

**Updated Ecological Appraisal of Land Adjacent to
Sunnydale Close, Surfleet, Spalding, Lincolnshire
PE11 4BS**

August 2015	
AMENDED PLAN	
Ref.	A 1



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1 INTRODUCTION

Independent Ecologist and Protected Species Consultant, Andrew Chick MPhil, was commissioned by Mr Brian Gilham (Status Design) to undertake an updated ecological appraisal of Ecological Appraisal of Land Adjacent to Sunnydale Close, Surfleet, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 4BS. The survey is required in connection with a planning application with South Holland District Council.

This report details the methods used, describes the habitats and species found on the site, discusses the results and makes recommendations for further work. The common English names are used for all species referred to throughout the text.

A previous survey had been undertaken on site, specifically:

- Ecological Appraisal of Land Adjacent to Sunnydale Close, Surfleet, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 4BS – March 2015 Andrew Chick Ecology

The results of this previous survey are mentioned within this report where considered relevant, particularly referring to the site descriptions which is unchanged since the original survey in March 2015.

1.1 Accurate lifespan of ecological data

The majority of ecological data remains valid for only short periods of time due to the inherently transient nature of the subject. Where the species/group being surveyed for is present within the site, the data is considered to be accurate for two years. However, an update may be needed in order to obtain a European Protected Species licence, if such a licence is required. Where absent, although the data is considered accurate for two years, an update may be required if the habitats surrounding the site are of a quality that are likely to encourage the species to move into the site in the interim.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Site communities and habitats

The survey site is a steep-sided field drain which forms the western boundary of an intensively managed arable field, located on the eastern site of Surfleet. The eastern edge of the drain forms a public footpath. There are no buildings on the survey site. The site is located to the east of dwellings adjacent to the B1356 Surfleet Road which runs between Gosberton and Pinchbeck. Access to the site is via Sunnydale Close, through a small wooden gateway

located at TF 25194 27844 beside a short section of hawthorn hedgerow *Crataegus monogyna*. A general site location is given in Appendix 1 as Figure 1 and shows the approximate survey boundary (marked with a red line). The images below show approximately the same location photographed during the original survey March 2015 and during the updated survey August 2015.



Photograph 1: Representative views of field drain showing the southern section looking north (left) and the northern section looking south (right) taken March 2015.



Photograph 2: Representative views of field drain showing the southern section looking north (left) and the northern section looking south (right) taken August 2015.

At the time of the updated survey, the drain was heavily overgrown throughout its length and the watercourse itself (which had minimal water) was hidden by arching vegetation, including hedge bindweed *Calystegia sepium* and reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima*. The crop currently growing in the adjacent field was sunflowers which at the time of the survey were approximately 2m in height and lie immediately next to the public footpath

2.2 Survey constraints

There were no constraints to the survey, with full access available to the whole site. Note, the drainage ditch was considerably over-grown since the original survey, with no water visible at the time of the updated survey.

2.3 Proposed work

The proposed work entails installation of a drainage pipe and infilling the field drain.

3 METHODS

The site was surveyed on 3rd August 2015 by Garry Steele (Natural England bat licence number 2015-12515-CLS-CLS. All habitats and plant communities within and adjacent to the site were recorded and mapped. Representative photographs were taken.

The purpose of the survey work was to update the survey undertaken in March 2015 and to assess the site for bat activity during the active season.

3.1.1 Bat activity survey

An activity survey was undertaken on the evening of 3rd August 2015.

The aim of the survey was to assess the value of the site for use by bats for foraging and feeding.

The survey was carried out in accordance with the Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines (BCT, 2012). An experienced surveyor undertook the dusk surveys. Levels of bat activity are strongly correlated with climatic conditions due to the influence these factors have on the abundance of insect prey. The climatic conditions throughout the survey were also recorded.

Fixed points were established along the survey site, with the surveyor standing at each fixed point for 5 minutes, in combination with very slow walking for 5 minutes between fixed standing points, and simultaneously observing for bats aided by use of bat detector and headphones - the southern and northern fixed points being at the extreme ends of the survey area.

3.2 Common species of birds

All habitats were assessed for their potential to support nesting birds. All bird species seen or heard were noted. All disused and active nests were recorded.

3.3 Badgers

The survey site and within a 30m distance of the survey site boundary were searched for signs of the presence of badger setts, footprints, padways, feeding signs and latrines.

3.4 Water voles

The water course was assessed for its potential to support water voles. The full length of both sections of the field drain were walked, and a search was made for signs of use by water voles including feeding stations, burrows, latrine sites/droppings, runs through the vegetation,

characteristic 'plop' sound as the animals enter the water and cropped grass around burrow entrances.

3.5 Otter

The water course was assessed for habitat that may be used by otters. This includes significant habitats, but also features within close proximity of water bodies that provide lying up or denning sites, such as fallen trees or bankside holes.

3.6 Other statutorily protected species

As part of the extended walkover of the site and its environs, a search for signs of use by other statutorily protected species was also undertaken. Particular attention was focused on the habitats and plants and the presence of any ponds.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Habitats and plant species

The habitat types and plant species recorded within the site during the survey on 3rd August 2015 are common in the local context and the region as a whole, with no plants of local importance or significance found. None of the plant species recorded on site appear on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

4.2 Bats

Sunset was recorded at 20:50hrs.

Recorded climatic conditions:

	Air Temperature	Precipitation	Wind Speed	Cloud Cover
Start:	20.3 Deg C (55% RH)	Nil	Force 2	7/8
End:	17.3 Deg C (52% RH)	Nil	Force 1	5/8

Climatic conditions were ideal for foraging bats, with many airborne insects present.

During the emergence survey no bats were seen to emerge from any of the trees on site.

TIME:	LOCATION:	OBSERVATION:
21.00 hrs - 21.05hrs	Southern fixed point	
21.05hrs - 21.10hrs	Between fixed points	
21.10 hrs - 21.15hrs	Central fixed point	
21.15 hrs - 21.20hrs	Between fixed points	
21.20hrs - 21.25hrs	Northern fixed point	
21.25hrs -	Between fixed	

21.30hrs	points	
21.30hrs – 21.35hrs	Central fixed points	Single brief pass of Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>) at 21.31hrs. Bat not seen.
21.35hrs – 21.40hrs	Between fixed points	
21.40hrs – 21.45hrs	Southern fixed points	
21.45hrs – 21.50hrs	Between fixed points	Very brief, single pass of Pipistrelle sp. (<i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.) at 21.47hrs. Bat not seen.
21.50hrs – 21.55hrs	Central fixed point	
21.55hrs – 22.00hrs	Between fixed points	
22.00hrs – 22.05hrs	Northern fixed point	Single brief pass of Common Pipistrelle at 22.01hrs. Bat not seen.
22.05hrs – 22.10hrs	Between fixed points	Very brief single pass of Common Pipistrelle at 22.06hrs. Bat not seen.
22.10hrs – 22.15hrs	Central fixed point	2 strong, nearby passes of Common Pipistrelle & single feeding 'buzz' at 22.12hrs. Bat not seen.
22.15hrs – 22.20hrs	Between fixed points	
22.20hrs – 22.25hrs	Southern fixed point	Single pass of Common Pipsitrelle. Bat not seen

The first bat was recorded at 21:31hrs, approximately 50 minutes after sunset,

With the exception of the bat recorded at 22.12hrs, the directional fix from the bat detector suggested the remainder of the bat registrations were flying over the gardens of the adjacent properties to the west of the survey site.

A streetlight at the end of Sunnydale Close was noted to rise high above the height of the adjacent hedge and quite strongly artificially illuminated the southern end of the survey area.

4.3 Badgers

No evidence of badger was found within the actual survey area. No setts were found within the survey area, and none were found in the land adjacent.

4.4 Water voles

No evidence indicating the presence of water vole, such as burrows, droppings or feeding remains was recorded in association with the field drain. The lack of connectivity to other habitats was considered to be a limiting factor.

No further survey work in respect to this species was considered necessary.

4.5 Otter

No evidence indicating the presence of otter, such as footprints or spraints, was recorded in association with the field drain. The field drain is relatively small and exposed, and was

considered that its suitability to support otter was very limited. The lack of connectivity to other habitats was considered to be an additional limiting factor.

No further survey work in respect to this species was considered necessary.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Bats

5.1.1 Legal protection

In England, Scotland and Wales, all bats are strictly protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended); in England and Wales this legislation has been amended and strengthened by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.

Bats are also protected by European legislation; the EC Habitats Directive is transposed into UK law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 – often referred to as 'The Habitat Regs'. Taken together, all this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a group of bats where the disturbance is likely to significantly affect the ability of the animals to survive, breed, or nurture their young or likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species whether in a roost or not
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place of a bat
- Possess a bat (alive or dead) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead) or parts of bats

A roost is defined as being 'any structure or place that is used for shelter or protection', and since bats regularly move roost site throughout the year, a roost retains such designation whether or not bats are present at the time.

5.1.2 Recommendations

The survey results suggest the site is generally used for foraging by only very small numbers of bats, and the boundary hedgerow/field drain as a flight corridor. However, most activity was recorded in the gardens to the rear of the houses, rather than associated with the drainage ditch.

5.2 Further survey recommendations

5.2.1 Ecological walk-over

An ecological walk-over survey should be carried out approximately one month prior to proposed works commencing. This will update the present survey results and ascertain whether any badgers have dug setts on the site in the intervening period.

5.2.2 Nesting birds

If it is necessary to carry out works during the bird breeding season, then a nesting bird survey must be carried out by a qualified ecologist prior to works going ahead to ensure that no active nests will be affected. If active nests are found then work will have to be delayed until all chicks have fledged.

6 REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust 2012 'Good Practice Guidelines'

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NBN Gateway. Available: nbn.org.uk.

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APPENDIX 1

**FIGURE 1 Site habitat and location map for land to Sunnydale Close, Surfleet, Spalding,
Lincolnshire PE11 4BS**

(For specific tree details see March 2015 report)

