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10th March 2026

Re: Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) survey of 24m of native species hedge; Grainingfold Farmhouse, Horsham Road, Five Oaks, West Sussex, RH14 9AT.

The survey works detailed in this letter have been undertaken in response to an application to remove approximately 24m section of native species hedge, to create a new access at the above site¹.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken for the site during the summer of 2025, as part of a planning application to create a new access to the site, from the adjacent local authority controlled road¹. In order to create a new access to the site, it will be necessary to remove approximately 24m of mixed species native hedge, within the norther boundary of the site (Figs. 1 & 2).

The biodiversity data search, undertaken as part of the PEA, returned two records for dormice within 2km of the site in 2023 and 2002. Therefore, given the size of the area of hedge proposed to be impacted, making it not possible to carry out a full standard presence/absence survey using nest tubes, it was decided that a dormice nest search survey was to be undertaken.

Approximately 24m of hedge was surveyed on the 9th March 2026, by Dr Ryan Walker, CIEEM, CEnv, at the above site. The survey involved slowing inspecting all of the sections of hedge for dormouse nests within the structure of the hedge. This method follows national dormouse surveying guidelines as detailed by Bright et al. (2006)². This 24m stretch of hedge is dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and field maple *Acer campestre*.

The search did not reveal any dormouse nests. The results of this survey for dormice within the vicinity of the stretch of hedge proposed to be removed, did not reveal any evidence to suggest the presence of dormice. Therefore, no specific mitigation for dormice is necessary. However, native species hedges are National Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats due to their importance to biodiversity, therefore compensatory planting of mixed, native species hedge and/or planting of other native broad-leaved species will be undertaken within the proposed development (Fig. 1). To mitigate any potential impact to nesting birds hedge removal should only be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season March - August inclusive).

Kind regards,

Dr Ryan Walker CIEEM, CEnv

¹ The Ecology Co-op (2025) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Grainingfold Farmhouse, Horsham Road, Five Oaks, West Sussex, RH14 9AT

² Bright, P., Morris, P. and Mitchell-Jones (2006). The Dormouse Conservation Handbook, 2nd Edition. English Nature, Peterborough

Issue No	Issue Date	Additions/Alterations	Initials	Notes
1.0	10/03/2026	New Doc	RW	

