

Our ref: 500149

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Dear Mr & Mrs Fearn,

## MILL FARM: NOCTURNAL SURVEY RESULTS 2021 & MITIGATION STRATEGY

This summary letter provides the results of the 2021 nocturnal survey results carried out at the above-mentioned site and also a Bat Mitigation Strategy required as a condition to the planning consent for conversion of an outbuilding to residential dwelling issued by Rushcliffe Borough Council (Ref: 19/00476/FUL).

The nocturnal surveys were undertaken after initial findings and recommendations of surveys carried out by JJH Consulting Ltd in May 2019. The repeat of nocturnal surveys in 2021 have been completed to support of an application for a Natural England Bat Low Impact Class Licence (BLICL) required to facilitate the conversion of an outbuilding into a dwelling house which will temporarily disturb an occasional brown long eared bat roost.

Condition 2 of the existing planning consent issued by Rushcliffe Borough Council requires a bat mitigation strategy be completed and submitted. The information contained within this document will satisfy this condition which can then be discharged prior to an application for the BLICL from Natural England.

### Background Information

A potential roosting assessment (PRA) was first undertaken by JJH Consulting Ltd in May 2019. Following this the buildings (Figure1: Buildings Plan) were considered to provide 'moderate' potential and in line with current survey guidance two nocturnal surveys were undertaken on the buildings within the site. No bats were seen emerging from buildings during the nocturnal emergence survey on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019 or during a second survey on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019.

However, a small number of bat droppings were found within one section of the building (B1e). The droppings were confirmed to be from brown long eared bats by an eDNA analysis undertaken in 2019. During an additional visit to the building at dusk on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019 whilst on site to undertake great crested newt surveys, the Ecologist and licensed bat worker, observed two brown long eared bats flying inside section B1e approximately twenty-five minutes after sunset. One of these bats was observed leaving the building via the open door on the southern aspect.

The recommendations after surveys undertaken in 2019 were to complete three nocturnal surveys in 2021 to update the results and also to inform an application for a BCLIML from Natural England which will legitimise the temporary disturbance of the occasional used brown long eared *Plecotus auritus* bat roost in building B1e. The details of these surveys and subsequent mitigation strategy have been included below.

## Methodology

Three nocturnal bat surveys were completed in May and June 2021 (Table 1) in line with standard BCT guidance. During the surveys bat workers were positioned such that all aspects of the proposed working area of the buildings with potential to support bats could be observed.

The dusk survey commenced 15 minutes prior to sunset and continued at least 1.5 hours following sunset. The dawn survey commenced 1hr 30 minutes before sunrise and ended 15 minutes after sunrise. During the nocturnal surveys, the species and location of any bat activity was recorded using Echo Meter Touch® bat detectors in conjunction with Echo Meter Touch® app and Apple Inc. iPad®.

Surveys were conducted in appropriate conditions, i.e., ambient temperatures above 10°C and with little wind and no rain, in line with guidance. The nocturnal surveys were completed by experienced bat workers and co-ordinated on site by Jenny Wheeldon a licensed bat worker (License Reference Number: 2015-12340-CLS).

**Table 1: Nocturnal survey dates and conditions**

Survey date	Time (sunset/sunrise)	Conditions
9 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 Dusk Survey	20:33 to 22:20 (sunset 20:48)	14°C, 60% cloud cover, light breeze, no rain.
23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2021 Dusk Survey	21:00 to 22:45 (sunset 21:48)	14°C, 20% cloud cover, no wind or rain.
12 <sup>th</sup> June 2021 Dawn Survey	03:08 to 04:53 (sunset 04:38)	12°C, 0% cloud cover, no wind or rain

## Nocturnal Survey Results 2021

*9<sup>th</sup> May (dusk emergence) 2021* - During the dusk survey bat activity was limited to occasional common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bats commuting through the survey area. Some brief spells of foraging were recorded nearby to the east, but this bat was not observed only picked up on detector. The first bat observed was a common pipistrelle commuting adjacent the southern aspect of the building at 21:51. A single pass by a noctule *Nyctalus noctula* bat was also recorded at 21:05 but this call was faint and the bat itself was not observed suggesting it was off site. No bats were seen emerging from the building during the surveys and no brown long eared bats.

*23<sup>rd</sup> May (dusk emergence) 2021* - During the dusk survey bat activity was consistent with the previous survey with occasional common pipistrelle commuting and periodic foraging around the building and in gardens to the south. The activity was recorded between 21:50 and the end of survey at 22:15 and were from either a single bat or a small number of individuals flying across the site. No bats were seen emerging from the building during the surveys.

*12<sup>th</sup> June (dawn re-entry) 2021* –Again a small number of passes by a common pipistrelle bat were noted including commuting behaviour. Also, brief pauses to forage around the adjacent garden to the south and east of the building were observed between 03:08 and 03:50. A single pass by a noctule *Nyctalus noctula* bat was recorded 03:30 but this bat was not observed within vicinity of the building but only heard on detector. No bats were observed entering the building B1 during the dawn re-entry survey.

## Discussion and Recommendations

Given the presence of bat droppings and sighting of two brown long eared individuals in the end section of the building (section B1e) this part of the building was considered to be only an occasional roost used by a small number of brown long eared bats possibly for feeding only.

This particularly section of the building will not be converted but will be retained as storage. However, there will be temporary disturbance to any roost in B1e during works in the adjacent section B1d which will affect the dividing wall between section B1d and B1e. Therefore, a BLICL will be obtained prior to the start of any works affecting section B1d.

## **Impact Assessment & Mitigation Strategy**

The proposals will result in the temporary disturbance of small, occasionally used (non-maternity) day roost of brown long eared bats. The relative conservation significance of the roost identified is low. However, given the protection afforded to bat roosts it is considered that a BLICL will be necessary to facilitate works which affect the roost.

In order for a licence to be approved by Natural England it must be demonstrated that the proposals will minimise any potential impacts upon the species in question (in this case bats) and that the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of the species is met. The following section, based on the Bat Mitigation Guidelines, provides details of the mitigation/compensation that is proposed.

The works will be supervised by the BLICL holder/a qualified accredited agent and will include;

- Erection of at least two bat boxes on suitable retained trees within the boundary of the property and close to the location of the roost. Although not a statutory requirement given the small status of the roost this is best practice.
- A toolbox talk by licenced bat worker to the site operatives making them aware of the bat related issues on site and the evidence to look out for.
- Although complete reroofing is not required any localised work affecting the roof on sections B1d and B1e including internal works affecting the underside of the roof, will be done under supervision with high-risk areas such as the ridge/eaves.
- Any other suitable features observed such as wall cavities or gaps above the dividing wall will also be thoroughly checked (using endoscopes) prior to any works blocking gaps. This will be done under supervision where necessary.
- In the event bats are recorded during any of the above, these will be moved to the installed bat boxes.
- Once the works to convert the building including the adjacent section B1d, have been completed section B1e will be available for use by roosting bats once again.
- In the highly unlikely event that bats are recorded during the remainder of works, works should cease until a licence bat worker has been notified and further advice provided.

The proposed mitigation strategy outlined above will form the basis of a licence application to Natural England for temporary disturbance of the roost within B1e building and details how the favourable conservation status of bats will be maintained at the site.

In addition, the information will satisfy condition 2 of the planning consent by Rushcliffe Borough Council (Ref: 19/00476/FUL) which requires submission of a bat mitigation method statement for approval in writing by the Borough Council. The development will be carried out in accordance with this statement and any mitigation measures such as provision of bat boxes will be implemented prior to start of the works and retained for the lifetime of the development.

If, however there any queries relating to the information provided, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your sincerely,



**Jenny Wheeldon MSc MIEEM**  
**Consultant Ecologist**

Figure 1: Buildings Plan

