abbas ecology

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Dear Ms Burrows, many thanks for your feedback on the surveys at Meadow Farm Barn.

Please see below some responses to your comments along with some additional information.

County Ecologist comment: "The report does not state that these features were inspected using ladders, torches or endoscope to confirm the absence of roosting bats as would normally be expected."

Response: on the contrary, this is covered by the statement:

"Methodology

This consisted of searching for bat droppings, corpses, scratch marks, urine staining, grease marks and clean cobweb free areas around potential access points and crevice roosting sites within the structure and on its outside."

Use of an endoscope was not carried out as the surveyor did not hold an appropriate licence to use this survey methodology, but it is noted that some additional inspection of the corner uprights could be achieve with the use of an endoscope. All potential features were otherwise examined as fully as possible.

County Ecologist comment: "Given the high number of bat roosting features that are present…"

Abbas Ecology response: I would say it is erroneous to describe as 'high' – each potential feature was considered, with some ruled out (e.g. the lapped boarding and window frames having no crevice spaces between them, only leading straight through to the interior) and, as per the BCT guidelines, the roosting potential of the building was ultimately 'low' and therefore the survey effort is well within the expected range for this.

re the static data. Although a small number of recordings were within the emergence times the conclusion was made on the basis of all evidence found. i.e.

- Droppings were individually scattered about – there were no clusters suggesting a potential roost access and none around any of the potential internal features. Along with the feeding remains this is evidence of a feeding roost being the most likely status.
- Feeding activity was recorded (e.g. feeding buzzes) including during the recordings that are within the emergence times (bearing in mind bats do enter buildings early in the evening to

forage). This suggests foraging only rather than emergence from an internal feature and supports the use of the building as a feeding roost.

- There were no emergences or returns-to-roost and little activity recorded around the building during either dusk or dawn survey. Again, making use as a feeding roost only the more likely status.

I did also enter the barn towards the end/beginning of each survey during the darkest times (camera footage was reviewed in full to ensure no bats were missed) and did not record or see any bat activity. I realise this was erroneously not included in the report which would provide some additional evidence.

I understand that such a building in a rural location has a high potential for use by bats and therefore that you are cautious with the findings (I note that some aspects I could have describe in greater detail) and I hope that the additional information helps with your assessment. The survey effort was made according to the potential as well as evidence of use and I stand by my assessment that, once all findings are considered, that the building is used as a feeding roost only.

Re the mitigation for a replacement feeding roost. There is little to no standardised methodology for providing replacement feeding roosts so the LHS bat roost design was used as a baseline given that both BLE and LHS bats are void roosting species and therefore have some similar requirements. The aim is to provide a structure that bats can enter freely and use as a sheltered space to hang-up and feed with the addition of some crevice roosting features that could be used for day roosting. This would provide similar features present in the barn.

Should you still require an additional survey to be confident in your assessment, please specify the requirements to ensure that this is carried out to your satisfaction so there are no further delays (e.g. x1 emergence survey as before, but with x1 camera and/or surveyor inside also).

Regards

[redacted]

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