Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Sarah Brooks
Head of Planning
Amber Valley Borough Council
PO Box 18
Town Hall
Ripley, Derbyshire
DE5 3SZ

For the attention of Rebecca Godson

Your Ref: AVA/2025/0691
Our ref: DWTAVA2160c

2nd February 2026

Dear Rebecca,

Proposal: Proposed demolition of existing agricultural outbuildings, erection of 5 dwellings with associated infrastructure and new double garage for the existing bungalow.

Location: Bargate Farm The Croft Bargate Belper Derbyshire DE56 1SQ

Application Ref No.: AVA/2025/0691

With reference to the above application, I am responding as the Biodiversity Planning Officer responsible for work relating to the Service Level Agreement, which the Amber Valley Borough Council and the Trust have signed. The following comments are aimed at providing accurate and up to date information on the nature conservation issues associated with the proposed development.

Response overleaf

Sandy Hill, Main Street, Middleton, Matlock, DE4 4LR
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Wilder by nature

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Further to our response letter dated 27th November 2025, a revised Biodiversity Impact Assessment and metric (Brindle & Green, December 2025) have been submitted for review.

The revised BNG assessment appears to resolve our concerns regarding hedgerow creation and total area of vegetated garden within the site.

The proposals result in a +0.02 gain in habitat units, equating to +12.01% and a gain of +0.05 hedgerow units, equating to +15.61% with trading rules satisfied.

Given that the onsite gains will be minor and restricted to mostly private gardens, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is considered disproportionate. A landscape plan could be secured by the LPA, and we would encourage the inclusion of native or beneficial garden planting, such as small trees and pollinator-friendly shrubs, where possible.

The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain requires a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be submitted and approved by the planning authority to discharge the mandatory biodiversity gain condition prior to the commencement of development.

Guidance for LPAs regarding Gain Plans can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain#para25 and the Gain Plan template is here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-gain-plan

Conditions overleaf

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Nesting Birds

No building works or tree, scrub or hedgerow clearance shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless preceded by a nesting bird survey undertaken by a competent ecologist no more than 48 hours prior to clearance. If nesting birds are present, an appropriate exclusion zone will be implemented and monitored until the chicks have fledged. No works shall be undertaken within exclusion zones whilst nesting birds are present.

Hedgehog Precautionary Measures

Site clearance shall be undertaken in a manner by which to safeguard hedgehogs. All rubble piles, leaf piles, compost heaps, dense vegetation and other general debris that could be used for shelter shall be carefully cleared by hand to a location such as a skip, other container or raised pallets. This shall be undertaken prior to machinery entering site and avoiding the core hibernation period (November-February). If a hedgehog is discovered during clearance, it shall be moved immediately and carefully with gloved hands to an area of shelter such as beneath adjacent hedgerow/bushes. A short statement of compliance shall be submitted to the LPA upon completion of clearance works to discharge this condition.

Lighting

Prior to the installation of lighting fixtures, a detailed lighting strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA to safeguard bats and other nocturnal wildlife. This should provide details of the chosen luminaires, their locations and any mitigating features such as dimmers, PIR sensors and timers. Dependent on the scale of proposed lighting, a lux contour plan may be required to demonstrate acceptable levels of lightspill to any sensitive ecological

zones/features. The Strategy should refer to Guidance Note 08/23 - Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (BCT and ILP, 2023) and explain how proposals have been designed in compliance with this document. Such approved measures will be implemented in full.

Landscape Plan and Monitoring Schedule

Given the limited extent and low distinctiveness of the proposed onsite habitats, it may be that the onsite gains are not considered significant and therefore a HMMP for these is not strictly required. A good quality landscape plan and management schedule may be sufficient to secure the gains.

Species Enhancement Plan

Prior to building works commencing above foundation level, a Species Enhancement Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Approved measures shall be implemented in full and maintained thereafter. The Plan shall clearly show positions, specifications and numbers of features, which will include (but are not limited to) the following:

• integrated universal nest boxes / swift bricks at ratio of 1:1, in line with British Standard 42021:2022, erected at eaves level, avoiding southern elevations.

• integrated bat boxes (1 per dwelling) erected at eaves level, favouring southern elevations.

• bee bricks in dwellings

• fencing gaps 130 mm x 130 mm to maintain connectivity for hedgehogs in all gardens.

A statement of good practice including photographs should be submitted to the local planning authority prior to fully discharging this condition, demonstrating

that the enhancements have been selected and installed in accordance with the above.

It is hoped that the information provided is helpful to the Council. If you require any further information or wish to discuss any of the comments made, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Holly Fowler

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