

Job Name: Land North of Little Slaughterford Chapel Road, Barns Green West Sussex
Date: 1st April 2026
Prepared By: Matt Pendry BSc (Hons) MCIEEM (Principal Ecologist)
Subject: Technical Response – Planning ref: DC/25/2057

Following submission of ecology and BNG documents in relation to the above site the Ecology Officer at Horsham District Council issued a response which included a holding objection in relation to the removal of more trees than accounted for in the original BNG assessment, and the need for further compensation due to potential impacts on a roosting feature for bats.

“It is noted within the Arboricultural Implications Assessment and Method Statement and associated Tree Protection Plan (Canopy Consultancy, 2025, drawing ref. 25-1907-TTP) that trees T80 and T81 will be removed to facilitate drainage works. However, there is no accompanying information pertaining to these trees, which is required to determine whether their losses need to be accounted for separately in the metric. Please can this information be sought.

Trees T80 and T81 are associated with the eastern boundary hedgerow. In accordance with the BNG user guidance (Page 60), only medium or larger trees within hedgerows need to be included in the baseline if being removed. T80 is a small tree and as such is not included. T81 however, is a medium tree. As such, this has now been accounted for in the latest version of the Metric (2026 Issue).

“The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and the BNG Feasibility Report (The Ecology Partnership, 2025) both mention a 20m buffer zone for ancient woodland, whereas other documents refer to 15m. Please can the correct buffer zone be confirmed.”

The buffer zone ranges from 15m to 20m, this wording has been amended in the updated BNG report.

“It is understood that the entirety of the eastern hedgerow, which is a priority habitat in good condition, is to be lost to facilitate the de-culverting of a watercourse, and for the watercourse to be opened on-site. The loss is regrettable, and therefore it is preferred to retain sections of this hedgerow where possible in line with the mitigation hierarchy. Note that the hedgerow loss may have landscape implications.”

Owing to site access, sightlines and the stream de-culverting there is no way that the hedgerow can be retained. In line with the mitigation hierarchy, options to explore part of the hedge were explored, but, ultimately it was not feasible. Further information relating to this is provided in the landscape response.

"It is recommended that a greater surrounding area of modified grassland is located around the LAP, to provide opportunity for informal recreational/sport play."

The LAP itself will be hardwearing grass and has been recorded as modified grassland. The area surrounding the LAP will be flowering lawns managed to a short sward height. These would be suitable for recreational play and are targeted no higher than "poor" condition. Whilst there may be slightly higher disturbance, appropriate management of the grassland and scarification and re-seeding of damaged areas in the spring will aim to ensure that the grassland does not degrade to modified grassland.

"It is noted that some of the gardens are within existing tree RPAs on the southern hedgerow. Methods to reduce impact on ancient woodland resulting from increased PROW use via an introduced footpath connection through the buffer zone are also proposed. Therefore, the HDC Arboricultural Officer should be consulted to comment on certainty of retention of these trees and impacts on irreplaceable habitat. If the HDC Arboricultural Officer deems that the ancient woodland would deteriorate because of the development, I request to be reconsulted to determine whether a compensation strategy is needed."

It is understood that the Arboricultural Officer is broadly in agreement with the approach to ancient woodland and their comments are being addressed by the arboricultural consultant.

"The other neutral grassland (wildflower grassland incl. SUDS) and mixed scrub needs to pass a minimum of 4 criterion (including Criterion A for ONG) to achieve moderate condition. Please can this be amended in Table 10, 12 and 14 of the BNG Feasibility Report"

Please see below extracts from the official Defra Habitat Condition Assessment Document ([Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments - July 2025](#)). This confirms that three passes is sufficient to achieve moderate condition in both other neutral grassland and mixed scrub.

Non-acid grassland types (Result out of 6 criteria)			
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.	Good (3)		
Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate (2)	Condition Assessment Result (out of 5 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor (1)	Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)
		Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)
		Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)

Figure 1. Other neutral grassland conditions assess (left) and scrub condition assessment (right)

Hopefully these comments help to address the concerns of the ecology officer and can be formally addressed through a Condition for the finalised detailed landscape design, Biodiversity Gain Plan and HMMP.

Kind regards

Matt Pendry BSc (Hons) MCIEEM