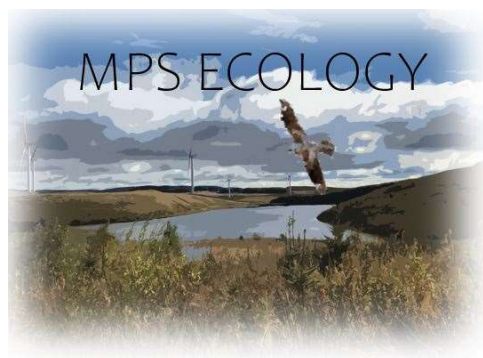
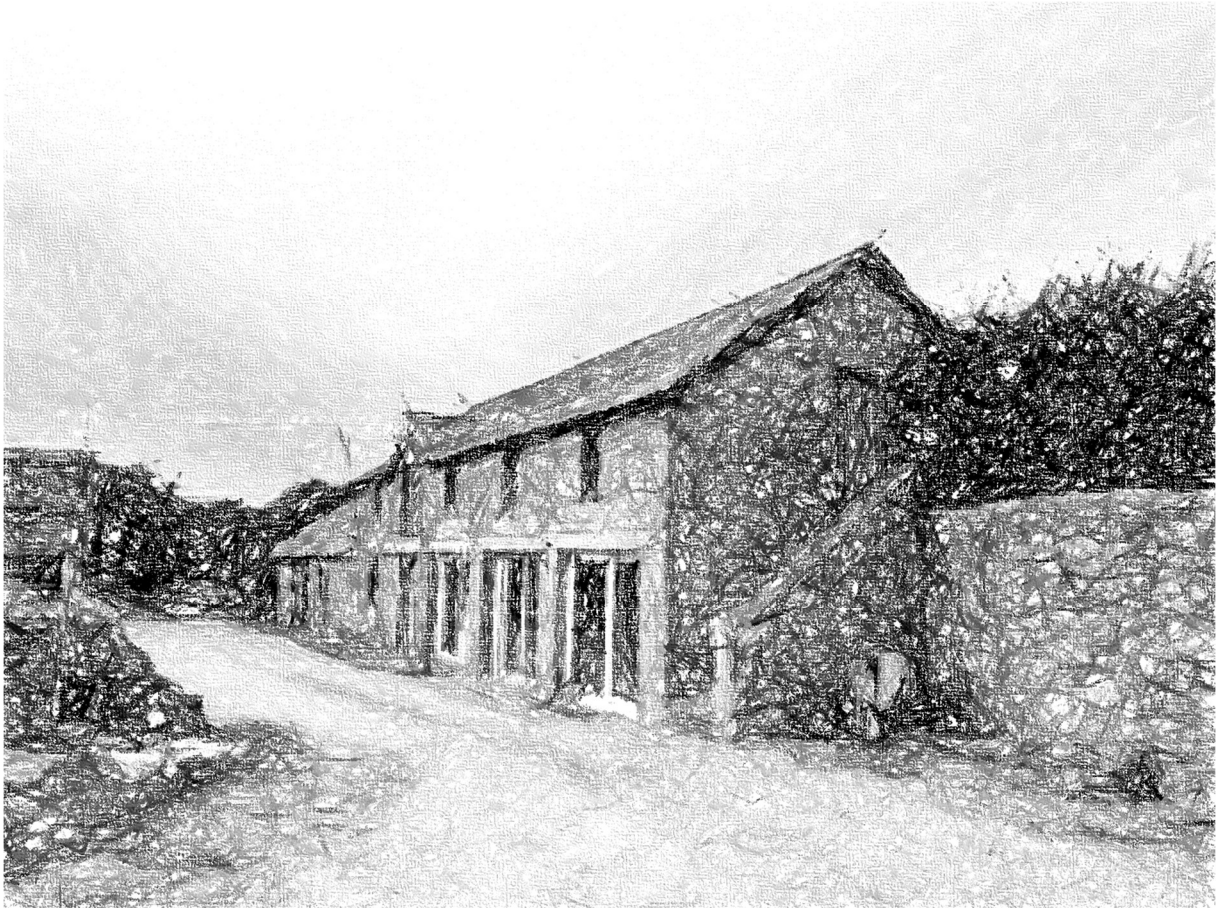


## **Marlas Farm, Pyle, Bridgend**

# **Bat Emergence Survey Report**

*A report by MPS Ecology*

*September 2022*



Project:	Marlas Farm, Pyle, Bridgend
Report:	Bat Survey Report
Date:	4 <sup>th</sup> October 2022
Issue:	FINAL
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Checked By:	N/A

## **Contents**

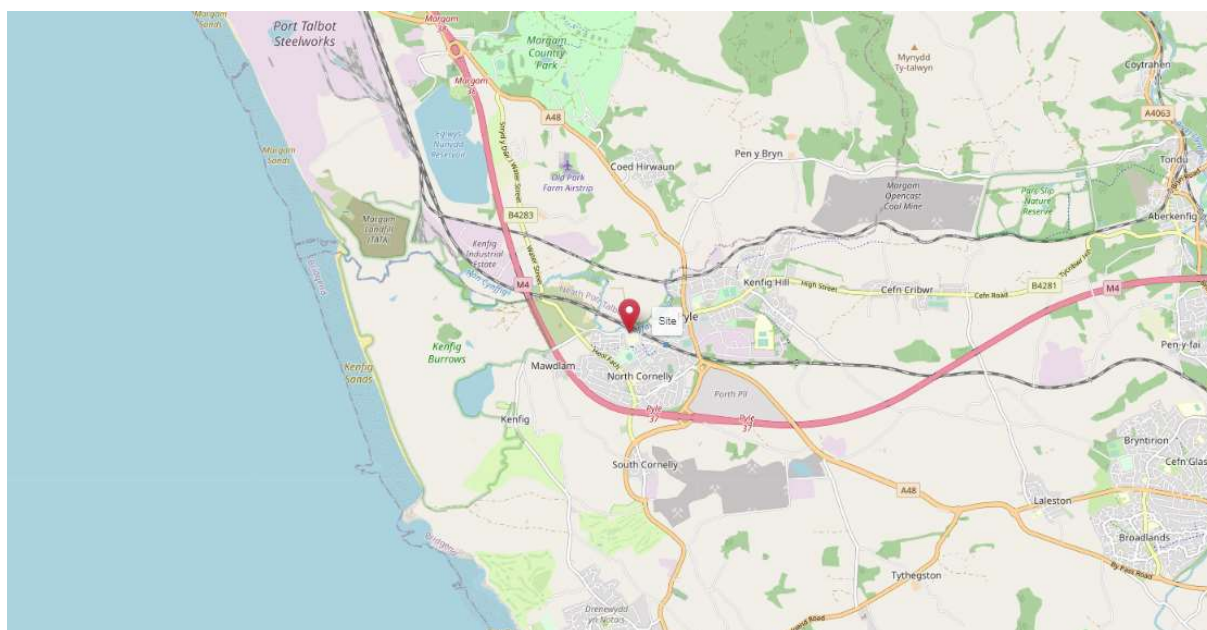
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Methodology .....	5
3. Results.....	7
4. Legislation/ Planning guidance .....	9
5. Conclusions/ recommendations.....	10

## 1. Introduction

MPS Ecology were commissioned by via PlanR to undertake a series of bat emergence surveys at a suite of structures at Marlas Farm, Pyle (grid reference SS 81835 82234) in June 2022. It is our understanding that this survey work and reporting is intended to inform the planning process and development of the site for residential housing.

The map below demonstrates the approximate location of the site.

Figure 1 – Site location



The site supports a number of farm buildings located to the north of the settlement of North Cornelly and south of Pyle. It is also located in close proximity to the Afon Cynffig corridor and the Swansea – Cardiff railway line.

The site is largely surrounded by sub-urban habitats with the exception of the river and railway corridors to the north where an area of agricultural fields (pastoral) and woodland lead to the wider landscape. Beyond these immediately adjacent features the area supports a relatively diverse mixture of grassland, hedgerows and scattered woodland blocks, with the Kenfig Dunes SAC located ~500m to the West.

The aim of the current survey work, comprising of a series of bat emergence surveys (4) was to confirm the likely presence/ absence of roosting bats in the structure. This report presents the findings of the emergence survey works undertaken over July – September 2022.

This survey work follows on from an initial PEA and PRA undertaken by Koru Ecology Associates in June 2022 (See Koru Ecology Associates (27/08/2022). Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment for Marlas Farm, Pyle).

## 2. Methodology

The current survey comprising internal/ external inspection followed existing best practice guidance (BCT 2016<sup>1</sup>) as far as practicable.

### *Field survey - inspection*

To inform the likely ecological constraints to any proposed development of the site, the following elements were undertaken:

- a. External Bat inspection survey based on surveyor experience, local knowledge and guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (2012);

External surveys at the site involved the use of binoculars and ladders to identify possible access/entry points into the structure and aimed to identify any evidence of use by bats such as droppings, staining, prey remains etc. The survey was undertaken from ground-level around the exterior of the site buildings with ladder access where required and was assisted by the use of close-focus binoculars and a high powered torch (1 million candlepower). These works were undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist (Dr Mike Shewring -CEcol MCIEEM). This survey work was completed in July 2022.

### *Limitations*

No external access was available to the eastern elevation of the far eastern building/ barn due to its abutment to a residential property.

### *Field survey – emergence survey*

Emergence surveys were completed at dusk on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1<sup>st</sup> August, 31<sup>st</sup> August and 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022 using suitable ultrasonic detectors (i.e. EMT pro and Peersonic) by experienced surveyors; Mike Shewring<sup>2</sup>, Hal Starkie<sup>2</sup>, Jess Dangerfield<sup>2</sup>, Neil Price<sup>2</sup> and Joey Pickard.

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<sup>1</sup> BCT 2016. Bat Survey: Good Practice Guidance- 3 Edition.

<sup>2</sup> NRW Licensed bat worker - license numbers can be provided upon request

Surveyors were located as suggested by Koru Ecology Associates<sup>3</sup> (See Appendix A) with three surveyors focused on the granary/ cart shed during the surveys on the 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1<sup>st</sup> August and 31<sup>st</sup> August. Whilst two surveyors focused on the Pig Shed on the 11<sup>th</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> August and two surveyors focusing on the Cow Shed on the 31<sup>st</sup> August. An additional visit by a single surveyor focused on the western elevation of the cow shed was also undertaken on the 9<sup>th</sup> September.

Suitable weather conditions for bat survey (>8°C, Dry) were encountered during all surveys and thus no limitation due to weather is considered likely. Surveyors were positioned to provide maximum visual coverage of the buildings as recommended by Koru Ecology Associates (See Koru Ecology Associates (27/08/2022). Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment for Marlas Farm, Pyle).

Emergence surveys started 15 minutes before sunset and continued for 90 minutes afterwards.

#### *Limitations*

Again no external access and thus complete visual coverage was available to the eastern elevation of the far eastern building/ barn due to its abutment to a residential property. See Figure 2 below showing area of restricted visual coverage (highlighted in yellow).

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<sup>3</sup> See Koru Ecology Associates (27/08/2022). Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment for Marlas Farm, Pyle and Appendix A

Figure 2 – Area of restricted visual coverage



Additionally survey work undertaken on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August was terminated early (~45mins post sunset) due to site access issues and confrontational interactions with residential neighbours to the site.

### 3. Results

Field Survey - Inspection

*External building inspection survey*

External building inspection survey results mirrored those of Koru Ecology Associates<sup>4</sup>.

No droppings or staining were associated with the stone-work/wall areas below potential access points and no external evidence to indicate use of the building by bats was recorded over the course of the survey.

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<sup>4</sup> Koru Ecology Associates (27/08/2022). Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment for Marlas Farm, Pyle

#### *Internal inspection survey*

Internal inspection of the granary/ cart shed (Koru Ecology Associates- Target Note 8<sup>5</sup>) was possible during our survey visits in contrast to the initial survey by Koru Ecology Associates. Internal areas of this structure are split over two storeys with numerous potential access points. The structure is currently utilised for storage. Inspection identified no internal roof lining but suitable roosting habitat was considered likely to be present in timber joints, ridge tiles and wall top/ cavities.

Inspection of internal areas of the structure did not identify any direct evidence of bats, although a number of active Swallow *Hirundo rustica* nest sites (~5) were recorded.

#### *Inspection survey – Barn Owl*

No evidence of breeding barn owl was recorded over the course of the survey.

#### *Field Survey – Emergence Survey*

##### *Emergence Survey – 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022*

Dusk emergence survey carried out on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2022 identified low levels of foraging activity (< 10 bat passes total) around the periphery of site by common and soprano pipistrelle with occasional commuting noctule bats passing over.

No bats were observed emerging from any of the structures on site during this survey.

##### *Emergence Survey – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022*

Dusk emergence survey carried out on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2022 identified low levels of foraging activity (< 10 bat passes total) around the periphery of site, concentrated along woodland/ agricultural land to north and garden areas to south east, by common and soprano pipistrelle with occasional commuting noctule bats passing over.

No bats were observed emerging from any of the structures on site during this survey.

##### *Emergence Survey – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022*

Dusk emergence survey carried out on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 again identified low levels of foraging activity (< 10 bat passes total) around the periphery of site by common and soprano pipistrelle only.

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<sup>5</sup> See Koru Ecology Associates (27/08/2022). Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment for Marlas Farm, Pyle



No bats were observed emerging from any of the structures on site during this survey.

#### *Emergence Survey – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022*

Dusk emergence survey on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September focused on the western elevation of the Cow Shed identified low levels of bat activity (< 10 bat passes total) again entirely consisting of common and soprano pipistrelle.

No bats were observed emerging from any of the structures on site during this survey.

## **4. Legislation/ Planning guidance**

The following international, national and local legislation and planning policies pertaining to bats, nature conservation and biodiversity are considered of some relevance to the site surveyed and to the proposed works.

#### *Legislation Pertaining to the Protection of Bats*

Under Annex II of the *Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora* (EC Habitats Directive) some bat species are listed as of Community Interest, the conservation of which requires designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); Under Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive all bat species are listed as of Community Interest, in need of strict protection. In England and Wales, the EC Habitats Directive has been transposed into law in 1994 and, following recent amendments is set out in the *Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulation 2010* to give bats, their breeding sites and resting places a high level of strict protection making it an offence (subject to certain specific exceptions) to deliberately capture or kill/injure a bat, to damage or destroy a place used for shelter or protection or to deliberately disturb a bat in such a place.

Bats are also afforded protection within England and Wales under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

#### *Legislation Pertaining to Birds*

Under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) all wild birds are protected against killing or injury and their nests against damage or destruction whilst they are being built or contain eggs/dependent young.

## 5. Conclusions/ recommendations

External and internal inspection of the structure in 2022 has identified no evidence of the presence of roosting bats. The survey work completed did identify the presence of suitable access points and roosting habitat for bats within the structures present on site during both MPS Ecology and Koru Ecology Associates surveys. However, the suite of bat emergence surveys completed at the site over the 2022 survey season have confirmed the likely absence roosting bats, with no bats noted to emerge over the course of a total of four survey visits.

Due to the confirmed likely absence of roosting bats there is no requirement for any derogation license to allow works to proceed. However, given the presence of potentially suitable habitat and the nomadic and opportunistic nature of some bat species, and in particular individual male bats, the occasional use of features present cannot be definitively precluded. As such, it is recommended that proposed demolition works adopt a suite of reasonable avoidance and mitigation/enhancement measures to minimise the risk of impacts as far as practicable and ensure equivalent availability of suitable habitat in the region for the long term. Appropriate measures should include the following

- 1) removal by hand (or with hand tools) of roof coverings;
- 2) Undertake roof strip works within the period when bats are most likely to be absent from the site (1st Sept- 31st Apr) as far as practicable; and
- 3) New buildings will integrate a number of bat roosting features (minimum 5) to ensure no net loss of suitable habitat (e.g. [https://www.nhbs.com/ib-vl-05-vivara-pro-build-in-woodstone-batbox?bkfno=252213&ca\\_id=1495&adlocale=uk&gclid=CjwKCAjwpqCZBhAbEiwAa7pXeXKj5hxWJwKIQYp2mr\\_2p6OGu9\\_ZVxvqipN05ezUSAKdisxR9t3KUxoCAocQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.nhbs.com/ib-vl-05-vivara-pro-build-in-woodstone-batbox?bkfno=252213&ca_id=1495&adlocale=uk&gclid=CjwKCAjwpqCZBhAbEiwAa7pXeXKj5hxWJwKIQYp2mr_2p6OGu9_ZVxvqipN05ezUSAKdisxR9t3KUxoCAocQAvD_BwE))

The presence of nesting Barn Swallow was also confirmed during internal inspection with a small breeding colony of approximately 5 pairs present at the time of survey. This colony was mostly using the granary/ cart shed structure but additional nest cups were also noted in the cow shed and it is likely this structure is also used by pairs in some years.

In light of the legal protection afforded nesting birds under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, further consideration will be required prior to development. This should include the avoidance on impacts on active nests and the provision of suitable alternative nesting habitat for the long term, post development.

## Appendix A

