

# Salopian Consultancy Ltd

**Letter Note** Land at Poole Meadow Farm, Beamish Lane, Albrighton

(23.02.2021)

This letter note has been prepared following an updated Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) of those barns and pond in relation to the proposal at Poole Meadow Farm.

The purpose of these assessments is to update the previous study undertaken in 2018 to ensure the site has not changed in its suitability for protected species, and that the findings of the previous report remain valid.

The update assessment was undertaken on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2021 by Douglas Williams, Salopian Consultancy's principle consultant. Doug is an experienced Ecologist/Arboriculturist who holds an MSc in Biological Recording, protected species licences for both bats and great crested newts, and memberships with the Royal Society of Biology, the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and the Arboricultural Association.

The findings of this letter note should be read in conjunction with the original study (report reference SC:213 04.09.2018) for context, categorisation of habitats, desk study and technical details on methodologies used.

## PRA

The PRA identified that the buildings remaining in a good condition with no obvious crevices and crack considered suitable for roosting bats. Internally the structure is partially illuminated within day light our by virtue of the transparent corrugated roofing sheets. No evidence of bats such as droppings or insect feeding remains were noted.

**Image 1** Barn to be converted external/internal.



## HSI

Pond 1 located 120m south of the site scored a similar reading as the previous 2018 assessment reproduced below. The terrestrial habitat surrounding the barns is considered poor suitability for amphibians (exclusively sheep grazed pasture), with no opportunities for refuge in these areas. Conversely the terrestrial habitat around the ponds itself is excellent, thus it is deemed unlikely that newts if present would stray more than 100m from this habitats into unsuitable grazed pasture. This position is support by the capture-mark-recapture studies by Mullner 2001<sup>1</sup> and the research into mitigation schemes (Cresswell and Whitworth, 2004)<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, given that the proposed works are restricted to an existing building further Phase 2 surveys are not considered necessary.

**Table 1** HSI scoring of suitable ponds within 250m of the application area.

Indices	Pond 1
SI1 - Location	1
SI2 - Pond area	0.9
SI3 - Pond drying	1
SI4 - Water quality	0.33
SI4 - Shade	0.2
SI6 - Fowl	0.67
SI7 - Fish	1
SI8 - Ponds	0.8
SI9 – Terrestrial habitat	1
SI10 - Macrophytes	0.5
<b>HSI score</b>	<b>0.67</b>
<b>Suitability to support Great Crested Newts</b>	<b>Average Suitability</b>

<sup>1</sup>Müllner, A. (2001) *Spatial patterns of migrating Great Crested Newts and Smooth Newts: The importance of the terrestrial habitat surrounding the breeding pond*. Rana

<sup>2</sup>Cresswell, W. & Whitworth, R.(2004) *An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt Triturus cristatus*. **Report no 576**.English Nature

**Image 2** Pond 1 located 120m south of the site



In conclusion the findings of the 2018 study still remain valid which determined that the site is considered unlikely to support protected species (notable bats and great crested newts), and that opportunities to increase biodiversity could be condition as part of planning consent by way of new planting, and erection of bird/bat boxes.

The site should be maintained in it`s current context to ensure it`s suitability for protected species does not inadvertently increase prior to development.

Subject to the implementation of those recommendations set out within **Section 2** of the 2018 report no significant impacts upon protected species are considered likely to arise. In the event of a protected species being encountered during works; all works will halt, and further advice shall be sought from Salopian Consultancy Ltd.

The findings of this report are valid for up to two years from its date. In the event the development proposals/application area alters significantly a re-assessment of the likely impacts by a suitably experienced Ecologist will be required.