

Bat Survey

**Trowbridge Rugby Club,
Paxcroft, Hilperton,
Trowbridge, Wiltshire,
BA14 6JB**

Client	Trowbridge Rugby Football Club
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Issue	1

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CROSSMAN ECOLOGY

Non-technical Summary

Background

In September 2026, Crossman Ecology was commissioned by Trowbridge Rugby Football Club to survey a small gym shed at Paxcroft, Hilperton, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 6JB. The proposal is to replace it with a larger building.

Methods

The scoping survey was undertaken by Fairbrass Knowles, a fully licensed bat worker, (licence number 2015-12392), experienced ecologist and full member of CIEEM. The shed was inspected for any evidence of bat / bird presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or actual bats / birds.

Results

The shed consists of a very basic off the peg sectional design constructed from single skin bolt together timber panels and fitted with a low double pitched roof of felt. Internally it has one bay, which houses gym equipment. The shed is located on the north-east corner of the ground's car park and adjacent to club house and playing fields. The shed provides bats with no roosting suitability and is classified as having Negligible Roosting Suitability. The shed provides birds with no nesting suitability.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following is undertaken as part of the works.

- A precautionary approach to development with regard to bats and hedgehog
- Install a range of tree mounted bird boxes and bat roosting boxes in trees that bound the grounds western boundary.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. In September 2026, Crossman Ecology was commissioned by Trowbridge Rugby Football Club, Paxcroft, Hilperton, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 6JB; site Ordnance Survey grid reference ST 8169812577; to undertake a bat and bird scoping survey of a small shed that serves as the club's gym.
- 1.2. Figure 1 under Appendix I provides a site location map.
- 1.3. The objectives of the ecological appraisal were to;
 - Produce a map of the habitats on site
 - Assess the likely presence of any notable/protected species
 - Identify any policy or legislative constraints relevant to the project
 - Provide recommendations for further surveys, compensation or mitigation as appropriate

Site Description

- 1.4. The shed is an off the peg design and in its construction is very basic being formed from bolt together single skin timber panels. The roof is a low double pitched design clad with felt. Internally the shed provides a single bay which houses gym equipment. The shed measures approximately 6 m x 5 m and remains in full use and good order.
- 1.5. The shed is located on the north-east corner of the ground's car park, (which is a large open area of chippings and tarmac) and adjacent to club house and playing fields.

- 1.6. The site is situated on the eastern edge of the town of Trowbridge and the wider landscape consists largely of farmland. The main town lays to the west.

Proposals

- 1.7. The proposals are to replace the shed with a larger design, size approximately 16 m x 7 m. The larger footprint will extend onto areas that are currently hard-standing associated with the car park.

Legislation

- 1.8. In the UK all species of bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under this legislation it is a strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb damage or destroy the resting place of a bat. Under this legislation the UK is obliged to fully take into account bats within the planning process, and the level of bat activity on-site must be fully assessed prior to the assessment the planning application.
- 1.9. In Britain all wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). This legislation protects the birds, their eggs and nests whilst being built or in use.

2. Methodology

Data Search

- 2.1. The MAGIC website was accessed for information on any statutory site designations within 2 km of the site.
- 2.2. National planning policy has been reviewed for policies that relate to nature conservation relevant to the site.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

- 2.3. The shed was inspected for any evidence of roosting bats, including actual bats, droppings, urine staining and evidence of feeding activity such as discarded insect wings and cases. The interior of the shed was accessed.
- 2.4. The shed was also assessed for its suitability to support roosting bats by considering several factors including whether bats can access internal and external voids within the building and whether these voids provide adequate protection and shelter for roosting bats. If the building is not confirmed as a roost, it is assessed from High to Negligible Suitability as follows;
 - **High Suitability** – many roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, large and rural
 - **Moderate Suitability** – some roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, rural with some recent maintenance
 - **Low Suitability** – few roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be modern, urban and well maintained

- **Negligible Suitability** – insignificant roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be small, modern, urban and very well maintained.

Birds

- 2.5. The shed was also inspected for the presence of birds including house sparrow *Passer domesticus*. The shed was checked for field signs including nesting material, accumulations of droppings and/or pellets.

Report validity

- 2.6. In accordance with CIEEM guidance, the ecological information within this report is considered likely to remain valid for up to 18 months from the date of the most recent site survey, provided there are no significant changes to the site of development proposals.
- 2.7. After 18 months, the findings should be reviewed by a suitably qualified ecologist, and updated survey work may be required. Ecological information more than 3 years old is unlikely to remain valid without further assessment.

3. Results

Desktop Study

- 3.1. The Magic website informed of no statutory sites designated for bat conservation within 4 km of the site.

Planning policy

- 3.2. National policy guidance is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, August 2026), which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied to planning applications.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- Policy N2: Improving the natural environment states that development proposals should:
 - a) consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development and identify opportunities to conserve or enhance them;
 - b) take account of agricultural land quality and, where significant development of agricultural land is necessary, use poorer-quality land where possible;
 - c) take suitable opportunities to connect to and strengthen ecological networks beyond the site;
 - d) conserve and enhance established trees, hedgerows and other natural features where possible, and use appropriate landscaping;

- e) use green infrastructure and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits for biodiversity, water management, climate adaptation and recreation;
- f) minimise adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features that support priority or threatened species, including bats, hedgehogs and swifts;

Policy N2 also states that:

- integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) should be incorporated unless compelling technical reasons would make them unsuitable or ineffective;
 - a) green infrastructure and other nature-supporting features should be designed and located to minimise the risk of future failure and be subject to appropriate long-term management;
 - b) the mitigation hierarchy must be applied, and development should be refused where significant biodiversity harm cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.
- Policy N6 provides additional protection for sites, habitats and species of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity.
 - a) Development affecting a habitats site should be refused unless an appropriate assessment concludes that site integrity will not be adversely affected, the statutory derogation tests are met, or the relevant effects are addressed through an applicable Environmental Delivery Plan.
 - b) Development affecting a Site of Special Scientific Interest should only be supported where there would be no adverse effect on its special-

interest features or where the benefits clearly outweigh the likely harm.

- c) Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and an appropriate compensation strategy is secured.
- d) These national policies have been considered in the assessment and recommendations below.

Bats

Bat scoping survey

- 3.3. Survey work was undertaken by Fairbrass Knowles, an experienced ecologist and fully licensed bat worker, licence number 2015-12392 and took place on 21 September 2026.
- 3.4. The condition of the shed is described in the table below and photographic reference can be found within Appendix II.
- 3.5. A table within Appendix III; information sheets set out the criteria for the way a building is assessed for its potential to support roosting bats.

Feature		Bat suitability
Overview	The shed is an off the peg design and in its construction is very basic being formed from bolt together single skin timber panels, with windows only present on the east gable. The roof is a low double pitched design clad with felt. Internally the shed provides a single bay which houses gym equipment. The shed measures approximately 6 m x 5 m and remains in full use and good order. The shed is located on the north-east corner of the ground's car park, (which is a large open area of chippings and tarmac) and adjacent to club house and playing fields. Refer to photographs 1, 7 & 8.	Negligible Suitability ☒
Exterior	The shed is constructed from bolt together timber panels of tightly fitted tongue and groove planks. All planks are present, remain in good condition and fit tightly showing no evidence of any significant crevices. Access is a pair of wooden doors and windows are present on the east gable. The exterior provides bats with no significant roosting suitability.	

Interior	The interior provides a single and open bay with the rear of the exterior tongue and groove boards forming the walls and ceiling. The floor has rubber tiles. The interior provides bats with no significant roosting suitability.	
Roof	The roof is a shallow double pitched roof clad with mineralised felt. The felt remains well fitted and sealed. The roof provides bats with no significant roosting suitability.	

Birds

- 3.6. During the survey the shed showed no evidence of nesting birds and overall, the shed does not provide birds with any roosting suitability.

Evaluation

Scoping survey

- 3.7. During the scoping survey, no droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed.
- 3.8. The shed presents as a small and well-sealed building which serves as a small gym. The shed provides bats with no significant roosting potential and is assessed to provide bats with **Negligible Roosting Suitability**.

Bat Habitat

- 3.9. The site predominantly comprises areas of hardstanding, including the car park, together with closely managed rugby playing fields, which provide relatively limited habitat value for bats. However, the site boundaries include some tree-lined areas and associated vegetation that provide opportunities for foraging and commuting, particularly for common and widespread bat species such as common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. Overall, while the boundary habitats provide some value to bats, the main body of the site does not contain any significant habitat component for foraging or commuting bats.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. The recommendations in the paragraphs below should be followed to help ensure that wildlife and important ecological features are protected during the course of works. Recommendations also set out mitigation measures to minimise harm where this cannot be avoided and provide compensation measures to allow the proposals to meet current legislative and planning policy objectives.
- 4.2. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) states that a public authority must 'in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'.
- 4.3. Under the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, August 2026) opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

Species recommendations

Bats

- 4.4. In the UK all species of bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under this legislation it is a strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb damage or destroy the resting place of a bat. Under this legislation the UK is obliged to fully take into account bats within the planning process, and the level of bat activity on-site must be fully assessed prior to the assessment the planning application.

- 4.5. Due to the transitory nature of bats, there is a small possibility that bats could be encountered during building works; therefore, all works must proceed under a cautionary approach. All site workers will be vigilant at all times and in the very unlikely event that a bat is found, then works must stop immediately and advice should be sought from Crossman Ecology or Natural England (telephone number 0300 0603900).

Hedgehog

- 4.6. In the UK hedgehogs are listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as Amended which makes it illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs. Hedgehogs are also listed as a species of 'principal importance' under the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006, which is meant to confer a 'duty of responsibility' to public bodies.
- 4.7. Excavated holes and trenches on building sites have the potential to trap wildlife including hedgehogs leading to the potential suffering and death of the animal (s) particularly if they become filled with water.
- 4.8. If during the development excavated holes / trenches are likely to be left open, then timber builders' planks should be fitted as ramps to enable any wildlife including hedgehogs a means of escape.
- 4.9. During all operations careful observation should be kept for hedgehogs and other species.

Ecological enhancements

- 4.10. A line of established trees along the western boundary of the rugby grounds provides an opportunity to enhance the biodiversity value of the site through the installation of bat roosting and bird nesting boxes. Suitable box designs recommended for installation within these trees are detailed below.

Bats

- 4.11. A Chillon WoodStone bat box should be installed on a suitable mature tree along the site boundary. The box should be positioned on the southern or western aspect approximately 3–4 m above ground level. The box should be positioned with a clear and unobstructed flight path to the entrance and away from dense foliage.
- 4.12. The Chillon woodstone bat box is available from 'Wildcare' environmental suppliers; www.wildcare.co.uk Telephone number 01451 833181.

Birds

- 4.13. The following models are recommended;
- Vivara Woodstone 32 mm nest boxes
 - Vivara Woodstone 28 mm nest boxes
 - Vivara Woodstone Barcelona Open nest boxes
- 4.14. The bird boxes should be securely fitted to suitable mature trees along the western boundary, generally at a height of approximately 2–4 m above ground level. Boxes should be positioned in sheltered locations, avoiding areas exposed to prolonged direct sunlight and prevailing weather, with entrances generally orientated between north and east where practicable. Boxes should be firmly secured using appropriate tree-friendly fixings and positioned to provide an unobstructed flight path to the entrance. Installation should follow the manufacturer's recommendations for each box type.
- 4.15. Bird boxes can be obtained from www.vivara.co.uk.

5. Limitations

- 5.1. This report records wildlife found during the survey and anecdotal evidence of sightings. It does not record any plants or animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of visit.
- 5.2. This report represents a preliminary assessment only. Recommendations and conclusions are subject to change should further findings significantly differ from those collected from the survey efforts to date.
- 5.3. The advice contained in this report relate primarily to factual survey results and general guidance only. On all legal matters you are advised to take legal advice.

6. References

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) *Bats and Lighting in the UK* BCT

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

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Langton, T., Beckett, C. and Foster, J. (2001) *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*. Froglife

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Stace, C. (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles 2nd Edition*. Cambridge University Press

MHCLG (2026) National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

TSO (2006) *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act* TSO

Appendix I – Site Figures



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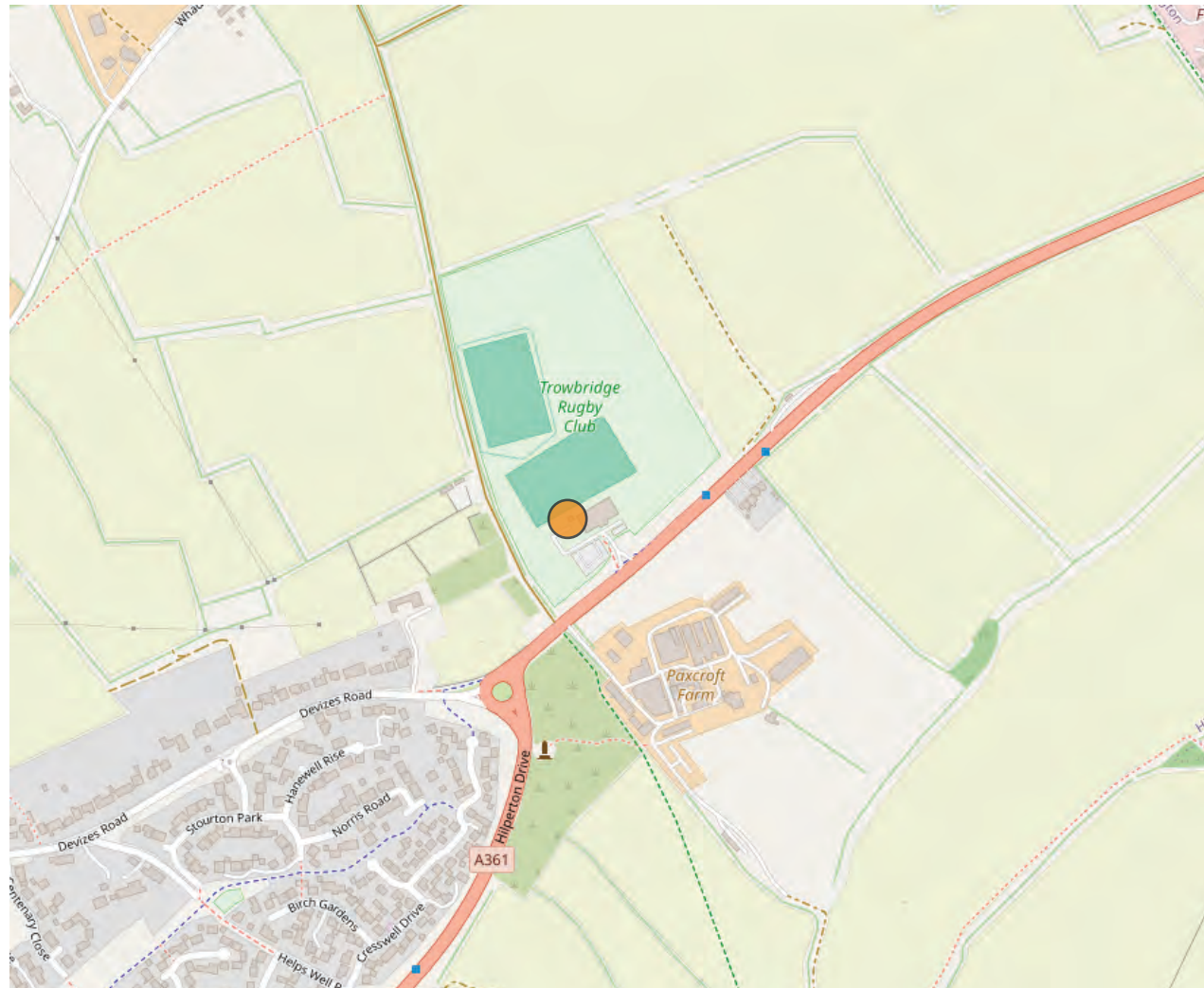
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Site location



Client Trowbridge Rugby Club

Title Location plan

Site Trowbridge Rugby Club

Figure 1

Date 21 September 2026

Scale Not to scale



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Fit bat roosting boxes and
bird nest boxes.



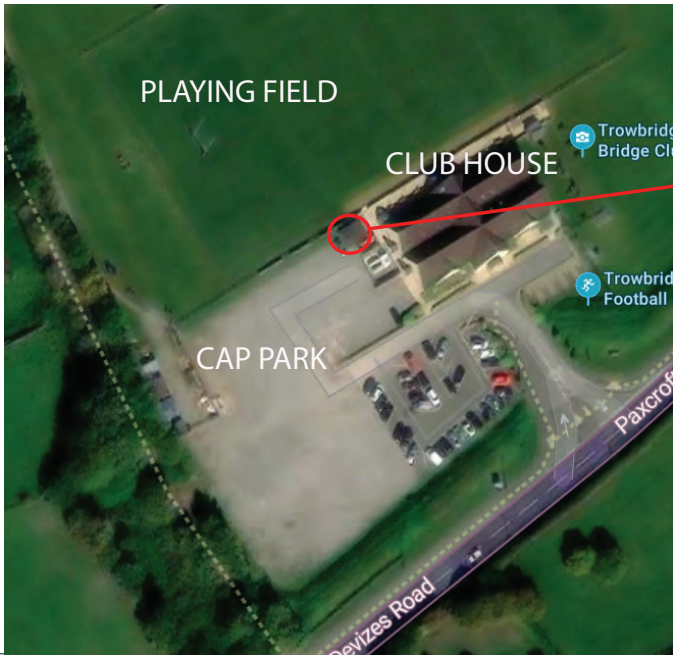
Client	Trowbridge Rugby Club
Title	Ecological enhancement
Site	Trowbridge Rugby Club
Figure	2
Date	22 September 2026
Scale	Not to scale

Appendix II – Site Photographs



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Photographs 1- 3



Photograph 1:

Location of the surveyed shed



Photograph 2:

North elevation and west gable



Photograph 3:

East gable

Photographs 4 - 6



Photograph 4:

South elevation



Photograph 5:

Roof



Photograph 6:

Interior

Photographs 7 - 8



Photograph 7:

Detail; showing areas of hard-standing which surrounds the shed.



Photograph 8:

Deetail; showing the playing field which occupies the land directly to the sheds north side.

Appendix III – Information Sheets



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Bat Habitat Suitably Criteria

Bat Roosting Suitability	Criteria	Survey requirement to prove likely absence
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further survey work required
Low	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roosting sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically; however, these possible roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used by large numbers of bats and are unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation roosts.	One activity survey
Medium	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to the size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habit, but is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Two activity surveys
High	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Three activity surveys

Survey requirements are taken from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2024), which is the recognised industry standard guidance used by local planning authorities and other statutory consultees.