

## **APPLICATION FOR DEROGATION LICENCE TO ALLOW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT RATHELLEN HOUSE, FAR FINISKLIN, CO. SLIGO**

On behalf of JJ Rhatigan & Co, Wolfe Tone House, Galway, I wish to apply for a derogation licence to allow a proposed housing development at Rathellen House and outbuildings, at Far Finisklin, Co. Sligo.

A small roost of 4 Brown long-eared bats *Plecotus auritus* was recorded roosting within Rathellen House itself in 2024. The exact position of the roost site was not identified. The building is boarded up and is currently unsafe to enter. The bats were observed through open windows and gaps in the roof on the front elevation of the building. Further surveys in May/June 2025 will pinpoint the exact location of the bat roost.

A single Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* was recorded roosting in the roof of a dormer window at the rear of Rathellen House in 2021 and 2024. A single Whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* was recorded roosting in the stonework of one of the outbuildings in 2021 and again in 2024.

All works on site will be supervised by an ecologist on site (Dr Caroline Shiel).

In February 2025, Six 1FF Schwegler bat boxes were mounted on mature trees on site to compensate for loss of roost sites. It may also be possible to incorporate a roosting box for the Brown long-eared bats within the attic space of Rathellen House.

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.*

Currently, there is no suitable alternative. Rathellen House is currently in very poor condition and structurally unsound. In time, the building will collapse if repair works are not carried out. If it is discovered that the Brown long-eared bats are roosting in an internal wall within Rathellen house the bats will not be able to remain roosting in that position when the building is renovated. However, if bats are found to be roosting within the attic space, it will be possible to retain a section of the attic as a roost site. A bat access slate will be incorporated into the new roof structure.

One of the stone outbuildings will be retained on site. This will provide an alternative roosting site for the single Whiskered bat and Soprano pipistrelle on site.

The proposed development works will not be detrimental to the maintenance of populations of any of these three 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.

Dr Caroline Shiel

10/03/25