SOUTH COAST ECOLOGY

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| Client Name | Wickham and Knowle Parish Council |
| Site Name | Wickham Recreation Ground, Fareham Rd, Wickham, PO17 5BY |
| Report Title | Preliminary Ecological Appraisal |
| Date of Report | 06/02/2025 |
| Version | FINAL |
| Author | Tristanna Boxall BSc (Hons) MCIEEM |

**Summary**

South Coast Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Wickham and Knowle Parish Council to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the sport pavilion and immediate area. This was to ascertain the baseline ecological conditions to assess the likely impacts in the absence of mitigation relating to the proposed replacement of the pavilion. This assessment also provides appropriate recommendations to ensure proposals are in line with legislation and policy.

The PEA involved both a desk study and field survey. The site visit paid particular attention to the potential for roosting bats on site. It is considered the pavilion has negligible potential to support roosting bats.

This report provides the findings, further recommendations and appropriate mitigation and enhancements.

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

As defined by CIEEM a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) is the process of assessing the ecological features present, or potentially present, within a site and the zone of influence of any proposal(s). It comprises a desk study and a walkover survey.

South Coast Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Wickham and Knowle Parish Council to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at Wickham Recreation Ground in relation to the proposed demolition of the existing sports pavilion and subsequent replacement. The information gained during the assessment process has been collated and presented within this report.

### 1.2 Aim

The aim of this PEA is to:

- identify the habitats on site and record species encountered,
- classify suitability for legally protected and/or notable species,
- identify likely ecological constraints associated with a project,
- identify any mitigation measures likely to be required,
- identify any additional surveys that may be required, and
- identify the opportunities to deliver ecological enhancement.

### 1.3 Objective

The overall objective of this PEA is to ensure proposals are in line with local and national policy and legislation (**Appendix I**), resulting in a net gain for biodiversity.

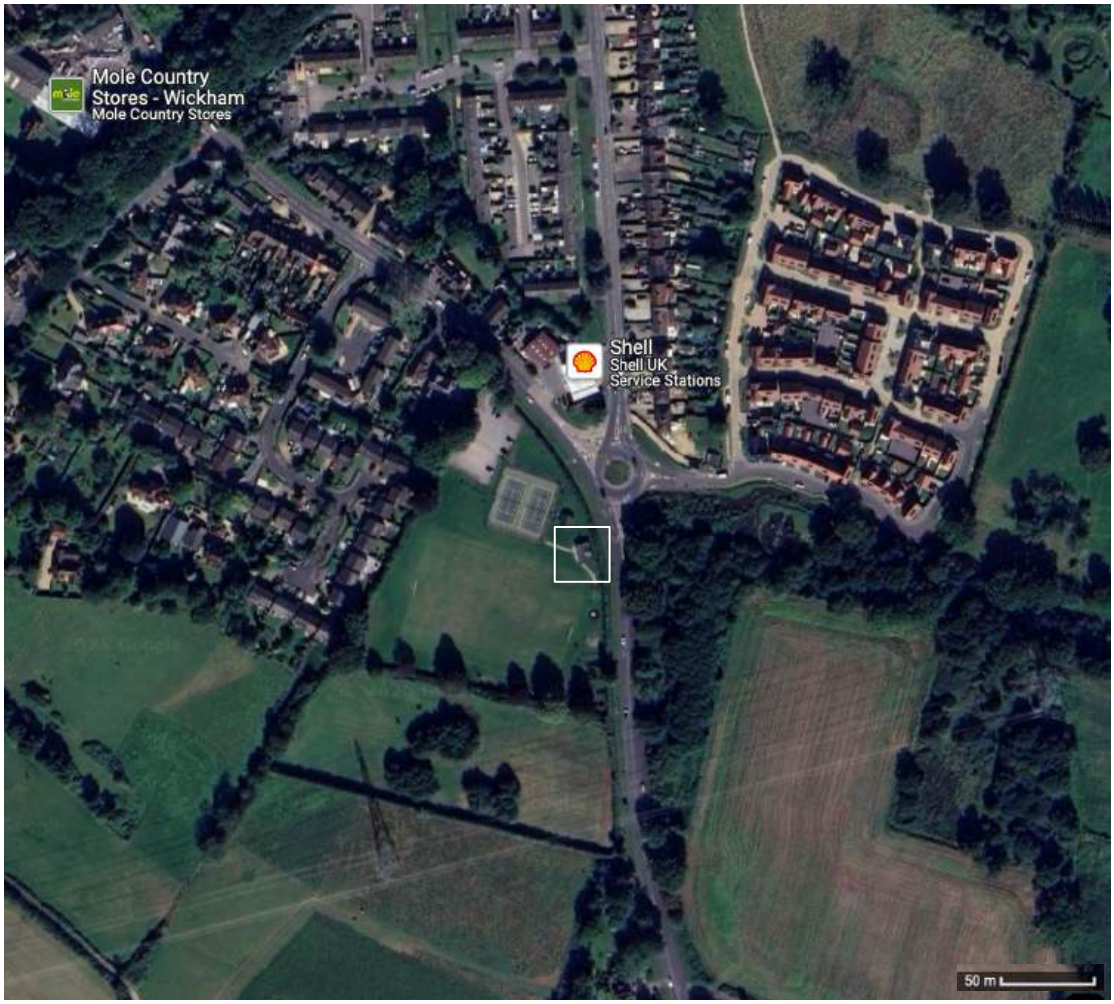
### 1.4 Report Lifespan

This report will remain valid for 18 months after the execution of the site visit (February 2025). After this point an updating site visit will be required by a professional ecologist to ensure the findings and recommendations remain in line with the status of the site (CIEEM, 2019).

### 1.5 Site Description

The site is located within Wickham Recreation Ground, Fareham Road, Wickham, PO17 5BY (central grid reference SU 57486 10963) (**Figure 1**). Fareham Road runs along the northeastern boundary with the sports field to the south and west. The wider area is a mixture of a rural characteristics, consisting of agricultural land, woodland and hedgerow networks and also residential development with the settlement of Wickham to the north and Knowle to the west.

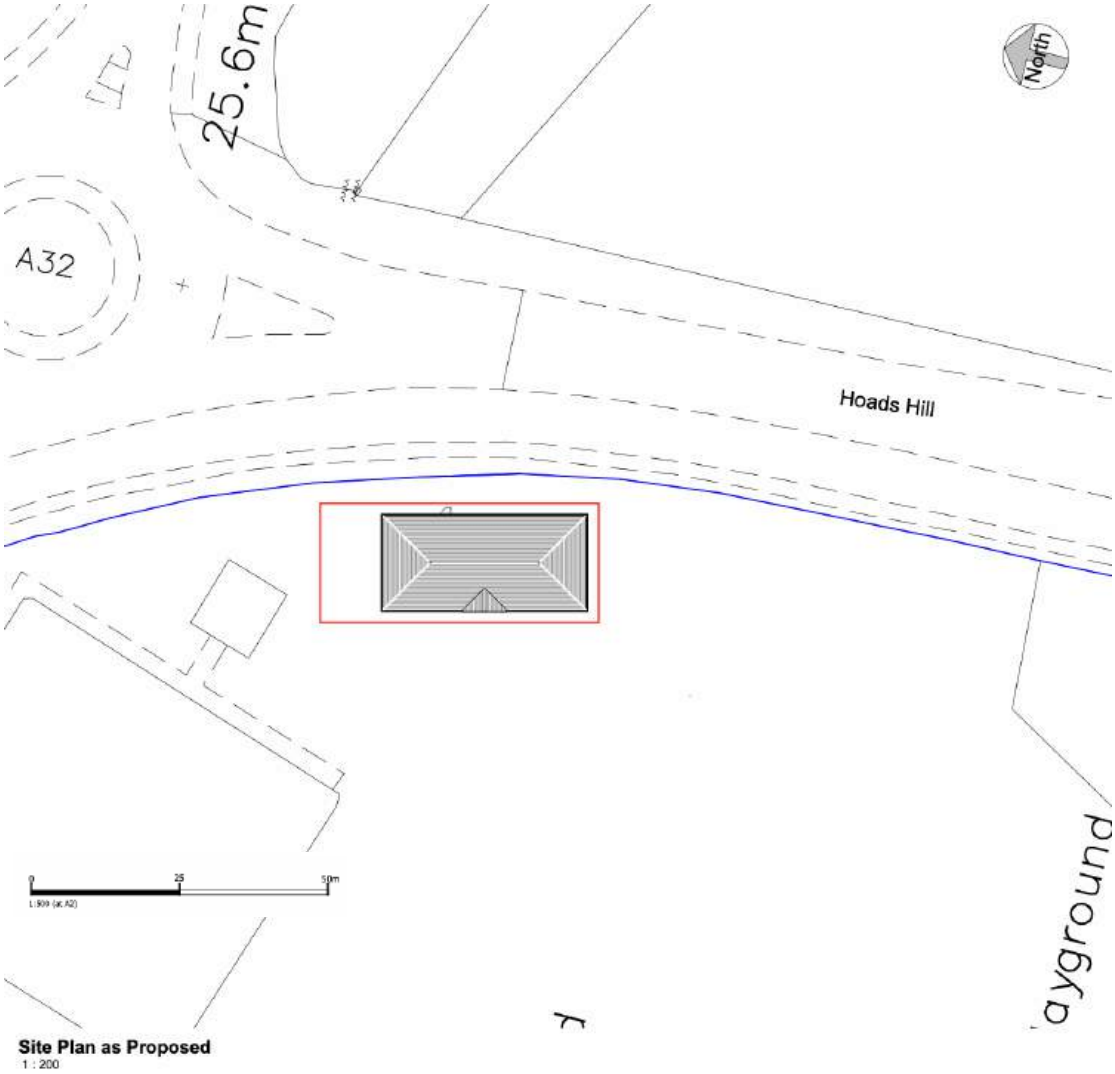
**Figure 1.** Location of site (GoogleMaps, 2024).




### 1.6 Proposals

The proposals involve the demolition of the existing pavilion and subsequent replacement (**Figure 2**).

**Figure 2.** Proposals.



## 2.0 Methodology

The survey work was undertaken by Tristanna Boxall BSc (Hons) MCIEEM Senior Ecologist (Natural England license Class Level 1 for GCN and Dormice and Class Level 2 for bats) with 12 years experience.

## 2.1 Desk Study

### *2.1.1 Site Information*

A search utilising the online planning portal of the relevant planning authority was undertaken to identify any local ecological issues that have been raised. In addition, web-based aerial photos and Ordnance Survey maps were utilized to gather initial information about the site and surrounding area, giving an indication of the type of habitats and species likely to be present. This included a search for water bodies within 500m of the site.

### *2.1.2 Designated Site Information*

A search for designated nature conservation sites within the zone of influence of the project was undertaken using online resources. The location of each designated site, distance from the redline boundary, connectivity to the project site and reason(s) for designation were recorded.

### *2.1.3 Species Records*

A search for granted licenses was undertaken. This allows an assessment of the likelihood of such species being present on site and/or being impacted directly or indirectly by proposals. This informs whether further survey effort will be required.

### *2.1.4 Habitat Information*

Existing information on the habitat types within the site boundary and the surrounding area was gained via the use of online resources.

## 2.2 Habitat Classification

This took place on 4th February 2025. Weather conditions consisted of temperatures of 6°C, 100% cloud cover and no wind or precipitation. The habitats present were recorded along with species encountered. UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) methodology was utilised. The UKHab hierarchical system identifies primary habitat types with secondary codes linked to each.

The five levels in the hierarchy, moving in increasing detail from Level 1 to Level 5:
Level 1 – Terrestrial, Freshwater and Marine.
Level 2 – Ecosystem types.
Level 3 – Broad Habitats, based on Biodiversity Broad Habitats of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Level 4 includes Priority Habitats identified through the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
Level 5 includes Annex 1 Habitats (EU Habitats Directive, 1992).

A thorough and systematic search for evidence of legally protected and notable species was undertaken whilst on site. The habitats were assessed as to their potential to support such species.

**2.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment (Day Time Bat Walkover)**

The purpose of this aspect of the survey was to observe, assess and record any habitats suitable for bats too roost, commute and forage. The assessment of the pavilion to support roosting bats was undertaken by Tristanna Boxall BSc (Hons) Class Level 2 Natural England License holder.

The survey consisted of a thorough search of the externals of the pavilion for features likely to support a roost. A high-powered torch and binoculars were used for this. Access was also gained into the loft void. A search for evidence of bats (i.e. droppings, feeding remains, urine staining etc) took place. A general assessment of the internals to supporting bats was also undertaken.

The survey methodology was in line with best practise guidelines (Collins, J. ed. 2023).

**2.4 Impact Assessment**

*2.4.1 Valuation*

As part of this assessment Ecological receptors have been assigned importance in terms of biodiversity conservation value on a geographic scale. Value is assigned based on legal protection and national and local biodiversity policy:

- International and European
- National
- Regional
- County
- Local
- Site

*2.4.2 Magnitude of Effect*

The magnitude of effect represents the degree of change in an ecological receptor. These are either temporary or permanent, direct or indirect and adverse or beneficial.

*2.4.3 Significance of Effect*

This combines the above factors to determine the significance of effects. Impacts are categorised as Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible.

**2.5 Limitations**

The survey was undertaken outside of the optimum season for Biodiversity Net Gain Condition assessments however given the habitat type (modified grassland) and the ongoing management due to recreational use this is not considered likely to have negatively impacted the results.

Due to the restricted height of the void, it was not possible to gain full access however, via the use of a high-powered torch a thorough search from the hatch was able to take place with the insulation providing a canvas on which it was considered droppings would have been visible if present. Given the general negligible potential for roosting bats, this was not considered a significant limitation

The survey represents the site at the time of survey. Lack of evidence of a particular species does not confirm absence. Similarly, species may take up residence and/or begin to utilize the site and/or area impact following the completion of the survey.

This survey does not constitute a full site assessment for invasive species, such as Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).

## 3.0 Results

### 3.1 Desk Study

*3.1.1 Water bodies*

Four ponds were identified within 500m of the site however the A32 acts as a significant dispersal barrier and therefore no further assessment was considered necessary.

*3.1.2 Designated Site Information*

No statutory designated sites were identified on site or within 2km.

*3.1.3 Species Records*

EPS license returns relating to Common and Soprano Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared bats were identified within 2km of the site.

*3.1.4 Habitat Information*

No priority habitat was recorded on or adjacent to site.

### 3.2 Habitat Classification

*Buildings (u1b5)*

The key feature on site was the pavilion itself (**Figure 3**).

**Figure 3.** Front elevation of the pavilion (February, 2024).

*Developed land; sealed surface (u1b)*
There is a small area of concrete hardstanding at the front of the pavilion (evident in **Figure 4**).

*Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (u1c)*
A gravel path also runs from through the redline boundary (also visible in **Figure 4**).

*Modified grassland (g4)*
The area surrounding the pavilion consists of managed modified grassland (**Figure 5**). Species recorded included Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and Cat's ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*).

**Figure 5.** Proposed location of native trees (February, 2025).

*Native Hedgerow (h2a)*
A Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) hedgerow runs parallel to the site but outside the redline boundary (evident in **Figure 5** above).

No evidence of Badgers was recorded during the survey.

### 3.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment (Day Time Bat Walkover)

The pavilion consists of a brick base and timber frame. The externals are covered in tongue and grove cladding with bitumen roofing felt on the roof. The

structure was considered to be in a relatively good state of repair. The majority of the cladding was tightly sealed with the only gaps noted in the bottom four lengths on the left-hand side of the front elevation (south) and rear corner (southeast). These gaps were easily visually accessible and were discounted as potential roost features given a lack of crevice opportunities behind and obstructed access into the internals. The soffits were also found to be tightly sealed.

During the internal assessment, no daylight was seen entering the void (apart from through a vent which was considered highly unlikely to facilitate bat access) supporting the conclusion that the construction materials were well sealed and thus entrance into the void unlikely. Similarly, no evidence of bats was noted.

It is considered the pavilion has negligible potential to support roosting bats.

## 4.0 Evaluation

### 4.1 Assessment of the likely importance of the habitats present

The habitats within the area of impact are considered to be limited to site value due to the lack of recorded floral diversity. Although outside the area of impact, the hedgerow has potential to support nesting birds and forms part of the wider hedgerow network and is considered to be of local value.

### 4.2 Assessment of the likely presence of protected and priority species

It is considered likely notable and/or legally protected species may well commute and/or forage over or through the site (i.e. bats and Hedgehogs). However, no habitats within the redline boundary are considered likely to support roosting, nesting or places of shelter.

### 4.3 Likely Impacts in the Absence of Mitigation

*4.3.1 During Works (Habitats)*

Works taking place adjacent to the hedgerow have potential to negatively impact through root compaction or severance. Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, works have potential for permanent, adverse impact at local level.

*4.3.2 During Works (Wildlife)*

There is a risk that animals (such as Hedgehogs) could become trapped and therefore harmed or injured by falling into trenches and/or excavations during the construction of the new pavilion. Therefore, works have potential for moderate, adverse impacts at site level.

*4.3.5 Once Operational*

Any increases in lighting has potential to result in a negative impact on nocturnal wildlife at site level.

## 5.0 Recommendations

### 5.1 Bats

*5.1.1 Lighting*
There will be no additional lighting on site.

*5.1.2 Bat Roost Feature*
It is recommended that a Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box is attached to the external of the pavilion once constructed as high as possible on the southern gable. This bat box is made from woodstone (concrete and wood fibres) providing stable temperatures and is long-lasting. It is considered suitable for crevice dwelling bats such as Common and Soprano pipistrelle.

### 5.2 Badgers and Hedgehogs
During the construction phase, escape ladders should be used to prevent animals from becoming trapped in any open excavations left overnight.

### 5.3 Hedgerow
The hedgerow adjacent to proposals should be fenced with heras fencing, or similar, during construction the ensure works avoid damaging the root systems. This should be installed prior to works getting underway on site.

### 5.4 Native Planting
Three small trees will be planted on site. Either Willow, Beech, Ash, Elm, Birch, Hawthorn, Holly, Elder, Hazel and Rowan should be utilised as they provide fruit for small mammals and birds, will attract invertebrates and as they mature the trees have potential to support roosting bats. (Gunnel et al. 2012).

## 6.0 Conclusion

It is considered the pavilion has negligible potential to support roosting bats and the area of impact is considered to be limited in terms of ecological value. Ecological enhancements have been included within this report to result in an increased biodiversity value including a bat box and native planting.

## 7.0 References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## APPENDIX I – Legislation and Policy

### Legislation

*The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)*

The primary legislation by which biodiversity if protected within the UK. Protected fauna and flora are listed under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. They include all species of bats, making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat whilst it is occupying a roost or to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost. Similarly, this Act makes it an offence to kill or injure any species of British reptiles and also makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to take, damage or destroy their eggs and nests (whilst in use or being built).

The Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) states that it is an offence to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild' any plant listed in Schedule 9 art II of the Act. This list over 30 plants including Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Parrots Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*).

*The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)*

This Act strengthens the Wildlife & Countryside Act by the addition of "reckless" offences in certain circumstances, such as where there is the likelihood of protected species being present. The Act places a duty on Government Ministers and Departments to conserve biological diversity and provides police with stronger powers relating to wildlife crimes.

*Protection of Badgers Act (1992)*
This relates to the welfare of Badgers (*Meles meles*) as opposed to nature conservation considerations. The Act prevents the wilful killing, injury, ill treatment or taking of Badgers and / or interference, damage to or destroying a Badger sett and disturbing a Badger while it is occupying a sett including causing a dog to enter a set.

*Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)*

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires that public bodies have due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. This means that Planning authorities must consider biodiversity when planning or undertaking activities. Section 41 of the Act lists species found in England which were identified as requiring action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the *UK Post – 2010 Biodiversity Framework.*

*The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)*

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the “Habitats Regulations 2017”) consolidate and update the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the “Habitats Regulations 2010”).

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 transposed the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into UK domestic law. It provides protection for sites and species deemed to be of conservation importance across Europe.

It is an offence to deliberately capture, kill or injure species listed in Schedule 2 or to damage or destroy their breeding sites or shelter. It is also illegal to deliberately disturb these species in such a way that is likely to significantly impact on the local distribution or abundance or affect their ability to survive, breed and rear or nurture their young.

**Schedule 2 - European Protected Species (animals)**

| **Common name** | ***Scientific name*** |
|---|---|
| Bats (all species) | Vespertilionidae |
| Eurasian Beaver | Castor fiber |
| Large Blue Butterfly | Maculinea arion |
| Wild Cat | Felis silvestris |
| Dolphins, porpoises and whales (all species) | Cetacea |
| Dormouse | Muscardinus avellanarius |
| Pool Frog | Rana lessonae |
| Sand Lizard | Lacerta agilis |
| Fisher's Estuarine Moth | Gortyna borelii lunata |
| Great Crested Newt | Triturus cristatus |
| Common Otter | Lutra lutra |
| Lesser Whirlpool Ram's-horn Snail | Anisus vorticulus |
| Smooth Snake | Coronella austriaca |
| Sturgeon | Acipenser sturio |
| Natterjack Toad | Bufo calamita |

| | |
|---|---|
| Marine Turtles | Caretta caretta<br>Chelonia mydas<br>Lepidochelys kempii<br>Eretmochelys imbricata<br>Dermochelys coriacea |

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (EU Exit) made changes upon the UK's exit from the European Union (EU). These include The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This legislation ensures the existing protections of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 continue.

*The Environment Act (2021)*

The Environment Act 2021includes the protection of water quality, clean air and biodiversity. Part 6 of The Environment Act relates to nature and biodiversity. This section makes provision for biodiversity net gain. The legislation specifies biodiversity enhancement and includes a requirement for authorities to publish biodiversity reports including local nature recovery strategies.

Within England, the legislation also provides Natural England with the power to publish 'species conservation strategies' and 'protected site strategies' to identify activities that may affect a species or site's status and outline their opinions on measures that would be appropriate to avoid, mitigate or compensate any adverse impacts.

**Policy**

*National*

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

Chapter 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity, the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

The NPPF states that plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and that the scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

To protect and enhance biodiversity plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation and promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

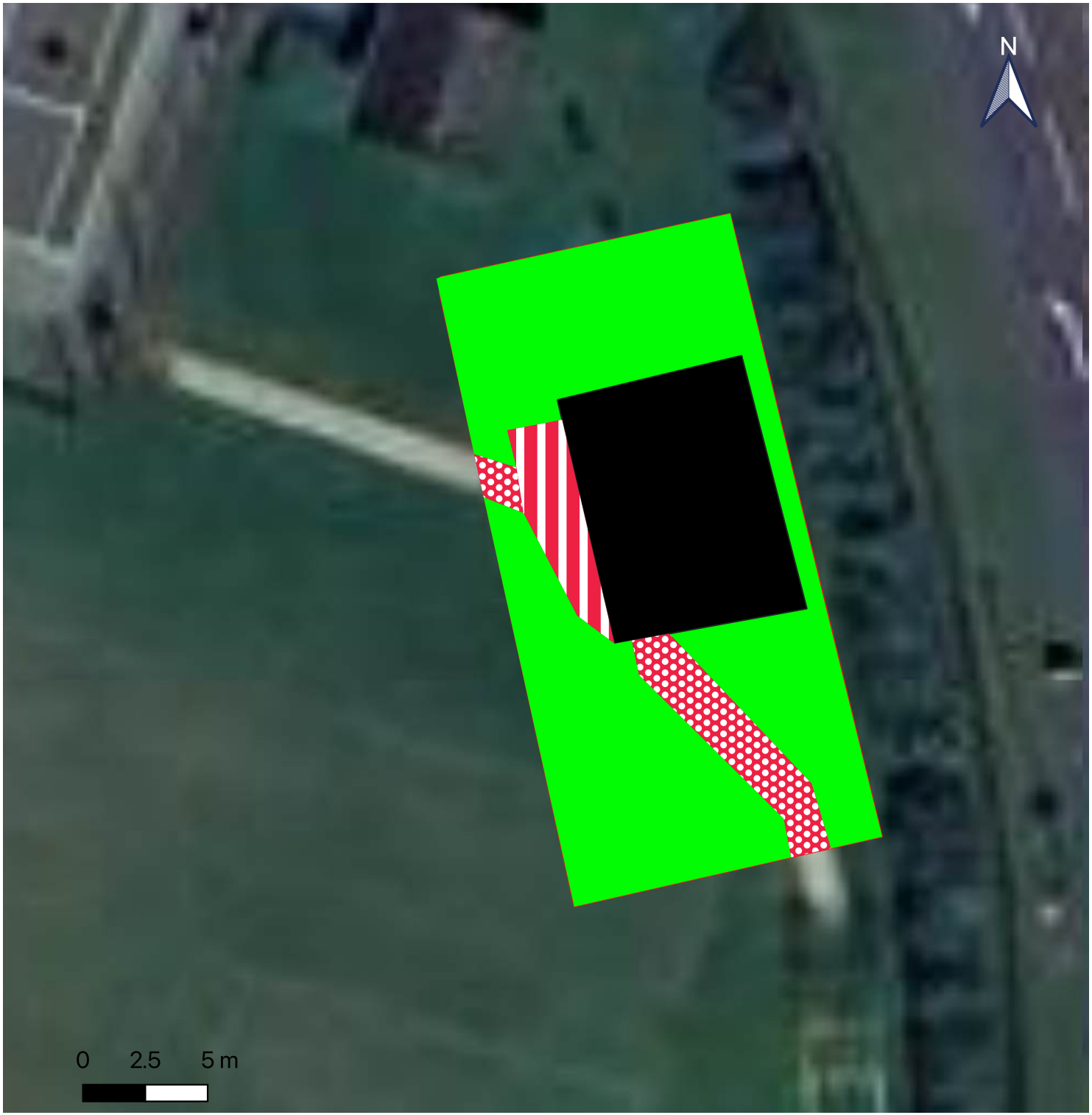
The NPPF states determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

b) development on land within or outside a SSSI, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of SSSI;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists;

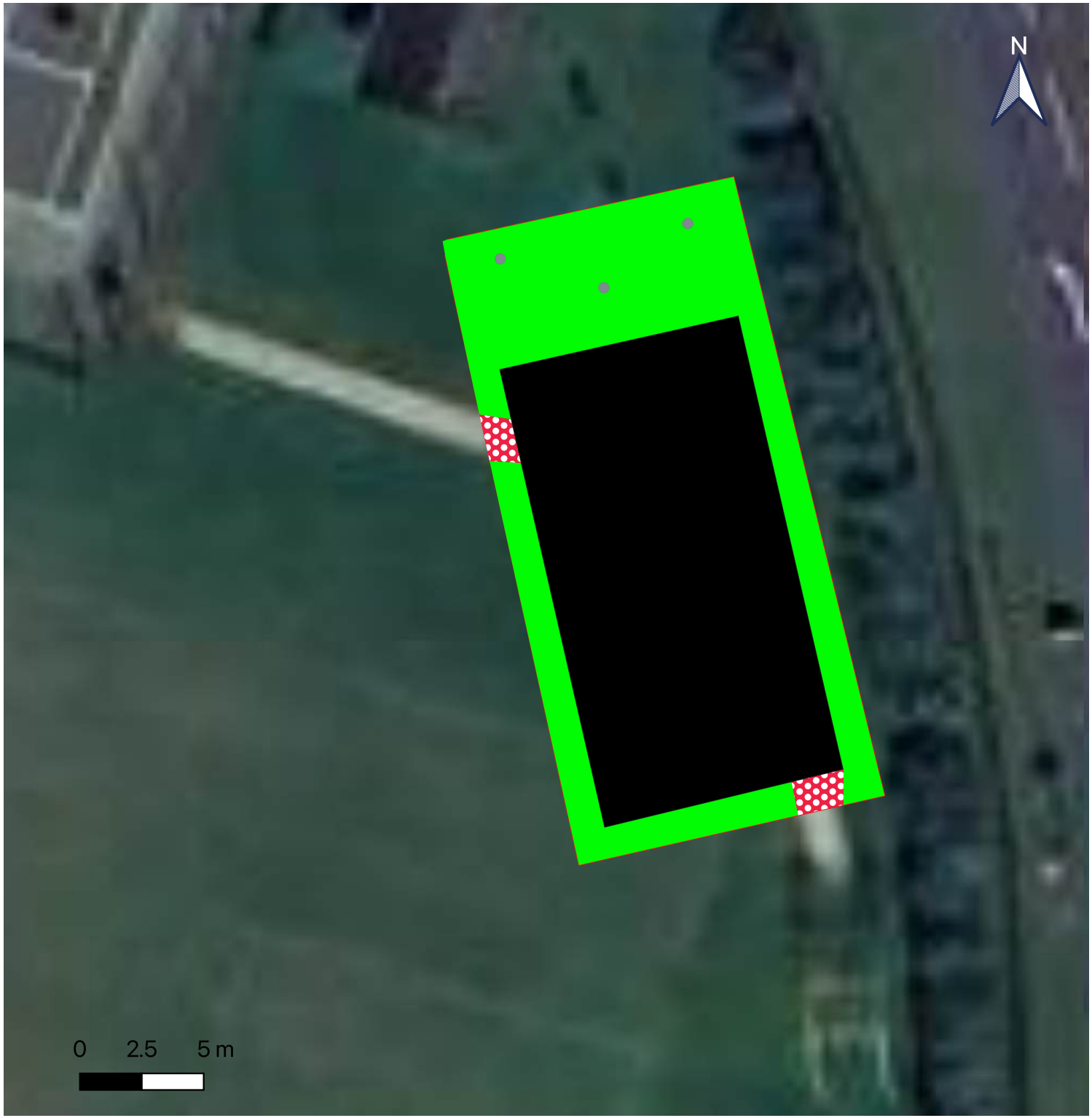
d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.




## Legend

- Modified Grassland
- Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface
- Building
- Developed Land, Sealed Surface
- Redline Boundary

| | |
|---|---|
| **Map** | Pre-Development Habitats |
| **Site** | Wickham Recreation Ground |
| **Client** | Wickham Parish Council |
| **Date** | 04/02/2025 |




## Legend

- Newly Planted Native Trees
- Modified Grassland
- Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface
- Building
- Redline Boundary

| | |
|---|---|
| **Map** | Post Development Habitats |
| **Site** | Wickham Recreation Ground |
| **Client** | Wickham Parish Council |
| **Date** | 04/02/2025 |