Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

PINE LODGE, HOOD GREEN.

OS REF: SE 31751 02753.

PRECAUTIONARY WORKING METHHOD STATEMENT.

Ref No: **220640/PWMS.**

Date: **18th October 2022.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Pine Lodge has been empty and vacant for some years. A planning application has now been submitted to Barnsley Council to demolish the existing buildings and to replace with a new dwelling and an EcIA was submitted in support of that application.

1.2. Planning consent has now been granted and Condition 4 of that consent states:-

No development shall take place (including vegetation/site clearance) until a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) for amphibians, bats (including details regarding the soft felling of trees with bat roost potential) and small mammals has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved PWMS shall be implemented in full according to the specified timescales, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

1.3. This document is designed to satisfy that condition.

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2. METHOD STATEMENT.

2.1. Amphibians.

2.1.1. Prior to any works commencing on site a Natural England District Level Licence will be applied for and granted to cover the development of the site.

2.1.2. Prior to any works commencing, all personnel will be briefed on the potential presence of reptiles and amphibians within the work area. Toolbox talks have been included at the end of this document to assist with this briefing.

2.1.3. Immediately prior to soil stripping, an ecologist will carry out a hand search of the area to be affected and under the District Licence and that ecologist will relocate any great crested newts or other amphibians or reptiles to a place of safety. That will normally be on the site boundary where they will be released underneath a felt or carpet square.

2.1.4. In the event that any reptiles or common amphibians are found during the works they must be left to safely move away of their own accord. If large numbers of reptiles (5+) are found, works will cease until the ecologist has made a judgement on the impact of the works on reptiles.

2.1.5. In the event that any great crested newts are found during the works, the works will cease immediately and the ecologist shall be contacted to move it under the District Licence.

2.1.6. As far as is reasonably possible, materials will not be stored on the ground but will be placed on pallets. All materials will be lifted cleanly upwards without dragging and causing harm to any reptiles or amphibians potentially taking refuge underneath.

2.2. Bats.

2.2.1. No bat roosts have been identified in any of the buildings or trees on the site but Potential Roost Features have been identified in two trees, one willow tree that is to be felled and one oak tree that needs some tree surgery carrying out.

2.2.2. Prior to any demolition works commencing, all personnel will be briefed on the potential presence of bats within the existing buildings. Toolbox talks have been included at the end of this document to assist with this briefing.

2.2.3. Demolition of the existing building will be undertaken with due care particularly below roof tiles. In the unlikely event of a bat being found, the bat will be covered to keep it safe and work will cease at that location. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd will be immediately contacted for further advice and the way forward.

2.2.4. The willow tree has been assessed to have moderate potential for roosting bats despite no bats having been found in the tree during activity surveys.

2.2.5. This tree will be checked for the presence of bats using an endoscope to investigate all cracks and crevices before it is soft felled. All sections of the tree that contain cracks, crevices or voids that may be used by roosting bats will be left on the ground for 24 hours to enable any bats present to escape.

2.2.6. At the end of the 24 hours, the sections of the tree will be chipped and disposed of in the normal way.

2.2.7. In the unlikely event that a bat is found, works must cease and Whitcher Wildlife Ltd contacted for further results.

2.2.8. The amount of tree surgery works to the oak tree will be kept to a minimum and where possible broken branches will be retained to provide potential points of shelter for bats.

2.2.9. What needs to be felled from this tree will be soft felled and all sections of the tree that contain cracks, crevices or voids that may be used by roosting bats will be left on the ground for 24 hours to enable any bats present to escape.

2.2.10. At the end of the 24 hours, the sections of the tree will be chipped and disposed of in the normal way.

2.2.11. In the unlikely event that a bat is found, works must cease and Whitcher Wildlife Ltd contacted for further results.

2.3. Small Mammals.

During the above precautions for amphibians and reptiles, any small mammals, in particular hedgehogs, if found, will be relocated to an area of the site where they will remain unharmed and can escape to a safe location off site.

2.4. Birds.

2.4.1. Where possible, all vegetation clearance and initial site clearance will be carried out between September and February inclusive to avoid the nesting bird season.

2.4.2. Where it is necessary to undertake such works within the nesting bird season, a nesting bird survey will be carried out by a suitably experienced person immediately prior to the works being carried out.

2.4.3. In the event that any active nests are found during that survey, a buffer zone will be demarcated around the nest and the nest will be left undisturbed until the young have fledged. The size of this buffer zone will be decided by the ecologist at the time.

2.5. Habitats.

2.5.1. There are a number of important trees on the site, in particular the mature oak close to the existing bungalow and the mature pine trees around the site after which the site is named.

2.5.2. Protective Heras fencing will be erected around the root zones of these trees and no works must be carried out within that root protection zone.

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Prepared by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 20th October 2022.

Checked by:	
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Identification: Great Crested Newts

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If newts are identified during works the following document can be used to identify whether the newts are likely to be Great Crested Newts.

The newts should also be photographed and professional advice should be sought on the way forward.





Great crested newts can grow up to 15cm in length. They are dark, nearly black in colour with a speckled belly which is distinctly orange in colour and with orange stripes across their toes.









Great crested newts and other amphibians will often be found underneath refugia such as logs, stones and other rubbish on the ground. They will also often be found in railway ballast and in cable troughs.



If great crested newts are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk

Toolbox Talk: Great Crested Newts

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

Ecological Consultants

The great crested newt population has suffered a major decline in Britain over the last century. Numerous ponds have been lost, unmanaged ponds have become silted up and over-shaded, development has destroyed ponds and associated terrestrial habitat and caused fragmentation of populations. The loss of grassland, scrub and woodland has resulted in fewer opportunities for foraging, dispersal and hibernation.

Identification: Great Crested Newts.

Great crested newts are dark, nearly black in colour with a speckled belly, distinctly orange in colour and with orange stripes across their toes. Great crested newts can grow up to 15cm in length.





Identification: Smooth and Palmate Newts.

Smooth newts are predominantly lighter in colour although their colour may vary from sandy coloured to very dark. Smooth newts also have a speckled orange belly but the orange colour fades to pale.





Palmate newts are similar to smooth newts but with a pinker belly and wedded feet.

Habitat.

Great crested newts live predominantly on land but breed in ponds between March and June.

Great crested newts may be found on land almost all year round. They spend the daytime under rocks or logs, in cracks, crevices or holes, or anywhere that is moist and cool and emerge at night to forage. During the winter months great crested newts hibernate deep down away from frost.

When disturbed in terrestrial habitats newts will usually be very sluggish and will take time to move away.

Legislation.

The great crested newt is listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, recently modified by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000. The great crested newt is therefore subject to the provisions of Schedule 9, which make it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a great crested newt.
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

The great crested newt is also listed on Annex II and Annex IV of The Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) Regulations 1994. Regulation 39 makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or kill a great crested newt.
- Deliberately disturb a great crested newt.
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of a great crested newt.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a great crested newt.

The legislation applies to all life stages of great crested newts.

The maximum fine on conviction of offences under Section 9 and Regulation 39 currently stands at £5,000. The CroW Act 2000 amendment also allows for a custodial sentence of up to six months instead of, or in addition to, a fine. In addition, items, which may constitute evidence of the commission of an offence, may be seized and detained.

If great crested newts are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk

Toolbox Talk: Reptiles

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

Ecological Consultants

Identification: Grass Snakes.

The grass snake can be up to 120cm long. It is generally dark green in colour but may occasionally appear grey with vertical black bars and spots that run along its sides. There is usually a yellow marking around the neck.



Identification: Adders.

The adder is the only native species that is venomous, but it is rarely harmful to humans. Adult adders are generally up to 66cm long. Back ground colouration is a light shade of grey or brown with a black zigzag marking along the length of the back. As with all reptiles, colouration varies and becomes duller as sloughing (skin shedding) approaches.



Identification: Slow Worms.

Slow worms grow to around 45cm in length. The males and females display a marked difference in colour when fully grown. In general, the species displays colouring that varies from light brown, dark brown, grey, bronze or brick red with the females often displaying a dark vertebral stripe and both males and females displaying occasional markings on the flanks.



Identification: Common Lizards.

Common lizards grow to around 16cm. They are grey brown to dark brown, often with a darker streak that may run the entire length of the spine. A continuous dark band bordered by light yellow or white spots is often seen on either side of the body. The underside of the males is egg yolk yellow to orange spotted with black. Females are yellowish grey.



Other Reptiles.

In addition to the reptiles outlined on this document, there are also two other reptile species in Great Britain, the smooth snakes and the sand lizard. These reptiles are a lot less common than the four species covered with the smooth snake being predominantly found on heathland in southern England and the sand lizard found throughout Great Britain in coastal dune areas.

These species are also afforded a higher level of protection because they are European Protected Species.

Habitat.

Maintaining the right body temperature is vital to reptiles' survival. In the morning they find a warm basking site to heat up their bodies and then later they may move back into the shade so as not to overheat. Hence, reptiles require a habitat that provides a range of suitable refugia for shelter such as dense vegetation, rubble or log piles, or crevices and open areas for basking such as bare ground, rocks or railway ballast shoulders. During hot summers reptiles may be found in damper, cooler sites. Reptiles hibernate, spending the winter in burrows or under logs protected from the cold and predators.





When disturbed in their natural habitat reptiles will usually move away quickly.

Legislation.

Reptiles are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They received greater protection following reviews of the schedules published in 1988 and 1991. This means they are protected against intentional or recklessly killing and injuring and against sale or transporting for sale.

If reptiles are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk

Toolbox Talk: Bats

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18 species of bat have been recorded in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed here.



Identification.

Some species can be extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Species such as the Brown Long Eared bat pictured above can be more easily identified in the hand. Whereas, the Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle are more difficult to identify.

Bats are more easily identified by field signs such as droppings or feeding remains.





Habitat.

Bats are highly specialised creatures and require a relatively narrow range of suitable conditions in order to sustain a viable population. Bats require an abundant supply of flying insect food in places where they can easily be caught and they need safe and reliable roosting sites, particularly during breeding and hibernation.

Bats are heavily dependent on buildings and trees for their roost sites and therefore extremely susceptible to disturbance from human activities. Development schemes can also isolate bat populations and sever roost sites from favoured feeding areas by removing hedgerows or other features used as commuting routes.

Bats are susceptible to disturbance and have been known to abandon roost sites after instances of disturbance. The effects of disturbance are more pronounced at different times of year. Serious disturbance during breeding can result in the breeding females being killed or the abandonment and subsequent starvation of dependant young. Repeated disturbance during winter hibernation can result in the death of adult animals from starvation.

The level of protection afforded to bats in the UK and European legislation reflects the fact that it is now generally accepted that bats have declined substantially, maybe by as much as 60%, over recent years. Most species are declining and vulnerable with all species being protected.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and occasionally the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly Pipistrelle, can quickly adapt to manmade structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Legislation.

Bats and their roosts are fully protected at all times (whether the bats are currently present or not). This protection comes from the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (updated by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) and the Habitats Regulations 1994. Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection.

Under the Habitats Regulations, where bats may be affected by development proposals, a licence is required from Natural England. Natural England's published guidelines on the licence procedure indicate that if, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence then a licence is required. If, on the other hand the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence, then a licence is not required.

If bats or bat field signs are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk

Toolbox Talk: Bats in Trees

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

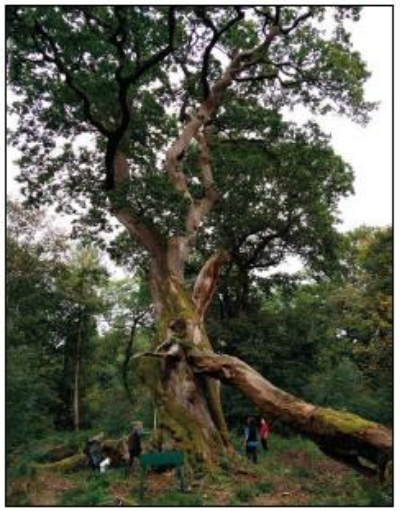
Ecological Consultants

18 species of bat have been recorded in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed here. All UK bat species have been found in and around trees or woodland habitats although the way that different species utilise trees varies with trees or woodland habitat being used for roosting, foraging and navigation.

This document concentrates on the use of trees as bat roosts.

Trees with Bat Roost Potential.

Typically it is thought that bats will only roost in large mature trees. However, all trees that display suitable PRF (Potential Roost Features). may be used by bats, despite the overall size of the tree.





In larger trees PRF may not be visible from ground level due to the foliage of the tree, the location of the PRF or due to the small size of the opening.

PRF (Potential Roost Features).

Bats will utilise an abundance of different features around a tree at different times of year including trunk hollows, knot holes, splits/cracks in branches and sheltered areas of flaking bark with different species typically utilising different features.







Any feature matchbox size and above should be considered suitable for use by bats with the preference being for PRF with a smaller entrance for safety.

Legislation.

Bats and their roosts are fully protected at all times (whether the bats are currently present or not). This protection comes from the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (updated by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) and the Habitats Regulations 1994. Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection.

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If works are required on trees that display suitable PRF further advice should be sought prior to the works commencing. For further advice contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk

Toolbox Talk: Hedgehog

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

Ecological Consultants

The hedgehog was a common species once widespread throughout the country but suffered a major decline in the 20th Century due to loss of habitat. They are now found distributed across the UK, but the population increases to the south and east. Hedgehogs are therefore rare in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Identification: Hedgehog

The hedgehog is a small, spiney mammal around 20cm long with a long snout. The hedgehog's back and sides are covered in 25 mm (1") long spines. These are absent from the face, chest, belly, throat and legs which are covered with a coarse, grey-brown fur. Hedgehogs roam the countryside at night and can walk one to two miles while foraging.



Habitat

The hedgehog got its name because of its peculiar foraging habits. They root through hedges and other undergrowth in search of their favourite food – small creatures such as insects, worms, centipedes, snails, mice, frogs, and snakes. As it moves through the hedges it emits pig-like grunts — thus, the name hedgehog.



Legislation

The hedgehog is considered an endangered species, but it benefits only from general protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They are listed on schedule 6 of the Act which makes it illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs, with certain methods listed. They are also listed under the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996), which prohibits cruel treatment of hedgehogs and they are a species of 'principal importance' under the NERC Act, which is meant to confer a 'duty of responsibility to public bodies'.

However, none of these deal with the issues that are a threat to the hedgehog. The main threat is the increasing loss of habitat, the increasing traffic on our roads and the increasing use of herbicides, in particular those used to kill garden slugs.

Hedgehog Hibernation.

Hedgehogs hibernate from October/November through to March/April although exact timings are dependent on the weather. However, hedgehogs will still move from one place to another during hibernation and therefore can be seen out and about during the winter. Hedgehogs hibernate under dense dead leaves and vegetation and this can cause another threat to them, the results of disturbance to their hibernacula. Many will seek shelter beneath piles of garden debris and are killed when such piles are set fire to.

Hedgehog Help.

We can help hedgehogs by:

- Leaving wild corners in our gardens.
- Leaving access gaps under garden fences.
- Leaving water bowls out during dry periods.
- Leaving cat food or dog food out at night
- Being careful when starting fires to ensure no hedgehogs are sleeping

If hedgehogs are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk