

Legislative Background

Nesting birds

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The Act makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird or to damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst in use or being built.

Survey Methodology

A site walkover and inspection of the group of trees including the trees to be removed was conducted on the morning of the 27th August 2021 by a Qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and an assistant ecologist. Photographs of the trees are included in **Appendix 1**.

During the walkover survey, any birds heard or observed were identified to species level, signs of nesting were sought with the use of binoculars and the trees and hedges were searched for nests. There were no significant survey constraints.

Survey Findings

There were four willow trees (*Salix* sp.) along the eastern side of the existing car park. Four magpies (*Pica pica*) were observed feeding in the middle two trees, with wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*), great tit (*Parus major*), blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) also observed in the trees (**Photograph 1**).

To the south of the site was a water filled ditch, bordered by an area of dense scrub, which included hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.). A mature willow tree was present to the south of the ditch, and two collared doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*) were seen and heard calling within the tree, with one seen flying to a nearby lamppost and scrub before flying back into the tree (**Photograph 2**).

To the south-east of the site was a row of cherry trees (*Prunus* sp.), field maple and willow, with occasional dog rose (*Rosa canina*) and bramble present (**Photograph 3**). Two wood pigeons were observed flying into the vegetation and feeding on berries. A blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) and female blackbird (*Turdus merula*) were seen and heard calling from the vegetation.

At the centre of the car park was a group of four ash trees, with no bird activity observed during the course of the survey (**Photograph 4**).

Between the car park and the playground was a strip of tall ruderal vegetation, consisting of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), nettle (*Urtica dioica*) with occasional buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*) (**Photograph 5**). To the eastern end of the scrub were scattered trees including a cherry tree, firethorn (*Pyracantha* sp.), cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster* sp.) and several immature ash trees. A greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*), blackbird and robin were observed foraging within the trees and bushes, with a dunnoek (*Prunella modularis*) and goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) observed within the bramble and nettle towards the eastern end.

Just north of the site boundary, to the east of the existing leisure centre, was an area of mature trees including aspen (*Populus tremula*), field maple and ash (**Photograph 6**). Two magpies were seen flying towards and then away from the trees, with robin and blackbird also heard within the trees. Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and a goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) were observed flying past the trees but did not enter them.

Discussion and Recommendations

The walkover survey revealed that no birds are currently nesting in any of the areas of trees to be removed to enable the site set up and building works. Therefore, the proposed removal of those trees to be carried out shortly will not result in the damage or destruction of active bird nests.

In the highly unlikely situation that birds start nest building or using the old nest before the vegetation removal is completed, works must stop immediately, and an ecologist called to site for advice.

If you have any questions or require additional information, then please feel free to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



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Appendix 1



1. Semi-mature willow trees to the west of the existing car park.



2. Mature willow tree, with dense scrub along the ditch (southern side of the site).



3. Dense scrub and scattered trees along the ditch (southern side of the site).



4. Group of ash trees in the centre of the car park.



5. Group of semi-mature ash and willow trees adjacent to an area of tall ruderal.



6. Group of mature trees to the east of existing building (northern end of the site).

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