

kite ecology

Extended Phase 1 and Protected Species Survey

**Land to east of Ogmore House, Templeton,
Pembrokeshire**

Mr Morse

Final Report

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kite ecology

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This report, and the information contained in it, is intended to be valid for a maximum of 12 months from the date of the survey, providing no significant baseline changes have occurred.

Project number	Report number	Revision number	Date of issue
2033	001	Draft	10032021
2033	001	Final	17052021

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 An extended phase 1 and protected species survey of land to the east of Ogmores House, Templeton, Pembrokeshire were commissioned by Hayston Developments & Planning Ltd on behalf of the owner, Mr Morse, in relation to a planning application. Under the current proposals, the land would be developed for housing.
- 1.2 A walkover survey of the site was carried out on 5th March 2021 when it was surveyed for evidence of use by protected species including badgers, bats, birds, dormice and reptiles as these were considered the species most likely to utilise the site. Habitats on site were also recorded. All surveys were completed by a suitably licensed and experienced ecologist.
- 1.3 No evidence of protected species was found on site. The site comprises two improved agricultural fields which have recently been used to graze cattle. There are two further sections of grassland which currently form part of the rear garden associated with Ogmores House. The hedgerows surrounding the site are species poor and well maintained as boundary features. The eastern hedgerow is adjacent to the railway line so beyond an existing post and wire fence out of the proposed development. The only hedgerow to be impacted is the central hedgerow which separates the two fields. There is a storage shed along the northern boundary. This has corrugated metal walls and roof and is considered to be of very low bat potential, so no additional surveys have been recommended in this instance.
- 1.4 While there was no evidence of protected species on site, the development should be used as an opportunity to improve the biodiversity of the site. It is considered unlikely that the development would impact on the biodiversity of the area, particularly if the recommendations of this report are included in the scheme.

2 Introduction and site description

- 2.1 An extended phase 1 and protected species survey of land to the east of Ogmores House, Templeton, Pembrokeshire were commissioned by Hayston Developments & Planning Ltd on behalf of the owner, Mr Morse, in relation to a planning application. Under the current proposals, the land would be developed for housing. The centre of the site is located at OSGR SN11371164.
- 2.2 The survey relates to two agricultural fields located to the east of Ogmores House. Two further fields were also included and these currently form the rear garden associated with Ogmores House. The extent of the survey is shown on Figure 1.



Figure 1. Aerial photograph of the survey area.

2.3 Unless the client indicates otherwise, all species records will be submitted to the relevant biological records centre.

3 Desk study and survey methodology

3.1 General

A walkover survey of the site was carried out on 5th March 2021 when it was surveyed for evidence of use by protected species including badgers, bats, birds, dormice and reptiles as these were considered the species most likely to utilise the site. The weather on the day of the survey was clear with light south westerly winds of Force 1-2 and an average temperature of 7°C. All surveys were undertaken by a suitably licensed ecologist who is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and a Chartered Environmentalist. Surveys and reports have been completed following accepted guidelines and in accordance with CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (2015) and BS 42020:2013 *Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development.* (2013).

3.2 Desk study

3.2.1 Local Records Centre Data Search

The West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre (WWBIC) was contacted for known records of Protected Species, records for other species of conservation concern and locally important species within 2km of the site.

3.2.2 Aerial photographs

Google Earth was used to identify any important landscape features surrounding the site.

3.2.3 Designated sites

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information website (www.magic.gov.uk) was used to identify the presence of any protected sites within 2km of the survey area.

3.3 On site surveys

3.3.1 Phase 1

A Phase 1 habitat survey was carried out following the standard field methodology set out in the *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – A Technique for Environmental Audit*, Joint Nature Conservation Committee 1990 (2016 edition).

3.3.2 Badgers

The site, and where possible, a radius of 30 metres from the site boundary was searched for badger setts. Sett entrances are recognised by entrances c.300mm wide and c.200mm high and tend to have large accumulations of earth outside. Other signs searched for included 'snuffle holes' (holes dug by badgers when searching for invertebrates), 'dung pits' (small pits in which badgers deposit their faeces) and 'day nests' (nests of bedding material made by badgers for sleeping above ground).

3.3.3 Bats

3.3.3.1 Visual inspection

An initial internal inspection of the buildings was undertaken using a ladder and powerful torch. Binoculars, a LUX meter and an endoscope were also available. The buildings were searched thoroughly for any signs of bats including droppings, feeding remains, staining and the bats themselves. Any potential bat access points were also recorded. Following this initial inspection, an emergence survey was carried out.

3.3.4 Dormice

The hedges, scrub and woodland were assessed for their potential use by dormice and any areas of fruiting hazel were searched for hazel nuts opened in the characteristic way.

3.3.5 Birds

Any birds seen or heard on site during the survey were recorded.

3.3.6 Reptiles

Given the time of year that the survey was carried out, it was only possible to assess the habitat suitability for reptiles.

3.3.7 Other species

Incidental records of any other species seen or heard on site during the survey were also recorded.

4 Results

4.1 Desk study

4.1.1 Local Records Centre

There are over 2575 individual species records within a 2km radius of the site. Of these the majority relate to butterfly and moth species recorded on the Templeton Airfield to the south west of the site. Other species of relevance include badger *Meles meles*, hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, brown long eared *Plecotus auritus*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*. The species records are summarised on Figure 2.

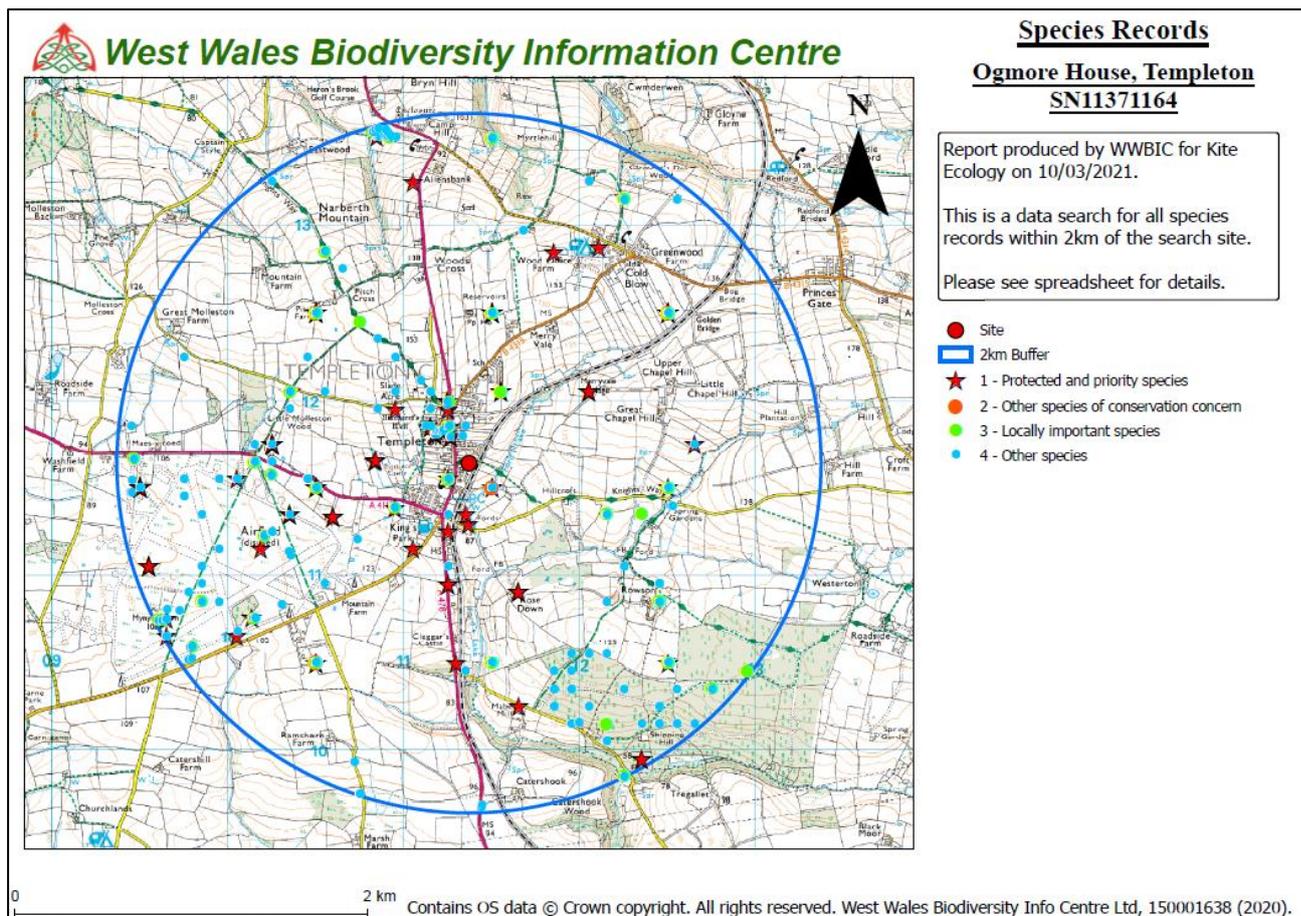


Figure 2. Summary of species records within a 2km radius.

4.1.2 Aerial photographs

Situated to the east of the linear village of Templeton, there are existing houses to the north, south and west, with a main railway line along the eastern boundary. Except for the scrubby vegetation along the eastern boundary, the habitats on site are relatively isolated from the surrounding vegetation.



Figure 3. Aerial photograph of the survey area in relation to the surrounding habitat.

4.1.3 Designated sites

There are no designated sites within a 2km radius of the proposed development site.

4.2 On site surveys

4.2.1 Phase 1

4.2.1.1 Field 1

Well maintained grassland (Figure 4) adjacent to access track to buildings and fields to the east. Dominated by red fescue *Festuca rubra*.



Figure 4. Grassland to north of access track on north western half of the survey area.

4.2.1.2 Field 2 and 3

An improved grassland field situated in the north eastern corner of the site and until recently grazed by cattle. Includes common daisy *Bellis perennis*, common dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, red fescue, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, red clover *Trifolium pratense*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, celandine *Ficaria verna* and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*. The fields are shown in Figures 5 and 6.



Figure 5. Panoramic view of field 2 (north eastern corner of survey area) taken from the north western corner facing eastwards.



Figure 6. Panoramic view of field 3 (south eastern corner of the survey area) taken from the eastern boundary facing south west.

4.2.1.3 *Field 4 and 5*

Two fields situated centrally in the survey area (Figures 7 and 8). Both have a very short, uniform sward height and are currently used as lawns associated with Ogmore House.



Figure 7. Central field currently used as lawn and situated to the south of the survey area.



Figure 8. Field 5 (located centrally in the survey area) and currently forming lawn associated with Ogmore House.

4.2.1.4 Hedgerows 1 -6

All hedgerows on site are dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* with occasional ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*. The hedgerows also include ivy *Hedra helix* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. with occasional hart's tongue fern *Asplenium scolopendrium*. All hedgerows are relatively well maintained as boundary features. Hedgerow 3 (along the eastern boundary adjacent to the railway line) is rather gappy and situated on the opposite side of the fence, so off the proposed development site. Fields 4 and 5 which are both used as lawn associated with Ogmore House are surrounded by amenity hedgerows including cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, *Griselinia* and box *Buxus* sp.



Figure 9. Hedgerow 1. Forming the north western boundary.



Figure 10. Hedgerow 2 forming the north eastern boundary.



Figure 11. Eastern hedgerow with railway line to east.



Figure 12. Central hedgerow between Fields 2 and 3.



Figure 13. Southern hedgerow.



Figure 14. Western hedgerow.

4.2.1.5 *Building 1*

A double height storage building (Figure 15) that has unlined corrugated metal walls and an unlined cement fibre roof. The roof has a shallow pitch and includes skylights, making the building very light internally.



Figure 15. Storage building to the north of the site.

4.2.1.6 The site layout is shown on Figure 16.



Figure 16. Site layout.

4.2.2 Badgers

No evidence of badgers was found on site or within a 30m radius of the site boundary.

4.2.3 Bats

4.2.3.1 Buildings

The one building on site has unlined corrugated metal walls and an unlined corrugated cement fibre roof. It lacks any potential roosting features. The building is also very light internally as there are skylights in the roof. The building could be surveyed without the use of a torch, even though one was used.

4.2.3.2 *Trees*

There are a number of mature trees in the hedgerows surrounding the site. However, the trees lacked any features suitable for roosting bats and can be classed as being of low Bat Roosting Feature potential.

4.2.3.3 *Habitat*

As there are a number of known bat records in the area, it is likely that the site would be used by foraging and commuting bats.

4.2.4 **Dormice**

There are no known dormouse records within a 2km radius of the site. The hedgerows lack the dense and diverse species range usually required to support dormice.

4.2.5 **Birds**

Blackbird Turdus merula and crow *Corvus corone* were all seen or heard on site during the survey. It is likely that the hedgerows are used by nesting birds at appropriate times of year.

4.2.6 **Reptiles**

While the fields and garden areas appear too uniformly short to support reptiles, it is possible that the vegetation along the base of the hedgerows may support common species such as slow worm. There are also several rubble piles on site which may again be suitable for use by reptiles.



Figure 17. Rubble pile adjacent to H1 (western half of the northern boundary).

4.2.7 **Other species**

No other species were recorded.

5 Limitations to surveys

- 5.1 The results and recommendations of the report are based on findings as they were at the time of the survey. Kite Ecology cannot be held responsible for any base line changes to the site that have occurred since the survey was carried out that may have any effect on the results and recommendations.

6 Legislation and planning policy

6.1 Designated sites

Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest are strictly protected through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

6.2 Badgers

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 fully protects badgers and their setts and makes it an offence to either intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a badger, to cruelly ill-treat a badger or to interfere with a badger sett. Under section 10(1)(d) of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, Natural Resources Wales has the authority to issue licences to interfere with a badger sett for the purpose of development, as defined by Section 55(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

6.4 Bats

All species of bat and their breeding sites or resting places (roosts) are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which transcribes the EC Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna) into UK law. Bats are also protected under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence for anyone intentionally to kill, injure or handle a bat, to possess a bat (whether live or dead), disturb a roosting bat, or sell or offer a bat for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not. Licences are available from Natural Resources Wales to allow actions that would otherwise be unlawful.

6.5 Dormice

The dormouse is strictly protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which transcribes the EC Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna) into UK law. The deliberate and reckless capturing, disturbing, injuring and killing of dormice is prohibited, as is damaging or destroying their breeding site or resting places. Licences are available from Natural Resources Wales to allow actions that would otherwise be unlawful.

6.6 Birds

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

6.7 Reptiles

Common lizard, slow-worm, adder and grass snake are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it illegal to intentionally kill or injure these animals.

6.8 **Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a duty on public bodies listed in the Act to carry out sustainable development.

6.9 **Environment (Wales) Act 2016**

The Environment (Wales) Act has been designed to complement the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act by applying the principles of sustainable development to the management of Wales' natural resources. The Act puts the ecosystem approach into statute through a set of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) principles, which are based on the 12 principles (Ecosystem Approach principles) contained in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

6.10 **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006**

Section 40 of the NERC Act places a 'Biodiversity Duty' on local planning authorities as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions.

6.11 **Technical Advice Notes 5**

TAN 5 gives advice to local authorities on development control issues for Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). It also covers the selection and designation of non-statutory nature conservation sites, such as local nature reserves, and the protection of species, commons and greens.

6.12 **Local Development Plan**

Policy GN.37 (Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity) from the Pembrokeshire Local Development Plan states:

'All development should demonstrate a positive approach to maintaining and, where ever possible, enhancing biodiversity. Development that would disturb or otherwise harm protected species or their habitats, or the integrity of other habitats, sites or features of importance to wildlife and individual species, will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where the effects are minimised or mitigated through careful design, work scheduling or other appropriate measures.'

6.13 **Additional Regulations**

Local Authorities also have a duty under Regulation 9 (Parts 1 and 5) of the Habitat Regulations to have regard for the requirements of the Habitat Directive which includes a requirement to maintain the populations of Protected Species in a 'favourable Conservation Status'.

7 Discussion and key recommendations

7.1 Habitats

7.2.1 The proposed development relates to the construction of new dwellings. This will inevitably lead to the loss of the improved grassland and the central hedgerow, therefore any planting should utilise locally sourced, native species in all gardens and landscaping. Hedgerows could be used to demarcate property boundaries as these can also act as natural wildlife corridors.

7.2 Bats

Given that there are a number of known roosts in the area for a variety of species (pers comm.), it is very likely that the habitat would be used by foraging and commuting bats. Of particular importance are the hedgerows. Under the proposals, the existing boundary features are to remain unaffected. All lighting must be hooded and downward facing and positioned to avoid shining directly onto the features such as woodland edges and hedgerows. The lighting should also be PIR sensitive LED type which have a much more directional lighting range. An example is shown in Figure 18.



Figure 18. Example of PIR LED light.

7.3 Birds

Any site clearance should be carried out between late August and early March in any year which will avoid the bird nesting season, so preventing the potential killing or injuring of birds or destruction of their eggs or active nests. If it is unavoidable to carry out site clearance during the bird nesting season, then it should be conducted carefully and the presence of birds and/or their nests checked for throughout the clearance. Should a nest be encountered during such works, then clearance in that area should cease immediately with the nest being protected until the young have fledged or the nest is no longer in use.

8 Additional recommendations

8.1 Hedgerows

8.1.1 Management

- only cut each hedge every 2 years; this reduces maintenance and labour costs, creates a bushier hedge for wildlife and allows flower and berry production in the intervening years.
- hedges with slow growing species, such as hawthorn, can be cut on a 3 year cycle.
- do not cut back to the same height repeatedly, raising the cutting height each time will avoid placing the hedge under stress and allow it to regenerate more vigorously.
- cut hedges to a variety of shapes and sizes; "A" shaped hedges provide good stock proofing and shelter, create song posts for birds and enable hedgerow trees to develop if left untopped.
- leaving 1-2 metre (or wider) verges of tall grass by hedges provides nesting habitat for birds and protects hedgerows from pesticide or fertiliser spray drift.
- hedges can be trimmed, laid and coppiced from September to February but try and cut as late in the winter as possible so wildlife can take advantage of the nuts and berries produced in the autumn.

8.2 Enhancements

8.2.2 Birds

Bird boxes should be incorporated into the scheme to enhance the nesting potential of the site. Nest boxes which can be incorporated into the fabric of buildings themselves are recommended (Figure 19), although these should be sited high up on walls (immediately below the wall plates or soffit boxes) and avoid being positioned above windows or doors. These should be included on 20% of all buildings on site.



Figure 19. Example of a bird box which can be built into new buildings.

8.2.3 Bats

Measures to allow bats to utilise the new buildings would enhance the roosting potential of the site. Such measures could include the incorporation of 'bat tubes' (Figure 20). These are prefabricated boxes which are built into the external wall structure. It is recommended that bat tubes are included on 20% of the new buildings (but different ones to the bird boxes). They should be positioned at least 3m above ground, but avoid being positioned above windows or doors.

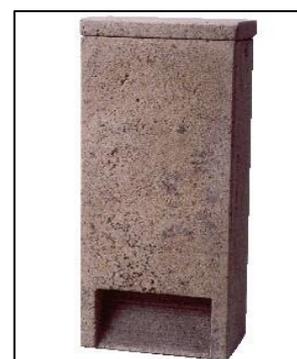


Figure 20. Example of a bat tube.

8.2.4 Hedgehogs

One of the reasons for a decline in hedgehogs is a loss of habitat and fragmentation of habitat. As hedgehogs have been recorded in the area, it would be beneficial if the boundary hedgerows could be retained as much as possible and new planting included so providing additional corridors around the site and surrounding habitat. Any property fences should include 'hedgehog highways', where a 15cm by 15cm hole is cut in the base of any fences to allow

hedgehogs to move between gardens, so increasing their access to foraging and nesting sites. An example of such a 'hedgehog highway' is included in Figure 22.



Figure 22. Hedgehog highway included in base of fence to allow hedgehog movement.

9 Conclusions

While there was no evidence of protected species on site, there are records in the area for a number of mobile species which may on occasion utilise the site. It is considered unlikely that the development would impact on the biodiversity of the area, particularly if the recommendations of this report are included in the scheme.

10 References

Bat Conservation Trust (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 3rd Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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Rose, F. (2006). The Wildflower Key – How to Identify wild flowers, trees and shrubs in Britain and Ireland.

Welsh Assembly Government (2009) Technical Advice Note 5, Nature Conservation and Planning.

APPENDIX 1

Further information on European Protected Species licences from Natural Resources Wales

The Welsh Ministers, in exercise of the powers conferred under regulation 44(2)(e-g) & 44(3)(a-b) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations (as amended), has authority to issue licences for the following purposes:

- Preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;
- Preventing the spread of disease;
- Preventing serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber or any other forms of property or to fisheries; to allow people to carry out activities which would otherwise be illegal;

Provided that:

- that there is no satisfactory alternative; *and*
- that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Although the licence is applied for and, if successful, issued in the name of the developer, a suitably experienced and licensed ecologist must assist with the completion of the forms and the design of the accompanying method statement.

It should be noted that Natural Resources Wales licenses are legally binding documents, and the method statement will be attached to any licence issued. It is the responsibility of the licence holder to ensure that the method statement is adhered to.