

AIB/Marina Wall Remediation, Athy, Co. Kildare

Supporting Information for Derogation Licence
Application for Bats under Regulation 54 & 54A of the
European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats)
Regulations 2011 (as amended)

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Supporting Information for Derogation Licence Application for Bats

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Appendix A [Vegetation Pre-Removal Works – ECoW Report]

1 Introduction

A derogation licence is being sought for bats under the provisions of Regulation 54 and 54A of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended). This document provides supporting information to inform the derogation licence application.

The derogation licence is being sought to permit urgent remediation works along a section of old stone wall of heritage significance adjacent to the River Barrow in the centre of Athy, Co. Kildare. The urgency of the works have been identified as part of ongoing preliminary works related to the development and assessment of the Athy Flood Relief Scheme.

Based on the bat surveys completed of the old stone wall, these works have the potential to disturb roosting bats.

The supporting information included within this document includes:

- Section 2 – Description of the Proposed Works for which a Derogation Licence is Sought
- Section 3 – Details of the Bat Surveys completed to inform both the Proposed Works and the Derogation Licence.
- Section 4 – Evidence to Support the “Tests” for Derogation Licence
- Section 5 – The Mitigation to be implemented during the Proposed Works.
- Section 6 – The Monitoring to be implemented following the completion of the Proposed Works.

The document has been prepared by Dr. Julie Larkin a Senior Ecologist for RPS/Tetra Tech with 12 years’ experience. Julie holds a chartership and has obtained a BSc in Ecology, an MSc in Ecological Assessment and a PhD in agri-ecology. Oversight for this project will be given by Dr. Rob Rowlands and Dr. Miles Newman. Rob is a Technical Director of Ecology with RPS/Tetra Tech who has over 25 years’ experience in consultancy. He is a Chartered Environmentalist and holds a BSc in Environmental Biology and a PhD in peatland restoration. Miles is a Chartered Senior Associate Ecologist with RPS/Tetra Tech. He has over 17 years of professional experience. Miles holds a BSc in Environmental Management, an MSc in Biodiversity and Conservation, a Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics and a PhD in botany. Dr. Julie Larkin, Colin Keane and Conor Maloney will undertake the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) role for this project (see **Section 5**). Colin is an ecologist within RPS/Tetra Tech with 3 years’ experience. He holds a BSc in Zoology and an MSc in Environmental Sustainability. Conor is an ecologist within RPS/Tetra Tech with 2 years’ experience. He holds a BSc in Marine Science and an MSc in Applied Environmental Science.

Each of the five members of this team has experience in bat surveying having undertaken ground level tree roost assessments, preferential roost assessments, night-time bat walkover surveys, endoscopy surveys, passive bat detection surveys and emergence surveys for a wide range of different projects across Ireland (e.g. flood relief schemes, road projects, wind farm projects etc.). Additionally, three team members (Miles, Conor and Colin) also have tree climbing licences and regularly undertake tree climbing as part of the suite of bat surveys undertaken by the RPS/Tetra Tech ecology team as a whole. Furthermore, each of the five members of this team have ECoW experience having monitored on-going works for a number of different projects across Ireland including site clearance for road projects and flood relief schemes, amongst others.

2 Proposed Works

This derogation licence application pertains to an existing stone wall on the western (true right-hand) bank of the River Barrow, immediately south of Duke Street/Crom-a-boo bridge in the centre of Athy (**Figure 2-1: GPS Location 52.991476, -6.985084**). This wall runs in a north south direction parallel to the River Barrow forming the eastern border of the garden behind the Athy Allied Irish Bank (AIB) building and the western border of Athy Marina. At its southern extent, the wall curves around to the west. This wall is considered to be a heritage feature, despite not being listed on Kildare County Council's (KCC) Record of Protected Structures (RPS) or on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH).

The wall consists of roughly coursed rubble stone abutting Crom-a-boo bridge to the north and appears to have remnants of thin lime-based harling to the south. It is also crenellated to the south, has slit windows with brick reveals and lancet windows with dressed surrounds (which have been blocked up). 25-inch Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) mapping (dated 1907-1909) indicates that this wall forms part of Millview House and its garden. However, older 6-inch OSI mapping (dated 1839-1841) indicates that this wall was present prior to the construction of Millview House. Older mapping again (i.e. John Rocque's 1756 map of Athy) also indicates the potential for a wall structure to be present at this point but the exact details cannot be verified. This wall has significant dense vegetation overgrowth of ivy and of a non-native climber obscuring much of both faces of the wall (i.e. on both the AIB garden (west facing) and Athy marina (east facing) sides) (**Plate 1; Plate 2**).

As outlined previously, dense ivy and non-native climber growth is present across the existing stone wall. This growth is particularly dense on the northern section of the wall with the roots and other parts of these vines having penetrated into the structure itself, loosening and dislodging stones (**Plate 3; Plate 4**), which is having an overall effect on the structural integrity and safety of the wall. Therefore, there is a strong need for this vegetation to be removed as there is a risk of wall collapse should the vines be allowed to penetrate further into the wall. As this wall is considered to be a heritage feature, it needs to be maintained and accordingly, remedial actions are required to prevent further deterioration and potential collapse of the wall. The removal of the vegetation will allow for full assessment of the structural integrity of the wall and for remedial actions to be undertaken. Furthermore, given the close proximity of the wall to Athy Marina, there is also a public health and safety aspect in the need to preserve this wall as a wall collapse poses a serious risk of damage to property (i.e. boats) and risk of injury (or worse) to human health. Additionally, this wall is in very close proximity to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC which has been designated for a number of different aquatic Qualifying Interests (QI). These QI are potentially at risk should the wall collapse and result in fragments of wall and mortar and other pollutants entering the River Barrow itself.

The removal of the vegetation from the wall also has the potential to provide additional roosting opportunities for bats within the wall as currently dense vegetation growth may be hindering bats from utilising cracks and crevices within the wall. With the removal of the vegetation, these cracks and crevices will be easily accessible for bats to roost within.

The Proposed Works relevant to addressing the structural integrity and safety of this structure are discussed below.

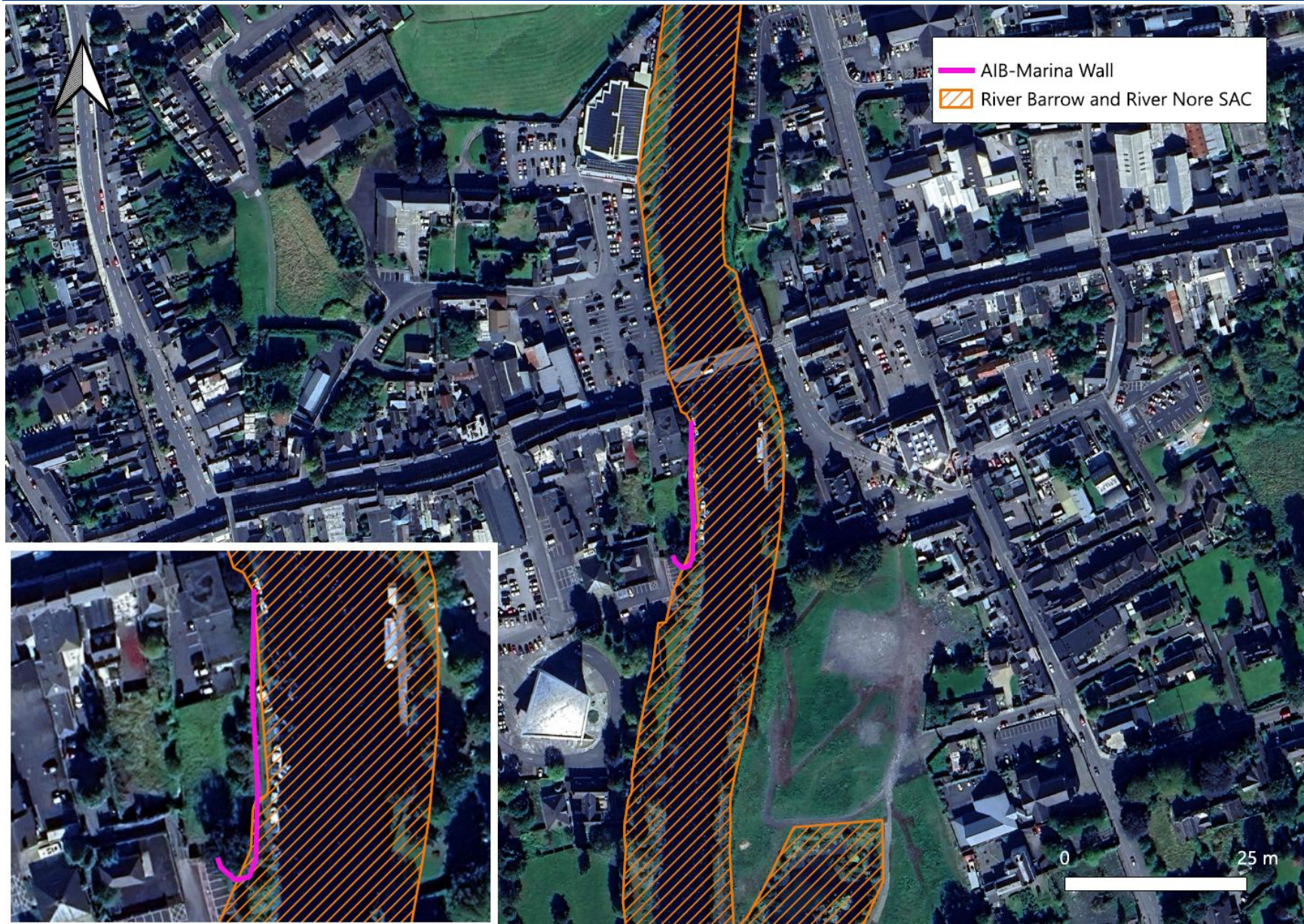


Figure 2-1: Location of the wall within the centre of Athy town and the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.

2.1 Vegetation Cutting and Removal

2.1.1 Vegetation Clearance Preparation

As previously mentioned, there is dense vine/climber growth covering the majority of this wall. The stems of these vines were initially severed on 20th February 2026 using hand tools including handheld shears and secateurs. The purpose of using hand tools was to avoid any disturbance from noise and vibration to bats. On this basis, it was not considered that such works would have been contrary to the strict protection afforded to bats under the Regulations.

Stem severance was completed in the presence of a suitably experienced and competent Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to ensure no potential roosting bats were disturbed. The stems were severed to allow the vegetation to die back before full removal to reduce potential impacts to the stonework and mortaring. The ECoW report from the vegetation clearance works on the 20th February 2026 is provided in **Appendix A**.

2.1.2 Vegetation Removal and Structure Preservation

This derogation license application pertains to the full removal of the remaining vegetation following the stem cutting that was carried out in February 2026. Further stem cutting will be required on ivy stems on the marina (i.e. the riverbank) side of the wall as this area was inaccessible during clearance preparations as the riverbank was flooded on 20th February 2026 (**Appendix A**).

Remaining stem cutting works will be carried out alongside vegetation removal. Vegetation will be carefully removed from the masonry by hand once it has sufficiently died back. Hand tools will be used if further stem cutting is required. If vegetation removal affects the integrity of the wall (e.g. causes stones to loosen or fall) remediation works will be carried out immediately post vegetation removal to minimise the risk of collapse of the wall.



Plate 1: The wall on the western (i.e. AIB garden) side showing extensive ivy and vine coverage. Note – this picture was taken prior to stem severance.



Plate 2 The wall on the eastern (i.e. Athy Marina) side showing extensive ivy and vine coverage. Note – this picture was taken prior to stem severance.



Plate 3: An example of how the ivy and vines are penetrating in between the stonework of the wall



Plate 4 Examples of a cracks in the stonework and ivy penetrating into this crack.

3 Overview of Relevant Bat Surveys

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Desktop Study

A desktop study was completed in March 2026 to identify relevant information regarding bats across Athy town and wider environs from available publications and other publicly available resources. This desktop study also included a search of aerial imagery to ascertain the suitability of the wider landscape for bat species. Bat records older than 10 years or more were excluded from the data search. This exercise collated information from the following sources:

- Distribution records for bats held online by the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) (<https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map>). Study area: 2km grid squares that overlap with Athy town: S69W, S69R, S69S, S69X grid and the wider 10km grid squares S68, S69, S78, S79.
- Photographs and aerial imagery e.g. Google Maps (<https://www.google.ie/maps/>); Bing Maps (<https://www.bing.com/maps>) etc.
- Tailte Éireann - mapping and aerial photography (<https://www.geohive.ie/>).

3.1.2 Field Study

3.1.2.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

A preliminary roost assessment (PRA) is a detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of a structure to look for features that bats could use for entry/exit and for roosting. It is also undertaken to search for signs of bats e.g. droppings, urine staining, live specimens etc. A PRA inspection of the existing stone wall between the AIB garden and Athy Marina was carried out on the 16th June 2025 by suitably qualified and experienced RPS ecologists. This inspection was carried out during daylight hours in suitable weather conditions using close focusing binoculars, as necessary.

The inspection was conducted with reference to the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines (Collins, 2023) which outline clear assessment methodologies for preliminary bat roost assessment surveys of buildings, structures and trees.

The wall was assessed externally for features with suitability for roosting bats including cracks and gaps in the stonework. The structure was also assessed for evidence of use by bats (e.g. staining and droppings).

The results of this assessment were used to grade the structure as having negligible, low, moderate or high suitability for roosting bats with reference to the BCT guidelines (Collins, 2023).

3.1.2.2 Endoscope and Emergence Surveys

Once the PRA survey was completed, bat roost features identified during the PRA assessment were inspected at ground level using an endoscope. Inspections were carried out during daylight hours on the 6th and 27th of August and the 22nd of September 2025. The inspections were carried out using the Explorer Premium Wireless Inspection Camera with Recordable Monitor. If evidence of roosting bats was observed, this data was recorded and photographed with the endoscope and information such as the number of bats and species of bats were noted, if these could be ascertained.

The entire wall could not be fully endoscoped due to the presence of thick vegetation cover. Additionally, the northern section of the wall on the marina side could not be safely accessed due to the proximity of the River Barrow at this point. Therefore, the endoscope inspections were also supplemented with emergence surveys.

Emergence surveys were carried out in August and September 2025, using full spectrum digital-recording bat detectors (Elekon Batlogger M2 detectors and Anabat Scout) and Night Vision Aids (NVAs) i.e., Canon XA60 and XA65 Camcorders. Nightfox infrared torches and floodlights were also used to highlight each area being recorded by the NVAs. As a precaution, the entire existing stone wall, including the sections that were endoscoped fully, were captured during the emergence surveys. A total of four vantage points were set up to capture the length of the east facing side of the wall (i.e. Athy Marina side). Three vantage points were positioned on the eastern bank of the River Barrow and one vantage point was positioned on Duke Street/Crom-a-boo bridge (**Figure 3-1**). Emergence surveys were also completed on the west-facing side of the wall within the garden behind the AIB bank. Two vantage points were sufficient to capture the west-facing side of the wall.

The timing and survey effort for the emergence surveys were completed with reference to the recommendations set out in BCT guidance (Collins, 2023) with respect to structures. Emergence (dusk) surveys started 15 minutes before sunset and finished 1.5-2 hours after sunset. The emergence surveys were carried out in optimal weather conditions (e.g. mild temperatures, no- to light winds and no rainfall), in order to maximise the results of the roost surveys.

Following the survey, camera footage and audio files were uploaded to a desktop and reviewed by an ecologist.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Desktop Study

The NBDC database holds a number of records of bat species for the wider 10km grid squares S68, S69, S78, S79. These records are detailed in **Table 3-1**. Two records each of common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*), three records of soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), and 38 records of Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) were returned for the 2km grid square S69W. The most recent record for this 2km grid square was from 2018.

No recent (i.e. <10 years) records were returned for the remaining 2km grid squares (i.e. S69R, S69S and S69X).

Table 3-1: Bat species recorded within the NBDC database for grid squares S68, S69, S78 and S79 the past ten years.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Record count	Date of most recent record	Grid square	Status
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	383	2022	S69, S78, S79	Wildlife Acts Annex IV
Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	145	2018	S69, S78	Wildlife Acts Annex IV
Leisler's bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	137	2022	S69, S78, S79	Wildlife Acts Annex IV
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	155	2022	S69, S78, S79	Wildlife Acts Annex IV
Nathusius's pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	3	2019	S78, S79	Wildlife Acts Annex IV
Pipistrelle spp.		56	2019	S78, S79	Wildlife Acts Annex IV

3.2.2 Field Study

3.2.2.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The PRA recorded 24 cracks and gaps in the stonework of the wall. Thick vegetation cover along the wall was also noted as a potential feature for individual roosting bats. Additionally, it was noted that the vegetation may cover additional cracks and gaps used by roosting bats. Due to the number of potential suitable features for roosting bats, the structure was assessed as having “High” suitability for roosting bats.

3.2.2.2 Endoscope and Emergence Surveys

As the structure was assessed as having High suitability for roosting bats, endoscope and emergence surveys of the wall were replicated three times (Collins, 2023). Due to the length of the wall being captured, one replicate was completed over the course of two nights. A summary of the survey dates and the number of surveyors and NVAs used are presented in **Table 3-2**.

Table 3-2: Summary of Emergence Surveys completed

Structure	Overall Suitability	Survey Type	Dates	Replicate	No. of Surveyors	No. of NVAs	Roosting confirmed?
Stone wall (AIB garden (i.e. west side))	High	Endoscope and Emergence	13/08/2025	1 of 3	2	2	No
			26/08/2025	2 of 3	2	2	
			22/09/2025	3 of 3	2	2	
Stone wall (Marina (i.e. east) side)	High	Endoscope	06/08/2025	1 of 3	2	NA	Yes
		Emergence	20/08/2025	1 of 3	2	2	
			21/08/2025	1 of 3	2	2	
			25/08/2025	2 of 3	2	2	
			27/08/2024	2 of 3	NA	NA	
		Emergence	02/09/2025	2 of 3	2	3	
			15/09/2025	3 of 3	2	2	
			17/09/2025	3 of 3	2	2	

During the endoscope surveys on the 6th August 2025, a single roost was recorded in a gap in the stonework. This roost was located towards the southern section of the wall in an area where no vegetation cover was present. The roost contained two individual bats; however, the species could not be fully ascertained but on the basis of size are likely a pipistrelle species. The confirmed roost was flagged and was avoided during subsequent endoscope inspections of the structure on the 22nd of August and 27th September. The location of the confirmed roost is provided in **Figure 3-1**.

A high level of bat activity was observed along the stone wall structure and along the River Barrow during emergence surveys. Species recorded during the period of the emergence survey included

common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat and Leisler's bat. Instances of potential bat emergence coming from the vegetation along the existing stone wall was observed during all survey replicates. However, emergence could not be confirmed for certain as the high level of foraging and commuting bats captured during the survey made it difficult to determine whether these bats were actually emerging or just commuting/foraging past along a watercourse optimal for such activity.

No bats were captured emerging from the AIB side of the wall.



Figure 3-1: Bat Emergence Survey Vantage Points and confirmed roost location



Plate 5: Photograph of roosting bats taken during endoscope survey.



Plate 6: Location of the known bat roost (i.e. in the gap in the stonework being indicated by the surveyor)

4 Evidence to Support Derogation Test

4.1 Test 1 – Reason for Derogation

As per Article 16 of the Habitats Directive which is transposed into Irish law by Regulation 54(2) (b) of the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, this derogation licence is being sought *“In the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”*.

4.2 Test 2 – Absence of Alternative Solution

4.2.1 Aim of the Proposed Works

As outlined in **Section 2** the aim of the Proposed Works is to preserve a heritage feature (i.e. the stone wall between the AIB garden and Athy Marina) and to prevent its further deterioration due to the growth of ivy and other non-native vines. These vines have compromised the structural integrity of the wall by rooting themselves into the wall and causing stones and mortar to become dislodged; adversely affecting the structural integrity and safety of the wall.

4.2.2 Need for the Proposed Works

The Proposed Works are needed to preserve a heritage feature at risk within the centre of Athy town. This feature is at risk of collapse at some time in the future should the vegetation growth continue to penetrate and compromise the wall. Should the wall collapse, there is a health and safety risk due to the proximity of Athy Marina. There is also a risk to the River Barrow and the associated River Barrow and River Nore SAC via introduction of pollutants such as cements, mortar and sediments into the River Barrow. Additionally, any associated remedial works at this point (i.e. after a wall collapse) has the potential to cause further contamination of the river.

4.2.3 Alternatives Considered

The alternative to undertaking the proposed works is to do nothing, however, as outlined in **Section 4.2.2**, doing nothing will mean the eventual collapse of the wall with associated health and safety and environmental implications. The collapse of the wall will also result in a complete loss of any potential roosts within the wall for bats to use in addition to having the potential to cause mortality should roosting bats be present when the wall collapses.

Buttressing the wall from the AIB garden side was also researched, however, this approach would still leave the Athy Marina/River Barrow side without any protection as the strip of riparian land adjacent to the River Barrow is too narrow for such works to be undertaken. Furthermore, disturbance of the soil here (i.e. on the river barrow side of the wall) has the potential to result in pollutants, such as silts and sediments entering the watercourse. Therefore, this method of wall preservation was deemed inappropriate and ineffective for this feature. This approach could still result in a wall collapse which, as outlined above, could result in bat mortality and/or a loss of roosts.

4.3 Solutions Test 3 – Impact on Conservation Status.

Bats are not listed as a Qualifying Interest (QI) of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC which is adjacent to the wall. However, all bat species are protected under Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive, as species protected across their entire natural range. Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) is further protected under Annex II, as a species for which core areas of their habitat must be protected within the Natura 2000 network. However, the Proposed Works lie outside the distribution range for this species.

The NPWS does not list any specific conservation measures for all other bat species. The overall conservation status and trend for the four bat species recorded during surveys associated with the proposed works are outlined in **Table 4-1**. This table shows that the conservation status, overall trend and future trend of the species likely to be roosting within the wall (i.e. *Pipistrelle* sp.) as Favourable, Improving and Favourable, respectively.

Table 4-1: Overall Conservation status and trends for the four bat species recorded during surveys (NPWS, 2025).

Common Name	Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Overall Trend	Future Trend
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Favourable	Improving	Favourable
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	Favourable	Improving	Favourable
Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Favourable	Stable	Favourable
Leisler's bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Favourable	Improving	Favourable

The AIB/Marina wall is not a major bat roost and is considered to be a transitory roost, used by a small number of bats on an impermanent basis. The locations within this wall, within which bats may roost, are considered to change on a temporal basis i.e. the number of bats potentially roosting within the wall at any one time is considered to change on a day-to-day basis.

The granting of this derogation licence, therefore, will not have an effect on the conservation status and trends of bats. The species relevant to the Proposed Works and potentially affected by the Proposed Works (i.e. pipistrelle species) are common and widespread with Favourable and Improving conservations status and trends. The known roosting site will not be affected by the Proposed Works as no vegetation removal at that part of the wall is required as this section of wall is already free of vegetation.

This derogation licence application is being submitted as a precautionary approach in the event that roosting bats are encountered during the vegetation removal process. Given that the wall is not a major roost but is instead considered to be a transitory roost used by a small number of bats at any one time, the Proposed Works are considered to have the potential to effect a maximum of 5 bats. Measures including the presence of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) during works (**Section 5**) will be implemented to prevent any negative effects on bats as a result of these works.

Given nature of the Proposed Works, the overall Favourable conservation status and Improving population trends of the relevant bat species, it is considered that the granting of this derogation licence will not affect the favourable conservation status of any bat species at the local, regional or national level.

5 Proposed Mitigation

A suitably experienced and competent ECoW with experience of bat surveys will be appointed before the commencement of the proposed works. This ECoW will oversee all works proposed on the wall.

Two bat boxes, suitable for crevice roosting species, will be erected on the upstream and downstream extents of the AIB/Marina wall where no vegetation is present, prior to any works commencing. If the erection of bat boxes has the potential to compromise the structural integrity of the wall, adjacent features e.g. Crom-a-boo Bridge, nearby mature trees etc. may be utilized for the erection of the bat boxes. The exact location of these boxes will be decided by the ECoW.

Prior to the commencement of vegetation removal, the vegetation present on the wall will be searched for any possible bat presence via visual inspection and the use of an endoscope to provide detailed inspection of areas of dense vegetation¹. Any holes or potential cavities in the wall visible before vegetation removal or those revealed by vegetation removal will be inspected via endoscope for the presence of bats. If a bat roost is located, the roost will be avoided and any vegetation removal that will potentially disturb this roost will not be carried out until such time as the roost is known to be empty. This will be confirmed by the use of night vision aids utilized by a specialist bat ECoW or ecologist. A tarpaulin, or similar, will be used to cover the section of the wall where the roost was located, once bats have exited, to prevent bats from re-entering the roost. Vegetation removal can then be undertaken the following day.

If roosting bats are observed in the wall in an area where remediation works are required immediately after vegetation removal, no works will be undertaken until such time as the bats have exited the roost. This will be confirmed by the use of night vision aids utilized by a specialist bat ECoW or ecologist. A tarpaulin, or similar, will be used to cover the section of the wall where the roost was located to prevent bats from re-entering the roost, once they have exited. Remediation works, if required, will ensure that a number of suitable cracks and crevices remain in the wall post remediation for bats to use for roosting. Therefore, no roosting opportunities are expected to be permanently lost as a result of these works. Additionally, there is potential for an increase in available roosting habitat as a result of the vegetation being removed as it is envisioned that cracks and crevices will become accessible to bats in the absence of the vegetation.

The ECoW will be the liaison for the purposes of consulting with environmental bodies including the NPWS for the Proposed Works, as necessary. In advance of any works commencing on site, all personnel will receive on-site induction by the ECoW.

¹The presence of breeding birds will also be considered throughout the Proposed Works. Mitigations with respect to these taxa have not been outlined here, however, no disturbance of any occupied nests will occur as a result of these works, should they be undertaken during the breeding bird season.

6 Monitoring

The ECoW appointed for the Proposed Works will produce a report outlining all works undertaken for each day they were on site. This report will include details of any bat roosts identified within the wall prior to works commencing and during works. This report will include the exact location of each roost (if any are identified) and the number and species of bats, if possible. If confirmation is required that these bats have exited the roost via the use of night vision aids, the species and number of bats exiting the roost will be confirmed and detailed within the report. The report will also detail the location of the bat boxes to be erected prior to works commencing and will outline any cracks and crevices (i.e. potential roost locations) within the wall once works have completed.

All necessary return forms and reporting will be submitted to the NPWS, as required.

7 References

Collins, J., 2023. *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*, London: The Bat Conservation Trust.

National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2025. *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 3: Species Assessments*. NPWS

Appendix A[Vegetation Pre-Removal Works – ECoW Report]

Athy AIB/Marina Wall - Vegetation Clearance ECoW Report

Memo

Date: 23rd February 2026

Pages: 11

Regarding: AIB/Marina Wall Remediation, Athy, Co. Kildare – Vegetation Clearance ECoW Report

Vegetation clearance works were undertaken on 20th February 2026 in the AIB Garden in Athy Town Centre. The Garden is located to the rear of the AIB branch in Athy Town Centre, is enclosed by modern concrete block walls to the west and south with an old stone wall to the east. The main channel of the River Barrow is located to the east and is separated from old stone wall by a narrow riverbank walkway which acts as a mooring point for boats.

The works undertaken included the severance of ivy rooting stems along the base of both sides of the wall. The ivy has compromised the wall as a potential flood barrier and requires removal. Cutting the ivy stems will allow the ivy to die back before full removal to reduce potential impacts to the stonework and mortaring. Due to recent wet weather and the resulting flooding, access to the riverbank side of the wall was not possible (**Figure 1 & Figure 2**).



Figure 1: Access Gate to River Barrow Riverbank



Figure 2: River Barrow Riverbank and Mooring Point

The AIB Garden was accessed through a gate to the north. Ivy rooting stems were extensive along the bottom of the wall (**Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6 & Figure 7**). The southern section of the internal wall was excluded from the works due to the presence of a known bat roost recorded during a previous survey (**Figure 8**).

Prior to the commencement of the clearing works, the ivy present on the wall was searched for any possible bat presence via visual inspection and use of an endoscope to provide detailed inspection of areas of dense ivy. Any holes or potential cavities in the wall were also inspected via endoscope. No bats were recorded in the ivy or in any holes in the masonry.



Figure 3: Extensive Internal Ivy and vines



Figure 4: Extensive Internal Ivy and vines



Figure 5: Extensive Internal Ivy and vines



Figure 6: Extensive Internal Ivy and vines



Figure 7: Extensive Internal Ivy and vines



Figure 8: Southern Corner Excluded from Removals

The ivy stems were severed using hand tools to ensure no vibrations disturbed any bats that may be present within the wall and to reduce any potential damage to the wall itself. Between 10cm and 15cm of ivy stem was removed to ensure stems could not re-establish connection and continue growing (**Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11, Figure 12 & Figure 13**). All cuttings were placed on the established vegetation pile at the southern end of the AIB Garden. Any side growths (i.e. narrower guage stems/branches) were removed from the lower stems and the wall, where possible (**Figure 14, Figure 15, Figure 16 & Figure 17**).Figure 14: Removal of Ivy Side Growth from Wall



Figure 9: Ivy Stem Cutting



Figure 10: Ivy Stem Cutting



Figure 11: Ivy Stem Cutting



Figure 12: Ivy Stem Cutting



Figure 13: Ivy Stem Cutting



Figure 14: Removal of Ivy Side Growth from Wall



Figure 15: Removal of Ivy Side Growth from Wall



Figure 16: Removal of Ivy Side Growth from Wall



Figure 17: Removal of Ivy Side Growth from Wall

Further cutting will be required on ivy stems on the riverbank side of the wall. These works may be combined with the removal of dead ivy as a result of the works carried out. Ivy die back should be monitored to ensure works have been successful and that further cuts inside the AIB Garden are not required beyond cleaning of dead plant material.

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