



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

Land North of Pressing Centre,
Nyetimber Estate, West Chiltington

A REPORT FOR NYETIMBER VINEYARD

This report provides an independent assessment of the habitats within the site and their relative ecological value, alongside a determination of likely constraints and opportunities for enhancement.

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Survey and assessment completed in
May 2026.

Table 0.1 - Document and Version Control

Author	Orlando Methuen-Campbell MCIEEM		
Site	Land North of Pressing Centre, Nyetimber Estate, West Chiltington		
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Copyright and guidance

This report has been written to provide an objective assessment of the ecological constraints and opportunities that were considered to be present at the site at the time the survey/s were conducted and, should be used solely for the purpose for which it was designed. The copyright must be considered to rest with Co-ecology Ltd whilst use of the report is for the commissioning party and their client only, unless with the express and written consent of Co-ecology Ltd.

The surveys and assessment have been drafted to be in accordance with the British Standard for Biodiversity BS42020:2013, Biodiversity - Code for planning and development and the Code of Professional Conduct published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental management.

N.B It must be noted that investigations of this sort provide only a snapshot in time of the ecological conditions of a site, are limited in extent and cannot capture the full picture of the biodiversity interests at the given location.

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1 Summary of Assessment

Co-ecology Ltd was commissioned by Nyetimber Vineyards to provide advice and support related to the proposed development of a new pressing centre at Nyetimber Vineyards, West Chiltington, West Sussex. The following points summarise the main results of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

- 1.1. The proposals comprise the development of a new pressing centre and associated hard and soft landscaping.
- 1.2. Arun Valley Ramsar Site, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located 3.28km southwest of the site, and The Mens SAC is located 7km north-west of the site.
- 1.3. There are two internationally designated sites within 10km of the site and five Sites of Special Scientific Interest within 5km of the site, the closest being Hurston Warren, 2.65km southwest. There is one Local Wildlife Site (LWS) within 2km of the site: Cattlestone Farm, 0.32km north.
- 1.4. Due to their distance from the site, the reasons for citation, and the nature of the proposals, no impact to the protected sites is predicted.
- 1.5. The data search from the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) for a radius of 2km returned a total of 2,793 records. 212 of these were bats, 2002 for notable birds and the remainder for other species and plants. There were 380 records for invasive non-native species, the majority of these being Canada geese.
- 1.6. There were two granted European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences within 2km of the development site boundary, both licences were granted for bats at adjacent locations 2km west of the site boundary.
- 1.7. A UK Habitats survey, habitat condition assessment and protected species assessment were carried out in May 2026 by an experienced ecologist from Co-ecology.
- 1.8. The site boundary measures approximately 0.67ha and was a flat uniform piece of land. It comprised a parcel of vineyard with a buffer of modified grassland to the north and south of a 4m stretch of species-rich native hedgerow. A small area of vegetated developed land was to the south of the hedgerow, leading to a paved access track to the road network.
- 1.9. The proposals will result in direct impacts to c1d7 Vineyard, g4 modified grassland, 4m of species-rich native hedge, and a small area of sparsely vegetated urban land. All other habitats around the site will remain unaffected.
- 1.10. **Bats:** The hedgerow provides a limited commuting and foraging corridor for bats within an otherwise low-quality site. There are no suitable roosting features within the site and therefore no impacts to roosting bats are anticipated. The proposed loss of hedgerow is minimal (approximately 4m), and larger canopy trees on either side are to be retained, ensuring that the commuting route remains functional and largely intact.
- 1.11. **Nesting birds:** The hedgerow habitat provides suitable nesting opportunities for common and widespread bird species. The remaining habitats are not suitable to nesting birds due to their intensive commercial management.

- 1.13. **Reptiles** - The modified grassland provides limited and sub-optimal habitat for reptiles due to its short sward and regular disturbance. While there is some low potential for reptiles to be present,

the site lacks the habitat diversity required to support notable populations. Works could result in a low risk of harm to individual animals, giving rise to a minor impact at the site level.

- 1.14. **Dormice** – The native hedgerow has low suitability to support dormice, and is connected to a network of hedgerows to the west. The proposals include a loss of 4m of hedgerow, however it has been proposed that the hedge loss is in an area that will retain adjacent trees, in turn keeping arboreal connectivity. Therefore, there is a chance that nesting dormice could be impacted, although the probability of this is low due to the short distance of hedge loss. There is no impact to arboreal connectivity for dormice.
- 1.15. Biodiversity enhancements onsite could include the creation of new native hedgerows on the development perimeter and the installation of bat and bird boxes on the new building.
- 1.16. A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment is being completed by the project ecologist in consultation with the design team for the scheme, and the results are presented separately.

2 Background

Overview of the commission and the proposals

- 2.1. Nyetimber Vineyards commissioned Co-ecology Ltd to provide advice and support relating to the proposed development at land north of the pressing centre, on land east of Broadford Bridge Road.
- 2.2. The proposals comprise the construction of a new pressing centre with associated hard and soft landscaping, including road access from the existing track to the south.
- 2.3. This report has been completed and comprises the following elements:
 - A data search with the local environmental records centre;
 - results of a survey of the on-site habitats following the UK Habitats Classification;
 - an assessment of the likely presence of legally protected species;
 - an evaluation of the relative nature conservation value of the site;
 - an initial assessment of likely impacts and opportunities;
 - recommendations for any further surveys or assessments that may be necessary.

Objectives of this appraisal

- 2.4. To use the process outlined above to determine the status and value of the habitats within the application site and any likely constraints to the proposals, and to provide an initial assessment of impact to any identified ecological receptors and measures to off-set those impacts and provide enhancements in line with national and local planning policies.
- 2.5. The primary objectives of this appraisal are to ensure that all impacts are correctly identified, to determine if any further surveys may be required, and to provide an outline of appropriate measures for mitigation, compensation and enhancement.

Site context

- 2.6. The site is approximately 0.67 hectares (ha) in area and comprises of an area of vineyard with a modified grassland buffer on both sides of a 4m length of species-rich native hedgerow. South of the hedgerow lies an area on sparsely vegetated urban land, with a hardstanding access track leading from the site to the road. National Grid Reference for the centre of the site is TQ 0959 1910.
- 2.7. The site is part of the wider Nyetimber Vineyard Site and is bordered on all aspects by vineyards. Habitats in the wider landscape include parcels of agricultural pasture, deciduous and ancient woodland, and mature hedgerows. The village of West Chiltington lies 0.75km to the south.
- 2.8. The wider surroundings consist of a rural landscape containing large areas of agricultural grassland with scattered patches of ancient and semi-natural woodland. The site is relatively well-connected to the wider landscape through a network of hedgerows.

Legislation and policy

- 2.9. The following pieces of legislation and National policy are relevant to this appraisal and have been used to inform this appraisal;
 - The Environment Act (2021);
 - Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
 - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;

- Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (as amended);
- The National Planning Policy Framework 2023;
- Biodiversity and geological conservation: circular 06/2005.

2.10. The following local policies are extracted from the Horsham District Planning Framework¹

- **Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity**

2.11. An extract of the key relevant sections of these policies is provided below whilst the full policies themselves are available online following the link provided in the footer.

2.12. **Policy 31:** *“Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and /or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks.”*

¹ [Horsham District Council Planning Framework](#)

3 Methodology

Personnel

- 3.1. The habitat survey, site appraisal and reporting were carried out by Orlando Methuen-Campbell MCIEEM. Orlando is an ecologist with eight years' commercial experience in quantitative field surveys and assessments, with expertise in habitats although primarily a specialist in the mitigation of impacts to legally protected species.

Contextual information and data records

- 3.2. Contextual information on the site was gathered from freely available online resources including a 2km search for habitats and species and a 10km search for protected sites using Magic Map hosted by Defra. Online aerial imagery was used to make an assessment of the site's position within the wider landscape including connectivity and potential corridors for movement. A 2km standard data search was commissioned from the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) and the most pertinent results are summarised in this report.

UK Habitats Classification Survey

- 3.3. The surveyor visited the site on 11th May 2026 and recorded all identifiable plant species with an indication of their relative abundance following the DAFOR² scale. The purpose of the survey was to complete a baseline habitat survey of the developable areas of the site using the UK Habitats Classification system. The UKHab-Professional system was used as reference with habitats assigned to either Level 3 or to Level 4 where applicable, the minimum mapping unit used was 25m² and all Secondary Codes were utilised where the relevant conditions pertained.

Protected Species Risk Assessment

- 3.4. This report provides an assessment of the likely presence of any legally³ protected or notable⁴ species based on the habitats present and the known affiliations of species with those habitats and their distribution across the UK. The assessment draws on the findings of the site visit, the contextual information, and any data records returned from the Local Environmental Records Centre during the desk study.

Evaluation

- 3.5. An assessment is provided as to the likely importance of the site judged by the habitats present and the species that have been confirmed or are likely to be present. This value is expressed at a geographic scale following criteria set out by CIEEM (2017) in their impact assessment guidance.

Constraints

- 3.6. The findings presented in this study represent those at the time of survey and reporting, and data collected from available sources. Ecological surveys by their nature are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals, such as time of year, migration patterns and behaviour.
- 3.7. The habitat survey was undertaken in May 2026 and consequently any plants with an earlier or later flowering phenology may have been missed or underreported. This report is not aimed at offering a concise list of all species present on site at any time of the year but as assessment of the habitats present on site.

² Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional, Rare

³ Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

⁴ Notable includes those listed as Priority Species under Section 41 (S41) of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act.

4 Results

Contextual information and biological records

- 4.1. Arun Valley Ramsar Site, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located within 3.8km southwest of the site and The Mens SAC is located 7.8km north-west of the site. Table 4.1 below, and Figure 4.1, shows the reason for citation and location of the internationally protected sites within 10km of the site, and the nationally important sites within 5km of the site.
- 4.2. The South Downs National Park is 2.8km southwest of the site, at its closest point.
- 4.3. The tables below set out the pertinent findings from the desk study and data search.

Table 4.1 Internationally protected sites notified for their nature conservation interest that lay within a 10km radius of the development site and nationally important sites within 5km

Type	Site	Reason for Citation	Distance and orientation
Ramsar, SAC, SPA	Arun Valley	<i>Arun Valley comprises an area of wet meadows on the floodplain of the River Arun between Pulborough and Amberley. The neutral wet grassland which is subject to winter, and occasional summer, flooding, and is dissected by a network of ditches which support a rich aquatic flora and invertebrate fauna. The area is of outstanding ornithological importance notably for wintering wildfowl. The site is a Site of Conservation Importance (SCI) for Little whirlpool ram's-horn snail Anisus vorticulus for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</i>	3.28km southwest
SAC	The Mens	<i>The Mens is an extensive area of mature beech Fagus sylvatica woodland rich in lichens, bryophytes, fungi and saproxylic invertebrates, and is one of the largest tracts of Atlantic acidophilous beech forests in the south-eastern part of the habitat's UK range. It is developing a near-natural high forest structure, in response to only limited silvicultural intervention over the 20th century, combined with the effects of natural events such as the 1987 great storm.</i>	7.6km northwest
SSSI	Hurston Warren	<i>Hurston Warren is an area of heathland on Lower Greensands and contains a range of habitats including woodland, wet and dry heath, open water and bog. The quaking bog which has developed over an old lake is regarded as one of the best examples of its type in the south east and contains several locally rare plants. Much of the remaining open heath is managed as a golf course. In the drier parts of the site acid grassland of common bent-grass Agrostis capillaris, wavy hair-grass Deschampsia flexuosa and Yorkshire fog grass Holcus lanatus is intermixed with dry heath of ling Calluna vulgaris and bell heather Erica cinerea. In wetter areas a wet heath community with ling, cross-leaved heath Erica tetralix, purple moor-grass Molinia caerulea, rushes Juncus species and sedges Carex species has developed.</i>	2.65km southwest
SSSI	Marehill Quarry	<i>This quarry is of great historical and stratigraphic interest for its Lower Greensand exposure.</i>	3.05km west
SSSI	Pulborough Brooks	<i>This site consists of a series of wet meadows on the floodplain of the River Arun between Pulborough and Greatham. The fields, which are subject to winter, and occasional summer flooding, are dissected by a network of wet ditches, several of which support a rich aquatic flora and invertebrate fauna. The area is of outstanding ornithological importance notably for wintering wildfowl and breeding waders.</i>	3.67km west

Table 4.1 Internationally protected sites notified for their nature conservation interest that lay within a 10km radius of the development site and nationally important sites within 5km

Type	Site	Reason for Citation	Distance and orientation
SSSI	Sullington Warren	<i>This site, which lies over Sandgate Beds and Lower Greensand, supports a range of heathland habitats including both wet and dry heath, grassland, scrub and woodland. The woodland carries a rich community of breeding birds. The area of heathland in Britain has declined in recent years largely as a result of agricultural improvement and the encroachment of woodland onto neglected heaths. On Sullington Warren the majority of the heathland is dry heath, but there is also a small area of wet heath which increases the species interest of the site. Several unusual plants and invertebrates are associated with these wet and dry heath communities. The remaining area on this site is comprised of scrub and bracken which forms dense stands in places; set natural woodland, which has a very varied age structure and composition, and two small areas of grassland, one of which is predominantly wet.</i>	4.25km south
SSSI	Parham Park	<i>Parham Park is a medieval deer park situated on Folkestone Sands at the foot of the South Downs. It has one of the richest epiphytic lichen floras in southeast England. In the northeast there is a relict lowland raised bog with adjacent alder carr. The site also contains a number of artificial ponds and ditches with marginal plant communities which add to its interest. This site is a locality for two rare beetles, and contains one of the largest heronries in Sussex. The southern half of the site is open woodland and parkland with individual and small groups of oak <i>Quercus robur</i>, beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> and Scot's pine <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> trees scattered over permanent pasture grazed by deer, sheep and cattle. In some areas bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> has invaded and is dominant</i>	4.34km southwest

- 4.4. The site lies on the edge of the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Hurston warren SSSI. However, the proposed development is unlikely to pose a risk to this SSSI due to the nature of the non-residential development and will therefore not require consultation with Natural England.
- 4.5. Table 4.2 below shows the Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within 2km of the development site and the reason for their citation.

Table 4.2 non-statutory sites designated for their nature conservation interest within a 2km radius of the development site

Type	Site	Reason for Citation	Distance and orientation
LWS	Cattlestone Farm	<i>The site encompasses five fields of pasture and meadow. The largest, southern pasture contains some interesting plants of wet grassland including Marsh Foxtail <i>Alopecurus geniculatus</i>, Sneezewort <i>Achillea ptarmica</i>, Marsh Thistle <i>Cirsium palustre</i> and rushes <i>Juncus</i> spp. An unusual feature of this pasture is a hummocky, waterlogged area which contains several bare ground species such as Marsh Cudweed <i>Gnaphalium uliginosum</i> and Common Swinecress <i>Coronopus squamatus</i>, but most notable is the Chamomile <i>Chamaemelum nobile</i> that grows on top of the hummocks and is rare in Sussex.</i>	0.32km north

- 4.6. The data search from the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) for a radius of 2km returned a total of 2,793 records - 212 of these were bats, 2002 for notable birds and the remainder for other species and plants. There were 380 records for invasive non-native species, the majority of these being bird species.
- 4.7. There are two granted EPSM licences within 2km of the development site boundary. Both licences were granted for bats at adjacent locations 2km west of the site boundary. One licence (2019-2029) included destruction of a breeding site and resting place for barbastelle, brown long-eared, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and serotine bats. The second licence (2010-2021) was granted for the destruction of a breeding site for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats.
- 4.8. 1km north-west of the site at the Nyetimber Manor Vinyard there was a mitigation licence obtained and enacted for a soprano pipistrelle maternity roost and occasional brown long-eared roost located in the manor house in 2005 and a nearby common pipistrelle roost in an adjacent office barn and temporarily disturbed by refurbishment, all roosts were and reinstated afterwards. Records exist also for Barbastelle record in an adjacent medieval barn along with pipistrelle day roosts all disturbed and reinstated under licence (Giles Coe, Pers comms).

Table 4.3. A summary of the most relevant⁵ records for legally protected and invasive species within a 2km radius of the development site since 2015

Status	Species	Number of records	Distance and orientation of nearest
Habs Regs Annex 2 & 4 WCA Schedule 5 Bern Appendix II	Bats Total	74	
	Serotine	2	
	Myotis	1	
	Noctule	3	
	Pipistrelle sp.	7	
	Common pipistrelle	29	2km west: common pipistrelle maternity roost 56+ individuals, soprano pipistrelle maternity roost 96+ individuals, serotine and BLE field observations
	Soprano Pipistrelle	18	
	Long eared sp.	5	1.8km east whiskered day roost
	Brown long eared	7	
	Whiskered	1	1.6km south, alcathe 1.6km field sighting
	Alcathe	1	
Habs Regs Annex 2 & 4 WCA Schedule 5 Bern Appendix II	Common pipistrelle maternity Soprano Pipistrelle maternity Brown long eared day roost Barbastelle foraging	4	1km north-west
WCA Schedule 5 NERC Act 2006 (Section 41)	Reptiles		
	Slow Worm	2	1.4m west – slow worm
	Grass snake	3	1.35km east – Grass snake
WCA Schedule 5 NERC Act 2006 (Section 41)	Water Vole	1	1.5km east (year 2000)
Habs Regs Annex 2 & 4	Hazel Dormouse	1	1.5km southwest

⁵ This excludes species for which there are no suitable supporting habitats on the site e.g duck species, wading birds and other coastal/aquatic specialist bird species.

Table 4.3. A summary of the most relevant⁵ records for legally protected and invasive species within a 2km radius of the development site since 2015

Status	Species	Number of records	Distance and orientation of nearest
WCA Schedule 5 NERC Act 2006 (Section 41) Bern Convention Appendix II			
WCA Schedule 1 Birds Directive Annex I NERC Act 2006 (Section 41) BoCC Bern Convention Appendix II	White tailed eagle Red kite Little ringed plover Black-tailed godwit Kingfisher Hobby Barn owl Firecrest	1 19 6 4 9 13 20 1	1.1km north 1.75km north 2km southeast 2km southeast 2km northeast 2km northeast 0.8km east 1.1km south-east
NERC Act 2006 (Section 41)	Turtle dove Cuckoo Lesser spotted woodpecker	35 46 7	1.13km south 1.85km southwest 2km east
UK priority	European Hedgehog	2	2.3km north
WCA Schedule 9	Invasive Non-native including: Marsh frog Wall cotoneaster Japanese knotweed Himalayan Balsam		1.7km east, marsh frog 1.63km southwest, wall cotoneaster 1.5km southwest, Japanese knotweed 1.9km west, Himalayan balsam 0.66km north, Giant Rhubarb The majority of the records were for Canada Goose and did not have specific locations.

4.10. The native hedgerow onsite qualifies as Species-Rich Priority Habitat due to its composition of over five native woody species in a 30m section.

4.11. There are several areas of priority habitat recorded within the surrounding landscape as shown within Figure 4.2. These include:

- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and deciduous woodland – 0.24km to the east;
- Traditional Orchard – 0.8km southeast.

Figure 4.1 – Statutory Protected Sites within 10km of development site

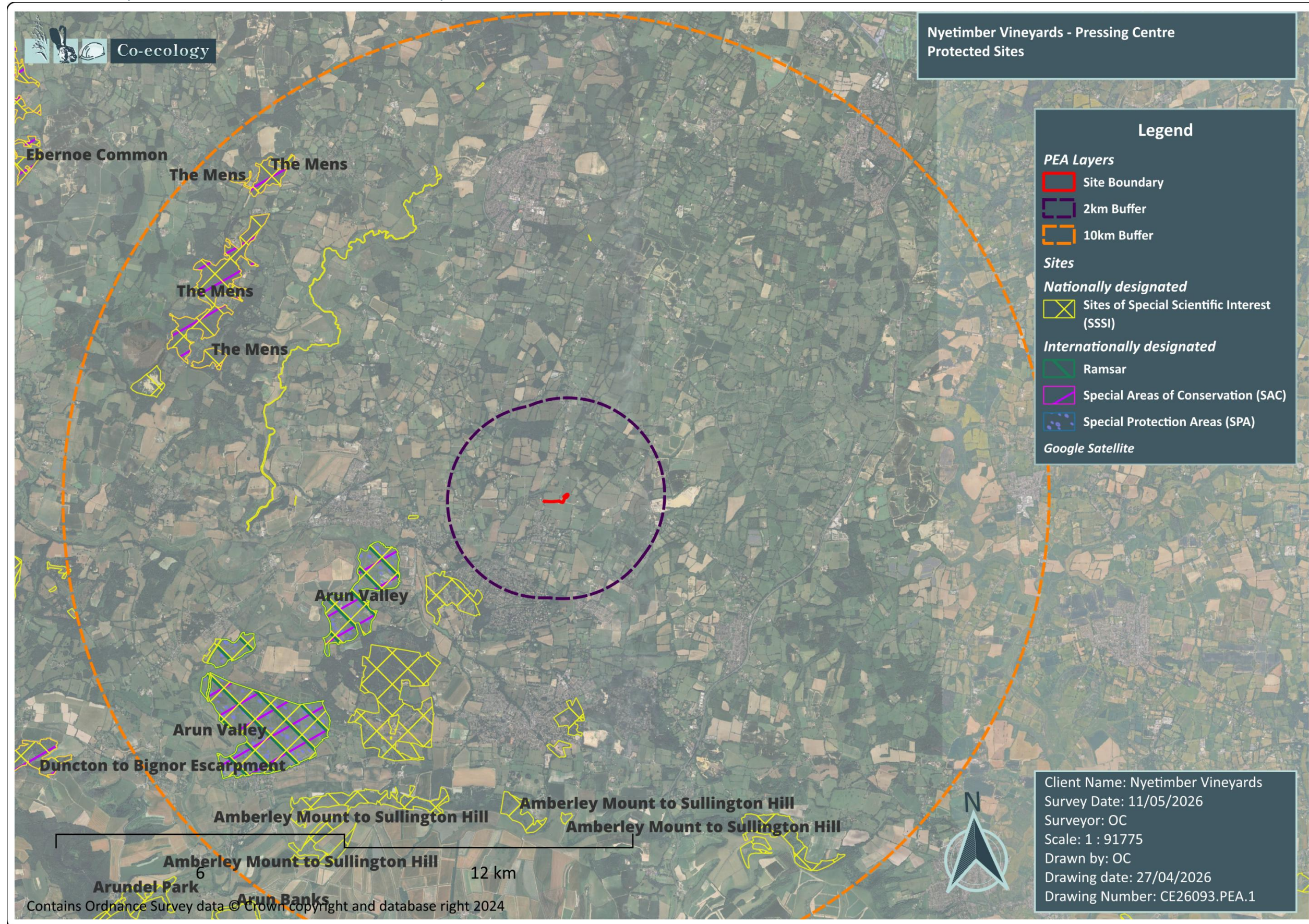


Figure 4.2 –Priority habitats within 2km of development site

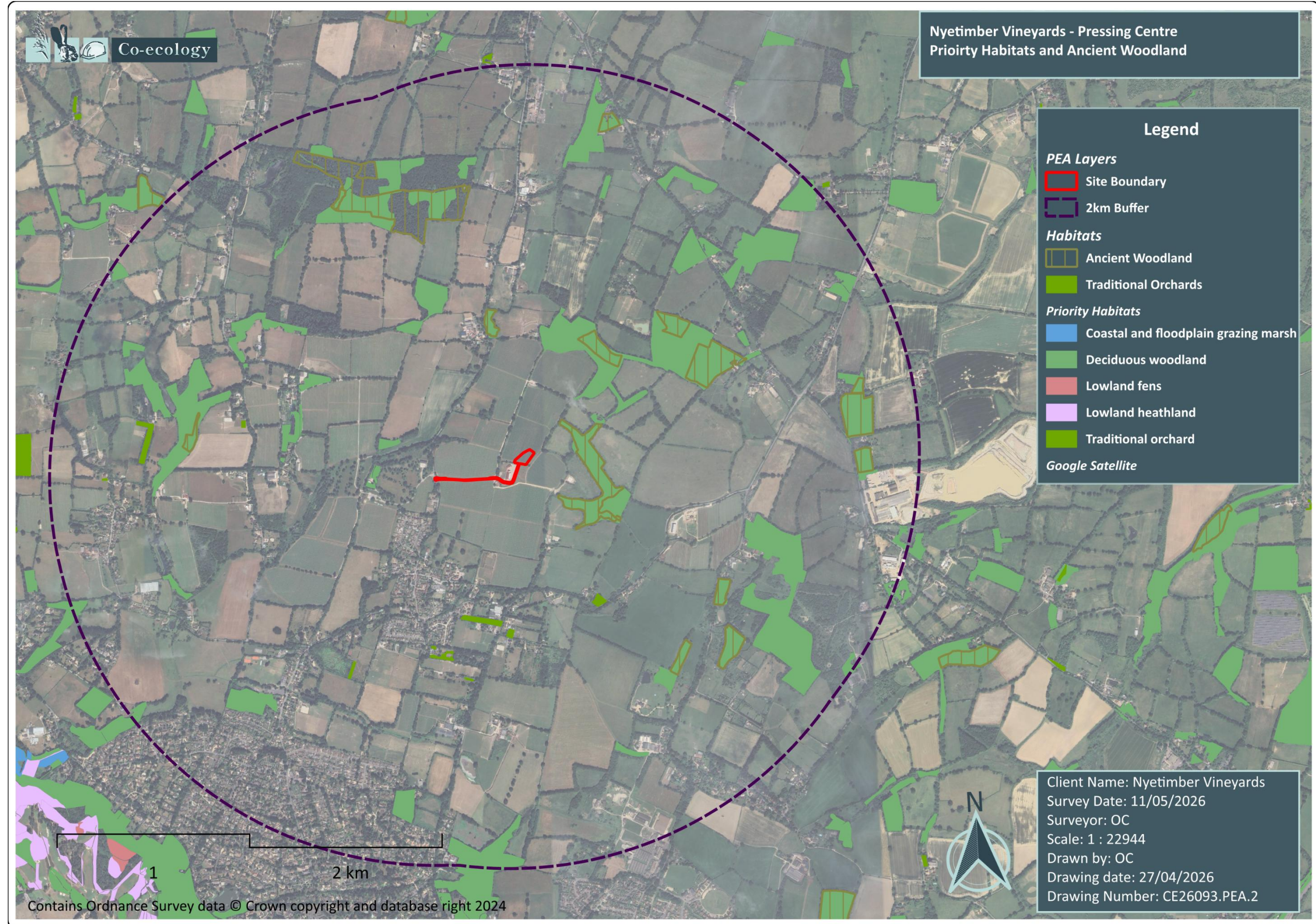


Table 4.4. The likelihood of occurrence of any legally protected species within the development site

Status	Species	Likelihood	Narrative
WCA Schedule 1	Breeding birds	Moderate	The hedgerow is likely used by breeding birds, however it is limited in extent. The remainder of the site is unsuitable for ground nesting.
Habs Regs Annex 2 WCA Schedule 5	Great crested newt	Negligible	There were no ponds within 250m of the site, and two ponds within 500m of the site, with the nearest being 380m north-east. The grassland onsite provides some suitable habitat for great crested newt in their terrestrial phase; however, this is limited due to the grazed short sward and regular disturbance from operational use. The use of the site as an operational vineyard, regular grassland management and agricultural spraying, combined with the absence of ponds within 250m of the boundary and absence of local records, indicate that the site is largely unsuitable for the species. No records were returned for this species.
Habs Regs Annex 2 WCA Schedule 5	Hazel dormouse	Low	The hedgerow onsite provided opportunities for dormice, however it lacked optimal species such as hazel or honeysuckle. There was connectivity to the west to a network of native hedgerows, however this did not continue to the east as the hedgerow ends adjacent to the site. It is considered there is a Low likelihood dormice could be using the hedgerow, however the impacts are relatively low and considered unlikely to impact dormice directly.
WCA Schedule 5	Reptiles	Low	The site provides some suitable habitat for reptiles in the grassland, however overall, the grassland on-site does not provide the complex mosaic of habitats reptiles require.
WCA Schedule 9	Invasive Non Native Species - Plants	Negligible	No INNS were recorded during the survey.

Evaluation

- 4.20. The site comprises predominantly low ecological value habitats, with the majority (0.36ha) consisting of intensively managed vineyard, offering limited structural diversity and low suitability for most wildlife. Areas of modified grassland are species-poor, short-sward and regularly disturbed, further reducing their ecological value, although they provide minor foraging opportunities for generalist species.
- 4.21. Small areas of sparsely vegetated land and sealed surfaces are of negligible ecological importance.
- 4.22. In contrast, the native hedgerow, although limited in extent within the site, is of higher ecological value. It qualifies as a species-rich Priority Habitat and provides some connectivity, as well as limited foraging and nesting opportunities for birds and commuting/foraging routes for bats. However, its short length within the site restricts its overall ecological contribution.
- 4.23. Protected species' use of the site is generally limited. Bats may use the hedgerow for commuting and foraging, but no roosting features are present. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The site offers negligible suitability for great crested newts and hazel dormice, and only low potential for reptiles due to the lack of habitat diversity and frequent disturbance. No invasive non-native plant species were identified.
- 4.24. Overall, the site is of low intrinsic ecological value, with the exception of the Priority hedgerow which represents the main ecological feature of note. On balance, the application site is of value at **Site level only**.

Ecological Receptors

- 4.25. Following on from the background studies and assessments of likely presence or absence the table below provides a summary of which receptors are carried forward from results to impact assessment and which are not.

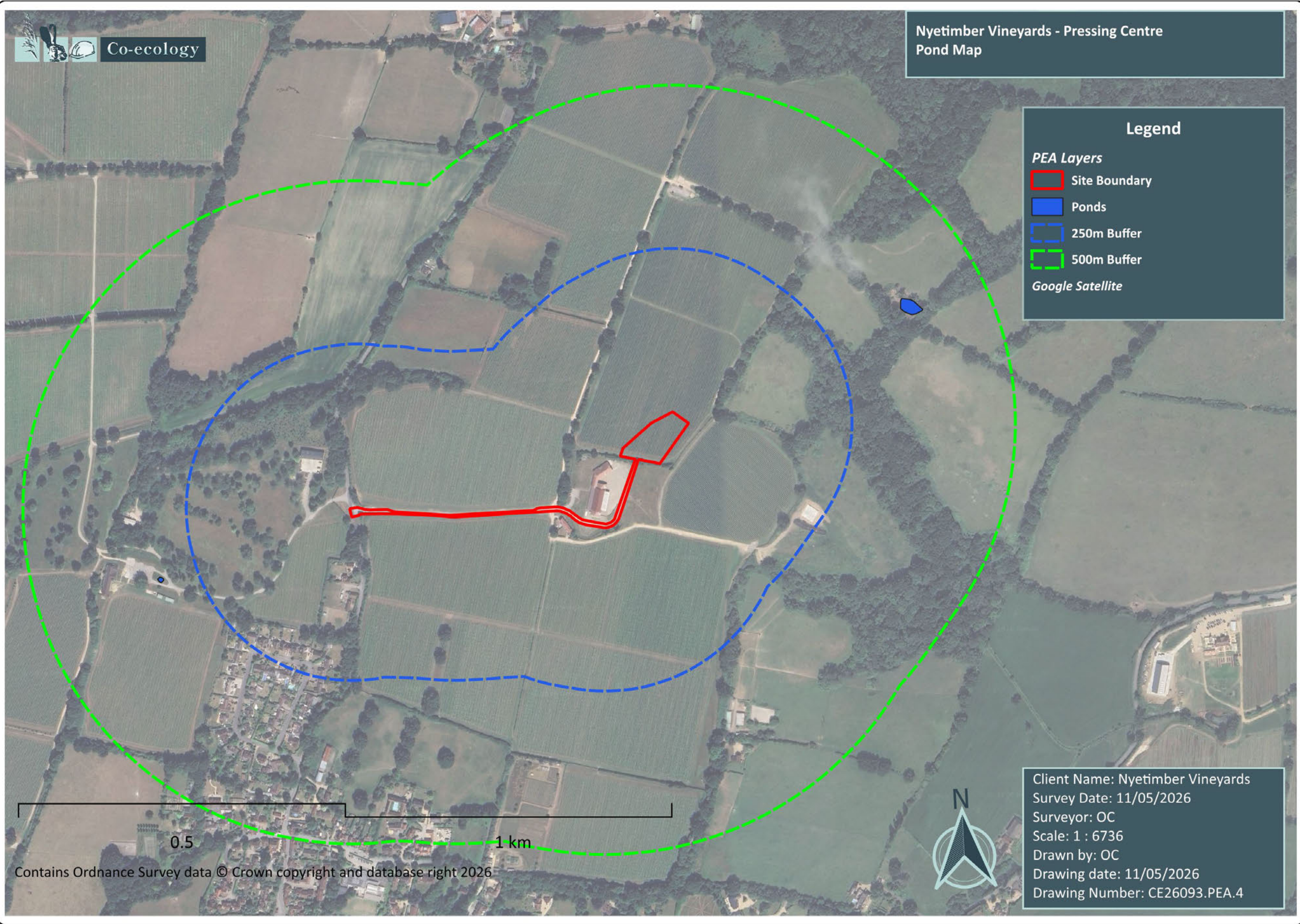
Table 4.5. Ecological Receptors considered further in this assessment

Receptor	Significance	Considered further
SAC/SPA	International	No
SSSI	National	No
LWS	County	No
Priority Habitats	N/A	No
Habitats	Site	Yes
Bats (Foraging only)	Site	Yes
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Breeding birds	Site	Yes
Great crested newt	N/A	No
Hazel dormouse	Site	Yes
Otter	N/A	No
Reptiles	Site	Yes
Water vole	N/A	No
Invasive Non-Native Species	N/A	No

Figure 4.3 - Habitat Map



Figure 4.4 – Pond Map



5 Impacts and Opportunities

Impacts

- 5.1. **Protected sites** – The site lies on the edge of the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Hurston warren SSSI. However, the proposed development is unlikely to pose a risk to this SSSI due to the nature of the small scale, non-residential development and will therefore not require consultation with Natural England.
- 5.2. While Arun Valley Ramsar Site, SPA and SAC is located within 3.8km southwest of the site and The Mens SAC is located 7.8km north-west of the site, the proposed works are not an urban development and overall, the proposals provide ecological enhancements to the area. Therefore, there are no perceived impacts to the protected sites.
- 5.3. When taking into account the reasons for their citation, the distance from the site, and likely absence of any supporting function from the on-site habitats, no direct construction led impacts from the proposals to the international sites or the SSSIs within the wider landscape are anticipated nor would there likely be any loss or disturbance of functionally linked land. As such, no further consultation with the local planning authority regarding the impacts of the proposed development is required.
- 5.4. Cattlestone farm LWS is located 0.32km north-east of the site. The site is cited for its wet grassland plant species. When taking into account the small size of the development, cited in an vinicultural environment and absence of an increase in net population, it is considered that the proposals will have a negligible impact on the LWS.
- 5.5. **Habitats** – The project design has been developed to minimise the impacts on the most important habitats, such as the hedgerows that intersect and surround the site by minimising the loss of hedgerow required and citing the loss towards the end of a hedgerows, causing minimal impact to ongoing connectivity. The remaining vineyard and modified grassland that the site comprises is of low ecological value.
- 5.6. **Protected species** – There are potential impacts from the proposals to foraging bats, breeding birds, [REDACTED] and reptiles.
 - **Bats** – The hedgerow provides a limited commuting and foraging corridor for bats within an otherwise low-quality site. There are no suitable roosting features within the site and therefore no impacts to roosting bats are anticipated. The proposed loss of hedgerow is minimal (approximately 4m), and larger canopy trees on either side are to be retained, ensuring that the commuting route remains functional and largely intact. However, the introduction of artificial lighting during construction or operation could disrupt commuting and foraging behaviour, particularly for light-sensitive species.
 - **Breeding birds** – The hedgerow offers some limited nesting habitat for breeding birds. Any removal or inappropriate timing of works to this feature could result in the loss or disturbance of active nests. The remainder of the site, including vineyard and short sward grassland, is largely unsuitable for nesting birds. Construction activities may also cause temporary disturbance to birds using adjacent habitats. Overall, this could result in a minor impact at the site level.
 - [REDACTED]
 - **Dormice** – The native hedgerow has suitability to support dormice, and is connected to a network of hedgerows to the west. The proposals include a loss of 4m of hedgerow, however it has been proposed that the hedge loss is in an area that will retain adjacent trees, in turn keeping arboreal connectivity. Therefore, there is a chance that nesting

dormice could be impacted, although the probability of this is low due to the short distance of hedge loss. There is no impact to arboreal connectivity for dormice.

- **Reptiles** - The modified grassland provides limited and sub-optimal habitat for reptiles due to its short sward and regular disturbance. While there is some low potential for reptiles to be present, the site lacks the habitat diversity required to support notable populations. Works could result in a low risk of harm to individual animals, giving rise to a minor impact at the site level.

Opportunities

5.7. Some measures could be implemented to improve the site's ecological value. These could include:

- Creation of new native hedgerows around the perimeter of the development;
- enhancement of existing retained hedge and creation of scrub pockets;
- alterations to the remaining retained grassland habitats to make them more diverse in species and with a variety of structure; and
- introduction of bat and bird boxes on the new building or nearby mature trees.

6 Recommendations

Recommendations

- 6.1. The proposals do not fit within a Biodiversity Net Gains (BNG) exemption, therefore, the development must deliver mandatory 10% BNG.
- 6.2. A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment is being completed by the project ecologist (OC) in consultation with the design team for the scheme, and the results are presented separately.

Recommendations for surveys prior to construction

- 6.3. No further surveys are required to facilitate the development.

Mitigation

- 6.4. **Habitats** - Retained hedgerows that surround the construction area should be protected during the construction phase with Heras fencing, or similar.
- 6.5. **Breeding birds** – The removal of any suitable nesting habitat should be removed between September and February (inclusive) outside of the bird breeding season. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken no more than 48 hours prior to the commencement of works by an experienced ecologist. All active nests will need to be protected and retained until the young have fledged.

- 6.7. **Bats** – All construction activities should be confined to daylight hours, with no artificial lighting to be used. As foraging bats are likely to utilise the hedgerow either side of the site, artificial lighting should be avoided during the construction phase, and any new lighting should follow current best practice guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and the Institute of Lighting Engineers (ILE).
- 6.8. **Dormice** – Prior to removal of the hedgerows, the area will be checked for dormice nests by a suitably experienced ecologist.
- 6.9. If works are undertaken during the dormouse hibernation period (October to April inclusive) the hedgerow clearance will undergo a two phase cut. The vegetation will be cut to approximately 30cm off the ground when it will then be inspected by a suitably experienced ecologist before being cut to ground level.
- 6.10. **Reptiles** – Modified grassland within the development area should be kept to a short sward prior to development to deter reptiles from using the site.

Habitat enhancement

- 6.11. Measures for habitat compensation and enhancement for individual species could include:
 - The enhancement of the retained grassland by increasing species and structural diversity;
 - The creation of new native hedgerow around the perimeter of the development; and
 - Introduction of new bat and bird boxes on the new building or nearby mature trees.
 - Installation of nearby log piles for reptiles.

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Photographs

Picture 1

View looking south into the area of hedgerow proposed to be lost (between the two retained trees).



Picture 2

View looking north across the proposed development site.



Picture 3

View looking north west across the site



Picture 4

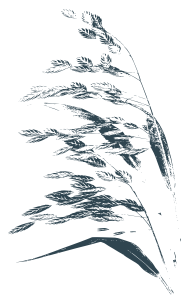
View of the site looking south over hardstanding access track.





Plant Species List

English name	Scientific name	G4	H2A
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>		F
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>		F
Broadleaf plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>	F	
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>		D
Couch grass	<i>Elymus repens</i>	O	
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	F	
Dog rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>		O
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>		F
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>		D
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>		O
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>		R
Mallow	<i>Malva sylvestris</i>		O
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	D	
Red clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	O	
Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	D	



Co-ecology