



Dormouse Survey Report 2025

Land south of Smugglers Lane,
Barns Green

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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 Miller Homes to undertake an assessment for presence/likely absence of dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) on the proposed development site on land south of Smugglers Lane, Barns Green, RH13 0PS, hereafter referred to as the 'site' (Figure 1).
- 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 comprises one field of modified grassland bordered by hedgerows on each aspect. Ancient and deciduous woodlands are adjacent to the south western boundary, with a large fishing pond to the west. The site is approximately 3.2ha and located southwest of the town of Barns Green in Horsham, at a central grid reference TQ1246727020. In the wider area supports a fishery and campsite to the south and west, residential development to the east and blocks of woodland connected by arable land and hedgerows. The aerial photograph (Figure 1) shows the site and its immediate surroundings. The red-line depicts the approximate site boundary and survey area.
- 1.4 The proposals are for a residential development, comprising 68 units with associated access road and garden space. Amenity areas include a play area and open space supporting a SuDS basin. Additional tree planting will be present across the site. A 15m vegetated buffer is to be maintained along the boundary of the adjacent ancient woodland to the west of the site.



Figure 1: Approximate location of the red line boundary

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.

2.0 Dormouse Survey Methodology

2.1 Using the methodology provided in the Mammal Society Hazel Dormice Mitigation Handbook a habitat quality assessment of the hedgerows onsite was undertaken (Wells et al 2025). On average the hedgerows were considered to support a high species diversity, as greater than 6 suitable species were present across the hedgerows. The structural complexity was considered medium suitability as the width of the hedgerows were between 2 to 3 meters, with very few gaps and dense growth was present to ground level

with an average height of above 2m. On this basis the habitat was considered to be of 'good' quality.

2.2 As such, in accordance with the guidance, a total of 50 Dormouse nest tubes were established within the hedgerows and woodland edge habitats around the site's boundary in April 2025. Each dormouse tube was established as per Natural England guidelines, attached to the underside of a suitable branch. Checks were undertaken once a month in May-September 2025. Surveys were carried out by Alexia Tamblyn's (The Ecology Partnership) accredited agents.

3.0 Results

3.1 Surveys undertaken once a month between May to September 2025, with the results shown within Table 1 below.

Table 1: Survey Dates and Results

<i>Date of check</i>	<i>Observation</i>
22 nd April 2025	<i>Set up</i>
27 th May 2025	No evidence
19 th June 2025	No evidence
29 th July 2025	No evidence
27 th August 2025	No evidence
24 th September 2025	No evidence

3.2 No evidence of dormice was found during the course of the survey period. Small nut and seed caches were found in some of the tubes throughout the surveys but no nests of any rodent species or birds were recorded.

3.3 As such, is considered that dormice are likely to be absent from the site and therefore the development is not constrained by this species and no further survey or mitigation is required in relation to this species.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The site at land south of Smugglers Lane, Barns Green, was originally surveyed by the Ecology Partnership in April 2025. The potential for the site to support dormice was identified, due to the presence of ancient woodland edge and native hedgerows within the site boundaries.
- 4.2 A total of 50 dormice nest tubes were set up in April 2025 and checks were carried out from May 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.
- 4.3 As such, no mitigation specific to dormice is considered necessary.

References

The Ecology Partnership (2025) Land South of Smugglers Lane – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Wells, D., Chanin, P. & Gubert, L. (2025) *Hazel Dormouse Mitigation Handbook*. The Mammal Society.

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