



HARDINGLEY FARM.

MAP REF: SE 20677 09978.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: 260237/EcIA.

Date: 6th May 2026.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. A planning application is to be submitted for the conversion of the existing Hardingley Farm into separate residential dwellings.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. That survey was carried out on 3rd February 2026.

1.4. The PEA report has now been converted into a final Ecological Impact Assessment suitable for submission to the planners in support of the planning application.

1.5. Appendices I and II of this report provides additional information on specific species and are designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.2. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the UK Habitat Classification methodology to identify the broad habitat types throughout the survey area.

2.3. The survey area and immediate surrounding area was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) activity by looking for the following signs in line with Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D (1989). *Surveying Badgers*. Mammal Society: -

- * Badger setts.
- * Badger latrines or dung pits.
- * Badger snuffle holes and evidence of foraging.
- * Badger paths.
- * Badger prints in areas of soft mud.
- * Badger hairs caught on fencing.

2.4. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Rob Strachan, Tom Moorhouse and Merryll Gelling (2011). *Water Vole Handbook: Third Edition*: -

- * Water vole burrows.
- * Water vole faeces and latrines.
- * Water vole feeding stations.
- * Water vole runs.
- * Water vole prints in areas of soft mud.
- * Water vole lawns.
- * Predator field signs.

2.5. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of otter (*Lutra lutra*) activity by looking for the following signs

in line with the P Chanin (2003). *Monitoring the Otter and Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Monitoring Series No10 Guidelines*: -

- * Otter prints in soft mud.
- * Otter spraints.
- * Otter Holts.

2.6. The survey area was searched for watercourses and waterbodies. Where found, and where safe to enter the water, all were thoroughly searched for the presence of crayfish, for approximately 50m in each direction of the site, by searching under rocks and logs. Where stated, crayfish traps were also deployed into the watercourse. All survey work was carried out in accordance with the *Conserving Natural 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 1, Protocol for Monitoring the White Clawed Crayfish*.

2.7. The survey area was searched for mature trees and derelict buildings and where found these were checked for potential bat roosting sites in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)* by looking for the following signs: -

- * Holes, cracks or crevices.
- * Bat Droppings.

2.8. The land immediately adjacent to the survey area was assessed for bat roosting potential and bat foraging potential. Connective routes and flight lines were also assessed whilst on site and using maps of the area.

2.9. The area within 500m of the survey site was cross referenced to maps to highlight all ponds close to the site. Where possible, all ponds identified were accessed using agreed access or public rights of way to assess the potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) to be present.

2.10. The survey area was assessed for the potential for reptiles and suitable reptile habitats. Where applicable the area was also searched for the presence of reptiles.

2.11. Where appropriate, the habitat within and surrounding the survey area was searched for species such as hazel, oak, honeysuckle, bramble and other species which may provide potential habitat for hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Field signs such as feeding remains and nests were also searched for where possible, in line with P Bright, P Morris and T Mitchell-Jones *the Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition*.

2.12. Where appropriate, the area within and surrounding the survey area was assessed for its potential to house habitat for red squirrels. Field signs of red squirrels were searched for at least every 50m, looking for any dreys, feeding signs or sightings of red squirrels.

2.13. All surveys were carried out in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) survey standards and advice.

2.14. This document is prepared in line with The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out the government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation and places a duty on Planning Authorities to give material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications. The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance on “Natural Environment” also promote sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity and that it is conserved and enhanced within the development.

2.15. This report is prepared in line with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

2.16. This survey was carried out by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years’ experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance on a wide range of training courses through CIEEM, FSC and BCT. As a member of CIEEM he is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership. He holds current Natural England survey licences for barn owl, bat, great crested newt and white clawed crayfish.

3. ECOLOGICAL BASELINE.

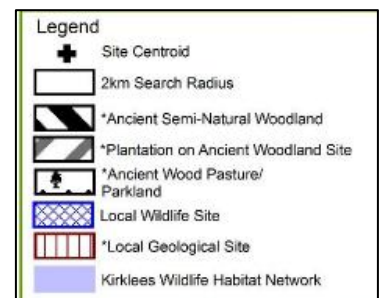
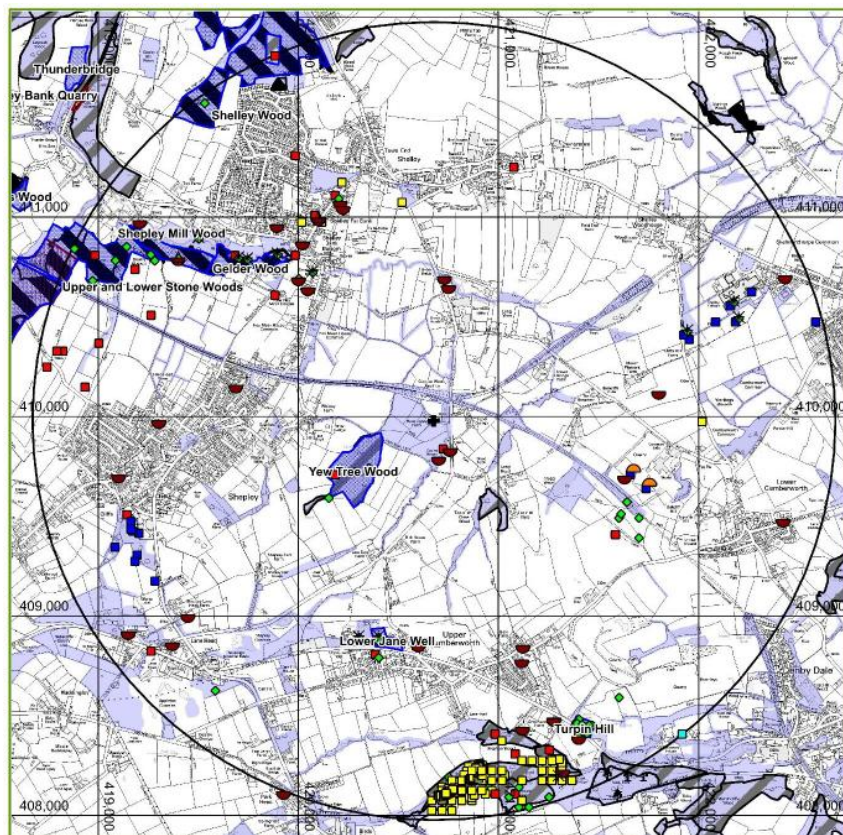
3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to West Yorkshire Ecology for existing records of designated sites and protected species within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. There are no national or international designated sites in the search area.

3.1.3. The following locally designated Local Wildlife Sites lie within the search area and are shown on the map below.

Name of Site	Designation
Gelder Wood	Local Wildlife Site
Lower Jane Well	Local Wildlife Site
Shelley Wood	Local Wildlife Site
Shepley Mill Wood	Local Wildlife Site
Turpin Hill	Local Wildlife Site
Upper and Lower Stone Woods	Local Wildlife Site and Local Geological Site
Yew Tree Wood	Local Wildlife Site



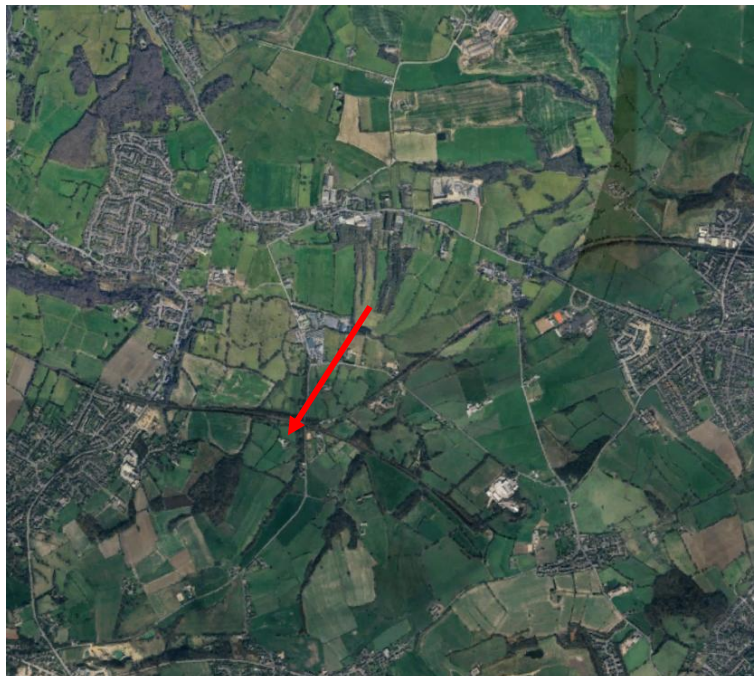
3.1.4. Hardingley Farm lies within the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network, shown shaded blue in the map above.

3.1.5. The only species records close to the site are bat records, predominantly field records of individual bats with the closest roost a pipistrelle roost 156m from the survey area.

3.1.6. The data search results are available to the client on request but must not be placed in the public domain.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The aerial photograph below shows the location of Hardingley Farm marked with a red arrow and the surrounding area. The site is located in a rural location surrounded by farmland.



3.2.2. The survey area is shown below shaded in yellow.



3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix III of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats that are on the site. The primary habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- g4 – Modified grassland.
- u1 – Vegetated garden
- u1b – Developed land, sealed surface.
- u1b5 – Building.
- u1e – Built linear feature.

3.3.2. Biodiversity calculations have been calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, the current version at this time.

3.3.3. g4 - Modified Grassland.

3.3.3.1. The survey area is located within farmland used for the grazing of stock. Parts of this grassland fall within the red line boundary for the site. In addition, there is another area of modified grassland between buildings within the site and an area for additional planting to the north, towards the railway line.



3.3.3.2. Species present include perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), Cocks foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), thistle (*Cirsium* sp(p)) and dock (*Rumex* Sp).

3.3.3.3. The condition assessment for this habitat is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition of the grassland is poor, passing five criteria but failing the essential criteria.

3.3.4. u1 – Vegetated garden.

3.3.4.1. There are a number of garden areas across the site.

3.3.4.2. Either side of the entrance road to the site there are narrow flower borders and shrubberies.



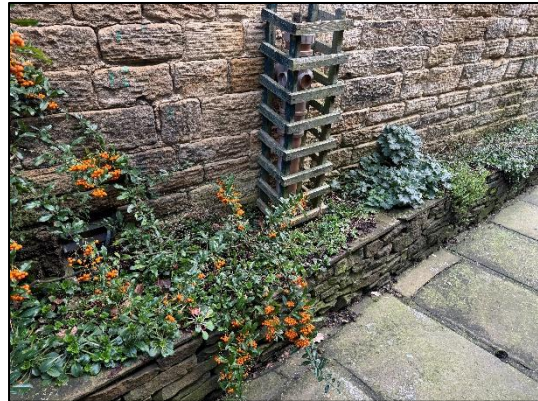
3.3.4.3. To the north of the access road there is a garden area leading back towards a garden room with a central lawn and



3.3.4.4. To the west of this there is a fruit and vegetable garden complete with fruit bushes, fruit trees and a greenhouse.



3.3.4.5. Within the middle courtyard there are small garden areas.



3.3.4.6. Along the southern side of the existing farm houses there are additional garden areas that include a small garden pond.





3.3.4.7. Species present include rose, cinquefoil (*potentilla fruticosa*), eleagnus (*Elaeagnus ebbingei*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*), evergreen spindle (*Euonymus japonica*), weigela (*Weigela florida*). Skimmia (*Skimmia Japonica*), cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), firethorn (*Pyracantha angustifolia*), photinia (*Photinia × fraseri*), daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*), iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), strawberry (*Rosaceae fragaria*) and apple (*Malus domestica*).

3.3.4.8. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.5. u1b – Developed land, sealed surface.

3.3.5.1. There are extensive areas of developed land with a sealed surface around the site and buildings. Some are paved, some cobbled, some tarmac and others concrete.





3.3.5.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.6. u1b5 – Building.

3.3.6.1. There are numerous buildings on the site ranging from the old stone barn, the existing houses and modern farm buildings. The photographs below show a sample with further details included in the bat survey report for the site (Ref 250839).





3.3.6.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.7. u1e – Built linear feature.

Secondary code 114 - Dry stone wall, 853 – Mortared wall.

3.3.7.1. There are stone walls all across the site.



Secondary code 612 - Fence.

3.3.7.2. There are timber stock fences around the site.



3.3.7.3. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.8. Secondary code 200 – Urban tree.

3.3.8.1. There are two mature trees within the survey area.

3.3.8.2. The first is a mature oak (*Quercus robur*) tree adjacent to the access road into the site.



3.3.8.3. The second is a mature ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) tree in the garden around the summer house.



3.3.8.4. The condition assessment for this habitat is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition of the two mature trees is good, passing six criteria.

3.3.8.5. In addition, there are four small apple (*Malus domestica*) trees in the fruit and vegetable garden.



3.3.8.6. The condition assessment for this habitat is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition of the apple trees is moderate, passing three criteria.

3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. There were no badger setts or badger field signs present anywhere within the survey area.

3.4.2. There is a small watercourse that flows through a culvert deep beneath the existing site access road. This will not be affected in any way and therefore there will be no impact on water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish.

3.4.3. There are ponds in the surrounding area but all are in excess of 700m from the survey area with abundant terrestrial habitat between that is suitable for amphibians. It is unlikely that any amphibians would travel to the survey area.

3.4.4. There are a number of buildings present in the survey area that were all surveyed for bats during the 2025 season and no bats emerged from any of the buildings. The results are all provided in report reference 250839/1.

3.4.5. There are two trees present on the site that are mature enough to provide potential roost features for bats although no such features were visible from ground level. Both

of these trees are to be retained unaffected by the proposed development and therefore, there will be no impact on bats roosting in trees.

3.4.6. The area around the survey area is farmland and woodland and is assessed to be high value habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

3.4.7. There are opportunities for nesting birds in the buildings on the site and during the bat surveys, swallows were identified nesting in the buildings.

3.4.8. The site is assessed to have no potential for reptiles. The site is surrounded by open farmland and there are few opportunities for shelter in the survey area.

3.4.9. The site is assessed as an unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse as it lies well outside of their natural range and the habitat is totally unsuitable.

3.4.10. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for red squirrels, located outside the natural range for the species.

3.4.11. The only alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act present on the site is cotoneaster horizontalis growing as an ornamental shrub in the gardens on site, particularly alongside the access road onto the site.

3.4.12. The site has some suitability for hedgehogs as the site is surrounded by open grazing land and woodland.

4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS, MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS.

4.1. Designated Sites.

4.1.1. Assessment.

4.1.1.1. There are no international or nationally designated sites within the data search area.

4.1.1.2. There are records of locally designated Wildlife Sites within the data search results but the closest is Yew Tree Wood 240m to the southwest.

4.1.2. Mitigation.

There will be no impact on designated sites and therefore, there is no requirement for mitigation measures.

4.1.3. Residual Effects.

There will be no negative residual impact on designated sites as a result of the proposed development.

4.2. Habitats.

4.2.1. Assessment.

4.2.1.1. Baseline biodiversity calculations have been carried out using the Statutory Metric tool, the current metric at the time of writing this report. The calculations have been completed for baseline area habitats. The condition assessments for each habitat are shown in the attached condition assessment document and the baseline biodiversity values are shown in the attached metric calculation tool as well as being listed below.

4.2.1.2. Area Habitats – Pre Development.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Developed land, sealed surface	0.192	V.Low	N/A	0
Developed land, sealed surface.	0.117	V.Low	N/A	0
Vegetated garden	0.067	Low	N/A	0.13
Modified grassland	0.126	Low	Poor	0.25
Urban trees – 2 mature	0.0326	Medium	Good	0.39
Urban trees – 4 apples	0.0163	Medium	Moderate	0.13
Total (Excl trees)	0.50			0.91

4.2.1.3. There are 0.91BU of area habitat on the site pre-development.

4.2.1.4. There are no linear habitats present in the survey area pre development.

4.2.2. Mitigation.

4.2.2.1. The two mature trees on site pre-development will be retained.

4.2.2.2. An additional twenty small, moderate condition trees will be planed adjacent to existing trees along the railway corridor.

4.2.2.3. The following table shows the area habitats on site post development.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Developed land, sealed surface	0.173	V.Low	N/A	0
Developed land, sealed surface.	0.083	V.Low	N/A	0
Vegetated garden	0.184	Low	N/A	0.36
Modified grassland - retained	0.126	Low	Poor	0.11
Urban trees – 2 mature retained	0.0326	Medium	Good	0.39
20 new urban trees	0.0814	Medium	Moderate	0.25
Total (Excl trees)	0.50			1.11

4.2.3. Residual Effects.

4.2.3.1. There are 1.11 Bu of area habitat on the site post development. This represents and increase of 0.2Bu or 22.43% and also satisfies the Trading Rules. These results are shown below.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.20
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	22.43%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.91	1.00	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

4.2.3.2. This represents a Positive Residual Impact on habitats.

4.3. Species - Bats.

4.3.1. Assessment.

4.3.1.1. There are a number of buildings present in the survey area that were all surveyed for bats during the 2025 season and no bats emerged from any of the buildings. The results are all provided in report reference 250839/1.

4.3.1.2. There are two trees present on the site that are mature enough to provide potential roost features for bats although no such features were visible from ground level. Both of these trees are to be retained unaffected by the proposed development.

4.3.1.3. The area around the survey area is farmland and woodland and is assessed to be high value habitat for foraging and commuting bats. This will be retained as is.

4.3.2. Mitigation.

No further mitigation measures are necessary.

4.3.3. Residual Effects.

There will be no negative residual impact on roosting or foraging bats.

4.4. Species – Nesting Birds.

4.4.1. Assessment.

There are opportunities for nesting birds in the buildings on the site and during the bat surveys, swallows were identified nesting in the buildings.

4.4.2. Mitigation.

4.4.2.1. Works to the buildings will be carried out outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to the end of August each year.

4.4.2.2. In the event any works are necessary in the nesting season, prior to those works, a nesting bird survey will be undertaken and if any active nests are identified, no works

will be undertaken in the area around those nests until the young have fledged and left the nest.

4.4.2.3. Swallow nesting opportunities to replace those lost to the development, will be provided in the garages of plots 1 and 2 as a minimum.

4.3.3. Residual Effects.

There will be no negative residual impact on nesting birds.

5. COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES.

5.1. To provide additional biodiversity enhancements in line with the NPPF, one new integrated bat brick will be built into each of the new dwellings and into those where this is practical. Where there is no new build but conversion of existing stone buildings, one surface mounted bat box will be provided instead.

5.2. Integrated bat bricks will be Habibat boxes, as shown below or equivalent to match the external materials of the building.



5.3. Surface mounted boxes will be Beaumaris boxes, as shown below or equivalent.



5.4. Swift boxes will be provided in all dwellings. Where possible these will be integrated but if this is not feasible, it will be surface mounted.



5.5. Where perimeter fences or garden fences are to be erected between gardens, these will be furnished with gaps 130mm by 130mm to allow the free passage of hedgehogs into and between gardens.

Prepared by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 6 th May 2026.

Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou, BSc, MCIEEM	Date: 6 th May 2026.

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JNCC, Peterborough.

Appendix I. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub, but others are ground nesting or prefer man-made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Appendix II. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Many species appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATS agreement. Numerous species are also listed

under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number of bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Appendix III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA PRE DEVELOPMENT.



Appendix IV. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA POST DEVELOPMENT.

