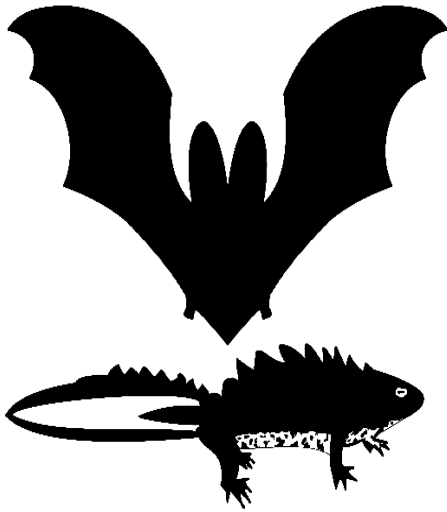




AEWC^{Ltd}

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

25-101
25 August 2026

Site Name: Land East of Henfield Road, Cowfold
Planning Reference: DC/26/0913

To whom it may concern;

AEWC Ltd have been undertaking static detector monitoring surveys to assess bat activity levels at Land East of Henfield Road, Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8DT at central grid reference TQ 21392 22023.

The surveys involve the deployment of static detectors for five nights of good weather per month between April and October 2026 inclusive. Surveys have been completed for April to August, with the final two months outstanding. Upon completion of these final two surveys, full analysis of the data will be undertaken, and a full survey report will be provided. This interim letter report has been produced to provide initial results from the surveys completed to date and outline conclusions and recommendations, to support the planning application.

Rationale and Methodology:

The majority of the site is of very low suitability for foraging and commuting bats, comprising fields of very short-grazed horse pasture. The habitats with potential to be important habitat features for foraging and commuting bats, due to their dense vegetation cover and connectivity to the wider landscape, were considered to be the belt of hedgerow, trees, scrub and stream along the southern boundary, the block of mixed scrub along the eastern boundary, and the belt of hedgerow, trees and scrub through the centre of the site separating the two fields.

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The plans for the site include retention and enhancement of a wide habitat buffer along the southern edge of the site. As such, no impacts on the existing southern boundary habitat are expected, and it was considered that surveying this boundary would not provide any useful data for the proposed development.

The eastern block of mixed scrub is proposed for retention, however there will be development works in very close proximity to this habitat, which could have indirect impacts on bats, for example through increased lighting. An internal road will punch through the hedgerow that cuts across the middle of the site, which will impede on the connectivity of this habitat feature. Due to the potential for impacts, the survey focused on these two locations, with the aim of identifying whether either appeared to be important commuting features and how they are used by rare and light-averse species.

The survey involves the deployment of two static detectors on the site for five nights of good weather per month. Static 1 (S1) is installed within the block of scrub on the eastern boundary. Static 2 (S2) is installed within the hedgerow that cuts across the centre of the site. Song Meter SM4 Acoustic Detectors have been used for every survey.

The data has been analysed using SonoBat software. The data was run through the automated species classification tool, which is considered to have high accuracy. *Myotis* sp. and *Plecotus* sp. calls have been grouped by genus. So far, all identifications of barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*) have also been manually verified. Further manual verification will be undertaken across dataset prior to production of the final report.

It should be noted that the SD card for S2 corrupted during the August survey, and therefore only four nights of activity were recorded for this static on this month. The full five nights were recorded for both statics on all other survey months.

It was not considered that undertaking Night-Time Bat Walkover (NBW) surveys would provide useful or necessary data for this site. There are significant limitations to this survey method, including that they only provide data from a short window after sunset on one night per month, observations of bat activity are influenced by the route and therefore subject to considerable subjectivity, use of a head-torch deters light-averse species resulting in them being under-recorded or missed entirely, and quiet species are easily missed, particularly where they fly directly above or within dense vegetation whilst the surveyor will walk in the open. The majority of the site is of low suitability for bats and almost all boundary vegetation is being retained, as such the aim of the survey was to focus solely on bat activity at the eastern boundary scrub and central hedgerow, which can be targeted more specifically and thoroughly using static detector monitoring.

Results and Evaluation:

The raw survey data, showing number of bat passes per species per static for each month, as well as the percentage of the total bat passes belonging to this species, is provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Showing the number and percentage proportion of bat passes assigned to each species per static per month

Month	Static	Pip.pip.		Pip.pyg.		Pip.nat.		Nyc.noc.		Nyc.lei.		Ept.ser.		Bar.bar.		Myotis sp.		Plecotus sp.		Total
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
April	S1	427	40%	570	53%	0	0.0%	40	3.7%	14	1.3%	9	0.8%	2	0.2%	14	1.3%	2	0.2%	1078
April	S2	484	52%	388	41%	6	0.6%	23	2.5%	7	0.7%	0	0.0%	2	0.2%	22	2.4%	3	0.3%	935
May	S1	576	51%	501	44%	3	0.3%	17	1.5%	22	1.9%	8	0.7%	5	0.4%	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	1133
May	S2	253	40%	280	45%	4	0.6%	16	2.6%	5	0.8%	10	1.6%	2	0.3%	52	8.3%	3	0.5%	625
June	S1	198	35%	334	59%	7	1.2%	8	1.4%	0	0.0%	6	1.1%	2	0.4%	6	1.1%	2	0.4%	566
June	S2	627	52%	474	39%	20	1.7%	12	1.0%	2	0.2%	4	0.3%	4	0.3%	56	4.7%	5	0.4%	1204
July	S1	475	38%	732	59%	3	0.2%	5	0.4%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	4	0.3%	18	1.4%	3	0.2%	1248
July	S2	574	41%	751	54%	20	1.4%	2	0.1%	6	0.4%	8	0.6%	10	0.7%	31	2.2%	1	0.1%	1403
August	S1	404	23%	1301	73%	2	0.1%	12	0.7%	1	0.1%	18	1.0%	8	0.4%	39	2.2%	3	0.2%	1788
August	S2	224	44%	215	42%	3	0.6%	2	0.4%	4	0.8%	5	1.0%	7	1.4%	47	9.2%	4	0.8%	511

Whilst there is no standardised method for determining how many bat passes would equate to low, average, or high levels of bat activity, we can make an estimate of activity level based on a comparison with the typical datasets we collect across numerous static detector monitoring sites. Broadly speaking, we consider that there was an average level of bat activity during April, but fairly low activity throughout May – August. A spike in bat activity is typically expected in the warmer months and during the maternity season, but this was not clearly seen at this site.

A minimum of nine bat species have been recorded at this site, these being common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Nathusius' pipistrelle, noctule, Leisler's bat, serotine, barbastelle, Myotis species, and long-eared species.

The vast majority of bat passes have been assigned to common pipistrelles and soprano pipistrelles, which together typically accounted for over 90% of the total bat passes each month. These species are very common and widespread, and will utilise a range of habitats, being tolerant of urban habitats and higher levels of lighting. Only a low number of passes have been recorded for all other species. Barbastelles, an Annex II species, have been recorded in very low numbers only, with a maximum of 10 passes at a static in one survey month (July). As such, it appears that the site is used by non-pipistrelle bats on occasion only, and it is unlikely that each habitat feature monitored is a regular commuting route or foraging resource for any of these species.

There was no clear difference in activity levels between the two static detector locations on the eastern boundary (S1) and the central hedgerow (S2). Some months higher numbers of passes were recorded at S1, and other months higher numbers of passes were recorded at S2. The proportion of species recorded at each static detector location was also very similar. As such, there is no clear preference for any species for either habitat feature.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Overall, the surveys undertaken to date have indicated that the two habitat features monitored are typically subject to fairly low levels of bat activity and this is dominated by common and soprano pipistrelles with very low numbers of other species recorded. Barbastelles have been recorded at both statics every month, but in very low numbers only. No clear spike in activity was observed during the maternity period. Activity was overall similar between both habitat features.

The results would suggest that the two habitat features monitored are not used as major commuting routes for bats, nor are they particularly important and frequently used foraging resources. Reasonable numbers of common and soprano pipistrelles were recorded; however, this is a normal result during static detector monitoring surveys since these species are significantly more common than all other bat species and have loud echolocation. The numbers of common and soprano pipistrelles were not high enough to suggest that this is an important site for these species. Given the very low numbers of

passes for all other species, it can be concluded with high confidence that these two habitat features are not fundamentally important for any of these species, including barbastelle, and are likely used opportunistically on occasion only, as part of a wider network of foraging and commuting habitat.

Based on the findings, it is considered unlikely that the proposed development will have any significant impacts on foraging and commuting bats, and almost certainly not on Annex II barbastelle bats. Pipistrelles are tolerant of urban environments and as such are likely to continue utilising the site in the same manner post-development.

It is recommended that there is a condition for a bat-sensitive lighting strategy for the site. This should seek to maintain dark corridors along all boundary vegetation, and well as low overall light levels within the centre of the site, to maximise opportunities for light-averse bats. The lighting strategy will be designed specifically around the finalised reserved matters layout.

It is noted that this is an outline planning application, with detailed landscaping to be confirmed at the reserved matters stage. However, the initial proposals for the site are considered to be favourable for providing enhancements for bats and protecting higher value habitats. These include the retention of almost all boundary habitats, the planting of new species-rich hedgerows along the northern boundary, enhancement of existing hedgerows and scrub, and the creation of wildflower meadow with attenuation ponds in the south of the site, as well as scattered tree planting. It is recommended that the final landscaping plan seeks to incorporate all of these features, and notably the provision of new hedgerows and trees along the northern boundary to compensate for a reduction in habitat connectivity across the existing central hedgerow.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best wishes,

Natalie Arscott

AEWC_{Ltd}

Consultant Ecologist