

EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY AND DAYTIME BAT SURVEY OF LAND OFF LONG LANE, CHAPEL-EN-LE-FIRTH, DERBYSHIRE

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Bowden Hall, Bowden Lane, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 6ND
Tel: 0161 465 8971

mail@rachelhackingecology.co.uk

www.rachelhackingecology.co.uk

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2019 by High Peak Retreat to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of a piece of land off Long Lane in Chapel-en-le-Firth, Derbyshire. As part of the Phase 1 Habitat Survey, a Daytime Bat Survey of the trees on site was also undertaken. The site will be the subject of a planning application for a glamping site.
- 1.2 The site is located on a private road off Long Lane, Chapel-en-le-Firth (O.S. grid reference: SK 05237 79933– see Figure 1). The site currently comprises permanent pasture, which is grazed by sheep and is damp in places. Wet ditches run along the northern and southern boundaries of the site. The site is bordered by a lane to the east, by further pasture to the west and south and by a school and residential development to the north. This report updates a report from 2019 (see Land off Long Lane, Chapel-en-le-Firth, Derbyshire – Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Daytime Bat Survey – Rachel Hacking Ecology).
- 1.3 The aims of the survey were to:
- Describe and map the habitats present on the site
 - Assess the potential for protected species to be present on the site or just outside the immediate site boundary
 - Identify where further survey may be necessary.

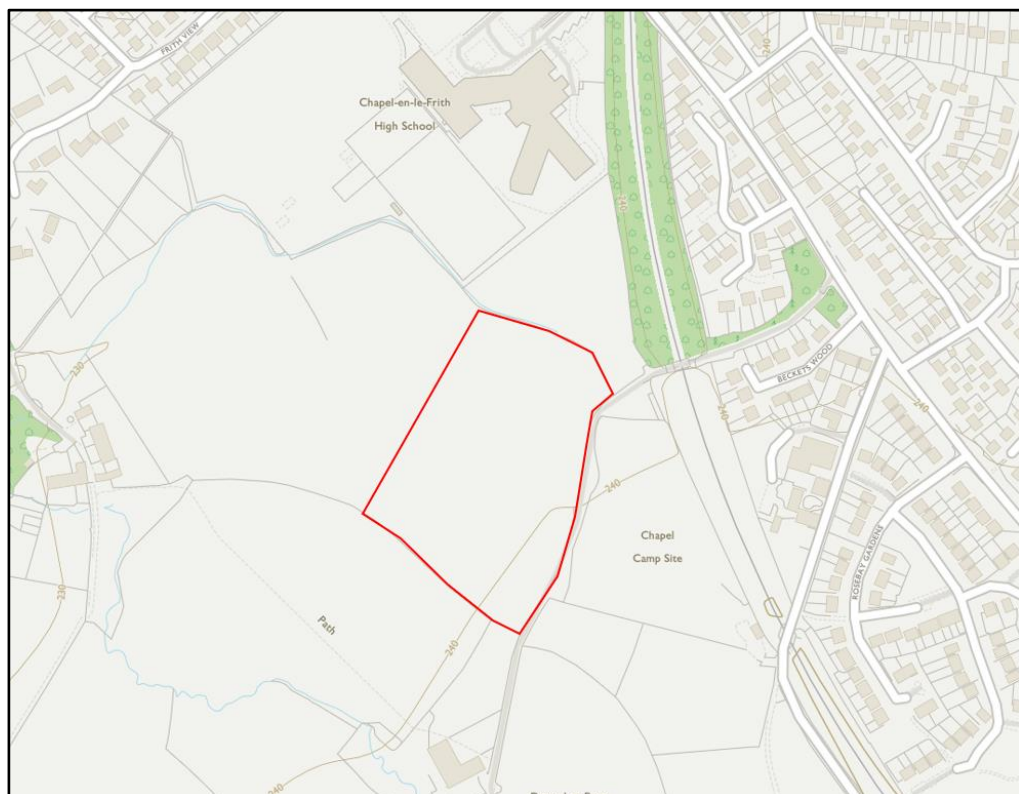


Figure 1 showing the surveyed site within the red line boundary

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken to JNCC standards (JNCC, 2010). The site was walked, and each habitat was assigned a Phase 1 habitat category. Species lists were taken at locations of botanical interest. All botanical nomenclature follows Stace, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries.
- 2.2 During the Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, looking for signs of Badger activity (e.g. setts, paths, latrines and hairs on fences), assessing any waterbodies on site or near the site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt.
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.
- 2.4 Biodiversity is a material consideration to the planning process and consideration must be given to protected species. The proposed works to the trees will be destructive/intrusive and therefore consideration should be given to roosting bats and other protected and notable species, which could potentially utilise the trees.
- 2.5 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). All bird species are protected whilst at the nest under The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 2.6 Rachel Hacking (Principal Ecologist) undertook the survey on 2nd December 2020. The weather was dry and mild with light cloud. Rachel has over nineteen years of experience in habitat and protected species surveys. November is a sub-optimal time of the year for botanical work, however, due to the habitats present on site a thorough assessment could be undertaken. Protected species assessments can be undertaken at any time of year. There were no constraints to the survey and the site was fully accessible.

3.0 RESULTS

HABITATS

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats present are described below.

Marshy Grassland

- 3.2 The majority of the site comprises marshy grassland. This has extended over sections of the species-poor semi-improved grassland from the 2019 survey. Here, the grassland is species-poor and is dominated by Soft-rush *Juncus effusus* (see Photograph 1). Other species include Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Tufted Hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, Cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis* and Hairy Sedge *Carex hirta*. Hard Rush *Juncus inflexus* occurs infrequently. The marshy grassland is grazed by sheep and all apart from the rush, is low-growing.



Photograph 1 showing the marshy grassland on site

Tall, Ruderal Herb

- 3.3 Tall, ruderal herb occurs within the western boundary of the site, surrounding a tree (see Photograph 4). This remains the same as during the 2019 survey. The habitat is dominated by Common Nettle *Urtica dioica* and Rosebay Willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium*.



Photograph 4 showing tall, ruderal herb on site

Species-poor Hedgerow and Other Boundaries

- 3.4 A small stretch of intact hedgerow exists along the eastern boundary of the site (see Photograph 5). The hedgerow is species-poor and mainly comprises Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* with occasional Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. The remainder of the western boundary is marked by fencing and all other boundaries are unmarked.



Photograph 5 showing a section of species-poor defunct hedgerow

Running Water and Dry Ditches

- 3.5 Ditches runs along the northern and southern boundary of the site. The ditches are intermittently wet and dry across the lengths. The ditches support limited aquatic vegetation including Brooklime *Veronica beccabunga* and Yellow Flag *Iris pseudacorus*.



Photograph 6 showing ditch on site

Scattered Trees

- 3.6 Mature trees are located along the boundaries of the site (see Photograph 6). Species include Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Alder *Alnus glutinosa*.



Photograph 6 showing tree on site

Scattered Scrub

- 3.7 Scattered scrub is located sporadically along the northern and southern site boundaries (see Photograph 7). Dominant species are Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Alder *Alnus glutinosa* and Goat Willow *Salix caprea*.



Photograph 7 showing some of the scattered scrub onsite

PROTECTED SPECIES

Badger

- 3.8 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under The Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This Act, for example, makes it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 3.9 Evidence of Badger including snuffle holes and latrines were searched for on site. No evidence of Badger activity was located. No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site.

Water Vole

- 3.10 Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius* is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This act, for example, makes it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) a Water Vole or intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which Water Voles use for shelter or protection or disturb Water Voles while they are using such a place.
- 3.11 The proposed development site does not support optimal Water Vole habitat. The ditches on the site boundaries were inspected for evidence of Water Vole. No Water Vole field signs such as latrines, feeding remains or burrows, was found. The water levels are extremely shallow, only small patches of aquatic/marginal vegetation are present and the banks are shallow.

Bats

- 3.12 All bat species are European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Bats

are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

- 3.13 A daytime bat survey of the trees on site was undertaken. The trees were given a ground-level assessment to search for any potential roosting features that could be utilised by bats. These features include suitable branch splits, knot holes, woodpecker holes, rot holes, lightning strikes and flaked bark.

- 3.14 Four trees within the site boundary hold potential roosting features for bats. This matches the results from the 2019 survey. These are rot holes and scars in Ash and Pedunculate Oak trees on the east of the southern boundary and a rot hole in an Ash tree on the south of the eastern site boundary.

Great Crested Newt

- 3.15 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the species is fully protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

- 3.16 No ponds exist on the site. No ponds could be located within 500 metres of the site. The site supports Great Crested Newt terrestrial habitat within the hedgerow bases and small patch of ruderal vegetation.

Nesting Birds

- 3.17 All bird species are protected at their nest under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

- 3.18 The trees, hedgerow and scattered scrub on site provide suitable nesting habitat for birds. The grassland is sub-optimal for ground-nesting birds. The wet/damp ground, presence of sheep and proximity to elevated perches for predatory birds (such as trees, pylons and lines) reduce the suitability for ground-nesting birds.

Brown Hare

- 3.19 Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus* are given priority status under the UK Biodiversity Plan. No evidence of Brown Hare such as droppings, tracks or forms were found on site.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

- 3.20 No invasive, non-native plant species as listed on Schedule 9 Part II (plants) of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are present on site.

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.21 No statutory protected or non-statutory protected sites lie within the site boundary or immediately adjacent to the site. One statutorily protected site exists within the 2km search radius. This is Combs Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Combs Reservoir has been designated for its unusual drawdown community of bryophytes and bird interest. It lies approximately 1.5km to the west of the site.
- 3.22 The site is within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone which lists development types that may affect local designated sites. The type of development proposed is not listed in the criteria.
- 3.23 Six Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) occur within 2km of the site. These have non-statutory protection. The closest of these is Lower Crossings Meadow (ref: HP092), designated for its unimproved (species-rich) grassland. This lies approximately 500 metres to the north-west of the site, on the opposite side of Manchester Road. The other five LWS are designated for their individual habitats such as open water, hedgerows and plantation woodland.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

HABITATS

- 4.1 The Phase 1 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.
- 4.2 The marshy grassland on site is species-poor and offers little ecological value. The site is heavily grazed by sheep. None of the hedgerow satisfies the ecological criteria for 'Important Hedgerows' under The Hedgerow Regulations 1997.
- 4.3 The mature trees, dense scrub and hedgerows provide nesting opportunities for birds and provide a valuable wildlife corridor.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Badger

- 4.4 No Badger sett or evidence of Badger activity was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. Badger is not considered to be a constraint on the development at this time.

Water Vole

- 4.5 No signs of Water Vole such as burrows or latrines were found on site or along the ditches on the site boundaries. The ditches are considered poor Water Vole habitat. Water Vole is not considered to be a constraint on development at this time.

Bats

- 4.6 No structures exist on site. The trees on site were the subject of a daytime bat survey. A ground level assessment of the trees was carried out to determine if they had potential roosting features. Four trees were found to have potential roosting features for bats. These trees are along the southern and eastern site boundaries and are proposed to be retained in the development. If these trees are to be removed or managed, an aerial tree survey is required to further inspect the features.
- 4.7 Bats use linear features in the landscape to forage along. It is likely that bats forage along the hedgerows and site boundaries and it is recommended that linear features on site are retained or created where possible, for example, hedgerows.

Great Crested Newt

- 4.8 No ponds exist on site or within 500 metres of the site boundary. Given the lack of suitable breeding habitat in the locality, it is considered unlikely that Great Crested Newt are present on site and no further survey work is needed.

Nesting Birds

- 4.9 The site supports suitable nesting habitat for birds within the hedgerows, scattered tree and scrub. Nesting birds can be mitigated for by allowing no works to potential nesting habitats to be carried out within the bird nesting season (which is generally March – August) unless a nesting bird survey is undertaken first. No evidence of ground nesting birds was recorded on site during the survey. The site provides sub-optimal habitat for ground nesting birds. Given the sub-optimal habitats present on site, it is recommended no further survey work is required and the development can proceed without ground nesting bird mitigation.

Brown Hare

- 4.10 The site does not support suitable habitat for Brown Hare. The tall sward of the marshy grassland is unfavourable for feeding and the location of forms, as these areas provide cover for potential predators. The lack of arable crops in the locality reduces the suitability of the site as these habitats can form part of the Brown Hare diet. No evidence of Brown Hare activity was found on site. Brown Hare is not considered to be a constraint on the development.

PROTECTED SITES

- 4.11 The nearest statutory protected site lies over 1.5km away from the proposed development site and are separated by farmland and busy A roads. Due to the distances involved, the adequate buffer habitats between the proposed development site and the protected sites, it is considered that there will be no detrimental impact on any statutory protected sites from the development. The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone which lists development types that may affect local designated sites. The type of development proposed is not listed as a concern.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Further Survey

- 5.1 Protected species are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. The presence of protected species, the effect of the proposed development and suitable mitigation, if required, must be established before planning permission can be granted. Following the findings from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the following may be required:

- **Nesting Birds** - If any work to the hedgerow, scrub and trees needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season (generally March to August), then a nesting bird survey will be required by experienced personnel immediately prior to work commencing.
- **Bats** - An aerial tree assessment is required on the trees found to have potential roosting features for bats if any of these trees are to be removed or managed. This is to determine if the trees identified are being used by roosting bats.

Habitat Enhancement

- 5.2 It is recommended that the following measures are taken into account, if a landscaping plan is produced, to increase the biodiversity value of the site:

- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
- Tree and shrub planting – where practical, native tree and shrub species should be planted.
- Bird and/or bat boxes could be erected onto the new dwelling and/or retained trees.

6.0 REFERENCES

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PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP



Key

-  Marshy Grassland
-  Tall, Ruderal Herb
-  Dry Ditch
-  Fence
-  Intact Hedgerow
-  Running Water
-  Scattered Scrub
-  Scattered Trees

Phase 1 Habitat Map

Long Lane, Chapel-En-Le-Frith

NOT TO SCALE



Drawn by: RF
Date: 14/12/2020



RACHEL HACKING ECOLOGY