

**SOUTHERN OFFICE**

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By Email Only (Peter.Rainier@dmhstallard.com)

Peter Rainier
DMH Stallard
Griffin House
135 High Street
Crawley
West Sussex,
RH10 1DQ

Our ref: 9309

Dear Peter:

Clay's Field, Land at South Side of Castle Lane, Bramber, Steyning.

We understand that The Parish Council has submitted a draft Neighbourhood Plan which allocated Clay's Field as Local Green Space (LGS).

The draft Neighbourhood Plan also states that the whole of Clay's Field could be too large for LGS. However, the section to the south may meet the requirements, while a section to the north may be designated for housing development.

Further to a draft Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Phlorum, 2019), which focused on the north section of the site, some information that might be relevant to the designation of the northern part of Clay's Field could be considered.

At this stage, the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is still in a draft stage as the data for the desk study has not been returned. However, a report by Bramber Parish Council (Clay's Field Assessment November 2018) states that no protected species have been recorded on the site as a whole.

The use of the site for recreation by dog walkers, as observed during the site visit on 29th October 2019, may impact on the use of the site by protected species. "Dogs running loose can cause serious disturbance of reptiles" (Edgar. 2010. Reptile Habitat Management Handbook. Page 61; Baker. 2011. Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook, page 20). Therefore, the current use of the site by dog walkers is likely to make it less suitable for this species group.

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Aerial photographs of the whole of the Clay's Field site show that it is in a relatively isolated position ecologically, with the busy A283 to the east, Clay's Hill (road) to the south, and residential housing to the west and north. This will restrict the ability for terrestrial species to commute from the site and disperse. This in turn is likely to restrict their ability to connect to other populations in the area.

Additionally, the proposed development area occupies 20% of Clay's Field as a whole. Within the broader site, the key areas highlighted for biodiversity include the pond and scrub in the south of the field. These, along with more extensive areas of grassland and trees, are likely to provide more opportunities for biodiversity than found within the proposed development area.

As a result, the current use of the site, reported absence of protected species on the site, and the isolation of the site from other areas, could all be contributing factors reducing the ecological importance of this site. The principal habitats for biodiversity are located in the south of the field, away from the proposed development.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Carter', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Paul Carter,
Environmental Consultant

References

- Baker, J., Beebee T., Buckley, J., Gent, A. and Orchard, D. (2011). Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook. Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bournemouth.
- Edgar, P., Foster, J. and Baker, J. (2010). Reptile Habitat Management Handbook. Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bournemouth.