

For additional advice on trees:

Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service (AAIS),

Alice Holt Lodge, Wrecclesham, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 4LH

Tel: **01420 22022** Fax: **01420 22000**

Tree Helpline: **0897 161147** (*calls charged at 1.50 per minute*)

The Arboricultural Association

Ullenwood Court, Ullenwood, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53 9QS

Tel: **01242 522152** Fax: **01242 577766**

e-mail: admin@trees.org.uk website: www.trees.org.uk

Bat Conservation Trust

5th floor, Quadrant House, 250 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5RD

Bat Helpline **0345 1300 228** (*local rate but does not include calls from a mobile*)

e-mail: enquiries@bats.org.uk website: www.bats.org.uk

Useful contacts and references:

Contact the Tree Team by e-mail at trees@westberks.gov.uk

or phone on **01635 551111** for Council owned trees and general queries.

Contact the Tree Officers for tree works applications, trees and planning applications and trees in Conservation Areas.

The Tree Officer for the Eastern Area is Jon Thomas

Contact Jon at jon.thomas@westberks.gov.uk

or on Tel: **01635 519611** ext **2611**

The Tree Officer for the Western Area is Andrew Giles

Contact Andrew at andrew.giles@westberks.gov.uk

or on Tel: **01635 519349** ext **2349**

West Berkshire Council

Environment

Market Street

Newbury

Berkshire

RG14 5LD

www.westberks.gov.uk

If you require this information in an alternative format or translation, please call 01635 5191111

Environment

Bats and trees



The purpose of this leaflet is to advise you of your responsibilities under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994. If you are planning to carry out tree work these Acts and Regulations protect ALL wild birds, their nests (whether in use or being built) and eggs and other wild animals including bats and their roosts in or adjacent to trees.

In simple terms, you should make sure that there are no wild birds nesting in or bats roosting in or adjacent to the tree(s) that you are proposing to work on. It is a criminal offence to recklessly or intentionally destroy any bird, its nest or its eggs or any bat or its roost (even if the roost is not occupied at the time). Please note that if your trees are protected (either subject to a tree preservation order or by virtue of growing in a conservation area), obtaining consent from the council will not override your responsibilities under the above wildlife acts.

With particular reference to bats, it is the tree owner's responsibility, along with the tree work contractor who will undertake the work, to observe the law and make sure that no offence is committed. If you consider that there is potential

for the trees to be used by bats, we recommend that a bat survey of the trees is undertaken by a consultant. If bats or bat roosts are found to be present, a licence from Department of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs may be required for the work to be undertaken legally. This licence simply permits works which affect bats or their roosts which are otherwise unlawful. Natural England can provide details of suitable consultants to undertake bat surveys on **023 8028 6410**.

If bats or evidence of bats are found at anytime, all works must stop immediately and Natural England contacted for further advice on **023 8028 6410**.

The Bat Conservation Trust produce a helpful leaflet entitled 'Bats and Trees - a guide to the management of trees', copies of which can be obtained on **08451 300 228** or e-mail enquiries@bats.org.uk

The Arboricultural Association also publish a useful resource 'Guidance Note One - Trees and Bats' (£12.50) that gives good advice, particularly on how to mitigate the impact of any tree work on potential roosts for example, by using soft felling techniques. Copies can be obtained on **01242 522152** or through the Associations web site at www.trees.org.uk

Some basic advice on avoiding disturbance to bats is given below.

Timing of tree works

To reduce the chance of disturbing a bat roost, it is important to avoid the summer (breeding season) and winter (hibernation) months. Works to trees with potential for bats is best done from late August to early October when young bats are mobile and on the wing, female bats are unlikely to be pregnant and the hibernation season has not yet begun. March to April is also a suitable time, though consideration should also be given for nesting birds as these are also protected by law. Crown pruning and minor tree works can also be completed over the winter months. The removal of potential roost sites during this time should be avoided, as some bat species hibernate in trees.

Best practice methods

Keep tree work to a minimum retaining all potential roosts where possible. A precautionary inspection of the tree(s) by the tree work contractor looking for signs of bats should be carried out before starting work. This should include an inspection of all holes and niches using a torch and preferably an endoscope. If bats or signs of bats are found, no work should start and English Nature should be contacted for further advice.

Where possible, avoid cross cutting in proximity to cavities or hollows. Limbs with internal fissures should be pruned carefully to maintain integrity of features as potential roost sites.

Any sections felled containing cavities should be lowered carefully and left on the ground (preferably for 24 hours) with the openings clear, allowing anything inside an opportunity to escape.

Split limbs that are under tension may need to be wedged open to prevent their closure when pressure is released, potentially trapping bats

If ivy covers areas of a tree's trunk or branches, there is roosting potential behind it. In addition, potential roosts in the tree may also be hidden behind the ivy. Dealing with ivy-covered trees depends on the amount of growth. If there is a thick mass of ivy growth, it may be practical to consider felling the tree on the basis that the thickness of the foliage will soften the fall and reduce the shock. This tree can then be inspected on the ground and if possible left for 24 hours, before section cutting. If the tree is only partially covered, pruning or sectioning may be more appropriate. If the works are not urgent, cutting the ivy at its base and completing the work when the ivy is dead, thus reducing the bat roosting potential should be considered. However, here stems of ivy create a dense mass against the trunk, there will always be roosting potential