

Bat and Barn Owl Scoping Report

Cowley Brook Farm

Higher Road

Longridge

Preston

PR3 2YX

25.05.2014



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Summary

In March 2014 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of the main house and agricultural outbuildings at Cowley Brook Farm, Higher Road, Longridge, Preston, PR3 2YX to assess the potential for their use by bats and barn owls.

A daytime survey, static detector survey and emergence survey were carried out.

No evidence was recorded to suggest bats were roosting within the site.

No evidence of the use of the site by Barn Owls was found during the survey.

The surveyor does not consider the proposed works are likely to result in a breach of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) therefore the proposed development does not require an EPS Licence (EPSL) to proceed lawfully.

It is recommended that any work on the roof of the barn or outbuildings, involving the removal of stone slates, is carried out by hand as a precautionary measure given the mobile nature of some roosting bats.

In the unlikely event bats are discovered or disturbed during roof removal or building renovation, work must be halted until the bat licence holder can attend the site and give further advice as necessary.

Introduction

In March 2014 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of the main house and agricultural outbuildings at Cowley Brook Farm, Higher Road, Longridge, Preston, PR3 2YX to assess the potential for their use by bats and barn owls.

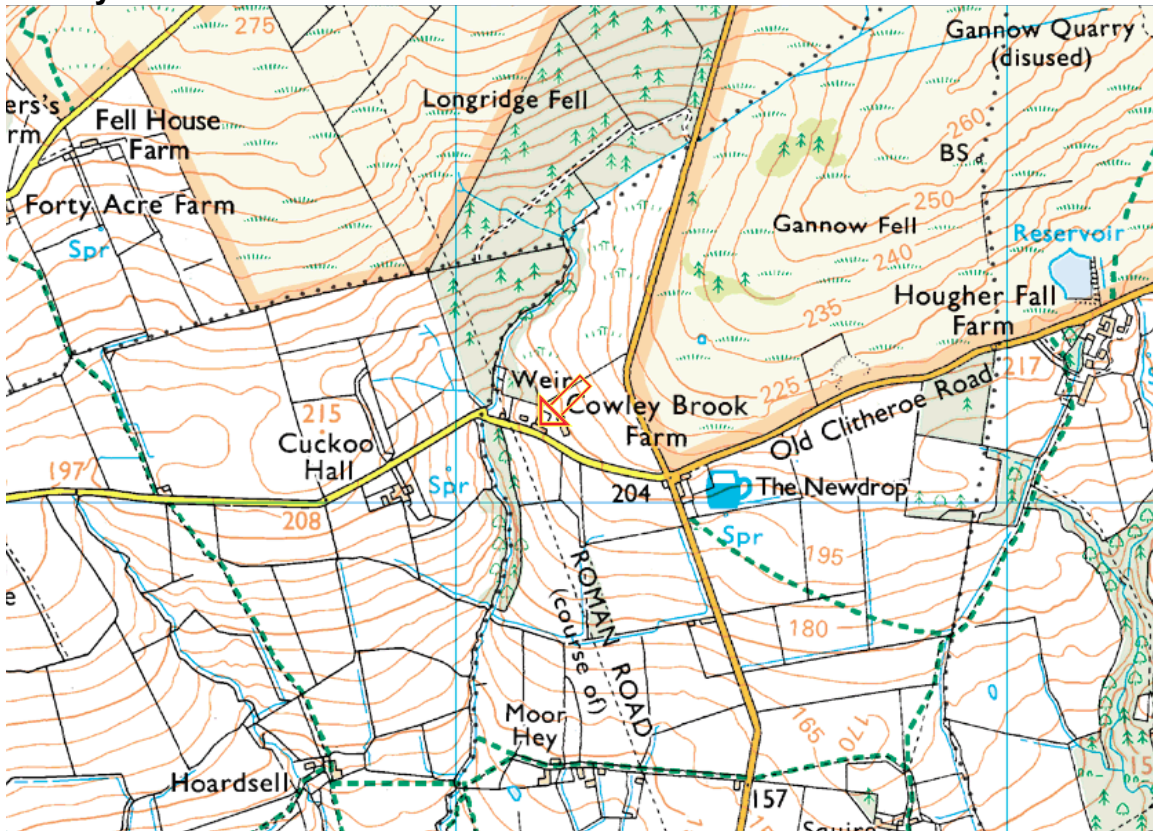
A central grid reference for the site is SD642391

Survey and Site Assessment

Objectives of the survey

The survey was carried out to determine current usage by barn owls, bat use of the site and to establish status of the bat species using the site prior to development work being carried out.

Survey site location



The site is located at NGRef: SD642391



Site/Habitat description

Cowley Brook Farm is a mixture of traditional stone built houses, main barn and associated outbuildings. Roofing throughout the buildings is double pitched and unlined traditional stone slates.

Roofing is in generally good condition although some gaps particularly in ridge tiles is present. Access to the main barn is also possible via a dove cote.

Cowley Brook is located in a rural setting with a mixture of semi improved grassland, heather moorland and clough woodland being in close proximity to the site.

The clough woodland can be considered high quality foraging potential for bats.

The habitat surrounding the farm can be considered of moderate potential for hunting Barn Owl.

Pre Existing data on local bat species

For the purposes of this survey a data search with East Lancashire Bat Group was carried out, this revealed no recorded bat roosts within 1km of the site.

However, from personal experience of surveying for and researching bats in the East Lancashire area the following species were considered.

Common Pipistrelle – known to roost on sites where suitable foraging habitat is available.

Soprano Pipistrelle – known to roost on sites where suitable foraging habitat is available.

Whiskered/Brandt's – species often found roosting in buildings close to woodland.

Natterer's – a typical upland bat with foraging bats being recorded high on heather moorland. Often roosting in barns.

Long Eared bat – a woodland species which has been recorded foraging over in by meadows and rough grassland sites. Often roosting in barns.

Field Survey Methodology

Visual inspection

An inspection was carried out to search for and identify potential feeding perches, roosting opportunities and signs of bat use both internally and externally.

Equipment used included:

- [Cluson CB-1 1M candle power lamp
- [SeeSnake CA 300 video endoscope
- [Opticron close focusing binoculars

The visual inspection focussed on searching for feeding remains and bat droppings within the barn and outbuildings.

Crevices and other potential roost sites were investigated for smear/grease marks, lack of cobwebs, urine staining.

In addition an inspection were carried out to assess potential for use by Barn Owl

Evidence searched for included:

- [Feathers
- [Owl pellets
- [Lime
- [Nestling fluff
- [Signs of nesting

Personnel

All surveys were conducted by:

Dave Anderson MSc, Natural England Science, Education and Conservation bat licence holder (NE licence no.20123170) a bat surveyor and ecologist with 20 years experience.

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Visual	24.03.2014	2 hours
Static detector	24.03.2014 – 31.03.2014	
Emergence	24.05.2014	3 hours

Survey constraints

Access to all areas of the barn and associated outbuildings was possible, weather conditions favourable and good visual inspection at ground level was possible.

Access to high beams in the main barn and the stables roof void was not possible due to safety considerations. These areas were assessed by binocular.

Results

Visual Inspection

Feeding remains (Peacock, Tortoiseshell and Orange Underwing moth wings) were identified during visual checks in the stables building and lower floor of the main barn. These were scattered throughout the two buildings rather than localised accumulations often associated with feeding perches.



Typical feeding remains in main barn

Two old bat droppings were recorded in the main barn on the eastern wall

No grease marks/ staining or urine staining were observed where crevices were found.

Static Detector Survey

Two Common Pipistrelle passes were recorded one on the 25th March and one on the 27th March. This is consistent with foraging bats entering the barn to forage.

Emergence Survey

No bats were recorded using the buildings.

Barn Owl Survey

No evidence of use of the site by Barn Owls was recorded.

Breeding Birds

Evidence of breeding birds, namely Swallow, using the main barn entrance porch was observed.

Evaluation of the results

The results of this survey work suggest that the barn and its outbuildings are used by small numbers of bats from a nearby roost for foraging.

No evidence of roosting bats was observed and no accumulations of feeding remains to suggest regular use as a feeding perch.

Significantly, there is no evidence of a roost or place of hibernation and there are no signs of significant flight within any of the buildings to suggest roosting.

In conclusion the overall conservation significance of the farm house, barn and outbuildings remains 'low' (*Reference: Bat Mitigation Guidelines page 39*).

Conclusion

Although no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the survey, scattered feeding remains consistent with bats using the site occasionally for foraging were observed.

The surveyor does not consider the proposed works are likely to result in a breach of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) therefore the proposed development does not require an EPS Licence (EPSL) to proceed lawfully if recommended timing of work and enhancements are followed.

Any works should be carried out at a time guaranteed to have no impact on nesting Swallows.

Further Recommendations

It is recommended that any work on the roof of the barn or outbuildings, involving the removal of stone slates, is carried out by hand as a precautionary measure given the mobile nature of some roosting bats.

In the unlikely event bats are discovered or disturbed during roof removal or building renovation, work must be halted until the bat licence holder can attend the site and give further advice as necessary.

E Bibliography

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|--|-----------------------------|
| Barn Owls and Rural Planning Applications | Barn Owl Trust 2009 |
| Barn Owl Survey Methodology and Techniques for use in Ecological Assessments | Shawyer, C. August 2011 |
| Bat Mitigation Guidelines | Natural England 2006 |
| Bat Survey Guidelines 2 nd Edition | Bat Conservation Trust 2011 |
| Bat Workers Manual 3 rd Edition | JNCC 2004 |

Bats and the Law

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, principally those relating to powers and penalties, have been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). The CRoW Act only applies to England and Wales.

Section 9(1)

It is an offence for any person to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat.

Section 9(4)(a)

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection.

(*Added by the CRoW Act in England and Wales only)

This is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not.

Section 9(4)(b)

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly* disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

(*Added by the CRoW Act in England and Wales only)

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994

Section 39(1)

It is an offence

(a) deliberately to capture or kill any bat

(b) deliberately to disturb any bat

(d) to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat.

The difference between this legislation and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the use of the word 'deliberately' rather than 'intentionally'. Also disturbance of bats can be anywhere, not just at a roost. Damage or destruction of a bat roost does not require the offence to be intentional or deliberate.

Barn Owls and the Law

Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally (or recklessly as amended by the CRoW Act, 2000) (a) kills, injures or takes any wild bird; (b) takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while

that nest is in use or being built; or (c) takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird. he shall be guilty of an offence.

(5) Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally- (a) disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is at, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or (b) disturbs dependent young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000)

Part III Nature conservation and wildlife protection

74 Conservation of biological diversity

(1) It is the duty of (a) any Minister of the Crown (within the meaning of the Ministers of the [1975 c. 26.] Crown Act 1975), (b) any Government department, and (c) the National Assembly for Wales, in carrying out his or its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biological diversity in accordance with the Convention.

SCHEDULE 12 AMENDMENTS RELATING TO PART I OF WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

1. In section 1(5) of the 1981 Act (offence of intentional disturbance of wild birds) after "intentionally" there is inserted "or recklessly".

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)

PART 3, (40): Duty to conserve biodiversity

(1) Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

(3) Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.