Netherwood Farm, Marsden

Bat Survey Report

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Disclaimer

Contents

1. Summary

1.1.1 A bat inspection of Netherwood Farm near Marsden was commissioned by Lee Roberts in March 2026. The survey was undertaken to support a planning application for the conversion of two existing barns attached to a recently renovated farmhouse.

1.1.2 The site comprised a farmhouse with adjoining barns set within a rural landscape. The surrounding area included grazed pasture, areas of scrub, and a wooded clough to the north, with moorland located nearby. These habitats were considered to provide good opportunities for bats to forage and commute, and overall, the site was considered suitable to support a wide range of bat species.

1.1.3 No bats or signs of bats were recorded during the inspection. However, a previously recorded roost location within the building remained present and viable. A range of features suitable for use by roosting bats were identified, including gaps within masonry, behind fascia boards, and between stone slates. Taking these features into account, the building was assessed as having moderate bat roost suitability.

1.1.4 Evidence of nesting birds was identified within the building. Swallow nests were present within the barn and barn owl pellets were recorded, indicating use of the building by these species.

1.1.5 Further survey work was recommended in the form of two nocturnal surveys to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats and to inform any required mitigation. It was recommended that lighting is carefully designed to avoid disturbance to bats.

1.1.6 For birds, it was recommended that any active nests are protected during works, with additional provision including swallow nest cups and a barn owl nest box to compensate for potential impacts.

1.1.7 The recommendations in this report were considered valid for a period of four months or until the completion of the nocturnal surveys.

2. Introduction

2.1.1 A bat inspection of Netherwood Farm near Marsden was commissioned by the client Lee Roberts on 29th March 2026. The survey was undertaken to support a planning application to convert two existing barns which are attached to a recently renovated farmhouse.

2.1.2 The legislative context to the survey and assessment reported here is included in Appendix 1.

3. Habitat Assessment

3.1.1 The site was located in a rural location to the north of Marsden, West Yorkshire. The survey area comprised a farmhouse and adjoining barns (Plate 1 and 2).

Plate 1. Netherwood Farm viewed from the southeast

Plate 2. Netherwood Farm viewed from the north

3.1.2 The survey area was surrounded by grazed pasture to the south, a wooded clough (Drop Clough) to the north, and pasture that was reverting to scrub to the east and west (Figure 1). The site was located at a relatively high elevation with moorland (Garside Hey) present approximately 75 m to the west.

3.1.3 Despite the elevation, the site and surrounding habitats were considered to comprise above average[1] quality bat foraging and commuting habitat. The area was considered likely to have average levels of bat activity, but a diverse range of species.

Figure 1. The site location

[1] The average bat activity level referred to is taken from professional judgement for that area within which Middleton Bell Ecology usually operates comprising Yorkshire and the surrounding counties to the south and west.

3.1.4 Table 1 summarises the habitats present within, and adjacent to the site.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: Netherwood Farm, Netherwood Lane, Marsden HD7 6AT			
OS Grid Ref.: SE0509713095	Elevation: 291 m		
Local Planning Authority: Kirklees Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✔		Nearest offsite dwelling is 190 m south.
River bordered by trees			River Colne 970 m southeast.
Standing water			Sparth Reservoir 680 m southeast.
Bridges tunnels and culverts			Railway bridge 580 m southeast.
Trees	✔	✔	Within garden of the property
Woodland		✔	Wooded clough 50 m north
Grassland	✔	✔	An abundance of grassland both improved and rough grazing .

3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the:

- Presence/absence of roosting bats within the building.
- Potential roosting areas and roost access/egress points.
- Level of bat roost suitability associated with the building.
- Current or historic use of the building by nesting birds.
- Further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 A desk study was undertaken with West Yorkshire Bat Group and West Yorkshire Ecology to request bat records for locations within 2 km of the site.

4.1.2 A search of the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was undertaken to identify historic European Protected Species (EPS) licences obtained for locations within 2 km of the site.

4.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

4.2.1 An inspection of the building was undertaken on 30th March 2026 by Greg Slack (MCIEEM; Class licence WML-A34-Level 4, 2025-84759-CL20-BAT).

4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the initial inspection survey:

- An examination of all parts of the building to record structural features and condition, and features that may be suitable for use by roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any holes, crevices or gaps in walls, lintels, windows, and windowsills, gaps/holes in cladding and soffits and to the

possibility of finding droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below features.
- Any signs indicative of a bat roost presence including live or dead bats, droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks and staining were recorded.
- An assessment of the bat roost suitability of the building (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).

4.2.3 The following equipment was used or on hand during the inspection:

- a high powered torch;
- binoculars;
- ladders;
- an endoscope;
- a camera; and
- an ultralight drone (DJI Mini 4 Pro).

4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 No significant survey limitations were encountered during the survey.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

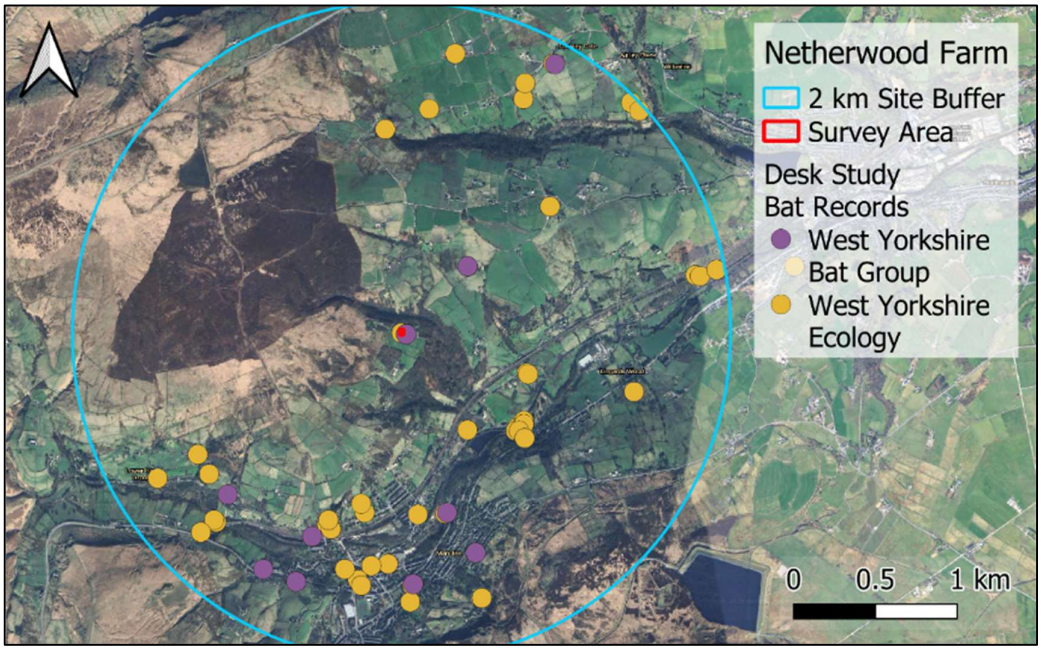
5.1.1 West Yorkshire Bat Group provided 19 bat records for the surrounding 2 km with West Yorkshire Ecology providing 102. The species included in the records comprised: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*; soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*; brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus;* Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri;* Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii;* noctule *Nyctalus noctula;* and Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*.

5.1.2 The closest records related to the common pipistrelle roost within the farmhouse, and in-flight records of a Myotis bat species and a noctule recorded by Middleton Ecology Consultants in 2017. The roost was located in the western verge of the porch roof at the south of the farmhouse (as shown in Plate 3 below).

Plate 3. Extract from the 2017 Middleton Ecological Consultancy Report showing the flight path of one emerging bat on 22nd August 2017

5.1.3 The records were well distributed across the lowland areas within the 2 km desk study area with no records on the high moor to the northwest (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Distribution of bat records in the vicinity of the site



5.1.4 Four bat EPS mitigation licences had been issued within 2 km of the site. The details of the licences are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Bat EPS mitigation licences within 2 km

Species listed on the licence	Licence start date	Licence end date	What does the licence cover?	Approximate distance (m)	Direction
Common pipistrelle & soprano pipistrelle	01/01/2019	31/12/2020	Destruction of a resting place.	925	Southeast
Common pipistrelle	05/08/2015	01/08/2020	Destruction of a resting place.	1560	Southwest
Common pipistrelle	17/03/2016	30/06/2021	Destruction of a resting place.	1560	Southwest
Common pipistrelle	17/01/2011	01/01/2012	Destruction of a resting place.	1990	West-southwest

5.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

Building description

5.2.1 The building comprised a two-storey, L-shaped farmhouse with an adjoining barn (Plate 4 and 5). It was arranged primarily on a north–south orientation, with a west-extending wing. The roof was covered with York stone slates and incorporated multiple

pitches.

5.2.2 A single-storey lean-to extension was present at the southern end of the building, while a smaller stone extension was attached to the northern end of the barn. The windows had a mixture of uPVC and wooden frames. The barn doors were timber, set within wooden frames. Guttering was mounted on wooden fascia boards along the length of the building, with the exception of the gable ends. The verges at the gable ends had been pointed with mortar.

Plate 4. The building viewed from the east

Plate 5. The building viewed from the northwest

5.2.3 The farmhouse was undergoing renovation at the time of inspection. The internal ceilings had been vaulted, and the ceilings and walls had been plastered since the 2017 inspection (Plate 6). The roof structures of both the farmhouse and barn were supported by king post trusses, rafters, and purlins (Plate 7).

Plate 6. Interior of the farmhouse

Plate 7. Interior of the larger barn section

5.2.4 Within the barn, traditional bitumen-coated roofing felt (Type 1F) was present beneath the stone slates (Plate 7). In the smallest section at the northern end, the roof had been lined with a breathable membrane, likely Proctor Roofshield (Plate 8). The client

confirmed that the farmhouse had not been reroofed as part of the renovations – having been last done in approximately 2011. As a result, the traditional Type 1F bitumen coated roofing felt would have been present above the vaulted ceilings within the farmhouse too.

Plate 8. Interior of the smaller barn section

External inspection

5.2.5 Potential bat roost features associated with the walls comprised gaps in masonry, gaps behind fascia boards, ventilation bricks, and a wooden bird box. In addition, gaps associated with the roof were also present comprising gaps between stone slates, including at the verge (and the previously recorded roost location). Potential roost features are shown in Table 3, and their locations shown on Figure 3.

Table 3. Potential Roost Features Recorded

PRF	Example Photo	Description
A		Gaps between masonry.

PRF	Example Photo	Description
B		Gaps behind the fascia board.
C		Gaps between stone slates.
D		Gaps below lead flashing /between slates on the roof verge.
E		Ventilation bricks.
F		Bird box.

PRF	Example Photo	Description
G		Gaps around the door frame.

Figure 3. Potential roost feature locations

5.2.6 In addition to the potential roost features, unglazed windows and gaps around doors offered access into the barn without constituting roost features in their own right. Within the interior of the barn, the wall top and roof timbers were suitable for use by roosting bats.

Internal inspection

5.2.7 No bats or signs of bats were present within the interior of the building. The common pipistrelle roost recorded in 2017 (Plate 3) remained viable, but no bats were identified during the endoscope inspection of the roost.

Nesting birds

5.2.8 Swallow nests were recorded within the smaller section of the barn (Plate 9). In addition, approximately 15 barn owl pellets were recorded in the smaller section of barn at the northern end of the building (Plate 10).

Plate 9. Swallow nests within the northern section of the barn

Plate 10. Barn owl pellets within the northern section of the barn

6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

6.1.1 Although potential roost features were present within the building, no bats or signs of bats were recorded. The previously recorded bat roost remained viable.

6.1.2 The habitat around the building was highly suitable for bats. Overall, it was considered that the bat roost suitability of the building was moderate.

6.2 Further Survey, and Recommendations

Further Survey

6.2.1 In line with good practice survey guidance (Collins, 2023) it is recommended that two nocturnal surveys are completed to identify the presence or likely absence of roosting bats within the building. The surveys must be completed between May and August and the surveys must be at least three weeks apart. They have been scheduled for 24th June and 15th July 2026.

Bat Roost Features

6.2.2 The original report recommended the retention of the known roost as well as gaps between stone slates (MEC, 2017). The extent of any additional mitigation required would need to be determined on completion of the nocturnal surveys.

Roofing Membranes

6.2.3 Although no reroofing is anticipated, if plans change such that it is necessary then one of the products that are safe for use in bat roosts should be used. Many breathable roofing and cladding membranes are not safe for bats if they come into contact with them. Further information on the issue of bats and roofing membranes is included in Appendix 2.

Lighting

6.2.4 As recommended in the original bat survey report, any new exterior lighting required for the site should be kept to a minimum. In line with guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP, 2023) it should not be directed upwards and should not spill onto the bat roost location.

6.2.5 In addition, any new external lighting should be a warm white colour (3000 K),and activated by passive Infrared (PIR) movement sensors and/or timers to ensure lights are not left on throughout the entire night.

Nesting Birds

6.2.6 Swallow nests were recorded in the smaller section of the barn at the northern end of the building. Active birds' nests are protected by legislation (Appendix 1). If an active birds' nest is present during the work, it must be retained with a suitable stand-off buffer.

6.2.7 It is recommended that two swallow nest cups are installed in an alternative open-fronted building nearby.

6.2.8 The barn owl roost should be compensated for by the installation of a barn owl nest box on the northern gable of the building, or the point at which the roof steps up between the smaller and larger sections of the barn.

7. Conclusion

7.1.1 The building was considered to have moderate suitability to support roosting bats.

7.1.2 No reroofing is anticipated to be required as part of the project but if this changes during the course of the work, a bat safe option should be selected for the roofing membrane. Mitigation measures regarding lighting are recommended to protect bats likely to use the site in the future. It is recommended that two further surveys are

undertaken to identify whether a roost is present within the barn and to inform any further mitigation or compensation measures required.

7.1.3 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 4 months or until the nocturnal surveys are undertaken. If the project is delayed until after this time, Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted.

8. References

MEC (2017) MEC BAT 2017 64 Netherwood Farm, Marsden – Bat Survey Report. Middleton Ecological Consultants.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. The Bat Conservation Trust.

ILP (2023) Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. Institute of Lighting Professionals. Available online at: https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/

Appendix 1. Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

It is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection or obstruct access to any such place.
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat.
- Possess a bat (live 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 (dead or alive), or parts of bats.

The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, requires member states to develop national strategies and to undertake a range of actions aimed at maintaining or restoring biodiversity. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the Convention.

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". Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* are included as priority species within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. At a more local level there are Local Biodiversity Action Plans for smaller geographical areas which may cover a greater or lesser range of bat species.

Where it is proposed to carry out works which will have an adverse impact on roosting bats a European Protected Species (EPS) licence must first be obtained from Natural England. This requirement applies even if no bats are expected to be present when the work is carried out.

Birds

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which makes it illegal (subject to exceptions) to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.

Special penalties relate to offences concerning birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), such as barn owl. In addition to the offences detailed above which relate to all wild birds, it is illegal to intentionally or recklessly disturb any Schedule 1 bird or their dependent young while nesting.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2024. This document states that plans should 'promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

Appendix 2. Roofing and Cladding Membranes

Standard roof membranes can cause the death of significant numbers of bats. Traditional bitumen coated roofing felt is recommended where roosting bats are expected to be present.

The problem

Standard non-bitumen coated membranes (including almost all breathable membranes) used below roof slates and tiles present a significant problem for bats. Over time, strands are pulled away from the surface of these materials as bats crawl over them. These fuzzy strands are very strong and can tangle and trap bats, sometimes causing the death of bats over multiple years[2].

One example we have encountered comprised a pipistrelle roost which formed in a building extension constructed in 2009. Over the course of just 13 years the roofing felt degraded to the extent that it trapped and killed more than 10 bats. Fortunately, the problem in this roost was identified and remedial work was undertaken to replace the roofing membrane in 2022.

Plate A2.1. Four dead pipistrelles tangled in breathable roofing membrane

Although a new roof might be considered to lack potential bat access points, that is often not the case. Roofs covered with stone slates almost always have gaps large enough to be accessed by bats, this is often also the case where imitation stone slates are used. On older buildings the uneven roof timbers and/or building design also often results in gaps on wall tops and between slates. Even on new builds it is often possible for bats to access potential roosts via features such as dry verge capping. Some bats can access a space no wider than a biro pen, therefore it is not surprising that they can find their way into most buildings.

Safe roofing membranes (and membranes behind cladding)

From a bat perspective, the best membrane option for areas where roosts are expected comprises traditional hessian-backed Type 1F bituminous felt. This product has been widely and safely used as a secondary weather barrier since approximately the 1950s/1960s. Wooden sarking has also been used for many decades and if appropriately treated, is safe for

[2] Wearing S. Essah E., Gunnel K. & Bonser R. (2013) Double jeopardy: the potential for problems when bats interact with breathable roofing membranes in the United Kingdom. Architecture and Environment

use in bat roosts. Wooden sarking also has the benefit of providing additional insulation and is usually breathable.

At the time of writing (and to our knowledge) three products have passed the 'snagging propensity' test; and are approved by Natural England for use in bat roosts. This test attempts to replicate the wear and tear which results from bats crawling over the membrane. The approved products are: TLX BatSafe[3,4], SIGA Majcoat 350, and Partel Exoperm Duro 300 Fuse. Although they have passed this test, it is unclear how these membranes will degrade in the medium and long term, particularly in larger bat roosts. Therefore we do not recommend that they are used for roosts with multiple bats, and particularly for large (maternity roosts). An additional product, SIGA Majcoat 200 SOB Diffusion, passed the test for its upper surface only. This product should not be used in known bat roosts or locations where bat mitigation is to be installed. Although none of these products are considered to be as safe as traditional Type 1F bituminous felt, they may provide an option for roofs where future bat use cannot be ruled out, and a breathable solution is required.

Additional considerations

In recent years a fairly substantial proportion of the lofts we have surveyed which had existing breathable felt, were found to have been damaged by wasps (Plate A2.2). The wasps appear to have chewed holes in the felt and formed nests. This doesn't appear to be a problem associated with traditional bitumen coated roofing felt. Any holes within roofing felt are likely to significantly reduce its functionality as a secondary weather barrier. Where bats or birds come into contact with breathable roofing membranes, they can also damage it causing it to leak, they can also significantly reduce the breathability of the felt in that location.

Plate A2.2. Damage to a breathable roofing membrane adjacent to a wasp nest

Traditional bituminous Type 1F roofing felt is a non-breathable product and therefore ventilation is required. Sufficient ventilation can be usually be achieved, even in buildings with vaulted ceilings, however, some consideration during the design stage is required. Products to increase the ventilation within roofs where bituminous Type 1F felt has already been installed are also available.

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bats-apply-for-a-mitigation-licence#full-publication-update-history:~:text=Use%20of%20safe%20roofing%20membranes

[4] TLX BatSafe requires all joints and cut edges to be taped in order to prevent the fraying of bare edges.