

BAT EMERGENCY SURVEY

**THE WINKFIELD CLUB,
WINKFIELD ROW, BRACKNELL RG42 6LY**



Commissioned by: **County Homes Thames Valley Ltd**

Report Number: ASW/CHTV/061/27/2023
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. During this Summer 2023 bat emergence survey, four bat species were recorded at or over the application site at The Winkfield Club. These were common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) and serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*).
2. There were no bat roosts present within the clubhouse at the application site, with no bats emerging at any time during this survey.
3. The bats were recorded foraging and commuting along the boundary tree lines, which are clearly important features for bats.
4. The existing clubhouse is not being used by bats, most likely due to far more suitable buildings and trees being present elsewhere in this area for roosting purposes.
5. Based on this bat emergence survey, there will be no negative impact to the local bat populations from the proposed demolition works at the application site, as long as all recommendations within this report are strictly followed by both the client and all contractors.

1. INTRODUCTION

- A Bat Emergence Survey was undertaken at the Winkfield Club, Winkfield Row, Bracknell RG42 6LY, during Summer 2023 for: County Homes Thames Valley Ltd.
- The national grid reference for this site is: SU896712.
- This survey was required due to the proposal to demolish the existing clubhouse building, for a new development scheme.
- The main method used for this bat survey, as well as the full results and the final recommendations can be found within this report.
- Both this bat survey and the report were undertaken and compiled by Mr Andrew S. Waller, Consultant Ecologist, ASW Ecology Ltd, with the help from assistant ecologists.
- Mr Andrew S. Waller MSc BSc (Hons) MCIEEM, Director of ASW Ecology Ltd - has been a Consultant Ecologist since 1997, and has very extensive experience and knowledge of protected wildlife species/issues including bats, for which he is fully licensed to survey throughout England by Natural England for consultancy purposes (Bat Class 2 Licence Registration Number: 2015-15703-CLS-CLS). He also has Natural England survey licences for great crested newts and barn owls. He has been studying bats for 30 years and wildlife in general for 41 years. He is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and meets the requirements of being a Suitably Qualified Ecologist.

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2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Bat emergence survey

- During June to August 2023, a follow-up Bat Emergence Survey was undertaken at The Winkfield Clubhouse building.
- A total of three bat surveyors using Bat Box Duet bat detectors and also Echo Meter Touch bat detectors were present on the 3x bat dusk survey visits. The main aim was to determine the range of bat species present; the presence of any roosts during the survey period; and the presence of any key foraging areas and bat commuting routes.
- Night vision aids (NVA), mounted on tripods, mainly 2x Nightfox Whisker IR night vision cameras and 2x HIKMICRO Lynx thermal imaging cameras, were used on the key features at this building, so to ensure that this structure was covered robustly for this survey and following current best practice guidance.
- The dusk based visits were undertaken in suitable weather conditions only, so there was the best chance of finding any possible emerging bats. The dusk visits started before sunset and lasted for up to 2 hours after sunset.
- Additionally, an internal bat loft check was made on 9/8/2023 of the clubhouse, to ensure that no bats or bat evidence was present, if that was the case. So that this study was robust and followed all current best practice guidance.
- All results from this survey can be found in the next chapter of this report and a map showing all bat sightings are shown in Appendix 2.

2.2 Constraints

- Due to the timing of this follow-up bat survey, only the Summer period could be covered this year. This is a standard constraint for any bat survey which can only investigate part of any year.
- The June to August period is important to bats, since this is when maternity roosts are present and young bats will be born. Large roosts are sometimes present within structures and trees, and can be very visible during bat emergence surveys. This survey was commissioned when bats will be very active and day roosts could be present, as well as bat maternity roosts, so was timed at the key period of the year for bats.
- As always though, without taking into account any further active surveying or monitoring, this study can only provide a “snapshot” of the presence of bats at the site during the period of this study.
- Please also note that any bat survey report is valid for one year only, as stated in the BCT bat survey guidelines (BCT, 2016).

3. BAT SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Bat emergence survey

Bat emergence survey - visit 1 – 30/6/2023

Sunset time: 9.23pm

Weather: dry, cool, light wind, cloudy (8/8CC)

Temperature (sunset): 18°C (end: 17°C)

Windspeed (max): 6mph

RH: 72%

Invertebrates present: flying insects noted

Bat Species	Time Noted	Location
Common Pipistrelle	9.24pm	Heard near trees
Common Pipistrelle	9.27pm	Flew across site
Common Pipistrelle	9.34pm	Heard only near trees
Common Pipistrelle	9.38pm	Flew over site
Common Pipistrelle	9.44pm	As above
Common Pipistrelle	9.49pm	2 bats over site
Common Pipistrelle	9.55pm	Flew over site
Common Pipistrelle	9.58pm	Flew near trees
Common Pipistrelle	10.05pm	Over site
Common Pipistrelle	10.08pm	Circled over site
Common Pipistrelle	10.12pm	Over the site
Common Pipistrelle	10.15pm	2 bats over site

Common Pipistrelle	10.19pm	Heard at site
Common Pipistrelle	10.24pm	As above
Common Pipistrelle	10.26pm	Over the site. No further bats to the end of the survey visit

Bat emergence survey - visit 2 – 17/7/2023

Sunset time: 9.12pm

Weather: dry, mild, calm, cloudy (8/8CC)

Temperature (sunset): 17°C (end: 15°C)

Windspeed (max): 0mph

RH: 47%

Invertebrates present: flying insects noted

Bat Species	Time Noted	Location
Noctule	9.09pm	Over site
Common Pipistrelle	9.25pm	Over car park area
Common Pipistrelle	9.29pm	As above
Soprano Pipistrelle	9.30pm and 9.32pm	Heard over site
Common Pipistrelle	9.40pm	Circling over site
Common Pipistrelle	9.45pm and 9.49pm	Feeding near trees
Common Pipistrelle	9.53pm	Heard at site
Soprano Pipistrelle	9.58pm and 10pm	As above
Common Pipistrelle	10.08pm	Circling over site
Common Pipistrelle	10.20pm	Heard over site
Common Pipistrelle	10.22pm to 10.26pm	Over site
Common Pipistrelle	10.34pm	Heard over the site. No further bats to the end of the survey visit

Bat emergence survey - visit 3 – 6/8/2023

Sunset time: 8.42pm

Weather: dry, mild, calm, mainly clear (2/8CC)

Temperature (sunset): 16°C (end: 14°C)

Windspeed (max): 0mph

RH: 74%

Invertebrates present: small flies and moths

Bat Species	Time Noted	Location
Soprano Pipistrelle	8.47pm to 9.01pm	Rear tree line
Common Pipistrelle	8.59pm	Near trees
Common Pipistrelle	9.04pm	Rear tree line
Common Pipistrelle	9.10pm	Rear tree line
Common Pipistrelle	9.14pm	As above
Common Pipistrelle	9.16pm	Circling over site
Common Pipistrelle	9.17pm	Feeding near side
Common Pipistrelle	9.21pm	As above
Serotine	9.22pm	Along tree line
Common Pipistrelle	9.25pm	Along tree line
Common Pipistrelle	9.36pm	As above
Common Pipistrelle	9.41pm	Over site
Common Pipistrelle	9.43pm	Over site

Soprano Pipistrelle	9.45pm and 9.47pm	Along tree line
Common Pipistrelle	9.50pm	Over site
Common Pipistrelle	9.51pm	Along tree line
Common Pipistrelle	9.59pm	Over site
Soprano Pipistrelle	10.08pm	Near trees briefly. No further bats to the end of the survey visit

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Significance of the bat emergence survey results

- During this bat emergence survey, a total of four bat species were at or over the Winkfield Club site. These were common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule and serotine.
- There were no bat roosts present within the existing clubhouse, with no bats emerging at any time during the bat survey period.
- The bats were recorded both foraging and commuting along the boundary tree lines, which are important features for bats at this site.
- Common and soprano pipistrelles were the main bat species encountered on the three bat dusk survey visits. Noctule and serotine were rarely recorded and were commuting over the site only.
- No other bat species were recorded during this survey, but would be expected in the wider area, especially at local green spaces such as brown long-eared bat.
- In regards to the daytime clubhouse loft check on 9/8/2023, no bats and no bat evidence was found within the building roof void or the loft cupboards. The main loft was in a very poor condition, with likely vandalism present from trespassers. Part of the loft was blocked by moved piping and insulation so it is not known what could be present there. But the main central loft section was searched, with spider webs and detritus noted only. The loft cupboards had mouse droppings within only.
- Please see the next chapter of this report for the best practice guidance that must still be followed during the future development works by all contractors and the client.

4.2 Impact assessment

In the absence of any mitigation measures or precautions, the following direct or indirect impacts on bats from the proposed demolition works at this site:

- **DIRECT:** There would be no negative impact to the bat population at the site due to the proposed demolition works, with no potential disturbance, damage or no loss of a bat roost within the clubhouse building, without any mitigation. **Impact magnitude predicted: NIL**
- **INDIRECT:** Since no bat foraging habitat or commuting routes are to be impacted, there is a no risk of the loss of high quality bat related habitat or fragmentation of the local bat population due to the stated works. **Impact magnitude predicted: NIL**

4.3 Summary of the legal protection of bats in the UK (Simplified summary only of the legislation – please see other texts for full details)

4.3.1 THE LEGAL PROTECTION OF BATS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Introduction

All species of bats in England and Wales are protected by law. Their legal protection derives from two sources:

- the strict species protection provisions of the EU Habitats Directive as implemented in England and Wales by Part 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the **“2017 Regulations, amended by the 2019 Regulations due to Britain leaving the EU”**); and
- Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (“2017 Regulations”, as amended by the 2019 Regulations)

The 2017 Regulations came into force on 30th November 2017, amended by the 2019 Regulations. They replace the previously applicable regulations (Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 1994 and the 2010 Regulations) in relation to England and Wales. The 2017 Regulations are the principal means by which the EU Habitats Directive is transposed in England and Wales.

The Regulations contain a number of Parts which set out the protection to be afforded to “European Protected Species” (“EPS”), which includes all species of British bats. The list also includes other species which are rare on a European scale, such as great crested newts, otters and dormice.

Under the 2017 Regulations both bats themselves and their “breeding sites and resting places” (most commonly their roosts) are protected.

It is a criminal offence to do the following (note that this is not an exhaustive list of all offences but rather a list of offences which will be of most relevance to developers):

- a. to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat (even if bats are not present at the time);
- b. to deliberately capture, injure or kill a wild bat;
- c. to intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or to deliberately disturb a group of bats, in particular:
 - i. any disturbance of bats which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
 - ii. any disturbance of bats which is likely to impair their ability to hibernate or migrate; or

- iii. any disturbance of bats which is likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- d. to have in one's possession or to control or to transport or to sell or exchange or offer to sell or exchange any live or dead bat or part of a bat which has been taken from the wild; or any part of, or anything derived from, a bat or any part of a bat; and
- e. to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

The maximum penalty that can be imposed for the above offences is (as at May 2010) a fine of up to £5,000, and/or up to six months imprisonment. The offences can be committed by individuals or by bodies corporate. Where a body corporate has committed the offence, the directors or officers of the company may also be prosecuted if the offence has been committed with their consent or connivance, or is attributable to their neglect.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (“WCA 1981”)

The WCA 1981 protects a wide range of animals, plants and habitats in the UK. All British bat species are afforded protection under Part 1 of the WCA 1981, in addition to the protection they have under the 2019 Regulations.

As regards England and Wales the following offences apply to protect bats under the W&CA 1981:

- a. to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection (s9(4)(b) WCA 1981);
- b. to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection (s9(4)© WCA 1981);
- c. attempting either of the above (s18(1) WCA 1981).

The maximum penalty that can be imposed for the above offences is (as at May 2010) a fine of up to £5,000, and/or up to six months imprisonment. The offences can be committed by individuals or by bodies corporate. Where a body corporate has committed the offence, the directors or officers of that company may also be prosecuted if the offence has been committed with their consent or connivance or is attributable to their neglect (s69(1) WCA 1981).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Best practice guidance – bats and development

- As a standard precaution only as per any development related site, the future demolition contractors should be fully aware of the legal protection of bats and what to do if an unexpected bat is found or suspected at the site during all works at the house.
- This is especially relevant during any soft stripping works, where external/internal features may be removed by hand, such as roof tiles, ridge tiles, slates, fascias, soffit boxes, stonework, brickwork, timbers, roofing felt and lead flashing, for example.
- Bats and their evidence such as droppings can unexpectedly be present under such features and be completely hidden until accidentally uncovered.
- If any new bat evidence such as crumbly droppings composed of insect remains or an actual bat is seen, during the building related works, then such work must stop and a licensed bat consultant contacted immediately for urgent advice.
- Usually, late summer/early autumn e.g. late August/September/October or early spring e.g. April/early May, are ideally the best times to work on such structures, as this avoids both the main bat breeding season and the winter hibernation period.
- **However, since no bat evidence and no bat roosts have been found at the clubhouse building at this application site, there are no bat related constraints in regards to when the development works can commence.**

5.2 Best practice guidance – breeding birds and development

- **FOR AWARENESS ONLY:** As per any development related site, the general advice is that no vegetation eg trees, bushes, shrubs, hedges, bramble scrub or dense ivy cover should be removed during the bird nesting season as all bird nests are fully protected by law, and this includes whilst a nest is being built by the adult birds. This also includes buildings that have been proved to have active bird nests present.
- If any nests are present within the proposed development footprint during the works phase, then these must be left alone until the young birds have fully fledged from the nest and no further breeding attempts are to take place.
- The bird nesting season in the UK, currently runs mainly from mid-January to September, but sometimes birds can start breeding before or after this period e.g. some resident birds can start building nests during the first half of January or earlier, including crows, magpies, feral pigeons and woodpigeons.
- Therefore, September to mid-December can be the best months for such works, although with a bird watching brief for any early or late nesters as stated above. An ecologist can be present on site during the clearance work so to search vegetation, where possible, before strimming commences.

5.3 Biodiversity enhancement options for bats

5.3.1 Bat boxes

- As a biodiversity enhancement option for the client, it would be recommended for them to install at least 3-4x bat boxes at the site for local bats to use.
- The bat box model proposed would be the 2F Schwegler Bat Box and this is a high quality bat box which will be used by a number of different bat species, including for the bat species recorded flying here. This box is made of woodcrete and is a long lasting box.
- The bat boxes can be located on separate trees eg one per tree ideally, so there is a better chance of them being used by bats, or onto buildings.
- Bat boxes should be installed at least six metres up a tree trunk, facing mainly South-east or South-west and with enough space for bats to fly under the box easily. Although 1x bat box should be facing North or West so this will provide additional microclimates for bats. No artificial lighting must illuminate any of the installed bat boxes as this would deter bats from using the boxes.
- The NHBS is a good ecological equipment supplier and this bat box model can be purchased from them. The web link for this bat box is:

<http://www.nhbs.com/title/158629/2f-schwegler-bat-box-general-purpose>

5.3.2 Bat friendly planting

- It would also be advantageous if any bat friendly planting can be introduced to any new landscaping scheme, if applicable, by the use of night scented plants, which will attract insects which bats prey on.
- Native plants should always be chosen ideally since these species will have the most benefits to wildlife. But the occasional non-invasive hybrid or exotic would be fine.
- Suitable border plant species can include corn flower, field poppies, mallow, evening primrose, cherry pie, soapwort, sweet rocket, bladder campion, Nottingham catchfly, night-scented catchfly, ox-eye daisy, primrose and yarrow.
- Herbs can also be very good for insects and include borage, coriander, fennel, lavender, rosemary, chives and thyme.
- Trees, shrubs and climbers suitable for insects, so to benefit bats, include dog rose, elder, gorse, guilder rose, English oak, goat willow, silver birch, blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel, honeysuckle, ivy and jasmine.
- Further information can be provided on the above if needed.

5.3.3 Bats and lighting

- It will be important that dark corridors are allowed for bats at night, especially along the site boundaries. This will mean that bats, can use the local gardens and other green spaces, especially whilst commuting between sites. This can be ensured by the use of dark buffer zones.
- Artificial lighting can cause a vacuum effect at greenspaces and at other sites, where such artificial light will pull flying insects at night away from areas where bats feed. So adjacent darker areas will have less insects for bats to survive on and that negatively affects the life cycles of the insect species present (BCT, 2018).
- The future lighting scheme must be bat friendly and adhere to best practice on this aspect. There must be no UV elements to the new lighting and no metal halide or fluorescent sources used (BCT, 2018).
- Additionally, a warm white spectrum should be used, with no blue light components. LED luminaires should also be used, as this has a reduced impact on bats.
- In regards to any future lighting, it would be beneficial for both insect populations and for bats, any new security lighting is set on motion sensors and with short timers (1 minute).
- Light spillage must also be curtailed, with reduced glare and light spillage with lighting near to windows.
- Such lighting within dwellings can be recessed. Lighting must be directed to where it is required only and baffles or hoods should be used to achieve this.
- Screening by vegetation such as new trees, bushes and shrubs can also be used to mitigate the effects of any new lighting scheme.
- The following latest best practice guidance note must be read and followed, in regards to how lighting affects bats and how to mitigate this at a site:

<https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

6. REFERENCES

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- (5) Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature.
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APPENDIX 1:

Photographs A-D

(All Photos are dated 6/8/2023)



Photograph A

No bats emerged from the clubhouse building during the 2023 survey period



Photograph B

Bat species such as soprano pipistrelle and common pipistrelle, did forage and commute a lot along the boundary tree lines at night



Photograph C

Example photograph using a night vision aid (NVA) of the missing and lifted roof tiles at the clubhouse roof – this picture was taken with the Nightfox Whisker digital night camera, mounted on a tripod

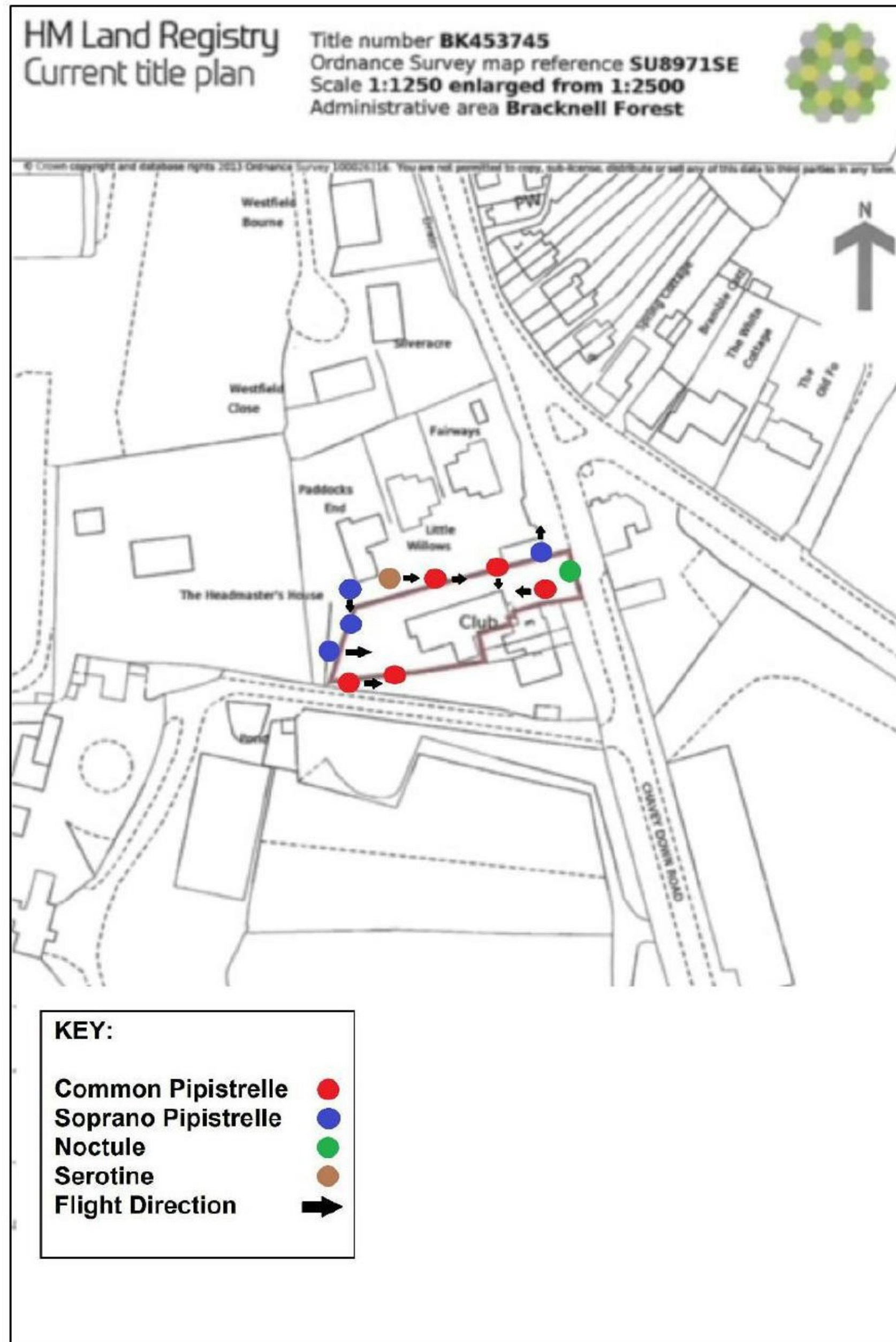


Photograph D

Example photograph using a night vision aid (NVA) of the cervices at the gable end of the clubhouse – this picture was taken with the HIKMICRO Lynx thermal imaging camera, mounted on a tripod

APPENDIX 2:

Map A – Location of the bat sightings - 2023



APPENDIX 3:

Selected bat sonograms for the bat emergence survey

Figure 1 – Bat sonogram of a Soprano Pipistrelle – flying near the tree line

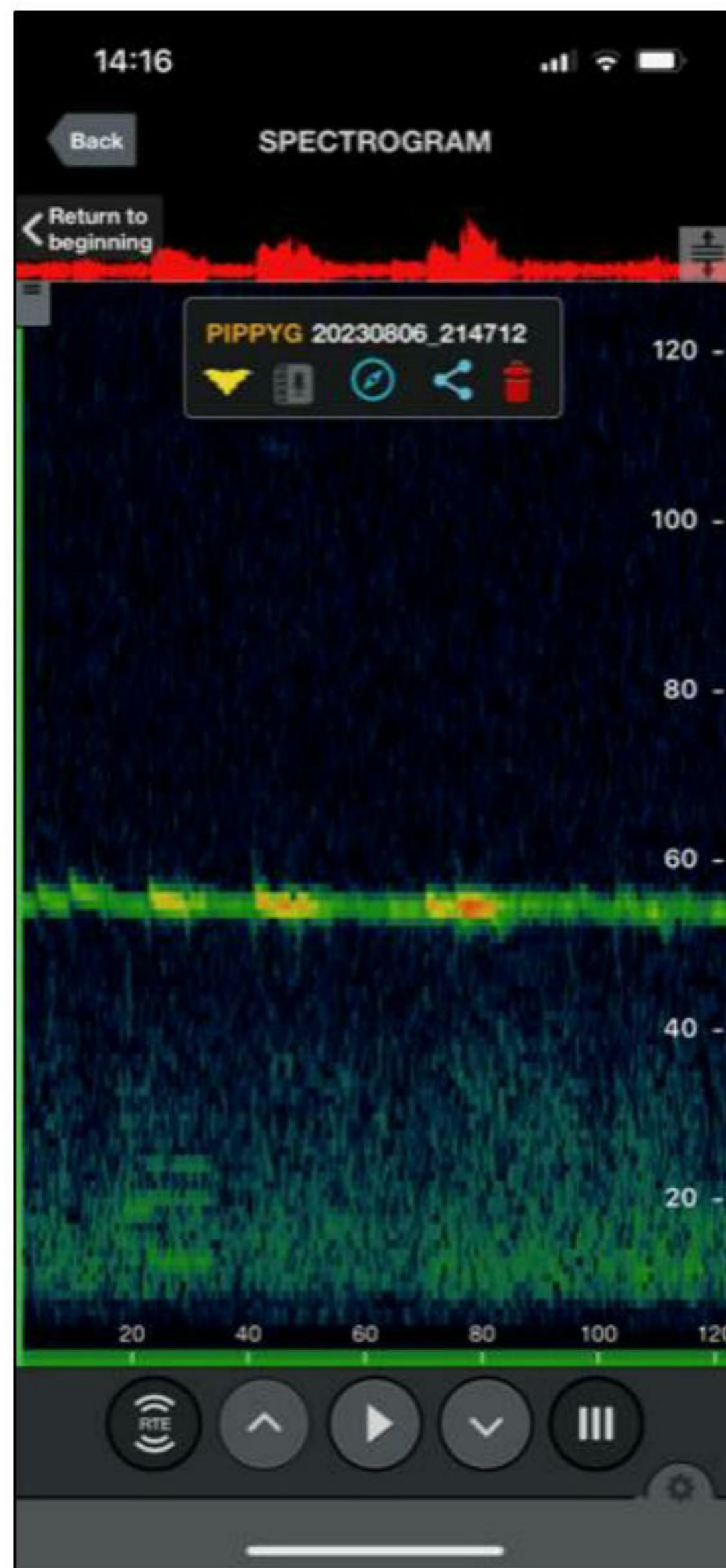


Figure 2 – Bat sonogram of a Common Pipistrelle – flying near the tree line

