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Protected Species Survey at Oaklands Higher Commons  
Lane, Balderstone.

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Undertaken by Joyce Gillies

**1 Species Background Information**

Bats are the only flying mammal. They have existed in their present form for over fifty million years. Bats and their roosts have full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, due to their significant decline in recent years.

Bats will live in buildings and trees at different times of year. They will feed over gardens and in woodland with mature trees due to the high density and range of insects and for the shelter provided from the elements. Bats like to fly along linear features such as hedges, fences, ditches, streams and riverbanks.

By using sound to find their way through their echolocation system, bats find prominent features easier to locate. When such features which are linear, e.g. hedges, bats follow them as we would use a footpath, for going to and from a feeding site, or for ease of navigation whilst feeding along such a feature.

Research has shown that bats prefer habitats containing water - this is probably due to the higher density of insects flying, feeding and hatching over ponds, rivers and canals. Bats will travel considerable distances to feed over still pools along a river system where they may be found in large numbers.

Tree lined field edges offer a choice habitat by providing added protection from the wind. Strong wind is a source of danger for the flying mammal whose wing area acts like a kite. Many casualties are picked up after summer gales when lactating female bats are under pressure to feed in conditions when single male bats choose to remain torpid.

If bats are able to roost close to good feeding habitat then their chances of survival and reproduction are increased. Reproduction does not markedly increase bat numbers due to the fact that only one baby is born each year. Although bats have been recorded at 16 and 30 years old, the average is probably 3-5 years with many juveniles not surviving their first winter.

Bats hibernate during the cold winter months when insect food is not available. They choose cool places with high humidity in which to hibernate, seeking out somewhere cooler if the site becomes too mild. In a dry atmosphere dehydration

occurs due to the large area of skin surface in the wings and tail membrane of the bat.

During hibernation in Britain bats are usually found singly or in twos or threes. Apart from caves, cellars and mines, places frequently chosen are gaps between the stonework of bridges, walls, buildings etc. Many bats are more secure with a little dorsal pressure and choose to squeeze into small gaps, drawing themselves deeper in with their feet, thus making them difficult to find. They shun any disturbance by torchlight.

Hibernating bats have been found in a wide variety of places, for example, in gaps in stonework of buildings, under lead flashing, behind metal down spouts, but more natural sites often chosen include behind the bark or in holes in trees.

Bats cannot fly away from danger as birds do. The ability of bats to go torpid, to save energy, means that their temperature, heart and respiratory rate is drastically reduced. To be able to fly they must increase the rate of these systems (temperature from  $-3/4^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $40^{\circ}\text{C}$ , heart rate from 2-4 in hibernation to around 400 per minute) before safe flight is possible. This takes in the region of 20 minutes.

Clearly, during building work any bats present would be in danger. If forced to fly in daylight the risk from predators is increased until an alternative roost can be found.

## 2 Bat Feeding and Roosting Behaviours

### 2.1 Feeding

Bats fly out of their roosts at dusk to search for insects on which to feed.

They find insects by using echolocation and might consume several thousand small flies each night.

Each bat has its own regular flight paths and feeding area.

Good feeding areas are sheltered from the prevailing wind.

Bats choose not to emerge to feed on wet and windy nights.

## 2.2 Roosts

**Hybernaculum:** Used in winter because of specific conditions provided, e.g. low temperature and high humidity.

**Maternity Roosts:** Large collections of females and young.

**Non-Maternity Roosts. :** Males, spring roosts, autumn breeding/ mating roosts.

**Night Roosts:** For rests between feeding or for hanging to eat large prey.

## 3 Possible Species in the area of survey.

Species found in the locality are Pipistrelle (possibly both types). Brown Long Eared and probably Whiskered/Brants. Also possible are Daubenton and even the more rare Natterers. This is due to the old pasture land, mature trees and many hedgerows, which have been there for many years.

## 4 The General Area and Bat Roosts.

The area of the survey is good bat habitat.

It is known that bats feed, commute and roost in this area.

Roost sizes could be from one to possibly several hundred.

Roosts are used for many reasons during the year, a generalised scenario would be: -

**Spring (April/May/June.):** Males still hibernating, singly or several together. Females begin gathering in small roosts. Pregnancy begins.

**Summer (June/July):** Small all female roosts join together, single young are born to females in large maternity roosts. Males live separately in small numbers or singly.

**Early Autumn (August):** Young begin to fly, learn to feed on insects.

**Late autumn (Sept/ Oct):** Mating takes place. Males set up breeding roosts, often in holes in trees, to attract several females.

**Winter (Oct/April):** Hibernation during cold weather though bats are seen flying on sunny days to drink or change roosts. After mating the female bats store

the valid sperm within their body, only becoming pregnant when conditions are favourable in the spring.

British bats are small; most will fit into a matchbox when their wings are closed. The largest, the **Noctule**, mainly a tree dweller, fits comfortably into a human hand.

Bats are generally dark brown, furred on the body, secretive in habit but capable of uttering shrill squeaks when disturbed.

## **5. The Survey is carried out on the instructions of Mr Steve Knott.**

### **5.1. The Instructions**

To inspect the outside and inside of the bungalow, for evidence of bats and assess its suitability for the possibility of housing a bat roost in connection with the proposed changes.

### **5.2. Accuracy of Report**

This report has been compiled based on the methodology and professional experience of the surveyor. Whilst the report reflects the situation found as accurately as possible, bats are wild and can move freely from site to site. Their presence or absence detailed in this report does not entirely preclude the possibility of a different past, current or future use of the site surveyed.

I would ask all clients acting upon the contents of this report to show diligence when undertaking work on their site and or in their interactions with bat species. If bats are found during a work program and continuing the work program could result in their disturbance, injury or death either directly or indirectly an offence may be committed.

Bats may only be disturbed, injured or killed under license. This report does not convey the authority to undertake work, which may disturb, injure or kill any bat species.

**If in doubt, stop work and seek professional help.**

Contact Natural England, Bat Conservation Trust (0845 1300 228) or  
Joyce Gillies (07801 386976)

Wear gloves if it is necessary to handle bats

### 5.3. Background

A planning application has been presented .

A Bats Survey has been requested following guidance under Regulation 39 of the Conservation(Natural Habitats etc)Regulation 1994, the Wildlife and Countryside Act1981(as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and Planning Policy Statement 9(PPS9) Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.

### 5.4. Proposed work on site

The existing conservatory is to be removed completely at the back.

The roof will be extended with a pitched roof to the East with full height glass windows.

The garage is being extended to the South, continuing the pitched roof with a gable end, as now.

### 5.5. Survey Area and Site assessment.

After driving around the local area and walking around the site, together with discussions with other bat workers, in the experience of the surveyor, bat species which may occur in the wider area around the building could be;

Common Pipistrel (pipistrellus pipistrellus)

Soprano Pipistrel (pipistrellus pygmaeus)

Whiskered (Myotis mystacinus)

Daubenton(Myotis Daubentonii)

Brants (Myotis brandtii)

Brown Longeared (Plectus auritus)

Natterers(Myotis nattereri)

Noctule (Nyctalus Nactula)

### 5.6. Objectives of the survey

To ensure that the proposed development does not affect any bat species which is listed under the Conservation( Natural Habitats etc)Regulations 1994which implements the EC Directive92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way act 2000 as it is an offence, with certain exemptions, to;

- 1) Deliberately capture or kill any wild animal of a European protected species;
- 2) Deliberately disturb such animals;
- 3) In respect of bat species, damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such a wild animal;

The survey will (where possible) identify the past or current use by bat species.

Assess the likely impact of the proposed development of the species.

Provide a basis upon which to propose mitigation(if required) for bat species affected by the development.

**5.7.Survey Area= Oaklands, Higher Commons Lane, Balderstone BB2 7LR**  
**Grid Ref SD644319**

### 5.8. Habitat Description

The property is situated on a slight rise, with open views of the sunset in front, on a country lane 0.25k N.W.of the A59,at Osbaldeston, 7k East of Preston.

The river Ribble is 3k kilometers North West.

There is an enclosed garden to the rear, surrounded by mature trees.

## **6) The Survey of the Building**

The true bungalow was built in the 1950's with white rendered brick/block walls and a concrete tile roof. This roof is to be removed and replaced, probably with slate.

My daylight/emergence visit took place on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at 9.15p.m. the outside temp was 14c, there was no wind blowing and the sun had been shining all day. There were a great many insects on the wing, making it ideal conditions for bats.

### **6.1. Method**

The outside roofline and gables were inspected using strong torch and binoculars. The inside was inspected visually using a 2,000,000 candle powered torch. Bat detectors were used after dusk outdoors.

### **Personnel**

Mrs. Joyce Gillies, a licensed bat worker with 25 years experience.

## **7. Results**

### **External assessment.**

The wall/roof line was well sealed with low risk of bats gaining access either at the sides or the North gable end. The plastic cladding on the South gable had sprung open, leaving a gap through which, in the past, a jackdaw type bird had built a nest which was now disused.

The ridge tiles were sealed at both ends. The South West edge of the roof had mortar missing from under 2 tiles.

### **Internal assessment**

The inside of the loft had a deep layer of fiberglass insulation and was not floored.

There was 'roofing felt' under the tiles.

### **7.1 Presence or Absence**

**Internally** no evidence of bats was seen at the time of the survey.

This would have consisted of droppings or butterfly wings etc on the fiber glass.

**Externally** One bat was seen apparently leaving the South gable apex where the gap could be seen. No other bats left in the next hour. No droppings could be found on inspection of the space behind the sprung fascia plastic boarding. The disused nest in the same space means that bat use was random and not a maternity roost .

Bats would not co-exist in close proximity to big, noisy birds.

### **8) Conclusion**

**Care** must be taken during demolition work particularly when removing the ridge tiles and any of the roof tiles where there is a bat sized gap.

These tiles **MUST** be **LIFTED** not **DRAGGED** whilst being removed.

Look carefully into spaces where a bat could crawl in and hide.

### **MITIGATION**

To replace the loss of the possible bat roost, the owner has agreed to make a similar area available for bat use in the new gable apex, still facing South.

This will be created in the angle of the top one meter of the soffit box, leaving a fingers sized gap between the wall and the timber. The soffit box will be sealed off internally at each side to restrict access to other areas. (See attached drawing)

**If the above measures are carried out, then I believe that there is a 'LOW RISK' to bats in the proposed developments of this building/site and as such I see no reason to withhold planning permission as far as Bats are concerned.**

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Joyce Gillies

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When work starts :

If a bat is found, that piece of work must stop, the bat must be cared for and advice must be sought ( if the bat is unharmed and the wood or materials can be replaced temporarily, that will be sufficient. If the bat is injured, it must be contained in a box and help obtained)

REMEMBER; WEAR GLOVES IF IT IS NECESSARY TO HANDLE BATS.  
PHONE; B.C.T. 0845 1300 228, OR JOYCE GILLIES 07801 38 69 76

**A COPY OF THIS REPORT MUST BE KEPT ON SITE FOR  
REFERENCE AT ALL TIMES.**

**THIS REPORT IS ONLY VALID FOR CURRANT SEASON.**

Joyce Gillies, licensed Batworker (20104275)

6<sup>th</sup> June, 2013