

APPLICATION FOR DEROGATION LICENCE TO CONDUCT ESSENTIAL REPAIR WORKS TO BOLEYBEG BRIDGE NORTH, BOLEYBEG, ABBEYLEIX, CO. LAOIS.

On behalf of Laois County Council, I wish to apply for a derogation licence to allow essential repair works to be conducted at Boleybeg Bridge North, Boleybeg, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois (52.908279, - 7.2574512). Boleybeg Bridge North was surveyed for bats on 19th March 2025 and two individual Daubenton's bats were recorded in two separate crevices under the arches. These crevices and other suitable crevices were marked for retention. There was no evidence that the bridge was used previously as a roost site by a larger number of bats (ie nursery roost).

A further bat survey will be conducted immediately prior to any works being conducted. The repair works will be supervised by an ecologist on site.

This licence is being applied for

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.

This derogation licence sought is the only available option for works and no suitable alternative exists as per Reg 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations. There is no suitable alternative. Currently, there is a weight restriction on the bridge as it is in an unstable condition. The bridge cannot be left in its current condition. The repair works are necessary to maintain the safety of the bridge and to allow all traffic to traverse it again.

The proposed repair works to Boleybeg Bridge North will not be detrimental to the maintenance of populations of this species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range as required under Section 54 (2) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations. A range of crevices will be retained under the arches to provide continued access to roosting sites for bats.

Dr Caroline Shiel

01/04/25