**Bats in Churches Class Licence WML-CL32**

**Report of action taken under licence**

Wildlife Licensing, Natural England, Horizon House, Deanery Road, Bristol. BS1 5AH

Email: BatsinChurchesCL@naturalengland.org.uk

The Primary Registered Consultant and Licensee must submit an annual report to Natural England **to be received no later than 15 January in each year of site registration**.

Separate forms must be completed for each registered site.

**Guidance Notes:** *Please read the following notes carefully before completing this form in block capitals or type. This form may be downloaded from the Huddle site for the Bats in Churches Class Licence, completed on screen, and emailed to us.*

* It is a condition of your licence to provide Natural England with a report detailing action taken under this licence. This report must be completed, even if no action is taken.
* Send the completed form to Natural England (address above) to arrive **no later than 15 January in each year of the site registration period, to cover the previous calendar year (1 January to 31 December inclusive).**
* Failure to provide a report is a breach of the licence conditions and may lead to future applications for licences being refused.

This report is used to provide summary information to Defra and the European Union on the number and type of licences issued and the actual work carried out under the licence. The data collected from licence reports might also be used for scientific monitoring and evaluation purposes. Any request for information in this report will be considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as appropriate. If you have concerns about the information you are providing please contact us.

**Section A Personal and Site details**

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| Matthew Cook |

1. Name of Registered Consultant:

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| B32RC004      |

1. Registered Consultant’s unique reference number:

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| St Nicholas, Elmdon |

1. Name of church:

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| Essex |

1. County:
2. Site registration unique reference number:

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| B32RC019-7A |

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| 1 January to 31 December 2022  |

1. Period covered by this report:

**Section B Bat Population Monitoring**

**Summary of population monitoring results**

1. Were population monitoring surveys undertaken for the reporting year?

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| [x]  Yes [ ]  No  |

If yes, please complete sections 8 and 9 below.

1. Population monitoring survey details for the reporting year

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Type of survey** | **Details** e.g. area of focus, general surveyetc. |
| 31 May 2022 | Daytime inspection and first dusk emergence survey and colony count | Inspection of mitigation, assessment of bat usage of church (porch and interior), followed by pre-partum emergence survey and colony count |
| 4 August 2022 | Daytime inspection and second dusk emergence survey and colony count      | Inspection of mitigation, assessment of bat usage of church (porch and interior), followed by pre-partum emergence survey and colony count |
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1. Survey results and comparisons

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| **Bat species** | **Peak count previous year \*** | **Peak count this year** | **Maternity roost present?** | **Have bats responded as predicted to licensed activities and management measures?** |
| Myotis nattereri | 132 (27 June 2019) | 96 (31 May 2022) |  [x]  Yes [ ]  No  | [x]  Yes [ ]  No  |
| **Notes:** please include type of roost present, ecological functionality, location of roosts and nursery clusters, description of entry exit locations. **Highlight and explain any significant differences to previous year results and any adverse or unintended impacts. If bats have not responded as predicted to licensed activities and management measures, please explain why and what measures will be taken.** |
| The church supports a sizeable maternity roost of Natterer's bats, which roost within the roof void above the porch. It is understood that the bats were evicted from the church interior several years ago. The Natterer's bats exit the roost alongside the structural roof timbers of the porch and then exit the porch via the main opening; none of these bats frequent the church interior.The baseline surveys undertaken by The Ecology Consultancy to inform the BiCCL application including the mitigation strategy in 2019 recorded the numbers of emerging Natterer's bats as follows: 9 May 2019 = 117; 27 June 2019 = 132; 27 August 2019 = 0.Mitigation to reduce the amount of droppings in the porch below the roost was implemented in September 2020. Post-intervention surveillance by B.A.T. Ecological in the summer of 2021 recorded the numbers of emerging Natterer's bats as follows: 1 June 2021 = 85; 2 July 2021 = 78; 2 August = 104.A peak count of 104 Natterer's bats recorded in June 2021 indicated that the colony was potentially 21% smaller in 2021 compared to the 2019 baseline peak count of 132. The peak count of 96 Natterer's bats recorded in May 2022 indicated that the colony was potentially 27% smaller compared to the baseline peak count from 2019, and had reduced in size slightly since 2021. Allowing for natural fluctuations in the colony size and seasonal variations in the counts, however, the results to date indicate that the Favourable Conservation Status of the local population of Natterer's bats is being maintained following the licensed intervention. The monitoring requirements under this BiCCL have now been fulfilled, however, it is important for BiC Project, National Bat Monitoring Programme, or local bat group volunteers to continue to monitor the church roost if at all possible. This has been recommended to the BiC Project and Licensee. |
| **Bat species** | **Peak count previous year \*** | **Peak count this year** | **Maternity roost present this reporting year?** | **Have bats responded as predicted to licensed activities and management measures?** |
| Pipistrellus pygmaeus | 4 (2019) | 0 |  [ ]  Yes [x]  No  | [x]  Yes [ ]  No  |
| **Notes:** please include type of roost present, ecological functionality, location of roosts and nursery clusters, description of entry exit locations. **Highlight and explain any significant differences to previous year results and any adverse or unintended impacts. If bats have not responded as predicted to licensed activities and management measures, please explain why and what measures will be taken.** |
| The aims of the licensed interventions in September 2020 were to exclude bats of this species from their low conservation status roosts within the church interior. These interventions appear to have been succesful as no bats of this species have been recorded inside since.  |
| **Bat species** | **Peak count previous year \*** | **Peak count this year** | **Maternity roost present this reporting year?** | **Have bats responded as predicted to licensed activities and management measures?** |
| Pipistrellus pipistrellus | 4 (2019) | 1 |  [ ]  Yes [x]  No  | [x]  Yes [ ]  No  |
| **Notes:** please include type of roost present, ecological functionality, location of roosts and nursery clusters, description of entry exit locations. **Highlight and explain any significant differences to previous year results and any adverse or unintended impacts. If bats have not responded as predicted to licensed activities and management measures, please explain why and what measures will be taken.** |
| The aims of the licensed interventions in September 2020 were to largely exclude bats of this species from their low conservation status roosts within the church interior. These interventions appear to have been partly succesful in this regard although at least one bat of this species occasionally accesses the church interior. There remains known access / egress features used by low numbers of Pipistrelles along the eaves of the north vestry that were not blocked in 2020 as these had not been allowed for within the Site Reg docs submitted by the original RC (Charlie Dwight). It is feasible that this feature continues to allow low numbers of Pipistrelles inside the church, however this was unconfirmed during the monitoring in 2021 or 2022 (no bats were observed using this area during any surveys).A seperate licence will be required if the church wishes to exclude the common pipistrelle/s from the church interior. |
| **Bat species** | **Peak count previous year \*** | **Peak count this year** | **Maternity roost present this reporting year?** | **Have bats responded as predicted to licensed activities and management measures?** |
| Plecotus auritus | 2 (2019) | 0 |  [ ]  Yes [x]  No  | [x]  Yes [ ]  No  |
| **Notes:** please include type of roost present, ecological functionality, location of roosts and nursery clusters, description of entry exit locations. **Highlight and explain any significant differences to previous year results and any adverse or unintended impacts. If bats have not responded as predicted to licensed activities and management measures, please explain why and what measures will be taken.** |
| The aims of the licensed interventions in September 2020 were to exclude bats of this species from their low conservation status roosts within the church interior. These interventions appear to have been succesful in this regard as this species has not been recorded inside the church since.  |

\* If reporting on first year results, include peak count numbers from pre-treatment surveys.

**Section C Summary of licensed action and work completed**

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| [x]  Yes [ ]  No  |

1. Have licensed activities been undertaken at this registered site during the period covered by this report?

If no, please explain why:

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1. Were all works conducted under this licence during the period specified above in line with the site registration form that was submitted for this place of worship?

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| [x]  Yes [ ]  No  |

If no, please explain why:

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1. Please provide a general summary of all licensable activities, management measures, and monitoring and site management/maintenance undertaken during the reporting year.

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| The low numbers of brown long-eared bats, common pipistrelles and soprano pipistrelles previously recorded within the church interior were largely excluded from the internal (publically accessible) areas of the church in 2020. Two existing bat access points - a gap above/around the chapel door and a hole in the west wall - were fitted with one way bat excluders in September, and after a period of monitoring and 5 nights these features were permanently blocked. Access for pipistrelle and long eared bats to roost externally under the external eaves (all elevations) and within the bell tower (access for long eared bats is via open vents) has been retained. Both locations provide suitable summer and hibernation roost opportunities for these species.To reduce the impact of bat dropping below the Natterer's bat colony that roosts within the porch deflector boards were fitted in September 2020. This roost was retained in situ. Monitoring in 2021 and 2022 indicated that the above interventions had largely been succesful in reducing the impacts from bats as intended - see above for detail - however it is recommended that ongoing monitoring of the Natterer's bat colony is completed by volunteers if at all possible. |

**Section D Impacts caused by bat presence**

1. Now that work has been undertaken to reduce the impact of bats, please fill in the table below by making a new assessment of the impacts that bat presence is currently having at the church. The information provided will be compared to the site registration document or previous licence returns to give an indication of success.

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| Do bats cause damage to: (if yes, please rate on scale of 1-4 where 1= tolerable and 4 = severe) | * The fabric of the church
* Monuments
* Fixtures and fittings
 | [ ]  Yes [x]  No Scale:       [ ]  Yes [x]  No Scale:       [x]  Yes [ ]  No Scale: 1  |
| Please provide details of damage, if any:  | There is still occasional evidence of the remaining bat(s) inside the building. These impact the altar cloths with their droppings.  |
| Do bats disrupt or stop worship taking place at the church? (if yes, please rate on scale of 1-4 where 1 = tolerable and 4 = severe) | [ ]  Yes [x]  No Scale: 1  |
| If yes, please provide details:  | See above |
| Do bats disrupt or stop the church being used for: (if yes, please rate on scale of 1-4 where 1 = tolerable and 4 = severe) | * Weddings
* Funerals
* Community activities
 | [ ]  Yes [x]  No Scale:       [ ]  Yes [x]  No Scale:       [x]  Yes [ ]  No Scale: 2  |
| If yes, please provide details:  | The church still needs to be cleaned between services, and always before weddings and funerals. The bat impact is however notably reduced compared with the era before this work was carried out. |

**Section E Management and progress towards meeting outcomes**

1. Please describe the progress that has been made towards meeting the agreed outcomes as described in the site registration form:

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| The bat mitigation measures described in the site reg docs have now been implemented and monitoring in 2021 and 2022 indicated that these interventions had largely been successful in reducing the impacts from bats as intended - see above for detail. |

1. Given the results achieved this year, will you be undertaking work differently next year than described in the site registration form or in previous licence reports?

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| [ ]  Yes [x]  No  |

1. If yes, provide details about any changes in approach:

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Please note that:

If details within an authorised site registration form change, which could affect Natural England’s licensing assessment, the Licensee and Primary Registered Consultant must apply promptly to Natural England with an amended site registration form to allow reassessment.

Subject to natural change, in the unexpected event that monitoring reveals that populations have not responded as predicted to the licensed activities and risks to bats have increased, the Licensee and Primary Registered Consultant must promptly submit an amended site registration form and/or an adaptive management plan to Natural England of further measures and monitoring needed to address these risks. No licensed activities may continue until written authorisation has been received from Natural England.

**PRIMARY REGISTERED CONSULTANT DECLARATION**

I declare, as the Primary Registered Consultant for this registered site, that:

1. I have personally completed this licence return form.

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| [x]  Yes, I confirm |

1. I accept responsibility for the information provided.

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| [x]  Yes, I confirm |

**LICENSEE DECLARATION**

I declare, as the Licensee, that:

1. To the best of my belief and knowledge the information in this licence return form is accurate.

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| [x]  Yes, I confirm |