

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Exemption Statement

We acknowledge the requirement to clarify the exemption from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for the proposed Gedney Hill Play Park development.

Exemption:

“Development subject to the de minimis exemption. Development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m by 5m) of onsite habitat, and 5 metres of linear habitats such as hedgerows.”

A development ‘impacts’ a habitat if it decreases the biodiversity value

The development does not impact a priority habitat, onsite habitat or linear habitat as it is on mowed grass. The grass will continue to be mown in the developed area.

There is a small area of porous rubber wet pour and porous conipave at the entrance to the fenced park area, this is to replace mown grass, which has very little biodiversity value.

Biodiversity Enhancements

While we have stated that the proposal is exempt from BNG, we are committed to ensuring that the project delivers a net positive impact on biodiversity, aiming for an increase of at least 10%.and so we will implement a range of measures to enhance biodiversity within the site, including:

- Woodland Walk – The walkway through the trees at the Eastern side of the field will gain log piles and natural features to support a variety of insect species and small mammals. The walk will encourage community engagement with nature while providing essential habitats for wildlife.
- Bird and Owl Boxes – We will install bird and owl boxes at strategic locations throughout the site to encourage nesting and roosting. These will help increase avian biodiversity by providing safe breeding sites for a range of bird species.
- Bug Hotels – Purpose-built bug hotels will be placed within the park to support pollinators and other beneficial insects. These structures will provide shelter and breeding sites, contributing to a thriving invertebrate population that supports local ecosystems.
- Wildflower Planting – Areas of the park will be seeded with a mix of native wildflowers, enhancing floral diversity and providing vital food sources for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. This will help sustain and attract a greater variety of wildlife.

Impact on Biodiversity

These measures will contribute significantly to local biodiversity by creating a more diverse habitat for various species. The introduction of additional flora and fauna-friendly features will increase ecological value while ensuring the play park remains a welcoming and environmentally responsible community space.

Increase of biodiversity from current to finish of project

Current

Biodiversity in mowed grass is very low: Regularly mowed grass typically supports only a few species of grass and weeds that can withstand frequent cutting.

- Invertebrates: Low diversity—mostly ants, a few beetles, and some hardy worms.
- Flora: Limited to a handful of grass species and occasional weeds like dandelions and clover.
- Fauna: Minimal—some birds may forage, but it provides little food or shelter for insects, mammals, or pollinators.

Biodiversity after the project is complete:

An area of 80m in length and 1.5m width will be left to grow and overseeded with wildflower mix.

- Estimated Biodiversity Increase if Left to Grow: Studies suggest that simply reducing mowing frequency can increase plant diversity by up to 60% and attract 2.5 times more pollinators.

Biodiversity in Wildflower Meadows

High Biodiversity: A wildflower area can support over 40 species of flowers per square meter, significantly increasing plant diversity.

- **Invertebrates:** Rich diversity—bees, butterflies, beetles, and many other pollinators thrive.
- **Flora:** Dozens of native flower species provide nectar, pollen, and seed heads for wildlife.
- **Fauna:** Birds and small mammals benefit from seeds, shelter, and insects to feed on.

Estimated Biodiversity Increase Compared to Mowed Grass: Studies show an increase of 10-50 times in pollinators, and plant diversity can increase by over 1,000%, depending on the seed mix.

Conclusion

Replacing mowed grass with wildflowers dramatically improves biodiversity, supporting a wider range of insects, birds, and small mammals. The plan to introduce wildflowers at Gedney Hill Play Park is a significant ecological improvement.

Given these proactive steps to enhance the ecological value of the site, we respectfully request that the project be considered exempt from any additional BNG requirements. However, we remain fully committed to supporting biodiversity and ensuring sustainable development within Gedney Hill.

Should further clarification be required, we would be happy to provide additional information.