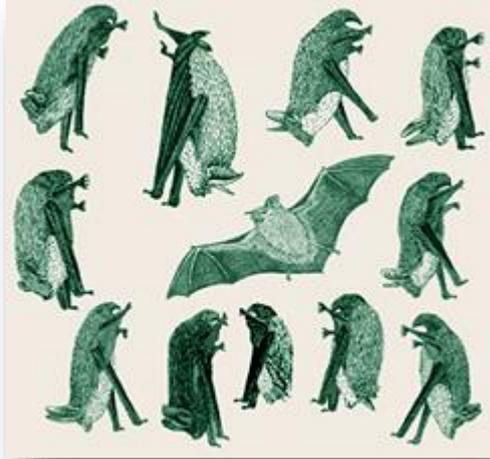


## BAT SURVEY REPORT



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GILFACH HOLIDAY VILLAGE, LLWYNCELYN,  
ABERAERON, SA46 0HN.  
for  
STANSGATE PLANNING

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*NB.* Information on legally protected, rare or vulnerable species may appear in ecological reports. In such cases it is recommended that appropriate caution be used when circulating copies.

July 2018  
6681 / J000945

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REPORT CONTROL SHEET

General Report Information	
Date of site risk assessment	26 June 2018
Ecologist	Lizzie Breakwell
Date report issued	24 July 2018
Contract Manager	Natalie Loben

**Report Version Control**

Version	Date	Author	Description
1.0	05 July 2018	Lizzie Breakwell	Document created
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**Comments on current status and any immediate and future actions needed:**

No bats were observed returning to any of the holiday homes on site during the dusk survey and it is concluded that the buildings are not used by roosting bats, and bats do not pose a constraint to their demolition.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1. An external preliminary roost assessment of twenty-nine semi-detached, single-storey holiday chalets (fifteen buildings) at Gilfach Holiday Village was carried out on 26 June 2018 to update findings of previous surveys conducted in 2014 by a third party (Bat Survey Report, Acer Ecology, October 2014).
2. The assessment concluded that the condition of the buildings has not changed from previous surveys; the majority of buildings have low or negligible potential for roosting bats, with only a low number of potential roost features such as missing or slipped roof tiles and very narrow gaps beneath weatherboard on some of the chalets. The buildings were generally considered to be of low suitability for roosting bats, however, due to their exposed position atop a cliff and their construction. No evidence of current or previous occupation by bats was found.
3. The site itself provides moderate foraging and commuting habitat for bats, but mainly in the form of hedge lines and fields behind and above the chalets and coastal vegetation on the cliff face itself. There is very little suitable habitat in the immediate vicinity of the chalets.
4. One dawn return bat survey was carried out on 27 July 2018 by an experienced and licensed surveyor (Natural England licence number 2015-17295-CLS-CLS) and two experienced assistants.
5. No bats were observed emerging from any of the chalets due to be demolished and very little bat activity was observed and/or heard at any part of the site or surroundings generally (only one or two common pipistrelle were heard foraging briefly in the distance during the survey).
6. It is concluded that the holiday chalets due to be demolished are not used by roosting bats and the habitats on site are not of importance to foraging and/or commuting bats.
7. These findings are in line with surveys conducted by a third party in 2014.

## Actions Required & Recommendations

Please be aware that many actions relating to construction and bats are obligatory to comply with current legislation. There is also the need to observe planning policy and best practice as recognised by the various statutory authorities. There is a large body of national and international legislation protecting bats and their habitats – please see Bats and their Protection in the Appendix to this report. Moreover, formal policies and recognised best practice include the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (former UK Biodiversity Action Plan), PAS2010 Planning to Halt the Loss of Biodiversity, Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, BS 42020: 2013 and BS 8583: 2015 on Biodiversity, and the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup>.

Our required actions and recommendations are intended to fulfil relevant ecological planning formalities and facilitate the implementation of the project.

- No further bat surveys are required.
- Due to the strict UK and European legislation affecting bats, a "soft demolition" approach is recommended as a precaution, with the demolition manager briefed on appropriate ecologically sensitive methods and an ecologist available on call to deal with any last minute discoveries of roosting bats. Specifically, ecological demolition practice (always subject to building/construction regulations) should aim to:
  - Remove tiles, under felting and other roof materials by hand and check for roosting bats before discarding.
  - Demolition and site clearance work is best carried out in the period October to February when bats are least active, and birds are not nesting. Outside these periods, work disturbing species or habitats must only be done under the direction of a suitably experienced ecologist.
  - **Habitat enhancement.** Landscaping should include native species, particularly those species that may flower at night. Further information on this can be provided if required.

---

<sup>1</sup> Policies and legislation are subject to frequent, often baffling, changes. They may vary in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Whilst we try to provide up to date information on both policy and legal matters, this is a very complicated and confused area, altered by successive governments and commonly subject to various consultations and reviews. Please always check with your specialist legal or planning policy advisor.

- To demonstrate conformity with the Convention on Biodiversity and biodiversity legislation generally (e.g. Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), Countryside And Rights of Way Act (2000)) and the current emphasis being placed by central government and local authorities on biodiversity issues, erect six bat boxes or integrated bat roosting features on new holiday chalets and/or existing buildings to provide new roosting sites for bats and contribute to the favourable conservation status of species in the local area.
- Seek to minimise artificial lighting at the proposed development and avoid spillage of light onto features such as mature trees, which are used by bats for foraging and as navigation aids. This can be achieved by sensitive positioning and height of artificial lighting and back-shields if necessary.

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## INTRODUCTION

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Betts Ecology were commissioned to undertake a Daytime Bat Assessment of twenty-nine semi-detached holiday chalets at Gilfach Holiday Village, which was conducted on 26 June 2018, and one dawn return bat survey, which was conducted on 27 July 2018. Development proposals include the demolition of twenty-nine semi-detached holiday chalets for safety reasons due to erosion of the cliff top upon which they sit.

The holiday park site lies on a cliff top overlooking the sea approximately 2.5km south-west of the town of Aberaeron and approximately 1.6km north-west of the village of Llwyncelyn, Ceredigion. The site is in a fairly remote area surrounded by improved pasture, scrub, native woodland and coastal habitats, and the Afon Cwinten flows past the site to the east and is lined with native semi-natural woodland.

The chalets were subject to an update daytime bat inspection/preliminary roost appraisal following on from surveys conducted in 2014, to assess their suitability to support summer roosting and/or hibernating bats. The assessment concluded that most of the buildings have negligible potential for roosting bats, but some of the chalets have low potential for roosting bats due to the presence of lifted shingle roof tiles and narrow gaps beneath weatherboarding. A dawn return bat survey was conducted to update previous results from 2014.

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## OBJECTIVES

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The objectives of this survey were:

1. to provide specialist advice on the possible presence of protected species (bats) in relation to planning requirements;
2. to inspect all built structures and trees (if present) within the proposed development footprint for evidence of roosting bats;
3. to report the survey findings, make any appropriate recommendations and point out actions that may be required to ensure compliance with wildlife law and recognised best practice.

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## METHODS

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A thorough external inspection was undertaken of the holiday chalets proposed for demolition at Gilfach Holiday Village on 26 June 2018, for any bat field signs or evidence of, or potential for potential bat roosting features. Methods followed those outlined in the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (2016).

A subsequent dawn return bat survey was undertaken on 27 June 2018. This survey date falls within the optimal survey period for surveys to locate maternity roosts (Mitchell-Jones, 2004; Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) 2004; Collins 2016).

The dawn survey recorded all bats seen or heard 1.5 hours before sunrise to 0.25 hours after sunrise. The species of bat, type of activity, direction of flight and time of observation were noted. The surveyors were positioned on site to gather the most accurate data on bat roosts and the use of the site by bats.

Weather conditions for the emergence survey were suitable for surveys of this type. Temperatures ranged from 15–14°C and weather conditions were clear and dry with a gentle breeze. One licensed chiropterist, Natural England licence number 2015-17295-CLS-CLS from Betts Ecology, and two assistants surveyed the site.

Equipment included one 1 x 106cd (one-million candlepower) lamp, one 0.5m flexible fibre-optic endoscope, binoculars, three frequency division bat detectors.

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## RESULTS

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### **Preliminary Roost Assessment**

A thorough external inspection for evidence of bats, or potential for bats was made at the buildings due for demolition.

An inspection was made of all exteriors of the buildings affected by the development proposals using 8 x 42 binoculars for any bat field signs or evidence of, or potential for, bat roosting such as faeces, feeding remains, oil staining, scratch marks, access points, loose claddings, cavities and hollows, etc. Interior inspection was not possible. Methods followed those outlined in the Bat Conservation Trust's 2016 survey guidelines (Collins 2016).

### **External Inspection**

The holiday chalets due for demolition are semi-detached block-built single-storey structures with cavity walls, rendered exterior and pitched roofs with cedar shingle roof coverings. All buildings have uPVC double glazed windows and doors. The chalets are in an exposed position on a cliff top overlooking the sea and are likely to be subject to inclement coastal weather conditions and strong winds.

Potential bat access points were noted on the exterior of some chalets, missing shingle, gaps beneath warped shingle and narrow gaps beneath weatherboarding. The condition of the chalets is considered to have remained the same since the previous survey carried out during 2014 by a third party, and conclusions/recommendations remain the same.

Exterior surfaces, windowsills and the ground below eaves/gable ends were carefully inspected for signs of bats such as droppings, urine stains and feeding remains; none were found.

Habitat in the immediate vicinity of the chalets is considered sub-optimal for bats, comprising amenity grassland and hard-standing/tarmac, but suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats is present immediately behind (fields and mature

hedgerows) and in front (cliff-top vegetation) of the line of chalets.

### **Bat Emergence and Return Surveys**

No bats were observed emerging from any of the chalets during the survey and no bats were observed in the vicinity of the chalets at any point during the survey and particularly within the 30 to 40 minutes before sunrise.

Activity across the site was very low, with only one or two common pipistrelle detected throughout the entire survey (heard, not seen) foraging over fields and hedgerow to the rear of the chalet.

For detailed observations please see the Appendix.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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Photographs were taken on 26 June 2018.



**Plate 1.** A chalet on site that is typical of those proposed for demolition.



**Plate 2.** The chalets are proposed for demolition due to erosion of the cliff top upon which they sit.



**Plate 3.** The chalets from the location of proposed replacement chalets.

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## EVALUATION

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No bats were observed emerging from or returning to any of the holiday chalets at Gilfach Holiday Village during the dawn survey on 27 June 2018 and it is considered that these buildings are not used by bats as a roost. Bats are not considered to be a constraint to the demolition of these chalets and the habitat immediately surrounding the chalets is not considered to be of importance to bats; indeed, removal of hardstanding and reinstatement of grassland habitat in place of the holiday chalets is likely to increase the suitability of the habitat for bats in the area. Soft demolition of features that have potential to be used by bats, such as roof tiles, is recommended as a precaution.

Many actions relating to construction and bats are obligatory to comply with current legislation. All UK bats are afforded legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) and are also protected under Appendix II of the Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and European Habitats). There is also the need to observe planning policy and best practice as recognised by the various statutory authorities. Formal policies and recognised best practice include the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (former UK Biodiversity Action Plan), PAS2010 Planning to Halt the Loss of Biodiversity, Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, BS 42020: 2013 and BS 8583: 2015 on Biodiversity, and the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>2</sup>.

### **Impact Assessment**

The short and long-term impacts on bat populations at the site and local level in the absence of mitigation are considered to be negligible due to the considered absence of a bat roost at the buildings.

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<sup>2</sup> Policies and legislation are subject to frequent, often baffling, changes. They may vary in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Whilst we try to provide up to date information on both policy and legal matters, this is a very complicated and confused area, altered by successive governments and commonly subject to various consultations and reviews. Please always check with your specialist legal or planning policy advisor.

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## REQUIRED ACTIONS

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Our required actions and recommendations are intended to fulfil relevant ecological planning formalities and facilitate the implementation of the project.

- No further bat surveys are required.
- Due to the strict UK and European legislation affecting bats, a "soft demolition" approach is recommended as a precaution, with the demolition manager briefed on appropriate ecologically sensitive methods and an ecologist available on call to deal with any last minute discoveries of roosting bats. Specifically, ecological demolition practice (always subject to building/construction regulations) should aim to:
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- **Habitat enhancement.** Landscaping should include native species, particularly those species that may flower at night. Further information on this can be provided if required.
- To demonstrate conformity with the Convention on Biodiversity and biodiversity legislation generally (e.g. Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), Countryside And Rights of Way Act (2000)) and the current emphasis being placed by central government and local authorities on biodiversity issues, erect six bat boxes or integrated bat roosting features on new chalets and/or existing buildings to provide new roosting sites for bats and contribute to the favourable conservation status of species in the local area.
- Seek to minimise artificial lighting at the proposed development and avoid spillage of light onto features such as mature trees, which are used by bats for foraging and as navigation aids. This can be achieved by sensitive positioning and height of artificial lighting and back-shields if necessary.

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<sup>3</sup> Advisory Note. These are non-statutory guidelines by a voluntary but well-respected bat charity. Whilst welcomed and useful, have no legal status *per se* and may not be universally approved or adopted. They should therefore be used with this in mind.

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**IMPORTANT**

Please be aware that, because the natural environment is dynamic, ecological reports generally have a limited period of currency. Many statutory authorities now regard one year as the maximum time that should elapse before a report will need to be updated, occasionally it may be longer but it may also be less. Where a protected species licence is to be applied for, a walk-over of the site should be carried out **within three months** of an application being submitted to check that the habitats have not changed significantly since the survey was carried out.

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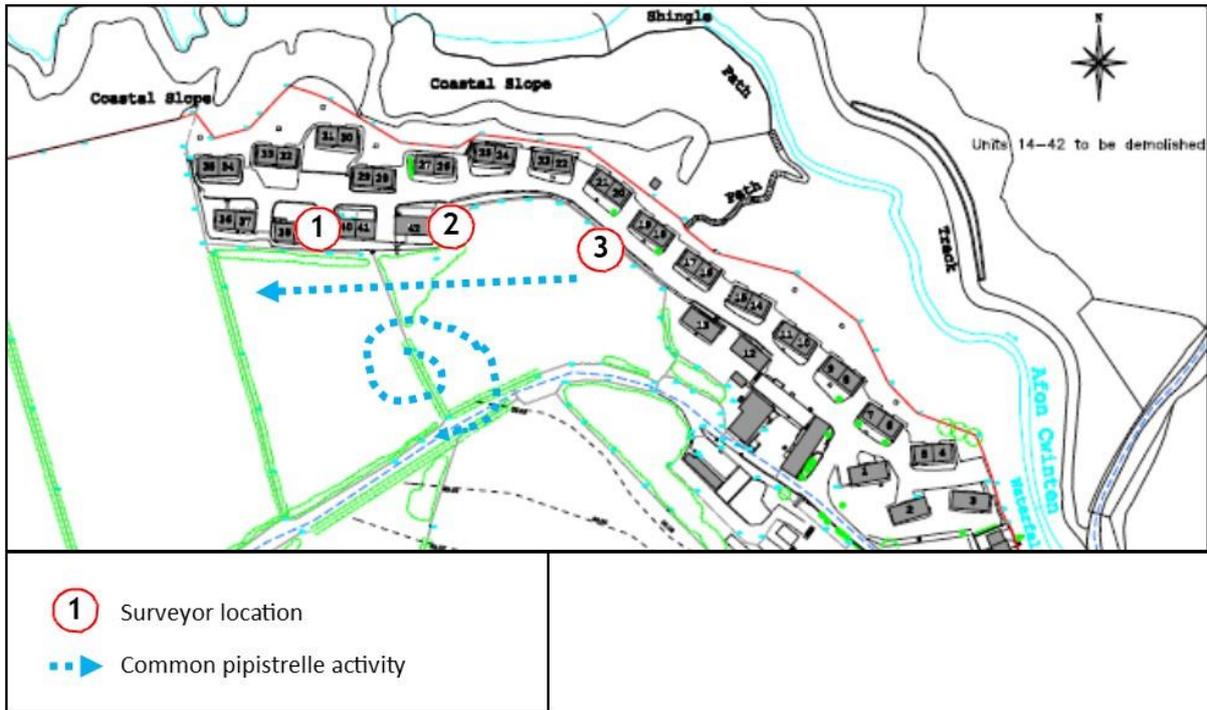
APPENDIX I

Detailed Survey Results

Dawn Survey results on 27 July 2018.

Time	Observations made
03:20	Survey start. Weather conditions were dry with a light breeze. Air temperature was measured at 14 °C, with a humidity of 68%. Cloud cover was 5%.
03:30	Common pipistrelle heard not seen foraging briefly over field to rear of chalets.
03:35	Common pipistrelle pass (heard not seen) over field to rear of chalets and foraging briefly over scrub.
04:56	Sunrise
05:00	Survey end. Weather conditions were dry with a light breeze. Air temperature was measured at 15 °C, with a humidity of 65%. Cloud cover was 5%.

Bat Survey Activity Plan



- 1 Surveyor location
- - - - - ▶ Common pipistrelle activity

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## APPENDIX II

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### Bat Signs

Signs of bat activity may include the following:

- Faeces – these typically contain fragments of insect exoskeleton and crumble (unlike those of small rodents, which typically harden with time). Bat droppings will stick to surfaces including walls, windows and window ledges. They may also become caught in cobwebs below a roost site or feeding perch.
- Feeding remains – these include the discarded wings of flying invertebrates, which may accumulate under a well-used feeding perch. Some species, such as the brown long-eared bat, have a well-known penchant for moths of the noctuid family. Hence the accumulated wings of these moths assist in suggesting the presence of this bat.
- Oil staining – the fur of bats may leave an oily residue on surfaces close to occupied roost sites and access/egress points.
- Diurnal vocalisations – these are most pronounced at larger roost sites during periods of hot weather.
- Absence of cobwebs – a well-used bat roost and its access points are typically clear of cobwebs.
- Scratchings – scratch marks produced by the claws of many bats may be apparent close to the access point for a well-used roost.
- Dead bats.
- Tracks in dust.
- Odour – most bats have a distinctive odour and certain species, such as the noctule and soprano pipistrelle, are noted for their pungent roosts resulting from their urine scent marking activity and oily fur.

### Bats and Their Protection

There are eighteen species of bats recorded as resident in the UK. The greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*) was regarded as extinct until a hibernating individual was recorded in a Sussex hibernaculum in December 2002 and Alcatheo's bat (*Myotis alcathoe*) was found here in 2010. The pond bat (*Myotis dasycneme*) may currently be in the process of colonising the country, based on an increase in recent sightings. All British bats are insectivorous, feeding on a range of invertebrates from gnats to ground beetles and spiders. Two families of bats occur in the UK, the *Rhinolophidae* or “horseshoe bats” and the *Vespertilionidae* or “vesper bats”. Bats are believed to have declined in range and numbers in the UK, due primarily to loss of roosts and suitable habitats (JNCC, 2004).

All British bats use high frequency sound (range 20–130 kHz approx.) as a form of echolocation. This allows bats to orientate themselves within their environment, detect and catch prey and communicate with other bats.

Bats use a variety of different structures for the purposes of roosting, including mature trees, caves, mines, buildings (both modern and ancient), bridges and tunnels. In addition, many bat species will occupy purpose-built bat-boxes or even boxes designed to house nesting birds (English Nature, 2002). Bats use different types of roost at different times of year. Maternity roosts, where large numbers of female bats congregate to give birth and rear their young, are typically associated with warm, sheltered conditions. Hibernation sites are characterised by stable temperatures and humidity approaching 100%. The use of roosts is rather unpredictable, particularly amongst tree-roosting species, but female bats are typically loyal to maternity roosts.

All British bats are afforded legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA). The WCA has been amended on several occasions, most recently by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Intentional or reckless damage of roosts is also specifically proscribed. Owing to the tendency of bats to remain loyal to certain roost sites, sites known to be used by roosting bats are regarded as roosts regardless of whether they contain bats at the time of survey.

All British bats are also protected under Appendix II of the Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and European Habitats), which lists strictly protected fauna, and Appendix II of the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. Pipistrelles receive a lower level of protection under the Bern Convention than other UK bat species.

Section 74 (2) of the CRoW Act 2000 (now updated by Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006) requires the publication of lists of habitats and species that are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biological diversity in accordance with the requirements of the United Nations Convention Environmental Programme Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)1992. The list is regularly updated and many bats appear on it. The NERC Act consolidates the requirements of the CRoW Act in placing duties upon government agencies, including local authorities, to ensure the conservation of Biodiversity.

## CAPABILITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

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### **Elizabeth Breakwell - BSc (Hons), MSc DIC, MSB, ACIEEM - Science Manager & Ecologist**

Lizzie has a 2:1 science degree with honours in zoology from Southampton University (evolution, behavioural ecology, genetics, quantitative biological methods, biodiversity & conservation, and experimental & field biology). She also holds a master's degree with Merit in Advanced Methods in Taxonomy & Biodiversity from Imperial College, London, based at the Natural History Museum. Lizzie's general ecological knowledge and experience extends to field survey, bat (Class 2 licence-holder), badger, reptile, water vole, dormouse (Class licence holder) and newt (GCN Class licence holder) studies, report writing and presentation, EIA and consultancy, planning and wildlife legislation. Complementing her ecological field and laboratory work, Lizzie also has a background in business, the media (working for the BBC), presentations and administration.

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