

# Ecology Report

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## Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris

### Summary

The site is improved agricultural land.

The site is poor in biodiversity,

No protected badgers or barn owls were found on site.

A protected ca. 450 year old hedgerow is present on site.

Overall the site is of low nature conservation interest.

There are two habitats on site, a) open field and b) hedgerows.

There are no bodies of water on site. The majority of the site is improved agricultural land. The site is part of a large field that is also improved agricultural land.

### Hedgerows

The site is edged by a hedgerow abutting the roadside. A 'hedgerow-dating' was carried out on the roadside hedge and it was found to be in the region of 450 years old. All hedgerows like this are protected via The Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

### Protected Species

#### Mammals

There was no evidence of badger on site.

Dormice were considered as there is a small amount of *Corylus* in the main hedgerow, but the habitat is not right (there is no woodland), and there is no *Lonicera* sp. which is a typical species much used by dormice. Because of the lack of suitable habitat and species, dormice were ruled out.

Bats were considered, but the absence of any buildings or old trees that could have been used for summer or winter roosts, indicated that bats would not be an issue here.

Bats are very likely to be in the locality and to fly over the field on their nocturnal forays but there is nowhere that they would roost on site.

#### Reptiles

The field is under agriculture, and having been managed in the past for agriculture, it is not in a very suitable condition for supporting reptiles. Some deposited debris near the gate entrance was

checked for reptiles, but none was found. It was thought unlikely that reptiles would be present on site.

### **Amphibians (newts, frogs, toads)**

The site does not have any ditches or water bodies that would support amphibian breeding.

### **Birds**

All bird species are protected by UK law, and nine species were seen on the site visit. One is red listed by the RSPB (Skylark) and another is amber listed (Blackbird). Skylark is also a Biodiversity Action Plan species.

### **Invertebrates**

A few species typical of field edge and waysides were found on this survey, and they included four species of butterfly (those whose larvae feed on nettles and grass) Small tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Meadow Brown and Large Skipper.

### **Wild Flowers (exc. Trees)**

The range of over 20 species of wildflower represented those typical found in fields margins and hedgerow wildflowers. None of the species found is protected by UK law.

### **Trees**

There are no trees in the main part of the proposed development site.

There are a number of small developing trees within the hedgerow, namely *Fraxinus* sp. and *Crataegus* sp.

### **Recommendations**

Need to be aware that skylark may breed on site, so a check needs to be done prior to any grading of the site.

Need to apply best practice with regard to any removal of hedgerow in widening the existing hedgerow.

Need to enhance the site by planting native species of local provenance as part of the landscaping, to compensate for the loss of habitat with the construction of the units.

Need to restore that part of the hedgerow that is missing with species that are already present in the rest of the hedgerow (i.e. *Fraxinus*, *Corylus*, *Prunus spinosa*).