



Dormouse Survey Report 2025

Land at west of Shoreham
Road, Small Dole, West Sussex

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living creatures are capable of migration and whilst protected species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

The views and opinions contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Wates Development Ltd to undertake an updated dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) survey for the proposed development site on land west of Shoreham Road, Small Dole, West Sussex.
- 1.2 This document provides findings of the dormouse surveys completed by The Ecology Partnership in 2025 in order to support the planning application for the proposed development. Section 2 of this report sets out the methodology of The Ecology Partnership's survey and the results in Section 3 and Section 4 and the implications discussed in Section 4. Conclusions are provided for in chapter 5 of this report.

Site Context and Status

- 1.3 The site lies to the west of the village of Small Dole, West Sussex, BN5 9YH (TQ 21331 13112). The site covers approximately 5.2ha and consists of an agricultural field with hedgerows and trees on the north, west and east boundaries, and deciduous woodland to the south. The red line boundary of the site is shown in Figure 1 below.
- 1.4 Planning proposals are for the development of 45 residential dwellings located in the south-eastern corner of the site. (Figure 2)



Figure 1: Approximate location of the red line boundary



Figure 2: Proposed layout

Relevant Legislation

- 1.5 Hazel dormice are a European protected species (EPS) and as such are protected from deliberate killing, injury or disturbance and its breeding sites and resting places are absolutely protected with no requirement to show that their destruction was deliberate or reckless. The aim of this law is to protect the favourable conservation status (FCS) of the species. The dormouse is further protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This law provides protection to individual animals as well as breeding and resting places, making the deliberate killing or injuring of individual dormice unlawful.
- 1.6 Due to the laws providing protection to dormice, any disturbance or destruction of their nests is unlawful unless done under a licence from Natural England.

2.0 Dormouse Survey Methodology

- 2.1 A total of 53 Dormouse nest tubes were established within all suitable habitats including the woodland and hedgerows on the site boundaries in March 2025. Each dormouse tube was established as per Natural England guidelines, attached to the underside of a suitable branch. Some of the tubes were located less than 20m apart, due to the size of the site and availability of suitable habitats.
- 2.2 Checks were undertaken once a month between April and September 2025. This is required to meet the minimum Index of Probability score of 20 which is considered necessary in order to detect presence/likely absence of dormice. By conducting the surveys once a month between April and September, a total Probability score of 21 was scored. Surveys were carried out by Alexia Tamblyn's (The Ecology Partnership) accredited agents.

3.0 Results

2022 surveys

- 3.1 A total of 53 dormouse tubes were established in all suitable habitat on site including the woodland and hedgerows present around the site boundaries on 8th April 2022. Surveys were undertaken once a month between May and November 2022, with the results shown within Table 1 below.

Table 1: Survey Dates and Results

<i>Date of check</i>	<i>Observation</i>
14 th April 2022	<i>Set up</i>
6 th May 2022	No evidence
9 th June 2022	No evidence
27 th July 2022	No evidence
16 th August 2022	No evidence
26 th September 2022	No evidence
24 th October 2022	No evidence
14 th November 2022	No evidence

3.2 No evidence of dormice was found during the course of the survey period. A woodmouse nest was found in the northeastern section of the site (Figure 3)



Figure 3: Woodmouse nest found in the northeastern boundary of the site on 24th October 2022

3.3 Using the Index of Probability outlined in the Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bright *et al.*, 2006), a score of 24 has been achieved. A recommended score of 20 is deemed necessary to detect presence/likely absence of dormice.

2025 surveys

3.4 Surveys were undertaken once a month between April to September 2025, with the results shown within Table 2 below.

Table 2: Survey Dates and Results

<i>Date of check</i>	<i>Observation</i>
14 th April 2025	<i>Set up</i>
13 th May 2025	No evidence
10 th June 2025	No evidence
15 th July 2025	No evidence
12 th August 2025	No evidence
9 th September 2025	No evidence

3.5 No evidence of dormice was found during the course of the survey period. A woodmouse/squirrel nut cache was recorded on the northern boundary on 9th September 2025 (Figure 4)



Figure 4: Nut cache, typically associated with wood mouse or squirrel found on 9th September 2025

3.6 Using the Index of Probability outlined in the Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bright *et al.*, 2006), a score of 21 has been achieved. A recommended score of 20 is deemed necessary to detect presence/likely absence of dormice.

4.0 Discussion and Recommendations

4.1 Dormice surveys were conducted from April to September 2025, with the tubes being taken down on the final survey. No dormice or evidence of dormice, such as nests or feeding remains, were found anywhere on site. No dormice or evidence of dormice were identified during the survey period in 2022.

4.2 As such, it is considered that dormice are likely absent from the site and the proposals for the site would therefore not be constrained by dormice.

4.3 Regardless of the absence of dormice, a range of native species have been recommended to be incorporated into the landscape proposals. These are of benefit to local wildlife, including birds, invertebrates and small mammals. Recommended species which will be incorporated into the planting scheme will include species of value to dormice and other wildlife and include:

- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Field maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)
- Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)
- Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)
- Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*)

4.4 Planting native species will ensure a robust network of wildlife corridors is retained and enhanced on Site to support a vast range of native species present both on Site and within the wider landscape.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The site at Small Dole was originally surveyed by the Ecology Partnership in March 2022. The potential for the site to support dormice was identified, due to the presence of woodland and scrub within the site boundaries. During the course of the survey, no evidence of dormice were found.

5.2 Due to the lapse of time since the original surveys additional update dormouse surveys were recommended. A total of 53 dormice nest tubes were set up in March 2025 and checks were carried out from April until September inclusively. No evidence of dormice presence was found during the survey period. It is considered that dormice are likely to be absent from the site and therefore the development is not constrained by this species.

5.3 Current proposals for the site involve the construction of a housing development within the field on site, leaving the woodland and the majority of the boundary habitats intact. Recommendations have been made to buffer the boundary features from development. As such, no mitigation specific to dormice is considered necessary. Enhancements have been recommended which provide value for local wildlife.

7.0 References

Bright, P., Morris, P. & Mitchell-Jones, T. (2006)., *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Second edition)*. English Nature, Peterborough.

Bright, P. & MacPherson, D. (2002)., *Hedgerow management, dormice and biodiversity (Report number 454)*. English Nature, Peterborough.

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