



Bartonbury Farm, Down Saint Mary, Crediton, Devon, EX17 6EB

Ms. Anita Gupta

Bat Survey - Preliminary Roost Assessment

11th November 2020

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Executive Summary

Quantock Ecology Ltd undertook a Preliminary Roost Assessment at Bartonbury Farm, Down Saint Mary, Crediton, Devon, EX17 6EB on the 14th October 2020. The aim of the assessment was to consider the value and suitability of the structures for roosting bats. The development proposals briefly comprise the demolition/reconstruction of a conservatory, conversion of an annex barn to provide living accommodation, and the restoration/extension of a lincay.

For the purpose of this report, the existing farmhouse (B1) has been broken down into sections. The lincay is referred to as B2.

Table 1: Summary of results

Building Ref	Value for / Likelihood of supporting roosting bats	Recommendations
B1: Existing Dwelling, section 2: Conservatory	Negligible	No further surveys or mitigation is required.
B1: Existing Dwelling, section 3: Former Stables	Confirmed	A roost characterisation survey is required to determine how bats use the roost and its conservation status. Three dusk emergence/dawn re-entrance surveys are recommended to confirm the entrance/egress point into the building, identify species and levels of use. Two surveyors should be used to provide suitable external coverage of the structure. An internal camera or surveyor should be utilised during at least one survey; to pinpoint internal roosting locations/check for potential commuting into the main house.
B2 – Lincay	Low	One dusk emergence survey/dawn re-entrance or automated detector survey

		<p>during May to September is recommended using two surveyors overall.</p> <p><i>Note - it may be possible for one of the surveyors to cover both this, and the southwest elevations of B1.</i></p>
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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Quantock Ecology were commissioned by Ms. Anita Gupta to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Bartonbury Farm, Down Saint Mary, EX17 6EB. The assessment is informed by the Bat Conservation Trust publication: *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, J. 2016).

No previous ecological assessments are understood to have been undertaken at the site.

1.2 Scope of the Report

This report provides a description of all structural features suitable for roosting bats and evaluates those features in the context of the site and wider environment. It further documents any physical evidence collected or recorded during the site survey that establishes the presence of roosting bats. It provides information on constraints to the proposals as a result of roosting bats, and summarises the requirements for any further surveys, to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve Planning or other statutory consent, and to comply with wildlife legislation.

The aim of the assessment was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how they could use the building or structure. To achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

- A desk study has been carried out, including the use of freely available resources such as Google Earth and the MAGIC online database.
- A field survey has been undertaken, including an external and internal inspection of the building.
- An outline of likely impacts on any known roosts has been provided, based on current development proposals.
- Recommendations for further survey and assessment have been made, along with advice on European Protected Species Mitigation Licensing if appropriate.

A survey plan is presented in Appendix 1 and the proposed project plan will be included in Appendix 2 upon receipt. Photographs taken during the site survey are included in Appendix 3, and a summary of relevant legislation can be found in Appendix 4. Desk study records can be provided on request (if applicable), with a summary presented in Appendix 5.

1.3 Site Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SS 738 034 and comprises an area of approximately 0.04ha. There are two buildings within the survey boundaries.

The site is situated ~800m south of the village of Down St Mary, Devon. The local landscape is dominated with both arable and pastoral farmland, all bordered with mature hedgerows. Small patches of woodland and hedgerows with an abundance of mature trees are found within the landscape, including a narrow strip of woodland/mature trees ~100m to the west, and a patch of woodland containing large ponds ~300m north-west. Further large ponds occur ~500m south east, and 800m south-west, ~ Isolated dwellings and occasional small villages are found within the landscape, the closest being the village of Down St Mary.

Connectivity to and from the site to the wider landscape is present; mostly in the form of the mature tree heavy hedgerows and linear woodland features.

1.4 Project Description

This report is prepared to accompany a future planning application to be submitted to Mid Devon District Council, for a mixed proposal to include the below items:

- The conversion of a former stable block, to provide living accommodation.
- The demolition and reconstruction of an existing conservatory.
- The renovation of an existing lincay

The programme for the scheme is not known at the current time. All works areas, storage and haul routes will be included within the site boundary; access will be provided by existing roads and as such, no additional working footprints are anticipated.

All works areas, storage and haul routes will be included within the site boundaries; access will be provided by existing roads and as such, no additional working footprints are anticipated.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

Existing bat records relating to the site and a surrounding 2km radius (the study area) were not requested from the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre. This is primarily due to the relatively small scale of the proposed development.

A review of the following information sources has also been undertaken to inform the assessment:

- Landscape structure using aerial images from Google Earth
- Designated sites, habitat and species data held on Magic.gov.uk
- Designated sites information found on Natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk
- Information on the surrounding area using OS Opendata 2010

2.2 Site Survey

The survey was undertaken by Alastair Blake, MSc, BA (Hons), BSdip, Grad CIEEM on the 14th October 2020. Alastair is an ecologist with over 10 years' experience working with bats. Licence number: 2015-15688-CLS-CLS.

All buildings that will be impacted by the project proposals (the survey area) were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. The surveyor systematically searched for features suitable for roosting bats and signs of bat activity, by conducting a non-intrusive visual appraisal from the ground using binoculars, inspecting the external features of the buildings for potential access/egress points, and for signs of bat use. An internal inspection of the building was also made, using an endoscope, torch and ladders. The surveyor paid particular attention to the floor and flat surfaces, window shutters and frames, lintels above doors and windows, and carried out a detailed search of numerous features within the roof space.

2.2.1 Breeding birds and other incidental observations

The surveyor also made note of any other ecological constraints observed during the survey, notably the likelihood of presence or signs of breeding birds, and the suitability of the site for breeding barn owls *Tyto alba*.

2.3 Suitability Assessment

The buildings were categorised according to the likelihood of bats being present, in line with best practice guidelines (Collins, J. 2016); the features of the building that dictate the likelihood of roosting bats are summarised in Table 1. Roost suitability is classified as high, moderate, low and negligible and dictates any further surveys required before works can proceed.

Table 2: Features of a building that are correlated with use by bats during the summer

Likelihood of bats being present	Feature of building and its context
Higher	Buildings/structures with features of particular significance for roosting bats e.g. mines, caves, tunnels, icehouses and cellars. Habitat on site and surrounding landscape of high quality for foraging bats e.g. broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that would be used by commuting bats e.g. river and or stream valleys and hedgerows. Site is proximate to known or likely roosts (based on historical data).
Lower	A small number of possible roost sites/features, used sporadically by more widespread species. Habitat suitable for foraging in close proximity, but isolated in the landscape. Or an isolated site not connected by prominent linear features. Few features suitable for roosting, minor foraging or commuting.

2.4 Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the features on site in the context of their suitability for roosting bats, this does not provide a complete characterisation of the site.

This survey provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of bats being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the local area, the ecology and biology of bats as currently understood, and the known distribution of bats as recovered during the desk study.

The linhay floor could only be inspected from a distance due to safety concerns. No other site specific limitations were recorded during the survey.

3.0 Results and Evaluation

3.1 Desk Study Results

A summary of desk study results is provided below; further details are included in Appendix 5.

3.1.1 Designated sites

The MAGIC database suggests there are no statutory designated sites or non-statutory sites within 2km of the site (the study area). This is illustrated in Appendix 5.

3.1.2 Landscape

The MAGIC database shows a traditional orchard adjacent to the north eastern edge of the site, and an area of deciduous woodland and scattered trees approximately 200m to the north-west. These habitats are likely to be classified as Priority habitats of principle importance, and of particular value to bats.

A review of aerial photographs (Figure 1) and OS maps shows how the site is situated in relation to the wider landscape.

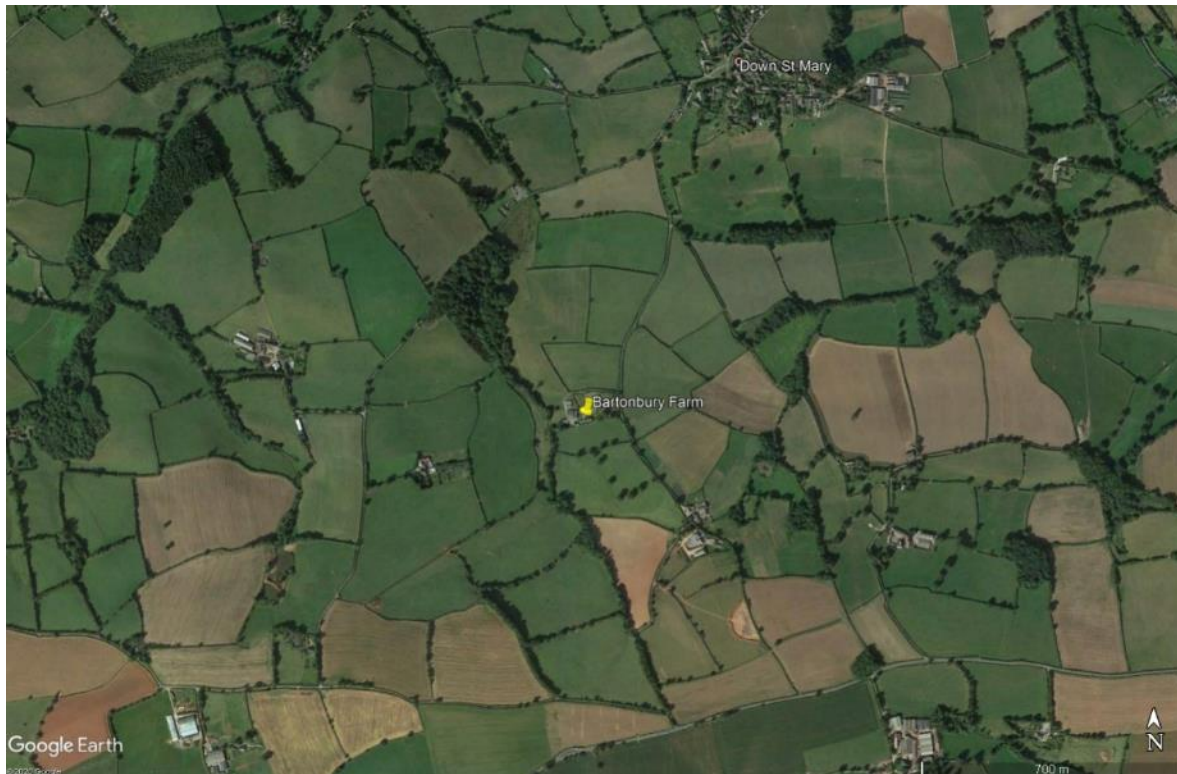


Figure 1: Aerial photo of site, showing landscape structure

3.1.3 European Protected Species Licencing

The MAGIC database shows no granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (referring to bats) within 2km of the site.

3.1.4 Historical records

The Devon Bat Group were not contacted to provide bat records for within 2km of the site. This was primarily due to the small scale of the proposed development.

3.2 Survey Results

3.2.1 Weather parameters

The weather conditions during the survey are detailed in the table below.

Table 3: Environmental variables during survey

	14/10/2020
Temperature	18°C
Relative Humidity	42%
Cloud Cover	0%
Wind	1/8
Precipitation	None

3.2.2 Building description

The buildings within the survey area comprised of a traditional cob and thatch Devon farmhouse (of which a small conservatory in the south and an attached 'former stable block are the specific subjects of the proposal), and a separate lincay/barn. Each building or structure is referenced, as illustrated in the map in Appendix 1.

B1 – Devon farmhouse

Note – the majority of this building is not the subject of the proposal but is described here to provide context.

The residential house on site is a double-storey traditional cob and thatch Devon farmhouse. This is understood to be of quite a considerable age, with parts dating back to the 16th century, and containing various period features throughout. Small relatively modern extensions with rendered walls and slate roofs are attached to the north of the building. A small conservatory is attached to the south of the

house, and 18th century former stable block is attached to the west of the property (both of which are described in more detail below).

B1 – Section 2: **Conservatory**

This is a small extension attached to the south of the house, and constructed with a hipped slate roof and rendered walls with glazed windows.

The structure appeared in relatively good condition (with no gaps noted in the roof or walls). Above this, the main house walls and wall tops appeared relatively well sealed, with no obvious gaps or crevice features noted.

Evidence of bats

No evidence of bats, such as droppings, urine staining and discarded insect wings/casings was noted during the survey.

B1 – Section 3: **Former stable block**

Building description

This is a barn annex attached to the western end of the farmhouse (see Appendix 3, photo 1). The building is constructed of a thatched roof over thick cob walls and is currently used for storing household items (see Appendix 3, photo 12).

The roof is in a good state of repair, however, there are believed to be some small gaps between this and the walls below. Externally, doorway and window features occur on the northern and southern elevations (with the western elevation being a bare wall). Two wooden doors occur on the north elevation and one in the south. Small gaps run along the length of door tops (enabling internal access), with further small gaps also occurring around the above timber lintels (some of which go into the stonework: (see Appendix 3, photo 14)). Both elevations also include a single small, glazed window (which appear well sealed), whilst the north also has a traditional wooden shuttered 'window' on the first floor.

Internally the building is open to the roof, with a mezzanine floor and wooden staircase present covering ~2/3rds of the internal areas (see Appendix 3, photos 12-15). The majority of the building comprises of a single large dark open space, with the roof being some distance above the floors below, and the

mezzanine floor open above and below. However, a small, segregated toilet is also present on the ground floor. The roof is unlined, with beams, rafters and thatch of the current roof all visible from below. Some traditional beams and rafters are also visible from a previous roof structure. In the east, a dividing wall separates the building from the main house, with this containing small spaces at the sides (directly against thatch). In the west the wall appears particularly thick, resulting in a wide darkened 'shelf' feature that cannot be seen from the ground. This wall also incorporates a crevice feature, suspected to be a former chimney, running up its' height.

Evidence of bats

Several thousand bat droppings were scattered across the floors of the building (see Appendix 3, photos 16-18), with a large concentration in the centre of the mezzanine floor; indicative of bats flying around and roosting within the internal space (most likely around ridge beams and rafters). The droppings were mixed together, containing a variety of ages (including both fresh and old/degraded droppings: the latter particularly within those larger concentrations). Different sized droppings were present, including medium sized (such as from a long-eared *Plecotus* sp.) and smaller specimens (such as from pipistrelle *Pipistrellus* sp. bats).

B2 – Linhay

Building description

This is a detached traditional barn that appears to have undergone extensive repairs during modern times; with both modern and traditional materials used in the construction (see Appendix 3, photos 5-11). The building is light and airy, being open in the west and the north. A traditional mezzanine floor is present, with this in some state of disrepair.

The building has a pitched roof constructed of corrugated metal sheets over a mixture of modern and traditional beams and rafters. Some gaps and spaces are present between and above these (see Appendix 3, photo 7). No underlining is present.

Below this the walls contain sections comprised of both concrete blocks (in the west), and traditional cob (along the south). Some crevice/gap features occur in the latter (see Appendix 3, photo 8,) although many of these relatively large and exposed.

Internally there is a wooden mezzanine floor, in poor condition and sagging in places, below which are a series of wooden stalls. An internal barn owl box is present against the western wall.

Evidence of bats

No evidence of bats, such as droppings, urine staining and discarded insect wings/casings was noted during the survey.

3.2.3 Breeding birds and other incidental observations

A barn owl nest box is located within B2. No obvious signs of barn owls were found within the building (although the mezzanine floor could not be checked up close). No nests were noted within B1, however occasional bird droppings were noted within this and there is also a likelihood of suitable nesting features to be present out of view (e.g. at obscured positions along the western wall tops).

3.3 Evaluation – Likelihood of bats being present

Taking the desk based assessment and site survey results into account, the following value for roosting bats has been placed on each building.

Table 4: Evaluation of buildings/structures on site

Reference	Value for / Likelihood of bats using the building for roosting	Brief summary of justification
B1	Confirmed bat roost	Droppings were found within the former stable block; indicative of roosting by multiple species. Dropping sizes and positions were most suggestive of use by long-eared and pipistrelle species. However, these species are neither confirmed, nor exhaustive. Bats are most likely to be roosting above/around beams and rafters, however there is also suitability for these to roost around wall tops and within lintel/crevice features. Access is most likely via wall tops and spaces above doors. However, it may also be possible for bats to pass the dividing wall into the main

		<p>house (although no droppings were found to confirm this). The structure has suitability for use as a maternity roost (however this is not confirmed).</p> <p>No potential roosting features were found within the conservatory. Roosting opportunities in the main house wall directly above this also appeared negligible.</p>
B2	Low	<p>Some crevice features were noted suitable for individual bats along the cob wall, as well as within/between the roofing timbers. However, the likelihood of use is reduced by the general exposed nature of the barn</p> <p>The barn has some suitability for used by night roosting bats, although no droppings were found in those areas that could be closely inspected.</p>

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions and Impact Assessment

The PRA concludes that one building (B1) is known to support roosting bats, and B2 has low suitability. It is considered likely that both long-eared and pipistrelle bat roosts are present in the former stable block section of B1, containing several individuals. This may potentially be used as a maternity roost, however this is unconfirmed (due to the mixing and age range of droppings making current numbers difficult to ascertain).

As the proposals include the conversion and restoration of these buildings, the roosts present would be destroyed. Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and Conservation Regulations; see Appendix 4 for a summary of legislation protecting bats in the UK.

4.1.1 Breeding birds and other incidental observations

No nests were observed, however nesting birds may be anticipated within the buildings. A barn owl nest box is also present, suspected to be unused (but this could not be fully confirmed).

Legislation protects all wild birds whilst they are breeding, and prohibits the killing, injuring or taking of any wild bird or their nests and eggs. Certain species of bird, including the barn owl, are subject to special provisions; it is an offence to disturb any bird or their young during the breeding season.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Survey and assessment

Best practice survey guidelines (Collins, J. 2016) recommends additional surveys for all buildings assessed as having low to high suitability for roosting bats. The survey effort recommended at this stage is iterative and if bats are recorded emerging from the buildings, the survey effort should be adjusted to provide sufficient information to inform European Protected Species Mitigation licensing (EPSML). Buildings assessed as comprising negligible suitability for roosting bats do not normally require further surveys. Appropriate justification for this assessment is provided in Section 3.0 and Table 4 of this report. Those known to support roosting bats may require further survey to inform a EPSML application, depending on the proposed works and assessment of impacts, and the species present/likely to be present

Recommendations for further survey or assessment associated with each building are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Survey recommendations

Building Ref	Value for / Likelihood of supporting roosting bats	Recommendations
B1: Existing Dwelling, section 2: Conservatory	Negligible	No further surveys or mitigation is required.
B1: Existing Dwelling, section 3: Former Stables	Confirmed	A roost characterization survey is required to determine how bats use the roost and its conservation status. Three dusk emergence/dawn re-entrance surveys are recommended to confirm the entrance/egress point into the building, identify species and levels of use. Two surveyors should be used to provide suitable external coverage of the structure. An internal camera or surveyor should be utilised during at least one survey; to pinpoint internal roosting locations/check for potential commuting into the main house.
B2 – Linhay	Low	One dusk emergence survey/dawn re-entrance or automated detector survey during May to September is recommended using two surveyors overall. Note - it may be possible for one of the surveyors to cover both this, and the southwest elevations of B1.

4.2.2 Breeding birds

Should works be required during the nesting bird season (March to September), it is recommended that these buildings be surveyed for breeding birds immediately prior to works. If active nests are found, they will need to be retained in situ until the young have fledged. No works should be conducted within 5m of an active nest.

A survey for barn owls is recommended during their breeding season, which starts in March or April, depending on weather condition, and continues through to August if 2 broods are successfully hatched. This may be conducted as incidental observations during bat surveys.

4.2.3 Enhancements

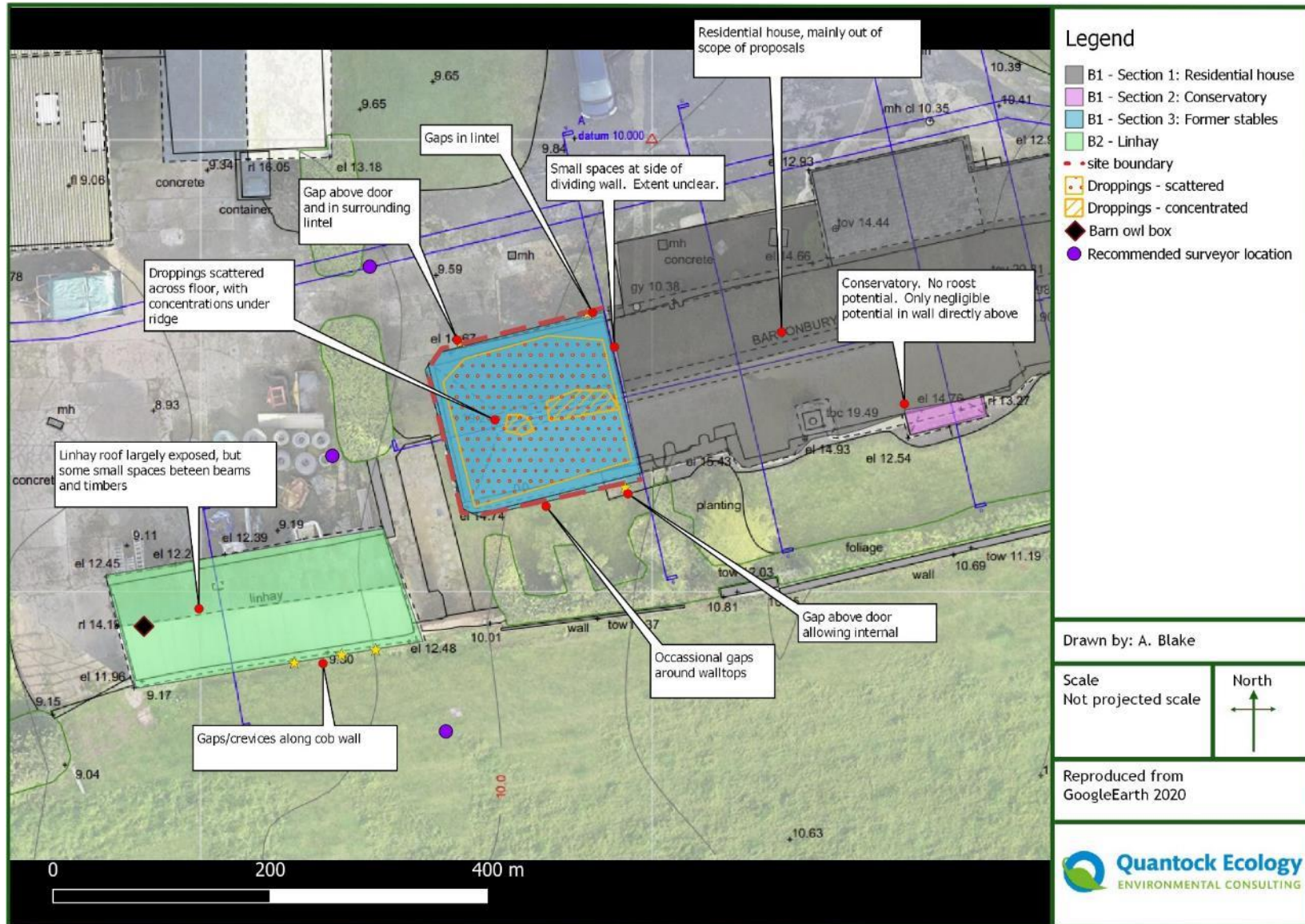
Accurate recommendations for enhancements can be made following the completion of the recommended further survey(s).

5.0 Bibliography

- British Trust for Ornithology (2016) www.bto.org/about-birds/nnbw/putting-up-a-nest-box
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists —Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Garland & Markham (2008) Is important bat foraging and commuting habitat legally protected?
- Google Earth (2020) accessed on 01/11/2020.
- Magic database (2020) <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> accessed on 01/11/2020.
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey Plan



Appendix 2: Proposed Site Plan

To be added once available.

Appendix 3: Photographs

Photo 1: Showing the western half of B1, taken from the north. The area left of the central door is comprised of the main house, whilst the area to the right is the former stable block.



Photo 2: Showing the southwestern corner of B1, taken from the south.



Photo 3: Standing by the conservatory, looking east.



Photo 4: Standing by the conservatory, looking west (with the former stable block in the distance).



Photo 5: The linhay taken from the east.



Photo 7: The cob linhay wall taken from the south.



Photo 8: The internal linhay roof structure.



Photo 9: The linhay taken from the north-east.



Photo 10: View of the upper level of the linhay, including the barn owl box.



Photo 11: View of the lower level of the linhay, with wooden stalls.



Photo 12: Internal view of the ground level of the stable block.



Photo 13: Internal view of the stable block roof structure.



Photo 14: Internal gaps around door lintel.



Photo 15: The upper floor area.



Photo 16: Example concentrated bat droppings beneath ridge.



Photo 17: Example scattered bat droppings on stored items.

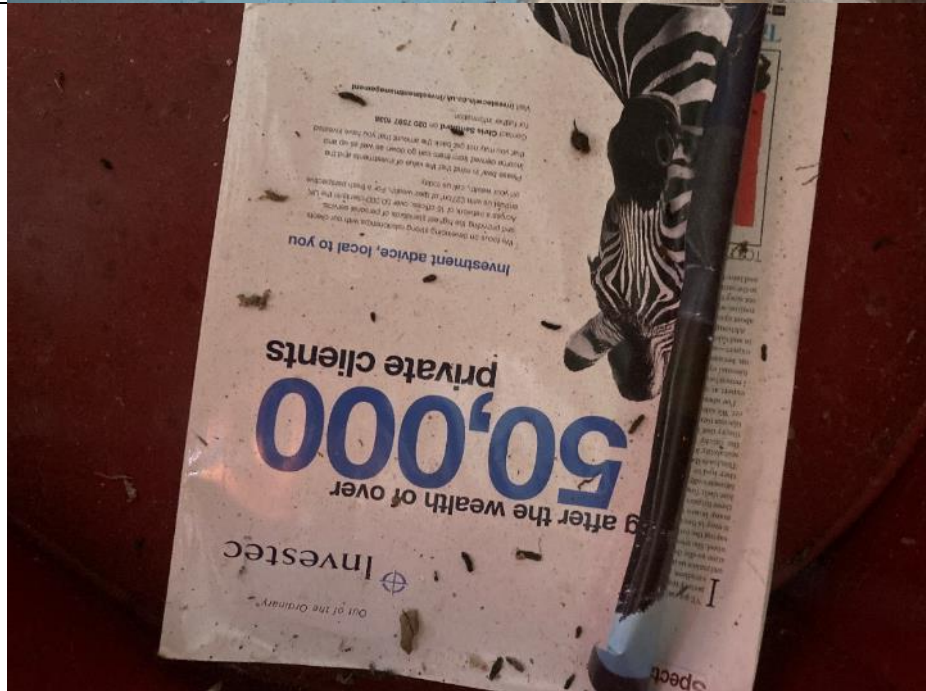


Photo 18: Further example of scattered bat droppings on stored items.



Appendix 4: Legislation and Planning Policy related to bats

LEGAL PROTECTION

All species of bat are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 through their inclusion on Schedule 2.

Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species (e.g. all bats)
- Deliberate disturbance of bat species as:
 - a) to impair their ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate
 - b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale

Effect on development works:

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by the relevant statutory authority (e.g. Natural England) will be required for works likely to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficiency/success to be monitored.

The legislation may also be interpreted such that, in certain circumstances, important foraging areas and/or commuting routes can be regarded as being afforded *de facto* protection, for example, where it can be proven that the continued usage of such areas is crucial to maintaining the integrity and long-term viability of a bat roost (Garland & Markham, 2008)

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments are encouraged; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and The Biodiversity Duty

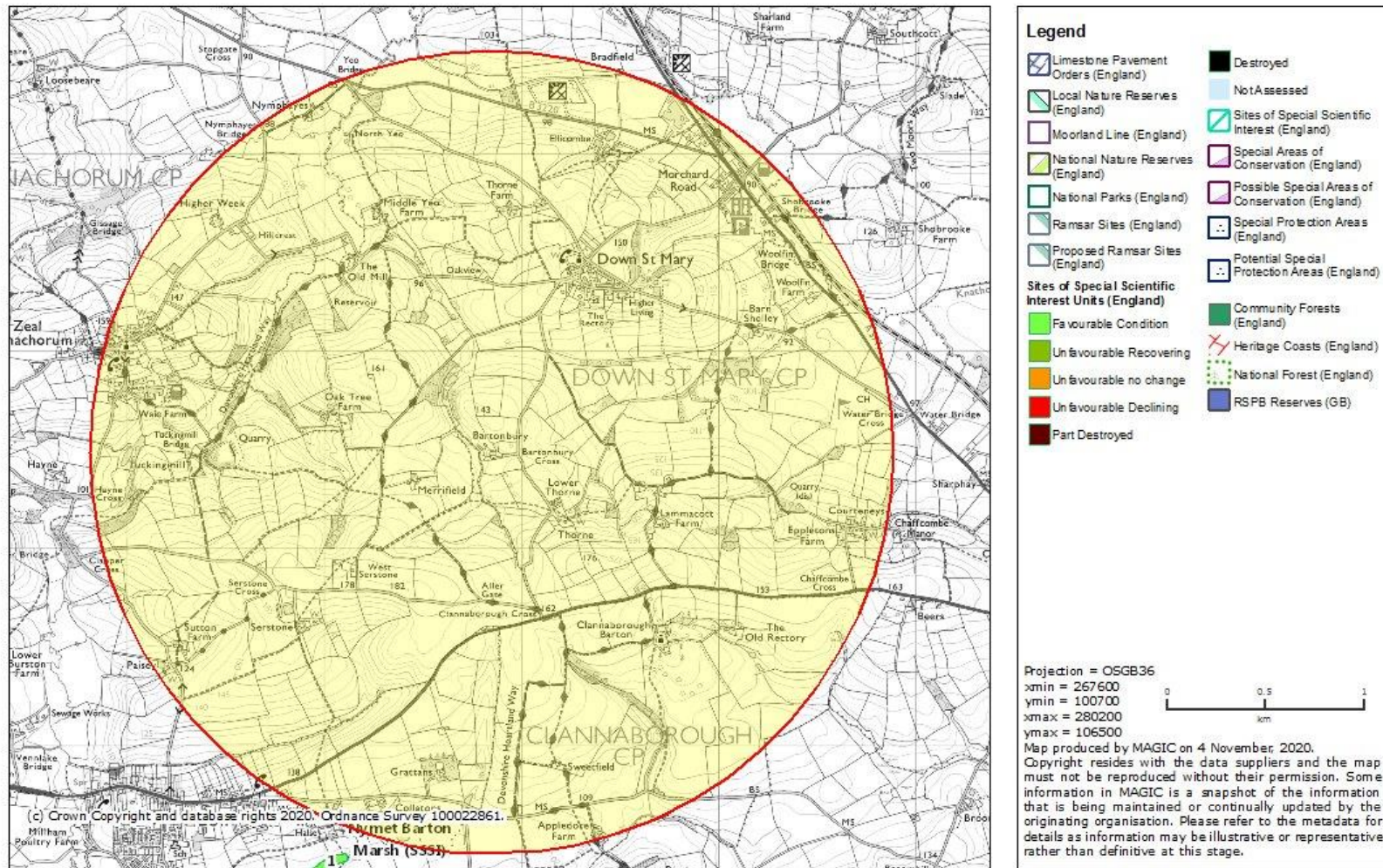
Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act (Section 42 in Wales) requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.' This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

Appendix 5: Desk Study Information

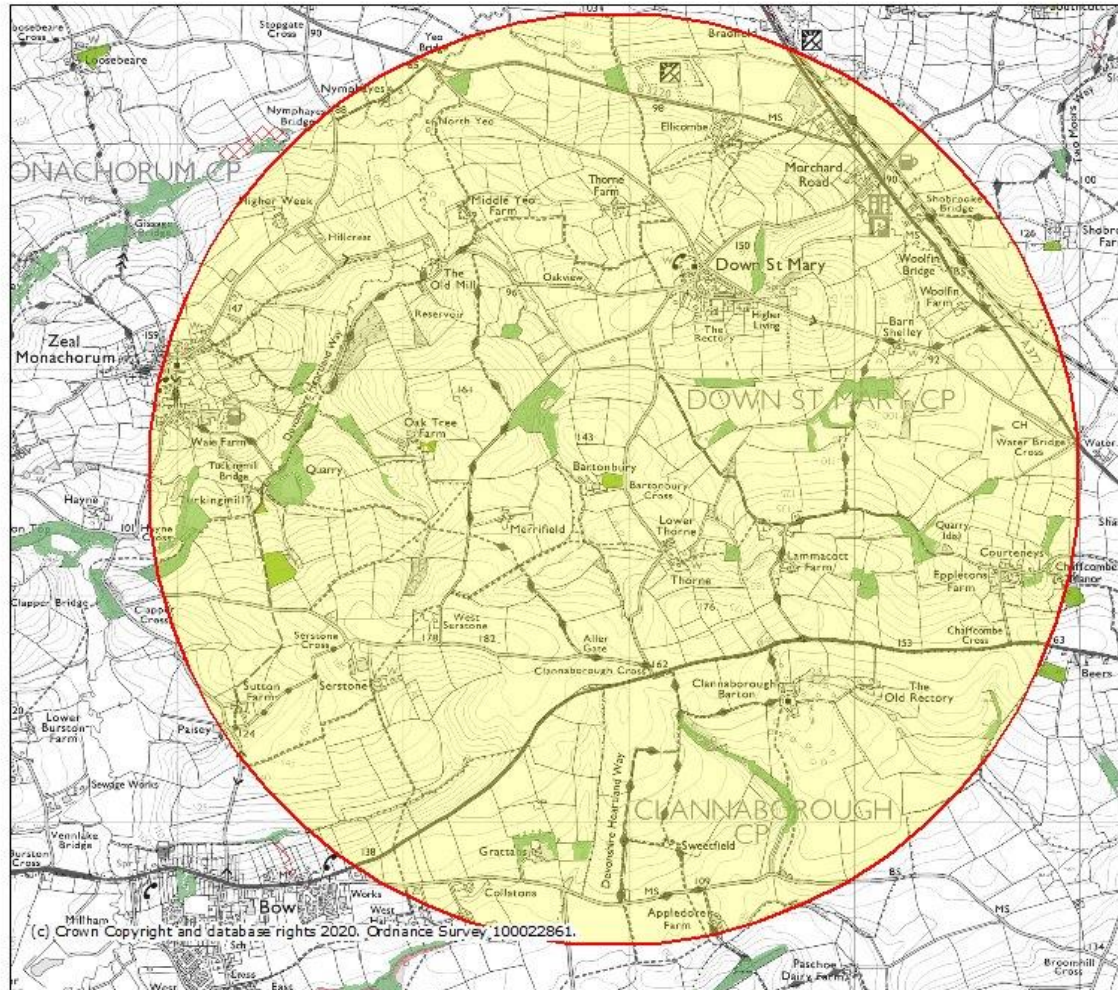
MAGiC

Designated Sites



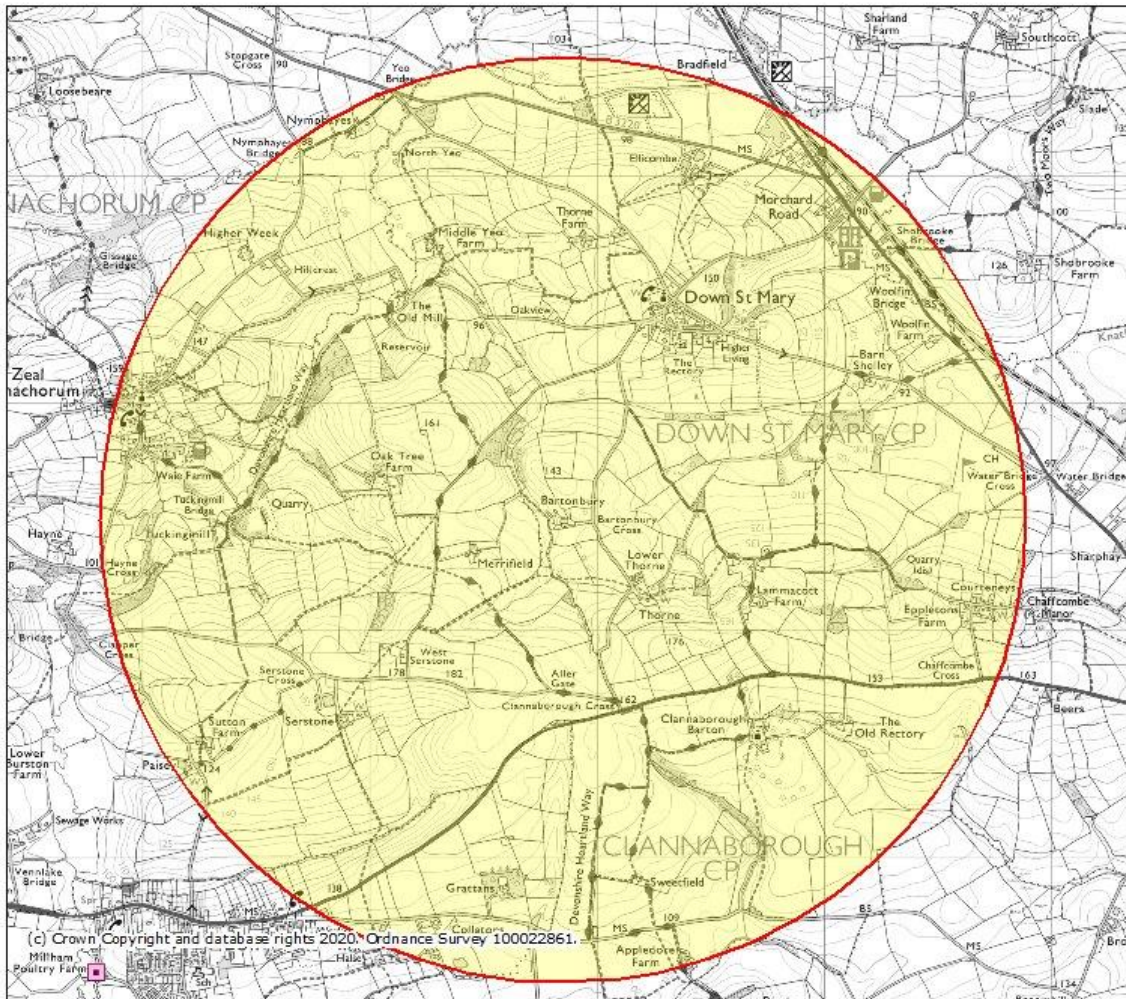
MAGiC

Habitats



MAGiC

EPSML

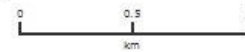


Legend

Granted European Protected Species Applications (England)

- Amphibian
- Bat
- Cetacean
- Invertebrate
- Other Mammal
- Plant
- Reptile

Projection = OSGB36
 xmin = 267600
 ymin = 100700
 xmax = 280200
 ymax = 106500



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