

# Woodhead Hall Cherry Lane Cheadle 6 1 bed Lodges

## SWT Comments

**Application Reference:** SMD/2022/0610

**Location:** Woodhead Hall, Cherry Lane, Cheadle}

**Proposed Development:** 6 one bed holiday lodges and fishing clubhouse/housekeeping storage building and associated works

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has been asked to review the above application as part of a service level agreement with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to provide ecology advice regarding planning and development management functions.

### Documents Viewed:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal- Woodhead Hall Estate, Cherry Lane, ST10 4QS July 2022, Absolute Ecology
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report- Woodhead Hall Estate, Cherry Lane, ST10 4QS, December 2024, Elite Ecology
- Woodhead Hall, Cheadle (Holiday Lodges) - Elite Ecology Proposed Statutory Metric (December 2024) (1)
- Arboricultural Report- Old Oak Tree Care, November 2024

Summary: We recommend a **holding objection** until the following information is supplied and our comments are resolved:

- Updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is completed with further species surveys as required e.g. HSI, water vole and reptile
- The updated PEA/ BNG walkover should be done at an appropriate time of year.
- Update the metric calculation in line with the appropriate strategic significance for the site.
- Update BNG report in line with the comments

## Further detail

### Application Form

In application form they haven't confirmed that the applicant believes that planning permission, if granted, the development would be subject to the biodiversity gain condition.

### PEA Report

The PEA is from 2022 so is out of date. In the report it states, "*If no development takes place within 2 years of this survey report, the findings should be reviewed and may need*

*updating, and a full survey should be repeated within three years.”* This should include both a desk study and relevant site surveys. At the discretion of the ecologist ground level tree assessments may be needed.

## BNG Report

The BNG walkover was carried out on 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2024, this is a sub-optimal time of year to carry out survey, particularly as there are grassland habitats on site.

Strategic significance- report states none of the habitats on site are not strategic however, part the site is situated within a strategic and semi strategic area for woodland and grassland. As reported on [Net Gain Staffordshire Website](#). This may change the metric calculation.

### *Habitat Creation and Management*

Management recommendations should be detailed so that the person creating or managing the habitat can follow them. Ensure any description of habitat works in accordance with British Standards that are not freely available are fully explained so that people without access to the British Standards can follow them.

1. Soil preparation. Wildflower areas – suggest low nutrient soil or subsoil rather than topsoil to keep the soil as nutrient poor as possible. No compost should be added to wildflower areas.

2. Scattered Trees. Ensure that “*These trees are to be planted accordance with BS 3936, BS8545 and The National Plant Specification – 'Rootballed Trees'.*” is expanded upon so that people without access to the British Standards understand what is required.

3. Wildflower meadow. All seeds should be native and preferably of local provenance. This could be purchased seed mixes or collection / green hay from a suitable local donor site. The cut should be between mid-July and September should replicate a traditional hay cut, therefore all cuttings should remain on site for a few days to allow any seeds to drop out back into the grassland and then removed off-site or placed in a designated area. If areas are left long, they should be cut on at least a three-year rotation to avoid succession, coarse grasses, plants such as dock and nettle that thrive in more nutrient enriched areas and scrub appearing.

4. Ensure that ‘*Mixed scrub is to be planted in accordance with BS 3936 and handled in accordance with NPS 'Handling & Establishment' guidelines and planted in accordance with BS 4428:1989*’ is expanded upon so that people without access to the British Standards understand what is required.

If possible natural regeneration or transplanting from unwanted or excess scrub within the site should be encouraged before buying in scrub. If scrub is bought in, it should be native and of local provenance. Scrub should be left to grow for five years then

monitored and managed every 5 years to ensure that it is covering the desired area. If areas are cut, this should be done on a rotational basis every 5 years.

5. Woodland Enhancement. All trees should be native and preferably of local provenance. Species such as Box, Buckthorn and Alder Buckthorn may be inappropriate for the locality, alternative species to use could include Pedunculate Oak, Rowan, Hawthorn, Field Rose and Elder.

6. Control of aggressive weeds – the management should include removal of aggressive weeds as well as plant ID survey. Perhaps worded ‘any aggressive or invasive weeds will be identified and removed by hand’. It is unclear why March is one of the times suggested to do carry out an ID survey for aggressive weeds – further clarification required. We would recommend identifying and removing aggressive weeds just once a year in May.

#### *Timing phasing and Duration of Conservation Measures*

Planting of wildflower seeds is usually done in Autumn or Spring following appropriate ground preparation. Timing should be as per seed company instructions.

Planting of trees / scrub / hedgerows to be ideally between the end of November and end of March, avoiding hard frosts, droughts or particularly cold, windy periods.

Wildflowers – sow Autumn or Spring. Cut between mid-July and end of September.

New Scrub – Would recommend monitoring after 5 years, not 15. Would recommend sections are monitored and cut on rotation every 5 to 6 years, not every 9 years.

Controlling aggressive weeds - the management should include removal of aggressive weeds as well as plant ID survey. Perhaps worded ‘any aggressive or invasive weeds will be identified and removed by hand’. We would recommend just once a year in May.

The monitoring schedule should be as agreed in the S106, planning condition or conservation covenant.

## Conditions

The conditions laid out in the Arboricultural Report regarding the removal, root protection areas and planting of new trees should be followed.

Following the receipt of an updated PEA, further conditions may be needed.