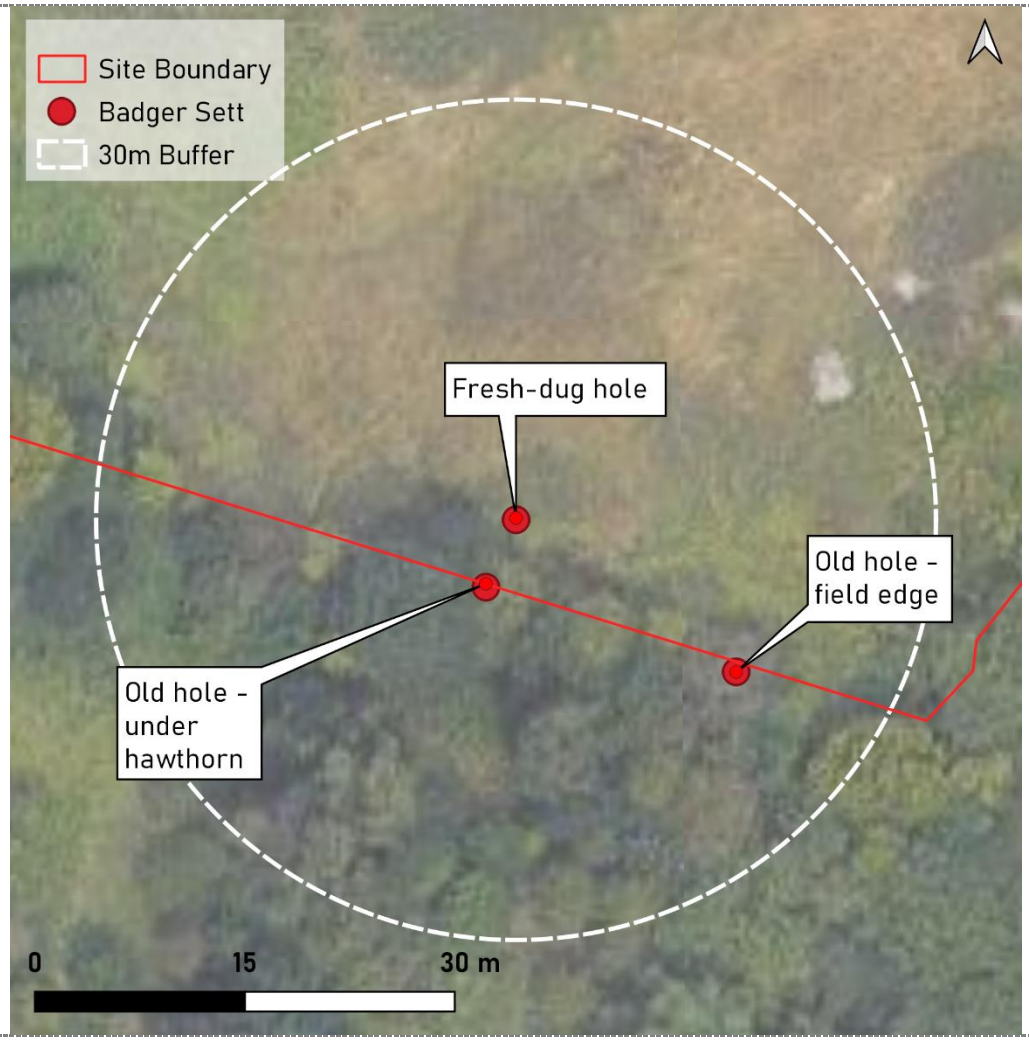
Site Inspection Report

Bleachcroft Way, Barnsley

Site Inspection reference	SI-4066-04	**Date of inspection**	21/03/2023
Inspected by	Olivia Benson BSc (Hons) ACIEEM – Ecologist Jon Roberts MSci (Hons) – Biodiversity Technician		
Task description	A visit to the Site was undertaken to collect data on its current use by badgers, following previous identification of an outlier sett in September 2021 (SI-4066-03). This work took the form of an inspection of the area surrounding the identified sett to search for signs of recent digging, and a walkover of the Site and neighbouring woodland to the south to identify evidence of badgers, including mammal paths, snuffle holes, latrines, retained hairs, and footprints.		
Report	A seemingly freshly-dug hole was found on the north side of the line of hawthorns along the Site's southern boundary. Spoil at the hole's entrance had not been compacted, indicating it was relatively fresh, and several badger footprints were found in it. The entrance to the hole was clear of leaf litter, and it was presumed to be active. This hole was soft-blocked with sticks, removal of which may indicate that the hole is in use. The sett identified in the original survey appeared to have been abandoned, with several holes found on the south side of the line of hawthorns more or less choked with leaf litter. No evidence of fresh digging was found, and the spoil heap adjacent to the holes was well-compacted, indicating that it is quite old. One hole, which contained less leaf litter and may therefore still have been active, was also soft-blocked during the survey. Numerous defined mammal paths were found running throughout the woodland south of the Site, and the grassland and thin bramble scrub at the Site's southern end. Most of these led into dense scrub-woodland to the southwest of the Site, heading towards the railway, possibly indicating the presence of a main sett off-Site in this direction. No further evidence of badger was located, correlating with the generally low activity levels established through previous survey.		
Summary	The location of the freshly-dug hole and a standard 30m exclusion zone surrounding it has been communicated to the Site Manager, who will ensure that the area is fenced off. **Works involving vegetation clearance, excavation, or machinery should not take place within this area**. Should works be required here, ecological advice should be sought and a suitable method (which may require licensing) be put in place.		

Unit A, 1 Station Road, Guiseley, LEEDS LS20 8BX
Phone **01943 884451**
Email:pjb@brooks-ecological.co.uk
www.brooks-ecological.co.uk
Registered in England Number 5351418

Further actions	The Site should be revisited to check if the soft-blocks of the holes have been moved, which would indicate they are occupied. If so, a period of camera trapping may be considered to confirm if badgers are using the hole/s, and if so, their level of activity. This evidence would be required to establish a case for licensed closure – should this be required. Once the implications of this potential (likely) sett have been confirmed in relation to the proposed layout, a suitable mitigation plan will need to be developed. Should this plan require licensed closure of the sett the next opportunity for this would now be the period July-November 2023.
Figure 1 Location of fresh and old holes, with 30m buffer surrounding fresh hole.	

Unit A, 1 Station Road, Guiseley, LEEDS LS20 8BX
Phone **01943 884451**
Email:pjb@brooks-ecological.co.uk
www.brooks-ecological.co.uk
Registered in England Number 5351418