



Cefn Fforest Farm Treharris

Bat Activity Survey Report

June 2026 | Issue 1VA



SITE NAME: Cefn Fforest Farm, Treharris**BAT ACTIVITY SURVEY****DATE: JUNE 2026****ISSUE 1VA****Document control**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is proposed to demolish a barn and extend a farmhouse at Cefn Fforest Farm, Treharris.

An initial bat inspection survey was undertaken by BE Ecological Ltd in 2026 in order to inform a planning application for the renovation and conversion of the buildings. The results indicated that the buildings are of moderate potential for roosting bats and as such further surveys were recommended.

Subsequent emergence surveys revealed that the buildings are not a bat roost. A European Protected Species Licence will not be required. Foraging and commuting bat activity was, however, recorded around the buildings and grounds, and enhancement and sensitive lighting recommendations are made accordingly.

No evidence of breeding birds was found on the exterior or interior of the buildings.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

BE ECOLOGICAL LTD was commissioned by the client to undertake an initial bat inspection survey and subsequent activity surveys at Cefn Fforest Farm, Treharris.

This report includes the findings of the aforementioned bat activity surveys undertaken in the appropriate season.

The surveys were undertaken in line with the current guidance on standards for bat surveys (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023).

1.2 Site description

The site comprises a traditional detached stone-built farmhouse with an attached stone barn range, located in a rural setting near Treharris. The farmhouse is two storeys and constructed of coursed local stone, beneath a pitched roof finished in clay/concrete interlocking tiles and served by stone-built chimney stacks at the gable ends.

The attached barn is of similar stone construction beneath a pitched corrugated metal (sheet) roof. The buildings are bounded by traditional drystone walls with grassland, hedgerow and tree cover in the wider surroundings, providing good connectivity to the surrounding landscape for foraging and commuting bats.

Both buildings are in a derelict and dilapidated condition. Internally the farmhouse has been gutted and is open from floor to ridge, exposing the full roof structure of rafters, purlins and ridge timbers; areas of the roof covering are missing, with daylight visible through gaps at the ridge and along the slopes. Internal walls retain areas of degraded lime plaster over bare stonework. The barn retains a suspended timber floor, above which is an open void that was accessed during the survey; its roof structure is similarly exposed, with gaps to the covering. Beneath the suspended floor is a ground-level area used for storage.

1.3 Proposed development

It is proposed to demolish a barn and extend a farmhouse at Cefn Fforest Farm, Treharris.

2 LEGISLATION & POLICIES

2.1 Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) provides safeguards for European Protected Species (those listed under Annex IV Habitats Directive). With regards to bats, this makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately (or recklessly in Scotland) capture, injure or kill a bat
- Deliberately (or recklessly in Scotland) disturb a bat in a way that would (significantly in Scotland) affect its ability to survive, breed or rear young (or hibernate or migrate in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or (significantly in England, Wales and Scotland) affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.
- Damage or destroy a roost (this is an 'absolute' offence)
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat

2.2 Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the legislation for England and Wales for nature conservation, making it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat at a roost
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost

2.3 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

The following sections are relevant:

6.2.8 The role of development as part of a spatial approach will be two fold. Planning authorities firstly must ensure that development avoids and then minimises impact on biodiversity and ecosystems and secondly that it provides opportunities for enhancement within areas identified as important for the ability of species to adapt and/or to move to more suitable habitats.

6.2.9 Planning authorities must encourage the appropriate management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna and other statutory and non-statutory designated sites. The features concerned are those which, because of their linear and continuous structure or their function as 'stepping stones' or 'wildlife corridors', are essential for migration, dispersal or genetic exchange. The protection and creation of networks of statutory and non-statutory sites and of the landscape features which provide links from one habitat to another can make an important contribution to developing resilient ecological networks and securing a net benefit for biodiversity and in doing so improve the quality of the local place and its ability to adapt to climate change.

6.2.12 A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal.

6.4.3 Recognising that development needs to take place and some biodiversity may be impacted, the planning system should ensure that overall there is a net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, resulting in enhanced well-being. Addressing the consequences of climate change should be a central part of any measures to protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems, and secure the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem resilience and resilient ecological networks by improving diversity, extent, condition, and connectivity.

6.4.5 Planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species (not including non native invasive species), locally or nationally and must work alongside nature and it must provide a net benefit for biodiversity and improve, or enable the improvement, of the resilience of ecosystems.

6.4.11 Planning authorities must follow a step-wise approach to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimised, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for.

6.4.12 Having worked iteratively through the stages of the step-wise approach, and providing evidence in the Green Infrastructure Statement that the step-wise approach has been followed, a scheme of enhancements must be provided to ensure a net benefit for biodiversity. Where biodiversity enhancement proportionate to the scale and nature of the development is not proposed as part of an application, significant weight will be given to its absence, and unless other significant material considerations indicate otherwise, it will be necessary to refuse permission.

6.4.35 The presence of a species protected under European or UK legislation, or under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal which, if carried out, would be likely to result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat and to ensure that the range and population of the species is sustained.

2.4 Building with Nature

Applicants should consider standards for development design “Building with Nature” which can be found at www.buildingwithnature.org.uk

2.5 Planning Policy Wales September 2009 (Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning)

Section 6.2.1 – the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a local planning authority is considering a development proposal, that, if carried out, would be likely to result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat.

Section 6.2.2 – It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted.

2.6 Environment (Wales) Act 2016 - The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

The Environment (Wales) Act became law on 21st March 2016 and replaces the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. It puts in place legislation to enable Wales’ resources to be managed in a more proactive, sustainable and joined up manner and to form part of the legislative framework necessary to tackle climate change. The Act supports the Welsh Government’s wider remit under the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council as a public body has obligations under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to demonstrate how the Local Authority will “seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the proper exercise of their functions and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems”.

The intention is to ensure that in carrying out their functions, public authorities will place biodiversity as a natural and integral part of policy and decision making; address biodiversity decline through positive actions that will result in maintenance or enhancement of biodiversity; and develop ecosystem resilience through maintaining and enhancing biodiversity.

2.7 State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to publish a State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) to provide information on the current state of our natural resources to enable Welsh Ministers to set priorities for action at the national level. The Authority is required to have regard to the findings of this report in exercising its functions. The SoNaRR report spells out the major threats to the proper functioning of ecosystems in Wales, which include climate change, land use change, over exploitation of natural resources, and nutrient enrichment and pollution.

2.8 Nature Recovery Plan

The Welsh Government launched the Nature Recovery Plan (NRP) which sets out its commitment to biodiversity in Wales and how Wales will address the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the associated Aichi biodiversity targets in Wales. The Nature Recovery Action Plan links to and complements The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The NRP highlights the issues to address through putting nature at the heart of decision making, increasing the resilience of our natural environment, and taking specific action for habitats and species.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Search

A full commercial data search was not undertaken in this instance; however, the local planning authority's planning portal was checked for relevant ecological information and planning history pertaining to the site.

3.2 Survey Objectives

- To carry out an initial bat inspection survey along with the recommended activity surveys
- To present the above details and if necessary recommendations for mitigation, future research and compensation within this report.
- To carry out a scoping survey for breeding birds

3.3 Survey Summary

The bat survey comprised of three parts:

- Part 1 - Initial bat inspection survey
- Part 2 - A single activity survey
- Part 3 - A second activity survey

3.4 Surveyor Information

The survey was run by Beth Evans. Beth is the owner of BE ECOLOGICAL LTD and has a postgraduate degree in Environmental Biology: Conservation & Resource Management, specialising in British bats. Beth has 11 years' experience of ecological surveys, both in a small scale and large multi-disciplinary context. Beth also holds Natural Resources Wales and Natural England bat licences to disturb and handle bats.

Beth Evans was assisted during the activity surveys by Michael Rogers, Dion Rowles and Nadine Morgan.

3.5 Internal & External Inspection

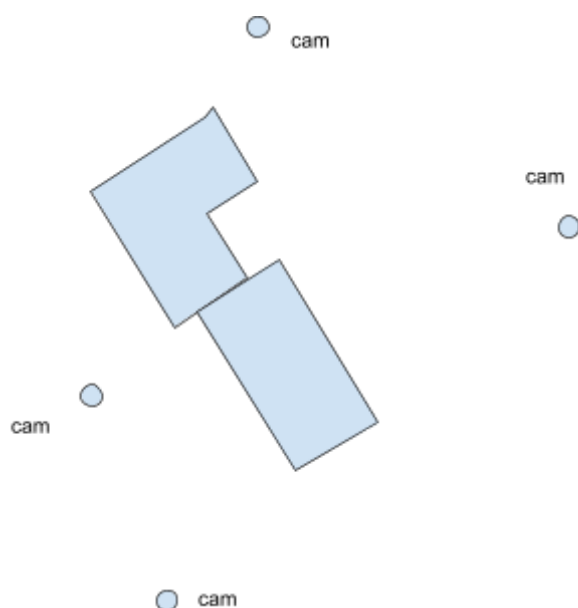
An initial inspection survey was carried out in May 2026 to search all buildings, both externally to identify potential bat roosting areas and signs of bat use including; live bats, dead bats, droppings, urine staining, grease marks and discarded prey items. The buildings and all areas/items of interest were recorded and photographed. Extension ladders/steps were used to safely access roof areas and fascia boards etc; where no safe access was available the survey was conducted using close focus binoculars and/or a high powered lamp.

3.6 Activity Surveys (emergence/re-entry surveys)

Building 'emergence' and 're-entry' surveys were carried out on the following dates, times and weather conditions. Climatic conditions including rain, wind, temperature and cloud cover were recorded for each survey using a hand held Kestrel 4500 weather station.

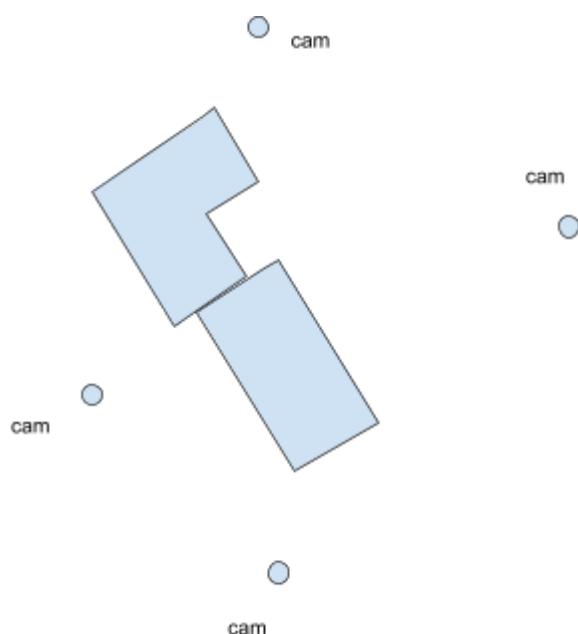
3.6.1 Survey 1 - 28th May 2026

A dusk survey was carried out on 28th May 2026 using surveyors, positioned in such a way that as much of the buildings was visible to surveyors as possible. Surveyors were equipped with Batlogger M detectors, IR cameras and thermal imaging devices.



3.6.2 Survey 2 - 18th June 2026

A dusk survey was carried out on 18th June 2026 using surveyors, positioned in such a way that as much of the buildings was visible to surveyors as possible (as above). Surveyors were equipped with Batlogger M detectors, IR cameras and thermal imaging devices.



3.7 Survey limitations

Any survey for bat species can only be a series of snapshots in time. Bats are highly mobile, long lived creatures (capable of living up to 30 years, sometimes longer) with complex social structures and utilising multiple roost sites within a year. The implications of this are that surveys and surveyors have to make informed assumptions based on observations, recorded data, local information and a detailed knowledge of the species.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Inspection survey

4.1.1 External survey results

The survey carried out by BE Ecological Ltd revealed no droppings or evidence of bats on the exterior of the buildings. A number of potential access points were noted:

- Gaps beneath and between the corrugated roof sheets of the barn
- Missing and slipped roof coverings to the farmhouse, with open gaps at the ridge and along the slopes
- Open joints and gaps within the stonework and around window and door openings
- Gaps around exposed and weathered timbers at eaves and verges

Given the derelict condition of the buildings, the disturbance, the abundance of potential access points and crevices, and the connectivity of the site to surrounding foraging habitat, the buildings were assessed as being of moderate potential for roosting bats.

4.1.2 Internal survey results

The farmhouse has been gutted internally and is open from floor to ridge, allowing the full roof structure to be inspected directly from ground level. No bats, droppings, urine staining, grease marks or discarded prey items were observed. The exposed stonework, timbers and gaps were inspected; no evidence of bat use was found.

Within the barn, a suspended timber floor is retained, above which an open void was accessed and inspected. The void and its exposed roof timbers were searched for live bats and field signs; none were found.

Beneath the suspended floor of the barn is a ground-level area used for storage. This area was accessed and inspected; it was found to contain stored materials and items, with degraded plastered and bare stone walls and exposed ceiling timbers above. No bats or evidence of bats was found within this area.

No evidence of bats was recorded internally in either building.

5.0 Activity surveys

The surveys were undertaken as per the table below:

5.1 Survey Schedule and Weather Conditions

Table 1: Schedule and weather conditions

Visit	Sunset	Start – End	Temp °C	Wind	Cloud Cover	Notes
Survey 1 28/05/26	21:18	20:58 – 22:48	17	Low	60% / 60%	Dry throughout; suitable survey conditions
Survey 2 18/06/26	21:35	21:15 – 23:05	19	Low	40% / 50%	Dry throughout; suitable survey conditions

5.2 Activity Survey Results

5.2.1 Survey 1 - 28th May 2026

A dusk emergence survey was undertaken on 28th May 2026 with surveyors/cameras positioned to maintain visibility of all elevations of both buildings.



Bat activity on this date was little and intermittent.

The first bat heard was a common pipistrelle at 23 minutes post sunrise. The bat was seen flying high from east to west above the property. A small number of passes by common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle were recorded foraging and commuting in the vicinity of the buildings. No bats were observed emerging from, or interacting with, either building.

5.2.2 Survey 2 - 18th June 2026

A dusk emergence survey was undertaken on 18th June 2026 by the same surveyors and using the same equipment (as above).



Bat activity was markedly higher than on the first survey. Approximately six bats (common and soprano pipistrelles) were recorded foraging around the buildings and grounds throughout the survey.

Species recorded included common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule and *Myotis* sp., foraging and commuting across the site.

Despite this level of activity, no bats were observed emerging from, or returning to, either building.

No bats emerged from or interacted with the buildings on this date.

5.2.4 Identified flight paths (arrowed red)

No discrete flight paths to or from the buildings were identified throughout the surveys; recorded activity comprised foraging and commuting bats moving throughout the site and grounds.

5.3 Identified Roosts

5.3.1 Survey 1

The property was not identified as a bat roost on this date.

5.3.2 Survey 2

The property was not identified as a bat roost on this date.

6.0 Conclusion

The buildings have not been identified as a bat roost. While no bats were observed emerging from or re-entering either building on either survey, the site supports notable foraging and commuting bat activity, with up to approximately six bats and four species/species groups (common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule and *Myotis* sp.) recorded around the buildings and grounds.

It is proposed to demolish a barn and extend a farmhouse at Cefn Fforest Farm, Treharris. As the buildings have not been identified as supporting a bat roost, impacts on roosting bats are considered unlikely. No bats or evidence of bats was found throughout the interior of either building.

A licence from Natural Resources Wales will not be required unless bats or evidence of bats are found.

7.0 Breeding Birds

There are swallows nesting within the main farmhouse (two pairs).

8.0 INTERPRETATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Active season usage

The property was not identified as a bat roost. The site is, however, used by foraging and commuting bats of several species.

8.2 Hibernation season usage

The winter period must be avoided due to the possible presence of hibernating bats.

8.3 Breeding birds

Two pairs of swallows were noted flying in and out of the farmhouse.

8.4 Ecological Impacts of development

The impacts of the development have been assessed using the current information of the proposed works. Should any changes be made to the proposed works, the assessment will need to be reviewed and amended as necessary.

The buildings have not been identified as a bat roost and therefore impacts on roosting bats are unlikely. To maintain and enhance the foraging and commuting value of the site, enhancement measures and sensitive lighting are recommended below.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Timing

It is considered that the buildings are not a bat roost and therefore the works can be undertaken at any time of year. The winter period must be avoided due to the unlikely, but possible presence of hibernating bats.

10.2 Timber/roofing materials

N/A the property has not been identified as a bat roost.

10.3 Lighting

Newly created access points and bat boxes will not be directly illuminated. All external lighting will face downwards and be set on timers to ensure that bats can use the area should they wish. In addition to this, any onsite lighting will conform to the following guidelines:

<https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

Flight paths to the bat boxes and the newly created bat mitigation will be kept dark at all times.

10.4 Bat Licensing

A European Protected Species Licence obtained from Natural Resources Wales will not be required before any works commence.

10.5 Supervision

N/A

12.0 REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust. (2023) Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guidelines. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004) The bat workers' manual (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. Natural England.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (HMSO).

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) (as amended) (HMSO).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (HMSO).

APPENDIX A - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

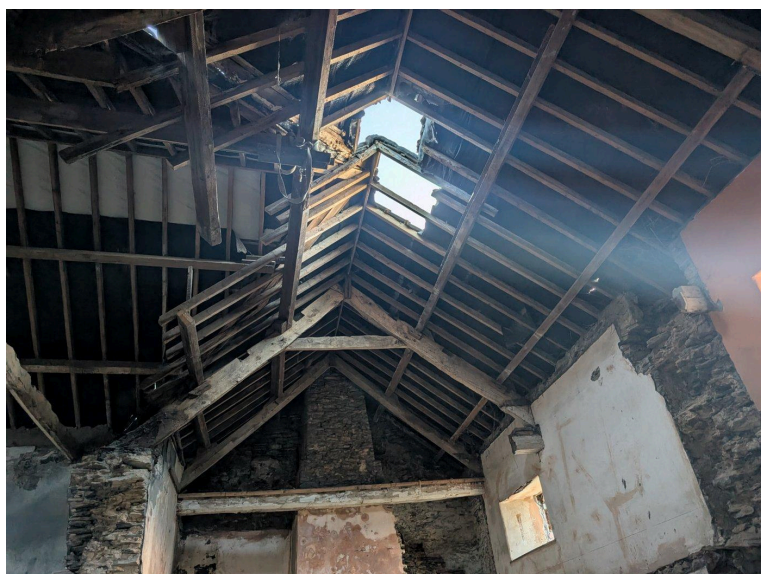


Plate 1 - Farmhouse interior, gutted and open from floor to ridge, showing the exposed roof structure of rafters and purlins with a section of missing roof covering at the ridge, and bare stone gable wall and chimney breast.



Plate 2 - Farmhouse roof structure viewed from below, showing exposed pitched roof timbers and rafters over degraded plaster and bare stone walls, with a small square window opening to the gable.



Plate 3 - Internal corner showing exposed roof timbers meeting a stone chimney breast,



Plate 4 - Derelict internal area with peeling plastered walls, exposed ceiling timbers, an acrow prop and stored materials



Plate 5 - Guttered ground-floor room showing multiple small window openings, exposed bressummer/ceiling beams and a bare earth and rubble floor.



Plate 6 - Internal storage room with degraded plaster over stone walls, exposed ceiling beams, stored tools and materials and a blocked former opening.



Plate 7 - Barn interior used for storage beneath exposed ceiling beams and timber roof structure, with an open doorway and stored materials



Plate 8 - Barn/store corner showing a mesh-covered window



Plate 9 - External elevation of the stone-built barn with corrugated metal roof and boarded loft opening



Plate 10 - Site context: the farmhouse and attached barn range viewed from the rear, showing tiled and corrugated roofs, chimney stack.