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Mr Tim Banks  
Blankney Estates Ltd  
The Estate Office  
Temple Grange  
Navenby  
Lincoln  
LN5 0AX

9<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Dear Tim,

#### **Hibernation survey for bats – Buildings at Village Farm, Blankney**

I am writing to confirm the results following our recent hibernation survey at the above site. The survey was undertaken on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023 by Celia Commowick (registered to use Natural England Class Licence WML-CL18 to survey bats; registration number 2018-37729-CLS-CLS), with assistance from Geraldine Commowick.

The hibernation survey was required following an assessment on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023, which found that Buildings A, F, G and H have potential to support bats during the hibernation season. The full results of the building assessment are reported in 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Village Farm, Drury Street, Blankney, Lincolnshire' by CGC Ecology Ltd in January 2023.

#### **Survey methods**

High-powered torches (to scan for niches), low powered torches (to inspect individual niches), an endoscope, binoculars and ladders were used to investigate the buildings. All accessible gaps and cracks within the interior and exterior brickwork and stonework, gaps around lintels and dark corners with potential for hibernating bats were checked for their presence where it was safe to do so.

The weather during the survey was considered appropriate for a hibernation survey, with maximum temperatures during the survey of 2°C, clear skies and light winds. The overnight low the night before the survey was -1°C.

## Survey results

A single hibernating barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus* was found within a crevice in the stonework of the central stone wall of Building A. No hibernating bats were found in any of the other buildings.



**Photograph 1: Hibernating barbastelle bat within Building A**



**Photograph 2: View of the crevice in the stonework where the bat was found**

## Legal protection

In England, Scotland and Wales, all bats are strictly protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended); in England and Wales this legislation has been amended and strengthened by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Bats are also protected by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Taken together, all this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a group of bats where the disturbance is likely to significantly affect the ability of the animals to survive, breed, or nurture their young or likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species whether in a roost or not.
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place of a bat
- Possess a bat (alive or dead) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead) or parts of bats

A roost is defined as being 'any structure or place that is used for shelter or protection', and since bats regularly move roost site throughout the year, a roost retains such designation whether or not bats are present at the time.

## Recommendations


The results of the survey indicate that Building A is used by single/small numbers of hibernating bats.

A European Protected Species (EPS) licence will be required from Natural England before any works to Building A can proceed, as otherwise the works to the building would destroy a hibernation roost used by a rare bat species, and possibly injure and/or kill bats. As part of the mitigation strategy, at least one bat box suitable for use by barbastelle bats, such as the Vincent Pro bat box, will be installed on the northern elevation of the building. If this is not possible, then the box will be installed on another building close by, to compensate for the loss of the identified hibernation roost.

It should be noted that further emergence surveys are required on Buildings A, D, F, G and H prior to an EPA licence being applied for.

I hope this provides all the required information. If you have any queries or we can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Celia Commowick BSc (Hons) MSc