

**LAND ADJACENT TO
WHITMORE POOL COTTAGE
TILLINGTON
HEREFORD
HR4 8LE**

**PHASE 1 HABITAT ASSESSMENT
&
BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN**

FOR

MR & MRS ELLIS

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION
2	SURVEY METHODS
3	RESULTS
4	ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
5	BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN
6	CONCLUSION

PLANS

PLAN 1	Site location
PLAN 2	Proposals

FIGURES

FIGURE 1	Looking south across the site from the northern roadside boundary. The site comprises a small field of poor semi-improved grassland.
FIGURE 2	Looking north across the site from the southern hedgerow boundary.
FIGURE 3	The site's northern roadside boundary. Looking east.
FIGURE 4	The site's southern roadside boundary. Looking west.
FIGURE 5	The site's eastern roadside boundary. Looking south.
FIGURE 6	The site's western boundary with an adjoining residential garden. Looking north from inside the proposed development site.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1	Data search letter received from Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.
APPENDIX 2	Map showing designated sites within 1km of study area. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.
APPENDIX 3	Map showing Phase 1 Habitat within 1km of study area. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.
APPENDIX 4	Map showing BAP Priority Habitats within 1km of study area. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.
APPENDIX 5	Map showing all protected and priority species recorded within 1km of study area. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.
APPENDIX 6	All protected and priority species recorded within 1km of study area. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Ecology Services was commissioned to undertake an ecological assessment of approximately 0.5 hectares of land that is located at Tillington, Herefordshire (Plan 1 & Figures 1-6). Grid ref: SO 4655 4523.
- 1.2. The site comprises a single field of species poor grassland with boundary hedgerows.
- 1.3. A previous planning application for residential development was withdrawn in June 2020 (P190029/O). This report forms part of the new planning application for residential development and sets out the results of a data search exercise and a Phase 1 habitat survey that was undertaken at the site on the 31st August 2023. The report also sets out biodiversity enhancement proposals (Plan 2).

Summary of survey findings & proposed ecological enhancements

- 1.4. The field supports poor semi-improved grassland that is mowed on a regular basis and there is no significant herb element. The site supports a box cut roadside hedgerow along its northern boundary. Hedgerows along the site's southern and eastern boundaries are partially managed; box cut along their outside boundaries with the public highway; uncut and encroaching within the field itself. The site's western boundary comprises an overgrown hedgerow with mature trees and shrubs and adjoins a residential garden.
- 1.5. No evidence of protected species such as badgers, dormice, bats, reptiles or great crested newts was found within the site following a Phase 1 habitat survey and a background data search exercise. Data search records of protected species from the wider area are all significantly removed from the proposed development site.
- 1.6. The site does not support or adjoin any statutory ecological designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are no statutory ecological designations within 1km of the site.
- 1.7. The site does not support or adjoin any non-statutory ecological designations such as Special Wildlife Sites (SWS). Non-statutory ecological designations located in the wider area are all well removed from the site boundary.
- 1.8. With the exception of hedgerows there are no Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats within or adjoining the site. BAP habitats in the wider area comprise traditional orchards, all of which are well removed from the site and would not be impacted on by the proposed development.
- 1.9. The development proposals would retain the existing hedgerow boundary features. In addition, a substantial new traditional orchard will be created on the southern half of the site. The ecological enhancement proposals also include the provision of native trees and shrubs, bird nesting boxes, pollinator boxes and bat boxes. These ecological enhancements will contribute a significant net gain in biodiversity at the site.
- 1.10. The findings of the Phase 1 ecological assessment confirm that no additional ecological survey work is required at the site and confirm the finding of a previous ecological assessment undertaken by Just Mammals ecological consultancy in 2017 (P190029/O).

2. SURVEY METHODS

2.1. Habitat survey methodology

- 2.1.1. An ecological survey was carried out to ascertain the general ecological value of the land contained within the boundaries of the site and to identify the main habitats and associated plant species. The site was surveyed on the 31st August 2023.
- 2.1.2. Using Extended Phase 1 survey methodology the site was classified into areas of similar botanical community types with a representative sample of those species present being described. This standard technique provides an inventory of the habitat types present and allows identification of areas that may require more detailed survey work.

2.2. Faunal survey methodology

- 2.2.1. Faunal activity was recorded during the Phase 1 survey and the site was assessed in terms of its suitability to support protected species including bats, badgers, reptiles, great crested newts and nesting birds.

2.3. Data search exercise

- 2.3.1. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre (HBRC) was contacted for records of protected and locally important species recorded within 1km of the site and for the location of ecological designations located within 1km of the site. (Appendices 1-6).

3. RESULTS

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 3.1. The site supports poor quality grassland which is regularly mowed. The field is classed as improved grassland on the Phase 1 habitats map received from Herefordshire Biological Records centre. Historically the field was grazed by horses. Species recorded include Yorkshire fog, cock's-foot, sweet vernal grass, broadleaved dock, creeping thistle, nettle, hogweed, common sorrel, meadow buttercup and creeping buttercup (Figures 1 & 2).
- 3.2. The site's northern roadside boundary supports a box cut hedgerow that is dominated by elm with hawthorn, holly and ash. Black bryony, bramble and honeysuckle scramble over the hedge in localised areas. Bramble is dominant in localised areas on the field side of the hedgerow. The hedgerow ground flora is limited and is dominated by rank grasses and ivy, with nettle, cleavers, garlic mustard and cow parsley (Figure 3).
- 3.3. The site's southern boundary supports a box cut roadside hedgerow that is dominated by blackthorn. The blackthorn is encroaching into the adjoining field. The ground flora is limited and is dominated by rank grasses, ivy and bramble (Figure 4).
- 3.4. The site's eastern boundary adjoins a tall box cut hedgerow that is dominated by hawthorn, with blackthorn, elm and some ash. The blackthorn and bramble are encroaching into the adjoining field. The ground flora is limited and is dominated by ivy with cuckoo pint, cow parsley, dandelion and cleavers (Figure 5).
- 3.5. The site's western boundary adjoins overgrown shrubs and trees that probably once formed a hedgerow boundary. The dominant species include hawthorn, willow and blackthorn, with occasional holly, ash and plum. The ground flora is restricted and is dominated by nettle, bramble and ivy (Figure 6).
- 3.6. With the exception of nesting birds that will be associated with the hedgerow boundaries, no evidence of protected species was found within the site during the Phase 1 survey.
- 3.7. A limited assemblage of common garden bird species will be associated with the site's hedgerow boundaries.

Data search exercise

- 3.8. The results of the data search exercise are reproduced in Appendices 1-6 and are summarised below.
- 3.9. The Phase 1 map identifies the site as improved grassland. Adjoining habitats are identified as amenity grassland, poor semi-improved grassland and improved grassland (Appendix 3).
- 3.10. The site does not support or adjoin any statutory ecological designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are no statutory ecological designations within 1km of the site (Appendix 2).
- 3.11. There is one non-statutory ecological designation located within the 1km search area. This being 'Pond near Tillington Court' Special Wildlife Site (SWS). This SWS is well removed from the proposed development site and is located 0.8km to the north east and is separated by agricultural land and residential properties (Appendix 1 & 2).
- 3.12. With the exception of hedgerows there are no Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats within or adjoining the site. The closest BAP habitats other than hedgerows are traditional orchards, all of which are well removed from the site boundary (Appendix 4).
- 3.13. Records of protected and notable species are reproduced in Appendix 5 & 6. There were no records from the site itself or the immediate area.
- 3.14. The closest species records were of great tit, wren and round-leaved cranesbill all of which were recorded from a field on the western side of the site (Appendix 5 & 6). The next nearest records were of a hedgehog (dead) that was recorded from a property to the north west of the site and a common pipistrelle bat (dead) that was recorded from a property to the north east of the proposed development site.
- 3.15. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Rabbit warrens were present along some of the hedgerow boundaries.
- 3.16. A great crested newt breeding pond is located 0.6km to the north west of the proposed development site (Appendix 5 & 6). The pond is separated by agricultural fields, main roads and residential properties and as such is significantly removed from the proposed development site.
- 3.17. The data search returned a single reptile record, a dead grass snake. This record was made in 2014 and is well removed from the site boundary (Appendix 5 & 6).
- 3.18. In addition to the above the data search returned a number of plant records and many records of birds. These records are mostly of very common species and none of these records were from the vicinity of the site.

4. ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

- 4.1. The site is dominated by poor quality grassland that is identified as improved grassland on the Phase 1 habitats map. This is a common habitat type that is of limited ecological interest. The localised loss of poor quality grassland is not ecologically significant.
- 4.2. The site supports box cut roadside hedgerows along its northern, southern and eastern boundaries. The site's western boundary supports a former hedgerow that is overgrown with mature trees and shrubs. Hedgerows are a BAP habitat. The site's boundary hedgerows are of ecological interest within the context of the site. With the exception of some minor alterations to the site's existing access point off the main road, there will be no loss of hedgerows or boundary vegetation. Any minor alterations to the site's access will be significantly compensated for by new amenity planting using native trees and shrubs (see biodiversity enhancement plan below).
- 4.3. The site does not support protected species or any species of special conservation interest. Protected species recorded in the wider area would not be impacted on by the development proposals.
- 4.4. The site's boundary hedgerows are likely to support small numbers of nesting birds. Birds will benefit from the proposed amenity planting, the proposed traditional orchard and the provision of bird nesting boxes on the new properties (see biodiversity enhancement plan below).
- 4.5. The proposed development site does not support or adjoin any statutory ecological designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and there are no statutory protected sites within 1km of the site.
- 4.6. The proposed development site does not support or adjoin any non-statutory ecological designations such as Special Wildlife Sites (SWS). Non-statutory ecological designations located in the wider area are significantly removed from the site and would not be impacted on by the development proposals.
- 4.7. None of the species recorded in the data search exercise would be impacted on by the proposed development.
- 4.8. An ecological clerk of works will be appointed prior to the commencement of works to advise contractors on the proposed ecological mitigation and enhancements and to deal with any unforeseen ecological issues in the unlikely event that they should arise (see biodiversity enhancement plan below).
- 4.9. In summary, the site is of very limited ecological interest supporting no habitats or species of special note. The proposed biodiversity enhancements will benefit a wide range of wildlife and will represent a net gain for biodiversity (see biodiversity enhancement plan below).

5. BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

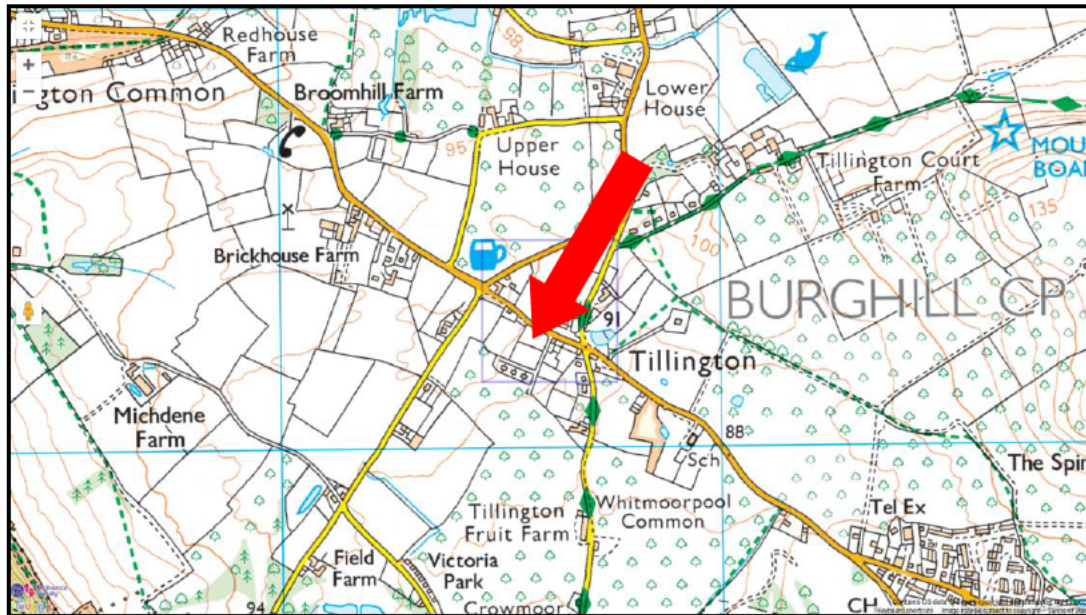
- 5.1. An ecological clerk of works will be appointed prior to the commencement of works. The ecological clerk of works will conduct a toolbox talk to contractors prior to works commencing. This talk will emphasise the importance of protecting boundary vegetation. Given that continuous onsite ecological supervision is unlikely to be appropriate or proportionate the appointed ecological clerk of works will provide an 'on call' service for occasions when contractors may require guidance/advice. This will allow any unforeseen ecological issues that may arise during the course of the development to be suitably resolved.
- 5.2. In the event that protected species are encountered (or suspected) all works will stop and the appointed ecological clerk of works will be consulted immediately.
- 5.3. Works that impact on boundary vegetation will be undertaken outside the bird nesting season or alternatively when the appointed ecological clerk of works has confirmed that nesting birds are absent.
- 5.4. Any trenches or holes that are created at the construction stage of the development will have one section gently sloping to enable any creatures that fall in to escape.
- 5.5. All building materials, equipment and excavated materials will be stored on the existing areas of mowed grassland. No materials will be stored alongside the boundary vegetation.
- 5.6. Best practice guidelines will be followed to ensure that excavated material does not drain into nearby watercourses.
- 5.7. Native trees and shrubs will be planted throughout the site. Species will comprise a mix of native species including hazel, holly, hawthorn, field maple, dogwood and oak (Plan 2).
- 5.8. A large traditional orchard will be planted in the southern half of the site. The orchard will comprise a mix of fruit varieties that are local to Herefordshire (Plan 2).
- 5.9. Four bat boxes, four bird nesting box and four bee pollinator boxes will be erected on the new properties. The boxes will be constructed from 'woodcrete' or a similar approved material. The boxes will be erected under the supervision of the appointed ecological clerk of works. There will be no artificial lighting in the areas where wildlife boxes are erected.
- 5.10. One hedgehog box will be located within the adjoining boundary vegetation and will be positioned under the supervision of the appointed ecological clerk of works.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The proposals are for a small number of residential dwellings on a small parcel of land that supports poor quality grassland. This habitat type is of no special ecological interest. There will be no impacts to protected species or habitats of special note.
- 6.2. There will be no significant impacts to boundary vegetation including hedgerows and trees, all of which will be retained as part of the development proposals.
- 6.3. No evidence of protected species was found within the site or in the immediate area during survey work or through a background data search exercise.
- 6.4. Nesting birds will be safeguarded by undertaking works outside the bird nesting season.
- 6.5. An ecological clerk of works will be appointed prior to the commencement of works and will be on call to deal with any unforeseen ecological issues in the unlikely event that they should arise.
- 6.6. The proposed biodiversity enhancements include the creation of a new traditional orchard and landscape planting with native trees and shrubs. In addition, there will be the provision of bat boxes, bird nesting boxes, pollinator boxes and hedgehog boxes. All biodiversity enhancements will be overseen by the appointed ecological clerk of works.
- 6.7. There will be no impacts on statutory or non-statutory ecological designations that are located in the wider area.
- 6.8. In summary, there will be no loss of protected or notable habitats; no habitat fragmentation; and no impacts to protected or notable species.
- 6.9. On current evidence there are no reasons to suggest that the proposed development would lead to any significant impact on protected species or ecological feature of value at the national, county or local level. The development proposals and associated biodiversity enhancements will contribute a net gain for wildlife at the site. As such there are no reasons for refusing planning permission on the grounds of nature conservation.

PLAN 1

Site location



PLAN 2

Proposals

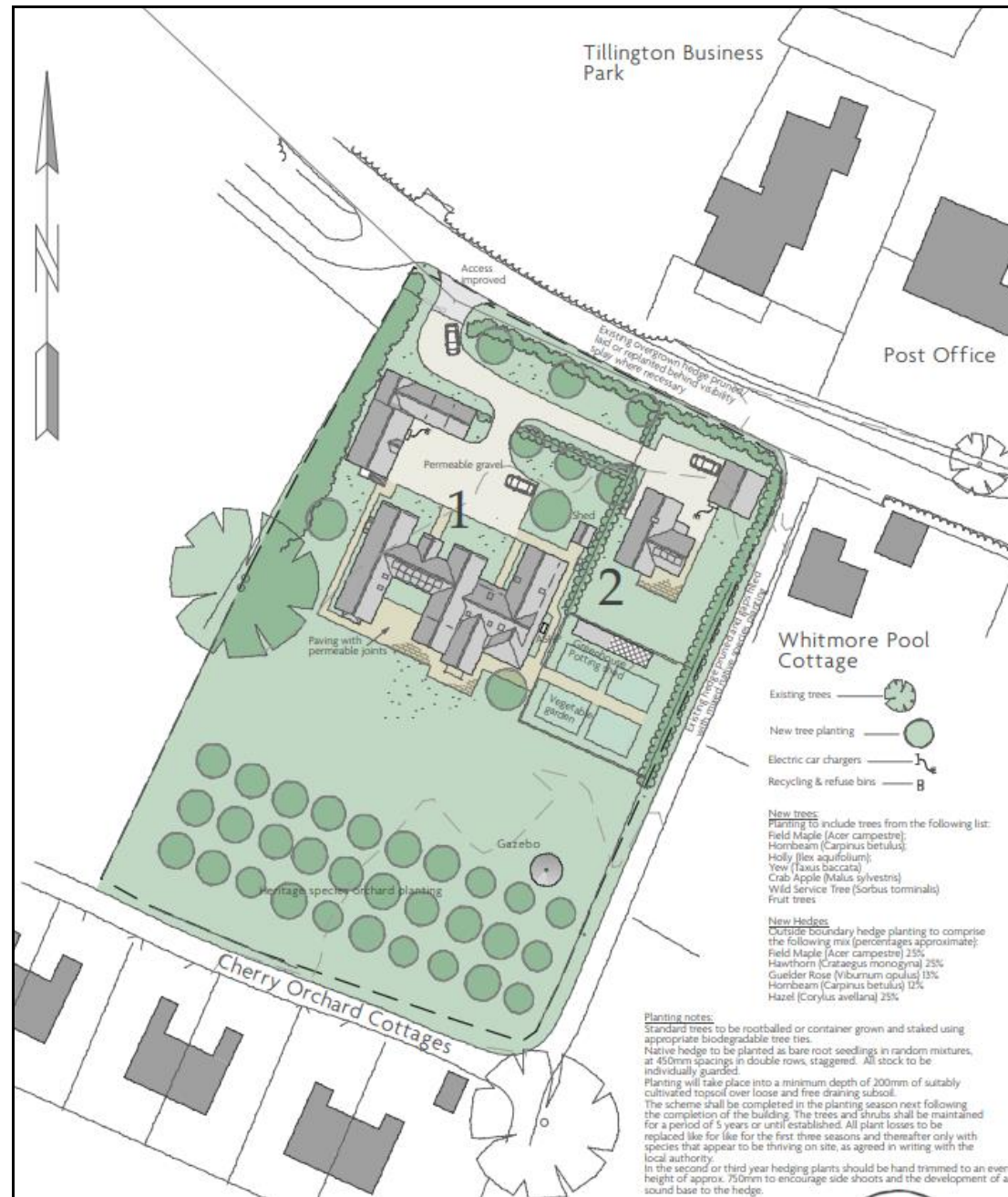




Figure 1

Looking south across the site from the northern roadside boundary.

The site comprises a small field of poor semi-improved grassland.



Figure 2

Looking north across the site from the southern hedgerow boundary.



Figure 3

The site's northern roadside boundary.

Looking east.



Figure 4

The site's southern roadside boundary.

Looking west.



Figure 5

The site's eastern roadside boundary.

Looking south.



Figure 6

The site's western boundary with an adjoining residential garden.

Looking north from inside the proposed development site.

APPENDIX 1

Data search letter from Herefordshire Biological Records Centre



Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre | Fir Tree Lane | Rotherwas | Hereford | HR2 6LA
(01432) 261538 | hbrc@herefordshire.gov.uk | hbrc.org.uk

21st June 2023

TILLINGTON – SO465452

SPECIES RECORDS

Further to your request, I have conducted a search of the database for the area you identified. These records are attached along with a map indicating their distribution.

Grid references containing a combination of letters and numbers, for example 'SO54E' are formulated according to the **DINTY** system. Such records are often from botanical recording, whereby a 10km square is divided into twenty-five equal 2km x 2km squares, each alpha-coded, thus:

E	J	P	U	Z
D	I	N	T	Y
C	H	M	S	X
B	G	L	R	W
A	F	K	Q	V

Therefore the correct full grid references for SO54E are as follows
SO5048, SO5049, SO5148 and
SO5149 i.e. four 1km squares.

Please keep location details of any bat, badger or newt records confidential.

DESIGNATED SITES

In addition, I have produced a map indicating designated sites and have provided register details for the relevant sites:

SO44/22 Pond near Tillington Court SWS
The register states: "A pool with reed beds and a good margin of trees."
Date 1990



HABITAT INFORMATION

Finally, please find attached maps showing Phase 1 Habitats and BAP Priority Habitats within your search area. Please be aware that where Natural England National Inventory BAP Priority Habitats data and HBRC BAP Priority Habitats data overlap in the BAP habitats map that you have been sent HBRC data has been supplied. This is because HBRC data is considered to be more reliable.

Please get in touch if you have any queries. I can confirm that the charge for the retrieval and analysis of your requests is [REDACTED] exclusive of VAT; this includes a fast-track fee to guarantee receipt of the data within 1 – 3 working days of your acceptance of the quote. You will receive an invoice from Herefordshire Council shortly: the Council handle all financial accounting on behalf of HBRC.

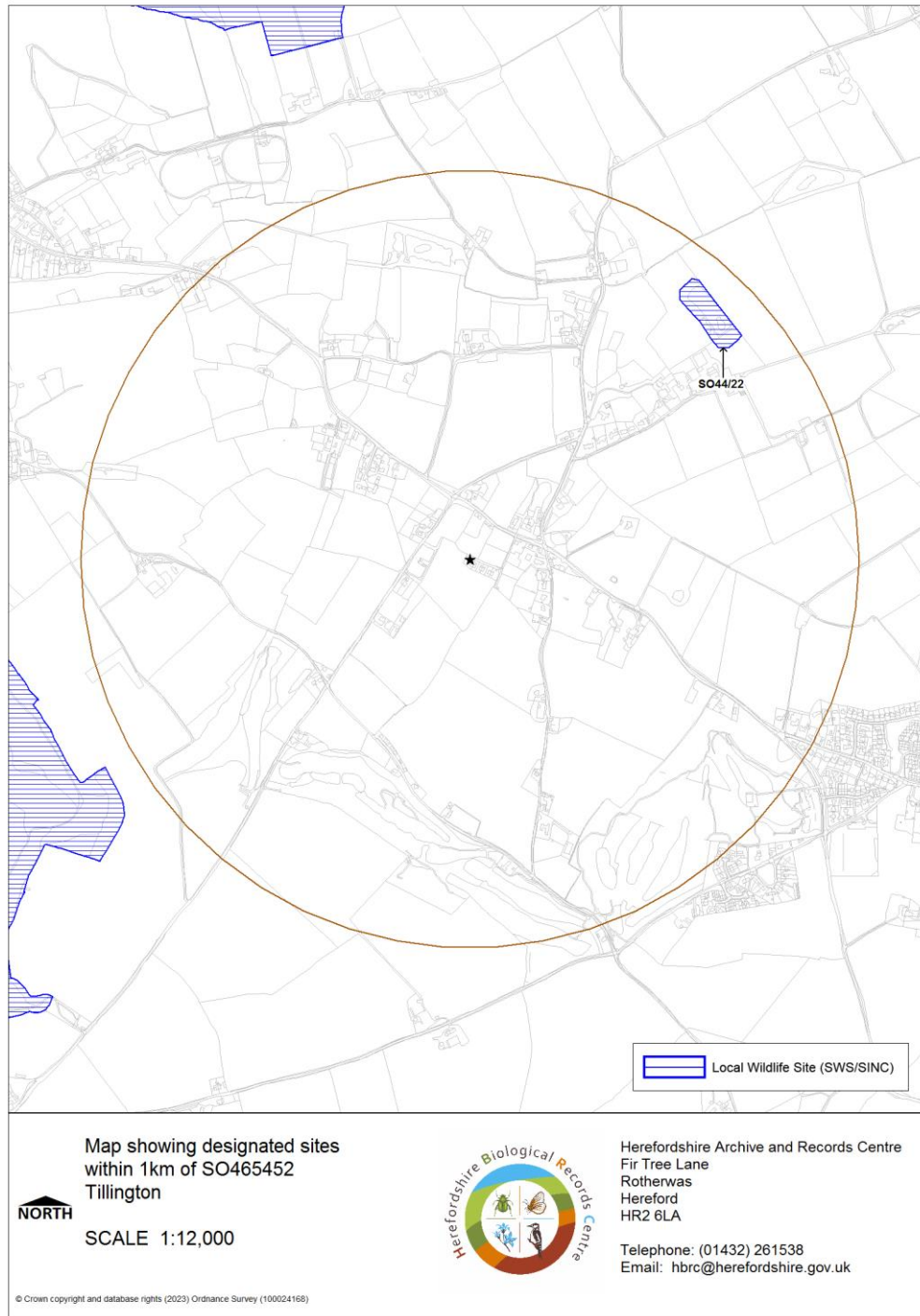
I hope that this information proves to be useful. I look forward to receiving new findings and biological records which any survey you undertake yields: this will help us to improve the information available for natural heritage conservation, research, advice, education and public information.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Tavener
Biological Data Officer
Encs.

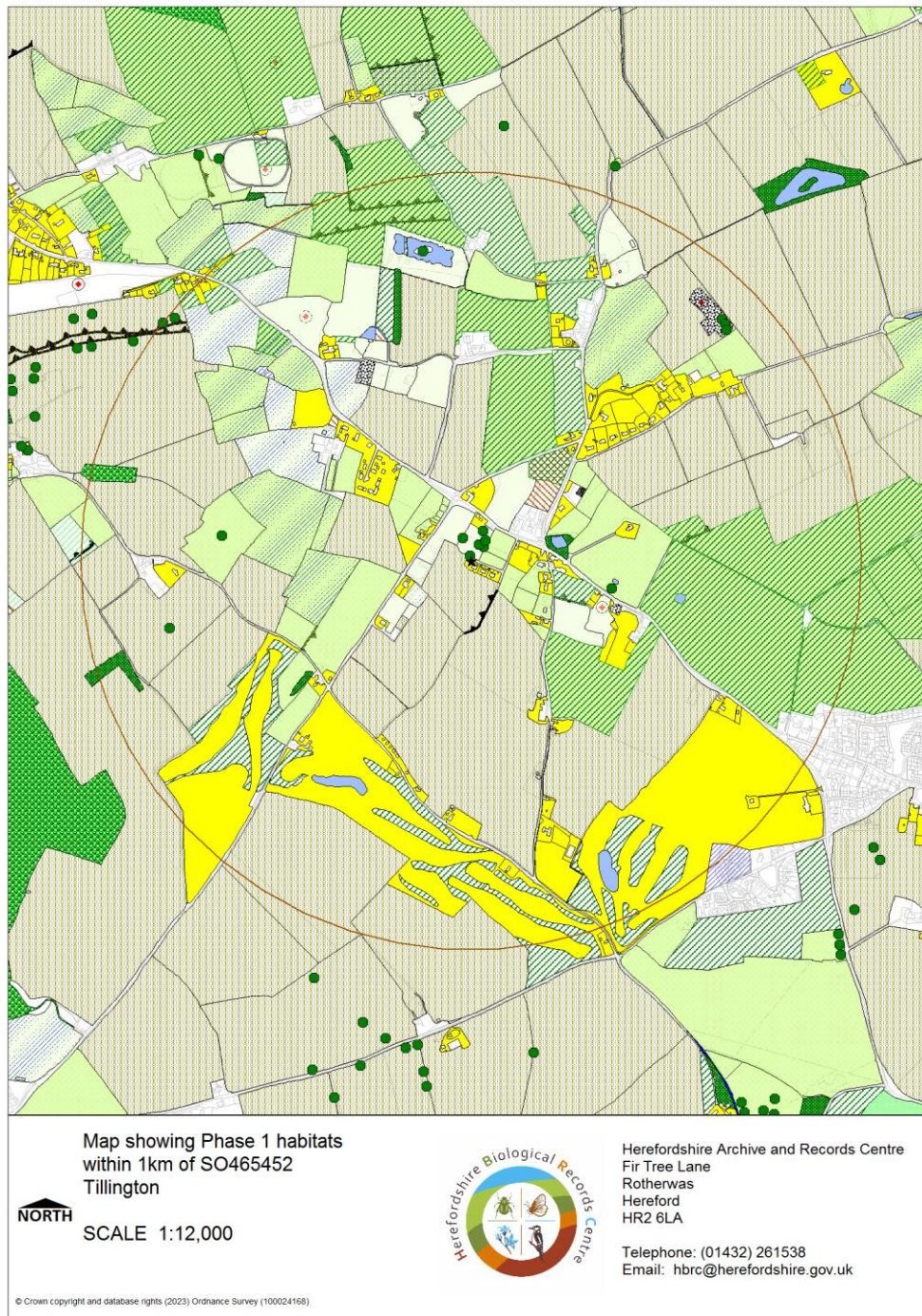
APPENDIX 2

Map showing designated sites within 1km of study area. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.



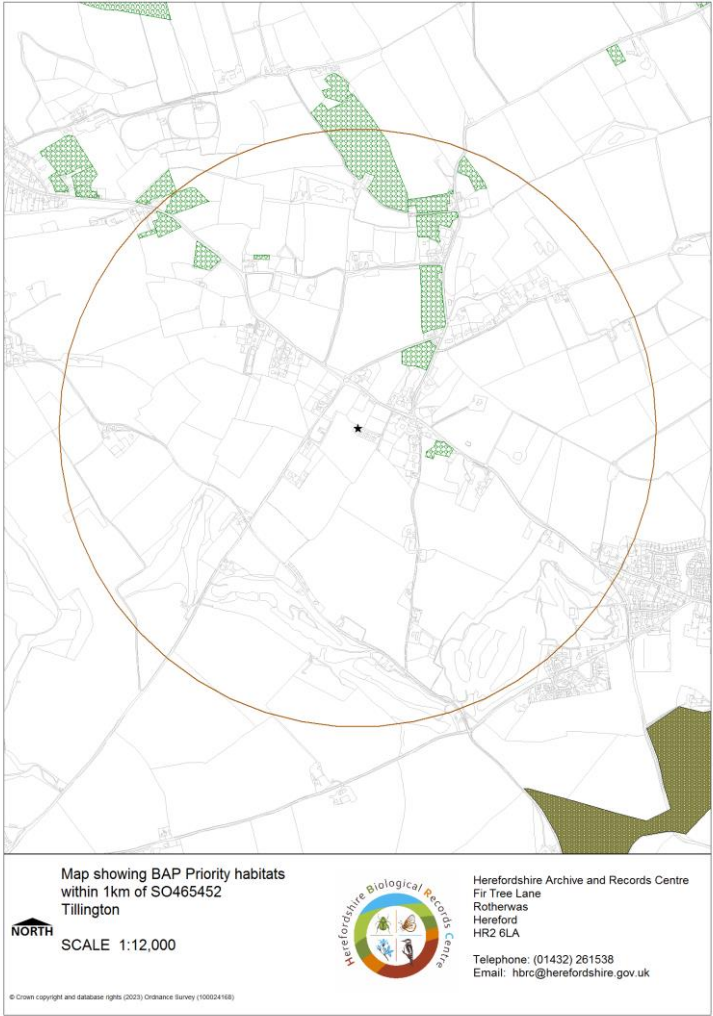
APPENDIX 3

Map showing Phase 1 Habitat within 1km of study area.
Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.



APPENDIX 4

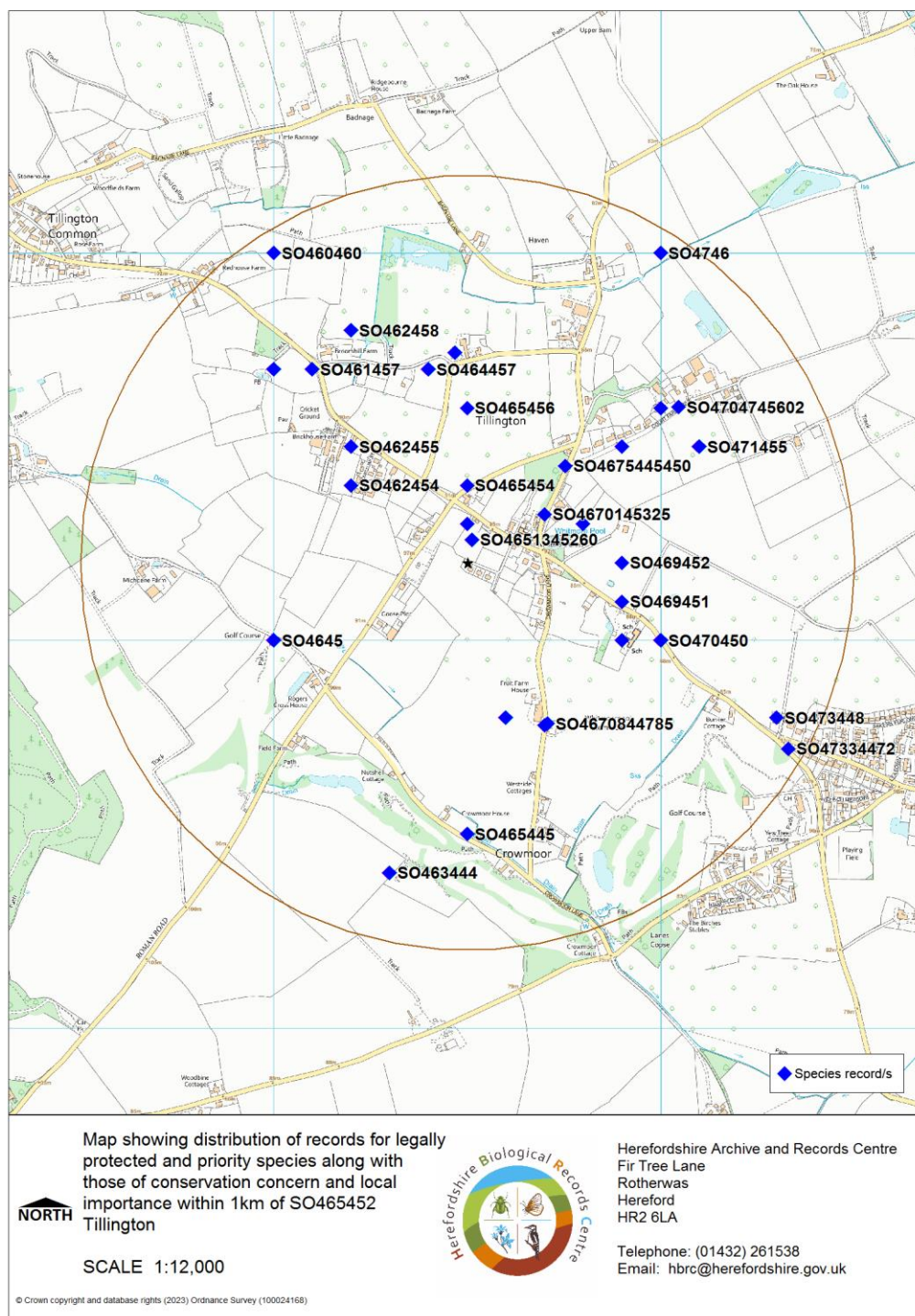
Map showing BAP Priority Habitats within 1km of study area.
Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.



Natural England National Inventories BAP Priority Habitats	HBRC Determined BAP Priority Habitats
Wet woodland	Ancient and/or species rich hedgerows
Upland oakwoods	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
Upland mixed ashwoods	Fens
Upland heathland	Good quality semi-improved grassland
Undetermined Woodland	Lowland beech and yew woodland
Undetermined Grassland	Lowland calcareous grassland
Purple moor grass and rush pasture	Lowland dry acid grassland
Maritime cliff and slope	Lowland heathland
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Lowland meadows
Lowland dry acid grassland	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
Lowland calcareous grassland	Ponds
Lowland beech and yew woodland	Purple Moor-Grass & Rush pasture
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	Traditional Orchard
Blanket bog	Upland calcareous grassland
	Upland Heathland
	Upland Mixed Ashwoods
	Wet woodland

APPENDIX 5

Map showing all protected and priority species recorded within 1km of study area.
Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.



APPENDIX 6

**All protected and priority species recorded within 1km of study area.
Herefordshire Biological Records Centre**

BOUND SEPARATELY