

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Technical Note

Project: Cattlestone Farm Campsite
Prepared for: Batcheller Monkhouse Ltd
Date: 29th April 2026

1 Introduction

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) Technical Note has been prepared by Abrehart Ecology (Sussex) Ltd in support of a planning application relating to Cattlestone Farm, Harbolets Road, West Chiltington, Pulborough (RH20 2LG).

The campsite at Cattlestone Farm has been operating for the past five years in its current form. The application seeks planning permission for the continued use of the land as a low-intensity campsite, together with the retention of existing movable welfare facilities, including toilet and shower units connected to existing services, and a seating area.

The purpose of this note is to provide a concise record of the habitats present on and immediately adjacent to the application site, together with a brief assessment of potential ecological constraints.

2 Site Description

The application site comprises an established seasonal camping field at Cattlestone Farm (refer to Figure 1). The grassland is usually grown and cut as a crop prior to the commencement of the camping season, after which the site operates as a low-intensity campsite. Grassland across the site is managed by mowing in areas used for tent pitches and car parking, with wildflower strips retained in the intervening areas. Small areas of the site are occupied by existing movable welfare facilities and a modest seating area associated with the campsite operation.

3 Habitats Present

3.1 g3c - Other Neutral Grassland

The main camping field comprises g3c - Other Neutral Grassland, in accordance with the UKHab classification system. Five quadrats (Q1 – Q5) were undertaken across the grassland to characterise species composition and confirm habitat classification. The results are presented in Appendix A alongside photographs.

Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) was recorded as the dominant species, with meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) and sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) abundant. Frequent species included cuckoo flower (*Cardamine pratensis*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*). Species abundance was assessed using a simplified DAFOR approach, recording dominant, abundant and frequent species.

3.2 u – Urban (Welfare facilities and Seating Area)

The site supports existing movable welfare facilities comprising toilet and shower units connected to existing services, together with a small seating area associated with campsite use. These facilities are non-permanent and movable in nature, requiring no fixed foundations or works to the land, and are sited on previously managed ground within the operational camping area. Photographs are included within Appendix A.

4 Discussion

The proposed development relates solely to the continuation of an existing seasonal campsite use within the current operational area. No new structures, areas of hardstanding, drainage works, or groundworks are proposed. No habitats are proposed to be removed or permanently modified as part of the development. No statutory or locally designated priority habitats are recorded within the application site.

The site comprises other neutral grassland. The landowner has confirmed that skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*) are breeding within the adjacent field, indicating that suitable nesting habitat is present in the immediate surrounding area. While no nests were identified within the application site at the time of survey, the grassland may still provide foraging habitat and could be used opportunistically for nesting.

As a precautionary measure, the grassland should be checked for active skylark nests prior to mowing during the breeding season (March–September inclusive). If an active nest is identified, mowing should be delayed within an appropriate buffer (typically c.10 m) until chicks have fledged. This approach accords with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which protects active nests, eggs, and dependent young.

5 Conclusion

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) site visit confirmed that the application site comprises other neutral grassland, together with existing movable welfare facilities and a modest seating area associated with the current seasonal use. No priority habitats are present within the application site.

The landowner has confirmed that skylarks are breeding within the adjacent field, indicating suitable habitat in the wider area. No active nests were recorded on site during the survey.

The proposals will not result in the loss or permanent degradation of habitats, and the ecological baseline of the site will remain unchanged. Subject to precautionary pre-mowing checks for active skylark nests during the breeding season (March–August inclusive), no significant ecological effects are anticipated.

Signed: 

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Figure 1: Site Plan



APPENDIX A: Grassland Survey Data and Photos

Table 1 Quadrat species records – other neutral grassland

Species	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Red clover (<i>Trifolium pratense</i>)	✓		✓		
Sweet vernal grass (<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common mouse-ear chickweed (<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>)	✓		✓	✓	✓
Common bird's-foot trefoil (<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>)	✓				
Red fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ribwort plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>)	✓				
Yorkshire fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>)	✓				
Perennial rye-grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>)	✓	✓		✓	✓
Cuckoo flower (<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>)		✓		✓	✓
Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.)		✓		✓	
Common sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosa</i>)		✓			
Meadow foxtail (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>)		✓	✓	✓	✓
Creeping bent (<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>)			✓		✓
Species total	10	9	8	9	9

Other species recorded in the grassland included timothy (*Phleum pratense*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), grass vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), meadow fescue (*Festuca pratensis*), (*Lathyrus nissolia*) and false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*).



Photographs of g3c – Other Neutral Grassland (existing seasonal campsite)



Photographs of seating area (left) and toilet and shower facilities (right)



Photographs of shower facilities (left) and toilet facilities (right)