



**Proposed Padel Courts, The John Pointon Sport and
Recreational Facility, Felthouse Lane, Cheddleton,
Staffordshire, ST13 7BP**

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Prepared on behalf of

Pointon Park

Final Report

15 September 2025

Proposed Padel Courts, The John Pointon Sport and Recreational Facility, Felthouse Lane, Cheddleton, Staffordshire, ST13 7BP

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Document Control

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Provided no significant changes are made to the proposals or on the site subsequent to the report's issue; this report can be considered valid for 18 months from the date of issue, in line with CIEEM's Advice Note on The Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys (2019).

As part of membership to our professional body (CIEEM) we are required to provide our biological results to applicable biological record centres. As such, it is our intention to supply biological data collected as part of this assessment to the relevant centre unless directly instructed in writing not to do so by the client.

Proposed Padel Courts, The John Pointon Sport and Recreational Facility, Felthouse Lane, Cheddleton, Staffordshire, ST13 7BP

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- Liz Ecology was commissioned by Pointon Park to conduct a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of the land at Proposed Padel Courts, The John Pointon Sport and Recreational Facility, Felthouse Lane, Cheddleton, Staffordshire, ST13 7BP . The survey was conducted to support a planning application for the removal of the existing skate park and the construction of two new padel courts.
- The purpose of this report is to identify the net percentage change in biodiversity on-site post-development and to aim for a minimum of a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)
- The current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that planning should provide biodiversity net gains where possible. Due to the date at which the planning application was granted, mandatory biodiversity net gain set out in the Environment Act was not applicable, as this did not come into force until February 2024 for new planning application.
- The development site is approximately 800m² and consists of developed land; sealed surface, and modified grassland.
- The baseline habitat units are 0.21 and hedgerow units are 0.00.
- It is predicted that the proposal will have 0.23 habitat units created, with a net increase of 0.03 units, showing a 12.65% net gain.
- Due to the proposed development site size and habitats present a preliminary ecological appraisal is not considered necessary. In its current state the site has no potential to support protected species.

Proposed Padel Courts, The John Pointon Sport and Recreational Facility, Felthouse Lane, Cheddleton, Staffordshire, ST13 7BP

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Liz Ecology was commissioned by Pointon Park to conduct Biodiversity Net Gain assessment of the land at Proposed Padel Courts, The John Pointon Sport and Recreational Facility, Felthouse Lane, Cheddleton, Staffordshire, ST13 7BP (Grid reference: SJ 96823 50705).
- 1.2 The survey was conducted to support a planning application for the removal of the existing skate park and the construction of two new padel courts.
- 1.3 There is a contractual obligation to deliver a 10% net gain for biodiversity for this project. This concept seeks measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development.
- 1.4 The aim of this report is to identify the net percentage change in biodiversity on site post development and where possible to seek a minimum of +10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in accordance with contractual requirements.

Site description

- 1.5 The site is approximately 800m² and consists of developed land; sealed surface and modified grassland.
- 1.6 The site is a recreational area located within a small residential area to the south of Leek. The site is located within a residential area, and is bounded on the south by residential development. There are areas of greenspace to the north, east and west. The site is relatively isolated within the wider landscape, with the treeline around the wider site offering potential foraging and commuting links in the wider landscape.

Brief

- 1.7 To conduct a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment using DEFRA metric version 4.0 to demonstrate, where possible, a minimum of 10% net gain.

Relevant Planning Policy and Legislation

- 1.8 In accordance with the Natural Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021), paragraph 180, development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around the developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.
- 1.9 The planning authority for the site Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. The council have an adopted local plan, and an emerging local plan. The vision for the local plan has been amended to include the ability of a project to 'secure biodiversity net gain'. This is further detailed within Policy WLP 54 – design of new development (amended) states that design will be a key consideration when assessing proposals of all scales and types. It states that all development will provide a minimum net gain of 10% of the current ecological value of the site.
- 1.10 The site will be assessed to provide a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain, in accordance with contractual requirements.

2. METHODOLOGY

Assessing Strategic Significance

- 2.1 A desk study was conducted to collate baseline data about ecological sites within the zone of influence of the proposed development site, following guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute of Environmental and Ecological Management (CIEEM, 2017). This data-gathering exercise was undertaken to obtain any available information relating to statutory nature conservation sites, ecological networks, local plans and priority habitats to help establish the strategic significance of the site. Sources of information used are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of information sources used for the desk study

Organisation/source	Information sought
MAGIC	Locations of and citations for all national statutory wildlife sites, including SSSI, and all international sites including SAC, SPA or Ramsar sites within a 5 kilometre radius of the site. Priority Habitats within 300m radius of the site.
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	Adopted Local Plan, Emerging Local Plan 2027, evidence base, and polices map

- 2.2 This evidence was reviewed and used to assess the strategic significance of the site, and/or individual habitats and whether it lies within an ecological network for the area.

Baseline Assessment

- 2.3 A baseline botanical assessment was undertaken by Elizabeth Davies, qualified ecologist, on 10th August 2025 before works commenced on site in mostly clear, still and dry weather conditions. The survey employed techniques based on the UK Habitat Classification System. Botanical information was collected, focussing on the dominant and/or key indicator species for each habitat, to enable allocation of habitats to hierarchy levels 3 and/or 4. Where relevant priority habitats were also identified. The conditions of the habitats on the site were assessed in line with the technical sheets supplied alongside DEFRA Metric 4.0.
- 2.4 The UK habitats map was digitised using QGIS. The mapped habitats were measured using the derived areas, and habitat areas are provided in hectares. Linear features were measured using the derived length and the measurements provided in kilometres.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.5 Biodiversity Net Gain complements and works with the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 180a. To achieve a net gain in a way that is consistent with the mitigation hierarchy and reflects the 'spatial-hierarchy' preference for local enhancements, the following steps should be followed:

- (1) Aim to avoid or reduce biodiversity impacts through site selection and layout;
- (2) Enhance and restore biodiversity on-site;
- (3) Create or enhance off-site habitats, either on their own land or by purchasing biodiversity units on the market; and

- (4) As a last resort, to prevent undue delays, purchase statutory biodiversity credits from the UK Government where they can demonstrate that they are unable to achieve biodiversity net gain through the available on-site and off-site options.

2.6 On completion of the fieldwork the habitat information was mapped and areas were imported into the DEFRA Biometric version 4.0 calculation tool. The metric calculates the baseline biodiversity units for the site based on the following factors:

- Area
- Habitat distinctiveness
- Habitat condition
- Strategic significance

2.7 Once inputted the metric provides biodiversity units for the proposed habitats based on the following factors:

- Area
- Habitat distinctiveness
- Habitat target condition
- Strategic significance
- Time habitat is created
- Time to target condition
- Difficulty of creation

2.8 The difference between the baseline units and proposed units is then used as a measure of change and is used to assess the number of biodiversity units achieved. Habitats, hedgerows and rivers are inputted as separate factors, with each requiring net gains.

2.9 **Limitations**

2.10 Whilst every effort has been made to accurately map the habitats on site there may be discrepancies associated with the projected coordinate reference system. The National Grid transformation, however, is considered to be the most accurate with an accuracy level of less than one metre.

3. BASELINE CONDITIONS

- 3.1 The results of the Baseline Assessment are presented below. A UK Habitat survey map is shown in Appendix I. The map illustrates the location and extent of the sites surveyed, along with additional notable features.

Strategic Significance

- 3.2 The site is a recreational area located within a small residential area to the south of Leek. The site is located within a residential area, and is bounded on the south by residential development. There are areas of greenspace to the north, east and west. The site is relatively isolated within the wider landscape, with the treeline around the wider site offering potential foraging and commuting links in the wider landscape.
- 3.3 There are a number of designated sites within 5km of the site. There are three Sites of Special Scientific Interest including Coombes Valley SSSI, Churnet Valley SSSI and Wetley Moor SSSI, all between 2km and 5km from the site.
- 3.4 The site is not part of a designated green belt site on the local plan, neighborhood plan or other policy document. It is considered to have low strategic significance.

On-Site Habitats

- 3.6 The following were recorded on site, and are described below:

- Developed land; sealed surface; and
- Modified grassland.

Developed land; sealed surface.

- 3.7 The site consists of developed land, sealed surface where there is a skatepark currently on site. This has a distinctiveness of very low, and condition assessment is not required.

Modified Grassland

- 3.8 Much of the site consists of modified grassland. The grassland is managed with a short sward length. Species include cock's foot, perennial rye grass, dandelion, creeping buttercup, white clover, ribwort plantain, yarrow and bristly ox tongue.
- 3.9 The grassland is a uniform, short sward height, with approximately 4-6 species per m². The grassland has bare ground present between 5-10% in places. There are no invasive non-native species present. There is no bramble present in the grassland.
- 3.10 This has a distinctiveness of low, and condition is assessed to be moderate.

Summary

- 3.11 Below in table 2 is a summary of the baseline habitats, areas, condition assessment and distinctiveness.

Table 2: Summary of baseline habitats

Habitat	Biodiversity Units	Area (ha)	Condition	Distinctiveness	Suggested action
Developed land; sealed surface	0.00	0.028	N/A – Other	V. Low	Compensation not required.
Modified grassland	0.21	0.052	Moderate	Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required.

4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN METRIC

Biodiversity Metric

4.1 The calculation has been run with the following habitat proposals:

- Creation of 0.035 ha other neutral grassland, in moderate condition.

4.2 The calculation has been based off the current landscaping plans. The biodiversity metric calculated a net change in habitat units of +12,65%. Table 3 below summarises the biodiversity metric results.

Table 3: DEFRA Biodiversity metric results scenario 1

On-site baseline	Habitat units	0.21
	Hedgerow units	0.00
On-site post intervention	Habitat units	0.23
	Hedgerow units	0.00
Total net change %	Habitat units	12.65%
	Hedgerow units	0
Trading rules satisfied	Yes/No	Yes

4.3 The measures to create and maintain the proposed habitats will be incorporated into the current management of the site.

4.4 A preliminary ecological appraisal is considered unnecessary for this site due to the small size of the site and the habitats present offering very limited potential habitat for protected species.

5. REFERENCES

CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2016) Biodiversity Net Gain. Good practice principles for development.

CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2019) Biodiversity Net Gain. Good practice principles for development. A practical guide. CIRIA C776a. London, 2019.

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

CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Department for Communities and Local Government (2005), *Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System*.

DEFRA (2023) Biodiversity Metric Calculation tool (spreadsheet) (Biodiversity Metric 4.0)

DEFRA (2023) Biodiversity Metric 4.0 User guide

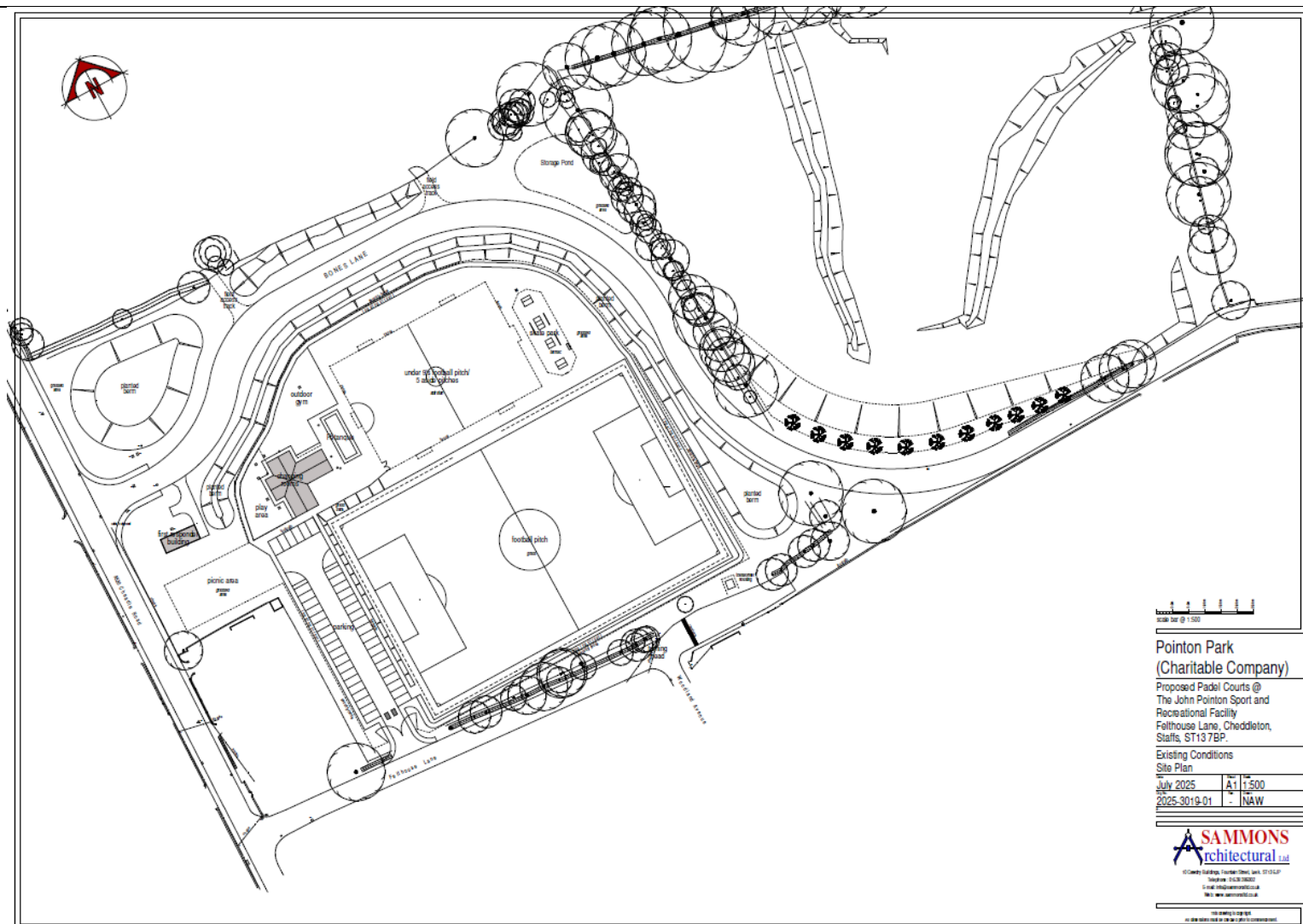
DEFRA (2023) Biodiversity Metric 4.0 and SSM: Technical Annex1 (habitat condition assessments)

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021), *National Planning Policy Framework*.

Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Website

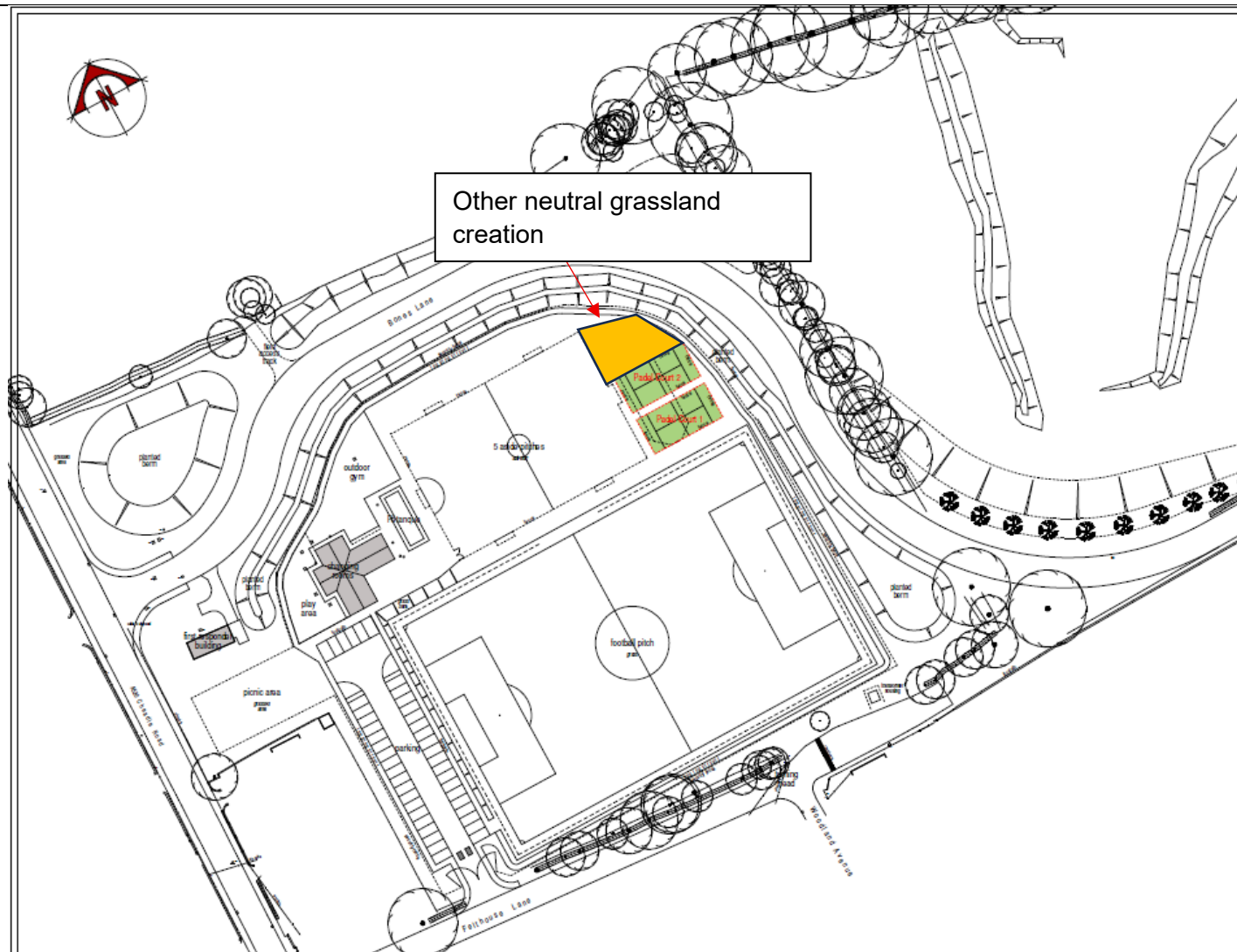
Appendix 1

Existing site layout



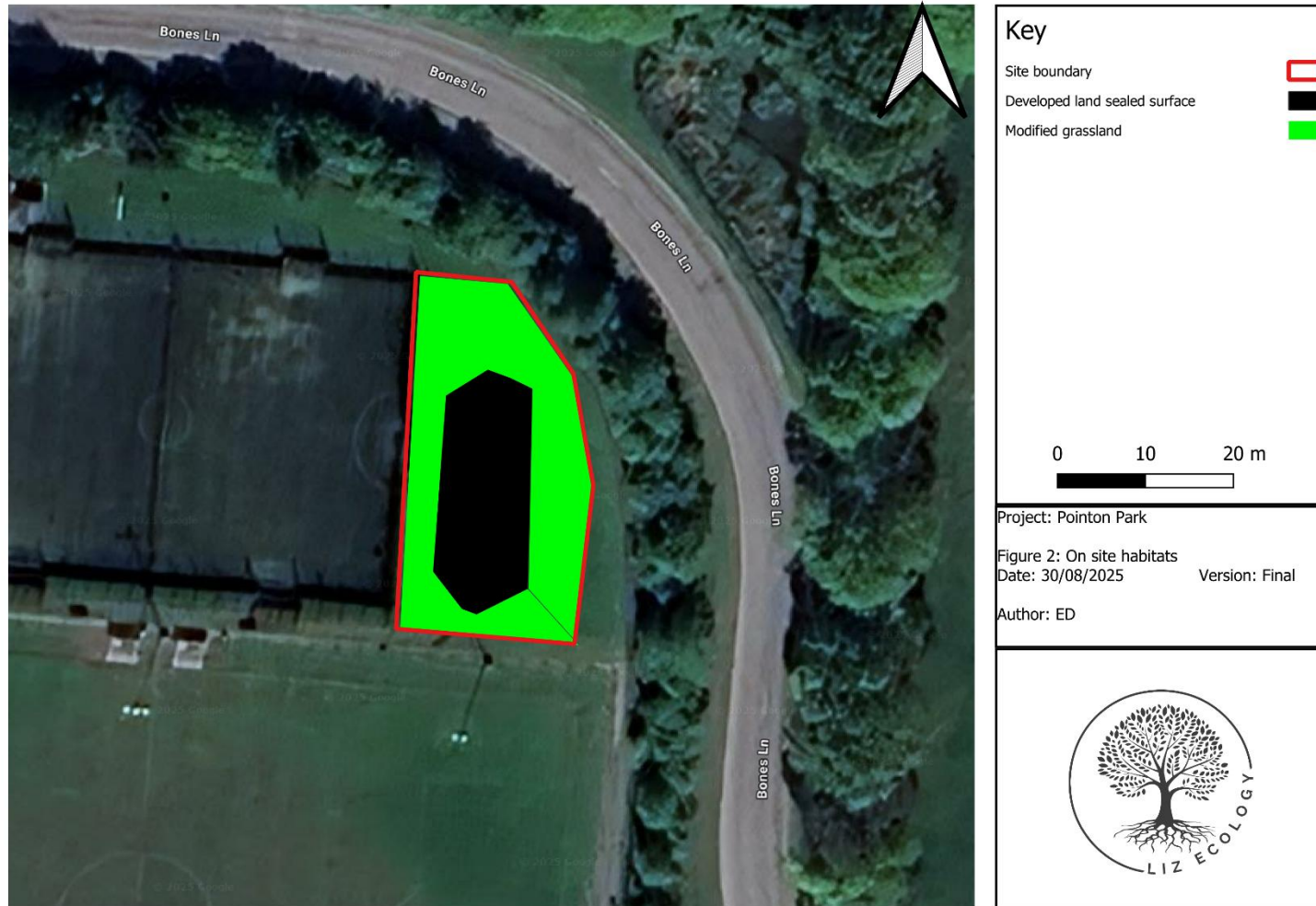
Appendix 2

Proposed site layout



Appendix 3

Onsite Habitats



Appendix 4

Site photographs

Photograph 1: General view of site



Photograph 2: General view of site

