

**BETHEL CHAPEL
PONTRHYDYFEN****UPDATE BAT SURVEY
July 2020****1 survey at the request of-**

Mr Peter Bowen, owner.

2 proposed works

Conversion of redundant chapel.

3 site: name/grid ref

Bethel Chapel, Oakwood, Pontrhydyfen SA12 9SA
SS795939

4 nature & date of survey

09th July 2020- assessment of bat-use *via* external/internal search

09th July 2020- roost-emergence/activity watch/survey

29th July 2020- roost-emergence/activity watch/survey.

5 objectives-

“Update survey” to repeat full-survey carried out, and reported, in September 2012 by Neil Price *et al*, EWS Ecology & Wildlife Services. A range of mitigation measures, detailed at an undated EWS “Method Statement” appended to the 2012 survey report, were LPA approved: some works to the site have proceeded but this 2020 “update” is made in support of further Application re. the Chapel building.

The 2020 survey i) sought any change to the building and any subsequent change to its potential to shelter bats (or other protected spp), ii) re-assessed day-roost use of the building, and iii) re-assessed the 2012 “mitigation suggestions” in the light of the 2020 observations.

The building (and bat use of it) are 2020-found to be largely as-reported by EWS in 2012. Change between 2012-20 is noted at the ff report but general location, site and contextual detail are not duplicated here; the 2012 Report and Mitigation document are appended.

6 surveyors

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Rob Colley: scientific/conservation bat licence 1999-, SO86091/1
Rob Taylor: scientific/conservation licence, 1995-
Len Moran: named agent, SO86091/1.

7 ecology & legal status

E(W)A 2016, since original report-

All British bats, and their roosts (occupied or not) are protected by i)) **The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010** (the “Habitats Regs”): this legislation implements the EC Habitats and Species Directive in the UK, and ii) the **Wildlife and Countryside Act** (as amended by the **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**) Schedule 5.

Developments which compromise the protection afforded to a European Protected Species require **Natural Resources Wales licence** (Habitats Regs). The granting of licence will be conditional on i) an agreed “works methodology”, designed to minimise impact on the bat(s), ii) agreed “mitigation”, to ensure the provision of alternative roost potential at/near the development. Where planning permission is sought, the LPA will need to know, at application stage, what methodology/mitigation is being proposed: this is to i) avoid changes in planning designs, post pp, ii) ensure that LPAs comply with reg 3(4) of the Habitat Regs, and iii) allow the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (NRW) to properly advise the LPA.

These protections can be summarised as prohibiting- taking, killing or injuring a bat; damaging or destroying a roost (occupied or not); obstructing access to a roost; disturbing in-roost bats.

The Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006/**Environment (Wales) Act 2016** requires all public authorities/bodies to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity- eg. when considering planning applications. **Section 6 (EWA)** requires LAs to ensure that development i) causes no significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and ii) provides a net benefit for biodiversity. There is a particular requirement to address those species and habitats listed by the **UK Biodiversity Action Plan**, in pursuance of which the Welsh Gov’t have listed Common and Soprano pipistrelles, Noctule, Brown long eared, Greater and Lesser Horseshoe, Barbastelle and Bechstein bats at Section 42 (NERC)/ **section 7 (EWA)**: Species of Principal Importance for Conservation of Biological Diversity. Implementation of these responsibilities varies across authorities but, typically, some LPAs ask for “bat accommodation” as a routine req’t, and some require survey data to be passed to a Local Records Office.

8 methods

Survey methodologies are implemented as appropriate, based on experienced surveyors’ assessment of the features at each site and with reference to the advice in **Bat Surveys: Good practice guidelines** (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016) & **Bat Workers’ Manual 3rd ed.** (JNCC 2004).

building assessment:

Internal/external daytime survey of the building was made, searching for possible bat (or other protected species) entry/exit and roosting points, incidental evidence (principally faeces) of bat use of the buildings and direct evidence of roosting bats.

emergence watch: At two dates, over the period during which bats can be expected to leave their roosts, direct observation was made of the building exteriors to monitor any

bat movement in or out; heterodyne, frequency-division bat detectors were used to assist species detection/identification.)

DNA genotyping: **n/a** (When surveyors are unsure of the origin of any bat faeces found, these are submitted to Dr Robin G Allaby, University of Warwick, for species ID *via* genotyping.)

overnight (dusk-dawn) remote data recording: **n/a** (At sites where initial investigation suggests that it is appropriate, Anabat detector-recorder equipment is left *in-situ* to indicate species identification and patterns-of-use at the site.)

methodology/mitigation: Methodology/mitigation measures, where appropriate, are based on the surveyor's experience of similar situations, with reference to ***Bat Mitigation Guidelines*** (English Nature, 2004) & ***Bat Workers' Manual 3rd ed.*** (JNCC 2004).

9 results

9.1 site location, adjacent habitat:

as appended 2012 report



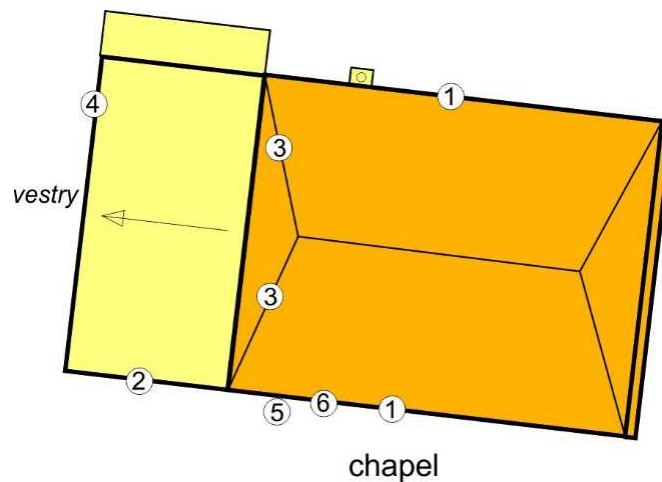
9.2 general description; bat access points; potential bat-roost opportunity; evidence of bat presence:

as appended 2012 report, plus-

2020, external:

External examination of the chapel and the abutting-to-west single storey vestry (outwith the proposed works but within “disturbance distance”) noted possible/potential bat access -

- 1 at both longwall tops, at wooden fascia/soffit-masonry wall gaps
- 2 behind (monopitch) vestry fascia
- 3 behind wooden barge boards at both pitches of the west gable
- 4 behind fascia at west (low) wall of vestry
- 5 at small area of wall cracking/open joints at the south longwall (all other masonry sealed against potential bat-access intra-masonry)
- 6 a small opening at the south longwall (all other windows wire mesh sealed)



No evidence of use was found at/below any of these areas.

It is noted that, since 2012, the chapel's south east corner and the east end parapet wall above have been dismantled and re-erected, to address structural incompetence at this area; it is understood that roof-cladding repairs were carried out at the same time.



internal:

No evidence of bat (or bird) use was found internally; the chapel void has no potential bat interest; the attic is as-described in 2012, with the addition of a c.2m wide strip of roof adjacent to the rebuilt parapet that now has a strip of BRM sarking.

The rebuilt south-east corner has no external potential bat-access intra-masonry; at the corresponding interior, some “fossil” cracking at the corner masonry does give bat accessible crevices but with no evidence of use.

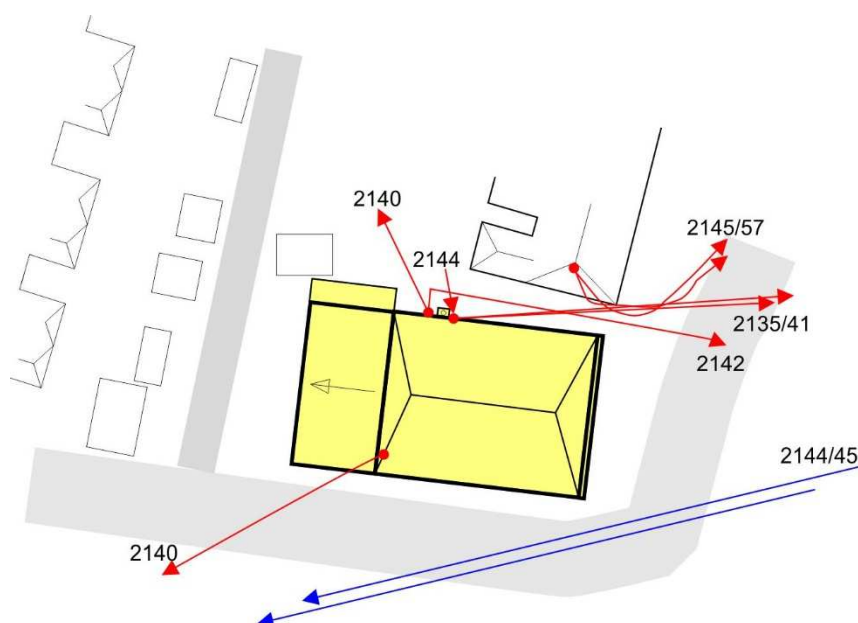
The abutting (west end) vestry is in dwelling use.

9.3 emergence watch:

On two dates, over the dusk + 1hr period during which bats can be expected to leave their day roosts, observers were positioned to allow detection of any bat movement from, to, or past the building.

Common pipistrelle *P. pipistrellus* and Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* bats were seen/heard at/near to the site.

09th July 2020
2100-2230
start temp. 15°C
100% cloud; no wind

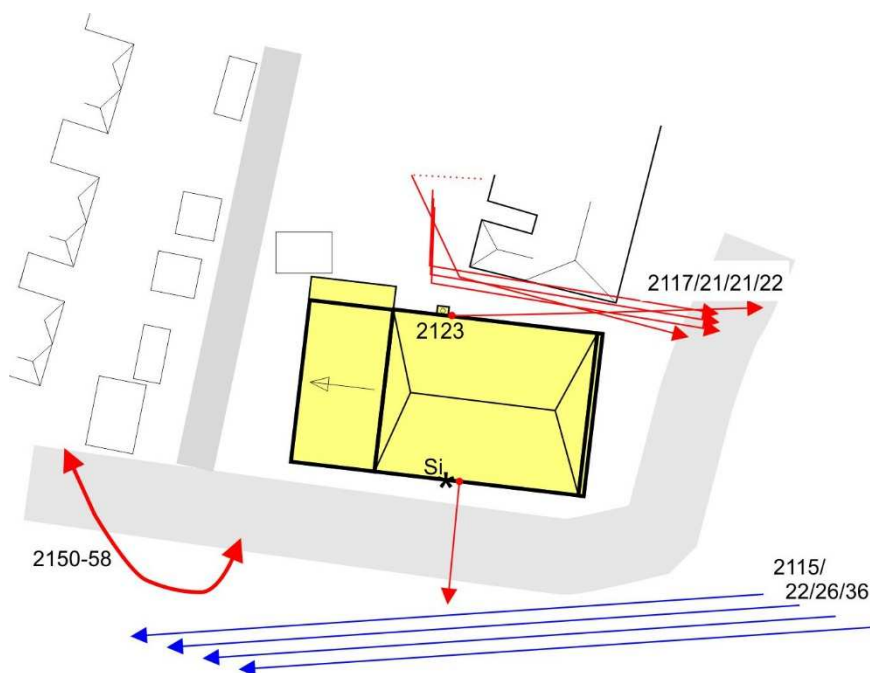


Common pipistrelle: x4 emerged from the north longwall top, either side of an external chimney, 2135/40/41/42, with x1 briefly entering here, 2144, and emerging <1min; x1 emerged from the south longwall top, 2140; x2 emerged from a gable apex at the to-north terrace of houses, 2145/57. Very little subsequent flight/foraging activity was seen/heard.

Noctule: x2 passed east-west over the site, 2144/45.

No other bats were seen/heard; no owl activity was seen.

29th July 2020
2050-2220
start temp. 16°C
80% cloud; no wind



Common pip: x1 emerged from the chapel north longwall top, adjacent to chimney, 2123; x4 flew from behind terrace-to-north, 2117-22 (with emergence thought to be from gable apex at a rear single storey extension); x1 foraged at/over scrub on bank, 2150-58

Noctule: x4 overflight passes, 2115-36.

No other bats were seen/heard; no owl activity was seen.

bird: x1 Swift *A. apus* entered walltop, centre of south longwall (x8 Swift flying o'head throughout first 30 mins but no other entry to building).

- 9.4 No owl activity was seen/heard.
- 9.5 overnight (dusk-dawn) remote data recording: n/a
- 9.6 DNA genotyping: n/a
- 9.7 other-season bat use- assessment: no "likely" winter bat-roost sites were identified.v

10 other protected spp/ecology

With the exception of the single (presumed) Swift nest, no other protected species interest (eg. breeding birds) was identified at the building.

The proposed conversion works do not impact beyond the current building footprint.

11 summary/assessment

11.1 There is no owl use of the building.

11.2 The chapel building hosts single animal/non-breeding Common pipistrelles, at various/varying walltops.

This 2020 finding agrees with the findings of the 2012 survey: there is no change in the level/nature of bat roost use here.

11.3 It is my understanding that the proposed conversion works will have no direct impact on the building exteriors that are bat used (beyond any minor slate repair that might prove necessary), and that the existing walltop, behind fascia/barge-board, bat access opportunity is retained.

However, the building is a bat-roost within the meaning of the protective legislations, and any (**more significant**) works which might *disturb* bat(s) roosting here, or which might result in *obstruction/damage/destruction* to the bat roost areas, **will require a "European Protected Species (development) licence"** from Natural Resources Wales (NRW; the Welsh Government's scientific/conservation advisory body.

The granting of such Licence will be conditional on i) agreed "mitigation", to ensure the retention of any existing roost or the provision of alternative (like-for-like, or enhanced) roost potential at/near the development, and ii) an agreed "works methodology", designed to minimise impact on the bats. It is almost certain that disturbance to the south east wall claddings will *not* be permitted/Licensed during the infant rearing months April-September inc.

The LPA will need to be confident, at planning-application stage, that an appropriate methodology/mitigation strategy is proposed: the site developer/agent will need to offer an appropriate methodology/mitigation strategy, to accompany a planning application.

Should potentially disturbing/damaging works (eg. roof stripping; fascia/barge board replacement) be undertaken under Licence, **(the 2012/previously agreed) mitigation measures remain appropriate** for the level of bat-use seen.

These measures are detailed at i) "Method Statement", (EWS undated, addendum to the 2012 survey report), and ii) supporting site drawings/plans (D. Newton Williams, architect; undated).

11.4 No other ecology/protected species interest is identified at the proposed works.

11.5 To answer the LA's responsibility for enhancing biodiversity (7.2, above), it is suggested that the new build might incorporate nest box opportunity for bird species that use built structures- eg. provision of Swift artificial nest boxes at west gable and/or south longwall tops.

The implementation of any such provision should form part of any Planning Application.

Rob Colley
August 2020