

Joanne Creese
(by email)

Wildwood Ecology Limited
The Lodge
Caerphilly Business Park
Van Road
Caerphilly
CF83 3GG

029 2002 2320

18/01/2021

info@wildwoodecology.com
www.wildwoodecology.com

Dear Joanne

Re: LAND ADJACENT TO GELLIGAER ROAD, TRELEWIS

I can confirm that I attended site today (5th January 2021) in good weather conditions (dry, bright day of 3°C, wind of 2/3 on the Beaufort scale) to complete a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. I was able to reach all areas of the site, with the survey undertaken following the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2013) guidelines and standard Phase 1 Habitat Survey protocol (JNCC, 2010).

The purpose of this brief report is to provide an ecological base line condition of the site at present, and to highlight any surveys that may be required at a further date. It also provides some ecological enhancements appropriate to the site and surroundings. A full PEA/EcIA report with data search and desk study will be provided to accompany the full planning application, should this go ahead.

Figure 1 below shows the extent of the site within the local area. The site is found between the residential properties along Gelligaer Road and the farm shop business. To the immediate north is Gelligaer Road, with further residences and gardens beyond, and to the south, horse grazed pasture. A stream (a tributary of the Nant Caeach) is found running along a wooded corridor to the south, at approximately 150m east of the site (at its closest point), with a small drain issuing within the site, and running along (and under) the southern boundaries of the residential properties to the west of the site. This drain then runs into the Nant Caeach 355m to the south.

The habitats onsite have been disturbed through works, with the hedgerow and scrub vegetation as noted on the aerial imagery, having been removed. The surface of the towards the western end is also gravelly with some building materials present, and with modifications to the drain around the point at which it is culverted under the adjacent property. There are some tree stumps indicating that there have been removals of some trees onsite at some point in the past, though the tree line along the Gelligaer Road are present, along with a large oak at the eastern corner of the site.

The boundaries of the site are demarked by post and wire (southern, eastern), by the adjacent property wall/fence and by the Gelligaer Road (to the north).



WINNER OF THE CIEEM 'SMALL CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR' AWARD 2019-2020

Company Registration No. 6646654 Registered in England & Wales
Registered Office: Queen Anne House, 66 Cricklade Street, Cirencester GL7 1JN



Figure 1 – The site is bounded by the red line

The onsite habitats include scattered scrub, towards the retained trees and hedge, and following the post and wire fence to the south (beyond a narrow corridor within grazing reach from the adjacent field). Some bare earth and gravel are noted onsite, with channels present within the channel facilitating drainage. The wetter central part of the site along the drain has soft rush and a little purple moor-grass, with the area towards the field being of a more tussocky neutral grassland, with creeping bent, false oat grass, cock's foot, ribwort plantain, spear thistle, common knapweed, creeping buttercup, dandelion and tending to tall ruderal towards the scrubber areas to the east, with great willowherb, bracken, bramble, ragwort, ivy, pedunculate oak and broad-leaved dock. The gravelly areas and area towards the northern roadside boundary include ribwort plantain, greater plantain, shepherd's purse, daisy, annual meadow grass and dandelion.

Whilst there is an area of marshy grassland, this is relatively small, and appears at the current time to be of low diversity. Recent disturbance to its integrity and isolated status away from any nearby similar habitats by intensively grazed pasture and residential properties, means that its value ecologically is less than would be for a larger area or area more connected to similar habitats.

The structure of the site at present appears to be able to support nesting birds within the brash and retained trees and hedge area; reptiles within the tussocky grassland and scrub margins; bats within the retained large tree at the eastern corner of the site (the tree has moderate suitability for use by roosting bats); and is likely to support a range of more common invertebrates.

The drain is modified within its route southwards to its confluence with the Nant Caeach, with otter known to use this water course. Given the more suitable habitats nearby, it is less likely that otter will use the site (and no signs of use were noted onsite or associated with the culverted section adjacent) though a precautionary construction methodology is advised. Similarly, precautionary methodology for other mammals such as hedgehog and badger are advised.

With respect to further survey of the site, additional survey for reptiles is required to ascertain the need for any further mitigation or compensation measures. The adjacent field is not suitable to support any large numbers of reptiles and so if reptiles are present, onsite retained habitats would be necessary, or a translocation exercise undertaken to move reptiles offsite to a more suitable new location, prior to works commencing. The eastern tree onsite will be retained and the planted trees along the road are all of negligible suitability for roosting bats.

In terms of enhancements for biodiversity, a sensitive planting scheme of native species rich lawn (i.e. flowering lawn mix able to withstand regular short mowings) is recommended, along with integrated bat roost provision (e.g. soffit bat boxes on the south-eastern facing aspects) on two properties, integrated bird nest boxes (swift boxes) on two properties at eaves height, facing south-east also; and a new species rich (i.e. at least five native species) double row hedge along the southern horse-grazed boundary (with adequate protection from grazing).

The SuDS solution is also advised to include native species plantings/sowings such as a swale formed using marsh-loving plant species (including devil's bit scabious) to add an aesthetically pleasing and functional solution to the drain.

The aforementioned precautionary methodology for mammals will include means of escapes from any deep excavations or trenching such as via a plank; and all chemicals and fuel to be safely stored away from animal access. Silt fencing and barriers are likely to be necessary to prevent impacts on the downstream water course also.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Wilson', with a small 'dr' written below the main signature.

Dr Alex Wilson MCIEEM
Principal Ecologist
Wildwood Ecology Ltd