Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Sarah Brooks
Head of Planning
Amber Valley Borough Council
PO Box 18
Town Hall
Ripley, Derbyshire
DE5 3SZ

For the attention of Laura Anthony

Your Ref: AVA/2025/0679
Our ref: DWTAVA2162b

30th March 2026

Dear Laura,

Proposal: Conversion of the existing agricultural barns to provide holiday accommodation with ancillary training facility, demolition of Dutch barn and creating of associated parking.

Location: Chapel Farm Windley Lane Windley Belper Derbyshire DE56 2LP

Application Ref No.: AVA/2025/0679

With reference to the above application, I am responding as the Biodiversity Planning Officer responsible for work relating to the Service Level Agreement, which the Amber Valley Borough Council and the Trust have signed. The following comments are aimed at providing accurate and up to date information on the nature conservation issues associated with the proposed development.

Response

Further to our response dated 2nd February 2026, we have been made aware of a Bat Survey Report produced by Betts Ecology (March 2026) in order to support the above application. Please find our updated comments below:

Bats

We have reviewed the submitted bat survey report which details that three nocturnal bat emergence surveys were undertaken on 21st August, 8th September and 22nd September 2025 during suitable weather conditions with an appropriate number of surveyors and Night Vision Aids (NVA's).

It is understood that the barn building (TN1 and TN8) supports several roosting bats attributed to common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats. A single myotis bat was recorded emerging within the interior of the building; however, the two later visits did not confirm roosting.

The proposals include the creation of a new two-storey building across TN1 and TN8 which will directly impact the roosts along the lower storey and indirectly disturb the roosts within the upper section. The plans will also seek to decrease the available roof space where brown-long eared bats are roosting.

For works to commence lawfully, a Natural England European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) will be required. We support the recommendation for a designated area within the retained roof space, a new similar structure which is purposely designed to act as a 'bat loft' or a combination of both.

We advise that sufficient information regarding bats has been submitted to enable the Local Planning Authority to reach an informed decision in accordance with Circular 06/2005 and to discharge its duty in respect of the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

Biodiversity Net Gain

We have reviewed the BNG metric submitted. The proposals are anticipated to result in a +11.95% gain in habitat units from the enhancement of modified grassland and native tree planting. A gain of +60.77% is anticipated form native

hedgerow planting. Trading rules have been satisfied, and the proposals appear to be achievable onsite.

The onsite gains should be secured via a Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan HMMP or landscape plan and management schedule which should be based upon the submitted metric.

The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain requires a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be submitted and approved by the planning authority to discharge the mandatory biodiversity gain condition prior to the commencement of development.

Guidance for LPAs regarding Gain Plans can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain#para25 and the Gain Plan template is here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-gain-plan

Conditions

Bat Roost Confirmed on Site

The conversion of the barn shall not take place until an appropriate bat licence has been obtained. Confirmation of that a licence has been granted shall be submitted to the LPA. Upon receipt of a licence from Natural England, works shall proceed strictly in accordance with the approved mitigation, which should be based on the proposed measures outlined in Bat Survey Report produced by Betts Ecology (March 2026) and amended as necessary based on any correspondence with Natural England or update surveys. Such approved mitigation will be implemented in full in accordance with a timetable of works included within the licence and maintained thereafter.

Lighting

Prior to the installation of lighting fixtures, a detailed lighting strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA to safeguard bats and other nocturnal wildlife. This should provide details of the chosen luminaires, their locations and any mitigating features such as dimmers, PIR sensors and timers. Dependent on the scale of proposed lighting, a lux contour plan may be required to demonstrate acceptable levels of lightspill to any sensitive ecological zones/features. The Strategy should refer to Guidance Note 08/23 - Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (BCT and ILP, 2023) and explain how proposals have been designed in compliance with this document. Such approved measures will be implemented in full.

Best practice measures

All works should be undertaken in a manner by which to safeguard common reptiles, amphibians and nesting birds. Immediately prior to commencement, the footprint of works should be checked for any wildlife. If any active bird nest is discovered, works must be delayed until chicks have fledged. Active nests are protected by law.

All excavations shall be covered overnight or else have an escape ramp installed to prevent entrapment of badgers, hedgehogs and other wildlife. All pipework greater than 150 mm shall be blanked off at the end of the day and chemicals shall be stored securely. Topsoil mounds shall be checked for badger activity prior to removal or re-use. An ecologist shall be contacted if any evidence of badger activity is found within the application area during development.

Any scrub or shrubs requiring removal should be cut by hand to ground level and removed from the footprint of works so as not to create habitat piles. If common amphibians or reptiles are discovered, they should be allowed to move away freely

or can be carefully collected with gloved hand and clean container and moved to an area of safety.

Landscape Plan and Management Plan

Given the limited extent of the proposed onsite habitats, it may be that the onsite gains are not considered significant and therefore a HMMP for these is not strictly required. A good quality landscape plan and management schedule may be sufficient to secure the gains.

Species Enhancement Plan

Prior to building works commencing, a Species Enhancement Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Approved measures shall be implemented in full and maintained thereafter. The Plan shall clearly show positions, specifications and numbers of features, which will include (but are not limited to) the following:

- universal nest boxes / swift boxes erected on the building at eaves level, avoiding southern elevations.
- integrated or externally mounted bat boxes erected on the building at eaves level, favouring southern elevations.
- insect towers / bug hotels
- fencing gaps 130 mm x 130 mm to maintain connectivity for hedgehogs

A statement of good practice including photographs should be submitted to the local planning authority prior to fully discharging this condition, demonstrating that the enhancements have been selected and installed in accordance with the above.

It is hoped that the information provided is helpful to the Council. If you require any further information or wish to discuss any of the comments made, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Holly Fowler

Holly Fowler BSc (Hons)
Biodiversity Planning Lead (South)
planning@derbyshirewt.co.uk

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