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**Preliminary Ecological Appraisal  
for a proposed development  
on land at  
Llanilar  
Ceredigion**

**Client: Patrick Loxdale**

**Survey Date: 15/4/2026**

**Report Reference: WW/15426**

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## 1. Introduction

Wyndrush Wild was contracted to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal in support of an application to Ceredigion County Council for a new housing development on agricultural land.

The proposed development is on the edge of Llanilar. The grid reference is SN622752 (see figure 1 below).

The aim of the survey is to provide baseline data on habitat and species, both on and adjacent to the site, and to investigate potential impacts that may occur during construction and post-construction stages. An assessment is made of any potential impact on Priority habitats, Priority or protected species, or designated sites in the area.



*Surveyed area*

## Site Description

The proposed site is a gently undulating field on the northern edge of Llanilar. This is used as pasture, and was grazed by cattle at the time of survey. There are no watercourses within the application area, but a wooded stream – the Nant Adail – adjoins the site to the north-east. This is a tributary of the Afon Ystywth which lies a short distance to the north.



*Proposed Development Site*

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Desk Exercise

A partial desk exercise was carried out. There are no protected sites within 2km; the Gro Ty'n yr Helyg SSSI lies just over 2km alongside the Afon Ystywth downstream. The Afon Ystywth discharges into the West Wales Marine SAC over 6km downstream.

Neither the Ceredigion Rare Plant Register (Chater, 2001) or Ceredigion Rare Bryophyte Register (Sutton, in prep) hold any records from on or near the site.

Protected species are known from the area. Otters are present on the nearby Afon Ystywth. Bats are widespread in the area, including a maternity roost of brown long-eared bats just to the south of Llanilar. There are no records of hazel dormouse from near the site.

### 2.2 Extended Phase I Survey

A thorough site inspection was made on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026. The survey followed the methodology set out by the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC, 1993) and then subsequently by

the Institute of Environmental Assessment (1995) and CIEEM. The methods provide quick and accurate classification of habitats.

In addition, the survey looked for field signs of protected species and assessed the habitat for their potential presence. Measures taken included:

- Consideration of the potential impact of the development on bats, badgers, hazel dormouse, other protected species and those classed as of conservation concern in Wales.
- Recording birds and identifying the suitability of the habitat for nesting birds especially those listed as species of conservation concern.
- Recording a list of plants found on the site, shown in Appendix 1.

### **2.3 Constraints**

There were no constraints to the survey.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Vegetation and habitat survey

The habitats within the application area were recorded in detail; adjoining habitats are also mapped. The site comprises improved grassland (B4) including areas with soft rush (B4 + Ju) and intact species-poor hedge (J2.1.2). Semi-natural broadleaved woodland (A1.1.1) and running water (G2) lie outside of the application area.



*Phase I habitat map*

## Improved Grassland (B4)



*Grassland across the field is species-poor and dominated by agriculturally-favoured grasses*

The grassland across the field is pasture, and was grazed by a herd of young cattle at the time of survey. The sward is strongly grass-dominated with Yorkshire fog, and perennial ryegrass the most prominent species; crested dog's-tail is also present and red fescue and sweet vernal grass were noted towards the northern edge. The few associated species are generally indicators of agricultural enrichment or disturbance, such as white clover, dandelion, creeping buttercup and broad-leaved. Occasional plants of meadow buttercup and red clover towards the northern hedgerow suggest localised transitions towards poor semi-improved grassland. Damper ground near the western fenceline has some soft rush and cuckoo flower, but no indicators of marshy grassland. The vegetation here is of no ecological significance.



*Soft rush patches are present near the western boundary*

## Hedgerow: Intact Species-poor (J2.1.2)



*South-eastern boundary hedge*

The boundary against the adjoining gardens is a trimmed hedge on a low bank, typified by holly, blackthorn, hawthorn and beech.

The northern boundary is a relatively recently planted hedge on a low earth bank, dominated by hawthorn and with field maple and spindle amongst the occasional other species. There is a mature ash standard in the centre of the hedge.

The southern roadside boundary is a thorn hedge with some sycamore on a low bank; there is a tarmac pavement rather than a grass verge. The western boundary is a wire fence.

Hedges are a Priority Habitat and all examples are of some ecological value. These examples are species-poor; the mature ash is the most notable feature here.



*Planted northern boundary hedge with ash standard*

### 3.2 Protected and Notable species

No badger setts, runs or foraging signs were found. The proposed development would not impact on badgers. The site has no potential attraction to otters, although they are present on the nearby Afon Ystwyth. The poor-quality hedges are too sparse to support hazel dormouse. Hedgehogs are unlikely to be present, and there are no obvious hibernacula on site.

Although the field itself has no potential for reptiles; common lizards may be present in association with the boundaries

The hedges may provide some bird nesting habitat; two Birds of Conservation Concern - house sparrow and dunnock - were noted in the southern boundary hedge. A rookery is present in mature trees beside the river to the north-east of the site.

The only mature tree within the application area – the old ash on the northern boundary – had no obvious potential features which could be used by roosting bats; this would be retained. The site will provide little in the way of foraging habitat, but the hedges may be used as foraging and commuting corridors.

### 3.3 Invasive Species

No invasive non-native species were found within the application area. Variegated yellow archangel was noted by the stream outside of the site boundary.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Scheme Details



*Hedgerow potentially requiring removal / adjustment for access purposes*

The development proposal is for a new housing estate. Full scheme details were not available prior to survey. The short section of roadside hedge may require removal or translocation for access purposes.

#### **4.2 Compliance with Environment Wales Act / Net Biodiversity Gain**

Ceredigion County Council requires that biodiversity enhancements are included in all developments to meet the Authority's Duty of Care under Section 6 of the Environment Act 2016.

Hedgerows are a 'Priority Habitat' and should be protected during the development. The mature ash tree on the northern boundary will require a root protection zone.

Integrity of the roadside hedge should be maintained by careful translocation rather than removal. A new hedgerow of locally-appropriate native shrubs and trees could be planted on the western boundary to provide Biodiversity Net Gain; soil derived from groundworks could be used to form a bank here to be planted on to.

Swift nest boxes or swift bricks should be incorporated into the eaves of the new houses; this declining species is present in Llanilar. The inclusion of bat roosting features could also be considered within the roof space of the new houses. The use of bat access tiles is a simple way to allow bat access to a void within the roof space.

A Green Infrastructure Statement should be produced to detail such measures.

#### **4.3 Recommendations**

Although there are no watercourses on the application area itself, site development should take place in a manner which controls potentially polluting discharges towards the Afon Ystwyth which drains into the West Wales Marine SAC; such measures may require detailing in a pollution prevention plan or similar.

Any lighting associated with the scheme should be minimised to avoid impacts on nocturnal wildlife. In particular, any external lighting should be hooded, downward-directed and controlled by short duration PIR sensors.

### **5. Summary and Conclusions**

The proposed development does not present a significant risk to Priority or protected habitats or species in the area. A Green Infrastructure will be required to detail how biodiversity net gain will be achieved through wildlife-friendly landscaping measures.

## 6. References

Chater, A.O. (2001) Ceredigion Rare Plant Register.

Handbook for Phase I habitat survey Nature Conservancy Council 1990

Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win I. 2021. The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. *British Birds* 114:

Sutton, M.D. (in prep) Ceredigion Rare Bryophyte Register. Unpublished.

## Appendix 1 Plant species recorded across the field during the walkover visit

Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Sweet Vernal Grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>
Cuckoo Flower	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Spear Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
Hazel	<i>Coryllus avellana</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Crested Dog's-tail	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
Spindle	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>
Lesser Celandine	<i>Ficaria verna</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Goose-grass	<i>Galium aparine</i>
Ground Ivy	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>
Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Soft Rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymneum</i>
Field Woodrush	<i>Luzula campestris</i>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
Sessile / Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus petraea / robur</i>
Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
Broad-leaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>
Smooth Sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>
Greater Stitchwort	<i>Stellaria holosteoides</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>

Red Clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Cornsalad	<i>Valerianella sp.</i>
Common Field Speedwell	<i>Veronica persica</i>
Thyme-leaved Speedwell	<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>