

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Steeles Wood Stables

July 2026

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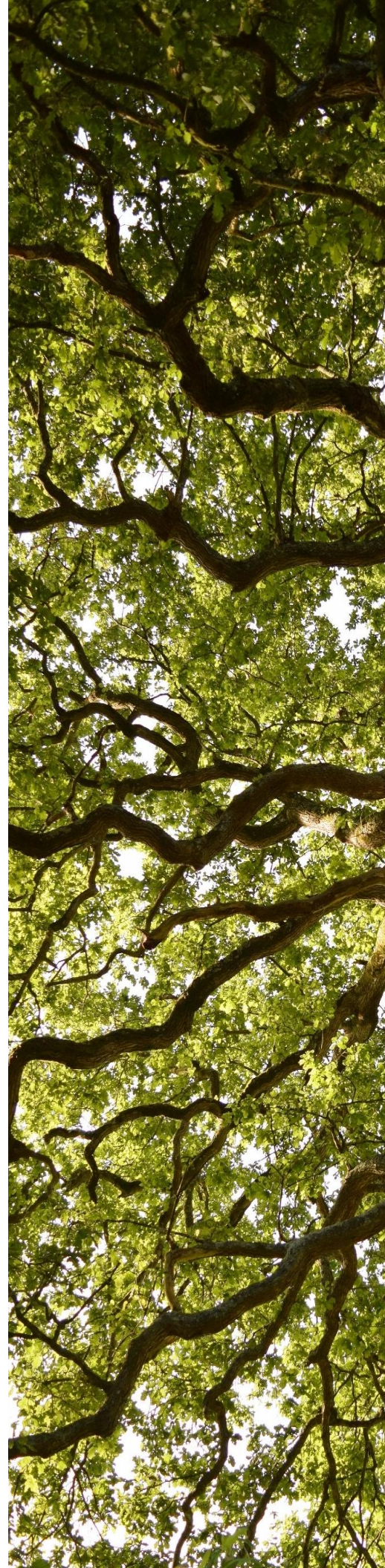
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1.0. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

- 1.1. Kent Sussex Ecology was commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment at 'Steeles Wood Stables', Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0QJ.
- 1.2. The site (redline boundary) is 0.29 hectares and comprises a combination of developed land with sealed and unsealed artificial surfaces, modified grassland, tall forbs, and mixed scrub. The proposed development is for the provision of five residential dwellings with parking and access.
- 1.3. A BNG assessment was carried out in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). The guidance in the 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide' and the condition assessment sheets (Technical Annex 1) were used to inform the metric inputs. The calculations will accompany this report.
- 1.4. The survey area includes all of the habitats within the site boundary. Jo Lewis¹ undertook a UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) survey during the optimal time of year (1st July 2026). Habitats were identified to at least level 4, following the standard UKHab definitions (UKHab 2023). The location and extent of the habitat parcels were mapped and assigned a unique reference ID. A habitat condition assessment was undertaken for each habitat parcel in accordance with criteria set out in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide and the relevant habitat condition sheets (DEFRA 2024, Natural England 2024). The size and condition of each habitat parcel was used to generate a BNG baseline score.
- 1.5. The main biodiversity metric calculation tool was used for the assessment of the site and proposed development. The guidance provided in Natural England's Biodiversity Metric User Guide was utilised to ensure the correct procedure was followed.
The core rules that must be met in order for the metric results to be valid are:
 - Completion of the metric (and baseline habitat assessment) by a competent person;
 - The three types of habitat units generated (area, hedgerow, and watercourse) cannot be summed together to achieve a positive result;
 - The trading rules within the metric must be satisfied.
- 1.6. As the attributes of the site and its habitats may change over time, the results of this survey are considered to be valid for 18 months from completion of the survey, in line with best practice guidance (CIEEM 2019). Assessments within this report are based on a site visit and the layout in the site plan. Subsequent changes to the layout may result in a requirement to reassess the potential impacts of the development.

¹ A competent person has the knowledge and skills to perform specified tasks to complete and review biodiversity metric calculations. Jo Lewis BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM has 18 years' experience working in conservation and 5 years in ecology, and a Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) level 4, she has undertaken CIEEM statutory biodiversity metric training and has completed many metric calculations.



2.0. METRIC INPUTS AND DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

- 2.1. A total of five UKHab habitat types were recorded on site, namely: u1b developed land sealed surface, u1b Developed land; sealed surface, g4 Modified grassland, u1c Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface, g4~16 Tall forbs and h3h Mixed scrub (see Appendix B for a full species list).
- 2.2. The BNG habitat plan (page 6) shows the location and extent of the habitat parcels. Table 1 (below) details baseline biodiversity values for each area habitat. The full BNG baseline calculations are provided within the statutory biodiversity metric spreadsheet for the project. The metric and the statutory biodiversity condition assessment sheets are provided separately.
- 2.3. Table 1. Biodiversity baseline values for area habitats:

Parcel ref(s)	Habitat Type	Baseline condition	Area (ha)	Baseline unit value
1	u1b developed land sealed surface	N/A	0.1336	0.00
2	g4 Modified grassland	Moderate	0.0593	0.24
3	g4 Modified grassland	Good	0.0234	0.14
4	g4 Modified grassland	Moderate	0.0129	0.05
5	u1c Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	N/A	0.0146	0.00
6	u1c Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	N/A	0.0135	0.00
7	u1c Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	N/A	0.0042	0.00
8	g4~16 Tall forbs	Moderate	0.0108	0.04
9	h3h Mixed scrub	Poor	0.0131	0.05
	TOTAL		0.2854	0.52

- 2.4. To offset the loss of the habitat from the proposed development, the wider site within the redline boundary will include:
- Modified grassland (good condition).
 - Mixed scrub (moderate condition).
 - 24 small trees (spaced 6m apart minimum to not constitute 'linear' habitat).



3.0. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

- 3.1. The proposed development successfully meets and exceeds the mandatory 10% statutory net gain requirements, delivering a 13.20% net gain in area habitat and satisfying the trading rules. The uplift is achieved by grassland and scrub creation, as well as tree planting. Therefore, the development demonstrates compliance with BNG legislation.

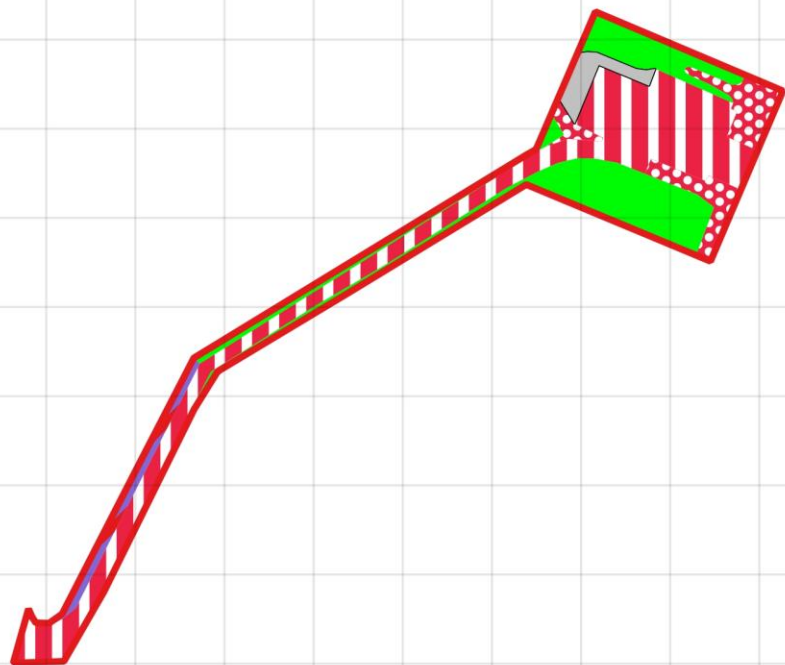
FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.07
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	13.20%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Headline results.

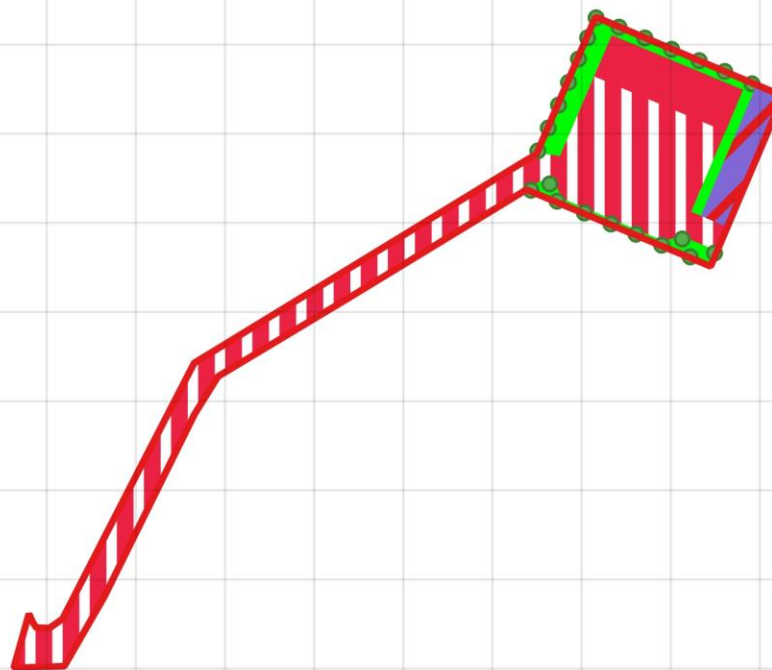
- 3.2. To secure these biodiversity gains, the development will likely be subject to a standard pre-commencement planning condition. This condition will require the submission and approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan alongside a 30-year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan before any works begin.



Existing



Proposed



-  Redline boundary
-  Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Mixed scrub
-  Modified grassland
-  Tall forbs
-  Vegetated garden
-  Individual tree

0 20 40 60 80 100 m



Steeles Wood Stables
BNG Plan Rev A
Scale 1:1600
22.07.2026.

Reproduced with Google Satellite & QGIS



APPENDIX A: PHOTOGRAPHS



The site's sealed surface entrance track and mixed scrub.



The existing building and surrounding grassland.



APPENDIX B: SPECIES LIST

Modified grassland: Av 6.4 Sp/m2		
Grid ref. TQ 63894 64508		
Species	Common name	Status
Yorkshire fog	Holcus lanatus	
Perennial rye	Lolium perenne	
False oat-grass	Arrhenatherum elatius	
Broad-leaved dock	Rumex obtusifolius	
Common nettle	Urtica dioica	
Hogweed	Heracleum sphondylium	
Dandelion	Taraxacum	
Common Bird's-foot trefoil	Lotus corniculatus	
Yarrow	Achillea millefolium	
Field bindweed	Convolvulus arvensis	
Prickly lettuce	Lactuca serriola	
Tall forbs		
Grid ref. TQ 63884 64532		
Species	Common name	Status
Common nettle	Urtica dioica	
Hogweed	Heracleum sphondylium	
Creeping thistle	Cirsium arvense	
Broad-leaved dock	Rumex obtusifolius	
Mixed scrub		
Grid ref. TQ 63775 64431		
Species	Common name	Status
Ash	Fraxinus excelsior	
Sycamore	Acer pseudoplatanus	
Hawthorn	Crataegus monogyna	
Hazel	Corylus avellana	
Cherry laurel	Prunus laurocerasus	
Bramble	Rubus fruticosus	
English oak	Quercus robur	
Traveller's Joy	Clematis vitalba	
Ivy	Hedera helix	



APPENDIX C: LEGISLATION AND REFERENCES

Biodiversity Net Gain Legislation Summary

The Environment Act 2021 introduced mandatory BNG requirements in England, amending the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Schedule 7A). Implementation began February 12, 2024, with some exceptions for smaller developments.

Most new developments requiring planning permission must achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity of at least 10%. This is assessed using a standardised metric that assigns values to different habitat types. Developers must demonstrate how they will achieve BNG through habitat creation, enhancement, or compensation measures. BNG plans must consider a minimum 30-year management period to ensure biodiversity gains are sustained.

A BNG assessment involves making a comparison between the biodiversity value of habitats present within the site prior to development (the 'baseline') and the predicted biodiversity value of habitats following the completion of the development (i.e., 'post-development'). The comparison is made in terms of 'biodiversity units', with a 'biodiversity metric' providing the mechanism to allow biodiversity values to be calculated and compared.

The metric calculates the overall loss or gains of biodiversity for development projects by assessing the distinctiveness (type of habitat and its value), condition, extent, and strategic significance of habitats on site pre- and post-development. To achieve biodiversity net gain, the results must have a post-development score higher than the baseline score. When calculating the post-development biodiversity units, the metric includes a series of standard 'risk multipliers' to account for the inherent risk of creating and restoring habitats, the time taken to establish habitats and the location of the mitigation in relation to the habitats lost on site. The risk multipliers have the effect of reducing the value of the proposed habitats, which means larger areas, habitats of higher distinctiveness, and/or condition are required to achieve net gain.

The metric assesses and generates separate outputs for area-based habitats (measured in habitat units) and linear based habitats, including hedgerows (measured in hedgerow units) and rivers (measured in river units). For the purpose of the BNG assessment, the output with the lowest value is used to determine whether following development there has been a net gain in biodiversity.

Distinctiveness

Each habitat is assigned a score for distinctiveness. Distinctiveness includes parameters such as species richness, diversity, rarity (at local, regional, national, and international scales) and the degree to which a habitat supports species rarely found in other habitats (Treweek et al., 2010). The categories for distinctiveness within the metric are shown within the Natural England guidance.

Condition

The condition of each habitat is assessed using the methods set out in the Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement. This approach determines how many of the condition criteria descriptions for each habitat type are met or are not met. This is used as a guide but may be superseded where appropriate by other evidence and best ecological judgement. Where this is the case, additional information is provided in the tables used to inform the condition assessment.

Strategic Significance

The metric requires that the strategic significance of all baseline and post-development habitats be defined. Strategic significance refers to areas of local priority for biodiversity and nature improvement, identified within local planning policies. As part of this assessment, the relevant local planning policy documents were reviewed to determine the strategic significance of the habitats on site.



CIEEM (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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UK Hab Ltd. (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0. Available: www.ukhab.org.

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