

Report for: Chris Dale, Varsity Consulting

Emerging Bat Survey (EBS) Report



Front of Town Hall

Hitchin Town Hall, Hitchin, SG5 1HX

Report No: 3337/1

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SUMMARY

During the emergence survey, carried out on the 04/05/2026, no bats were observed emerging from the building, therefore, it is concluded that there is a likely absence of roosting bats within the building.

No further surveys are required and no further impacts to bats are foreseen from the development.

Should bats be found at any point during works, then all works must stop and an ecologist consulted.

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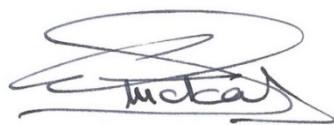
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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	Bat Emergence Report
The Client:	Chris Dale, Varsity Consultants Ltd.

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Report Number 3337/1	Status FINAL	Date of issue 15/05/2026
Prepared by	Clifford Stuckey BSc (Hon's) PhD MCIEEM CEnv Ecologist	
Reviewed by		
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Biological Records of species identified during this survey, the date, location and a brief description of the circumstances of their identification, may be passed on to Biological Records Centre's, local wildlife groups, the Wildlife Trust, Natural England and other interested parties unless written instructions not to do so are received within 30 days of receipt of this report.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INSTRUCTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

On the instructions of Chris Dale, Varsity Consultants,, MS Ecology carried out Bat Emergence Surveys for the site at Hitchin Town Hall.

The survey and report are in support of a planning application in association with a decarbonisation project.

The aim of this report is to identify any ecological constraints regarding bats that may affect the development proposals.

The emergence surveys, carried out on the 04/05/2026, are intended to inform on the presence or likely absence of bats on site, and if present, what the species, population and entry/exit points are. Information from the survey can be used to suggest appropriate mitigation and compensation measures, if necessary, to ensure that the presence of bats at the site is maintained and to comply with the legislation affording bat species protection.

2 METHOD

2.1 DUSK EMERGENCE/ DAWN ENTRY SURVEYS

All survey work is conducted according to the latest 'best practice' standards as published in Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn).

It is worth noting that the first page of all three editions includes the following:

'The guidelines should be interpreted and adapted on a case-by-case basis according to site-specific factors and the professional judgement of an experienced ecologist. Where examples are used in the guidelines, they are descriptive rather than prescriptive.'

Surveyors are positioned around the buildings, structures or trees in order to cover all elevations where possible, which are then observed for any emergences or entries of bats from suitable features e.g. gaps/ crevices.

The surveys are undertaken during the optimum survey period for bats (May-August inclusive) and in suitable temperature and weather conditions. The surveys commence 15 minutes before sunset and continue until at least 1.5 hours after sunset or 1.5 hours prior to sunrise and continue until 15 minutes after sunrise, by which time any bats present were expected to have emerged or entered.

Any additional bat activity on site e.g. foraging or commuting bats, is noted.

Equipment available for the assessment includes:

- Torches
- Ladders
- Endoscope
- Mirrors
- Binoculars
- Camera
- Sample pots (for collection of droppings)
- Echo Meter Touch Detector
- Night Vision Aids (IR lights and camera)

2.1.1 CONSTRAINTS

There are no specific constraints on this assessment and no deviation from the guidelines has been taken.

The absence of a bat roost at the time of the survey cannot rule out the possibility of a bat roost being present or developing at another time. Bats are highly mobile and regularly move their roost locations in response to both environmental conditions and the time of year.

3 RESULTS

3.1 SITE LOCATION AND SETTINGS

The site is centred on OS NGR TL 1835 2928. Post code, SG5 1HX

The site is located close to the centre of Hitchin town in a suburban area, with little natural habitat in the immediate vicinity. It is surrounded by urban infrastructure.

Residential treelines and hedgerows dominated the search area. Significant areas of woodland within a 1km radius are located ~400m east, ~899m west, ~837m south-west & ~515m south.



Figure 3-1 Site Location

3.2 DUSK EMERGENCE SURVEYS

The Preliminary Roost Assessment carried out on 16/04/2026 categorised the Town Hall as having a '**low potential**', based on the missing/damaged tiles on one side elevation, to support a bat roost, and it was recommended that a single dusk emergence survey be carried out, with two surveyors with bat detectors deploying three Night Vision Aids (NVA's). The results of this survey are provided below.

Table 3.1 Dusk Emergence Survey- 04/05/2026

Date	04/05/2026	
Sunset	20:30	
Survey Start	20:04	
Survey End	22:15	
Weather	Start Temp: 12°C Humidity: 75% Cloud: 100% Wind: 2 NNE Precipitation: None	End Temp: 11°C Humidity: 81% Cloud: 100% Wind: 3 NNE Precipitation: None
Building Observed	Town Hall	
No. of Surveyors	3	
Bats seen emerging/ re-entering buildings	None seen	
Species Recorded	None	
Surveyor Notes		
LT	No bats were observed emerging from the front elevation. No foraging or commuting bats were recorded over the front elevation.  Surveyor IR image: Front elevation – Start  Surveyor IR image: Front elevation- Finish	

CH

No bats were observed emerging from the side elevation. No foraging or commuting bats were recorded over the side elevation.



Surveyor IR image: Side elevation - Start



Surveyor IR image: Side elevation - Finish

RS

No bats were observed emerging from the rear elevation. No foraging or commuting bats were recorded over the rear elevation.



Surveyor IR image, Rear elevation – Start



Surveyor IR image: Rear elevation - Finish

4 CONCLUSION

During the emergence survey, carried out on the 04/05/2026, no bats were observed emerging from the building, therefore, it is concluded that there is a likely absence of roosting bats within the building.

No further surveys are required and no further impacts to bats are foreseen from the development.

Should bats be found at any point during works, then all works must stop and an ecologist consulted.

5 LEGISLATION

5.1 ANIMALS (EXCEPT BADGERS)

Wild animals listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and/or Schedules 2 and 4 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)

	Sections of the Act applicable
Bats	9 (1), (2) (4 a & b) of the WCA and Regulation 39 (1 a-c) of the Habitats Regulation

Species listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are afforded protection subject to the provisions of Section 9. A person will be guilty of an offence if they:

1. intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5,
2. have in their possession or control any live or dead wild animal included in Schedule 5 or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal,
- 3.
4. intentionally or recklessly—
 - a. damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection.
 - b. disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
 - c. obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.
5. Subject to the provisions of this Part,
 - a. sell, offer, or expose for sale, or have in his possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild animal included in Schedule 5, or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal; or
 - b. publish or cause to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that they buy or sell, or intends to buy or sell, any of those things,
6. In any proceedings for an offence under subsection (1), (2) or (5)(a) relating to an act which is mentioned in subsection (1), (2) or (5)(a), the animal in question shall be presumed to have been a wild animal unless the contrary is shown.

Species listed on Annex II and Annex IV of The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (the Habitats Regulations) which transpose into UK law Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21st May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (often referred to as the 'Habitats [and Species] Directive.') are afforded further protection. The former Annex relates to the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for some species.

Inclusion on Annex IV ('European protected species') means that member states are required to put in place a system of strict protection as outlined in Article 12, and this is done through inclusion on Schedule 2 of the Regulations. Regulation 39 makes it an offence to:

Deliberately capture or kill an animal listed on Schedule 2 [Regulation 39(1)(a)]

Deliberately disturb an animal listed on Schedule 2[Regulation 39(1)(b)]

Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of an animal listed on Schedule 2
[Regulation 39(1)(c)]

Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an animal listed on
Schedule 2 [Regulation 39(1)(d)]

Where applicable legislation applies to all life stages of a species.