

Land at Causeway Farm, Longsight Road,  
Balderstone

AERIAL INSPECTION SURVEY

APRIL 10, 2026

project ecology

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site Location

1.1.1 The site is located on land at Causeway Farm, Longsight Road, Balderstone, Lancashire (OS grid reference: SD 64579 31404).

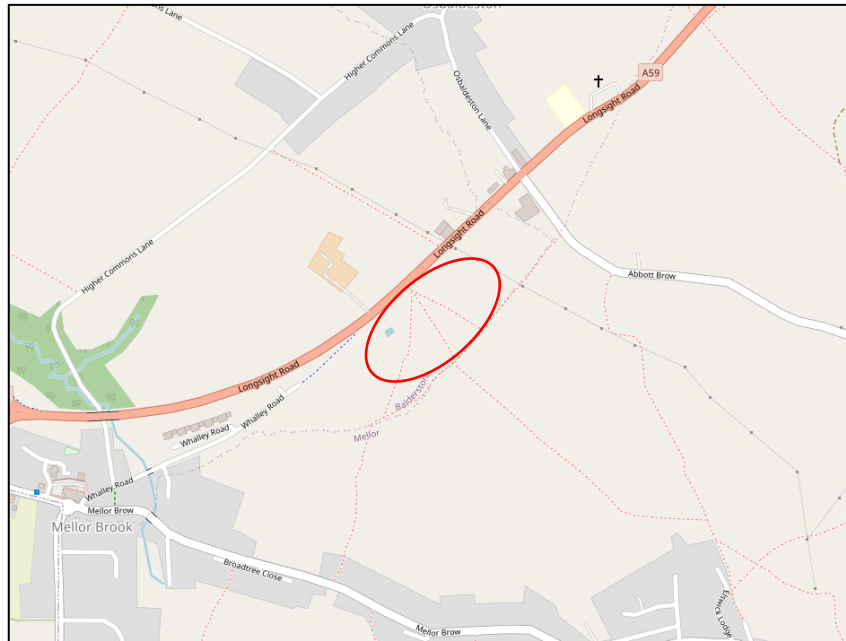


Figure 1: Site Location Courtesy of Open Steet Maps

## 1.2 Background

1.2.1 The site is the subject of an outline planning application with Ribble Valley Borough Council for residential development and associated works.

1.2.2 As part of the technical documents included in the application, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEA), provided by Etive Ecology<sup>1</sup> (2025), and a Bat Activity Survey report, provided by Bowland Ecology<sup>2</sup> (2022) were submitted to the LPA.

1.2.3 The Etive Ecology, 2025 report specifically identified 2 trees (recorded as TN9 in the report) requiring further assessment for roosting bats.

1.2.4 The application received an invalidation notification from the LPA requesting updated bat surveys.

1.2.5 A preliminary response from the LPA also included to following – *“In response to your email of 17 February, we acknowledge that although site conditions might not have changed since 2022, the ecological activity on the site could have changed. As we don’t condition further surveys and bearing in mind that this is only an outline and might not commence development for another 5 years or more, therefore we would need to have sufficient information submitted to enable the LPA to assess this prior to determination of this outline application.*

1.2.6 *We would accept an updated note from the ecologist to validate this application on the basis that further surveys will be undertaken and submitted asap, otherwise we might not have sufficient information to conclude that this would not be an issue at determination stage”.*

<sup>1</sup> Etive Ecology, 2025 – Causeway Farm, Balderstone – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

<sup>2</sup> Bowland Ecology – 2022 – Causeway Farm, Balderstone – Bat Activity Survey

- 1.2.7 A note from Etive Ecology was submitted to the LPA with the following email - *"Further to the emails below, please find attached a letter from the ecologist who undertook the updated PEA (2025). The letter confirms the site's baseline conditions in comparison to those recorded during the 2022 bat activity surveys. It also confirms that updated bat activity surveys will be carried out in 2026 and submitted to the LPA prior to the determination of the outline application.*
- 1.2.8 *I trust this information is sufficient to enable validation of the application".*
- 1.2.9 The following response was provided by Ribble Valley Borough Council Planning Validation – *"Unfortunately, the letter provided is not sufficient. As per our validation checklist [Adopted Validation Checklist for Planning Applications \(May 2025\)](#) we require bat surveys to be completed to be able to validate the application.*
- 1.2.10 *As no timescale have been given for when the surveys will be carried out and it is advised you withdraw and resubmit once the survey work has been completed".*

### 1.3 Scope of Work

- 1.3.1 PWA Planning Ltd commissioned Project Ecology to:
- Conduct Aerial Inspection Surveys (AIS) of the trees identified within the PEA (Etive Ecology, 2025) to assess them for bat roost suitability.

### 1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 Assess the trees in greater detail, with the use of rope and harness and where appropriate, endoscope, to assess the trees for suitable bat roost features that are/could be used by individual or multiple bats.
- 1.4.2 Provide mitigation measures to comply with current protected species policy and legislation.

### 1.5 Site Visit

- 1.5.1 The survey was undertaken on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026 by Ben Crossthwaite MCIEEM and Sam Harmer. Ben and Sam have over 10 years' professional experience of undertaking bat surveys and protected species surveys across the UK and hold a level 2 class survey licence (Reference Ben - 2025-83538-CL18-BAT and Sam – 2025-86186 – CL18 -BAT).
- 1.5.2 Ben and Sam also hold a CS38 Level 2 in Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue.
- 1.5.3 The weather at the time of the survey was clear, dry and mild.

## 2 Methodology

- 2.1.1 Where required trees were surveyed via an AIS to further assess identified Potential Roost Features (PRF) suitability to host bats.
- 2.1.2 The trees were climbed and any PRFs were inspected using an endoscopic camera, where required. The assessment was carried out in accordance with current guidelines<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.1.3 Interpretation of survey findings and assessment of roosting potential was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria in published guidance<sup>45</sup>. Trees were categorised in accordance with the criteria shown in the table adjacent.

Table 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

<sup>3</sup> *Bat Tree Habitat Key (2018) Bat Roosts in trees: A guide to identification and assessment for tree-care and ecology professionals.* Pelagic Publishing, Exeter

<sup>4</sup> *Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good practice guideline (4<sup>th</sup> edition).* The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

<sup>5</sup> *Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines.* English Nature, Peterborough.

### 3 Results

3.1.1 The locations of the trees subject to AIS are shown in Figure 2. The results of the AIS can be seen in Table 1 below.

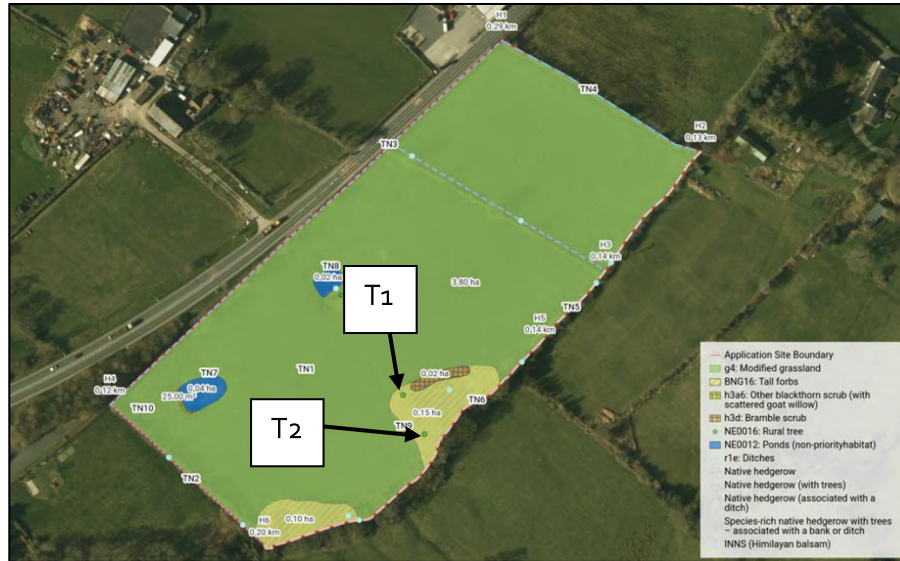
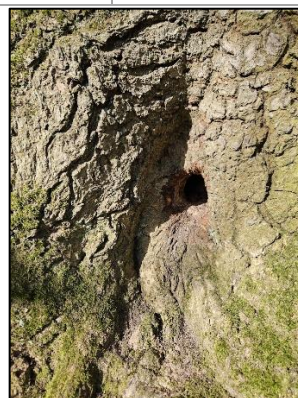
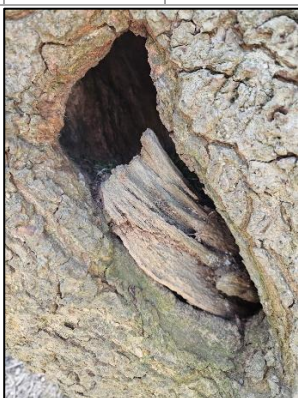


Figure 2: Tree locations courtesy for Etive Ecology

Table 1. Results of the Aerial Inspection Surveys

Tree Number	Tree Species	PRF on Stem/limb	PRF Type	Direction PRF Facing	Roosting Evidence	Humidity - Dry/Damp/Wet/Mildew	Apex Shape – Dome/Spire/Wedge/Flat	Competitors – Birds/Mammals/Inverts	Suitability None/PRF-I/PRF-M
Bt1	Oak	Stem	Knot hole – 4m	Southwest	No	Dry	Dome/wedge	Woodlice	PRF-I
		Limb	Knot hole – 4m	Southeast	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bt2	Oak	Stem	Butt rot – 0.5m	South	No	Dry	Dome/flat	Nesting bird and squirrel	PRF-I
		Stem	Butt rot – 0.5m	North	No	Dry-damp	Dome/wedge	Nesting bird and squirrel	PRF-I
		Stem	Butt rot – ground level	North-east	No	Dry	Dome	Squirrel	PRF-M
		Limb	Knot hole – 8m	South	No	Damp	Dome/spire	-	None



## 4 Evaluation and Recommendations

- 4.1.1 T1 and T2 have been found to provide potential roost features for individual bats (PRF-I). A feature recorded as PRF-M was recorded on T2. However, this butt-rot feature is located at ground level with extensive evidence of squirrel present. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that bats would utilise this and the other PRF's located on T2.
- 4.1.2 The trees within the sections of H1 and H3, proposed to be affected by the site proposals, were found not to support features for roosting bats, requiring no further survey work, such as an AIS.
- 4.1.3 As per the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines<sup>6</sup> trees characterised as providing PRF-I are subject to no further survey work, though appropriate mitigation measures should be undertaken.
- 4.1.4 The identified trees are to be subject to a pre-felling survey by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- 4.1.5 The sites peripheral linear habitats provide typical bat foraging and commuting habitat commonly found in pastoral farmland landscapes and are considered to be ubiquitous within the wider and local landscape.
- 4.1.6 More favourable, high value woodland and riverine habitat is located in the locality. However, the site does provide foraging habitat and may provide connectivity to these habitats and the wider landscape.
- 4.1.7 The presence of streetlights along the A59, running parallel to H1, reduces the suitability for activity along this hedgerow.
- 4.1.8 The bat activity surveys carried out in 2022 by Bowland Ecology support this as very little activity was recorded in the vicinity of H1.
- 4.1.9 The report (Bowland Ecology, 2022) concludes-
- 4.1.10 *"The survey demonstrates that the site supports low levels of bat activity, as mentioned previously, this activity is mainly limited to the linear hedgerows and the watercourse.*
- 4.1.11 *Works affecting either the watercourse or hedgerows on site are likely to have a negative impact on local bat populations. The dividing hedge in the centre, along with the hedge to the north and the watercourse to the south east appear to be used by small numbers of bats as commuting and foraging features on site. Removal or disturbance of any of these features should be appropriately mitigated with supplementary planting of linear features to aid in sustaining the local bat activity levels at the site.*
- 4.1.12 *Works within this site are not anticipated to cause significant disturbance to local bat populations (with appropriate mitigation planting of linear features). Proposals should however be designed to minimise light spillage during works and post construction. This is recommended due to the proximity of the site to the A59 (adjacent to the north western extent of the site) which already produces a lot of light and noise pollution and further increases in this area could lead to the site losing value to local bat populations in the area".*

<sup>6</sup> Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good practice guideline (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

4.1.13 At this outline stage of the application, considering the evidence provided above, no further survey work is required, and it is recommended a robustly worded condition is used to determine the application, which could include:

- The retention and enhancement of existing linear landscape features is to be prioritised within the site layout.
- A sensitive lighting scheme is produced, including indicated lux levels, to protect the existing 'dark zones' on site for bats and other fauna species.
- A conditioned bat mitigation scheme is recommended to increase the provision of roosting habitat on site.