) The Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain and Small Sites Biodiversity Net Gain Metric
[6] DEFRA (2023) Small Sites Biodiversity Metric User Guide
[7] CIEEM (2016) Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Development

6: Achieve the Best Outcomes for Biodiversity	The introduction of areas of mixed scrub and the planting of new native-rich hedgerows and native trees (as mixed scrub) will ensure increased Biodiversity
7: Be Additional	The surrounding site has a moderate potential for bat roosting, so additional features to protect bats can help support species, in addition to the BNG parameters.
8: Create a Net Gain Legacy	The proposed development will create a significant improvement in Biodiversity for years to come. This mixed scrub planting will form a barrier between the development footprint and the adjacent deciduous woodland to the north of the site. This will also enable colonisation of woodland species into this area, permitting the development of a more complex and ecologically rich ground flora over time.
9: Optimise Sustainability	The design is being developed with biodiversity in mind.
10: Be Transparent	Advice on enhancing the ecological value of the site was provided during the design process and will be used as part of the final development should outline planning permission be granted.

Habitat Mapping, Condition Assessment and Baseline Calculation Methods

2.4 Condition assessment were not required as part of this Small Sites calculation and the habitat mapping was carried out using QGIS.

2.5 The tree helper within the statutory metric was used to determine the area of the trees based on their size at diameter at breast height (dbh). Trees smaller than 7.5cm dbh were not included in the calculations.

2.6 The site survey data used for the calculations was 19th November 2024.

Successful Habitat Creation and Condition

2.7 The time that will elapse between site habitat clearance and habitat re-creation is, as yet, unknown. This time is recorded within the Biodiversity Metric as a temporal multiplier called 'delay in starting habitat', which is added to each post development habitat type, and increases 'time to target condition'. As a general pattern, the longer the time elapsed between habitat clearance and creation, the longer it takes to achieve the targeted habitat condition, which can lower the metric score.

2.8 Currently it is assumed that a 0-year delay has currently been used for each post-development habitat type. The target habitat conditions for the created habitats post development are given as moderate/ good.

Competencies

2.9 The survey work and reporting has been led by Richard Law BSc MRes CEnv MCIEEM FLS. Richard has been undertaking ecological survey work within the last 18 years on many different locations throughout the United Kingdom, for a variety of protected species, including bats (Class 2 2015-12576), reptiles, amphibians including great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) (Class 1 2016-20290) and terrestrial mammals including dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) (Class 1 2015-13188) and birds including barn owl (*Tyto alba*) licence (CL29/00236). Richard is also qualified in track and sign and trailing *via* an international system of assessment (www.trackercertification.com).

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 This section presents the findings of the biodiversity net gain calculation, the units present onsite prior to development (baseline), the units present post development and the total biodiversity net gain change in units as a percentage calculation.

Baseline Conditions

3.2 ***Table 2: Onsite Baseline Conditions***

Onsite Baseline	**Habitat Units**	**1.9800**
	Hedgerow Units	**0**

3.3 The size and condition of habitats present onsite at the time of the survey gives a total 1.9800 habitat units. This was comprised of entirely of modified grassland. No hedgerow units were present.

3.4 No irreplaceable habitats are present within the development footprint.

Post Development Habitats

3.5 ***Table 3: Post Development Habitats***

Onsite Post Intervention	**Habitat Units**	**2.2108**
	Hedgerow Units	**1.0603**

3.6 The post development habitat units will be 2.2108 and post development hedgerow units will be 1.0603.

3.7 Post development the site is proposed to contain the following habitats: Developed land/ sealed surface, modified grassland, native species rich hedgerow, mixed scrub and the planting of medium sized trees.

4.0 LONG TERM MANAGEMENT

4.1 A habitat management and monitoring plan (HMMP) would be required to ensure the long term viability of the A planning condition can be implemented to ensure correct watering and maintenance of the newly installed hedgerow, mixed scrub and tree planting to guarantee the overall BNG score over the assigned 30-year period.

5.0 NET GAIN SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

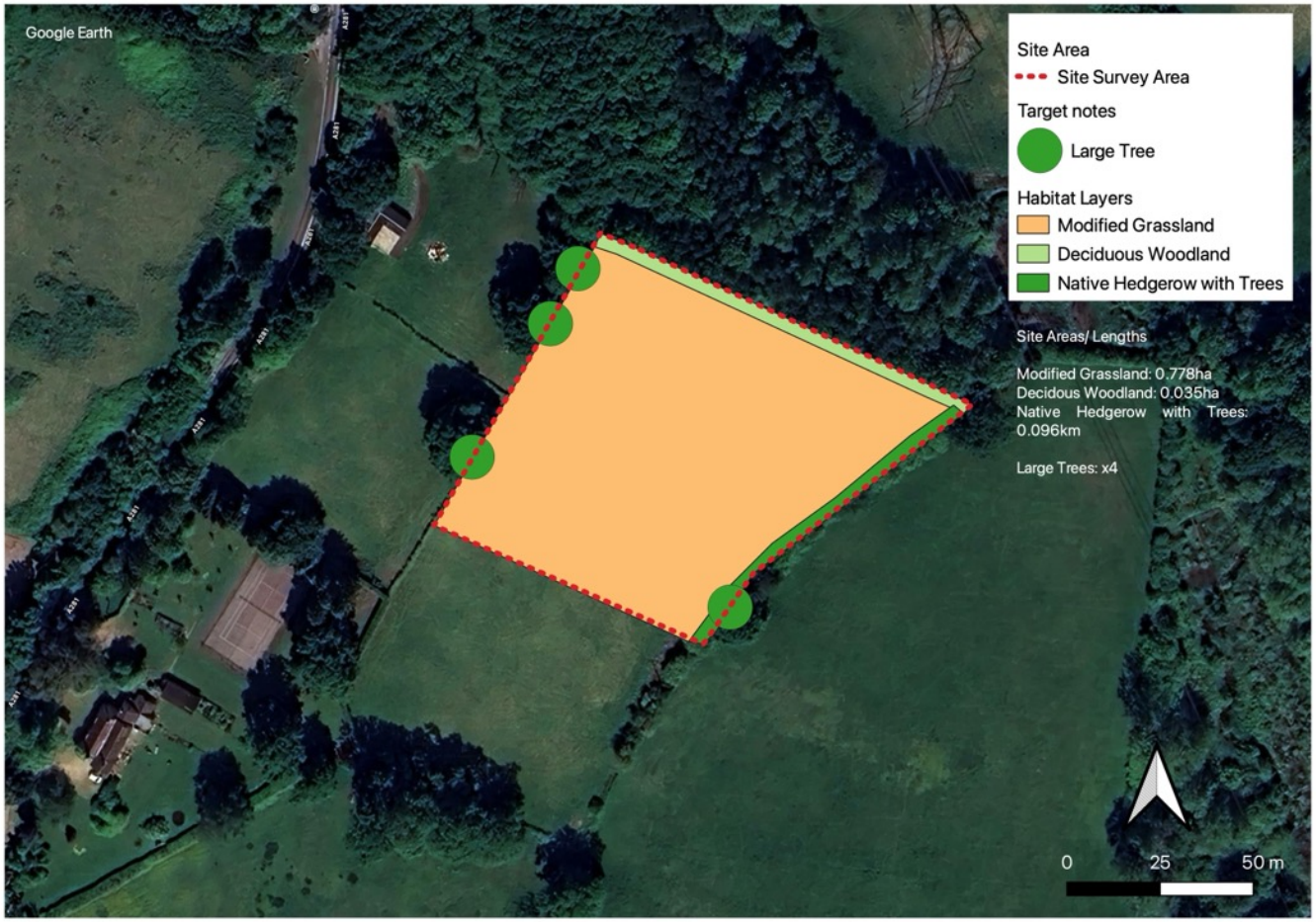
5.1 The baseline habitats present on sites provide 1.9800 habitat units. At the post development stage, it is anticipated that there will be 2.7084 habitat units following implementation of the scheme. ***Table 4*** below is a summary of the change in habitat and hedgerow units present on site. Full headline results are also shown in ***Appendix C***.

5.2 ***Table 4: Total Net Unit Change and Percentage Change***

Total Net % Change	**Habitat Units**	**0.2308 (+11.66%)**
	Hedgerow Units	**1.0603 (+ 100%)**

5.3 The post development habitat creation within the design of the scheme has resulted in a significant increase of habitat units, totalling 0.2308, giving a Biodiversity Net Gain of +11.66% and a gain of 1.0603 hedgerow units.

APPENDIX A: BASELINE HABITATS



APPENDIX B: HABITATS POST DEVELOPMENT

APPENDIX C: HEADLINE RESULTS OF NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

Site Name	Cotlands Paddock
Sheet Name	Headline Results

Headline Results

Headline	BNG Targets Met ✓
Trading Rules	Trading Rules Satisfied ✓
Next steps	Check for input errors/rule breaks present in the metric !

Baseline Units	*Habitat units*	1.9800	
	Hedgerow units	Zero Units Baseline	
	Watercourse units	Zero Units Baseline	
Post-development Units	*Habitat units*	2.2108	
	Hedgerow units	1.0603	
	Watercourse units	0.0000	
Total net unit change	*Habitat units*	0.2308	✓
	Hedgerow units	1.0603	
	Watercourse units	0.0000	
Total net % change	*Habitat units*	11.66%	✓
	Hedgerow units	% target not appropriate	
	Watercourse units	% target not appropriate	

Habitats units required to meet target	0.0000
Hedgerow units required to meet target	0.0000
Watercourse units required to meet target	0.0000

Chart 1 - Unit change by habitat group