

Living Ecosystems

'Working Towards Sustainable Development and Providing Ecological Education...'



Results of a bat scoping survey carried out at Bowlee Park Driving Range, Heywood Old Road, Middleton M24 4TH, Near Rochdale - May 2024

1.0 Introduction

Living Ecosystems was commissioned by Improve Your Golf Ltd to carry out a bat scoping survey at Bowlee Park Driving Range, Heywood Old Road, Middleton, M24 4TH. National grid reference SD 84567 06503. The survey is in support of the proposed development of an adventure golf course, an increase in the number of car parking spaces and the addition of another storey on the existing driving range building. The purpose of the survey is to provide an independent opinion of the likely presence of bats on the site to inform the client of their obligations and to assist the Local Planning Authority in their determination of a planning application.



Figure 1 The site is Bowlee Park Driving Range

Site description and location

The development site is located at Bowlee Park Driving Range off Heywood old Road, Middleton, and measures 175 metres by 120 metres or approximately 2.10 hectare area of very flat close mown amenity grassland.

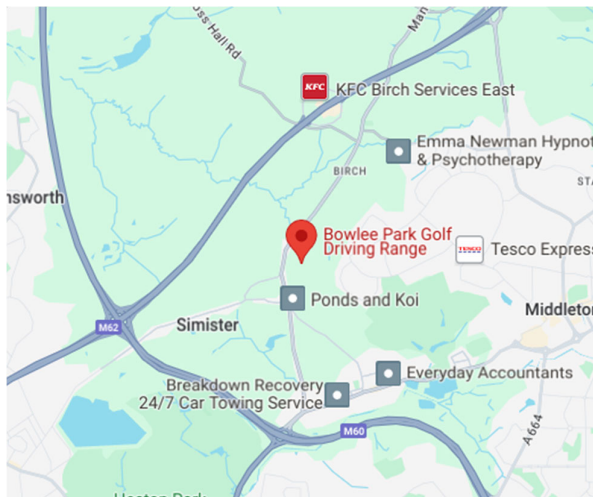


Figure 2 The survey site is Bowlee Park Driving Range M24 4TH

Details of the proposed works

The proposed development comprises the construction of an adventure golf course, an increase in the number of car parking spaces and the addition of another storey on the existing driving range building.



Figure 3 The current development proposals

2.0 Desktop Study and Data Search

This report contains the findings of a bat scoping survey. The Purpose of a bat scoping survey is to identify the potential for presence of bats at the site, according with UK law and the requirements of The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021). The brief of the survey was to identify direct or indirect evidence for bats at the

site or the potential for bat roosts at the site. The site-based element is supported by a desktop study undertaken to identify presence of Statutory/National/Local designations or protected species within the vicinity (from a 1 km radius) of the site. The final part of the project brief was to identify and make recommendations as appropriate for any further surveys required to determine presence/absence of bats on site if the survey determined that presence of a protected species on site was considered to be reasonably likely.

The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

A desktop study was undertaken through MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information System for Countryside). The search looked to identify the presence of statutory designated sites within a 1km radius (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR). A wider search radius up to 5km has also been considered where appropriate in the site’s context. The NBN Atlas: which is the UK’s largest repository of publicly available biodiversity data was used to find local records of relevant protected species and any other species of importance locally. All measurements within this report are approximate only, and have been estimated whilst on site or calculated using mapping software (QGIS) or internet-based mapping services such as MAGiC Maps and Google Earth.

3.0 Desktop Study and Data Search Results

The site is not designated as a statutory designated site for nature conservation, and no statutory designated sites for nature conservation lie within a 1.0 kilometre radius of the site. The site does not lie within the impact risk Zone of any statutory designated site

The site has no non-statutory designations for nature conservation, and no non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation lie directly adjacent to the site boundary. No statutory or non-statutory sites exist within a 1.0 kilometre radius of the site. The site does not lie within the impact zone of a SSSI.

Previous records of protected species within a 1.0 km radius of the site.

The only protected species recorded within a 1.0 km radius of the site is the common pipistrelle bat.

Bats - There have been four records of common pipistrelle bats within a 0.5 kilometre radius of the site, all of the records were made at a location about 150 metres south of the site which is marked on the map below. The area around the site does provide significant foraging potential and common pipistrelle bats wererecorded foraging around the site during the amphibian survey visits during May 2024. A bat scoping survey was carried out at the site during April 2024. There was no evidence for bat roosts in buildings on the site and they arconsidered to be unsuitable for bats. The lighting scheme at the site will include mitigation measures to reduce any impacts upon bats.

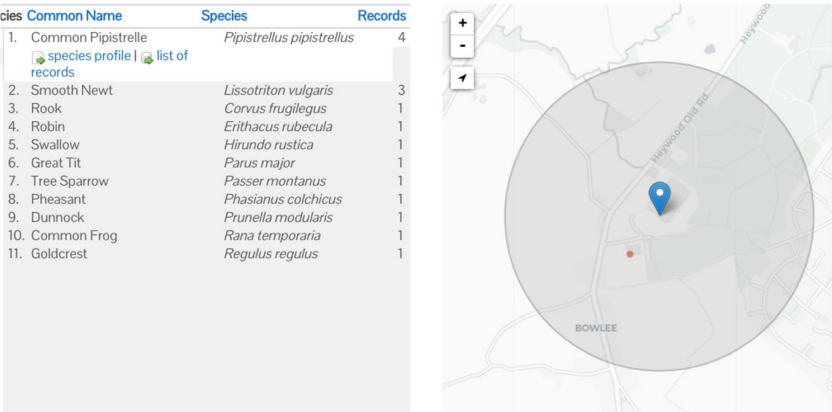


Figure 4 Location of the 4 common pipistrelle bat records within a 0.5 km radius of the site

3.0 Bat survey methodology

2.1 Field Study

The surveyor was Richard Parkinson BSc (Hons) FLS MCIEEM an Ecological Consultant who has 25 years of relevant experience and training including residential training in Bat Ecology, Conservation and Bat Survey Techniques validated by the Bat Conservation Trust at Flatford Mill Field Study Centre in Suffolk – June 2003 followed up by several months of mentored field training with licensed bat workers (particularly Dr Elizabeth Barrett) during summer and autumn 2003.

A detailed bat scoping survey of the site was undertaken on the morning of 1st May 2024. The weather was overcast, dry, mild (12 degrees C), with a light wind.

The inspection was carried out in accordance with BCT (2007) Good Practice Guidelines and JNCC Bat workers manual (Mitchell-Jones and McLeish, 2004). Due to the time of year a preliminary building inspection was carried out only. The site is not a known roost and therefore initially a licensed bat worker was not required. Upon the discovery of any roost evidence the survey was to be abandoned immediately and a licensed bat worker recommended to ensure there was no unlawful disturbance.

There was full access to the external walls of the building and every aspect of the building was inspected. An internal inspection of the building was carried out including loft and roof spaces.

2.2 Bat survey results

The surrounding habitat is of optimal quality for foraging and commuting bats. This consisted of a mixture of woodland to the north and east and farmland to the south.

The building is a single storey modern construction, built largely of wood with a small number of brick walls in very good repair with good pointing. The building consists mostly of open fronted linear shelters built mostly of wood with a single skin corrugated roof which is in excellent repair. There is a clubhouse built of wood and brick with a single skin corrugated roof. There are no trees with bat roost potential on the site itself. The loft is in good repair and weather-tight. There was no direct or indirect evidence for bats in the loft or elsewhere inside or outside the structure. No evidence of bat presence or roosts was observed during the inspection, ie droppings, carcasses, urine staining, etc.



Figure 5 The loft space of the property at Bowlee Park Driving Range, Heywood Old Road, Middleton M24 4TH, Near Rochdale



Figure 6 Internal structure of the driving range structures

Figure 7 The elevations of Bowlee Park Driving Range are below



West facing



East facing



South facing

3.0 Assessment

There was no direct or indirect evidence for bats in the loft or elsewhere inside or outside the structure. There was no evidence of bat presence or roosts seen during the inspection, ie droppings, carcasses, insect wings, urine staining, etc. The property is considered to have a very low suitability for bats partly because of its open structure and single skin un-insulated roof; but also because of the continual use, disturbance and strong lighting throughout the structure as a function of it's purpose.

4.0 Constraints on study information

This was a daytime survey only and represents a single snapshot in time of bat activity at the site.

5.0 Legislation and policy Guidance

All bat species and their roosts (defined as any structure or place used for shelter or protection) are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Conservation (Natural Habitat, &c) Regulations 2010.

6.0 Recommendations for bats

A detailed bat scoping survey was carried out on 1st May 2024. No direct or indirect evidence for bat roosts was found in the buildings or the loft space. The buildings are considered unsuitable for bat roosts. There are no trees on the site with bat roost potential. Many trees on the land adjacent to the site do have significant bat roost potential. The site does provide significant foraging potential. Common pipistrelles have been observed on four evenings during May foraging at the site. These were identified using a Batbox 3 bat detector.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) there is a requirement to provide features in proposed developments that promote biodiversity and habitat enhancements. The proposal would have no significant impact on any bat roosts or foraging and commuting routes.

As the site has been observed to be used by foraging bats it recommended that the lighting scheme be designed in order to reduce any potential impact bats. Any lighting installed on or around the new structures is low-pressure or high- pressure sodium with glass glazing, or alternatively LED. This will reduce the UV output, which attracts

insects. Lighting should be directional, installed with baffles if possible and should be directed to avoid light shine on boundary trees and vegetation.

It is further recommended; that new roosting opportunities for bats be provided at the site as part of the proposals. A total of 3 suitable bat roost boxes should be attached onto the building as high up as possible facing east.



Figure 8 Suitable bat boxes would include the Schwegler 1FF Flat bat box



Figure 9 1FQ Schwegler Bat Roost (For External Walls) is another good example which meets industry standards.

Although no evidence for bats roosting in the building was found a precautionary approach should be followed during the building works. Work to remove the corrugated roof panels and roof timbers should be undertaken with care and by hand. During such work, panels and timbers should be checked for the presence of bats and for signs of bats droppings. If bats or signs of bats are found during the work, works must stop and an ecologist contacted for advice.

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3rd June 2024

Appendix 1: Bat Roost Report Form

Address (Locality)	Bowlee Park Driving Range, Heywood Old Road, Middleton M24 4TH, Near
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	Rochdale
Structure	Open fronted wooden structure with brick club house.
Age	Late 20th century or early 21st century
Wall Construction	Mostly wood with a small quantity of solid brick, no cladding or hanging tiles.
Roof Covering	Single skin corrugated material throughout.
Position of bat access points	Unknown
Bat Roosting site(s)	Unknown
Number if bats at date and time	None noted
Species	n/a
Droppings	None found
Other Information	Not a known bat roost site
Other Visits	Additional surveys not recommended
Description of problem	Renovation and addition of a second storey.
Is there any threat to roost	n/a
Attitude of owners	n/a
Recommendations for action by SNCO	Bat box(es) desirable
Sketch	See photographs

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