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Report prepared for: Mr Joshi

For the Site of: 2 Snailswell Lane, Ickleford, Herts SG5 3TP

Version:	Written by:	Checked by:	Final:
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Final	Julian Newman 28/11/2025	Heather Stuckey 02/12/2025	Julian Newman 03/12/2025

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Ecological reports are limited in shelf life, usually 12 to 18 months for baseline surveys and for BNG as and when plans change. Information is believed to be accurate at the time of the survey; recommendations are made without bias based on good practice guidelines within the industry. However, species presence and ecological parameters can change over time.

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Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)/Biological Impact Assessment (BIA)

0.0 Non-Technical Summary

0.1 Background

The client commissioned Cherryfield Ecology to undertake a Biodiversity Net gain (BNG)/Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) for the site of 2 Snailswell Lane, Ickleford, Herts SG5 3TP to determine the biological impact of the proposed development.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than it was before. The process relies on the mitigation hierarchy, which sets out that everything possible must be done to firstly avoid, secondly, minimise and thirdly restore and rehabilitate losses of biodiversity on site.

This report uses the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA 2024), to quantify the biodiversity baseline for the site and calculate the post-development biodiversity unit for the proposed scheme following the best practice guidelines as set down by CIRIA (2019).

0.2 Results and Findings

A summary of the change in Biodiversity Net Gain on site is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Change in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on site

BIA Units	Total Net Unit Change	Total Net % change
Habitat Units	-0.09	-25.57%
Hedgerow Units	-0.02	-20.99%
Watercourse Units	n/a	n/a

A 10% increase for each unit type present is required and the trading rules for each habitat type must be met to meet the minimum statutory requirement.

The proposed development will result in a **-25.57% net loss** in Habitat Units and **-20.99% net loss** in Hedgerow Units on site and, therefore, does not meet this requirement.

As such, in order to meet the required 10% net gain for Habitat Units, a further **0.13 Habitat Units** and **0.03 Hedgerow Units** will need to be achieved. This can be of any habitat and hedgerow type.

This is not possible on-site and off-site compensation will be required.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Aim

The client, Mr Joshi, has commissioned Cherryfield Ecology to undertake a BNG/BIA for the site of 2 Snailswell Lane, Ickleford, Herts SG5 3TP

The aim of this report is to determine the Biodiversity Net Gain for the proposed scheme and, where necessary, make recommendations for increasing net gain in order to comply with the statutory requirements.

1.2 Site Information

The site consists of buildings, vegetated garden, introduced shrub, individual trees and ornamental hedgerows.

The proposed development includes for construction of two dwellings with associated access, parking, gardens and landscaping.

1.3 Study Area

The site is 0.06 Ha in size. The national grid coordinates for the centre of the site are TL 18395 32440.

1.4 Suitably Qualified Ecologist

This report has been completed by Julian Newman and checked by Sarah Kennard and Heather Stuckey. All meet the criteria for a suitably qualified Ecologist as defined in BS 8683:2021.

2.0 Methods

Biodiversity Net Gain is assessed through the use of biodiversity calculators to assess the biodiversity value of habitats pre- and post-development based on habitat type, distinctiveness and condition.

A biodiversity index is derived from the baseline and the proposed development and net gain is achieved where an increase in value is delivered either on-site (or through offsite compensation), where lower value habitat is replaced with one of higher value.

This report uses the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA 2024), to quantify the biodiversity baseline for the site and calculate the post-development biodiversity unit for the proposed scheme following the best practice guidelines as set down by CIRIA (2019).

2.2 Limitations

It is important to note that a scheme-wide biodiversity net gain or no net loss cannot be achieved for the scheme as a whole if there are negative impacts on irreplaceable habitats.

Any compensation offered to address impacts on irreplaceable habitats should be agreed directly with Natural England (NE). The baseline habitat which is identified for such compensation and the biodiversity units resulting from this compensation should also be excluded from biodiversity unit calculations.

Following Defra guidance, impacts on irreplaceable habitats and their compensation have been excluded from this biodiversity unit calculation.

Biodiversity Impact Assessment only deals with habitat and as such this report does not cover any of the requirements of the proposed development arising from potential impacts on protected species and designated sites.

3.0 Strategic Significance

Based on MAGIC, the following statutory sites and Natural England Protected Species (NEPS) have been located within the 2km search area (Figure 1).

Table 2: MAGIC search results

Receptor	Distance and Direction to Nearest (m/km)	Description
Statutory sites	~1518m SW	Oughtonhead Common LNR
Granted protected species licenses	~1394m NNW	2013-5803 - common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>
	~1487m SSW	2012-5071 - common pipistrelle
Priority habitat	~620m S	Traditional Orchard
	~201m E	Deciduous Woodland
	~331m E	Chalk Rivers
	~1374m SSE	Reedbeds
	~414m NE	Lowland Fens
	~830m SE	Lowland Meadows
	~111m E	Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland
	~199m NE	Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh

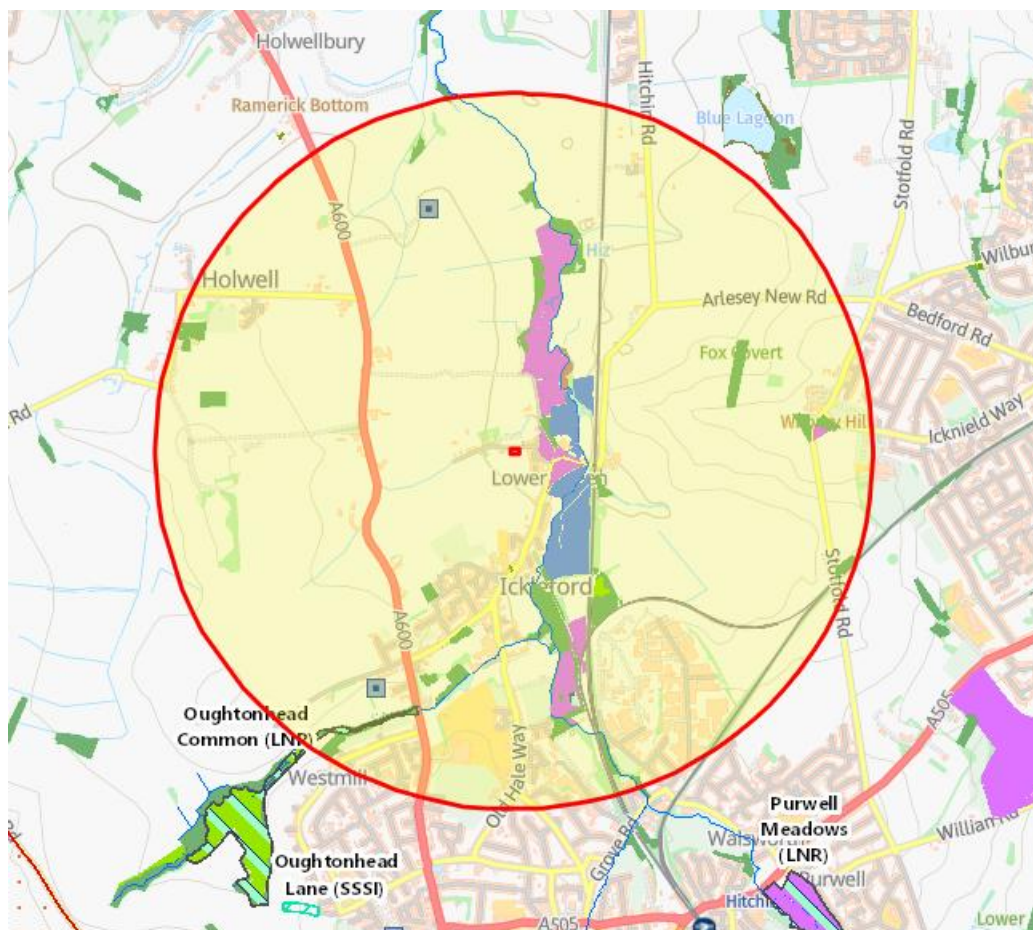


Figure 1: MAGIC.

Based on the Hertfordshire Ecological Network Mapping, the site falls into an orange zone which ‘contain no mapped existing habitats of any significance. Therefore, in the context of the ecological networks dataset, these areas are suitable for appropriate development.’ As such, the baseline habitats on site have been assigned ‘low’ strategic significance.

‘Medium’ strategic significance should be assigned to any created habitats that provide habitat corridors or improve the ecological network integrity. The habitat parcel that the site falls into (Ref: M03291) has a particular habitat creation target of ‘Chalk grassland/Neutral grassland’.

As the created habitats on site will consist solely of private residential land and low distinctiveness habitats, the post development habitats have also been assigned ‘low’ strategic significance.

4.0 Baseline Units

The UK Hab survey map used to assess the baseline is provided in Figure 2. Please refer to the Ecological Appraisal (Cherryfield Ecology, 2025) for full site details and to the separate Excel sheet for full condition assessments.

The following table summarises the baseline habitat and hedgerow value on-site. There are no watercourse features present.

Table 3: On-Site Baseline Habitat Value

Baseline Units	Total Net Unit
Habitat Units	0.35
Hedgerow Units	0.08
Watercourse Units	n/a



Figure 2: Baseline Habitats Site Plan

5.0 Post-Development Units

Proposed site plans “02. Proposed Block Plan.pdfA.pdf” were provided by the Client and used to calculate the Biodiversity Units post-development. Please see the separate Excel sheet for the assumed post development condition assessments.

The following table summarise the post-development habitat and hedgerow value on-site. There are no watercourse features present.

Table 4: On-Site Post Development Habitat Value

Post Development Units	Total Net Unit
Habitat Units	0.26
Hedgerow Units	0.06
Watercourse Units	n/a



Figure 3: Proposed Habitats Site Plan

6.0 Results

Table 7: Change in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on site

BIA Units	Total Net Unit Change	Total Net % change
Habitat Units	-0.09	-25.57%
Hedgerow Units	-0.02	-20.99%
Watercourse Units	n/a	n/a

6.1 Discussion

The mitigation hierarchy is the cornerstone of achieving net gain. It is a sequence of mitigation actions as described in Table 8.

Table 8: Mitigation hierarchy

Stage	In practice
Avoidance	This first stage is to avoid harm to biodiversity, for example locating to an alternative site. It is the most important stage and can ease the consent process, whereas missing this stage can lead to objections and refusal of permission to the development.
Minimise	If avoiding all adverse impacts is not possible, action is taken to minimize these effects.
Compensation	Addresses residual adverse effects, only considered after all possibilities for avoidance and minimising the effects have been implemented. Offsetting is a form of compensation that trades losses of biodiversity in one location with measurable gains in another. Offsetting losses of biodiversity with gains elsewhere can be within or outside of the development footprint.

Table 9 outlines how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied to this site.

Table 9: Application of the mitigation hierarchy

Hierarchy Level	Action	Habitat on site
Avoidance	Avoid	There are no priority habitats on site that would make avoidance necessary.
Minimise	Retain	Around half of the existing garden area will be retained as the proposed garden. Most of the grass verge and medium ash tree to the north will be retained. The existing ornamental hedgerow in at the southern and western site boundaries will be temporarily lost but are marked as retained as they will be replanted with native species.
	Enhance	There is no scope to enhance the habitats on site.
Compensation	On-site creation	Two new dwellings, associated hardstanding and gardens will be created.
	Off-site creation	As the site consists of private residential land, any on-site enhancements cannot be conditioned. As such off-site compensation will be required to achieve the national guidelines for biodiversity net gain. For available off-site units, see: - Environment Bank https://environmentbank.com/ - Environmental Trading platform https://www.environmentaltradingplatform.com/

7.0 Conclusion

A 10% increase for each unit type present is required and the trading rules for each habitat type must be met to meet the minimum statutory requirement.

The proposed development will result in a **-25.57% net loss** in Habitat Units and **-20.99% net loss** in Hedgerow Units on site and, therefore, does not meet this requirement.

As such, in order to meet the required 10% net gain for Habitat Units, a further **0.13 Habitat Units** and **0.03 Hedgerow Units** will need to be achieved. This can be of any habitat and hedgerow type.

This is not possible on-site and off-site compensation will be required.

8.0 References

Cherryfield Ecology (2025), Ecological Appraisal Report.

CIRIA (2020), Biodiversity Net Gain: good practice principles for development.

[Online] <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/C776a-Biodiversity-net-gain.-Good-practice-principles-for-development.-A-practical-guide-web.pdf> (Accessed at time of report)

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JNCC (2010), Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A technique for environmental audit. JNCC, Peterborough.

Natural England (2010), Higher Level Stewardship, Farm Environment Plan (FEP) Manual, 3rd Edition. The Hedgerow Regulations (1997). [Online] <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1997/1160/contents/made> (Accessed at time of report)

UKHabs (2020), *UK Habitat Classification*, UKHab, [Online] <https://ukhab.org/> (Accessed at time of report).

Appendix I



Scaled Baseline Site Plan



Scaled Proposed Site Plan