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PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL
REPORT

HAYES HAWKS BMX CLUB,
HILLINGDON

By

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
METHODOLOGY	4
RESULTS	6
LEGISLATION	11
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	12
REFERENCES	14
APPENDIX 1: SITE MAP	15

INTRODUCTION

Stark Ecology Ltd was asked by The London Borough of Hillingdon to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the Hayes Hawks BMX Club where new floodlights are proposed.

The site is located at OS Grid Reference TQ889804 in Lake Farm Country Park. The BMX Park is bordered to the north, south and east by open green space within the Country Park, and to the west by Dawley Road, beyond which is a golf course. In the wider landscape Hayes Hawks BMX Club is in an urban area with residential and commercial development and busy main roads.



Fig 1: New floodlights are proposed at the Hayes Hawks BMX Club which is in an urban area but well connected to green space.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out by Georgie Starkie BSc (Hons) MSc MRSB on 21st October 2025 when the weather was overcast but dry with no wind and the temperature was c.12°C.

METHODOLOGY

Data Search

A data search was requested from Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC (GiGL) for records of bat species within 2km of the BMX Club.

The MAGIC website was used to search for details of any European Protected Species licences which have been granted by Natural England for work at sites within 2km and for details of any statutory designated sites within 2km.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The site was surveyed according to the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal set out by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), in which the habitats present on site are classified (according to The UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0) and any signs of protected or notable species were also recorded:

Bats: The site was assessed for its suitability for bats commuting and foraging. There are no trees or other structures within the site which could be suitable for roosting bats.

Badgers: Evidence of badgers was sought, in particular badger setts which can be recognised by their characteristic size and shape, with large spoil heaps outside entrances. Other signs such as latrines (small pits in which badgers deposit their faeces), pathways through vegetation, hairs adhering to vegetation or sett entrances and snuffle holes indicating foraging were also noted.

Great crested newts: The habitats on and surrounding the site were assessed for their suitability to support great crested newts.

Reptiles: The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support reptile species.

Nesting birds: The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support nesting birds.

Hedgehog: The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support hedgehog.

Limitations

This survey provides a brief snapshot of the site at the time the work was carried out and while every step was taken to ensure that the results of the survey are accurate,

features of ecological value can change and therefore this report is only valid for 12 months.

RESULTS

Desk Study

Habitats

There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Sites of Special Interest (SSSI) within 2km of Lake Country Park.

Species

The MAGIC website lists one European Protected Species licence granted for work at locations within 2km of the Hayes Hawks BMX Club:

- In 2018, at a site which is c.1.5km to the east, a licence was granted for damage and destruction of a resting place used by great crested newt *Triturus cristata*.

The results of the data search for records of bats from GiGL included only two records of common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, both of which are for locations which are more than 1km from the BMX Club.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The site supports the following habitats:

- Native species hedgerows
- Other neutral grassland
- Bare ground/hard standing
- Building

Native Species Hedgerows

The BMX Club is surrounded by native species hedgerows. The hedgerows along the north, south and east boundaries are regularly cut blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*.



Fig 2: Hedgerows along the north, south and east boundaries of the BMX Club are regularly cut hawthorn and blackthorn.

This photo taken facing east on 21st October 2025.

The western boundary of the site is formed by a native species hedgerow which includes trees. Species present in this hedgerow include hawthorn, blackthorn, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, field maple *A. campestre*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* (including larger trees), dog rose *Rosa canina* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.



Fig 3: The western boundary hedgerow supports more mature trees and a more diverse species assemblage.

This photo taken facing north on 21st October 2025.

Other Neutral Grassland

The site supports large areas of regularly mown grassland with species present including perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*, yarrow *Achil-*

lea millefolium, ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, autumn hawksbit *Scorzoneroides autumnalis*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata* and dove's foot cranes bill *Geranium molle*.



Fig 4: The site comprises large areas of regularly mown Other Neutral Grassland.

This photo taken facing northeast on 21st October 2025.

Bare Ground/Hard Standing

In the centre of the site the BMX track is hard standing/bare ground.



Fig 5: The BMX track at the centre of the site is hard standing/bare ground.

This photo taken facing south on 21st October 2025.

Building

At the centre of the site are temporary structures which act as a club house/store.



Fig 6: There are temporary structures at the centre of the site that act as a club house/store.

This photo taken facing northwest on 21st October 2025.

Bats

Commuting and Foraging

There are few records of bats in the landscape surrounding the BMX Club but Lake Farm Country Park is part of a corridor of green space through the landscape and so is likely to provide an important part of the commuting and foraging resource for the local bat population. The native species hedgerows around the site boundaries provide shelter and commuting routes and are likely to support a diverse invertebrate assemblage on which bats can feed.

Badgers

No badger setts or other evidence of badgers was identified within the site but it supports suitable habitat for badgers as they commute and forage through the surrounding landscape.

Great Crested Newts

The on-site grassland and boundary hedgerows provide high quality terrestrial habitat for great crested newts but a review of OS maps shows no ponds or other waterbodies within 500m of the site and so, due to a lack of connectivity to suitable breeding habitat, the site is considered unsuitable to support great crested newts.

Reptiles

The grassland and hedgerows are suitable for common reptile species such as slow worm *Anguis fragilis*.

Nesting Birds

The boundary hedgerows are suitable for nesting birds between March and August (inclusive) but as no hedgerow removal is proposed no direct impacts on nesting birds are anticipated.

Hedgehog

The site supports suitable habitat for hedgehogs to use when commuting and foraging through the wider landscape at night.

LEGISLATION

Reptiles

All native reptile species are protected against intentional or reckless killing or injury by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

The habitat of the four common species of reptile (common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, adder *Vipera berus* and grass snake *Natrix natrix*) does not receive additional protection.

Nesting Birds

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 protects bird species in the UK and makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a wild bird;
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Other offences under this legislation relate to taking and possessing specimens or the eggs of wild birds.

Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are a Species of Principal Importance (SoPI) under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) and should, as such, be conserved through the planning process. Hedgehogs would also fall under the provisions of the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996, which prevents certain cruel acts against wild mammals.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Habitats

The on-site habitats are common and not intrinsically ecologically valuable but provide some habitat for protected species, as set out below. In the wider landscape the BMX Club forms part of a green habitat corridor through an urban landscape and is likely to act as an important commuting and foraging resource for a range of species.

Bats

Commuting and Foraging

The on-site habitats form part of a wider landscape that provides high quality habitat for bats as they commute and forage. There will be no substantial loss of habitat resulting from the installation of new floodlights but the use of the lights has the potential to cause disruption to them as they commute and forage through the surrounding landscape.

The new floodlights are proposed for use initially for only one night per week but this may extend to 3 or 4 nights per week. The impacts on bat activity are likely to be very limited due to the seasonal nature of the use of the lights:

- Floodlights will be used most regularly and for the longest periods when bat activity levels are low over the winter months. At this time of year there will be little or no disturbance to bats.
- During the period of the year when bats are most likely to be active over the site the floodlights will rarely need to be used.

These seasonal restrictions will ensure that disturbance to bats which commute and forage over the Hayes Hawks BMX Club can be kept to a minimum.

Badgers and Hedgehog

No badger setts have been identified at the site but it and the surrounding green space could be used by badgers as they commute and forage. The installation of the new floodlights is not anticipated to result in significant impacts on badgers or other wildlife but the following steps should be taken to avoid accidental harm during construction works:

- Any trenches that have to be left open overnight must be adapted so that any animal that falls into it is able to escape, either by leaving a gradient at one

end, or placing a structure (such as a plank of wood) in the trench to allow animals to climb out;

- Anything that may present a fire or other hazard (eg. stored chemicals) should be kept securely locked and made inaccessible to wild animals moving around the site at night.

Reptiles

The site supports potentially suitable habitat for common reptile species such as slow worm. The limited extent of ground works to install the new floodlights is not considered likely to result in any harm to reptiles and no specific steps are required in order to protect them.

Nesting Birds

The boundary hedgerows are suitable for use by nesting birds so, given the protection afforded to all breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young it is strongly recommended that any removal of, or disturbance to, vegetation that offers potential nesting habitat for breeding birds, should be undertaken between October and February, inclusive, outside of the main bird breeding season.

During this period the vegetation should be cut down to ground level, using hand-held mechanised tools, and the arisings removed from the site. Should this seasonal constraint prove not to be practicable, then suitable surveys for active nests should be undertaken of any vegetation which is to be cleared during the nesting bird season (March to August, inclusive). These surveys should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to the start of any works. If any active nest or nest under construction is found, then a buffer zone of at least 5m (with distance dependent upon species and location) should be created around the nest and maintained until all chicks have fledged. Once the fledglings are no longer dependent upon the nest, works can then re-commence.

It should be noted that significant delays can result to works being undertaken during the breeding bird season and, as such, it is strongly recommended that vegetation clearance works, where possible, are completed during the winter months.

REFERENCES

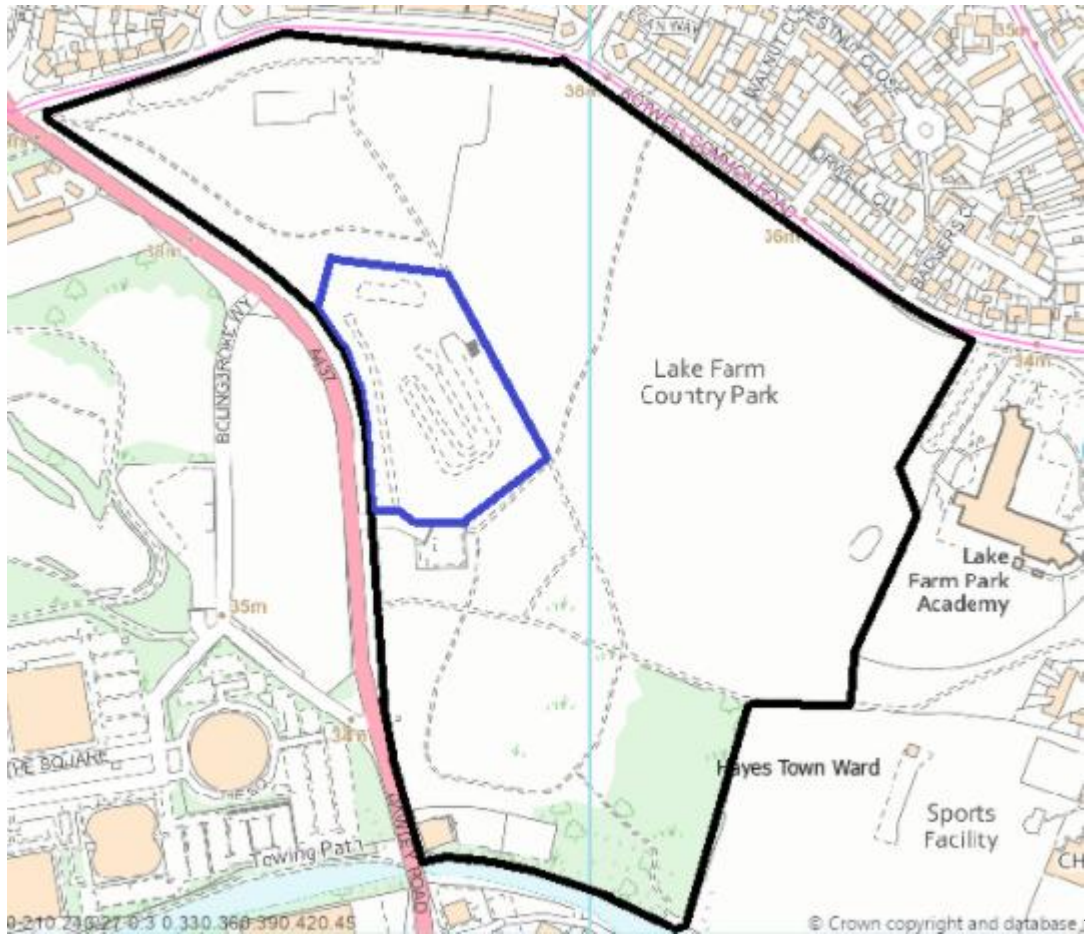
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APPENDIX 1: SITE MAP





Habitat Map

