

RESPONSE TO ECOLOGY / BNG CONSULTATION

Site: Inglenook Farm, Leicester Road, Barwell
Application: 26/00195/FUL
LPA Case Officer: Ashleigh Gade

Date: **5th May 2026**

1. Introduction

This response addresses the Ecology consultation comments and associated Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.

It is based on:

- the submitted application plans,
 - established site conditions, and
 - previous ecological assessment and appeal findings relating to the site.
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2. Established Ecological Baseline

The ecological characteristics of the site have already been assessed through:

- previous planning submissions,
- ecological survey work, and
- the subsequent appeal process.

This includes:

- an Environmental DNA survey confirming **absence of Great Crested Newts**,
- ecological assessment identifying the site as of **relatively low habitat value**, and
- confirmation that no significant harm to protected species was identified.

Following submission of additional ecological information at appeal stage:

- the Local Planning Authority **withdrew its ecology-based reason for refusal**, and
- the Planning Inspector confirmed that the appeal should be determined solely on landscape and visual grounds.

Accordingly:

The ecological baseline of the site is established and has been accepted through the appeal process.

3. Scale and Nature of Current Proposal

The current proposal differs materially from the previously assessed scheme:

- Previous scheme:
 - 14 structures
 - internal access road network
 - extensive site coverage
- Current proposal:
 - **2 lodges only**
 - located on **existing prepared pads**
 - confined to **established areas of the site**
 - no internal road network or site-wide engineering works

The proposal therefore represents a **substantial reduction in scale and impact**.

4. Access and Internal Circulation

4.1 Existing Access (Confirmed by Highway Authority)

The Local Highway Authority confirms:

- access is via an **existing agricultural access**,
- no alterations are proposed, and
- impacts on highway safety would not be unacceptable.

4.2 Internal Route

The consultation response refers to the creation of a “new access track”.

This is not correct.

- The route shown is **existing**
- It forms part of the **established use of the site**
- The proposal does **not involve the construction of a new track**
- There is **no change to ground condition or alignment**

Accordingly:

- no new access is created,
- no additional land is brought into vehicular use, and
- no habitat is affected by access arrangements.

5. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

5.1 Mischaracterisation of Site Condition

The BNG comments rely on:

- assumed new track formation
- assumed impact on field habitat
- assumption that land is undeveloped grassland

These assumptions do not reflect the actual site condition.

5.2 Correct Position

- Development is located on **existing pads and managed areas**
- Access arrangements are **unchanged**
- There is **no measurable additional habitat loss**

Accordingly:

- the proposal does not introduce new development into undisturbed habitat, and
- does not give rise to a level of impact requiring the extent of BNG assessment currently requested.

5.3 Without Prejudice Position

If limited areas of peripheral grassland are considered:

- such areas are of **low ecological value**,
- impacts are **minor and localised**, and
- can be readily addressed through **on-site enhancement measures**.

6. Protected Species

The proposal does not give rise to impacts on protected species because:

- lodges are placed on **existing prepared pads**,
- there is **no vegetation clearance**,
- there is **no disturbance of boundary features**, and
- works are confined to **previously used areas**.

In addition:

- eDNA testing confirms **Great Crested Newts are absent**, and

- no previous assessment has identified any protected species constraint.

Accordingly:

- no nesting habitat for birds is affected, and
 - no badger habitat or activity is disturbed.
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7. Overall Position

- The ecological baseline has been **established and accepted at appeal level**
 - The proposal is **materially smaller and less intensive** than previously assessed development
 - There is **no new access or track formation**
 - There is **no measurable habitat loss or species impact**
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8. Conclusion

The current Ecology holding objection is based on:

- a mischaracterisation of the site baseline, and
- assumptions regarding new access formation which are not supported by the submitted plans.

When assessed against:

- the established ecological baseline,
- previous appeal findings, and
- the actual nature of the proposal,

there is **no evidence of ecological harm**.

The proposal is therefore **acceptable in ecological terms**, and the current request for further information is not proportionate to the scale or nature of the development.

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For and on behalf of the Applicant