



AEWC Ltd

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

Calcot Farm Bungalow

**Horsham Road
Steyning
West Sussex
BN44 3AA**

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**25-086
July 2026**

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Report and version number	25-086-BES-V1

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The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal' and 'Code of Professional Conduct' issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 AEWCLtd were commissioned by Batcheller Monkhouse on behalf of their client to produce a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for a site at Calcot Farm Bungalow to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 This Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy has been prepared as of request from Horsham District Council.
- 1.3 A Protected Species Walkover Survey was conducted at the site on the 20th of November 2025 by AEWCLtd. No further surveys were required to be carried out.

Aims and Objectives

- 1.4 The aims and objectives of this strategy are:
 - To increase the site's biodiversity value;
 - To provide new nesting, roosting, and sheltering opportunities for protected species; and
 - To provide new valuable habitat for a range of wildlife.

Site Location and Context

- 1.5 The proposed development site is at Calcot Farm Bungalow, Horsham Road, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3AA at grid reference TQ 17912 14488. The site lies on the northern edge of Steyning, approximately 1.4km south of the village of Ashurst. The surrounding landscape comprises agricultural fields, hedgerows, pasture, and scattered woodland blocks, with small watercourses and wetland areas associated with the nearby River Adur valley. The nearest major road is the A283, located approximately 2.3km to the south. See Figure 1.
- 1.6 The site is approximately 0.64ha and largely comprises a grass field (modified grassland) and an area of hardstanding (developed land; sealed surface), with native hedgerows along the east and north boundaries. The field is used for pasture and to grow hay. See Figure 2.



FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE SITE LOCATION



FIGURE 2: AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE SHOWING THE SITE BOUNDARY

Proposed Development

- 1.7 The proposed development plan is for construction of two access tracks using an unsealed hardstanding surface. A short section of hedgerow will require removal from the eastern boundary. See Figure 3.

2. Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

- 2.1 In order to provide the background for providing advice on appropriate ecological enhancements given in this strategy, the findings of the ecological walkover survey undertaken in November 2025 are taken into account.
- 2.2 The implementation, initial aftercare, and long-term maintenance of the enhancements will be the responsibility of the property owner. The owner may appoint suitably qualified contractors.
- 2.3 The locations of the proposed enhancements are illustrated in Figure 4.

Habitat Enhancement

General

- 2.4 In order to enhance the habitat for wildlife, the planting schemes for the proposed development will use native species or species with known benefit to wildlife wherever possible.
- 2.5 In line with best practice, the use of peat in composts or topsoil will be avoided.

New Hedgerow

- 2.6 Approximately 50m of hedgerow planting will be undertaken within the northeast corner of the site. The hedge will comprise of a mix of native species including flowering and/or nut-bearing species. Recommended species include hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) and/or holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).
- 2.7 Instructions for the native hedgerow planting and initial aftercare are as follows:
- Hedgerow planting should be carried out between November and March, avoiding periods of frost, snow, or waterlogged soil.
 - The ground must be cleared of grass or other vegetation and soil loosened prior to planting.
 - Shrubs should be planted as a staggered double row to provide a dense hedgerow. Each plant should be spaced 30-50cm apart in each row, with 40-50cm between the two rows.
 - Along the proposed hedge line, dig holes or a trench deep enough to accommodate the root systems of the plants.

- If using bare-root plants, soak the roots in water for 1-2 hours before planting to prevent drying out.
- Place each plant so the base of the stem is at soil level and spread the roots out gently. Fill the holes with soil, firming it down gently.
- Apply a layer of mulch (such as wood chips or well-rotted compost) around the base of the plants to suppress weeds and retain moisture.
- Use spiral guards or fencing to protect young plants from grazing animals.
- Water regularly during the first 2 years, especially in dry spells, to help the plants establish.
- Lightly trim the top of the hedgerow in the first 2 years to encourage bushy growth.

Grassland

2.8 A 0.26ha section of grassland along the eastern boundary will be enhanced from poor condition modified grassland through an appropriate long-term management regime designed to increase botanical diversity and improve habitat structure, with the aim of achieving moderate condition in accordance with the relevant Biodiversity Metric condition criteria.

2.9 The following management measures will be implemented:

- Retain the existing grassland and avoid unnecessary soil disturbance to preserve the existing seed bank where practicable.
- Cease the application of herbicides (except for targeted treatment of injurious or invasive species), pesticides and other nutrient inputs.
- Introduce a reduced mowing regime, with one to two cuts annually. The main cut should be undertaken in late summer (July–September), with all cuttings removed to reduce soil fertility and encourage a more species-rich sward. Where necessary, an additional spring cut may be undertaken to control vigorous grass growth.
- Overseed areas of low botanical diversity with a locally appropriate native wildflower mix where required to increase species richness. Any seed mix should be of local provenance where possible and appropriate to the site's soil conditions (for example Emorsgate Seed's EG1 – General purpose meadow grass mixture, available via www.wildseed.co.uk).
- Control invasive non-native species and undesirable competitive species through targeted management where required.
- Avoid soil compaction and minimise disturbance from construction and maintenance activities.
- Monitor the grassland annually during the growing season to assess species composition, sward structure and condition, implementing remedial measures where monitoring indicates that target condition is not being achieved.
- The grassland will be managed to develop a diverse sward comprising a range of native grasses and wildflowers, with variation in sward height and limited bare

ground where appropriate, meeting the criteria for moderate condition under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

Species Enhancement

Birds

- 2.10 A minimum of one bird box will be hung on the barn on-site or one of the mature trees adjacent to the site, to provide nesting opportunities for birds present in the local area. This will be a traditional round-holed box, suitable for species such as tits, sparrows, redstarts and nuthatches. The bird box will be woodcrete or a similar hard-wearing material (rather than the less durable wooden boxes). The box must be sited in a sheltered location facing north or east, unless shaded by the surrounding trees, and should be installed with an aluminium nail or screw to prevent tree damage. It is to be installed between 2m and 4m above ground.
- 2.11 The bird box does not require any ongoing maintenance but must be repaired or replaced at the earliest opportunity should it become damaged, ensuring no active nests are present at the time.

Bats

- 2.12 A minimum of one bat box will be installed on the barn on-site or one of the mature trees adjacent to the site to provide roosting opportunities for bats present in the local area. The bat box will be woodcrete or similar hard-wearing material (rather than the less durable wooden boxes) and should be installed at least 4m above the ground roughly south-facing, sheltered from strong winds and exposed to the sun for part of the day. The box should be installed with an aluminium nail or screw to prevent tree damage. Example suitable boxes include the Schwegler 1FF bat box and the Schwegler 2F bat box, or similar bat boxes.
- 2.13 The bat box does not require any ongoing maintenance but must be repaired or replaced at the earliest opportunity should it become damaged. If the box is intact, it must only be opened by a licensed bat worker.



FIGURE 3: PROPOSED BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS
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