Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Land Adjacent to Jolesfield Cottages

Jolesfield

Partridge Green

Horsham, RH13 8JT



13th October 2026
V1.4

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 land adjacent to Jolesfield Cottages, Jolesfield, Partridge Green, Horsham RH13 8JT. 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 is approximately 8,705m².

1.2 BNG became effective in January 2024 (April 2024 for smaller sites) following the Environment Act 2021, 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 under the UK Habitat Classification System (UKHab) and the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, in accordance with BS42020:2013 Biodiversity.

1.5 A walkover was conducted by Sylvatica Ecology on the 24th October 2025. This version (V1.4) has been updated in response to Horsham District Council's ecology consultation response on application DC/26/1311 (9th October 2026), and is accompanied by the Small Sites Metric V1.3 (threshold option).

Development Proposal

1.6 An outline application (DC/26/1311) has been submitted for nine new dwellings, with individual gardens and parking spaces and access from the north and south (Manorwood block plan, drawing 2510LA_r3_001). The development builds over part of the modified grassland and removes the six existing trees (five small and one medium), approximately 680m² of mixed scrub (along the south boundary, in the south-east corner, and scrub G2 for the drainage works, which will be replanted) The existing accesses will be used and no hedgerow will be removed. The deciduous woodland, the pond and the hedgerows will be retained. The proposed habitat creation and enhancement measures are set out in Section 3.0.

Site Description and Adjacent Habitat

1.7 The site was positioned on the southern edge of a village within a semi-rural landscape composed of pasture, gardens and small woodland blocks. It lay just east of a main local road that formed a clear north–south corridor through the settlement, with residential properties and their associated private gardens arranged along both sides of the road. Immediately north of the site, the land was characterised by small fields, tree belts and an area of managed ground likely associated with community or recreational use, while the wider village extended further east with a mixture of detached housing, amenity grassland and scattered mature trees. To the west and south, the landscape opened into larger pastoral fields divided by hedgerows and treelines, creating a patchwork of agricultural land surrounding the settlement.

1.8 There were no designated sites within the search radius.

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



Planning Authority Comments Addressed

1.10 This version of the report has been updated in response to the ecology and biodiversity net gain consultation response from Horsham District Council (Linsey King, Ecology Officer (Planning), 9th October 2026) on outline application DC/26/1311. Each comment is set out in Table 1, with the response and the section of this report where it is addressed.

1.11 ***Table 1: Response to Horsham District Council Ecology Comments***

Para.	HDC comment	Response
1.0	*Assessment of the artificial ditch network within 5m of the site in relation to BNG.*	The ditches were dry at the time of the survey, when the pond was the only feature holding water. Surface water on the site drains from the east into the pond, not into or from the ditches. The ditches lie outside the red line and are not affected, so they are not entered in the watercourse module.
1.1	*Number and sizes of baseline trees to be clarified (4 small and 1 medium mapped; 3 medium in the metric).*	Corrected to match the baseline habitat map: five small trees and one medium tree, all removed.
1.2	*Baseline map does not clearly differentiate deciduous woodland and native species hedgerow.*	Baseline habitat map revised, with the native species hedgerow shown in yellow and the woodland in green.
2.0	*Hedgerow loss at the northern access and any widening of the southern access not accounted for.*	The planning agent has confirmed that no hedgerow adjacent to the road will be removed, as the existing accesses already have adequate visibility splays. All hedgerow is retained.
2.1	*Removal of mixed scrub (G2) for drainage not accounted for; cannot be treated as temporary.*	Approximately 371m² of scrub G2 is entered as lost, and its replanting after the drainage works is entered as new mixed scrub creation.
2.2	*Tree planting under power lines must conform with safety guidelines.*	New trees will be positioned to comply with the network operator's safety clearances, confirmed at Reserved Matters.
2.3	*New trees to be recorded as small, based on DBH at planting.*	All new trees are recorded as small.
2.4	*Pre- and post-development areas do not match.*	Corrected. The 125m² difference is entered as vegetated garden, and the baseline areas are scaled to the client's site area of 8,705m².
2.5	*Mixed scrub shown as retained in the metric but removed in the south and south-east on the plan.*	Approximately 309m² of scrub along the south boundary and in the south-east corner is entered as lost.
3.0	*Strategic significance uplift cannot be claimed; woodland planting along the eastern woodland edge encouraged (LNRS W2.1).*	Uplift removed from the baseline trees. 400m² of native woodland edge planting is proposed against the eastern woodland, in line with LNRS priority W2.1. The planting is not shown on the current block plan; as all matters except access are reserved, it will be incorporated into the final layout at

		Reserved Matters, with the eastern gardens set back from the woodland edge.
4.0	*More detail required in the HMMP (prescriptions, species compositions, risk register, remedial actions, keyed habitat map).*	A full HMMP following Natural England's template will be prepared to discharge the suggested condition.

1.12 With these changes, the scheme achieves an on-site net gain of 0.3549 habitat units (+8.38%) and 0.1252 hedgerow units (+10.26%). The combined on-site net change of 0.4801 units is below the Council's 0.5 unit threshold for significant on-site gains. The remaining habitat units needed to reach 10% will be purchased off site (Section 4.3).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Good Practice Principles

2.1 To calculate the ecological value of the pre and post development site, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Small Sites Statutory Biodiversity Metric was used, following best practice from DEFRA 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 2 provides additional information on each of these principles and how the development has or can achieve these requirements.

2.3 ***Table 2: Good Practice Principles and Discussion***

Good Practice Principle	Discussion
1: Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy	The habitats present on site are common and widespread: modified grassland, mixed scrub, deciduous woodland, native hedgerows and a pond. The woodland, pond and most of the hedgerows are retained, and the scrub lost is replaced by new and reinstated mixed scrub.
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	With the measures in Section 3.0, the development achieves a net gain of 8.38% in habitat units and 10.26% in hedgerow units on site, with the remaining habitat units purchased off site to achieve the 10% target.
6: Achieve the Best Outcomes for Biodiversity	The measures include grassland, pond and scrub habitat, woodland edge planting in line with the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy, new native trees and native hedgerow.
7: Be Additional	The proposals will look to meet a minimum of 10% BNG. Ecological enhancement can be achieved by additional planting of native species. The site has a high potential for bat roosting, so additional features to protect bats can help support species, in addition to the BNG parameters. Areas with potential for Great Crested Newt will be left undisturbed.
8: Create a Net Gain Legacy	The on-site habitats will be secured through the HMMP condition, and the off-site units before development begins.
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 development of the detailed design should outline planning permission be granted.

Habitat Mapping, Condition Assessment and Baseline Calculation Methods

2.4 Condition assessments are not required for the Small Sites Metric. The habitats were mapped in QGIS (Appendix A). The map has been revised so that the native species hedgerow is clearly distinguished from the deciduous woodland, and the baseline areas in the metric follow the mapped areas, scaled proportionally to the client's site area of 8,705m². The ditches adjacent to the site were dry at the time of the survey, when the pond was the only feature holding water. Surface water on the site drains from the east into the pond, not into or from the ditches. The ditches lie outside the red line and are not affected by the development, so they have not been entered in the watercourse module.

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 baseline. All new trees are recorded as small, based on their size at planting.

2.6 The site survey data used for the calculations was 24th October 2025.

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 Statutory 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 A 0-year delay in starting habitat creation has been assumed for each post-development habitat type. The target conditions for the created and enhanced habitats are moderate or good.

Competencies

2.9 The survey work and reporting has been led by Richard Law BSc (Hons) MRes CEnv MCIEEM FLS. Richard has been undertaking ecological survey work for 20 years at many locations throughout the United Kingdom, for a variety of protected species, including bats (2025-85394-CL18-BAT), great crested newt Triturus cristatus (2025-85909-SCI-CL08), dormice Muscardinus avellanarius (2026-88947-CL10a-DOR) and barn owl Tyto alba (2026-88948-CL29-OWL). 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 3: Onsite Baseline Conditions***

Onsite Baseline	**Habitat Units**	**4.2366**
	Hedgerow Units	**1.2200**

3.3 The habitats present on site at the time of the survey give a total of 4.2366 habitat units. These comprise modified grassland (7,046m²), mixed scrub (742m²), deciduous woodland (412m²), a pond (505m²) and six individual trees (five small and one medium). The native hedgerow (71m) and native hedgerow with trees (117m) give 1.2200 hedgerow units. The baseline areas follow the habitat map at Appendix A, scaled proportionally to the client's site area of 8,705m². No strategic significance uplift has been applied.

3.4 No irreplaceable habitats are present within the development footprint.

Post Development Habitats

3.5 ***Table 4: Post Development Habitats***

Onsite Post Intervention	**Habitat Units**	**4.5915**
	Hedgerow Units	**1.3452**

3.6 With the scheme as drawn and no further measures, the post development habitats would provide 3.0808 habitat units and 1.2983 hedgerow units. This would be a net loss of 1.1558 habitat units (-27.28%) and a gain of 0.0783 hedgerow units (+6.41%), and the trading rules would not be met. The measures below are therefore proposed, giving the post development values in Table 3 (Small Sites Metric V1.3, threshold option).

3.7 The measures comprise: enhancement of 2,070m² of communal open space from modified grassland to other neutral grassland (good condition); enhancement of the pond to a non-priority pond (good condition), with native marginal planting; 450m² of new native mixed scrub along the south and south-east boundaries; reinstatement of 371m² of mixed scrub (G2) after the drainage works; 400m² of native woodland edge planting against the eastern

woodland, in line with the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority for new woodland (W2.1); 30 new native trees, positioned to comply with the safety clearances for the overhead power lines; and 32m of new native hedgerow along the inside of the boundary fencing.

4.0 NET GAIN SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The baseline habitats provide 4.2366 habitat units and 1.2200 hedgerow units. With the measures in Section 3.0, there will be 4.5915 habitat units and 1.3452 hedgerow units on site. Table 5 summarises the change in habitat and hedgerow units. Full headline results are shown in Appendix C.

4.2 ***Table 5: Total Net Unit Change and Percentage Change***

Total Net % Change	**Habitat Units**	**+0.3549 (+8.38%)**
	Hedgerow Units	**+0.1252 (+10.26%)**
	Total Increase for Hedgerow and Habitat Units	**+0.4801**

4.3 On site, the scheme results in a net gain of 0.3549 habitat units (+8.38%) and 0.1252 hedgerow units (+10.26%), and the trading rules are satisfied. The combined on-site net change of 0.4801 units is below Horsham District Council's 0.5 unit threshold for significant on-site gains. Achieving 10% for both modules entirely on site would require a combined net change of at least 0.55 units. The remaining 0.07 habitat units (more if a spatial risk multiplier applies) will therefore be purchased from a registered habitat bank, preferably within Horsham District or the same National Character Area, before development begins. Together these achieve the 10% biodiversity net gain.

5.0 HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN

5.1 The BNG calculation reported in Section 4.0 depends on the successful creation, enhancement and long-term management of the on-site habitats described in Section 3.0. This section provides a summary Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), setting out how the retained and newly created habitats will be managed and monitored to secure the reported net gain of on-site net gain of +0.3549 habitat units (+8.38%) and +0.1252 hedgerow units (+10.26%) over the standard 30-year post-development management period required under the Environment Act 2021 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). A full

HMMP, agreed with the Local Planning Authority, would be required to discharge any relevant planning condition prior to commencement of the development. It will follow Natural England's HMMP template, companion document and checklist, and will include detailed management prescriptions, species compositions, a risk register with remedial actions and a post-development habitat map clearly keyed by habitat type.

Management Objectives and Prescriptions

5.2 The retained mixed scrub, hedgerows and deciduous woodland will be managed to maintain their existing (or better) condition, while the new habitats (other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, woodland edge planting, the enhanced pond, the new hedgerows and the 30 new native trees) will require a period of establishment aftercare. Mixed scrub and deciduous woodland will be subject to light, rotational management only, retaining structural diversity and controlling any invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The new and retained hedgerow will be watered and maintained through establishment (Years 1-3), with any failed sections gapped-up using the same native species, before entering a long-term rotational cutting cycle of no more than once every two to three years, outside the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive). The 30 new trees will be watered, staked/guarded and maintained through establishment (the first two to three growing seasons), with any tree that fails replaced with one of the same species and comparable size; thereafter, only formative pruning will be undertaken as necessary. The other neutral grassland will be sown with a native species-rich seed mix of local provenance and managed by an annual hay cut in late summer, with arisings removed. The pond will be enhanced with native marginal planting, kept free of fish and retained with an undisturbed buffer, with any encroaching bankside vegetation managed on rotation to prevent over-shading.

Monitoring

5.3 The condition of each retained and created habitat will be monitored by a suitably competent ecologist, by walkover condition assessment supported by fixed-point photography, in Years 1, 2, 3 and 5 following completion of the development, and thereafter at five-yearly intervals to Year 30 (i.e. Years 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30). A short monitoring report will be produced following each visit.

5.4 Where monitoring identifies that a habitat is failing to establish or is declining in condition (for example, greater than 10-20% mortality of new planting, encroachment of invasive or injurious species, or damage to or loss of habitat area), remedial action will be undertaken as soon as practicable. This may include gapping-up or replacement planting, targeted weed control, or a review of the management regime, with the issue and remedial action taken recorded in the following monitoring report.

Roles and Responsibilities

5.5 Overall responsibility for funding, delivering and maintaining this HMMP will rest with the landowner (or their appointed managing agent/contractor) for the full 30-year management period from first occupation/completion of the development. A suitably competent ecologist should be appointed to undertake the monitoring visits and reporting set out above, with monitoring reports made available to the Local Planning Authority on request.

6.0 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2016) Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Development

DEFRA (2023) Statutory Biodiversity Metric Draft User Guide

Horsham District Council (2026) Ecology and BNG consultation response, DC/26/1311, Land at Jolesfield, Partridge Green. 9th October 2026.

HM Government (2021) Environment Act 2021

HM Government (1990) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

HM Government (1981) Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

Natural England (2023) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric and Small Sites Metric – QGIS Template and QGIS Import Tool User

APPENDIX A: BASELINE HABITATS



Baseline Habitat Map: V1.3 - Land Adjacent to Jolesfield Cottages

Site Location
- Jolesfield Common

Trees
- Medium Sized Tree
- Small Sized Tree

Target Notes
- Dormice Potential
- Great Crested Newt Potential
- Reptile Potential

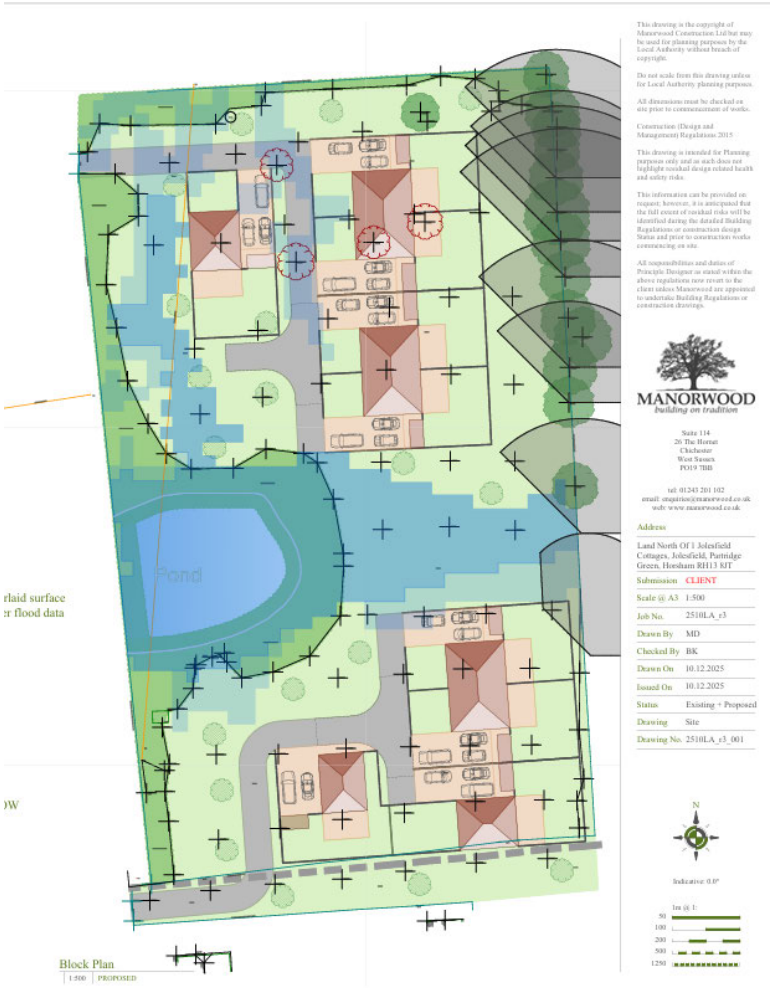
Linear Features
- Post and Rail Fencing

Habitat Types
- Deciduous Woodland
- Mixed Scrub
- Modified Grassland
- Native Species Hedge
- Native Species Hedge with Trees
- Pond

Areas and Lengths

Deciduous Woodland: 0.040ha
Mixed Scrub: 0.072ha
Modified Grassland: 0.684ha
Native Species Hedge: 71.0m
Native Species Hedge with Trees: 117.0m
Pond: 0.049ha

APPENDIX B: HABITATS POST DEVELOPMENT



APPENDIX C: HEADLINE RESULTS OF NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

Site Name	Jolesfield Cottages
Sheet Name	Headline Results

Headline Results

Headline	BNG Targets Not Met ▲
Trading Rules	Trading Rules Satisfied ✓
Next steps	Scheme alterations or offsite units required

Baseline Units	*Habitat units*	4.2366
	Hedgerow units	1.2200
	Watercourse units	Zero Units Baseline
Post-development Units	*Habitat units*	4.5915
	Hedgerow units	1.3452
	Watercourse units	0.0000
Total net unit change	*Habitat units*	0.3549 ⚠
	Hedgerow units	0.1252 ✓
	Watercourse units	0.0000
Total net % change	*Habitat units*	8.38% ⚠
	Hedgerow units	10.26% ✓
	Watercourse units	% target not appropriate

Habitats units required to meet target	0.0687
Hedgerow units required to meet target	0.0000
Watercourse units required to meet target	0.0000