

6 October 2021

**Your Reference**  
2021/01082/RG3Planning Authority of  
The Vale of Glamorgan Council  
FAO: Ian Robinson**Response to Ecology, Development Services Planning Application objection**

Dear Ian Robinson,

Please see responses below related with the Planning Application objection raised from Mr Colin Cheeseman Ecology, Development Services, Countryside and Economic Projects.

**1.1 Responses****1. Survey timing**

The survey date is given on Page 11, Section 3.2 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) report. A Phase 1 Habitat Survey was completed on 09 October 2019. The Phase 1 Habitat Survey was undertaken in early October, the optimal time for Phase 1 habitat surveys is April to Mid-October. Therefore, survey timing is not a limitation to the Phase 1 habitat survey or PEA.

**2a. Shepherd's Needle**

A record from 2011 (10 years) of Shepherd's needle *Scandix pecten-veneris*, was returned by the Local Environmental Record Centre (LERC) within 2 km of the Site boundary. This record is considered by the National Biological Network to be unconfirmed. There are only two current sites in Wales, one of which is in a garden (Plantlife, 2006). Plantlife state that *'the species has declined a lot in the last 50 years, and is now restricted to the extreme south-east of England, with a particular stronghold in Suffolk'*. The known distribution of Shepherd's needle suggests it's unlikely to be present at Llanmaes.

The majority of sites where Shepherd's needle now occurs are on heavy calcareous clays, particularly on the boulder clay of East Anglia (Plantlife, 2006), typically found in fields sown with winter cereals (Plantlife, 2006). Shepherd's needle is largely to be found in two situations: in relics of the species-rich arable vegetation that would once have been widespread across southern England on all but the most acidic and calcareous soils; either as a relic of previously rich vegetation or as a new colonist in impoverished communities in intensively farmed winter crops on heavy calcareous clay in central England (Plantlife, 2006). The soilscape at Llanmaes is 'freely draining slightly acid but base rich soils' (UK Soil Observatory <http://www.ukso.org/>). The soilscape at Llanmaes is not likely to support Shepherd's needle.

Shepherd's needle is typically found in fields sown with winter cereals (Plantlife, 2006). Mr Thomas grows maize, winter wheat, potatoes and grass for grazing. Based on recent evidence we understand that the land was under maize at Ditch 1, potatoes at the proposed Compound Area and winter wheat Bunds 1, 2 and 3. Other land at Bunds 3 and 4 is tenanted and assumed grass for grazing. Mr Cowling Ditch 1 and Ditch 3 is grass for grazing. Bunds

1, 2 and 3 are where winter cereals are grown, a suitable land use to potentially support Shepherd's needle, if the soil was suitable.

Based on the above, it is considered that Shepherd's needle is likely absent from within the Site boundary, and mapping its distribution would not be proportionate for this application.

## 2b Section 7 habitat - Arable field margins

There is a narrow field margin around each arable field of poor semi improved grassland, approx. 1 m in width and are occasionally mown (PEA Appendix B: Photograph 2). Margins at the time of the Phase 1 Habitat visit were dominated by cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and ivy *Hedera helix*, with occasional creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, speedwell species *Veronica sp.*, vetch species *Vecia sp.* and cleavers *Galium aparine*. Page 17, Table 4.2 in the PEA Report states that 'arable' is not a Priority Habitat which is correct. Arable field margins are discussed under 'semi improved grassland' within the Table. As per Page 17, Table 4.2 field margins on Site were reviewed against the criteria for Priority Habitat Arable Field Margins and concluded that they would not meet the criteria.

## 3. Large Wainscot

Common Reed, *Fragmites australis* was not noted within the Site boundary during the Phase 1 Habitat Survey. Therefore, it is unlikely that the habitats within the site boundary provide a significant resource for any local populations of Large Wainscot. Works within the site boundary are unlikely to impact the ability of any local populations to survive or reproduce.

## 4. Seeding

We will consider in the project tender to include a request to liaise with The Local Nature Partnership and Celtic Wild Flowers to identify if they can provide a suitable local seed mix for the proposed planting areas of the Scheme.

## 5. Enhancement

a) Provision of barn owl boxes will continue as it will provide an additional resource in a landscape which is increasingly short of nesting opportunities. This action can be accounted for with the responsibilities and timescales of project delivery. Though we appreciate that changes to local land practices would benefit local farmland bird species, the long-term management of land outside of the Site boundary, is not within the scope of the project.

b) Additional vegetation within the proposed ditches and swales will affect their hydrologic characteristics affecting their flood alleviation efficiency. Therefore, common reed will not be planted. It is possible that it will naturally colonise in these areas, and will provide some habitat for invertebrates between maintenance cycles (cutting back vegetation to maintain capacity within the ditches/swales).

Ref: Plantlife International (2006). *Scandix\_pecten-veneris\_dossier*. ISBN: 1 904749-26-7

Yours sincerely,



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