

Ecology response 2 1 26 for F/26/102003 SCOUT HUT, BRICKFIELD LANE, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 4DP

Erection of a two storey "mixed used" Recreational Building for a Scout Hall with Facilities, a Cafe, Meeting Rooms, and First Floor Gym, provided with Refuse Storage, Visitor Cycle Space and 17x Car Parking Spaces, with associated works and level changes.

Gregg Chapman

2/1/26

Summary No ecology objection

Ecology

There are records of bats, hedgehogs and swifts in the wider vicinity of this site.

The protected mature oak trees T1 and T2 at the rear of the site are ecologically important due to their maturity and their position in a line of vegetation that runs along the eastern edge of the Chandler's Ford industrial estate.

I have reviewed the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) (June 2026) and the Bat Report (July 2026) both by Hampshire Ecological Services. The Community building was assessed to have moderate bat roost suitability and the shed had negligible suitability for roosting bats. There were no potential bat roost features in trees T1 and T2, but the trees and hedges have potential for foraging and commuting bats. All trees, hedges and shrubs on site have suitable bird nesting habitat. Two bat emergence surveys were conducted, and no bats were observed emerging or re-entering the buildings during the surveys.

Although the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) report states that there are no potential bat roost features in trees T1 and T2, these trees provide potential habitat for the insects eaten by bats, and for nesting and foraging birds. Oak trees are known contribute to biodiversity by providing habitat for many different invertebrate and vertebrate species. Further information is available on the Woodland Trust webpage Oak Trees and Wildlife.

Ecology would prefer that the proposed development does not reduce the ecological value of these oak trees, but we will defer to the arboriculture officers for their opinion on the suitability of the proposed works and the potential effects on these trees.

Biodiversity net gain

In section 4.10 the Design and Access Statement states *that A BNG baseline habitat assessment was commissioned and has been attached with this application. Correspondence from Gregg Chapman on 15th June 2026 (attached with this application) confirmed a net gain of 0.1% as a minimum would be acceptable, a gain of 0.2% has been achieved and is detailed in the Biodiversity Metric attached.*

I can see the pre- and post-development habitat maps, but I cannot find a Statutory Biodiversity Metric or any other information relating to biodiversity net gain in the list of documents submitted. The site area given on the Application form is 1513.60 sq metres

which is 0.15 hectares, and below the 0.2-hectare threshold for 10% BNG. At least some BNG is required by DM 11.

SuDS

I have reviewed the Sustainable Drainage Assessment report by GeoSMart (August 2026) and the surface water drainage Management and Maintenance Plan.

The Ciria SuDS pollution hazard indices have been calculated, and *the proposed development is considered to be low hazard (runoff from roof, car parking and road)*.

Permeable pavement is proposed for the car park areas. This will provide sufficient pollution hazard mitigation.

Attenuation storage is proposed to be provided by the sub-base of the permeable paving with a hydro-brake vortex flow control regulating the discharge to 1 litre/second into the surface water sewer that runs along Brickfield Lane. Infiltration testing has confirmed that the geology underlying the site will not support infiltration into the ground.

Rainwater harvesting using water butts is also proposed. Rainwater planters along the front of the building may be more useful than water butts alone because there is no garden that needs watering proposed for the site, and the water from the water butts should not be used for anything other than watering the garden due to water cleanliness issues. Rainwater planters could be planted with flowering plants to attract pollinators which would add biodiversity interest and colour to the front of the building. This could also be used as a learning opportunity by Scouts working on Environmental Conservation and Living with Water badges.

Informatives and conditions

Should the issue of the proposed building having an unacceptable effect on the protected oak trees be resolved, the following informatives and conditions are recommended:

In the unlikely event of any bats being found during demolition or construction, all work must stop immediately, and Natural England must be informed. Additional information is available on the Bat Conservation Trust website at <https://www.bats.org.uk/advice/im-working-on-a-building-with-bats/ive-found-a-bat-during-works>.

Any vegetation to be removed to facilitate the development must be removed outside of bird nesting season (which is usually between the beginning of March and the end of August). If this is not possible then vegetation can be cleared only after being checked for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before the start of works. If any active nests are found, work must stop, and a 5 m buffer must be erected around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the birds have fledged and left the nest.

Any excavations or open pipes will need to be covered at night, or provided with a small animal escape ramp (a rough board at a shallow angle) to allow animals to escape if they fall in. If animals are found on site, they should not be handled but must be allowed to move away to safety on their own.

The recommendations for biodiversity enhancements in section 5.6 of the PRA and section 5.6 of the bat report are appropriate and can be conditioned. This includes enhancements for nesting bird (2 built in swift nest boxes and a Woodstone bird box on one of the trees), roosting bats (a built-in bat box, bat brick or tube), wildlife sensitive lighting, scrub containing native species hedgerow plants under-sown with a hedgerow seed mixture and the use of a flowering lawn mix or a shade tolerant meadow mix where grass is proposed under the oak trees.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist