



Bat Survey: Rhydycar, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1DH



Instructed by: Welsh Government

Reported by: Ecological Services Ltd
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1.0 Background and Purpose

1.1 The building being surveyed is a detached Welsh Government building which is situated within an urban environment, to the south of the town of Merthyr Tydfil. Planning permission is sought to install solar panels on the roofs of the southern and western wings of the building which will include the removal of the existing slates. This report will investigate if there is potential to disturb bats and will be used to assist in the planning process.

1.2 To support the planning application a bat report has been commissioned to investigate if bats use the current property in any capacity during the maternity season, and for any evidence suggesting that bats use the property at other times of the year.

1.3 The report is prepared and undertaken by Mr. Richard Watkins BSc., an experienced Natural Resources Wales licensed bat ecologist with 15 years experience, license number S096081/1.

1.4 Just Mammals Limited produced an Ecological Survey Report in June 2023. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was carried out by Just Mammals in March 2023. Just Mammals assessed the building as having low bat roosting potential. Therefore, a single bat activity survey was carried out in May 2023. No bats emerged from the building during the emergence survey. As the previous bat survey work has now expired, an updated bat scoping survey has been instructed by the client.

1.5 A data search was undertaken with SEWBRc by Just Mammals in 2023. The data search did not return any historic bat roost records for the building. An updated data search was not undertaken in this instance.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The building being surveyed is a detached Welsh Government building which is brick built and three storeys in height with a slate roof. There are large areas of metal cladding present on the building. There is likely to be a cavity wall in the building. There is also a single storey, detached, brick built energy centre to the immediate south east of the main building with a pitched slate roof.

2.2 The buildings date back to in excess of 30 years and are situated in an urban environment. There are likely to be minimal amounts of security lighting within the vicinity of the site.

2.3 The nearest significant watercourse is the River Taff, approximately 270m to the north east of the site at its nearest point.

2.4 The site is situated within an urban environment to the south of the town of Merthyr Tydfil. There is a partial riparian corridor along the River Taff. Despite being situated within an urban environment, there is good ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment as the site backs onto substantial amounts of open land.

2.5 The National Grid Reference of the site is approximately: **SO 0477 0540**

3.0 Report Constraints

3.1 Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviours. The survey methods employed can provide evidence for the potential presence of bats at the times when the site was visited. Although the methods follow best practice guidance and were carried out in such a way as to maximise the chances of detection, failure to detect the target species cannot be considered as definitive proof of their absence.

3.2 The report is solely concerned with bats in relation to these buildings. Trees and other buildings not mentioned directly have not been included in this report.

3.3 Even though bats are habitual creatures they can still move to new roosts if more suitable. Therefore this report cannot predict the status of the structure in regard to bat occupancy in the future. This report should be acted upon as soon as practical. Natural Resources Wales will only accept survey data up to two years old from date of issue for licence applications, although some Local Planning Authorities will only accept survey data up to eighteen months old. If planning or building works are delayed, it is the responsibility of the client to discuss and gain approval from the *author* before work commences.

4.0 Legal Constraints

4.1 Bats, and any place a bat uses for breeding or shelter, either currently occupied or unoccupied are protected by European and British law, predominantly by **The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017**, which are the principal means by which the Habitats Directive is transposed from European directive into law in England and Wales.

4.2 In summary this law states that it is an offence to:

- **Deliberately capture or kill a bat**
- **Deliberately disturb a bat**
- **Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat**
- **Keep; transport; sell; exchange or offer for sale or exchange a living or dead bat or any part of a bat**

4.3 ‘Deliberately’ may also be interpreted, as not intending to injure or kill a bat but having done so due to being insufficiently informed and unaware of the consequences of the action.

4.4 For a more comprehensive description and exact wording of the legislation please refer to:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/490/contents/made>

4.5 Where there is a risk that a bat roost may be present, it is incumbent upon the owner to commission a specialist bat survey to identify bat roosts before any work commences. Maximum penalties for offences relating to disturbance to bats or their roosts can amount to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or fines of up to Level 5 on the standard scale under the Criminal Justice Act 1982/1991 (i.e. £5000 in April 2001) per roost or bat disturbed or killed, or to both.

4.6 If a bat roost is discovered, no work that could affect the roost can be undertaken until Natural Resources Wales grants a licence endorsing the work. A thorough method statement and adequate mitigation proposal will need to be submitted to support any licence application.

4.7 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 puts an onus onto responsible bodies such as Local Planning Authorities to not only preserve, but also to enhance biodiversity meaning that planning applications must offer an element of ecological gain as well as preserving any aspects of ecological importance.

5.0 General Information

5.1 Bats are unable to build roosts themselves but instead rely on both man made and naturally occurring features to provide suitable accommodation. Bats generally prefer older buildings built with traditional materials, as traditional building methods provide more opportunities for gaps and entrances to buildings. Traditional cut roofs are preferred to a roof with trusses. Bats also prefer to roost where the external roost area has access to sunlight during the day such as south facing roof elevations.

5.2 Bats can utilise the following features on a building; end tiles, barge boards, soffit, gable ends, porches, lead flashing, hanging tiles, ridge tiles, broken tiles, eaves, sash window frames, wood cladding, fascia boards, window sills and internal roof spaces and timbers. Although this list demonstrates the most popular roosting sites it is by no means definitive. Bats can use apertures as small as 10mm in diameter to gain access.

5.3 The U.K bat population is divided into two distinct families, Rhinolophidae and Vespertilionidae. In general, Rhinolophidae (Horseshoe) bats differ in their roosting requirements to Vespertilionidae (the remainder of UK bat species). Horseshoe bats prefer to roost in large areas such as internal attic spaces and hang in the open from the roof of the roost. They tend to roost in visible clusters to maintain the high temperatures that a maternity colony needs. Horseshoe bats also prefer free flight access and egress into the roosting area. Horseshoe bats tend to be more light averting to other UK bat species, and routinely fly around the internal roosting area to warm up before exiting. It is noted that Plecotus (Long Eared) bats share some of these preferences. Vesper bats are, on the whole, crevice dwelling bats who squeeze into small apertures to access the roost. These, like Horseshoe bats, will cluster in maternity colonies, but are normally hidden from view. Vesper bats, with the exception of Long Eared bats, do not require a large internal roost to fly around before exit. Long Eared bats, although part of the vesper family, are very light averting and will, on occasions share the roosting patterns of both Horseshoe and crevice dwelling species.

6.0 External Scoping Survey

6.1 The external scoping survey was undertaken on the **30th June 2026** in conditions of good natural light. All external aspects of the buildings were comprehensively evaluated for roost potential. Evidence was also sought for any staining or droppings, which could suggest bat occupation.

6.2 The buildings were inspected for overt evidence of bat presence and occupation such as:

- Staining around the entry of roosting point caused by oils secreted by the bat into its fur
- Scratching on surfaces caused by the bat in the acts of take off and landing
- Bat droppings on walls; floors; roof voids; window sills or panes and barge boards
- Urine stains below a possible entrance site, within the entrance to a cavity or on timbers used for roosting
- Bats can produce chatter on warm evenings prior to leaving the roost. A heterodyne bat detector is used to help determine this
- Flies around the entrance or on the floor of possible roosts, which may be attracted to bat guano

6.3 Due to the age and condition of the buildings, there were a limited number of opportunities present for bats to access and use the buildings and those that were available were deemed as having low potential for roosting bats. There were a small number of slightly raised slates on the roofs of the buildings; areas of slightly raised lead flashing and slight apertures around the roof-lines.

6.4 No droppings or evidence of bats were discovered on any external features. However, this does not prove that bats are absent from the buildings.

6.5 No evidence of nesting bird use of the buildings was observed during the scoping survey.

6.6 Examples of apertures allowing access to cavities in the buildings:





7.0 Internal Scoping Survey

7.1 The internal scoping survey was undertaken on the **30th June 2026** by Hannah Evans (accredited agent S095550/1), an experienced bat ecologist with 5 years experience.

7.2 Due to the presence of suspended ceilings throughout the building, there were no accessible attic spaces present.

8.0 Emergence Survey

8.1 The emergence survey was carried out during the maternity season and adhered to current best practice guidelines. This survey was conducted from half an hour before sunset until two hours post sunset. The surveyors used are all experienced bat counters who have undergone sufficient training in basic bat ecology and bat activity. All sound analysis was undertaken by Richard Watkins.

8.2 The emergence survey gave extra consideration to the features identified during the external scoping survey which could be utilised by bats.

8.3 Emergence Survey on the 30th July 2026

- Sunset: 21:24
- Weather: Dry and calm with approximately 20% cloud cover
- Temperature: 14 degrees celsius
- Surveyors: Jonathan Daniels; Tyrone Evans; Adam Hughes; Kieran Meek; Nigel Meek; Ellie Rooza; Sarah Seward; Mason Smith and Kieran Turner

No bats were observed emerging from the building.

8.4 The weather conditions were dry and calm with little wind and no rain and therefore conducive for bat activity. The temperature was above 10 degrees celsius during the emergence survey.

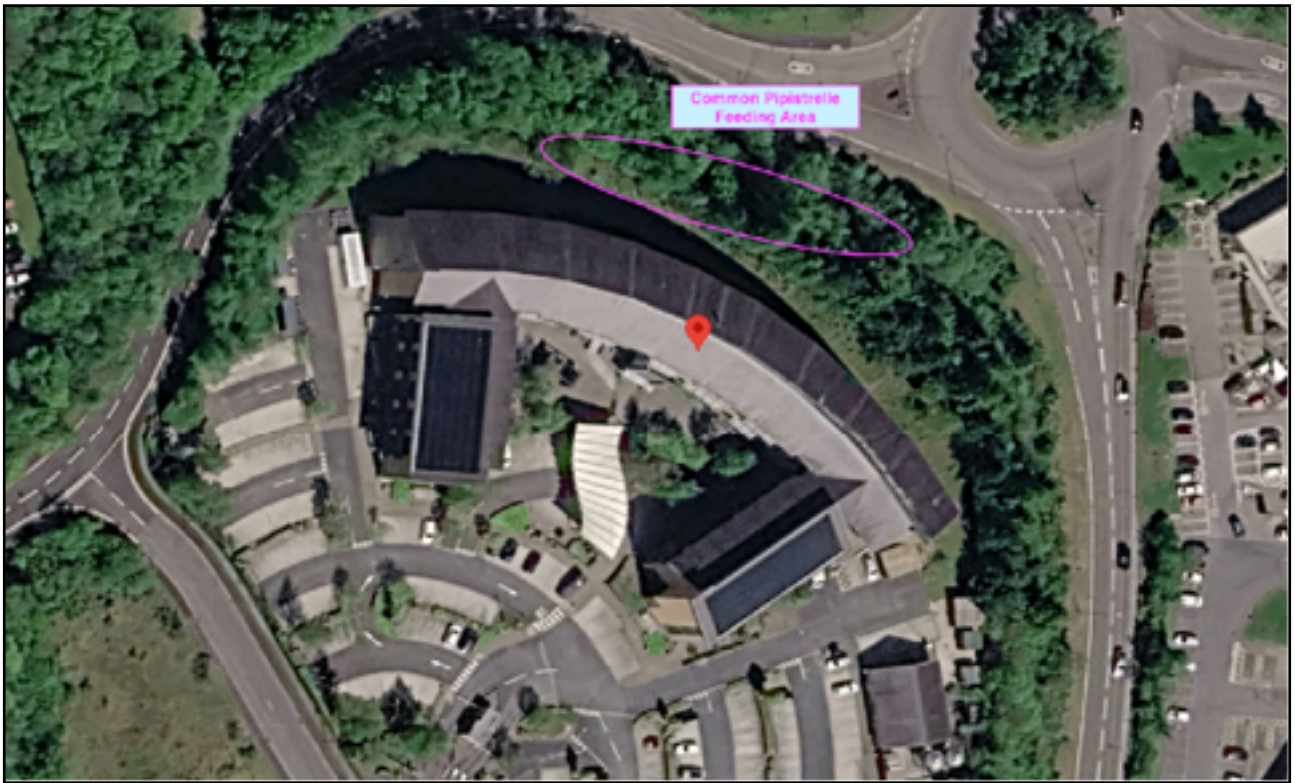
8.5 The best viewing conditions were obtained.

8.6 Echo-meter Touch 2 Pro bat detectors were present to acoustically record any bat calls. Nightfox Night Vision Goggles with record features were also used alongside additional infrared spotlights. These were positioned with the surveyors.

8.7 Analysis of sound recording on bat detectors:

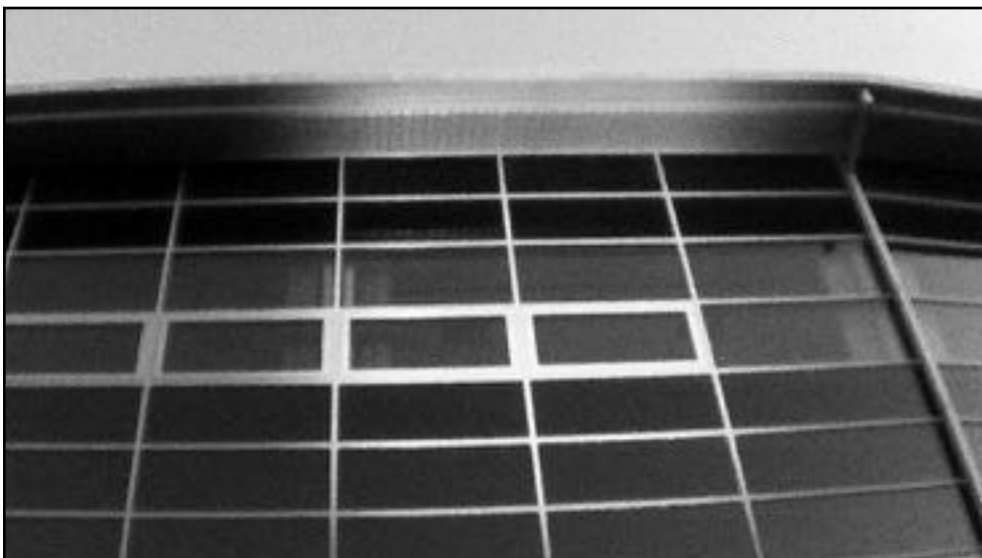
Species of Bats Recorded in the Area:	
Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>
Noctule	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>

8.8 During the emergence survey, a very low number of bat calls were recorded. A small number of Common Pipistrelles were observed foraging to the rear of the building and a Noctule was detected but was not observed.



8.11 Examples of NVA Still Shots:







9.0 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

9.1 During the emergence survey, no bats were observed emerging from the building.

9.2 Throughout the survey, a very low number of bat calls were recorded and no bats were observed using the building. Therefore it is suggested that the impact of the proposed building works will have a negligible impact on the local bat population.

9.3 The building does not offer significant hibernation potential for bats.

9.4 No evidence of nesting bird use of the buildings was observed during the survey.

9.5 Due to the age and condition of the buildings, there were a limited number of opportunities present for bats to access and use the buildings and those that were available were classed as having low potential for roosting bats.

9.6 The site is located in an area with good ecological connectivity for bats to the wider environment.

9.7 There were minimal amounts of security lighting within the vicinity of the site.

9.8 Following commencement of works; outside any ecologically supervised period and in the unlikely event that the contractor encounters any bats during any works, then work must immediately stop and the bat worker summoned. If for any reason they cannot be contacted, advice must be sought from Natural Resources Wales, (Telephone Number 0300 065 3000). No works would recommence until a licence is issued by NRW sanctioning works going forward. The guidance note on finding bats found in the appendices must be followed.

9.9 There is potential to offer ecological gain for bats if the project proceeds. This would help satisfy the local planning authorities legal responsibility to preserve and enhance biodiversity under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The creation of a bat roost for crevice dwelling bats can be incorporated into the new build element at very little expense and with no impact to the owners of the building. It is recommended that new roosts be created for crevice dwelling species of bats in the new build scheme and this should be added to the plans prior to submission for planning approval. Further ecological gain can be made by incorporating bird bricks into the new build design. Any new enhancements must not be directly illuminated and a dark corridor must be established allowing undisturbed access for any bat away from the site. If planning is granted then any ecological compensation/mitigation will be designed to maternity standards to ensure that there is no net biodiversity loss.

9.10 A suitable external lighting plan must be implemented to reduce any disturbance to the bats feeding and commuting around the building.

9.11 A significant amount of enhancements features were added to the building and trees within the site due to historic bat survey works. There is no significant merit to add to these features although the LPA may insist upon additional enhancement features.

Signed: *Richard Watkins* Date: July 2026

10.0 Appendix

Aerial Site Photographs

OS Map

Surveyor & NVA Position

Guidance Note

Appendix 1 Aerial Site Photographs

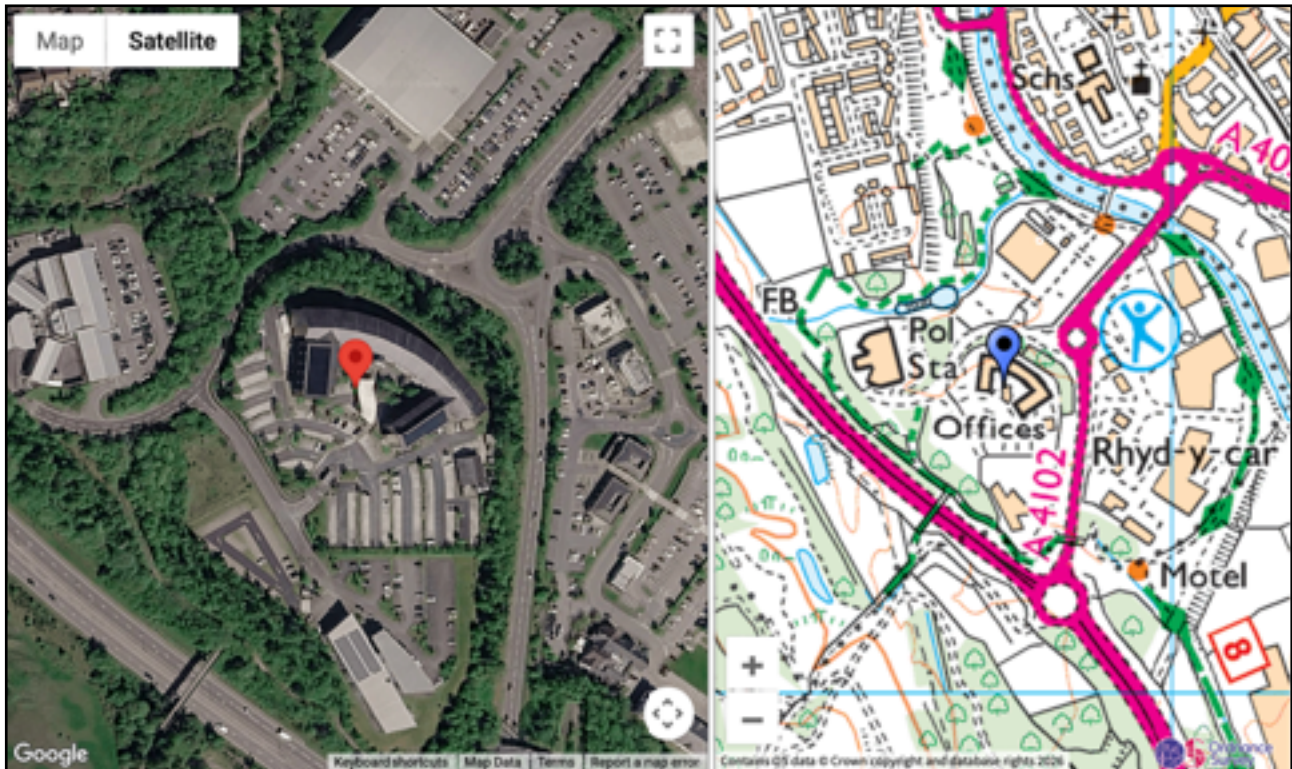


The site in its immediate environment.

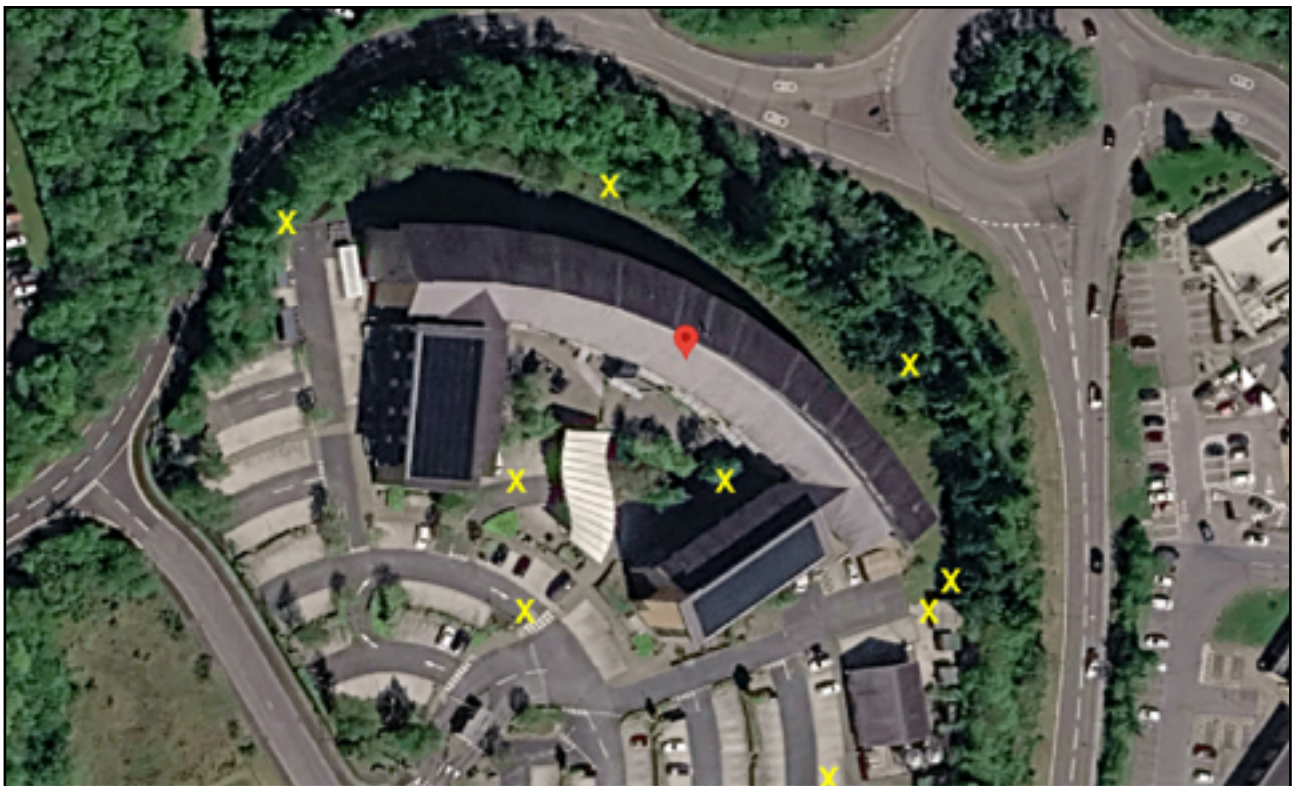


The site in its wider environment offering good ecological connectivity to the surrounding habitat.

Appendix 2 OS Map National Grid Reference SO 0477 0540



Appendix 3 Surveyor & NVA Positions



Guidance Note (Important information in the unlikely event that bats are discovered)

Where any building or demolition work is to commence, all contractors should remain vigilant at all times during the course of the works, looking for signs that bats are present or that bats have formerly occupied the building. Whilst this survey has been undertaken and no visible evidence of bats found within the building, the possibility of a bat or bats being present cannot be absolutely ruled out. In the extremely unlikely event that bats are discovered during the works, then work must **stop** as soon as it is safe to do so. The bat worker must be contacted immediately and Natural Resources Wales informed in order for a licence to be granted to complete the works. No works will be permitted until such time a license is approved.

If in the unlikely event a roost is accidentally opened up, any loose bats should be returned to the roost and apertures closed to prevent their escape until they can be examined for injury by a bat worker. Dead bats should be retained. Bats are very fragile and should be handled by a professional, and unless absolutely necessary should not be approached and disturbed. However, where a bat is clearly injured and distressed, the contractor should carefully collect them and place in a light proof box. Gloves must be worn when handling bats*

In the Event of a Bats being discovered the bat worker must be contacted immediately that it is safe to do so on 07866461726

If the bat worker is not available, Natural Resources Wales must be contacted on 0300 065 3000

*Bats can potentially carry European Bat Lyssa Virus (EBLV) which is a strain of rabies virus that is found in some bat species although extremely uncommon, a potential risk occurs; therefore, all bats must be handled with thick gloves.