

Bat Survey Report for Cricket Pavilion at Sibford School, Sibford Ferris, Banbury OX15 5QL



Cotswold Wildlife Surveys

17th June 2021

QUALITY CONTROL

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The information in this report has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. The conclusions and recommendations expressed are reasoned judgements based on the evidence.

Every reasonable attempt has been made to comply with BS42020:2013 *Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development*, *CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing* (CIEEM, 2017) and Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition, Collins, 2016). If there has been deviation from recognised practice, justification/explanation has been given.

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SUMMARY

At Sibford School in Sibford Ferris near Banbury, planning permission is being sought for a replacement cricket pavilion.

As this could impact on features typically used by bats as roosting places, a diurnal inspection was undertaken on 17th June 2021, to assess the building for signs of bat occupation.

All the external and internal structures, especially those associated with the roof and walls of the building were examined.

The suitability for roosting pipistrelles *Pipistrellus sp* was considered to be negligible, as the only gaps were at the eaves, these much too wide and open for a roosting bat.

At the time of the survey, the cricket pavilion at Sibford School was not identified as a bat roost, and as such no further surveys or mitigation measures are required.

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No birds' nests were found in or on the building, and the area occupied by the pavilion comprised close mown amenity grassland.

1. INTRODUCTION

In June 2021, Cotswold Wildlife Surveys was instructed by Framptons, on behalf of Sibford School (the client), to undertake a bat survey of the cricket pavilion at Sibford School, Banbury. On 17th June 2021, a visit was made to the site to carry out a diurnal inspection of the building to check for signs of bat occupation.

The result of the survey is contained in this report.

In England, Scotland and Wales, all bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended), through inclusion in Schedule 5. In England and Wales this Act has been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW), which adds an extra offence, makes species offences arrestable, increases the time limits for some prosecutions, and increases penalties.

All bats are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 1994, (or Northern Ireland 1995) (the Habitats Regulations), which defines ‘European protected species of animals’.

The above legislation can be summarised thus (Mitchell-Jones and McLeish, 2004):

- ❑ *Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats*
- ❑ *Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not)*
- ❑ *Recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts*
- ❑ *Damage or destroy roosts*
- ❑ *Possess or transport a bat or any part of a part of a bat, unless acquired legally*
- ❑ *Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats, or parts of bats*

The word ‘roost’ is not used in the legislation, but is used here for simplicity. The actual wording is ‘any structure or place which any wild animal...uses for shelter or protection’ (WCA), or ‘breeding site or resting place’ (Habitats Regulations).

As bats generally have both a winter and a summer roost, the legislation is clear that all roosts are protected whether bats are in residence at the time or not.

2. METHODOLOGY

In order to fully assess bat occupation of a particular site, the Bat Conservation Trust (2016) recommends that information gathered from a desk study of known bat records, and a daytime site walkover, is used to inform the type and extent of future bat survey work, potentially including nocturnal surveys.

The diurnal walkover provides an opportunity to check for signs of occupancy, such as droppings, scratch marks, feeding remains, carcasses, or even animals in residence, whilst nocturnal surveys (if required) allow numbers and species of bats to be confirmed. The latter are also used to determine the presence or absence of bats, where signs of bat activity are indeterminate or absent but suitability of roosting is considered to be medium to high.

Roosting places vary depending on the species. Pipistrelles usually inhabit narrow cracks or cavities around the outside of buildings, but they will roost in similar niches inside larger barns. Typical sites include soffit spaces, gaps behind fascia boards and end rafters, crevices around the ends of projecting purlins, under warped or lifted roof and ridge tiles, or in gaps in stone and brickwork where mortar has dropped out.

Larger species such as Brown Long-eared Bats *Plecotus auritus*, Myotis bats (Natterer's *Myotis nattereri* and Whiskered/Brandt's *M. mystacinus*/*M. brandtii*), and Lesser Horseshoes *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, like to roost in the roof voids of buildings, and can often be found hanging singly or in small groups from ridge boards or roof timbers, especially where these butt up against gable walls or chimney breasts. They especially favour older structures with timber frames. Here they squeeze into tight crevices making them difficult to observe.

Diurnal walkovers can be carried out at any time of the year, but nocturnal surveys should only be undertaken when bats are out of hibernation and in their summer roosts. The recommended period is from May to September inclusive, with May to August optimum and September sub-optimum. The season can be extended into October, although particularly cold weather will render this inadvisable. Indeed, the air temperature at the start of each survey must be at least 10°C or above.

Visits will be a minimum of two weeks apart, and the number of surveys is dependent on the evidence found or the suitability of the site to bats.

Where bats are found, or there is evidence of bat occupation or activity, i.e. that bat use is confirmed, the number and timing of visits will be decided by the ecologist, and will be appropriate for the type of roost. In general at least two nocturnal surveys will be carried out, both of which can be emergence surveys, or one emergence and one dawn re-entry.

Where there is no evidence of bat presence, and no suitability for roosting, no nocturnal surveys will be needed.

For a site with no evidence but low suitability, just one nocturnal emergence survey is required, this to be in the optimum period.

For medium suitability a minimum of two visits are needed, of which one must be in the optimum period, and one must be a dawn re-entry survey. With high suitability, three visits will be necessary, of which two must be in the optimum period. At least one of these must be a dawn re-entry survey, with the third visit either an emergence or a dawn re-entry.

For sites < 5 ha in size, and/or regularly shaped structures, at least two surveyors must be present, with more surveyors at larger sites and more complex buildings, e.g. those with multiple elevations and/or roof structures.

On 17th June 2021 a thorough inspection of the cricket pavilion was made by Andy Warren (Natural England bat licence No. 2015-16489-CLS-CLS), including the exterior and interior walls, roof covering, roof interior, eaves, gables, window casements and door frames.

10x42 binoculars and a Fenix TK75 torch were used for the inaccessible/unreachable areas. On this occasion an endoscope was not used to check gaps where they could not be inspected with a torch or by use of binoculars from a ladder.

The result of the survey is detailed in Section 3.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

In view of the small scale of the proposed works, the likely low impact on bats, and in line with current guidance on accessing and using biodiversity data (CIEEM, 2016), a background data search was not carried out in this case.

3.2 Location

Sibford School is situated in the village of Sibford Ferris near Banbury, Oxfordshire. The cricket pavilion lies in the middle of close mown playing fields, at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SP 35680 37038 (Appendix 1).

3.3 Site Description

The survey site comprised a stand-alone pavilion with a mono-pitch felted roof over timber clad walls on a brick plinth (Figs. 1 and 2).



Figs. 1 & 2 Pavilion – front (L) and rear (R)

Surrounding the pavilion was closely mown amenity grassland with the cricket pitch to the southeast and all-weather courts to the northwest. An asphalt path ran past the pavilion.

3.4 Building Survey

The daytime inspection was carried out on 17th June 2021 commencing at 14:30. The weather conditions during the time of the survey were recorded and are presented in Table 1 below.

Parameter	Value
Temperature (°C)	19.0
Cloud cover (%)	80
Precipitation	None
Wind speed (Beaufort scale)	0

Table 1 Weather conditions during the diurnal survey

3.4.1 Bats

The roof was a gently sloping mono-pitch that was covered with 1F type traditional felt, this intact and un-torn (Figs. 3 and 4).



Figs. 3 & 4 Roof felt un-torn

At the eaves the roof overhung a wide gap (Fig. 5). At the end the felt was folded over a tightly fitting end rafter (Fig. 6). The walls of timber cladding were sound throughout, whilst all the window casements and door frames were tightly fitting with no gaps or crevices.



Figs. 3 & 4 Roof eaves and roof end

Internally the roof was lined with hardboard, and there was no void (Figs. 7 and 8).



Figs. 7 & 8 Roof lining

No evidence of bat occupation was discovered inside or outside the pavilion, and it was considered unsuitable for bat roosting.

3.4.2 Other species

Apart from spiders and insects, there were no signs of other species using the building.

There were no old or in-use birds' nests.

The surrounding habitat consisted of close mown amenity grass and three trees, all of which are being retained (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9 Trees and close mown grass

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bats tend to be seasonal visitors to properties, and are not usually in occupation all year round. The females normally form maternity colonies during May or June and then leave for adjacent trees and/or woodland during July or August once the young bats are able to fly and become independent. Here they will spend the winter months in hibernation before returning to the house or barn the following spring.

Male bats generally live alone and have a number of favoured roosts. During the summer they visit each of these for a few days at a time, before moving to their chosen hibernation site in mid-late October. Different species have different habits, but this seasonal movement is common to all.

Bats choose their roosts carefully. During the summer they look for sites which are warmed by the sun, and as a result are most often found on the south and western side of buildings.

Pipistrelles, our smallest and commonest bats, prefer to roost in very confined spaces around the outside of buildings, typical places being behind hanging tiles, weather boarding, soffit, barge and eave boarding, between roof felt and roof tiles or in cavity walls.

As such they can be difficult to find, so the suitability for roosting was also assessed.

This was considered to be negligible, as the only gaps were much too wide and open for bat roosting.

Another bat frequently encountered in buildings is the Brown Long-eared. This is also a common species, but unlike pipistrelles, they prefer the dry, warm space of the loft or roof void, and can often be found hanging from roof timbers, especially rafters and the ridge board next to chimney breasts.

No signs of Brown Long-eared Bat activity were found, nor indeed signs of other species which are commonly found in roof spaces, and the interior of the building was both unsuitable and inaccessible to bats.

At the time of the survey, the cricket pavilion was not identified as a bat roost, and as such no further surveys or mitigation measures are required.

*

No birds' nests were found in or on the building, and the area surrounding the pavilion comprised close mown amenity grassland.

5. REFERENCES

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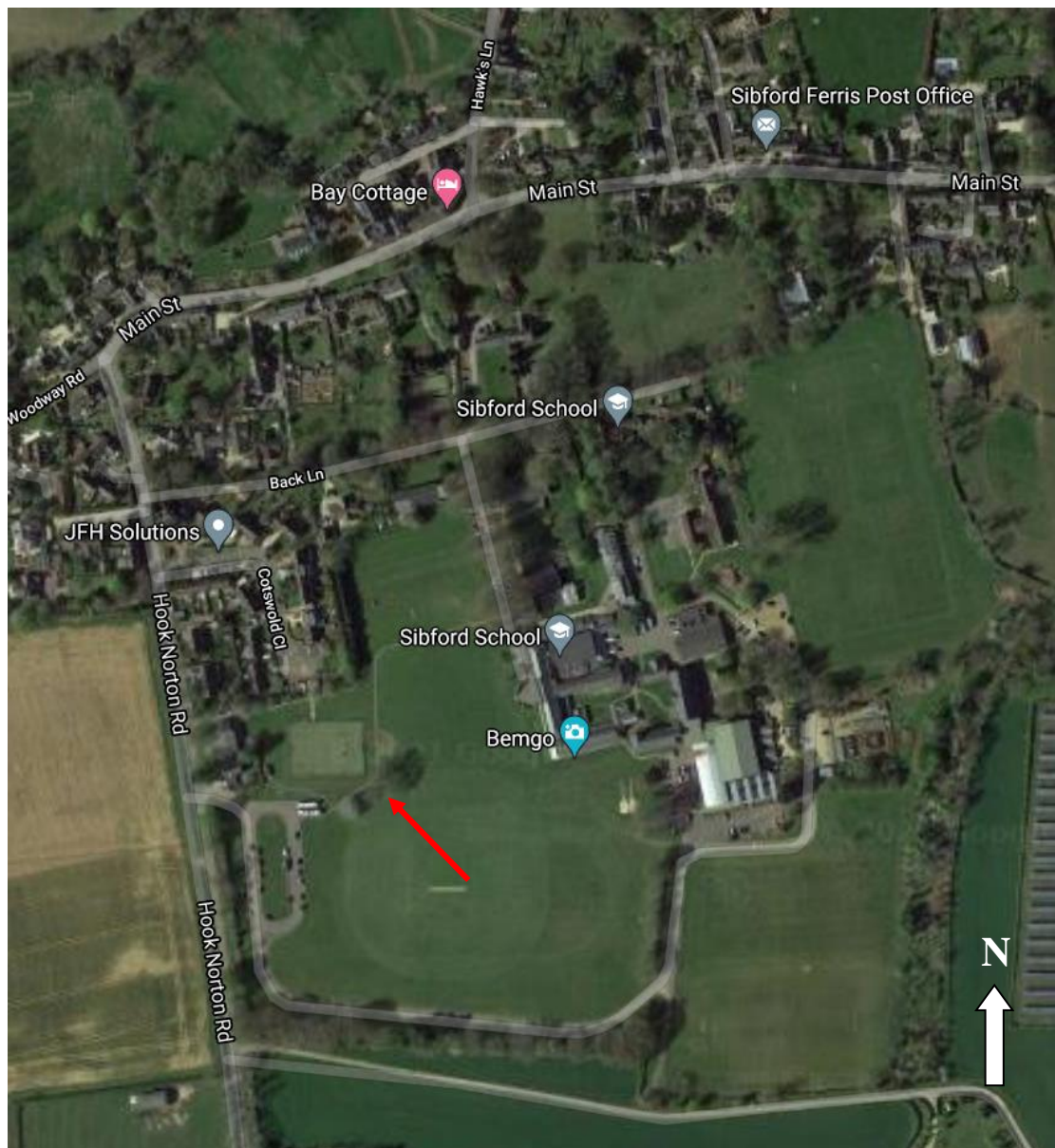
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Location plan

Appendix 2: Site layout

Appendix 1: Location plan



The Cricket Pavilion, Sibford School, Banbury

Appendix 2: Site layout



The Cricket Pavilion, Sibford School, Banbury

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