

Preliminary Ecological Assessment

**Land at Eaves Hall,
Moor Lane,
West Bradford,
Clitheroe BB7 3JG**

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Summary

In June 2018 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a preliminary ecological assessment of land at Eaves Hall, Moor Lane, West Bradford, Clitheroe BB7 3JG to assess the potential for impact on protected species.

A daytime survey was carried out on 20th June 2018 in order to support plans for development including installation of camping pods and creation of car parking and a path network. This was supplemented by great crested newt E-DNA sampling and monitoring bat activity with the placement of static detectors along boundary hedgerows.

A follow up daytime survey was made on 18th October 2020.

Bat use along boundary hedgerows was recorded, mitigation in the form of advice on lighting is included with this report.

A species rich meadow was recorded within the site, suitable management advice has been included within this report.

No evidence was recorded to suggest use of the site by protected species.

No evidence of badger was recorded within 100m of the site.

E-DNA sampling of the existing lodge recorded a negative result for great crested newts. No further survey effort is considered reasonable or necessary.

The surveyor does not consider the proposed development and change of use is 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.

Introduction

In June 2018 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a preliminary ecological assessment of land at Eaves Hall, Moor Lane, West Bradford, Clitheroe BB7 3JG to assess the potential for impact on protected species.

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Survey and Site Assessment

Objectives of the survey

The survey was carried out to determine current usage by protected species of the site and to establish status of those species using the site prior to development work being carried out.

Survey site location



A central grid reference for the site is SD7365544977

Site/Habitat description

The land is made up of a meadow of MG5 crested dogs tail – common knapweed grassland bordered by hawthorn and elder hedgerows with mature ash, oak and sycamore present.



To the north east of the site a lodge is present with areas of semi aquatic vegetation and open water.



The land can be considered to be of moderate conservation value.

Surrounding habitat.



The land is located in a rural area on the edge of West Bradford. Habitat is dominated by improved and semi improved grassland, with blocks of ancient woodland located to the east and west of the site.

Pre Existing data on local species

A search of the MAGIC website revealed no EPS licence applications within a 1km radius. The East Lancashire Bat Group database held no roost records within 1km of the site.

Field Survey Methodology

The ecological value of the survey area has been assessed based on the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (CIEEM, 2018). A survey of the surrounding habitat was carried out to assess potential for other protected species – badgers, reptiles and great crested newts in line with published guidelines. This included a search for field signs, and assessment of pond habitat where applicable.

The biodiversity value of any habitat types and associated species assemblages has been considered. Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, the Wildlife & Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended), including those given a higher level of legal protection under the NERC Act 2006 and Countryside & Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000.

Invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended 1996) were also recorded throughout the survey area.

Bat Static Detector Survey

Anabat Express static detectors were placed along boundary hedgerows to assess bat activity over an 11 night period. Analysis of recordings was made using AnalookW software to identify bat species and note timings of activity.

Great Crested Newt E-DNA

Sampling protocol was followed to collect water from the pond. Samples were sent to and analysed by Nature Metrics following a standardised test.

Personnel

All surveys were conducted by Dave Anderson MSc, Natural England Science, Education and Conservation bat licence holder (2015-15784-CLS-CLS) a bat surveyor and ecologist with 20 years experience.

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Visual	20 th June 2018	1 Hour
Static bat detector	20.6 – 2.07.2018	Sunset to sunrise
Daytime Survey	18.10.2020	1 Hour

Survey constraints

Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviour. Therefore the survey of the study area should not be considered to have produced a complete list of plants and animals present.

Desk study data should not be treated as a definitive list of species present within a search area. Many species are under-recorded and low numbers of records can reflect a lack of survey effort in some areas, rather than confirm the absence of a species.

The entire site was accessible and habitats present on site are commonly occurring and of limited ecological value. Therefore the survey timing is not considered to be a major limiting factor on the assessment of the habitats present and their potential to support legally protected species.

Results

Habitats



The site consists of MG5 crested dogs tail – common knapweed grassland bordered by hawthorn and elder hedgerows with mature ash, oak and sycamore present. A waterbody is located to the north of the site with yellow flag iris.

Breeding birds

Nesting potential is available within the hedgerow and trees present on site. No ground nesting birds were observed during the survey.

Bat Survey

Commuting and foraging activity along both hedgerows was recorded during the survey period with myotis sp, brown long eared, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule bat present. Timing of recordings suggests bats emerging from nearby roosts and using the site to forage throughout the night.

Badgers

No evidence of presence of badgers or foraging by badgers was recorded within 100m of the site.

Great Crested Newt

One pond was recorded within the north eastern end of the site. The pond was assessed to be of moderate suitability for crested newts, however E-DNA testing of the pond returned a negative result for presence of great crested newt.

Water Vole

No evidence to suggest water vole are present within the site boundary was recorded.

Invasive non native plant species.

No invasive non native species were observed during the survey.

Evaluation of the results

The site is of moderate conservation value with meadow habitat present over the majority of the site.

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

The proposed development will result in the loss of small areas of meadow grassland, however the development offers opportunities to put in place management measures to better conserve this habitat.

Whilst lighting has the potential to cause disturbance for foraging bats it is understood that lighting on site will be low key.

Mitigation measures will remove any potential negative impacts to breeding birds, and the development offers potential to create enhancements for biodiversity via a landscaping scheme.

Management and Mitigation

Provision for car parking should be positioned at the southern end of the site on land of low conservation value.

Paths through the site should use a PH neutral substrate.

Areas of meadow should be mown for hay in late July or early August each year. A second cut in late September or early October may be carried out.

Where unavoidable the use of artificial lighting is to be limited to the essential minimum, and any lighting to be used should avoid upward pointing lights, with the spread of light being directed to ensure hedgerows and field boundaries are kept dark.

Lighting with a low UV component should be used to reduce invertebrate attraction, and directional lighting/shielding of lights is to be used throughout to avoid excessive light spill.

Conclusion

Bat use along boundary hedgerows was recorded, mitigation in the form of advice on lighting is included with this report.

A species rich meadow was recorded within the site, suitable management advice has been included within this report.

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