

Job Name: Land to the West of Shoreham Road, Small Dole

Date: 8th December 2025

Prepared By: Digby Hayden

Subject: Technical Note – Ecology Response

The Ecology Partnership undertook multiple ecological surveys for the proposed development at land to the West of Shoreham Road, Small Dole, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. Comments have been received from Horsham District Council's Ecologist on 3rd December 2025. This technical note has been produced to provide further information and address the comments raised.

Recreational grassland

"It is also recommended to include an area of modified grassland for recreational activities which is subject to more disturbance, to alleviate any recreational pressure from the other neutral grassland / reptile receptor areas."

The area of other neutral grassland located in the northeast corner of the site is proposed to be retained. This section comprises existing neutral grassland that already supports a well-established and diverse range of species, justifying its classification as other neutral grassland. The dominant species present—red fescue, Yorkshire fog, cock's-foot and common bent—are all robust grasses capable of tolerating a short sward height and are commonly found in recreational or regularly maintained areas. Furthermore, the position of this grassland at the top of a slope, together with the creation of a drainage ditch to the south, significantly reduces the likelihood of waterlogging or physical damage. These features also limit nutrient accumulation, preventing fast-growing, nutrient-demanding species from outcompeting the existing grassland community. Overall, the robustness of this grassland and the low risk of waterlogging or nutrient enrichment mean that this area can sustainably accommodate increased levels of recreational disturbance. Directing footfall here will help alleviate pressure on the more sensitive neutral grassland and reptile receptor areas elsewhere on site.

Headwall Creation

"As part of the drainage strategy, installation of a headwall in the stream is proposed to link the SuDS/pond to the watercourse. As such, this needs accounting for in the metric as per the metric user guide."

This intervention has been accounted for within the Biodiversity Metric in line with the Metric User Guide. Specifically, the features have been captured in Appendix 2, Module 2, where:

- C8 – Bank face reinforcement extent has been reduced by 2 points in the post-development scenario to reflect the localised installation of the headwall and associated reinforcement works; and
- D5 – Channel margin artificial features has been reduced by 1 point to reflect the small increase in artificial structures at the watercourse margin resulting from the headwall.

These adjustments ensure that the metric accurately reflects the minor but measurable change in watercourse condition arising from the proposed drainage connection.

Category 'U' Trees

All category U trees are considered to be safe and do not require felling. All trees to be felled have been subject to an updated ground level tree assessment (Small Dole GLTA, Ecology partnership 2025).

Badgers

The badger report (Small Dole Badger Surveys, The Ecology Partnership, 2025) identifies detailed working zones and precautionary measures that are considered appropriate for mitigating potential impacts on the existing badger sett. It is noted that an updated walkover survey must be completed prior to the commencement of works, and that if any additional badger holes are identified during construction, further monitoring will be required. Depending on the findings, a Natural England license may also be necessary.

'The priority woodland to the south of the site is currently undisturbed and contains a badger sett. As such, it is advised that further measures such as planting of thick thorny scrub species within the buffer area to prevent residential access'

In order to discourage future residential access and associated disturbance to the currently undisturbed priority woodland along the southern boundary, which contains a badger sett, additional measures have been incorporated into the management proposals. This includes the planting of a dense belt of native, thorny scrub species along the northern woodland edge, within the woodland itself. This measure both enhances woodland structure and ecological value while acting as an effective soft-access deterrent, reducing the likelihood of informal pedestrian access into the woodland and towards the badger sett. The approach provides long-term protection through habitat enhancement rather than

reliance on fencing or signage, ensuring the priority woodland and associated protected species remain undisturbed post-development.

It is considered that the additional information provided, as well as the updated documents, addresses the comments and if further information is required, please feel free to contact me directly.

Many thanks

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Digby Hayden".

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Consultant Ecologist