



Technical Note

Subject	Ecological Method Statement for site clearance
Site Name	Land at Former Windsor Cottages, Aberfan
Title / Description	Development
Client	David George
BE Ecological Ltd Ref	Land at Former Windsor Cottages

Issue	Stage	Author	Approved	Date
1VA	ISSUE	Beth Evans BSc (Hons), MSc	BE	10.03.22
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BE Ecological Ltd was commissioned by the client in order to provide an on site a site clearance strategy, demonstrating how the site will be cleared, to facilitate construction in a manner sensitive to wildlife on site, in particular reptiles

Method Statement

A brief walkover of the site will be undertaken in the first instance to ensure that there are no species present on this site not covered by the below method statement.

1. All clearance will be supervised by a suitably experienced ecologist until such time as the ecologist states that direct supervision is not necessary.
2. The ecologist will be on call for the duration of clearance works.
3. Vegetation will be cleared from directly affected areas only and the area minimised wherever possible.
4. All vegetation and brash removal will preferentially be undertaken during the winter months i.e. between November and February inclusive.
5. If this is not possible, all areas to be cleared must be subject of a finger-tip search by an ecologist immediately prior to and during any clearance work; the ecologist should also be present while all post hole excavation (or other ground breaking should it be required) is being undertaken.
6. Should evidence of breeding birds, in particularly nests, be recorded, no clearance may be undertaken within 5m of any nest site until such time as the nest is vacated naturally.
7. No spraying of vegetation to be carried out. Vegetation will be maintained close to ground using repeated cutting only..
8. Woody vegetation will be cleared (ONLY IF NECESSARY) to ground level using a chainsaw with all arisings stacked in unaffected areas NOT on areas of tall vegetation (over 300mm). Where necessary, stumps and roots will only be removed by machine (under ecological supervision) once the clearance is complete.
9. All woody vegetation will be checked by the ecologist prior to cutting for the presence of bird nests.

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10. Vegetation will be cut in three phases. The first phase will reduce the vegetation height to 150mm; the second will reduce it to ≈50mm; the third phase will reduce the height to as close to ground level as possible. All cuts will have a period of 24 hours between each cut.

11. All vegetation cutting will be directional. This ensures that any animals present will be pushed from the site into adjacent retained habitats.

12. After clearance, if the vegetation is allowed to regrow above 150mm high, it will be cut and raked as described above.

13. Where necessary, potential hibernacula (brash, log piles, stumps, roots etc) will only be cleared during the active season (March-October) while day time temperatures are consistently over 12°C for a period of at least seven days prior as otherwise reptiles may be killed or injured as a result of inconsistent (low) temperatures (during the day and night) and/or low prey availability. Potential hibernacula will only be dismantled by hand unless the supervising ecologist gives the approval for machine dismantling.

14. If a bird's nest is observed on the site, the ecologist will assess it to determine whether or not it is active, the species concerned, the lifecycle state of any occupants and provide advice on next steps.

15. If reptiles are observed within the clearance area during the works, a decision on how to deal with them will be made on site in light of the conditions on site at the time and the state of the animals themselves. There are three options for dealing with them:

- It may be possible to leave the animals alone to find their own way into cover, depending on where they are seen, what they are doing and their apparent activity levels; or
- Capture, remove from site and take into temporary captivity until such time as they can be released adjacent to the cleared area (a vivarium has been prepared in case it is required); or
- Should conditions allow, capture and translocate the animals to a safe area immediately adjacent to the site.

16. Habitat and the unlikely presence for other species (e.g. dormice, otter, great crested newts & other amphibians etc.) can be identified and avoided by following this method statement.

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If large numbers of reptiles are discovered, an offsite receptor area should be suggested to be agreed by the County Ecologist.

Please note, the above methodology will also allow for the safety of other animals such as other amphibians, birds and hedgehog.

In Summary the works will proceed as follows:

1. Vegetation reduced to 150mm	Any time of year (following an inspection for breeding birds if undertaken during active season)
2. Vegetation reduced to 50mm	24 hours after first cut
3. Vegetation cut to ground level	24 hours after second cut
4. Removal of potential hibernacula (stumps, rubble piles etc), ground breaking	Preferably March to October or when temperatures have been above 12 degrees for a period of seven days or more
The site will be kept as close to bare ground as possible via repeated cutting to ensure that reptiles do not re-colonise the site.	

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Enhancements

The following bird box will be added to the northern elevation of the property <https://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/nesting-boxes>

The following bat box (<https://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/nesting-boxes/>) will be added to the northern elevation of the property

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Beth Evans (Director)



Beth Evans BSc MSc

APPENDIX A – LEGISLATION

CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES 2017 (as amended)

Prior to the 31st January 2020, European Union legislation required that member states designate sites for the protection of habitats and species included in the annexes of both Council Directive 92/43/EC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna (the Habitats Directive) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive). This legislation was implemented in the UK by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (“the Habitat Regulations”). This results in sites being designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas respectively (SPAs).

Following the UK’s exit from the European Union on 31st January 2020, the law responsible for continuing to implement this legislation through the transition period is The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU EXIT) Regulations 2019. All legislation within the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 still apply within the UK under the amendment to the 2017 regulations until otherwise notified.

Working in protected sites or disturbing protected species is possible as long as consent has been issued by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) or Natural England (NE)

It is possible to undertake damaging activities under the auspices of a Protected Species Licence issued by NRW or NE which provides a derogation from the Regulations, meaning that an otherwise illegal operation carried out under licence is lawful.

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, kill or injure a bat either in or out of a place of shelter (roost);
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost or otherwise disturb it; and
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy a roost.

ENVIRONMENT WALES ACT 2016