

Barn at Long Lane,  
Charlesworth  
Daytime Bat Survey  
2024



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Client Amy Hubble  
Project Title Barn at Long Lane, Charlesworth  
Project Reference RHE.4361  
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# Executive Summary

## Development Details

The client is proposing residential development of a barn off Long Lane, Charlesworth, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the potential for roosting bats at the site and assesses the potential impacts of the development on bats. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

## Ecological Interest

The site offers moderate potential to support roosting bats.

## Outcomes

Further survey work is required to establish the status of roosting bats and inform mitigation requirements. A minimum of two dusk emergence surveys should be conducted in accordance with current guidelines.



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2024 by Amy Hubble to carry out a Daytime Bat Survey of the Barn at Long Lane, Charlesworth, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is an unused agricultural barn constructed c.1870. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SK 0021 9314 (see Figure 1).

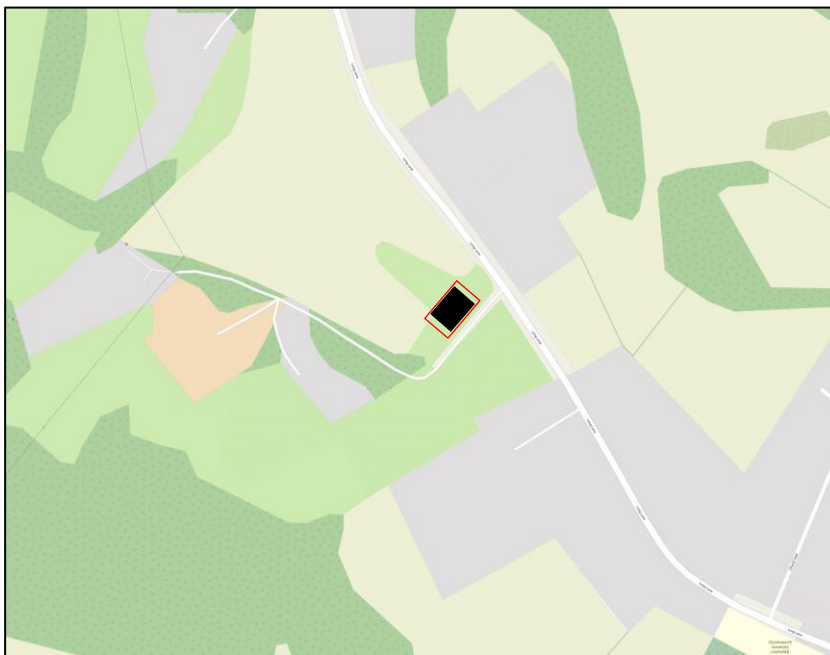


Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site courtesy of © OpenStreetMap Contributors

### Description of Development

- 1.1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for a conversion of the barn into residential accommodation.

## 1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to undertake an external and internal assessment of the site to assess the potential of the site to support roosting bats and identify the requirement for any further detailed surveys.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.1.1 The exterior of the building was surveyed from the ground using binoculars, a high-powered torch and an endoscope. Features offering potential access to roosting bats were recorded. Such features may include suitable gaps in roof coverings, gaps behind external cladding/facia and gaps in masonry.
- 2.1.2 Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include bat droppings on walls, windows or on the ground below roost entrances or staining from fur oil around roost entry points.
- 2.1.3 The interior of the building was surveyed to identify any evidence indicating use by roosting bats. Such evidence may include bat droppings, feeding remains, urine splashes, live or dead bats and staining from fur oil on timbers.

### 2.2 Assessment Criteria

- 2.2.1 Surveys were undertaken in accordance with current guidelines<sup>1</sup>. Interpretation of survey findings and assessment of roosting potential was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria described in published guidance<sup>1,2</sup>.

### 2.3 Survey Information

- 2.3.1 The survey was undertaken on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 by Simon Holden BSc (Hons), MCIEEM (Associate Ecologist) and Matthew Bottomley BSc (Hons), MSc (Hons) (Ecologist). Simon has 19 years' professional experience and holds a Level 2 class survey licence for bats (ref: 2019-42937-CLS-CLS)
- 2.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was mild, overcast, and wet. The average temperature was 12 degrees Celsius. Site conditions were appropriate for a full assessment to be undertaken.

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<sup>1</sup> Collins, J. (Ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists-good practice guidelines*. 4<sup>th</sup> edn. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

<sup>2</sup> Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Survey Constraints

- 3.1.1 There were no constraints regarding the survey. A full assessment was undertaken.

### 3.2 Habitat Appraisal

- 3.2.1 The site is located in a rural area with large gardens and agricultural land including mature trees and hedgerows. Ancient woodland is located within 200m. The wider area surrounding the site offers good bat foraging and commuting habitat.

### 3.3 External Survey

- 3.3.1 The site is a detached agricultural barn c.1840. The walls are stone, and the roof is of catslide construction and is covered with stone tiles (see Photograph 1)



*Photograph 1 showing the building*

- 3.3.2 The external stonework is aged and much of the mortar is worn away or cracked presenting gaps which provide potential access to crevice dwelling bats (see Photograph 2)



*Photograph 2 showing gaps in the external stonework*

- 3.3.3 A number of roof tiles are either raised, slipped or damaged, offering suitable access points for bats (see Photograph 3)



*Photograph 3 showing the roof*

- 3.3.4 A large gap between the roof verge and wooden soffit runs along the west facing elevation of the building (see Photograph 4).



*Photograph 4 showing the gap between the roof tiles and soffit*

### 3.4 Internal Survey

- 3.4.1 The interior of the building is separated into two areas. No roof void is present and the roof is unlined (see Photograph 5).



*Photograph 5 showing the interior of the building*

- 3.4.2 Some gaps are present within the internal masonry and also between the roof and wooden support beams (see Photograph 6).



*Photograph 6 showing the internal roof structure*

- 3.4.3 The interior of the site is exposed to a low level of daylight through gaps in the roofing and a window on the east facing side of the building (see Photograph 7).



*Photograph 7 showing the lit-up internal space*

- 3.4.4 The interior is cold and damp, with rain entering through the roof. No evidence of bats was recorded
- 3.4.5 No PRFs were identified on the two individual trees on-site.

## 3.5 Incidental Findings

- 3.5.1 The vegetation surrounding the site within the application boundary is comprised of tall ruderal vegetation that is dominated by a mix of Rosebay Willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium* and Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* (see Photograph 8). Himalayan Balsam is a schedule 9 listed invasive species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).



Photograph 9 showing the tall ruderal vegetation

- 3.5.2 It is not an offence to have this species on your land, but it is illegal to plant or otherwise cause it to grow in the wild.

## 4. Assessment

### 4.1 Interpretation of Results

The site is located close to good quality bat foraging habitat. The presence of numerous gaps in the roof and masonry present potential roosting features for crevice dwelling bats. The site is assessed as offering moderate potential to support roosting bats.

### 4.2 Potential Impacts

- 4.2.1 In the absence of mitigation, the proposed development could result in the destruction of a bat roost and the killing/injuring of individual bats, should these be present.



## 5. Recommendations

### 5.1 Further Surveys

- 5.1.1 A minimum of two dusk presence/absence surveys should be undertaken to establish the status of roosting bats and inform mitigation requirements. This will require a minimum of three surveyors and night vision aids to provide visual coverage.
- 5.1.2 Surveys should be conducted between May and August in accordance with current guidelines.

### 5.2 Mitigation Measures

- 5.2.1 If evidence of a roost is confirmed, a licence will be required to avoid the risk of an offence. A licence can only be applied for once planning permission is obtained.

### 5.3 Enhancement Measures

- 5.3.1 In accordance with NPPF (2023) and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), development should seek to include measures to benefit wildlife.
- 5.3.2 Bat roosting features could be incorporated in the converted building to maintain roosting opportunities. Details of the measures and their locations should be confirmed by a suitably qualified ecologist in accordance with the results from the dusk emergence surveys.

#### General Precautions

- 5.3.3 This report is considered to be valid for two years. After this, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted to assess its validity. An assessment update may be required.



# Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

## National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 180 and 186, shown below:

- 180. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
  - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
  - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
  - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
  - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
  - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
  - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 186. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
  - a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;



- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

### Legislation

All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit), which make it an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
- Deliberately disturb bats;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Proposed development works that are likely to disturb or destroy bats or their roosts will need to obtain a licence from the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (e.g., Natural England) prior to work commencing.

