RE: FW: Field Head Farm

Jenny Whitcher <jenny@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk> 14:27
To Mike Clynch

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Mike

Please find attached the bat report for Field House Farm.

Regards

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Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

FIELD HOUSE FARM, LANGSETT.

OS REF: SE 20971 01233.

BAT SURVEY.

Ref No: 210233/Rev 1.

Date: 4th June 2021.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to demolish the existing house at Field House Farm in Langsett. The building is a house at the southern end and a barn at the northern end. The building is empty and has been vandalised.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was therefore commissioned to carry out a daytime bat survey of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works. This survey was carried out on 19th February 2021.

1.3. The initial daytime survey identified low potential for roosting bats within the building and a bat dusk emergence survey was recommended.

1.4. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was therefore commissioned to carry out a bat dusk emergence survey of the building to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works. This survey was carried out on 3rd June 2021 and this report outlines the findings of both surveys and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.5. Appendix I of this report provides additional information on bats and the protection afforded to them and is designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

1.6. Appendix II of this report provides additional information on barn owls and the protection afforded to them and is designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

1.7. Appendix III of this report provides additional information on nesting birds and the protection afforded to them and is designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The buildings were thoroughly checked internally and externally for potential bat roosting sites by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat droppings.
* Prey remains.
* Staining on external walls.

2.2. Unless otherwise stated, all lofts were accessed and inspected using a high-powered torch and where necessary an endoscope.

2.3. A thorough external inspection was carried out from ground level for any gaps or openings in the roof and ridge tiles, behind soffits and fascia's and in the walls of the structure for suitable roost access points and field signs to indicate possible use by bats.

2.4. All window cills, walls and the ground around the structure were checked for signs of bat droppings or staining to indicate possible use by bats. Where necessary, ladders were utilised to gain access within the limits of health and safety.
Any access constraints encountered are outlined within the following report.

2.5. All survey work was carried out in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition),* with an assessment of the buildings suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.6. The subsequent dusk emergence survey was also conducted in accordance with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition).* It was conducted by a sufficient number of surveyors to cover all areas of roosting potential, in suitable weather conditions from fifteen minutes before sunset to at least an hour and half after.

2.7. All surveyors were equipped with Batbox Duet bat detectors, or similar. The use of static recording devices such as Anabat SD2's and video cameras with infrared lights were also utilised were appropriate.

2.8. This survey was carried out by Jenny Whitcher Roebuck MCIEEM. Since 2001 Jenny has had experience in a professional capacity as a Wildlife Consultant carrying out Ecology Surveys and Phase 1 Habitat surveys. Jenny holds Natural England Survey Licences in respect of bats, great crested newts, crayfish and barn owls, NRW and SNH Survey Licences in respect of bats and great crested newts. She has also successfully completed a number of courses run by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and the Field Studies Council (FSC) in the relative protected species, plant species and in carrying out Phase 1 Habitat Surveys. As a full member of CIEEM she is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership.

****

3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A desktop data search was not carried out as requested by the client.

3.1.2. An internet search of publicly available records was carried out for records of bats and bat roosts within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.3. One record of a Natterer's bat was found, recorded in 1991 although this record is located 2km to the northwest of the survey area.

3.1.4. There are no records of designated sites within or adjacent to the survey area.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The surveyed building is the main house as Field House Farm in Langsett. The house is empty and has been vandalised. The house is surrounded by large areas of grazing land. The aerial photograph below shows the surveyed building.

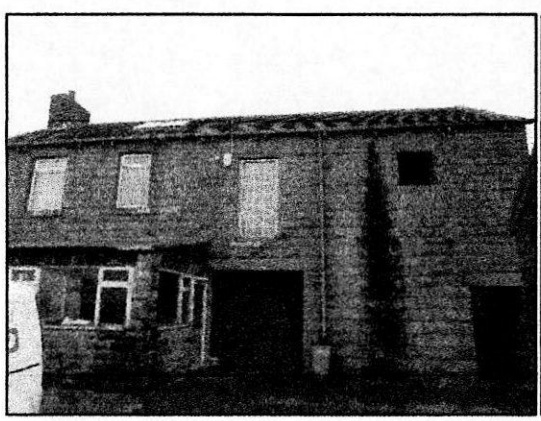


3.2.2. The aerial photograph below shows the surveyed building and the wider surrounding area.



3.2.3. The building is two storey and constructed from stone with a pitched cement tile roof. The southern part of the building is a house and the northern part is a barn.

3.2.4. There is a single storey extension on the front of the house with a sloping felt covered roof and a single storey extension at the rear of the house with a flat roof covered with a plastic sheet with gravel on the top. There is a single storey extension on the rear of the barn with a flat concrete slab roof.





3.3. Daytime Survey Results.

3.3.1. The walls of the building are in good condition with no cracks or gaps and all pointing in place.

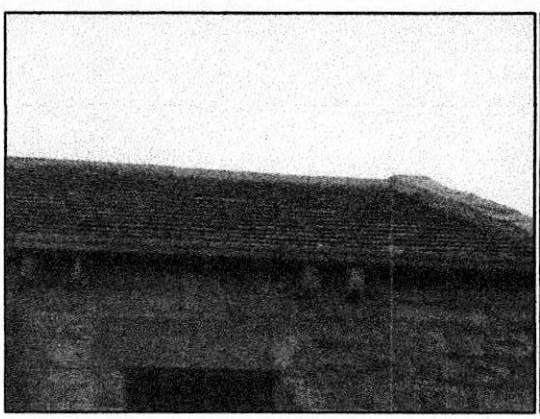
3.3.2. The building is empty and has been vandalised. All windows and doors are in place on the house, but the barn has open doors and windows. The eaves of the building all appear to be well sealed.

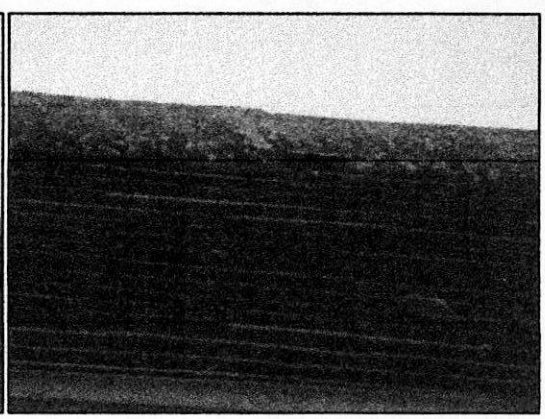
3.3.3. There is a cellar under the house with painted stone walls and a timber roof. The floor was flooded with water at this time. The cellar is assessed as unsuitable for roosting bats as there is no access for bats.

3.3.4. Throughout the building the roof is lined with felt, which is generally in good condition and tight fitting.

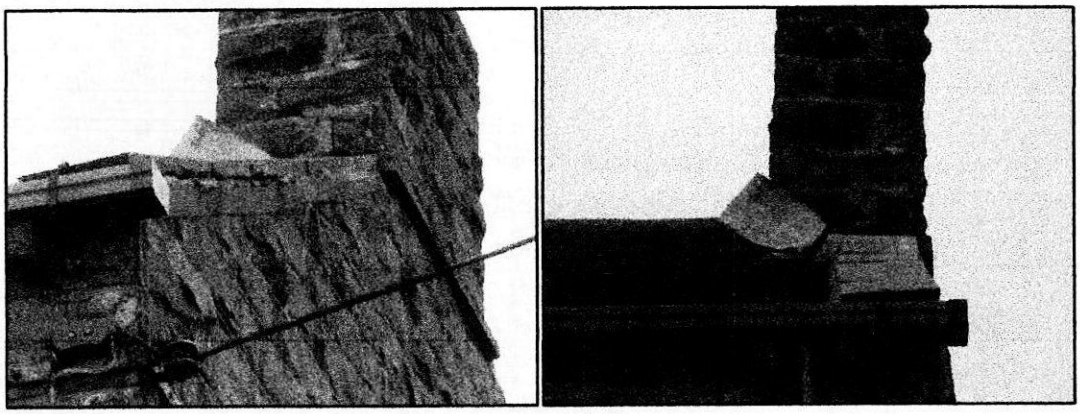
3.3.5. There is a loft space in the house at the southern end of the building, which is generally well sealed. The barn has no loft spaces with both first-floor rooms open to the underside of the roof.

3.3.6. The roof is generally in good condition, although there are a few lifted tiles on the northern end of the building. There is also a gap in the ridge on the eastern side of the building.





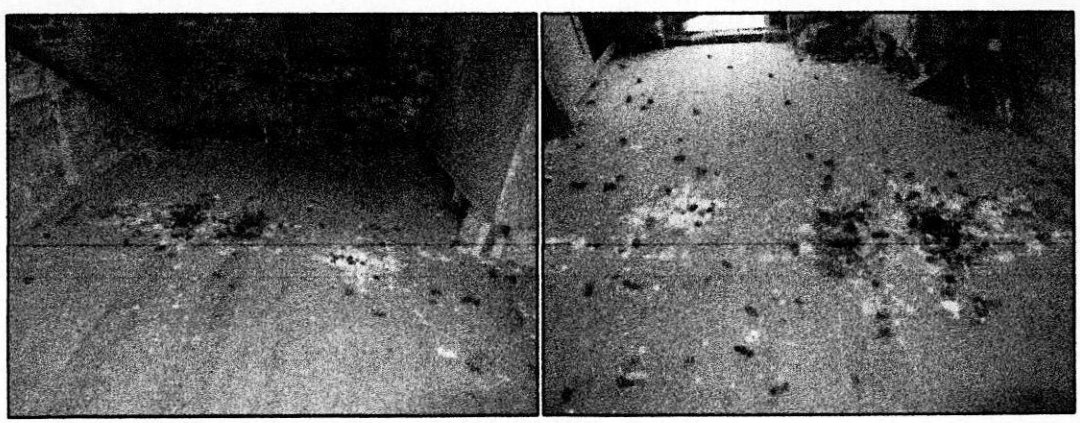
3.3.7. On the southern gable end there is an area where the coping stones are lifted leaving a crack below them. There is also a section of lifted lead around the chimney above these coping stones.



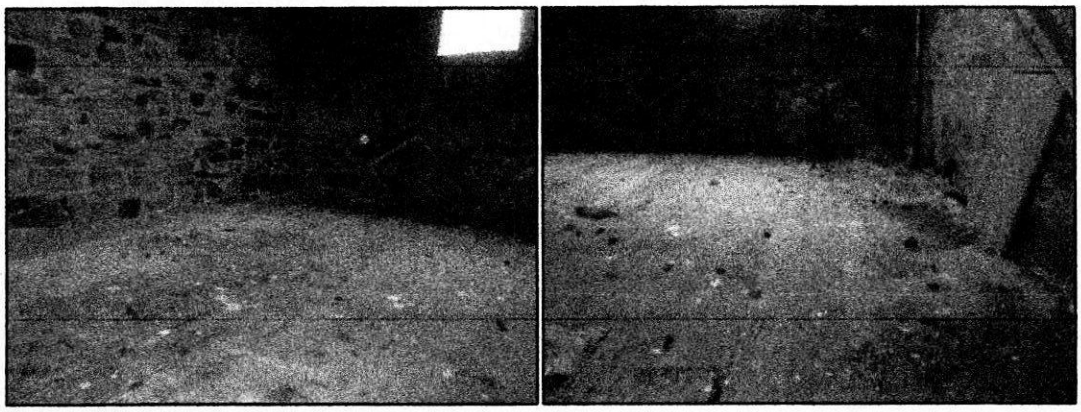
3.3.8. No bats or bat field signs were identified around the interior or the exterior of the building during this survey. However, the features above all provide potential for roosting bats. Therefore, the building is assessed as providing **low** potential for roosting bats.

3.3.9. During the survey abundant barn owl pellets, droppings and feathers were found in both first-floor rooms of the barn and some on the ground floor of the central room. This shows that the building is regularly in use by barn owls and has been for some time. They may also use the building to nest, although no nest was present at this time as it is outside the nesting season.

3.3.10. In the central first floor room there were approximately 80 barn owl pellets, some old but most fresh. There were also six concentrations of droppings and numerous feathers.



3.3.11. In the end first floor room there were approximately 50 barn owl pellets, old and fresh.



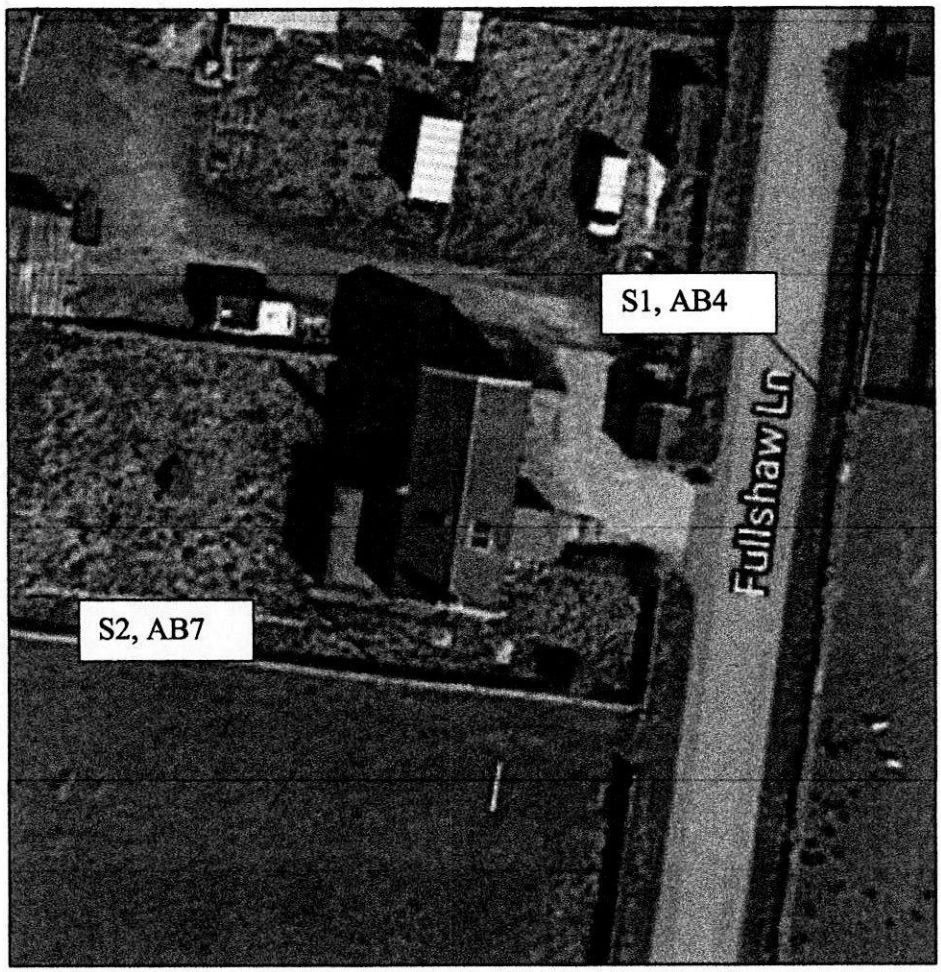
3.3.12. In both first floor and one ground floor room of the barn, numerous swallow nests were identified. In both first-floor rooms there were also abundant droppings and butterfly wings from the swallows.

3.3.13. Another nest, possibly blackbird, was identified in a ground floor room of the barn.

3.4. Dusk Emergence Survey Results.

3.4.1. The dusk emergence survey was carried out by two surveyors on the evening of 3rd June 2021. One surveyor holds a current Natural England class licence for surveying bats and the other is an experienced assistant.

3.4.2. The surveyors were positioned around the building in order to be able to view all aspects of the buildings simultaneously. Each surveyor was equipped with a Batbox Duet detector and a two-way radio for communications. In addition, two static Anabat recorders were deployed to record bat activity for subsequent computer analysis using Analook software. The positions of the surveyors (S) and the Anabat recorders (A) were as shown below.



3.4.3. The evening was fine and clear with a breeze to 2 BWS. There was a temperature of 18ºC at 21:15, which dropped to 14°C at the end of the survey. The survey continued until 22:55 and sunset was at 21:27.

3.4.4. The following are the observations of the surveyors and the recordings of the Anabat detectors: -

3.4.4.1. Surveyor 1.

- 21:54 – Common Pipistrelle flew past from south to north.
- 21:59 – Common Pipistrelle from the north, foraged briefly then flew north.
- 22:07 – Common Pipistrelle from north, foraged briefly then flew north.
- 22:09 – Common Pipistrelle from north, foraged briefly then flew north.
- 22:22 – Common Pipistrelle flew past from north to south.
- 22:23 – Common Pipistrelle flew past from north to south.
- 22:24 – Common Pipistrelle heard pass, not seen.

- 22:25 – Common Pipistrelle heard pass, not seen.

Anabat 4 with Surveyor 1 recorded fourteen Common Pipistrelle calls between 21:54 and 22:25.

3.4.4.2. Surveyor 2.

- 21:52 – Common Pipistrelle heard in the distance, not seen.
- 22:00 – Common Pipistrelle heard in the distance, not seen.
- 22:03 – Common Pipistrelle foraging over garden to the south.
- 22:22 – Common Pipistrelle flew past from north to south.
- 22:23 – Common Pipistrelle heard in the distance, not seen.

Anabat 7 with Surveyor 2 recorded five Common Pipistrelle calls between 21:53 and 22:30.

3.4.5. No bats emerged from the building during the survey. Low levels of Common Pipistrelle activity were recorded with bats passing the site, mainly from the north. There was some foraging recorded over the site and to the south of the site.

3.4.6. No other species of bat was recorded during the survey.

3.4.7. During the survey two barn owls were seen to exit the open windows of the building and fly off to feed.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. No bats or bat field signs were identified around the interior or the exterior of the building. However, the features in the roof and under the coping stones all provide potential for roosting bats. Therefore, the building is assessed as providing **low** potential for roosting bats. Therefore, works to demolish the building will have a high impact on roosting bats if they are present.

4.2. During the dusk emergence survey no bats emerged from the building during the survey. Low levels of Common Pipistrelle activity were recorded with bats passing the site, mainly from the north. There was some foraging recorded over the site and to the south of the site.

4.3. Abundant barn owl pellets, droppings and feathers were found in both first-floor rooms of the barn and some on the ground floor of the central room. This shows that the building is regularly in use by barn owls and has been for some time. They may also use the building to nest. During the dusk emergence survey two barn owls were seen to leave the building and fly off to feed. Works to demolish the building will have a high impact on barn owls as the building will be used in the nesting season, between March and September, and also as a roost and feeding perch during the winter.

4.4. Numerous swallow nests were also identified in three rooms of the barn showing that swallows use the building to nest each year. Therefore, works to demolish the building will have a high impact on nesting birds if the works are carried out during the nesting season, between March and September. There will also be an impact on a swallow nesting site.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. The building is assessed as providing **low** potential for roosting bats. No bat roost was identified in the building during the dusk emergence survey. Therefore, there is no requirement for any further surveys or for a Natural England licence.

5.2. Nevertheless, individual bats can seek temporary shelter almost anywhere and therefore it is recommended that conversion of the existing buildings is undertaken with due care. In the unlikely event a bat is found, the bat should be covered and protected, work should cease at that location and Whitcher Wildlife Ltd should be contacted for further advice.

5.3. As the building is well used by barn owls, mitigation must be put in place for barn owls either in the form of two barn owl nest boxes or a barn owl tower. No work should be carried out during the nesting season which extends from March to September.

5.4. As the building is well used by swallows, nest cups should be put in place to provide nesting opportunities and these must be put in place over a winter before the next nesting season as swallows return to the same site each year. Swallow nest cups must be sited inside a building, which allows easy access for the birds via an open door or window, such as a garage or outbuilding.

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Prepared by:	
Jenny Whitcher Roebuck MCIEEM.	Date: 19th February 2021.
Revised by:	
Jenny Whitcher Roebuck MCIEEM.	Date: 3rd June 2021.

Checked by:	
Derek Whitcher. BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 6th June 2021.

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