ECOLOGY SERVICES OCTOBER 2022

PROPOSED HOLIDAY CABIN
AT
CHANSTONE COURT FARM
VOWCHURCH
HEREFORDSHIRE
HR2 0QE

PHASE 1 HABITAT ASSESSMENT
&
BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

FOR

CROWN & CANOPY LTD

Ecology Services
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Ecology Services was commissioned to undertake an ecological assessment of a small plot of land that is located at Chanstone Court Farm, Vowchurch, Herefordshire (Plan 1 & Figures 1-6). Grid ref: SO 3615 3548.

1.2. The site comprises part of a large arable field. Surrounding habitats include broadleaved woodland and mature hedgerows.

1.3. A planning application is being prepared seeking permission to erect a holiday cabin on the edge of the arable field (Plan 2). Vehicular access to the holiday cabin and associated parking would be via an existing hardcore track.

1.4. This report sets out the results of a data search exercise and a Phase 1 habitat survey that was undertaken at the site on the 29th June 2022. The report also includes a biodiversity enhancement plan.

Summary of survey findings & proposed ecological enhancements

1.5. The extremely localised area that will support the holiday cabin comprises the edge of an arable field that is of no special ecological interest. There will be no loss of hedgerows, trees or woodland.

1.6. No evidence of protected species such as badgers, dormice, great crested newts, or reptiles was found within the immediate vicinity of the proposed holiday cabin following a Phase 1 habitat survey and a background data search exercise. Any protected species that are present in the wider area would not be impacted on by the extremely localised development proposals.

1.7. The site does not support or adjoin any statutory ecological designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Chanstone Wood SSSI is located a short distance (approximately 20m) to the north west of the proposed holiday cabin. Chanstone Wood SSSI comprises 40 hectares of broadleaved woodland. The proposed holiday cabin will be located just beyond the far north eastern extremity of Chanstone Wood and as such no impacts on the woodland flora and fauna is anticipated. There are no other statutory ecological designations within 1km of the site.

1.8. The site does not support or adjoin any non-statutory ecological designations such as Special Wildlife Sites (SWS). The closest non-statutory ecological designations are Chanstone Wood SWS/SSSI, Bacton Woods SWS and the River Dore SWS. None of these SWS's will be impacted on by the proposed holiday cabin. The north eastern extremity of Chanstone Wood SWS is located approximately 20m from the proposed holiday cabin. Bacton Woods SWS and the River Dore SWS are both located over 0.6km from the site of the proposed holiday cabin.

1.9. Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats located within 1km of the proposed holiday cabin include deciduous woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, hedgerows and traditional orchards. These are all well removed from the site boundary and would not be impacted on by the proposed holiday cabin.

1.10. Extensive ecological enhancements are proposed. This will comprise the establishment of a significant area of new deciduous mixed woodland alongside Chanstone Wood SSSI. Approximately 0.5 hectares of new woodland will be created. This will be achieved by removing the arable field margin from agriculture and allowing the natural colonisation of trees and shrubs from the adjoining Chanstone Wood. The new woodland would represent a very significant net gain for biodiversity.

1.11. In addition to the creation of new deciduous woodland, bat boxes, bird boxes and hedgehog boxes will be erected in Chanstone Wood.

1.12. Prior to the commencement of works an ecological clerk of works will be appointed. The appointed ecological clerk of works will undertake a toolbox talk prior to the commencement of works and will be on call to deal with any ecological issues should they arise. The toolbox talk will emphasise the importance of protecting adjoining hedgerows and woodland. The appointed ecological clerk of works will also advise on the implementation of the ecological enhancements.

1.13. The findings of the Phase 1 ecological assessment indicates that no additional ecological survey work is required at the site.

2. SURVEY METHODS

Habitat survey methodology

2.1. 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 29th June 2022.

2.2. 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.

Faunal survey methodology

2.3. 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, dormice, badgers and nesting birds.

Data search exercise

2.4. 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 existing access track to the site is in a sound condition and does not support any significant vegetation cover (Figure 1). The proposed carparking area is located alongside the existing track and also comprises compacted ground that is in regular usage by farm vehicles and machinery.

3.2. The proposed pedestrian access to the holiday cabin is via an existing footpath that is regularly mowed and comprises the corner of an arable field that has been taken out of production (Figure 2).

3.3. The site of the proposed holiday cabin also comprises the edge of an arable field that has recently been taken out of production. This area supports grasses, annual weeds and colonising vegetation from the adjoining woodland and shelterbelt. The field margin is cut and ploughed on a regular basis (Figure 3, 4 & 6). Species recorded on the footprint of the proposed holiday cabin include perennial rye, sweet vernal grass, cock's-foot, white clover, ribwort plantain, self-heal, creeping buttercup, dandelion and creeping thistle.

3.4. Chanstone Wood and a tall unmanaged hedgerow that supports mature trees is located alongside the northern boundary of the arable field. These areas support a variety of native trees and shrubs including a typical woodland ground flora (see below).

3.5. No evidence of protected species was found within the site of the proposed holiday cabin during the Phase 1 survey. This location comprises mowed grass and is extremely restricted in the opportunities it offers the most commonly encountered protected species. The woodland and hedgerows in the vicinity of the proposed holiday cabin offer opportunities for a wide range of protected species particularly nesting birds but these areas would not be impacted on by the proposed holiday cabin.

Data search exercise

3.6. The results of the data search exercise are reproduced in Appendices 1-6 and are summarised below.

3.7. The site does not support any statutory ecological designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The north eastern extremity of Chanstone Wood SSSI is located approximately 20m to the north west of the proposed holiday cabin (Plan 1 & Appendix 1 & 2). Chanstone Wood SSSI comprises 40 hectares of broadleaved woodland that is dominated by sessile oak and ash with a high proportion of field maple in the shrub layer. Birch, yew, lime and wych elm are also present. The shrub layer also supports hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn and goat willow. The ground flora supports dog's mercury, yellow archangel, enchanter's nightshade, ramsons and bluebell. The woodland supports a rich assemblage of birds including pied flycatcher and redstart. There are no other statutory ecological designations within 1km of the site.

3.8. The site does not support or adjoin any non-statutory ecological designations such as Special Wildlife Sites (SWS). The closest non-statutory ecological designations are Chanstone Wood SWS/SSSI, Bacton Woods SWS and the River Dore SWS. As discussed above, Chanstone Wood is located approximately 20m, to the north west of the proposed holiday cabin. Bacton Woods SWS is well removed from the site of the proposed holiday cabin and is located 0.6km to the south. The River Dore SWS is also well removed being located over 0.6km to the east (Plan 1 & Appendix 1 & 2).

3.9. The Phase 1 habitats map received from HBRC identifies the location of the proposed holiday cabin and the associated pedestrian access as arable land (Appendix 3).

3.10. Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats located within 1km of the proposed holiday cabin include deciduous woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, hedgerows and traditional orchards (Appendix 4).

3.11. Records of protected and notable species are reproduced in Appendices 5 & 6. The data search returned 72 species records for the search area, none of these records were from the vicinity of the site itself. There were two dormouse records from Chanstone Wood. [redacted] Three records of white clawed crayfish were from nearby watercourses. There was also a handful of records of common toad, common frog, palmate newt and smooth newt. The remainder of the records were made up of fish, birds, invertebrates and plants, all of which are well removed from the site boundary and relate to fairly common and widespread species.

3.12. There were no records of reptiles or great crested newts from the 1km search area.

3.13. There were no records of bats from the 1km search area although the woodlands in the local area are known to support important bat populations. However, there will be no impacts on bat roosting sites or foraging areas, especially given the extremely small and localised nature of the proposed holiday cabin.

4. ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

4.1. The site of the proposed holiday cabin supports mowed marginal ground that, until recently, was part of an arable field. This is a common habitat type that is of limited ecological interest.

4.2. The proposed holiday cabin will result in the extremely localised loss of marginal arable land. This is not ecologically significant.

4.3. There will be no loss or impacts on woodland, hedgerows, trees or shrubs that are located in the wider area.

4.4. The site of the proposed holiday cabin does not support protected species. Protected species located in the wider area would not be impacted on by the proposed holiday cabin.

4.5. The site of the proposed holiday cabin does not support any statutory ecological designations such as a SSSI. Chanstone Wood SSSI is located a short distance from the proposed cabin. The proposed ecological enhancements will ensure Chanstone Wood SSSI is protected and enhanced as part of the development proposals (see below).

4.6. Non-statutory ecological designation located in the wider area are well removed from the site and would not be impacted on by the proposed holiday cabin.

4.7. BAP habitats located in the immediate area include deciduous woodland and hedgerows. There will be no impacts on these habitats. The proposed ecological enhancements will result in a net gain for biodiversity associated with woodland and hedgerows (see below).

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 below).

4.9. Substantial ecological enhancements will be achieved through the creation of approximately 0.5 hectares of mixed deciduous woodland (Plan 3). This new woodland area will be located on arable land that adjoins Chanstone Wood SSSI. The new woodland will be allowed to colonise naturally and will represent a significant ecological net gain for the site and local area and will benefit a wide range of flora and fauna.

4.10. Chanstone Wood SSSI supports pied flycatchers. This red list species will benefit from the provision of six bird nesting boxes.

4.11. Bats and hedgehogs will not only benefit from the formation of a new woodland but also from the provision of bat boxes and hedgehog boxes.

4.12. In summary, the site of the proposed holiday cabin is of limited ecological interest supporting no habitats or species of special note. There will be no impacts on protected species or species of special note. There will be no impacts on statutory protected sites, non-statutory protected sites or BAP habitats. The proposed biodiversity enhancements will benefit a wide range of wildlife and will also complement the existing habitats located in the wider area, particularly lowland mixed deciduous woodland which is a BAP Priority Habitat.

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, particularly woodland and hedgerows. 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 quickly resolved.

5.2. In the event that any protected species are encountered (or suspected) all works will stop and the appointed ecological clerk of works will be consulted immediately.

5.3. Any trenches or holes that are created at the construction stage of the holiday cabin will have one section gently sloping to enable any creatures that fall in to escape.

5.4. All building materials, equipment, and excavated materials will be stored on the existing areas of arable ground. No materials will be stored alongside boundary hedgerows or Chanstone Wood.

5.5. Approximately 0.5 hectares of arable field margin will be taken out of agricultural production and set aside for natural woodland recolonisation. This arable land adjoins Chanstone Wood and will very quickly revert back to lowland deciduous woodland (Plan 3).

5.6. Four bat boxes and six bird nesting boxes will be erected on suitable trees in the immediate vicinity of the holiday cabin. The boxes will be erected under the supervision of the appointed ecological clerk of works. The bird boxes will comprise designs suitable for pied flycatcher and redstart.

5.7. Two hedgehog homes will be located inside Chanstone Wood.

5.8. There will be no artificial lighting or illumination of the holiday cabin or surrounding vegetation. External lighting will be restricted to down lighting around the cabin doorway. Holiday cabin windows will not be located where they could illuminate Chanstone Wood (such as the rear of the cabin).

5.9. Pedestrian access into Chanstone Wood will be prevented by the erection of appropriate fencing where required. However, the woodland boundary with the arable field has never been grazed by stock and as a result is extremely dense vegetation. Much of this boundary comprises hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble; most uninviting! The appointed ecological clerk of work will advise accordingly.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. The development proposals are for a holiday cabin on the edge of an arable field at Chanstone Court Farm.

6.2. The site comprises recently abandoned arable land that is now predominantly grass and is cut on a regular basis.

6.3. There will be no direct or indirect impacts on nearby woodlands or hedgerows.

6.4. No evidence of protected species was found within the vicinity of the proposed holiday cabin or associated access track.

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. Substantial biodiversity enhancements are proposed, notably the creation of approximately 0.5 hectares of lowland deciduous woodland along the boundary of Chanstone Wood SSSI. This will represent a significant net gain for a priority Biodiversity Action Plan habitat.

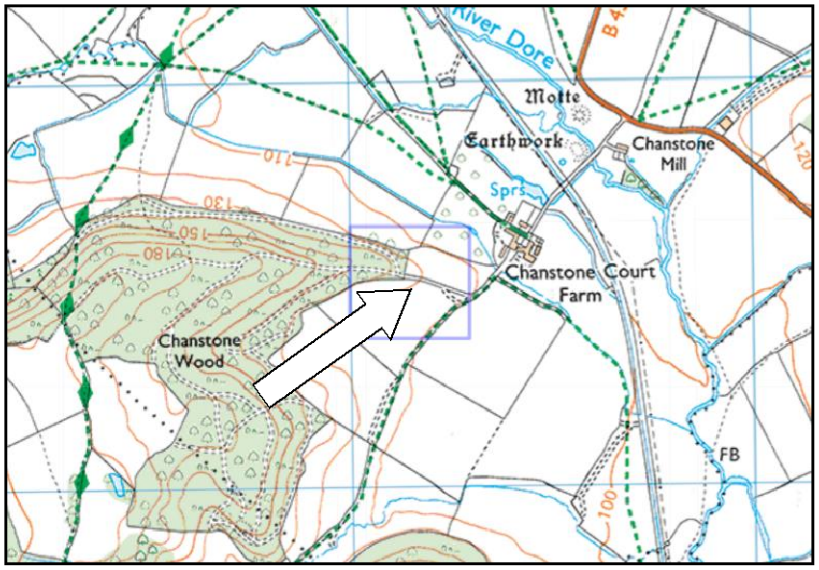
6.7. In addition, there will be the provision of bat boxes, bird nesting boxes and hedgehog boxes. All biodiversity enhancements will be overseen by the appointed ecological clerk of works.

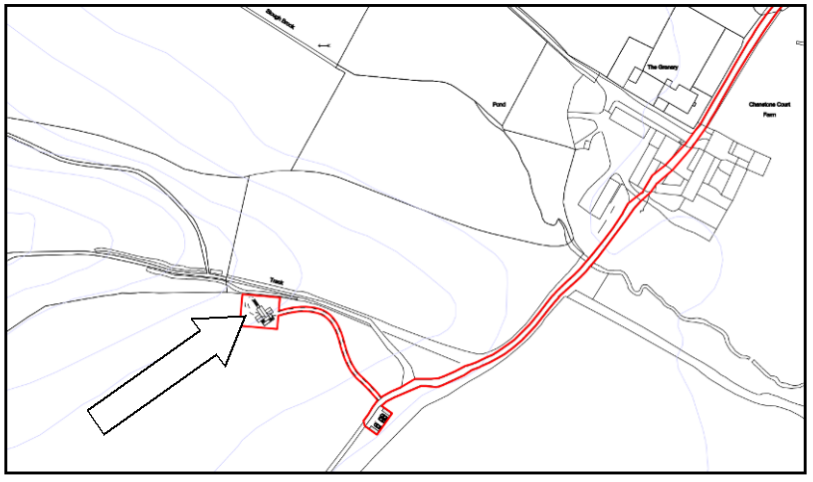
6.8. There will be no impacts on statutory or non-statutory ecological designations that are located in the wider area.

6.9. On current evidence there are no reasons to suggest that the proposed holiday cabin 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 significant net gain for wildlife and biodiversity at the site. As such there are no reasons for refusing planning permission on the grounds of nature conservation.

PLAN 1

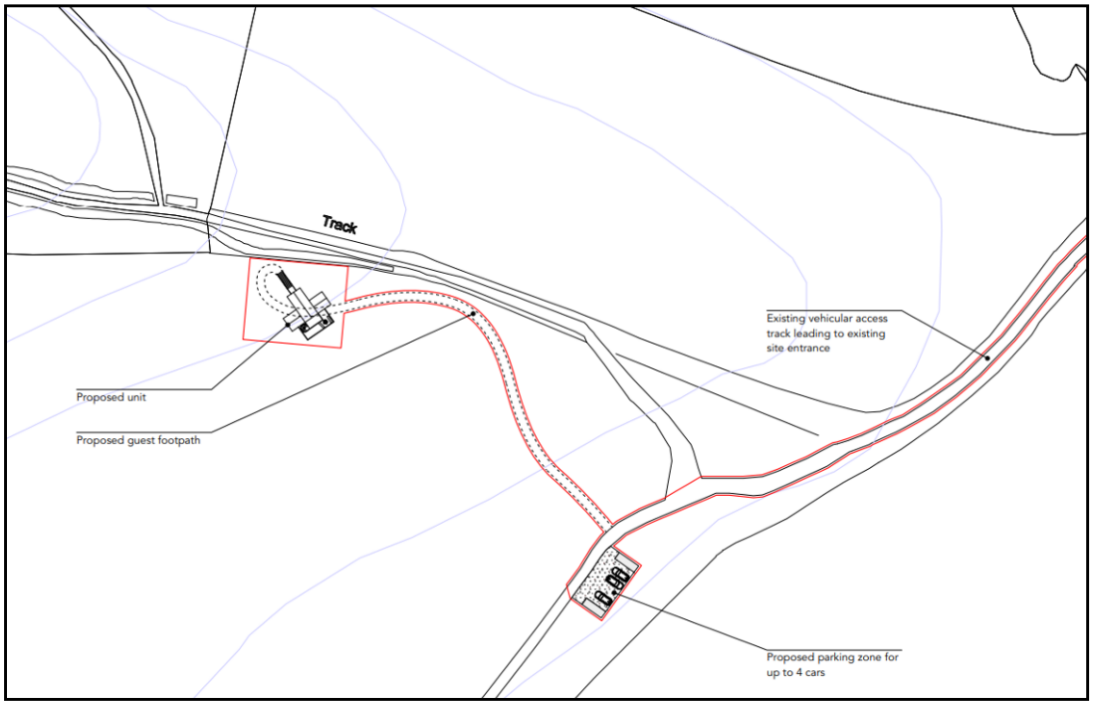
Site location





PLAN 2

Proposals



PLAN 3

Plan showing arable area that will be converted to broadleaved woodland

Figure 1

The existing access track to the proposed holiday cabin.

Looking north from the proposed parking area.

Figure 2

Pedestrian access to the holiday cabin from the parking area will be via an existing mowed footpath across recently abandoned arable land.

Looking north west from the parking area.

Figure 3

The site of the proposed holiday cabin.

Looking west along the arable field margin adjoining Chanstone Wood.

Figure 4

The site of the proposed holiday cabin.

Looking east along the arable field margin adjoining Chanstone Wood.

Figure 5

Looking east along the arable field margin adjoining Chanstone Wood.

This entire boundary will be set aside for woodland regeneration and will result in a significant net gain for biodiversity.

Figure 6

Looking south across the arable field from the site of the proposed holiday cabin.

APPENDIX 1

Data search letter from Herefordshire Biological Records Centre

Herefordshire Biological Records Centre

Supporting wildlife recorders and recording groups in Herefordshire

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

20th September 2022

CHANSTONE COURT – SO361354

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:

A Chanstone Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
The citation details are attached.

Herefordshire Biological Records Centre

Supporting wildlife recorders and recording groups in Herefordshire

SO33/17 Chanstone Wood and adjoining woodland SWS
The register states: "Little, Slough Breast, Great, Quarry, Blackpool, Whitehouse and Chanstone Woods.
An area of ancient woodland, large parts of which are still semi-natural.
Oak and ash are dominant with good numbers of lime and field maple. The ground flora is rich and varied with orchids and abundant bluebells.
The site is a good habitat for birds; pied flycatcher and redstart having been recorded."
Date 1990

SO33/20 Bacton Woods SWS
The register states: "Collier's, Haybrook's, Cwm-sais, Knapp, Lawn, Llan Arw, and Mill Woods. Githouse and Millfield Coppices.
An area of ancient woodland, most of which is still semi-natural, though some has been planted with conifer. Oak and ash are dominant, with some lime and coppiced hazel. The ground flora includes wood-sorrel and broad-leaved helleborine."
Date 1990

SO33/23 River Dore SWS
The register states: "A river with a stony substrate, gravel spits and some deep pools. There is a good margin of mainly alder, with some willow and ash.
The otter is known to occur along this river."
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 £210 exclusive of VAT. You will receive an invoice from Herefordshire Council shortly: the Council handle all financial accounting on behalf of HBRC.

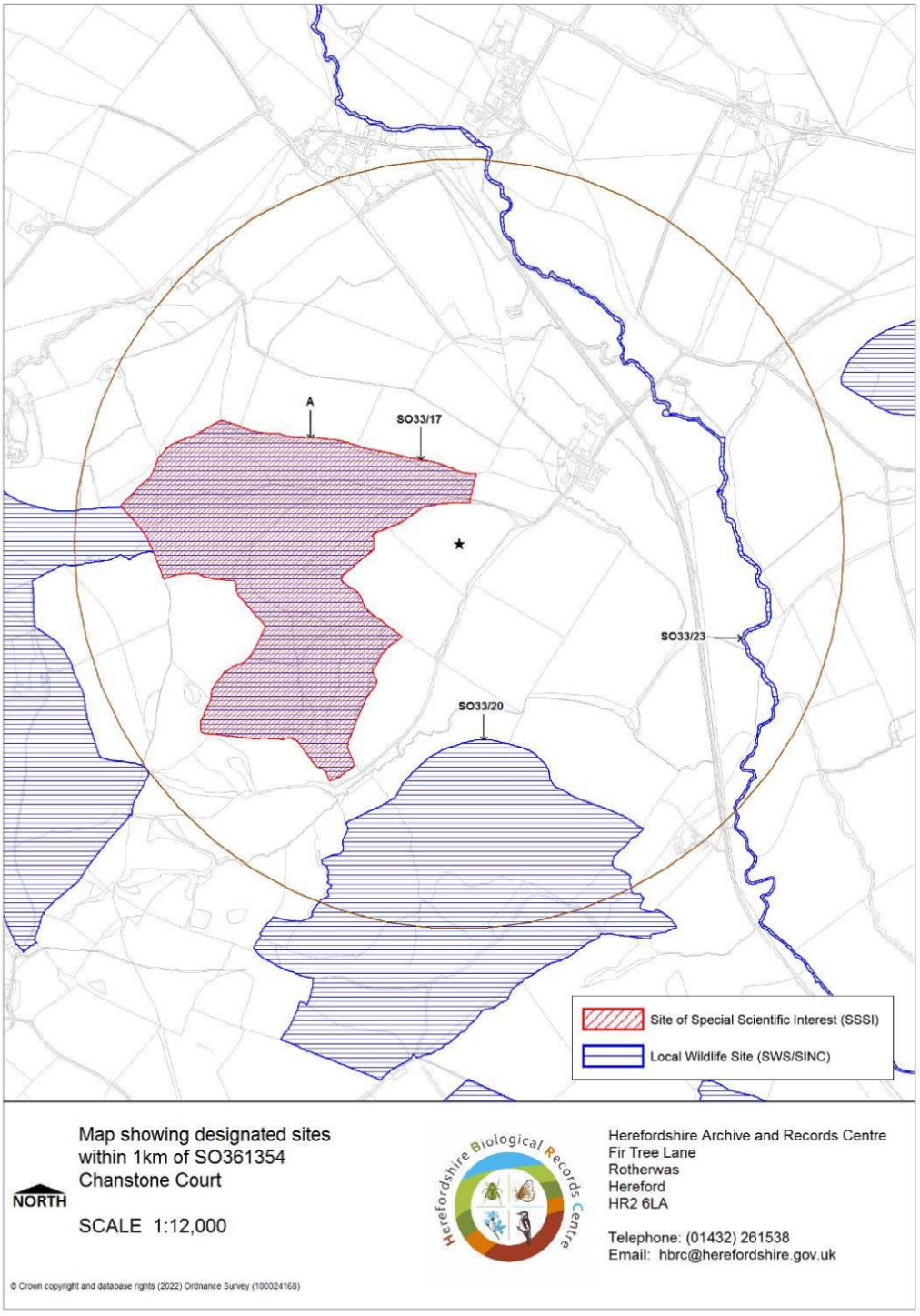
I hope that this information proves to be useful. I look forward to receiving new findings and biological records which any survey you undertake yields: this will help us to improve the information available for natural heritage conservation, research, advice, education and public information.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Tavener
Biological Data Officer
Encs.

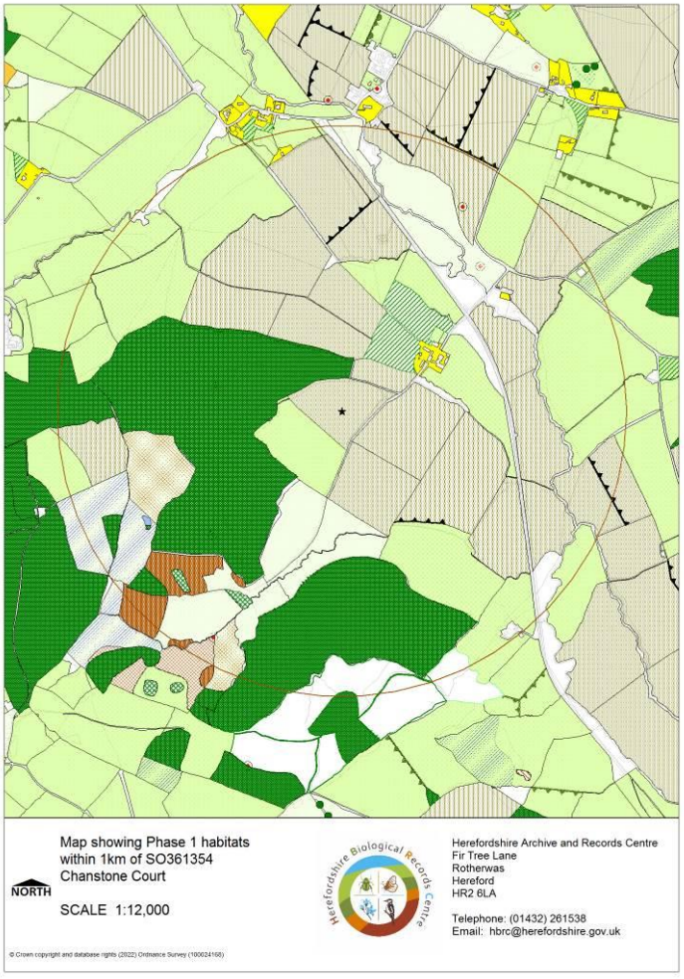
APPENDIX 2

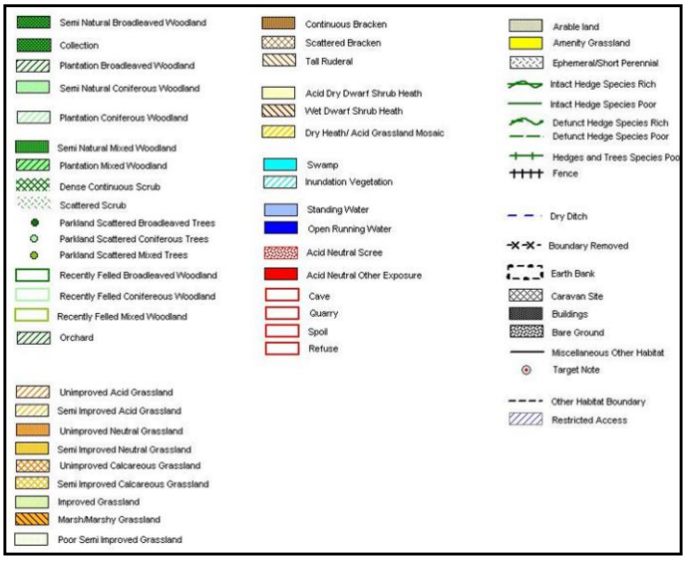
Map showing designated sites within 1km of study area. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.



APPENDIX 3

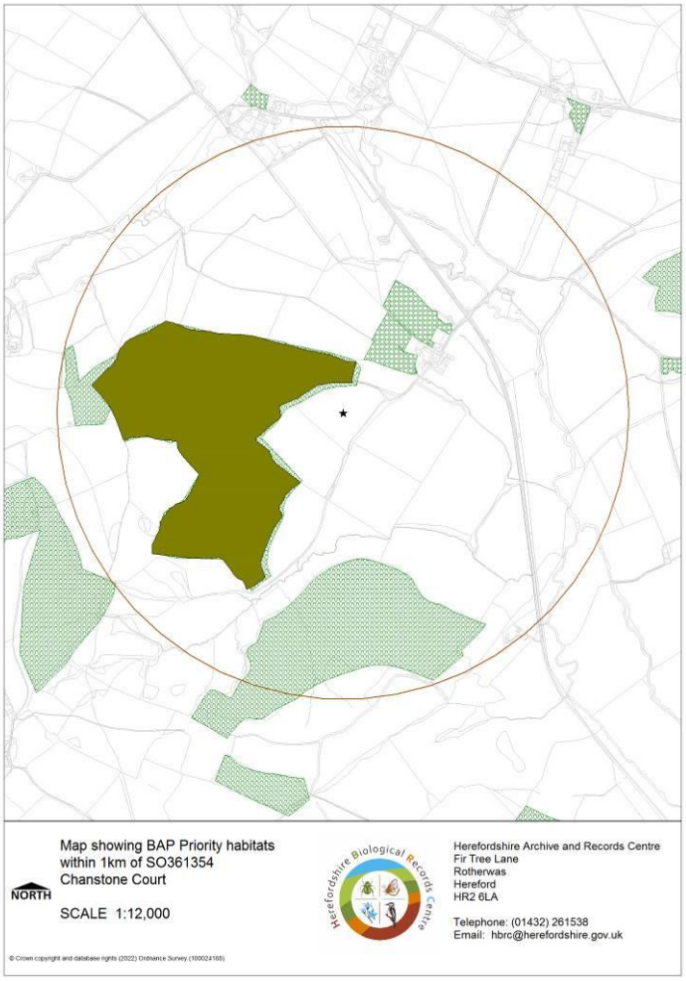
Map showing Phase 1 Habitat within 1km of study area. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.

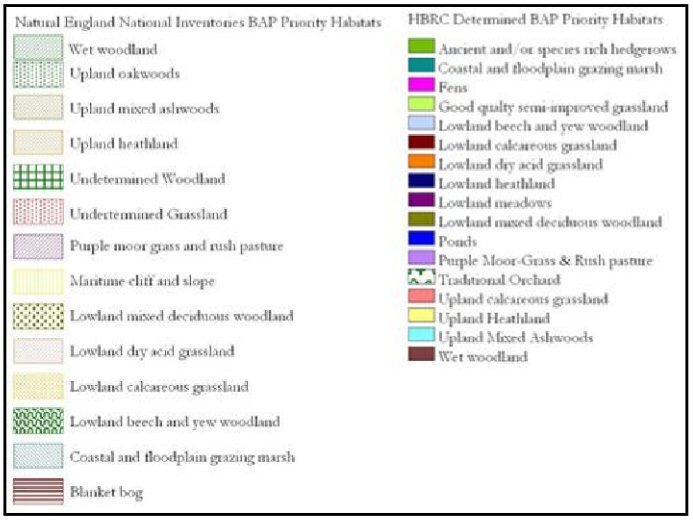




APPENDIX 4

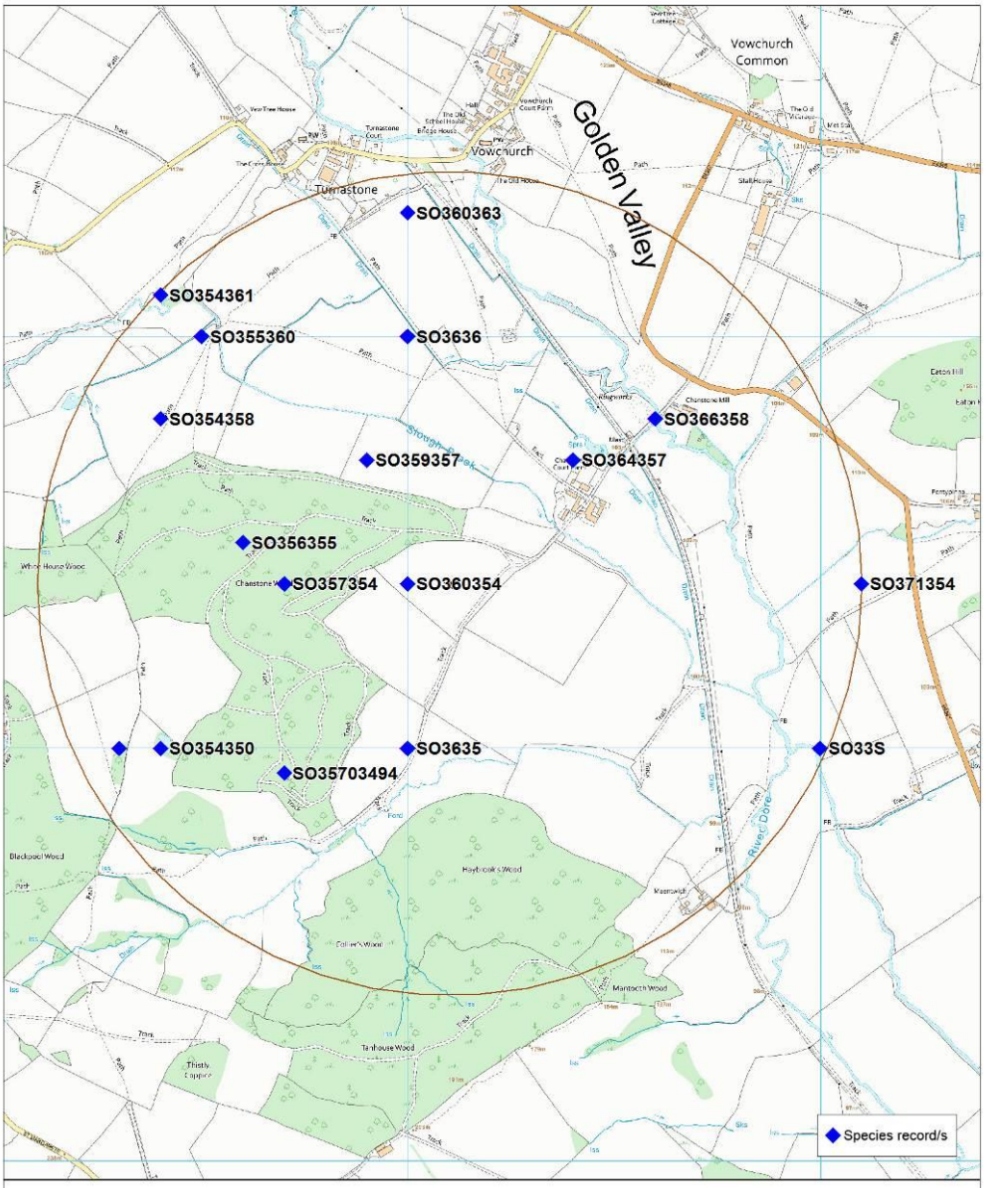
Map showing BAP Priority Habitats within 1km of study area. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.





APPENDIX 5

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



Map showing distribution of records for legally protected and priority species along with those of conservation concern and local importance within 1km of SO361354 Chanstone Court

NORTH

SCALE 1:12,000

Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre
Fir Tree Lane
Rotherwas
Hereford
HR2 6LA

Telephone: (01432) 261538
Email: hbrc@herefordshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 6

All protected and priority species recorded within 1km of study area. Herefordshire Biological Records Centre. Grid Refs bound separately.

Species	
Hornet	*Vespa crabro*
Goshawk	*Accipiter gentilis*
Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*
Yellow Wagtail	*Motacilla flava subsp. flavissima*
Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*
Great Spotted Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos major*
Great Spotted Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos major*
Cornflower	*Centaurea cyanus*
Beautiful Demoiselle	*Calopteryx virgo*
Beautiful Demoiselle	*Calopteryx virgo*
Beautiful Demoiselle	*Calopteryx virgo*
Blue Tit	*Cyanistes caeruleus*
Bullhead	*Cottus gobio*
Buzzard	*Buteo buteo*
Coal Tit	*Periparus ater*
Common Toad	*Bufo bufo*
Dipper	*Cinclus cinclus*
[redacted]	
Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*
Great Tit	*Parus major*
Green Woodpecker	*Picus viridis*
Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*
Hornet	*Vespa crabro*
Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*
Meadow Pipit	*Anthus pratensis*
Mistle Thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*
Nuthatch	*Sitta europaea*
Red Kite	*Milvus milvus*
Red Kite	*Milvus milvus*
Redstart	*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
Robin	*Erithacus rubecula*
Six-spot Burnet	*Zygaena filipendulae*
Stream Water-crowfoot	*Ranunculus penicillatus*
Swift	*Apus apus*
White-clawed Freshwater Crayfish	*Austropotamobius pallipes*
White-clawed Freshwater Crayfish	*Austropotamobius pallipes*
White-clawed Freshwater Crayfish	*Austropotamobius pallipes*
Common Frog	*Rana temporaria*
Common Toad	*Bufo bufo*
Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*
Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*
Palmate Newt	*Lissotriton helveticus*
Smooth Newt	*Lissotriton vulgaris*
Whitethroat	*Sylvia communis*
Bluebell	*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*
Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*
Blood-Vein	*Timandra comae*
Buff Ermine	*Spilosoma lutetum*
Dusky Thorn	*Ennomos fuscantaria*
Oak Lutestring	*Cymatophorima diluta*
Shaded Broad-bar	*Scotopteryx chenopodiata*
Small Phoenix	*Ecliptopera silaceata*
Small Square-spot	*Diarsia rubi*
Small Square-spot	*Diarsia rubi*
Beautiful Demoiselle	*Calopteryx virgo*
Brown/Sea Trout	*Salmo trutta*
Narrow Leaved Water-Plantain	*Alisma lanceolatum*
Mistletoe	*Viscum album*
Brown/Sea Trout	*Salmo trutta*
Bullhead	*Cottus gobio*
European Eel	*Anguilla anguilla*
Common Dormouse	*Muscardinus avellanarius*
Narrow Leaved Water-Plantain	*Alisma lanceolatum*
Bluebell	*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*
Brown/Sea Trout	*Salmo trutta*
Corn Spurrey	*Spergula arvensis*
Dwarf Spurge	*Euphorbia exigua*
Field Woundwort	*Stachys arvensis*
Wild Service-Tree	*Sorbus torminalis*
Megaloma undata	*Megaloma undata*
Wall	*Lasiommata megera*
Wall	*Lasiommata megera*