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 Rebecca Godson

Your Ref: AVA/2026/0324
Our ref: DWTAVA2368a

2nd September 2026

Dear Rebecca,

Proposal: Change of use of an existing vacant school room to form a residential dwelling, including associated internal and external Alterations

Location: The Haven Chapel Street Belper Derbyshire DE56 1AR

Application Ref No.: AVA/2026/0324

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 16th July 2026, we have been made aware of revised plans for the scheme. Our previous comments remain relevant and are reiterated below:

Sandy Hill, Main Street, Middleton, Matlock, DE4 4LR
01773 881188 · enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Limited is a company registered in England and Wales with company number 715675. Registered charity number 222212. VAT registration number 509 4825 32

We have reviewed the information submitted and Derbyshire Biological Records centre. We acknowledge and accept the exemption from statutory Biodiversity Net Gain given that only existing buildings and hardstanding will be affected.

However, the application as submitted is not accompanied by sufficient information to demonstrate the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development. In the absence of sufficient information on European Protected Species (i.e. roosting bats) the Local Planning Authority is unable to discharge its duty in respect of the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit).

It is recommended as a minimum that a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment is undertaken prior to determination by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any evidence of nesting bird activity should also be recorded. This survey can be undertaken any time of the year, and no works of any kind should be undertaken to the building until this assessment has been undertaken, and a decision has been made by the LPA.

Paragraph 99 of Circular 06/2005 states "*it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before planning permission is granted, otherwise all material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances*".

The results of the assessment should be presented in accordance with current guidelines, such as Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM, 2019) and Bat Conservation Guidelines (Collins, 2023). The report should make clear the requirement for any further survey work and it should be noted that if further survey is required, this should be undertaken prior to determination of the planning application. These

surveys will need to be undertaken at the appropriate time of year, in line with the good practice guidelines (Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition. Bat Conservation Trust). The report should include any requirement for licensing and details of mitigation and enhancement measures appropriate to the site.

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