Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

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

For the attention of Laura Anthony

Your Ref: AVA/2026/0306
Our ref: DWTAVA2379b

21st October 2026

Dear Laura,

Proposal: Creation of an earth bank slurry lagoon to support the Dairy Enterprise at New Buildings Farm

Location: New Buildings Farm Calladine Lane Shottle Belper Derbyshire DE56 2DY

Application Ref No.: AVA/2026/0306

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

Further to our response letter and additional correspondence in August 2026, we have been made aware of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Arbtech, October 2026), Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and metric (Arbtech, October 2026). Please find our updated comments below:

It is understood that the application pertains to the development of an earth bank slurry lagoon within a field north of New Buildings Farm.

The PEA presents the results of an extended UK Habitat Classification survey conducted on 15th September 2026. The site consists of modified grassland, artificial unvegetated and unsealed surfaces, and individual trees, with native hedgerows and trees along all boundaries. Most of the site is of limited ecological value; however, the boundary hedgerows are classed as a habitat of principal importance under the NERC Act 2006.

We acknowledge the presence of two off-site flowing ditches; one located immediately adjacent to the north-eastern boundary and the other immediately adjacent to the south-eastern boundary. Whilst not within the redline boundary, the features are considered to provide ecological connectivity.

The proposals will result in the loss of 0.88ha of modified grassland. All boundary hedgerows and trees will be retained. We would advise that all retained trees and hedgerows should be protected from damage during construction by the erection of adequate temporary fencing, in line with BS5837, prior to the commencement of groundworks. This fencing should remain in place for the duration of construction as a condition of any permission. These details should be provided in an Arboricultural Method Statement.

The main species constraints relate to badgers, hedgehogs and common herptiles. Although the removal of modified grassland is not anticipated to have a significant impact, there is a residual risk that the above ecological receptors may be negatively impacted during site clearance and construction works. We support the recommended mitigation measures as detailed in the PEA.

It is noted that the site lies within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Mount Pleasant Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Despite the PEA stating that site does

not meet any of the IRZ descriptions, it is our understanding that the slurry lagoon will measure 57m x 57m / 3249m². The development therefore falls under the air pollution criteria *'livestock & poultry units with a floorspace > 500m², slurry lagoons > 750m² & manure stores > 3500 tonnes'*. **Natural England should therefore be consulted for advice on the nature of the potential impacts and how these might be avoided or mitigated.**

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

We have reviewed the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and metric (Arbtech, October 2026). Proposals will result in the loss of 0.88ha of modified grassland. On-site gains pertain to 0.45ha of 'other neutral grassland' in moderate condition and 340m of 'native hedgerow with trees' in moderate condition.

Proposals result in a +1.25 gain in habitat units (+10.07%) and a +1.90 gain in hedgerow units (+14.17%) with trading rules satisfied.

A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is sufficent to secure the on-site gains.

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

Nothwithstanding the need to consult Natural England regarding the potential impacts on Mount Pleasant SSSI, the following conditions are anticipated:

Best practice measures

All works should be undertaken in a manner by which to safeguard common reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs, and badgers. Immediately prior to commencement, the footprint of works should be checked for any wildlife.

Any scrub or shrubs requiring removal should be cut by hand to ground level and removed from the footprint of works so as not to create habitat piles. If common amphibians or reptiles are discovered, they should be allowed to move away freely or can be carefully collected with gloved hand and clean container and moved to an area of safety.

All excavations shall be covered overnight or else have an escape ramp installed to prevent entrapment of badgers, hedgehogs and other wildlife. All pipework greater than 150 mm shall be blanked off at the end of the day and chemicals shall be stored securely. Topsoil mounds shall be checked for badger activity prior to removal or re-use. An ecologist shall be contacted if any evidence of badger activity is found within the application area during development.

Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan

Prior to the commencement of the development, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the LPA. If the standard HMMP template is not used, the HMMP checklist shall be consulted to ensure all appropriate information is included. The HMMP shall identify the habitats to be retained, created and / or enhanced on the site over the mandatory 30-year period and specify the appropriate management

prescriptions to secure the predicted condition targets, as per the approved biodiversity metric for the application. The HMMP shall also set out a proportionate monitoring schedule to ensure targets are met and remedial actions to take if not. Guidance on producing a HMMP can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/creating-a-habitat-management-and-monitoring-plan-for-biodiversity-net-gain

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:

- tree-mounted bird boxes and/or barn owl boxes
- tree-mounted bat boxes

Prior to occupation, a statement of good practice including photographs should be submitted to the local planning authority to fully discharge this condition. This shall clearly demonstrate 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.

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Wilder by nature

Yours sincerely,

Holly Fowler

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