Kent Sussex Ecology

Company no. 14209453

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Nuthurst Cricket Club

September 2025



Reference number: 0352

Version: 2.0

Luke Wallace ACIEEM

The copyright of this document remains with Kent Sussex Ecology. All rights reserved. The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole, or in part, for any purpose without the written consent of Kent Sussex Ecology.

Information and opinions within this report are considered to be accurate in accordance with the observation, skills and experience of the ecologist(s). The information set out within this report does not constitute a legal opinion and professional advice should be sought for legal interpretation.

No liability or responsibility is accepted by Kent Sussex Ecology for any use of this report, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided. The content of this report is partly based on information provided by third parties; Kent Sussex Ecology accepts no liability for any reliance placed on such information.

CONTENTS

1.0. INTRODUCTION....3
2.0. METHODOLOGY....4
3.0. METRIC INPUTS AND DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS....5
4.0. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION....7
APPENDIX A: PHOTOGRAPHS....8
APPENDIX B: LEGISLATION....9

1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Kent Sussex Ecology was commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment at Nuthurst Cricket Club, Golding Lane, Mannings Heath, West Sussex, RH13 6JX (see location plan below). The site is centred on grid reference TQ20642896.

1.2. The BNG assessment pertains to the proposed new 30m^2 astroturf surface, replacing an existing concrete base, upon which to site a new transportable cricket practice net. At present the site consists of maintained grassland, with the concrete base of the existing practice net.

1.3. Most developments are required to deliver a biodiversity net gain of 10%, in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). As such, biodiversity net gain calculations have been produced for the proposed development and summarised in this report.

1.4. The primary aim of this report is to objectively assess whether a biodiversity net gain can be achieved by the proposed development, using Natural England's net gain metric and the standardised approach in alignment with the Environment Act (2021).



Location plan.

2.0. METHODOLOGY

2.1. The site and proposed development meet the criteria for the 'small sites', being 0.5ha or smaller in size and subject to a proposed '0 – 9 dwellings'. As such, the small sites metric (SSM) calculation tool (Biodiversity Metric 4.0) was used for the assessment. The guidance in Natural England's 'The Small Sites Metric (Biodiversity Metric 4.0) User Guide' was followed to ensure the correct procedure was followed.

2.2. There are four rules that must be met in order for the metric results to be valid. These are:

- Completion of the metric (and baseline habitat assessment) by a competent person(s);
- The three types of biodiversity units generated cannot be summed together for a positive result;
- The trading rules within the metric must be satisfied, and;
- No use of the SSM on sites that contain irreplaceable, high or very high distinctiveness habitats.

2.3. Unlike the main metric calculation tool, the SSM calculation tool's 'habitat conditions' are fixed and cannot be altered. Regarding 'habitat distinctiveness', the user guide states that this category is not required by the user for the SSM, as it is automatically assigned.

2.4. A biodiversity net gain, in accordance with the metric guidance, can only be achieved via habitat enhancement and creation. Measures such as the provision of bird boxes or sensitive lighting design cannot be included in the calculations.

2.5. The survey was carried out on the 21st August by Giulio Vezzo and David Campion. Mr Vezzo is the Head Greenkeeper at Mannings Heath Golf Club, which adjoins the application site, and has worked at the Golf Club for 30 years. He holds Levels 2 and 3 qualifications in greenkeeping and sports turf management. Mr Campion graduated from the Royal Agricultural College in 1973 and is a Fellow of the British Institute of Agricultural Consultants. The survey consisted of a species list and a condition assessment of the grassland habitat using the BNG condition assessment criteria.

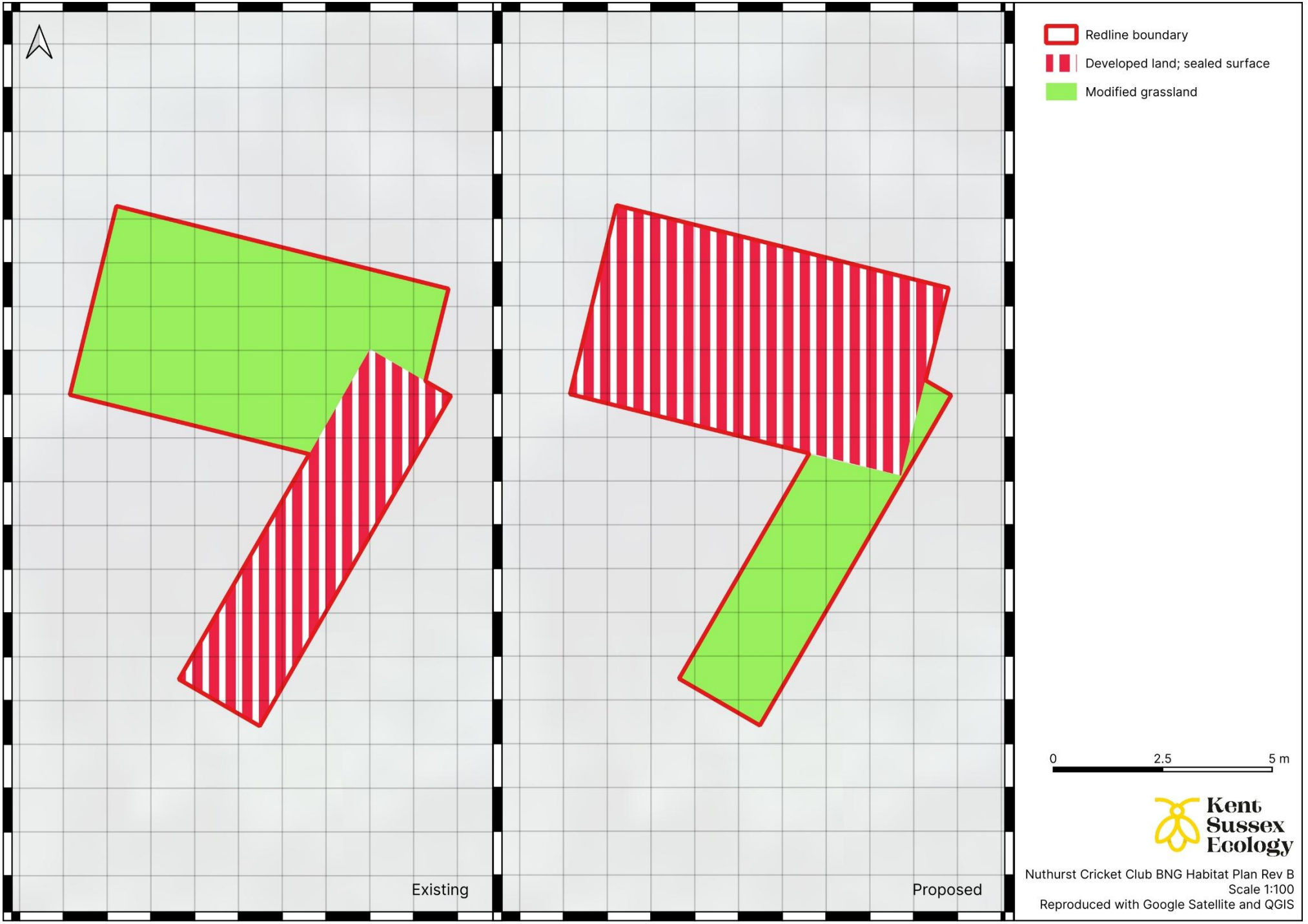
2.6. The report was written by Luke Wallace; a qualified (BSc) and CIEEM-accredited ecologist with over 15 years of experience in the field of ecology. The maps produced for this report use the colour coding as depicted within the latest UKHab 'Category Definitions' document.

2.7. There were no limitations regarding access to the site. However, not all flowering annuals will have been observable at the time of the survey. The accompanying metric will remain valid until 21st February 2026.

3.0. METRIC INPUTS AND DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

3.1. The primary habitat type within the redline boundary (totalling 48m^2) is 'modified grassland', consisting of common grassland species (see habitat plan on page 6). The site and the entire ground comprise predominantly perennial ryegrass, with a mixture of forbs, such as greater plantain, lawn daisy, dandelion and yarrow. The area is mown to a height consistent with cricket outfields (c.20mm). The remainder of the site (c.18m^2) consists of sealed surface hardstanding.

3.2. The development would entail the removal of the existing hardstanding, with a new c.30m^2 area of the grassland being used for the new hardstanding base. The removed hardstanding will be subject to grassland creation (modified grassland).


Redline boundary
Developed land; sealed surface
Modified grassland
Existing
Proposed
0
2.5
5 m
Kent Sussex Ecology
Nuthurst Cricket Club BNG Habitat Plan Rev B
Scale 1:100
Reproduced with Google Satellite and QGIS

4.0. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

4.1. The result of the metric calculations is a net loss of 0.42% of 'area' habitat (see the headline results table below), meaning the metric trading rules have not been satisfied. As such, the development does not adhere to the mandatory net gain obligations in its current format.

Headline		**BNG Targets Not Met ▲**	
Trading Rules		**Trading Rules Satisfied ✓**	
Next steps		**Scheme alterations or offsite units required**	
Baseline Units	***Area habitat units***	**0.0120**	
	Hedgerow units	**Zero Units Baseline**	
	Watercourse units	**Zero Units Baseline**	
Post-development Units	***Area habitat units***	**0.0121**	
	Hedgerow units	**0.0000**	
	Watercourse units	**0.0000**	
Total net unit change	***Area habitat units***	**0.0001**	⚠
	Hedgerow units	**0.0000**	
	Watercourse units	**0.0000**	
Total net % change	***Area habitat units***	**0.42%**	⚠
	Hedgerow units	**% target not appropriate**	
	Watercourse units	**% target not appropriate**	
Area habitat units required to meet target		**0.0011**	
Hedgerow units required to meet target		**0.0000**	
Watercourse units required to meet target		**0.0000**	

4.2. As offsetting on-site will be challenging due to the loss of 'cricket grassland', which would negatively impact the site's current use, it is recommended that the developer purchase biodiversity units from a recognised biodiversity offsetting scheme or purchase statutory credits from the government if offsite units are unavailable.

APPENDIX A: PHOTOGRAPHS



The grassland within the redline boundary.

APPENDIX B: LEGISLATION

Biodiversity Net Gain Legislation Summary

The Environment Act 2021 introduced mandatory BNG requirements in England, amending the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Schedule 7A). As such, most new developments requiring planning permission must achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity of at least 10%. This is assessed using a standardised metric that assigns values to different habitat types. Developers must demonstrate how they will achieve BNG through habitat creation, enhancement, or compensation measures, and the plans must consider a minimum 30-year management period to ensure biodiversity gains are sustained.

A biodiversity net-gain assessment (BNG) assessment involves making a comparison between the biodiversity value of habitats present within the site prior to development (the 'baseline') and the predicted biodiversity value of habitats following the completion of the development (i.e., 'post-development'). The comparison is made in terms of 'biodiversity units', with a 'biodiversity metric' providing the mechanism to allow biodiversity values to be calculated and compared.

The metric calculates the overall loss or gains of biodiversity for development projects by assessing the distinctiveness (type of habitat and its value), condition, extent, and strategic significance of habitats on site pre- and post-development. To achieve biodiversity net gain, the biodiversity unit score must have a post-development score higher than the baseline score. When calculating the post-development biodiversity units, the metric includes a series of standard 'risk multipliers' to account for the inherent risk of creating and restoring habitats, the time taken to establish habitats and the location of the mitigation in relation to the habitats lost on site. The risk multipliers have the effect of reducing the value of the proposed habitats, which means larger areas, habitats of higher distinctiveness, and/or condition are required to achieve net gain.

The metric assesses and generates separate outputs for area-based habitats (measured in habitat units) and linear based habitats, including hedgerows (measured in hedgerow units) and rivers (measured in river units). For the purpose of the BNG assessment, the output with the lowest value is used to determine whether following development there has been a net gain in biodiversity.

Distinctiveness

Each habitat is assigned a score for distinctiveness. Distinctiveness includes parameters such as species richness, diversity, rarity (at local, regional, national, and international scales) and the degree to which a habitat supports species rarely found in other habitats (Treweek et al., 2010). The categories for distinctiveness within the metric are shown within the Natural England.

Condition

The condition of each habitat is assessed using the methods set out in the Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement. This approach determines how many of the condition criteria descriptions for each habitat type are met or are not met. This is used as a guide but may be superseded where appropriate by other evidence and best ecological judgement. Where this is the case, additional information is provided in the tables used to the condition assessment. Certain habitats are allocated a fixed condition score and do not need their condition to be assessed.

Strategic Significance

The metric requires that the strategic significance of all baseline and post-development habitats be defined. Strategic significance refers to areas of local priority for biodiversity and nature improvement, identified within local planning policies. As part of this assessment, the relevant local planning policy documents were reviewed to determine the strategic significance of the habitats on site.