

58 Main Road, Pinhoe, Exeter

Ecological Impact Assessment (Bats and Birds)

September 2023

A report on behalf of Zenel Management Ltd

Ref: 2078-EcIA-HS

Site Details

Site Name	58 Main Road
Site Location	Pinhoe, Exeter
Central OS Grid Reference	SX 96468 94516
Client	Zenel Management Ltd

Quality Assurance

Report Title	Ecological Impact Assessment (Bats and Birds)
Report Reference	2078-EcIA-HS
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Executive Summary

This report presents the results of an Ecological Impact Assessment (Bats and Birds) at 58 Main Road, Pinhoe, Exeter (central OS grid reference: SX 96468 94516) in relation to a detailed planning application for the development of three commercial units with communal garden, three garages with a forecourt and one residential unit with associated access, parking and private garden.




A building assessment and bat emergence surveys were undertaken in 2023 to provide updated data for the Site and assess the ecological implications of the development.

The Site is approximately 0.15 hectares (ha) and comprised hardstanding with a carwash with garage, shops and a restaurant with flat, of which all had negligible bat roosting potential. The hardstanding is mostly devoid of vegetation bar some ruderal colonising plants including buddleia, fat hen and Canadian fleabane. A small ash tree is present in the southern corner of the Site. The limited vegetation provides little ecological value for populations of notable species.




The building assessment and bat emergence survey found that the buildings did not support roosting bats or birds.

Consultation with Natural England concerning a possible European Protected Species (EPS) Licence for bats **will not** be required before commencement of works.

The following mitigation and compensation measures will be undertaken to minimise impacts on important ecological features:

-  Overnight lighting will be at a level that does not exceed the current lighting on Site.
-  If bats are discovered, contractors should stop work immediately and telephone GE Consulting on 01647 253 652.
-  Any holes or trenches are to be capped overnight to prevent animals from getting trapped.

Recommendations have been provided to enhance the Site for biodiversity post-development, comprising:

-  One bat box per new building, located away from direct lighting, preferably on the southern or western sides at an elevation of at least 3m.
-  One bird box per new building, located on the northern or eastern sides at an elevation of at least 3m.
-  Three bee bricks facing the proposed communal garden.

Checklist - Devon Householder / Building Applications with only bat roost / bird nesting issues

To speed up assessment by the LPA, this form should be completed by the Ecological Consultant and submitted at the beginning of the Ecology Report.

Ecological consultant: Matthew Davey BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM Bat Class 1 2018-33405-CLS-CLS

Date: 15th August 2023

1. Impact assessment / survey effort		
Has the impact assessment / survey been done within the last 12 months <u>and</u> does it meet national guidance requirements? If there have been any deviations from national guidance, please select No in the right-hand column.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dates: 15/08/2023	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Ecological impacts		
2a. Proposal impacts on bats / birds and mitigation measures are specified.	Yes (conditions needed) <input type="checkbox"/> No (no conditions needed) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2b. Proposal has other ecological impacts which the LPA needs to consider.	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
2c. Is the proposal likely to result in an offence under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations?	Yes (go to 2.d) <input type="checkbox"/> No (go to 2.e) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2d. If YES (an offence IS likely) Could the works be undertaken, under a Low Impact Class Licence i.e.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three or fewer roosts are impacted by the proposals, and • The proposal will have a low or temporary impact, and • The proposal only effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low conservation status roosts for low numbers of: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, whiskered, Brandt's, Daubenton's Natterer's and/or - Feeding, day, night and/or transitional roosts for low numbers of serotine and/or - Day and/or transitional roosts for low numbers of lesser horseshoe. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2e. If NO (an offence is NOT likely) Does the roost meet any of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maternity or hibernation roost • greater horseshoe bat roost • grey long-eared bat roost • more than three species of bat found in small numbers 	No (none are met) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes (one or more are met) <input type="checkbox"/>
2f. Does the proposal potentially impact on barn owls?	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Expertise		
Are you, the ecological consultant, registered under either the Level 1 or the Level 2 Bat Survey Class Licence?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Are you a member of CIEEM or a Registered Consultant under Annex B of the Low Impact Class Licence for bats (or under Annex C or D for a serotine or lesser horseshoe roost where relevant)?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an Ecological Impact Assessment (Bats and Birds) at 58 Main Road, Pinhoe, Exeter (central OS grid reference: SX 96468 94516) in relation to a proposed planning application for the development of three commercial units with a communal garden, three garages with a forecourt and one residential unit with associated access, parking and private garden. The surveys were commissioned by Zenel Management Ltd.

The area within the application boundary is hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.

This report details the results of a building inspection for bats and birds and bat emergence survey and aims to:

- 👉 Identify any existing bat roosts within the building or any potential features which may provide roosting opportunities for bats and identify any evidence of nesting birds;
- 👉 Ascertain whether the proposals will affect protected species, specifically bats and nesting birds;
- 👉 Provide recommendations for further survey, licensing, mitigation and enhancement opportunities, as applicable, in accordance with relevant planning policy, legislation and other published guidance.

Relevant wildlife legislation is provided in **Appendix 1**.

The **Checklist for 'Devon Householder / Building Applications with only bat roost / bird nesting issues'** has been provided at the front of this report.

2 METHODS

2.1 Desk Study

An internet search was undertaken to identify statutory sites designated for nature conservation value within a 2km radius of the Site boundary and for National Site Network sites within 10km, using the Government's mapping website MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk). Devon Environment Viewer was assessed for SAC Consultation Zones. A search was also made of MAGIC for European Protected Species (EPS) licenses for bats issued by Natural England in the surrounding area since 2008. A previous report outlining a desk study and building assessment for the Site (Colmer Ecology 2022) was also reviewed.

As no evidence of or potential for bats was recorded no impacts are predicted it was not considered necessary to consult with the local biological records centre in this case.

2.2 Bat Survey

2.2.1 Building Assessment

All buildings within the Site boundary were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. A detailed inspection was undertaken on 15 August 2023 by Matthew Davey BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM Bat Class 1 2018-33405-CLS-CLS and Hannah Spencer MZool in accordance with current best practice methodology (Collins 2016).

This involved an external and internal inspection using close focusing binoculars and high-powered torches where appropriate. A search was made for features which could provide suitable roosting spaces for bats, including gaps beneath tiles and flashing, gaps around windows, door frames and pipe work and possible access under eaves, soffits and barge/ fascia boards. A systematic search was made of all accessible loft spaces for the presence of bats and evidence such as bat droppings.

Buildings were then prescribed a category based on their potential to support roosting bats as detailed in **Table 1**. Building locations are shown in **Figure 1**.

Table 1: Bat Roost Potential (as detailed in Collins 2016)

Suitability	Description of bat roosting potential
Negligible	The building is not considered suitable for bats
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used on a sporadic or occasional basis for feeding or solitary day roosting
Moderate	A structure with one or more areas suitable for roosting due to the features size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat that could be attractive to bats and potentially support maternity roosts
High	A structure with many areas suitable for roosting with a large number of potential access points obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis. These are normally sheltered locations, subject to low variation in temperature
Roost	Bats and/or evidence of bats found

2.2.2 Bat Emergence

One dusk emergence survey was conducted in accordance with best practice guidelines (Collins 2016) on the date detailed in **Table 2**.

Surveyors were positioned around the building with a good view of any potential bat access points and roost features. Surveyors used Anabat Express detectors recorders in conjunction with Elekon Bat Scanners.

The dusk surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately one and a half hours after sunset. The survey was completed during optimal weather conditions of at least 10°C temperature at the start of the survey, dry and with very little or no wind.

Table 2: Emergence survey dates and personnel

Date	Sunset time	Start time	Survey length (time)	Weather	Personnel
15/08/2023	20:35	20:20	1 hour 45 mins	Dry, 18 – 16°C, 30-40% cloud cover (cc), wind (Beaufort) 1 – 2.	MD, HS & HB

MD = Matthew Davey MSc MCIEEM (NE Level 1 bat class licence 2018-33405-CLS-CLS); **HS** = Hannah Spencer MZool; **HB** = Henry Buckpitt BSc.

2.3 Nesting Bird Survey

All buildings were inspected for evidence of and potential for nesting birds. This included a search for evidence of the schedule 1 species barn owl *Tyto alba* pellets, droppings, splashing (whitewashing) and feathers.

2.4 Other Protected/ Notable Species

During the survey work described above, the Site and immediate surroundings were assessed for the presence of and potential for other protected, notable or invasive species which could be impacted by proposals.

2.5 Survey Limitations

Care has been taken to ensure that balanced advice is provided on the information available and collected during the study period (s), and within the resources available for the project. However, the possibility of important ecological features being missed due to survey timings, absence during surveys or the year of survey cannot be ruled out. In addition the lack of evidence or records of protected species on Site does not preclude their presence from Site.

Some areas of the roof void were not accessible during the building inspection. As a bat emergence survey was subsequently undertaken this is not considered to be a significant limitation.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

The Exe Estuary Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA) is located approximately 5.4km south-east of the Site. East Devon Heaths SPA and East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are located approximately 9.4km south-west of the Site. The Site is within the 10km recreation zone buffer for both Exe Estuary SPA and East Devon Heaths SPA.

There are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the Site. The Site is within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of Stoke Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland and recently managed woodland, supporting a good population of breeding birds) and Brampford Speke SSSI (designated for geological reasons), though the proposed development does not appear to fall into the categories of planning applications likely to have an effect on these sites.

There are several County Wildlife Sites within 2km of the Site, the closest being Beacon Hill CWS located approximately 1.2km north-east of the Site.

The Site is not within any consultation zone associated with the greater horseshoe population of the South Hams SAC.

3.2 Bat Survey



3.2.1 Site Description and Building Inspection Results



The Site comprises a carwash with garage and car port, shops and a restaurant with flat above. The Site is set in a largely urban landscape, with street lighting and frequent traffic. There is limited connectivity for light-sensitive bats within the local landscape.



No evidence of bats was recorded within the survey area. The car wash and shed (B2) had negligible potential to support roosting bats due to a lack of roosting features and the highly disturbed nature of the surrounding environment. There were limited access opportunities or roosting features present in B2, with crevices which may have offered shelter for individual bats either heavily cobwebbed or with insufficient space for a roosting bat. The limited immediate habitats on site provided negligible foraging potential with limited commuting routes to and from the building. The buildings were also well-lit by overnight security lights and nearby streetlamps. However, as there were access points into inaccessible roof voids, a single emergence survey was considered necessary to rule out likely presence.

A summary of the building description and roosting potential is provided in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Building Inspection Results

Building number	Description	Bat evidence/ access points/ potential features	Photograph	Category (based on Collins 2016)
1 – Garage and car port, office, barber and restaurant with flat above	<p>The office, barber and restaurant with flat above formed the western extent of the building. This was of brick and wooden cladding construction and had a modern slate monopitch roof. A velux window was present at the south-west of the roof, with tight fitting doors and windows present along eastern and western elevations. A corrugated metal lean-to was present at the south-eastern elevation.</p> <p>The garage and carport formed the northern extent of the building and was of brick construction with a flat roof. The carport had metal shutter doors and windows at the southern and northern elevations. A small wooden porch was present at the front of the garage.</p>	<p>Exterior – Some lifted tiles and small gaps around fascia boards were present. However due to overnight lighting and location of the building, it has negligible bat roosting potential. Windows and doors were tight-fitting and all panes intact.</p> <p>Interior – No evidence of bats was found, though some voids could not be accessed. Although there were gaps identified that would allow bats to enter, bat presence is considered unlikely, with any presence likely to be of light tolerant species such as common pipistrelle due to the lighting and frequent human activity within the building.</p>	 <p>Office at the north-western elevation</p>  <p>Restaurant at the south-western elevation.</p>	Low

			 <p>Southern elevation of the car port</p>  <p>Northern elevation of the car port and garage</p>	
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<p>2 – Carwash and shed</p>	<p>The car wash was a corrugated metal canopy over hardstanding. A small wooden storage shed was present underneath, with a corrugated rubber roof. The shed contained storage for the water pump and cleaning supplies for the carwash.</p>	<p>The carwash roof was constructed of tightfitting metal and had no bat roosting potential. Due to daily usage and disturbance the shed had no bat roosting potential.</p>	 <p>View of car wash and forecourt looking north</p>  <p>Shed within the car wash</p>	<p>Negligible</p>
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3.2.2 Emergence Survey Results

During the survey, **no bats** were recorded emerging from building B1. A single common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bat was recorded to the south of the survey area during the emergence survey. The bat was not recorded in relation to the buildings and was commuting past the Site.

3.3 Nesting Bird Survey

There was no evidence of nesting birds and the buildings are in constant use and therefore are considered unsuitable for nesting. There is potential for bird nesting within the ash tree at the south of the Site. There is potential for bird nesting within the ash tree at the south of the Site.

3.4 Other Protected/ Notable Species

The habitats surrounding the buildings comprised hardstanding and were devoid of vegetation aside from some colonising plants including buddleia, fat hen and Canadian fleabane, and therefore the presence of other protected or notable species such as reptiles or badger was considered extremely unlikely. The gardens surrounding the Site have potential to support foraging hedgehogs but there are minimal opportunities for this species within the Site.

4 FURTHER SURVEY WORK

No further ecological survey work is considered necessary for this application and the results are considered valid for two years (unless local planning authority policy dictates otherwise); however any changes to the proposals or if any significant amount of time has passed since the date of this report, a re-appraisal may be required.

5 EVALUATION AND MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Designated Sites

As the proposals include a new dwelling and the Site is located within 10km of the Exe Estuary and Devon Heaths SPA, mitigation may be required for recreational impacts to these sites, taking the form of a financial contribution to the LPA towards mitigation measures. The planning consultant will need to confirm this with the LPA. Given the small scale of the development and the similarity of the proposals to the existing development, there are no predicted impacts to any other statutory or non-statutory designated Sites.

5.2 Bats

No evidence of bats was recorded within the buildings and no bats emerged from B1 during the emergence survey. B1 generally offered limited potential access for bats with conditions within lofts generally unsuitable for roosting. B2 provided negligible potential for roosting bats.

Consultation with Natural England concerning a European Protected Species (EPS) Licence for bats **will not be** required before commencement of works.

It is highly unlikely that bats will be discovered during works, however, prior to commencement, contractors should be made aware of the procedure to follow if a bat is discovered or suspected during works as outlined in **Appendix 2**.

Lighting during construction and operation has the potential to prevent/ reduce bat numbers commuting and foraging within the Site during the active bat season, and as such avoiding the use of construction

lighting that would exceed the current light levels on the site and designing lighting to avoid illumination of boundaries should be undertaken.

5.3 Nesting Birds

There was no evidence of birds or their nests found within the building. The ash tree at the south of the Site requires removal as part of the proposals. To avoid potential impacts to nesting birds, this should be undertaken outside the breeding bird season (which is March to August inclusive), or where this is not possible, with a breeding bird check by an ecologist prior to removal. Other Protected/ Notable Species

Significant adverse impacts on other notable species (such as reptiles or hedgehog) are not anticipated given the small size of the Site and common nature of the habitats present. However, to avoid entrapment any fauna that may be traversing the construction Site at night, any excavations must be covered overnight or a means of escape such as a ramp provided.

6 ENHANCEMENTS

In line with national and local planning policy it is recommended that ecological enhancements are included in the design of the development. This may include five bird boxes, five bat boxes and three bee bricks. These could be integrally built into the brickwork during construction or fixed retrospectively. See **Figure 2** for suitable locations.

The communal and private gardens will provide an increase in semi-natural habitats compared to the current situation, with additional small areas of planting along the western garage forecourt. Three heavy standard fastigiate oak trees will be provided within the private garden to compensate the loss of the ash tree.

6.1 Bat Boxes

Suitable integrated models include the Habibat box <http://www.habibat.co.uk/>, bat boxes available from <http://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/>, or the Vivara Pro Build-In Woodstone Bat Box. These types of boxes can either be faced with or made from the build material making them less visually intrusive than an externally mounted box.

For externally mounted bat boxes, woodcrete/ woodstone bat boxes should be used as they are more durable. For example, the Vivara Pro /Chillon Low Profile WoodStone Bat Boxes that can be purchased from www.nhbs.com or www.wildcare.co.uk.

Bat boxes should be located high on the building (e.g. at a gable apex or the wall top), in a dark location and with good connectivity to hedgerows/ tree lines.

6.2 Bird Boxes

Integrated swift boxes are recommended as they are considered a 'universal box' that can be used by a wide range of building dependent species such as swifts, house sparrows and starlings. Suitable models include the WoodStone Build-in Swift Nest Box, the Green & Blue Swift Block or the Habibat Swift Box that can be purchased from www.nhbs.com, www.greenandblue.co.uk or www.wildcare.co.uk

Boxes should be positioned on a northerly, easterly or well-shaded aspect avoiding southerly elevations and the immediate vicinity of windows. They should be erected at least 3 to 5 metres above ground level with unimpeded access, ideally directly under the eaves.

6.3 Bee Bricks

Suitable integrated bee brick models include the Green & Blue Bee Brick that can be purchased from www.greenandblue.co.uk.

Bricks should be positioned on a southerly or westerly aspect. They should be erected at least 1 metre above ground level with unimpeded access.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In summary the Site was considered to be of relatively low ecological interest, with no adverse impacts to roosting bats predicted.

Careful timing of works has been incorporated into the design to eliminate impacts to nesting birds.

Provided the avoidance, timing of works and mitigation measures are carried out, the proposal is considered unlikely to have significant adverse effects on ecological features.

Enhancement measures have been recommended with the aim of providing a net biodiversity gain, contributing to the aims of National Planning Policy Framework and local policy.

8 REFERENCES

BSI (2013) BS42020: 2013 Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development. British Standards Institution, London, UK.

CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

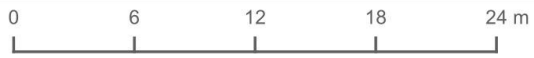
Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Survey for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Colmer Ecology Ltd (2022) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report – Desk Study and Protected Species Building Assessment.



Legend:

 Site Boundary



Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022

Figure 1:
Building Locations

Project:
58 Main Road, Pinhoe

Client:
Zenel Management Ltd.

Date:
31/8/2023

Drawn:
CB

Ref:
2078-EclA-F1

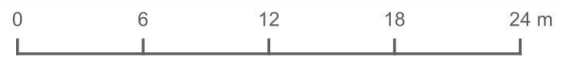
Revision:
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Legend:

-  Bee Bricks
-  Integrated Bat Box
-  Integrated Bird Box



Mapping reference: PMR Architecture, Proposed Site Plan
Dwg No. 20.94_PL_007

Figure 2:
Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan

Project:
58 Main Road, Pinhoe

Client:
Zenel Management Ltd.

Date:
31/8/2023

Drawn:
HS

Ref:
2078-EcIA-F1

Revision:
-



Appendix 1 – Protected Species Legislation

Bats

All species of bat and their breeding sites or resting places (roosts) are protected under Regulation 41 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence for anyone to:

- 👉 Deliberately capture, kill or injure a bat;
- 👉 Intentionally or recklessly to disturb a bat or group of bats in a roost;
- 👉 Damage or destroy any place used by bats for shelter, (whether they are present or not);
- 👉 Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost;
- 👉 Possess, or offer a bat (dead or alive) or part of a bat for sale or exchange.

Licences to permit illegal activities relating to bats and their roost sites can be issued for specific purposes. These are sometimes called 'derogation licences' or 'European Protected Species EPS' licences. These are issued by the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO) under the Habitats Regulations e.g. Natural England (NE) in England.

Breeding Birds

All wild bird species, their eggs and nests are protected by law. The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) makes it an offence to:

- 👉 Intentionally kill, injure or take wild birds;
- 👉 Intentionally take, damage or destroy a wild bird's nest while it's being used or built;
- 👉 Intentionally take or destroy a wild bird's egg;
- 👉 Possess, control or transport live or dead wild birds, or parts of them, or their eggs;
- 👉 Sell wild birds or put them on display for sale; and
- 👉 Use prohibited methods to kill or take wild birds.

In addition, birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Act have extra legal protection which protects them from disturbance while they're nesting, building a nest, in or near a nest that contains their young and protects their dependent young from disturbance.

Habitat and Species Legislation

Species and habitats receive legal protection in the UK under various legislation, including:

- 👉 The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
- 👉 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 (as amended) (also known as the Habitat Regulations, it implements the EU Habitats Directive in England and Wales);
- 👉 The Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
- 👉 The Hedgerows Regulations 1997;
- 👉 The Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and
- 👉 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Where relevant, this report takes into account the legislative protection afforded to specific habitats and species.

Appendix 2 – Procedure to Follow if Bats are Discovered During Works

- 👉 If at any point during the works bats are discovered, contractors should stop work immediately and telephone GE Consulting on 01647 253 652;
- 👉 GE Consulting will either provide a licensed bat worker to the site or provide a member of staff who will liaise directly with Natural England. Actions will then be taken following advice given by Natural England. This may include removal of bats, but only where direct written or verbal permission is gained from Natural England;
- 👉 Only when Natural England is satisfied that the risk to bats is ceased will works recommence.
- 👉 Should it transpire that the operation being carried out is of more risk to bats than was originally thought, then it is likely that works will only be able to proceed under a development licence from Natural England;
- 👉 If a bat is found under a tile or any other aperture, works will stop immediately (as above). If the bat does not voluntarily fly out, then the aperture will be carefully covered over to protect the bat(s) from the elements, leaving a small gap for the bat to escape voluntarily. Further advice will then be sought from Natural England (as above). Any covering should be free from grease or other contaminants, and should not be fibreglass-based materials;
- 👉 Avoid handling bats. Bats should not be handled with bare hands. If a decision is made to handle a bat (e.g. for good reason in the case of an injured bat or a bat in 'harm's way') then gloves must be worn to avoid being bitten. Any injured bats could be placed in a secure ventilated box (e.g. cardboard box) by the contractor for the bat's protection whilst awaiting the arrival of the bat worker;
- 👉 If during the course of works anyone is bitten by a bat then the area of the bite should be washed immediately with soap and water and medical advice sought.

