

## Bat Scoping Survey Report:

Cliff Farm, 8 The Cliff, Iburndale, Whitby, YO22 5DS

Report prepared: 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018



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# 1 Executive summary

A bat scoping survey of the Coach House was commissioned in connection with a proposal to create living accommodation at first floor level.

The survey was carried out by John Drewett BSc (Hons), MCIEEM on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018.

The survey found no evidence of bats roosting in the property. The roof has been replaced in recent years and so is tightly fitting with no potential bat access points. Bats could access the interior of the building through the open arch below the area to be converted and there are small gaps around the interior wall tops. However, this is a very disturbed part of the site and there is no evidence of use by bats.

During the summer months the surveyed building is used by nesting Swallows.

The proposed works are considered very unlikely to result in any adverse impact on bats so no further surveys are considered necessary in connection with this application.

Because the building is used by nesting birds works must be planned to avoid impacting on any occupied and active nests. Because the ground floor area will continue to be accessible following completion of the works, space will still be available for nesting Swallows.

*A bat emergence survey of other buildings on the site was carried out by John Drewett Ecology in May 2013. Whilst this survey was not directly concerned with the building that is the subject of this report, an observer was stationed close to the current building during that survey, but observed no bats emerging from it. During that survey only Common Pipistrelle bats were recorded in flight over the western and southern parts of the garden.*



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## 2 The survey site

### 2.1 Location

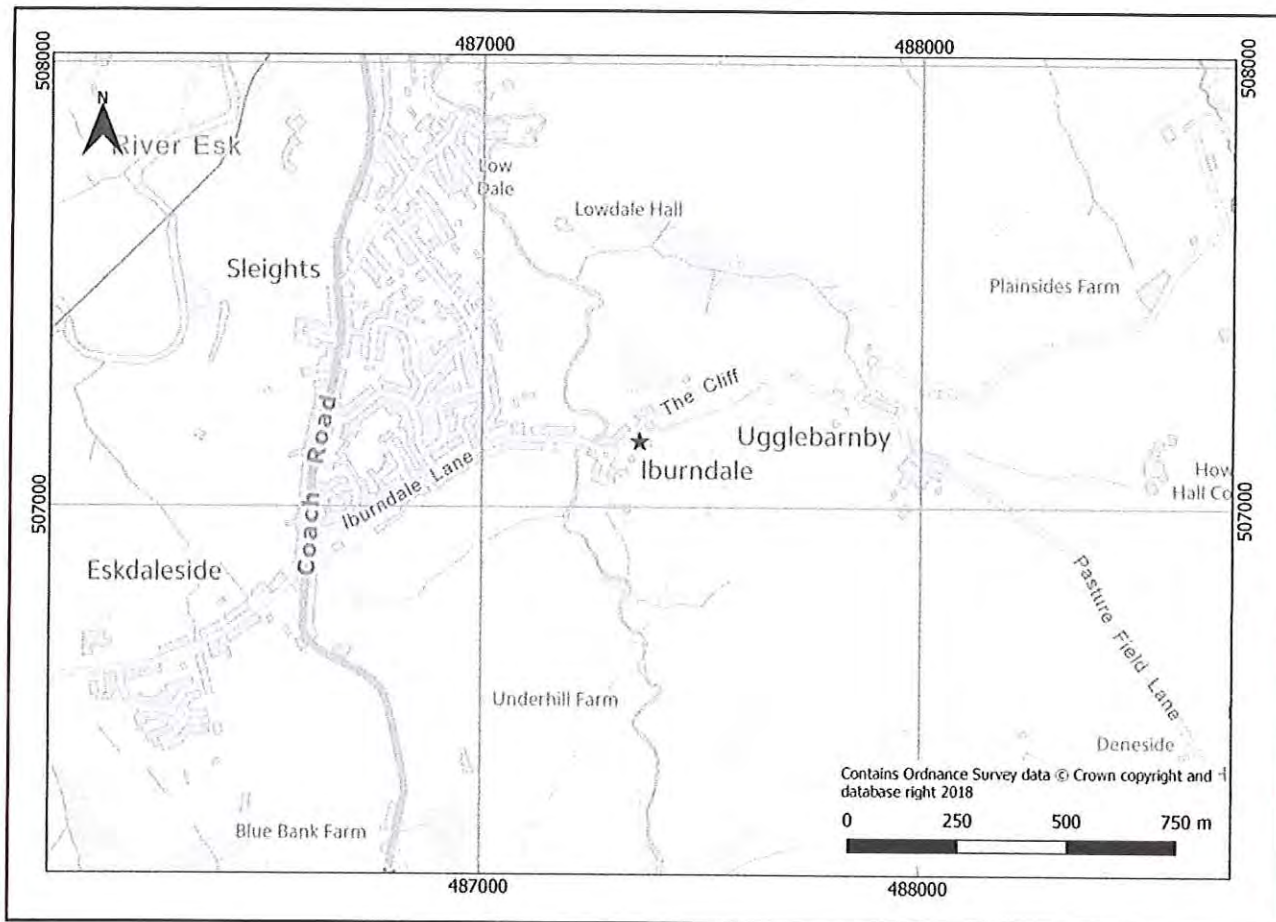


Figure 1: Location map, Cliff Farm, Iburndale, NZ 8735 0714

### 2.2 Site description

The survey site comprises a dwelling house and three holiday cottages with a garden off the Iburndale.

### 2.3 Surroundings

The surveyed property is in a rural location just to the east of Sleights.

The site is located in the valley of the Iburndale Beck which is approximately 100m to the west. This is a north flowing stream that forms a tributary of the River Esk at Briggswath.

The Iburndale Beck is bordered by trees along its course which link to trees along the course of another beck which joins it from Ugglebarnby and so to some small woodlands in the area.

The surrounding countryside is largely grazing land in the vicinity of the surveyed property, but with some arable land on the plateau to the east.

### 3 Proposed works

The proposal is for the insertion of a first floor into the unconverted part of the Coach House at Cliff Farm above the entrance into the courtyard in order to provide an additional room.



## 4 Survey methods

### 4.1 Desk study

- Consulted the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website at <http://magic.defra.gov.uk> to check if there are any statutory nature conservation designations relating to the site or nearby.
- Asked North Yorkshire Bat Group for records of bats previously recorded within 2km of the survey site to gather any previous information about bats at the site and to put our findings in the context of existing information.
- Researched the features and habitats of the area through the use of maps and aerial photographs.

### 4.2 Field work

- Undertook a survey of habitats and landscape features on the site and within 300m
- Examined the building to record its main features especially those that may be suitable for roosting bats or other protected species.
- Carried out a detailed check of the interior and exterior of buildings to look for bat droppings; feeding remains such as moth & butterfly wings; live bats; dead bats; stains and marks on surfaces indicating regular use by bats; urine marks; and areas devoid of cobwebs
- Took photographs of the site, its features and any evidence of bats to illustrate the findings in this report.

### 4.3 Surveyors working on the project

<u>Name</u>	<u>Natural England licences held</u>	<u>Survey dates</u>
John Drewett BSc (Hons), MCIEEM	WML-CL20 (Bats); WML-CL21 (Bats Low Impact); WML-CL08 (Great Crested Newts)	2 <sup>nd</sup> January 2018

### 4.4 Equipment used

A Clulite 500,000 candlepower torch was used to aid the examination of the building. The property was recorded using a Nikon Coolpix L30 digital camera.



## 5 Existing information

### 5.1 Designated statutory sites

The survey site is located within the North York Moors National Park.

There are no statutory nature conservation designations applicable to the survey site or its immediate surroundings.

### 5.2 Existing records of protected species

The following records of bats previously recorded within 2km of the site were supplied by North Yorkshire Bat Group. This information has largely been assembled as a result of responding to enquiries from the public about bats. Some recent records have also been supplied by consultants carrying out survey work in connection with proposed developments. It does not, therefore, represent a comprehensive assessment of the local bat fauna.

Species	Site	Grid ref.	Quantity	Date	Comment
Common Pipistrelle	Sleights new bridge	NZ867081		17 Sep 2005	Feeding
Common Pipistrelle	8 The Cliff, Iburndale	NZ874071		14 May 2013	In flight & foraging
Common Pipistrelle	Whitby	NZ86980851		06 Aug 2013	
Common Pipistrelle	Hillside Farm	NZ8552506490	5	2012	Roost
Common Pipistrelle	Hillside Farm	NZ8552506490	3	2012	Roost
Common Pipistrelle	164 Coach Rd, Sleights	NZ865069	2	15 Jul 2016	
Brown Long-eared Bat	117 Coach Road, Sleights, Whitby	NZ866074	1	15 Aug 2001	Roost
Brown Long-eared Bat	Woodlands Nursing Home	NZ861080		13 Jul 2000	
Brown Long-eared Bat	Hillside Farm	NZ8552506490	1	2012	Roost
Pipistrelle species	5 Orchard Road, Sleights, Whitby	NZ868077		13 Jul 1997	Roost
Pipistrelle species	Whitby	NZ869084		17 Jul 2013	
Pipistrelle species	Whitby, YO22 5AG	NZ86900780		04 Oct 2013	
Pipistrelle species	Buskey House Farm, Sneaton	NZ886076	1	02 Jun 2013	Roost
Pipistrelle species	Whin Green, Sleights	NZ869077	117	18 Jul 2014	Roost
Unknown	45 Iburndale Lane, Sleights	NZ870072	12	02 Aug 2001	Roost
Unknown	13 Carr Hill Lane, Briggswath	NZ869086	1	16 Aug 2002	Possible roost



Species	Site	Grid ref.	Quantity	Date	Comment
Unknown	2 Carr Hill Lane, Briggswath, Whitby	NZ869083	1	02 Sep 2002	Possible roost
Unknown	65/67 Birch Avenue, Sleights	NZ870073		23 Sep 1986	Possible roost
Unknown	Woodlands Nursing Home, Woodlands Drive, Sleights	NZ861080		18 Feb 1988	
Unknown	Sunniside, The Carrs, Ruswarp	NZ870082		26 Aug 1986	Roost
Unknown	Sleights	NZ8606	2	04 Sep 2004	Dead bats inside building
Unknown	10 The Cliff, Iburndale	NZ873071		02 Aug 2008	Bat inside building
Unknown	Cherry Tree House, 5 Ridge Lane, Briggswath	NZ873088		15 Sep 2008	Bat inside house

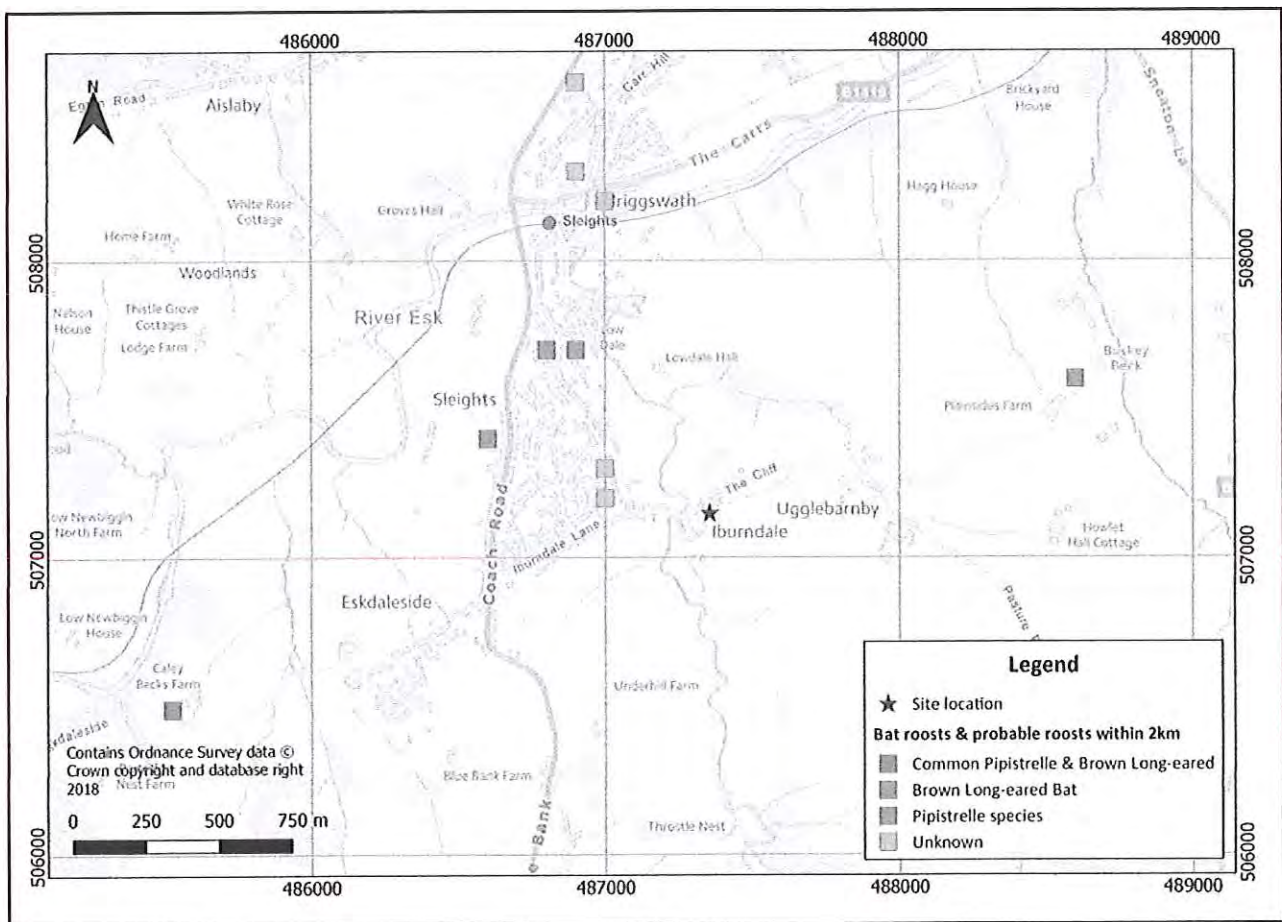


Figure 2: Bat roosts and probable roosts previously recorded within 2km of survey site

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## 6 Buildings

### 6.1 Coach House

#### 6.1.1 Description

The surveyed building comprises a semi-detached stone coach house with a lined, pantile roof. The building is attached to a cottage to the west. There is a large opening on both the north and south sides to permit vehicles to pass beneath. The walls are well-pointed both inside and out, though there is a small gap between the wall top and roof at the east end. The roof has been replaced in recent years when the adjoining cottage was re-roofed and has no gaps suitable for roosting bats. There is no enclosed roof void.



*Figure 3: Coach House viewed from the south*



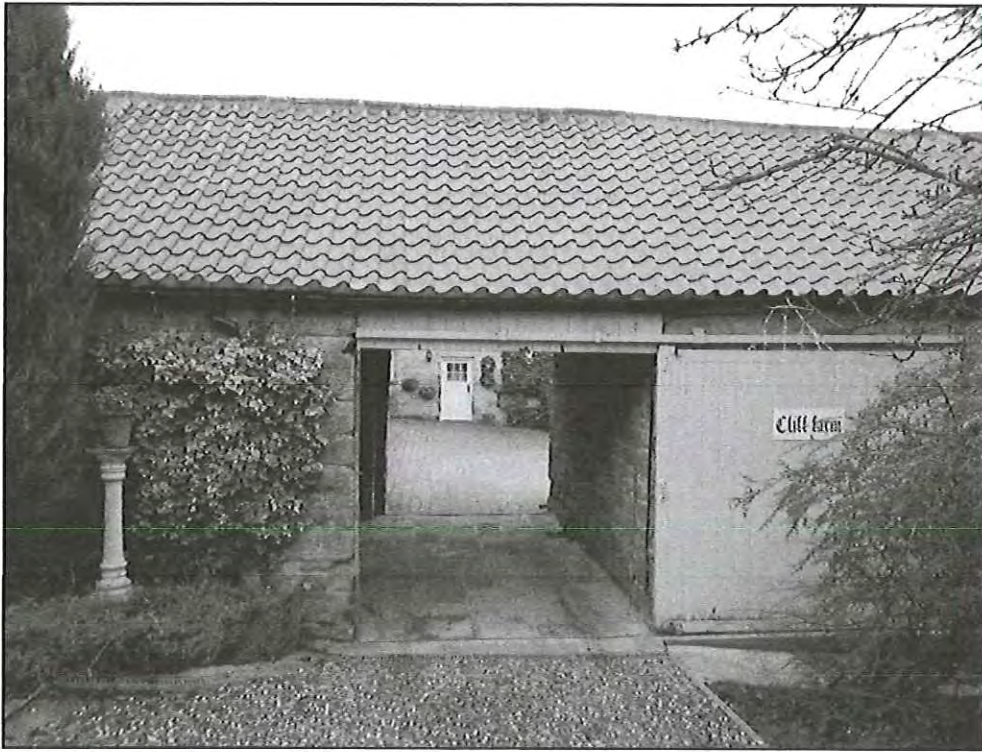


Figure 4: Coach House viewed from the north

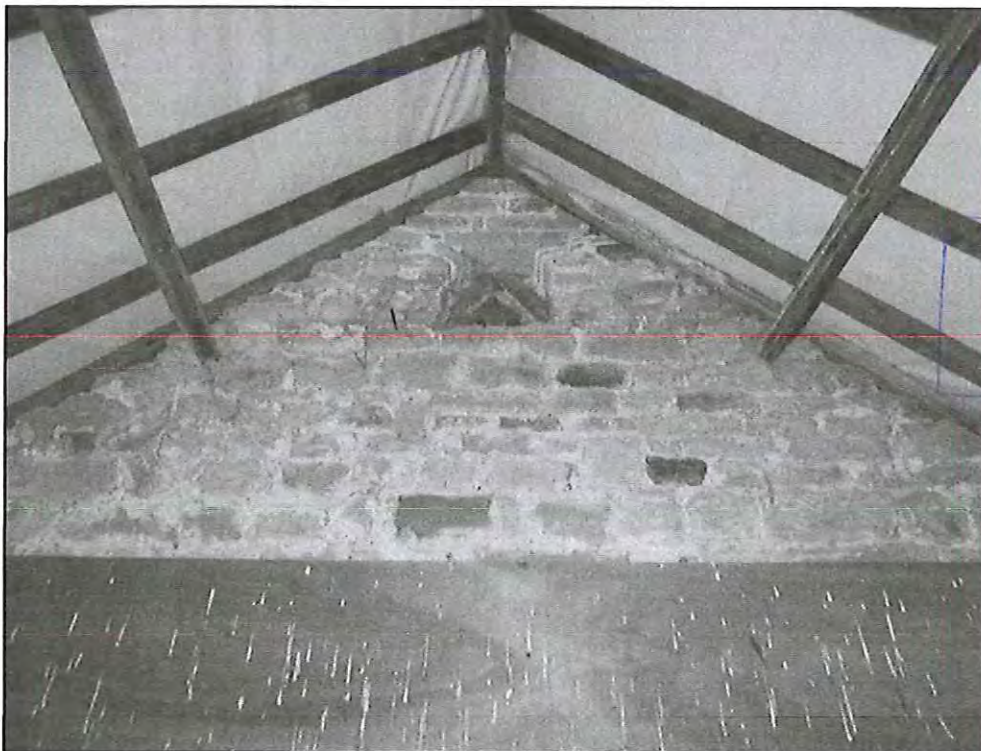
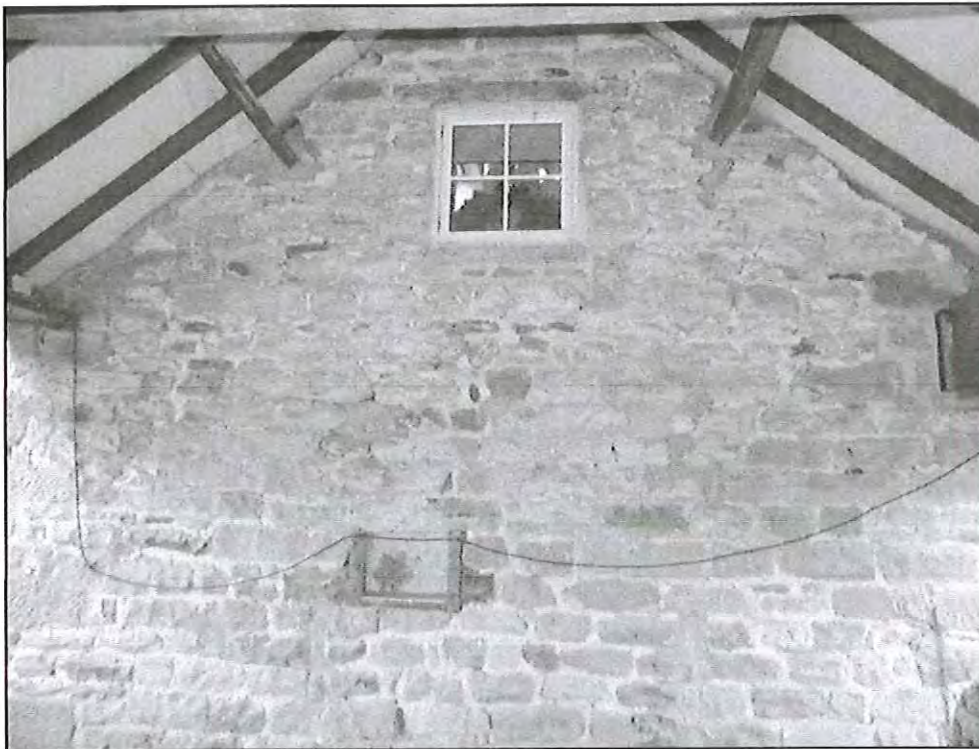


Figure 5: Underside of roof at east end. Swallow droppings on timber

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*Figure 6: Underside of roof at west end, looking towards attached cottage*

#### 6.1.2 Evidence of bats

No bats, bat droppings, feeding remains, stains on timbers or other evidence of bats was found during the survey.

#### 6.1.3 Bat roost potential

Whilst the interior of the building is fully accessible to bats due to the openings in the north and south wall, suitable roost crevices are restricted to a narrow gap at the wall tops at the east end. Due to regular disturbance of the area and absence of any evidence of bats, these are considered to not be used by bats. Bat roost potential is considered to be negligible.

#### 6.1.4 Other protected species

Old nests and droppings within the building indicate use by nesting Swallows.



## 7 Assessment

### 7.1 Constraints on survey results

During the period October to March inclusive bats may be in hibernation. During this time they are inactive for long periods and generally tucked into tight crevices where they are out of reach of predators. These hibernation sites may be different to those sites used during the summer. Surveys carried out during the hibernation period can rely only on signs of bat use such as droppings. Because many bat roosts are located in tight crevices where droppings are unlikely to accumulate outside the roosts surveys at this time of year can easily overlook roost sites. In this case it is considered that the bat roost potential of the building is sufficiently low that the time of year at which the survey was conducted is not a significant constraint.

### 7.2 Evaluation of survey findings

No evidence of bats was found in or around the building during the current survey. There are no previous records of bats from the property other than flying Pipistrelle bats over the site observed during a survey in 2013. The surveyed building has very few crevices suitable for roosting bats.

Swallows do nest in the surveyed building. Measures will be necessary to ensure that nesting Swallows are not disturbed during the works, but as the ground floor will remain open, alternative nesting sites will remain following the works.

### 7.3 Potential impacts in the absence of mitigation

No adverse impacts on bats are anticipated. However, even where bat roosts are not located during a survey there is always the risk that individual bats using the site on a casual basis may be encountered during works. Without taking appropriate precautions any such bats could be injured or killed.

Nesting Swallows could be disturbed and nests destroyed if the works are carried out between May and September inclusive.



## 8 Mitigation method statement

### 8.1 Minimizing risk to bats during works

To minimize any risks posed to bats that may be roosting or hibernating in the buildings on a casual basis, care must be taken during building works. In particular:

- When removing or repairing roofs at least remove the ridge tiles and the two rows of tiles at the ridge and along the eaves by hand, carefully checking the underside for the presence of bats.
- Do not slide any tiles down the roof to avoid crushing any bats concealed beneath
- If removing timbers from walls carefully check for the presence of bats around the ends of timbers. Where large timbers cannot be removed easily, cut through the timbers and remove the ends from the wall separately, to avoid the risk of crushing bats.
- When carrying out pointing works check for the presence of bats before pointing up holes. In stone walls bats may well be out of sight within the wall itself, so take extra care in such areas.
- Do not point up holes between November and February. Bats may be concealed deep in the wall at this time and be in hibernation, so will not arouse when disturbed.

### 8.2 Nesting birds

Birds have been found nesting in the surveyed buildings. If work is to commence after the start of the breeding season you are advised to secure the area prior to the return of Swallows to prevent birds starting to nest. If nesting has begun before building works start you must avoid disturbing the nest whilst it is being built or when it contains eggs or young.



## 9 Background information and references

### 9.1 Bats: legislation and policy guidance

*The following is a summary and brief interpretation of the legislation relating to bats. You are advised to consult the original legislation and/or a legal professional if you have particular concerns about the legality of a planned operation.*

Bats and their roost sites are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). This protection applies at all times, even if the bats are absent at the time that an activity is carried out.

Although many surveys are undertaken because Local Planning Authorities must consider the impact of a development on protected species during their decision making, it should be noted that bats and their roosts are protected, whether or not a survey has been requested, and that ignorance of the presence of bats is no defence against prosecution. Fines of up to £5000 and a six month prison sentence can be imposed for each offence.

Among other things it is an offence to:-

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat
- Deliberately disturb bats where the disturbance is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young or
- Deliberately disturb bats which is likely to impair their ability in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate
- Deliberately disturb bats, in particular any disturbance which is likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat



The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 recognises that the planning system should perform an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment. This should include “moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature”. Planning should “promote...recovery of priority species populations”. Paragraph 119 states that “if significant harm 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”. This section also states that “opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in or around developments should be encouraged”. Significantly, paragraph 119 states that “The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined”.

Where it is proposed to carry out works which will have an adverse impact on bats or on a bat roost, a European Protected Species (EPS) licence must first be obtained from Natural England, even if no bats are

expected to be present when the work is carried out. Granting of planning permission does not override this requirement.

Bat conservation is also part of the biodiversity action plan process. The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, requires states to develop national strategies and to undertake actions aimed at maintaining or restoring a wide range of biodiversity.

In England & Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, *"to have due regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity"*. It notes that *"conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat"*. Local authorities frequently require protected species surveys to be submitted with planning applications so that they can fully take conservation into account in their decision making.

An EPS licence application requires details of the proposed works, the bats which may be affected and the mitigation proposed to maintain the favourable status of bats in the region. The application is usually drawn up on behalf of the client by a specialist ecological consultant. The consultant is required to check that work is proceeding in accordance with the method statement and to also carry out monitoring of the impact on bats for some time after completion of the works – the length of monitoring is dependent on the species, development and expected impact of the development on protected species. Natural England aims to make a decision on licence applications within 30 working days of receipt. There is no guarantee that a licence will be granted and there is no fast track process to obtaining one. Applications can only be made once planning permission has already been obtained (where appropriate).

EPS licences can only be issued if Natural England is satisfied that there is no satisfactory alternative to the development and that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

## 9.2 Brief summary of bat biology

Bats are the only mammals to have developed powered flight. They are the second largest group of mammals in the world, with almost 1000 different species. In Britain 17 species occur, with the range of species declining towards the north. All British bats feed solely on invertebrates.

British bats live in crevices in trees, caves, buildings, bridges, tunnels and other structures. They are long-lived animals which use roost sites to which they return year after year. In summer females are usually colonial, each species gathering together in warm maternity roosts to give birth to their single young. Males often spend the summer alone or in small groups. Several different roosts may be used over a year, the bats moving between these places depending on time of year, prevailing weather and other conditions.

In winter bats hibernate, a process of long periods of deep torpor punctuated by regular arousals. Their body temperature falls close to the ambient temperature of their chosen hibernaculum and their heart rate and metabolism drop dramatically. In this state they use little energy, allowing them to survive until spring on their fat reserves. They are very sensitive to temperature changes at this time. Changes may cause them to wake, a process which uses considerable energy reserves. Many species hibernate in cool, stable underground sites such as caves and tunnels, although individual bats may be found in almost any small crevice. Summer roosts and hibernation sites for the same bats are normally located in different places.

For more than 50 years bats suffered a major decline. The reasons are many and varied, but include destruction of roost sites, a reduction in insect prey and direct and indirect poisoning from toxic chemicals. As a result of greater protection, some are now doing better, but they are still vulnerable and threatened.

The survival of a colony of bats depends on there being a range of suitable summer roost sites, hibernation sites and feeding areas within a reasonable distance. Deep crevices in which they can roost, woodland, hedgerows and freshwater nearby all help to provide the conditions and food they need. A continuous linked network of good habitat provides ideal conditions. Some species will follow hedgerows and woodland edges and rivers where their food is concentrated whilst others fly higher and largely ignore features on the ground. Almost anywhere, even city centres, will be visited by bats at some time.

Each species of bat is different in the places it roosts, the food it eats, how it hunts and what it requires. That is just one reason why a bat survey must identify the species and numbers of bats present on a site, their roost locations, access points, feeding areas, etc., before determining any mitigation necessary.

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### 9.3 Birds: legislation

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), a wild bird is defined as any bird of a species that is resident in or is a visitor to the European Territory of any member state in a wild state. Game birds however are not included in this definition (except for limited parts of the Act). They are covered by the Game Acts, which fully protect them during the close season.

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is thus an offence, with certain exceptions, to: -

- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird
- intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird
- have in one's possession or control any wild bird, dead or alive, or any part of a wild bird, which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act 1954
- have in one's possession or control any egg or part of an egg which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act 1954
- use traps or similar items to kill, injure or take wild birds
- have in one's possession or control any bird of a species occurring on Schedule 4 of the Act unless registered, and in most cases ringed, in accordance with the Secretary of State's regulations
- intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

### 9.4 References

- Anon (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department for Communities and Local Government
- Collins J (ed.) (2016) *Bats Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, The Bat Conservation Trust, London
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- Mitchell-Jones A J (2004) *Bat mitigation guidelines*, English Nature.
- Mitchell-Jones A J & McLeish A P (2004) *Bat Workers' Manual*, JNCC.



- Wray S, Wells D, Long E & Mitchell-Jones A J (2010) *Valuing Bats in Ecological Impact Assessment*, In Practice No. 70, pp. 23-25

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