SUPPLEMENTARY BAT REPORT

Ladds Garden Centre
Hare Hatch

Report for:
Westbourne Homes Limited
Farthings Barn
Ashridgewood Business Park
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 5BS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

AA Environmental Limited (AAe) has been instructed by Westbourne Homes Limited to carry out bat activity surveys at the above site. Although no evidence of bats has been recorded within any of the buildings on site, further surveys were considered necessary on two buildings (B2 and B5) to confirm absence or, if found to be present, characterise the roost so that appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures can be provided. An annotated site plan has been attached for reference.

The proposals are to redevelop the site and construct up to 19 new residential dwellings with associated access roads, parking and landscaping, requiring the demolition/removal of the existing buildings and clearance of some vegetation. It is anticipated that the majority of the existing established vegetation will be protected and retained as part of the scheme.

The site is located off Bath Road (A4) in Hare Hatch, centred at National Grid Reference: SU 806779 and covers approximately 1.3 hectares. The site comprised Ladds Garden Centre consisting of buildings, sheds and a number of metal shipping containers, with associated hardstanding and restricted vegetated areas, trees and a pond. The site is bordered by Bath Road to the north, agricultural fields to the east, a new dwelling to the west and residential dwellings and associated gardens to the south.

2.0 LEGISLATION

Currently there are 17 species of bat known to breed in the UK. All species and their roosts are protected under Regulation 41 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. As a signatory to the *Bonn Convention (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe)* the UK is also required to protect their habitats. This legislation makes it illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats, or to obstruct access to, damage or destroy bat roosts. Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Baseline Data

The previous Interim Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) produced by ACD Environmental (September 2025) was reviewed to provide baseline conditions for the site.

Follow-up Survey

A follow-up visual survey of the site was completed to record any fresh evidence of bats. The surveys were carried out following the guidelines provided by the Bat Conservation Trust[1] and by experienced and licensed ecologists[2]. A thorough internal and external re-examination of the existing buildings was carried out, with any potential access points inspected for evidence of bats. All internal roof voids/spaces were accessed to check for any fresh evidence of bats.

[1] Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
[2] Surveys were carried out by Harry Simpson BSc (Hons), MSc. (2023-11139-CL18-BAT) on 06.05.25 and Julian Thornber BSc (Hons), MCIEEM -2015-13307-CLS on 15.05.25.

The surrounding habitat was also surveyed to identify any important features such as mature trees with suitable features for roosting bats and any established lines of vegetation that might provide important flightlines.

Evidence of bats is usually detected by any one or more of the following signs:

- the presence of bat droppings, which tend to accumulate under established roost sites or at roost entrances;
- the accumulation of large numbers of moth wings, which have been discarded by feeding bats;
- areas of staining by urine or from fur rubbing; and
- the presence of bats themselves or their corpses.

The visual inspections were facilitated by the use of binoculars, ladders, powerful torches (1M candlepower) and a Ridgid Micro CA-350 Inspection Camera endoscope. A heterodyne bat detector (Pettersson D200) was also used during the inspection to record any bat calls.

In addition to the above, as potential roosting features (PRFs) were recorded on the eastern elevation of B2 which was assessed to provide **low** roosting potential for bats, and B5 to provide **moderate** roosting potential for bats[3], a single emergence/activity bat survey was completed on B2, and two emergence/activity bat surveys were completed on B5. Two experienced surveyors carried out the survey on B2, and three experienced surveyors carried out the surveys on B5 (details provided in Table 1) using direct observation and a range of bat detectors to record bat activity and supplemented with Night Vision Aids (NVAs). The following bat detectors were used on the site: heterodyne/frequency division (Pettersson D230); real time expansion Echo Meters (EM3+); Chorus; Peersonic and zero crossing recorder (Anabat SD2). The calls recorded from the EM3 detectors were analysed using BatSound software and the calls on the Anabat detector analysed using Analook software. NVA's used were Canon XA cameras (XA11, XA15 and XA20), supplemented with infrared lights. The darkest point for each camera is shown in Appendix A.

Table 1: Surveyors

Survey Date	Building	Surveyor Details
06.05.25	B2	Harry Simpson MSc BSc (Hons) -2023-11139-CL18-BAT
		Emma Cansdale MSc BSc (Hons) - 2 years experience
15.05.25	B5	Julian Thornber -2015-13307-CLS
		Nicholas Braybrook MSc BSc (Hons) – 4 years experience
		Emma Cansdale MSc BSc (Hons) - 2 years experience
16.09.25	B5	Dave Endacott - 2015-10616
		Kathy Warden - 2015-12571
		Nicholas Braybrook MSc BSc (Hons) – 4 years experience

Bat activity is strongly influenced by weather conditions and time of night. Peak activity occurs at dusk, but activity continues throughout the night as bats can commute long distances from their roosts to particular foraging sites (depending upon the species). For this reason, the emergence/activity surveys started 30 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 2 hours.

The emergence/activity surveys were carried out on the evenings of Tuesday 6 May 2025, Thursday 15 May 2025 and Tuesday 16 September 2025. The weather conditions were considered ideal to record bat activity and are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Weather Conditions

Date	Temp (°C)	Cloud (Oktas)	Rain	Wind (Beaufort scale)
06.05.25	12-10	0	Dry – no rain	0
15.05.25	13-11	8	Dry – no rain	2
16.09.25	16-14	1	Dry – no rain	1

[3] ACD Environmental assessed the buildings to be of low and moderate value.

4.0 RESULTS

Baseline Data

An initial site visit was carried out by ACD Environmental on 22 November 2024. The site was dominated by hardstanding including the existing garden centre buildings, sheds and a number of shipping containers with pathways, access track and parking. Restricted vegetation included introduced shrub, boundary grassland, a small patch of woodland and a pond with individual trees and hedgerows. During the site visit, no evidence of protected species was recorded with no evidence of bats found during the external and internal inspections of the buildings. However, the eastern elevation of B2 had some PRFs present (some damaged wooden cladding, crevices in the brickwork and an opening above the eastern doorway) and was assessed to provide **low** bat roosting potential. B5 was assessed to provide **moderate** bat roosting potential due to damaged wooden cladding and soffits providing opportunities for crevice dwelling species, as well as being located near linear connectivity to other habitats. The remaining buildings were assessed to provide **negligible** roosting opportunities for bats.

Follow-up Surveys (2025)

Visual Inspections

During the follow-up visual surveys (06.05.25 and 15.05.25), site conditions remained similar to those previously recorded with the site being dominated by the buildings with associated hardstanding and restricted boundary vegetation. No evidence of bats was recorded during the internal and external re-inspections of B2 and B5.

Bat Emergence/Activity Survey B2

During the emergence/activity survey (06.05.25), no bats were recorded emerging from B2. The first bat contact was a pass by a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) at 20:55 hrs, approximately 20 minutes after sunset. Foraging activity was dominated by common pipistrelles and brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) bats, with occasional passes by noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) bats also recorded.

Bat Emergence/Activity Surveys B5

During the first emergence/activity survey (15.05.25), no bats were recorded emerging from the building. The first bat contact was a pass by a common pipistrelle bat at 21:11 hrs, 22 minutes after sunset. Occasional passes by common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and noctule bats were recorded during the survey.

During the second emergence/activity survey (16.09.25), no bats were recorded emerging from the building. The first bat contact was a pass by a common pipistrelle at 19:26 hrs, approximately 10 minutes after sunset. Occasional passes by common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule bats were recorded during the survey.

Overall, low levels of bat activity was recorded during the surveys. There are considered to be no limitations to the accuracy of the survey findings as the buildings were accessed on a number of occasions allowing a thorough visual inspection to be completed and supported by bat activity surveys. All surveys were carried out by suitably experienced bat surveyors and completed at the appropriate time of year and during suitable weather conditions.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposals are to redevelop the site and construct up to 19 new residential dwellings with associated access roads, parking and landscaping, requiring the demolition/removal of the existing buildings and clearance of some vegetation. It is anticipated that the majority of the existing established vegetation will be protected and retained as part of the scheme.

There are no habitats of international, national, county or local importance that would be directly or indirectly affected by the proposals. The site is of overall low ecological value, with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain, with no evidence of protected species recorded on site

No evidence of bats has been recorded within the buildings on site during any of the visual inspections completed (visits in 2024 and 2025). No bats were recorded emerging from B2 or B5 during the emergence surveys, with overall low levels of bat activity recorded. Although the surveys completed confirm the absence of any roosts, in accordance with best practice, all site operatives should be made aware of current legislation protecting bats and their roosts (toolbox talk attached at Appendix B). In the unlikely event of any bats being encountered on the site, then works should stop immediately and Natural England or AAe contacted so that appropriate advice can be provided (**N.B. a European Protected Species Licence may then be required to permit the works to continue**).

In addition to the above, a series of specific and generic mitigation measures, as detailed below, could be implemented to reduce any impact the development proposals may have on local wildlife. There is also an opportunity to implement some enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024[4].

It should be noted that all species of wild bird and their nests are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2004*. Therefore, site clearance works should be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season, which generally runs from March to August (inclusive). If this is not possible, a check of all vegetation and buildings to be cleared should be carried out prior to the works to ensure there are no active nests present.

In order to protect any vegetation and trees to be retained, suitable fencing may be required at certain locations to reduce the possibility of any damage that could be caused during the works. To minimise accidental damage, any overhanging branches should be pruned back to suitable live growth points. All works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced specialist contractor and should conform to current industry best practice, i.e. BS 3998: 2010 '*Tree Work - Recommendations*'. The retention and protection of the existing vegetation will help to maintain existing commuting/foraging routes currently utilised by local wildlife.

As part of the proposals, new planting will be introduced to the site. The preference should be for native species of local provenance; however, where this is not possible, a suitable alternative is to use species of known wildlife value. The established hedgerows could be strengthened with supplementary planting using native species of local provenance only, along with sympathetic management.

The site could be further enhanced by providing roosting, nesting and sheltering opportunities for a range of species and the creation of new wildlife habitats, such as some of those recommended by the Chartered Institute of Ecology Environment and Management's published Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Guidance, and listed below:

- Nest boxes
- Bat boxes
- Pollinator nest sites

[4] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*. London.

- Wildflower planting

The effects of lighting on plants and animals are difficult to assess, but it is thought that lighting can adversely affect invertebrates, birds and bats. Although the site currently experiences some light spillage from on-site sources and neighbouring properties and roads, in accordance with good practice, any new lighting to be introduced should be designed to minimise light spillage and pollution.

In summary, the findings of the bat activity surveys confirm the absence of a bat roost and, therefore, there are no ecological constraints to the redevelopment proposals that would preclude planning permission being granted, subject to appropriately worded conditions. A range of standard controls are available and deliverable to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on local wildlife that are using the site with a series of controls to be implemented to avoid contravention of current legislation.

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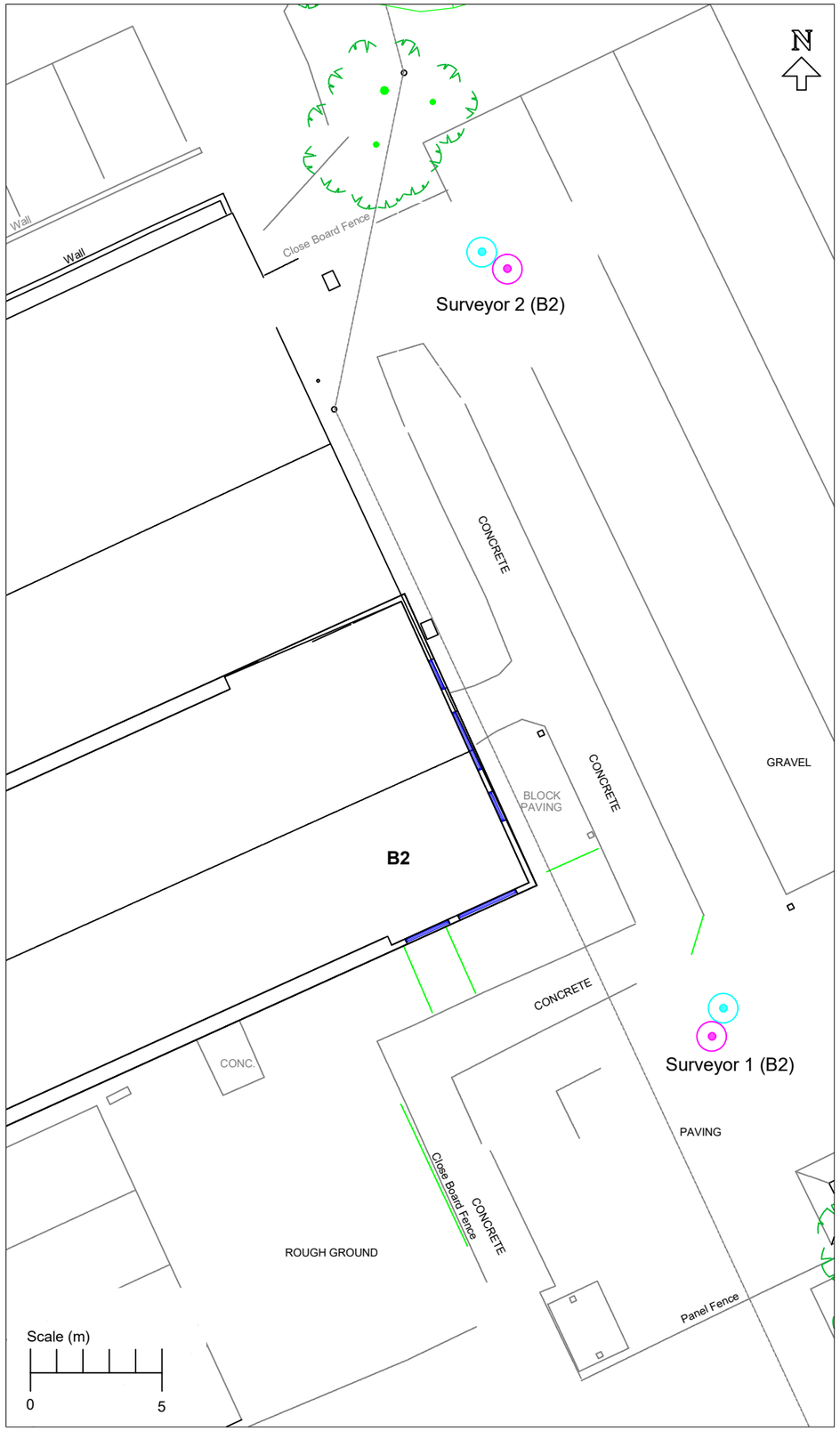
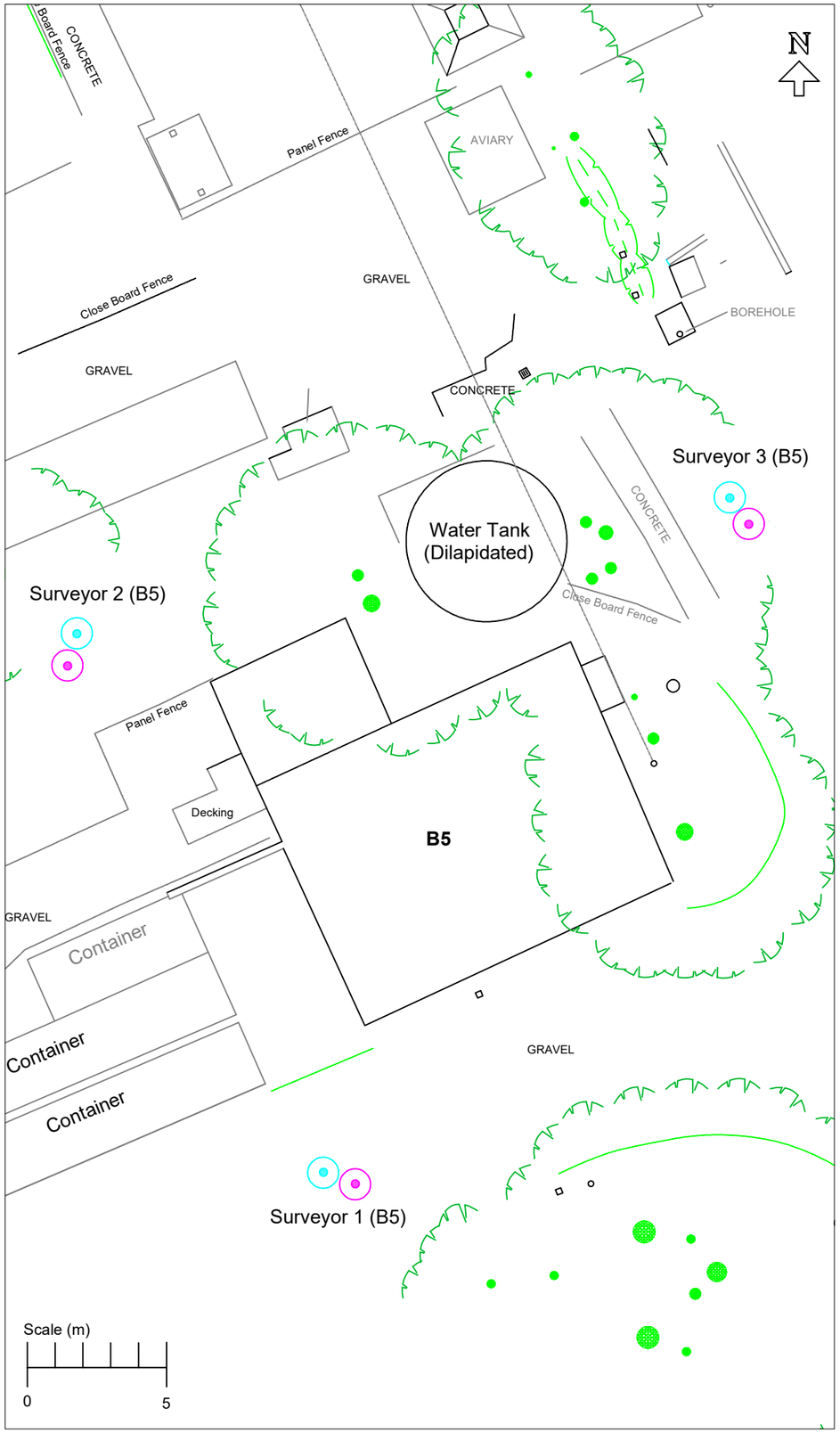
Figure





KEY

- Individual Tree (Topographed)
- Location of Surveyor*
- Location of Night Visual Aid*
- B1 — Building Reference*

* Indicative Location

Notes

No evidence of bats was recorded during the initial visual inspection (2024) and during the subsequent re-inspections (06.05.25 and 15.05.25).

B2
No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the emergence/activity survey (06.05.25).

B5
No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the two emergence/activity surveys (15.05.25 and 16.09.25).

Rev.	Details	Drawn / Chkd.	Date

Project
253137
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Bat Survey Results Plan

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Scale	Date	Drg. No.	Rev.
As shown	31.10.25	Figure 1	
	Drawn: EC / Chkd: ARB		

Appendix A
Darkest Points of Survey

Photograph 1 – South-eastern elevation of B2

Photograph 2 – North-eastern elevation of B2

Photograph 3 – Southern elevation of B5

Photograph 4 – North-western elevation of B5

Photograph 5 - Eastern elevation of B5

Appendix B
Toolbox Talk (Bats)

TOOLBOX TALK:
BATS

Key Contacts

AA Environmental Ltd, Units 4-8 Cholswell Court, Shippon, Oxfordshire, OX13 6HX

Tel: 01235 536042

Did you know?

- Bats are the worlds only flying mammal.
- There are 17 species of bat known to be breeding in the UK, 6 of which are endangered or rare and 6 are classed as vulnerable.
- Bats can be found across the country in urban and rural locations.
- They are often sighted at dusk as they leave their roost, flying around hedgerows, woodland and waterbodies, feeding on insects.
- Throughout the year bats will often change their roost, depending upon the season.
- Usually a pregnant female will only have one baby a year, this makes colonies vulnerable to population decline.
- During the winter bats hibernate and may not wake up, even if disturbed. Therefore it's important not to work on sites with bats during these months.
- Bats may not use the same roost throughout the year, however they are legally protected with or without a bat occupying them.

Identification

- You may find bats in any number of places, they tend to prefer dark, quiet spots with good shelter, such as holes and cracks in trees, roofs and walls of buildings, under bridges, old tunnels and in caves.
- Signs of bat presence include discarded moth wings, staining around crevices and small mouse like droppings which crumble easily.

Legislation

- All bats and their roosts are protected by UK and European Law. This makes it **illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats** or obstruct access to, damage or destroy their roosts and protects important feeding areas from damage or disturbance.
- Under law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

Site Controls

- There is always a **risk** that bats, as they move between different roost sites and occupy new roosts, could be encountered during site works.
- **If any bats are encountered during works the following controls must be applied to avoid breaking the law:**

1. If bats are discovered/suspected works must stop **immediately** with any bat left in-situ and AAe immediately contacted (contact details above).
2. If any injured bats are found during the works AAe would care for them and where possible be released in the same location once recovered.
3. During works staff must wear gloves in case of accidental contact with bats.
4. Any roof tiles will be lifted straight up, rather than being rolled over, minimising the risk of harming bats which may be sheltering underneath.
5. Areas must be fully checked for any bats or their evidence prior to filling any gaps and repointing any brickwork.
6. Any lighting must be installed must avoid illuminating vegetation and or bat boxes/access points.

These controls have been put in place to protect all site operatives from breaking the law. You're not expected to be able to identify bats or their presence so remember, **if in doubt shout and contact the relevant person.**

Brown long-eared bat.

Lesser horseshoe bat in rail tunnel.

Common pipistrelle bat.