Rhosddu Community Centre, Wrexham

# Bat and Bird Survey Report

16th June 2025



Produced by Wildbanks Conservation

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**REPORT VERIFICATION AND DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE**

| Report Version | Date | Completed by: | Date | Approved by: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Final | 16/06/25 | Tanya Cobb | 16/06/25 | M. Smith |

The information we have prepared is true and we confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Wrexham County Borough Council and provides the results of a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) on Rhosddu Community Centre, Price's Ln, Wrexham LL11 2NB (approximate OS Grid Ref: SJ 33575 51374) undertaken on 6th June 2025.

1.2 The PRA was required to establish the presence or potential presence of roosting bats within the property and any trees within the development area, identify potential constraints to the proposal, and outline the mitigation measures where relevant. If a bat or its roost/place of rest or shelter is identified and subsequently affected by the works, then a European Protected Species Development Licence, issued by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), would be required to proceed with the development.

1.3 In addition to roosting potential, the development site and surrounding habitat may also be used by bats for foraging and commuting or birds for breeding and nesting. Any loss or fragmentation of linear features or foraging areas (e.g. woodland edges, hedgerows, or open glades) should be assessed in terms of ecological functionality, with mitigation or enhancement measures proposed where necessary to maintain habitat connectivity and minimise disturbance, particularly from lighting.

1.4 The property in question comprises a detached building defined by the redline boundary shown on Figure 1. The building is currently unoccupied. The proposed works include complete demolition of the building and a new Scout building being built in its place. The footprint of the new building will be extended to the east. A development boundary has not been provided at the time of this report, therefore, an estimated development boundary is shown on Figure 1, to take into consideration the existing carpark, proposed extended footprint of the new building and construction vehicle access. The estimated development boundary includes mature trees and shrubs, in close proximity to the building that may be affected by the proposed works. The building, and estimated development boundary, is from this point referred to as the "Site".

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Rhosddu Community Centre is situated within Wrexham town. Immediately surrounding the Site are trees and a park and grass field to the North and Southeast. A large allotment is located to the West of the Site. Beyond these areas of green space are large numbers of residential properties forming Wrexham town.

2.2 The immediate habitat is considered good foraging habitat for bats, however, due to predominantly residential properties within the wider landscape, the good quality habitat is isolated within a small pocket of Wrexham town (Figure 2).



**Figure 1.** Plan with Rhosddu Community Centre building outlined red. An estimated development boundary has been included outlined blue. (Base image © Google Maps 2025)

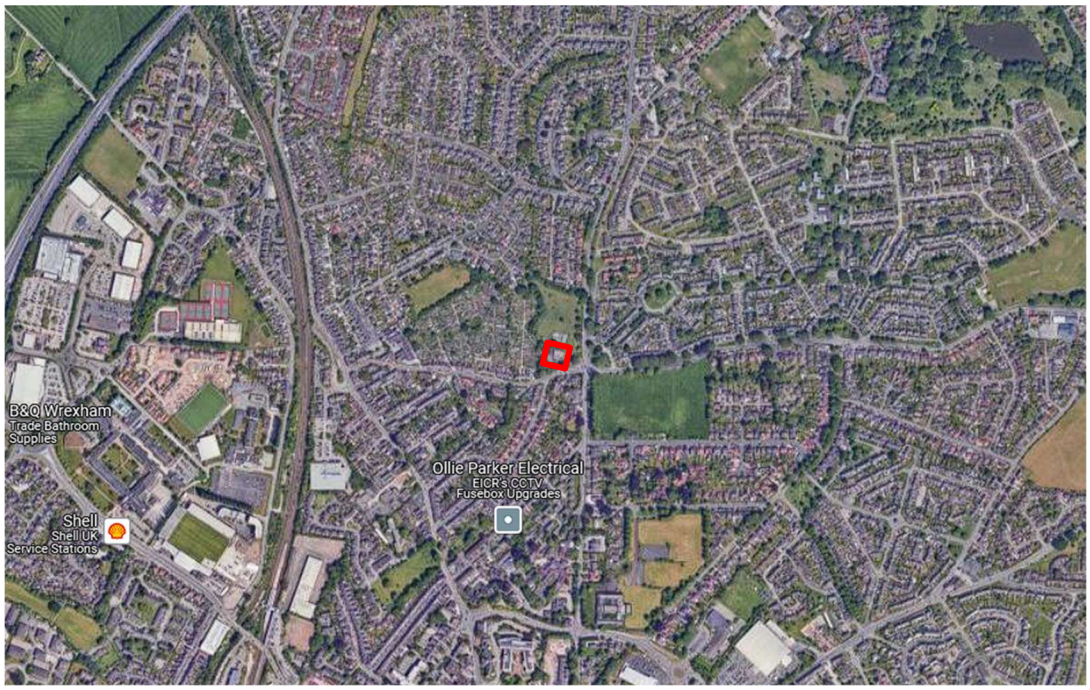



**Figure 2.** Plan with Rhosddu Community Centre building outlined red and showing wider landscape. (Base image © Google Maps 2025)

## 3.0 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 To inform this Preliminary Roost Assessment, a desk-top study, visual assessment and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) were undertaken in line with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

**Desk Top Study**

3.2 A desk top study was undertaken by Wildbanks Conservation Ltd using the following online resources for background information of the Site.

- MAGIC website
- Ordnance Survey maps
- Aerial photographs

3.3 **Building Visual Assessment**

*Bats*

3.3.1 The exterior of all aspects of the building were visually assessed for potential roost features (PRFs), potential access points and evidence of bat activity. With the aid of binoculars and endoscopes, features such as gaps in brickwork, small gaps under barge/soffit/fascia boards, raised or missing roof/ridge tiles or gaps at gable ends, which have the potential for use as roosts/access points, were sought. Evidence that bats actively used these PRFs/access points would include staining within the gaps, or bat droppings or urine staining under gaps; a note being made wherever these were present. The presence of cobwebs and/or general detritus within and around PRFs was used as an indicator that bats had not recently used the area to access the building. Following the external assessment, an internal assessment of the building was undertaken, searching for the same evidence.

*Birds*

3.3.2 The building was assessed for nesting birds at the same time as the bat visual assessment. All cracks, gaps and potential nesting areas were checked for the presence of nests/nesting material/live birds.

3.4 **Ground Level Tree Assessment**

3.4.1 All trees located within the proposed development area or immediately adjacent were included in the assessment.

3.4.2 Trees were inspected using ladders, binoculars, high-lumen torches, inspection mirrors and endoscopes, where possible. Features such as rot holes, hazard beams, woodpecker holes, lifted

bark, vertical cracks, dense ivy, or callus formations were recorded and evaluated. Trees were then classified according to bat roost potential as follows:

- Negligible – No suitable PRF observed.
- PRF-I (Individual use) – Small, isolated PRF suitable for single or small numbers of bats.
- PRF-M (Multiple bats) – Larger, more sheltered features potentially suitable for group or maternity roosts.

3.4.3 Any direct evidence of bat use—such as droppings, staining, feeding remains, or live bats—was noted. Conversely, the presence of dense cobwebs or detritus obstructing PRF entrances was used to infer likely absence of recent use.

## 3.5 **Limitations**

3.5.1 There were no limitations to the visual assessment. The whole exterior and interior of the building was visible during the visual assessment.

3.5.2 GLTAs are an approximation of bat roosting potential due to the possibility that not all PRFs are visible from the ground and the extent of each feature cannot always be established accurately. Assessments were undertaken whilst the trees were in leaf so visibility of PRFs from the ground was limited. However, the trees were in good condition, with no obvious signs of damage which would decrease the number of PRFs present.

3.5.3 It is considered that there are no significant limitations that would reduce the veracity of the conclusions or recommendations detailed within this Report.

## 4.0 RESULTS

### Desk Top Study

4.1 No statutory or local, non-statutory designated sites exist within 1km of the Site.

### 4.2 Building Visual Assessment

4.2.1 The building is a single storey brick building with partial shiplap PVC cladding and flat felt and gravel roof. The building is in good condition with few potential roost features for crevice dwelling bats (e.g., *Pipistrelle sp., Myotis sp.*). No loft space exists within the building or other internal spaces that would provide roosting opportunities for free flight species such as brown long eared bats.

4.2.2 The internal of the building is in a state of deterioration with ceiling and internal wall boards missing within the main function room (Plate 3 and 4). Another small office room remains in excellent condition with intact wall plastering and no gaps around windows.

4.2.3 The external brickwork and PVC cladding of the building are in excellent condition with no gaps into the building. There appeared to be gaps onto the wall plate under the cladding and plastic barge boards (Plate 5), however, on closer inspection these gaps are well-sealed so do not provide bat access to the building (Plate 6). Two vents are located within the northern wall of the building. These were inspected for bat access into the building; however, both are capped and well-sealed (Plate 7). The flat roof is also in good condition with no lifts or tears throughout (Plate 8).

4.2.4 The structure of the building e.g. no loft space, and lack of suitable features mean that the building has no opportunities for hibernating bats.

4.2.5 No nesting material or evidence of nesting birds were found within or on the building.

### 4.3 Ground Level Tree Assessment

4.3.1 Five semi-mature/mature trees have been identified on Site for their suitability for bats (Figure 3; Table 1; Plates 11 - 15). Upon investigation, one tree; a Wild cherry, has been identified as having potential bat roost features (Table 1), therefore, requiring further inspection, in the form of Aerial Tree Inspections (ATI), before it can be pruned or felled (if felling is necessary), to establish if a bat roost is present.

4.3.2 All potential roost features were categorised as PRF-I, indicating they are only suitable for an individual or very small numbers of bats.

**Table 1.** Ground Level Tree Assessment results showing the five trees on Site identified for suitability of roosting bats and their subsequent bat roost potential category.

| **Tree Number** | **Tree species** (Common Name) | **Tree Species** (Latin Name) | **GPS Coordinates** | | **DBH** (m) | **Description of feature** | **Bat Roost Potential Category** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Easting** | **Northing** | | | |
| T1 | Sycamore | *Acer pseudoplatanus* | 333568 | 351389 | 0.5 | None | Negligible |
| T2 | Wild Cherry | *Prunus avium* | 333559 | 351393 | 0.5 | None | Negligible |
| T3 | Wild Cherry | *Prunus avium* | 333556 | 351387 | 0.4 (Twin stem from base) | None | Negligible |
| T4 | Wild Cherry | *Prunus avium* | 333555 | 351381 | 0.5 | Branch cavity, 6m high, with opening approximately 4cm wide facing east. Depth of cavity could not be determined from the ground. | PRF-I |
| T5 | Wych Elm | *Ulmus glabra* | 333601 | 351375 | 0.15 | None | Negligible |

4.4 **Birds**

4.4.1 Mature trees and shrubs exist around the boundaries to the building that offer nesting opportunities to birds, particularly a 20m line of shrubs (Shrub S1) approximately 17m to the east of the building, acting as a screen for the Community Centre from the main road (Figure 3; Plate 9). These shrubs comprise of decorative shrubs and immature trees. The proposed footprint of the building is anticipated to extend within ~7m of these shrubs.

4.4.2 An immature, multi-stemmed Sycamore sapling also exists along the southern aspect of the building which offers bird nesting potential (Figure 3; Plate 10). This sapling has stems of less than 5cm diameter at breast height (DBH) and has a bushy appearance, so is considered a shrub within this report and not considered suitable for a Ground Level Tree Assessment/roosting bat potential (Shrub S2).

4.4.3 No evidence of nesting birds was observed during the visual assessment, in the form of birds traversing the site with nesting or food material.

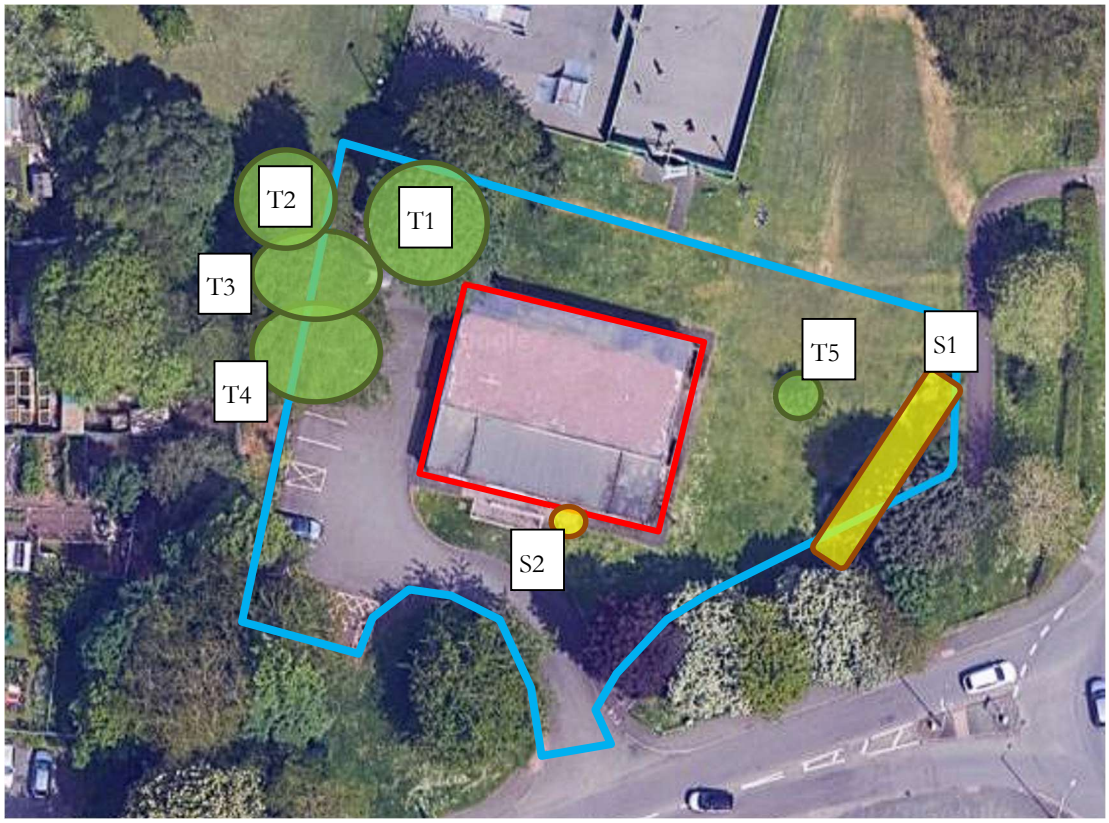



**Figure 3.** Aerial view of the Site with the building outlined red and the estimated development boundary outlined blue. The location of all shrubs (yellow) and trees (green) are marked. (Base image © Google Maps 2025)

## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Site has been subject to a Preliminary Roost Assessment on 6th June 2025 by Jack Halpin and Tanya Cobb, both Accredited Agents on Mick Smith's NRW bat licence (Licence number: S095544/1).

5.2 The immediate habitat surrounding the Site is considered moderate foraging habitat for bats, consisting of small amenity parks to the north and southeast, and allotments to the west. The wider landscape surrounding the Site consists of a large number of residential properties which isolate these pockets of moderate quality habitat within Wrexham town. The value of these green spaces within Wrexham town should not be overlooked and all precautions should be taken to retain all trees within the Site and minimise loss of vegetation and or grassed areas.

5.3 The building is in overall excellent structural condition and very well-sealed, the flat roof was in excellent condition and all windows, doors and cladding present did not have any suitable bat access points or potential features suitable for bats. The property is classified as negligible potential for roosting bats. One tree T4 has been recorded as having PRFs suitable for individual bats.

5.4 No evidence of nesting birds was recorded using the buildings; however, potential nesting habitat exists within a 20m line of shrubs to the east of the building and mature trees on Site.

5.5 **Recommendations**

*Bats*

5.5.1 Evidence of bats roosting within the property and no potential roost features were identified during the visual assessment. Therefore, no further survey work is recommended for bats in regard to the building. The building can be demolished without limitations regarding bats.

5.5.2 One tree T4 is categorised as having a PRF that requires further investigation should the tree require felling or pruning within the proposed works. Any works to tree T4 should be undertaken under a Precautionary Work Method Statement (PWMS). This is non-licensable approach which assumes low bat potential and no evidence of bat use. The PWMS must be produced prior to works taking place and will include, but not be limited to:

- Toolbox talk by licensed ecologist will be undertaken prior to any works commencing.
- A detailed PRF inspection survey, or Aerial Tree Inspection (ATI), to assess their suitability for bats and to confirm the absence of roosting bats should be conducted immediately prior to felling.

- If no evidence of bats is found during the ATI, works to trees should follow a 'Soft Felling' approach. A licensed ecologist or Accredited Agent will provide a watching brief during the works.

5.5.3 Aerial Tree Inspections may involve tree-climbing and/or ladders, depending on the tree's location, PRF height and ground access.

5.5.4 If bats or evidence of a roost are identified during the ATI, all works must cease immediately, and advice should be sought from a licensed bat ecologist. A European Protected Species (EPS) licence, issued by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), may be required before any further works can proceed. No works affecting the roost may legally continue without this licence in place.

5.5.5 Providing no bat(s)/evidence of use by bats is found within Tree T4, a European Protected Species licence will not be required for demolition works. The works can be carried out at any time of year.

5.5.6 If any bats are found during works, works must stop immediately, and the site ecologist will be contacted, and advice sought: **Wildbanks Conservation; 01691 623505.**

*Birds*

5.5.7 No birds were found to be nesting on or within the building. Shrubs S1 and S2 and trees T1-T5 exhibit good bird nesting habitat.

5.5.8 The proposed works do not currently include the removal or pruning of these areas, however, due to the proximity of the works, the felling/pruning of S2, T1, T4 and/or T5, and disturbance to any nesting birds in S1, is likely. The disturbance and/or destruction of bird nests is prohibited under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). If proposed works commence during the nesting bird season (March-September inclusive), there is potential for nesting birds to be disturbed and nests to be destroyed during the process.

5.5.9 To avoid impacts on nesting birds, a pre-works nesting bird check of the Site should be undertaken by a qualified ecologist prior to any works taking place. If nests are identified, the nests must remain intact and undisturbed until young have fledged. No work must take place within 5m of the nest. This will provide a buffer between any works and the nest.

## 5.6 Mitigation and Enhancement

5.6.1 Planning Policy Wales (PPW12) requires development to provide a Net Benefit to Biodiversity (NBB) i.e. a better outcome than if the site would be left undeveloped.

*Bats*

5.6.2 As no bat roosts currently exist within the property, it is recommended that integrated bat roost features be installed within the building, to improve the long-term opportunities for roosting bats on site.

5.6.3 Integrated roost feature as follows:

- Integrated Eco Bat Box, or similar, to be installed within the cladding on the eastern elevation, at the apex to the gable end. Location can be found on Figure 4.

5.6.4 On the date of this report, the extent of the pruning/felling of trees T1-T5 is unknown, however, it is important to acknowledge that roosting habitat loss encompasses not only currently occupied roosts, but also potential and future roost sites. Therefore, it is recommended that a bat box suitable for crevice-dwelling bat species be installed within Wrexham County Borough Council–owned land adjacent to the Site. A potential location for a bat box includes a Sycamore tree within the adjacent park to the north of the Site (approximate OS Grid Ref: SJ 33575 51374). Location can be found on Figure 4. Boxes should be located at a minimum of 4m in height, in unlit, undisturbed areas, ideally along woodland edges or within connected habitat corridors to support bat commuting and foraging.

*Birds*

5.6.5 To enhance the long-term nesting opportunities on site for birds, swift boxes, such as the RSPB Swift Nest box, or similar, should be installed on the northern elevation of the building. Exact number of boxes to install, to be discussed with Wrexham County Borough Council. Possible location of swift box installation shown on Figure 4.



**Figure 4:** An aerial view of the Site showing existing building outlined red and proposed footprint of new building with dashed white line. Yellow square = tree-mounted bat box location. Orange square = integrated bat box location. Blue square = possible swift box locations.

## 6.0 REFERENCES


- Collins, J (ed.). 2023. *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn).* The Bat Conservation Trust. London.

## A1 APPENDIX – SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



**Plate 1:** The western aspect of the building.



**Plate 2:** The eastern aspect of the building.



**Plate 3:** The internal, main function room, of the building.



**Plate 4:** Missing ceiling boards revealing the wooden boards of the roof structure.



**Plate 5:** Well-sealed roof structure showing no gaps between plastic barge board and brick work.



**Plate 6:** View of join between plastic barge board and flat roof board. Gap was identified from the ground but upon closer inspection the gap is well-sealed and offers no bat access.



**Plate 7:** Vent that was identified as potential bat access into the building, however, on closer inspection, the vent has been capped and sealed.



**Plate 8:** Roofing felt in good condition with no lifting or tears.



**Plate 9:** Shrubs to the east of the building that provide good bird nesting habitat.



**Plate 10:** Immature Sycamore growing as a shrub against the southern aspect of the building.



**Plate 11:** Tree T1: Sycamore



**Plate 12:** Tree T2: Wild Cherry

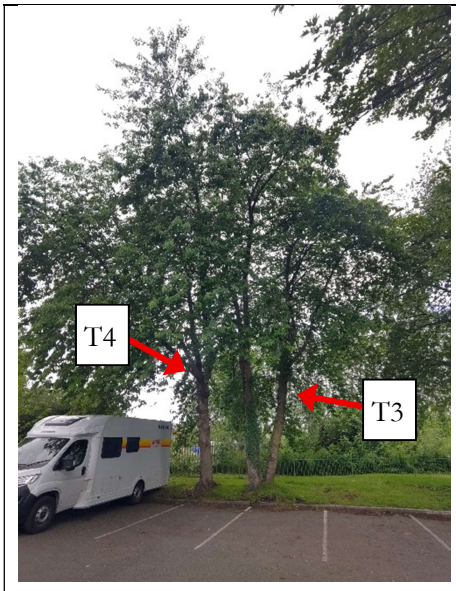



**Plate 13:** Tree T3 & T4: Both Wild Cherry

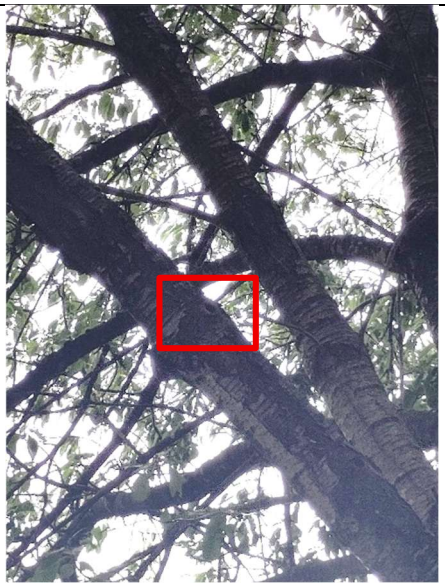


**Plate 14:** Potential bat roost feature in Tree T4. Branch cavity with opening approximately 4cm wide.



**Plate 15:** Tree T5: Wych Elm

## A2 APPENDIX – LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

### Bats

A2.1 All bat species are protected by European and/or UK legislation because of their decline across Europe and the UK. When undertaking an appraisal of a proposed development, such legislation is taken into account as follows.

- European: Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive'); and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conservation of wild birds (codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended) (the 'Birds Directive').

- UK (England & Wales): The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended (the 'Habitat Regulations') which transposes the Habitats Directive in UK law; The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000; the Protection of Badgers Act 1992; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) (2006) and the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990.

A2.2 Species such as bats (all UK species) are also protected in the UK under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

A2.3 It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place; intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, or obstruct access to a place used for shelter or protection and to possess, advertise control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead animal, or any part of one, listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

A2.4 All UK bat species and GCN are also referred to as European Protected Species (EPS) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

A2.5 If work is proposed that would affect a European Protected Species, then a licence from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) will be required. Natural Resources Wales (NRW), in exercise of the powers conferred under regulation 53(1) and 56(3) (a) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, may issue licences for the following purposes:

- Preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;

- Preventing the spread of disease; or

- Preventing serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber or any other form of property or to fisheries; to allow people to carry out activities which would otherwise be illegal.

A2.6 Before issuing a licence under the Habitats Regulations, the licensing authority must be satisfied that "there is no satisfactory alternative" to the work as proposed and, that the proposed actions "will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status (FCS)".

A2.7 To ensure these requirements are met, the licensing authority must have enough information to complete an assessment of the application. This includes sufficient survey data so that the roost and how it is used by bats is understood and impacts upon the roost are appropriately assessed so that mitigation and/or compensation can be designed into the proposed development that will ensure the bat population can be incorporated and maintained in the long term.

A2.8 Seven bat species are UK BAP Priority Species. These are as follows:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*
- Common noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*

**Birds**

A2.9 All wild bird species, their eggs and nests are protected under Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). You must always try to avoid harming birds or to use measures which do not kill or injure them before considering taking harmful action.

A2.10 It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take wild birds, intentionally take, damage or destroy a wild bird's nest while it's being used or built, intentionally take or destroy a wild bird's egg, possess, control or transport live or dead wild birds, or parts of them, or their eggs, sell wild birds or put them on display for sale, use prohibited methods to kill or take wild birds.

A2.11 Some birds, have additional legal protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). For these bird species it is also an offence to disturb them while they're nesting, building a nest, in or near a nest that contains their young or disturb their dependent young.

A2.12 The Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC5) (Stanbury et al., 2021) is also taken into consideration when undertaking this appraisal.