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## Dormouse Survey Report

### Reading Golf Club, Reading

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## ***Report Summary***

- 1. This report gives details of a dormouse nest tube survey of Reading Golf Club in relation to a proposed residential development**
- 2. A total of 100 nest tubes were set out within suitable woodland and hedgerow habitat within the site and its immediate surroundings.**
- 3. Tubes were checked on a monthly basis between May and August (inclusive)**
- 4. The survey was undertaken in accordance with best practice as set out within the Dormouse Conservation Handbook**
- 5. No dormice or evidence of dormice were recorded during the nest tube checks.**
- 6. Dormice are considered to be absent from the proposed development site and its immediate surroundings.**

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## **CONTENTS PAGE**

<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Purpose of the Report.....	5
1.2 Site Description & Background.....	5
<b>2 LEGAL PROTECTION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3 METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Desk Study.....	7
3.2 Nest Tube Survey .....	7
<b>4 RESULTS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1 Desk Study.....	9
4.2 Timings & Weather Conditions .....	9
4.3 Nest Tube Survey .....	9
<b>5 CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2 – COMMON DORMOUSE SURVEY RESULTS.....</b>	<b>10</b>



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### *1.1 Purpose of the Report*

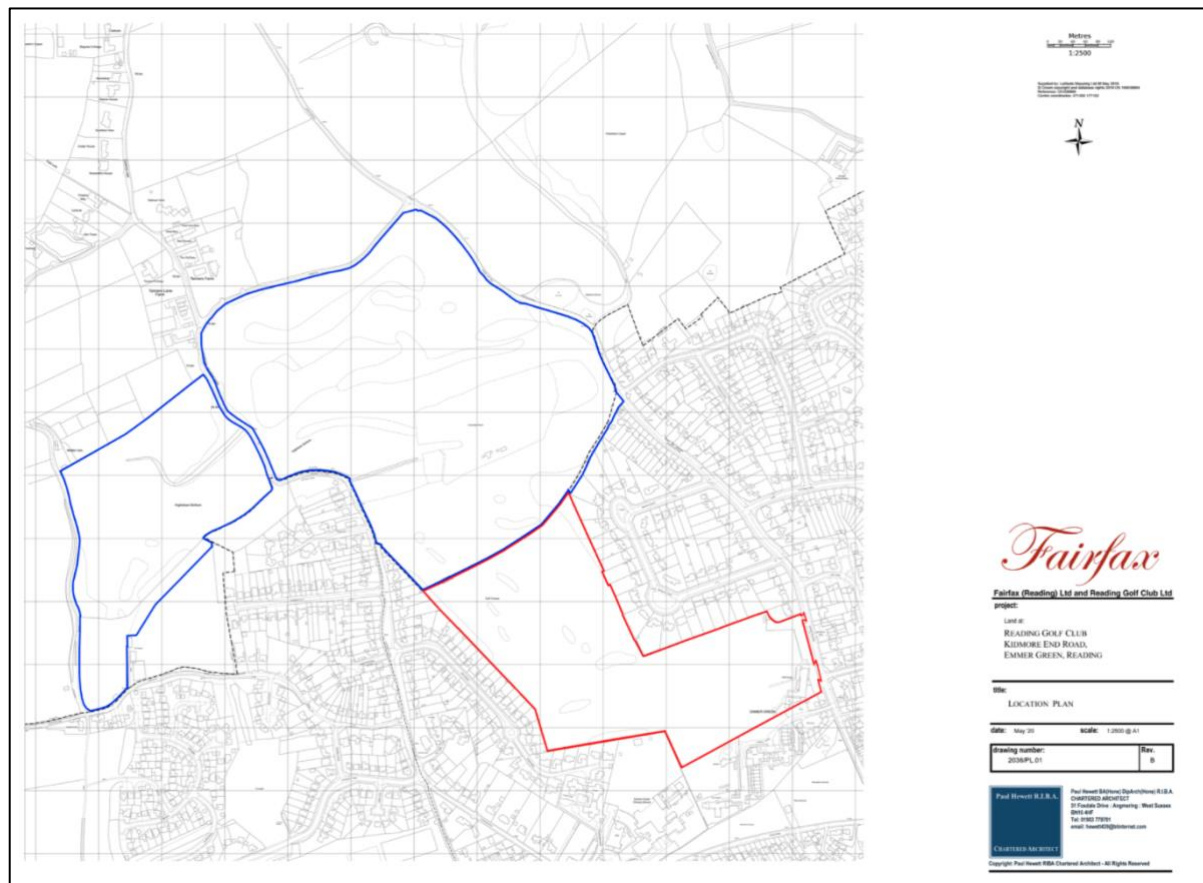
This report gives details of dormouse nest tube checks undertaken by The Ecology Co-op between May and August inclusive at Reading Golf Club. The surveys were undertaken following feedback from Giles Sutton following the submission of a scoping opinion submitted to Reading Borough Council to support a planning application for a proposed 263 plot residential dwelling within the southern half of the site.

The purpose of the survey was to confirm the presence/likely absence of dormice from the proposed development site and its immediate surroundings.

This survey and report was carried out and produced at the request of Fairfax Acquisitions Limited and Reading Golf Club Limited.

### *1.2 Site Description & Background*

The application site is located to the north of Reading, at the edge of Berkshire, with the northern boundary bordering Oxfordshire to the north. The full address for the site is at 17 Kidmore End Road, Reading RG4 8SQ. The central grid reference for the site is SU 7150 7689. Figure 1 shows the extent of the site within the wider landholding of Reading Golf Club which extends into Oxfordshire.



**Figure 1.** A plan showing the extent of the application site (outlined in bold red) within the wider landholding of Reading Golf Club (outlined in blue). Drawing Number 2036/PL.04 Rev B. Plan provided by Paul Hewett.

## 2 LEGAL PROTECTION

Under the Habitat Regulations, 2019. Regulation 41 makes it a criminal offence to;

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a dormouse;
- Deliberately disturb dormice;
- Deliberately take dormice (where relevant);
- Damage or destroy a dormouse *breeding or resting place*;
- Possess, control, sell or exchange any live or dead dormice;

The Habitats Directive and Habitats Regulations provide for the derogation from these prohibitions for specific reasons provided certain conditions are met. An EPS licensing regime allows operations that would otherwise be unlawful acts to be carried out lawfully. Natural England is the licensing Authority and, in order to grant a licence, ensures that three statutory conditions (sometimes referred to as the ‘three derogation tests’) are met:

- A licence can be granted for the purposes of “preserving public health or 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” (Regulation 53 (2) (e).
- A licence can be granted if “there are no satisfactory alternatives” to the proposed action.
-



A licence shall not be granted unless 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.

Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take dormice, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturb dormice while occupying such places.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

Common dormice are typically associated with broadleaved woodland habitat, hedgerows and scrub. They tend to occur at low density and good habitat connectivity is important. Common dormice need a constant supply of food throughout the active season over a large home range. A diversity of tree and shrub species will provide a range of fruit, nuts and insects. They hibernate during the winter typically at ground level amongst leaf litter and mosses protected by coppice stools, tree stumps or piles of brash wood.

#### 3.1 Desk Study

The Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) was contacted to request dormouse records held within a 2km radius of the site.

#### 3.2 Nest Tube Survey

Dormouse surveys are undertaken by attaching purpose built 'nest tubes' on trees and shrubs in suitable habitat such as woodland, scrub and hedgerows. Nest tubes are used by dormice as places of shelter and they will often construct their nests within them during their periods of activity (typically between April and November). In accordance with current best practice guidelines<sup>1</sup>, 100 nest tubes were deployed approximately 20m apart in woodland and hedgerows in April 2020 and left *in situ* for the survey season (Figure 2). These were checked on a monthly basis for presence of animals and evidence of dormouse presence (distinctively woven nests) from May to November 2020. Since the likelihood of use by dormice varies through the year, an index of probability score is used to determine confidence in a particular survey (see Table 1) comprising checks over several months. A minimum score of 21 is normally accepted to establish 'likely absence' in the event that no signs of dormice are found during the survey.

**Table 1.** Search effort score for each month that dormouse tubes are out on the site and subject to checks for occupation.

Month of check	Index of probability
April	1
May	4
June	2
July	2
August	5
September	7
October	2
November	2

<sup>1</sup> Bright, B., Morris, P., Mitchell-Jones, A.J. and Mitchell-Jones, T (1997) *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook*. English Nature.



Dormice checks were undertaken in the mornings and commenced one month after the nest-tubes were positioned. Surveys were undertaken under the supervision of licenced surveyor: Paul Whitby BSc MCIEEM CEcol (2016-21456-CLS-CLS).



**Figure 2.** The locations of dormouse nest tubes placed in suitable habitat at Reading Golf Club. The number of tubes in each location is indicated in yellow. Image produced courtesy of Google Earth (map data ©2020 Google).





## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Desk Study

The TVERC holds no records of dormice from within 2km of the application site.

### 4.2 Timings & Weather Conditions

Timings and weather conditions during the nest tube checks are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Details of dormouse surveys undertaken at Reading Golf Club.

Date	Timings	Temperature (°C), weather conditions throughout survey	Surveyor
22/05/20	10:20 – 13:25	Temperature: 19 Dry, overcast (cloud cover 90%), moderate breeze (BF 3)	Matt Blee
26/06/20	10:30 – 13:40	Temperature: 27 Dry, clear (cloud cover 10%), light air (BF1)	Matt Blee
24/07/20	13:30 – 16:45	Temperature: 23 Occasional rain, overcast (cloud cover 80%), calm (BF0)	Charlie Gardiner
28/08	13:00 – 16:00	Temperature: 18 Heavy rain, overcast (cloud cover 100%), light air (BF1)	Charlie Gardiner

### 4.3 Nest Tube Survey

No dormice or evidence of dormice were recorded during the nest tube survey undertaken at Reading Golf Club. Detailed results of each check are presented in Appendix 1.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The result of the dormouse nest tube survey indicates a likely absence of the speices at Reading Golf Club.

**Should you need any further advice on the information provided above, please do not hesitate to contact The Ecology Co-op.**



## APPENDIX 2 – COMMON DORMOUSE SURVEY RESULTS

Abbreviations: DM=dormouse; WM=wood mouse; YN=yellow-necked mouse; ad=adult; juv=juvenile, N=nest only; NM=nest material, not woven, unspecified; F=food cache (wood mouse); bee=tree bumblebee *Bombus hypnorum* nest. Bird=bird nest (BTO codes apply to species); E=empty; nf=tube not found.

	May	June	July	August
Completion date	22/05/20	26/06/20	24/07/20	28/08/20
1	E	E	E	E
2	E	E	E	E
3	E	E	E	E
4	E	E	E	E
5	E	E	E	E
6	E	E	E	E
7	E	E	E	E
8	E	E	E	E
9	E	E	E	E
10	E	E	E	E
11	E	E	E	E
12	E	E	E	E
13	E	E	E	E
14	E	E	E	E
15	E	E	E	E
16	E	E	E	E
17	E	E	E	E
18	E	E	E	E
19	E	E	E	E
20	E	E	E	E
21	E	E	E	E
22	E	E	E	E
23	E	E	E	E
24	E	E	NF	NF
25	E	E	E	E
26	E	E	E	E
27	E	E	F	E
28	NF	NF	NF	NF
29	E	E	E	E
30	E	E	E	E
31	E	E	E	NF
32	E	E	E	E
33	E	E	E	E
34	E	E	E	E
35	E	E	E	E



Reading Golf Club, Reading – DORMOUSE SURVEY REPORT

	May	June	July	August
Completion date	22/05/20	26/06/20	24/07/20	28/08/20
36	E	E	E	E
37	E	E	E	E
38	E	E	E	E
39	E	E	E	E
40	E	E	E	E
41	E	E	E	E
42	E	E	E	E
43	E	E	E	E
44	E	E	E	E
45	E	E	E	E
46	E	E	E	E
47	E	E	F	F
48	E	E	F	F
49	E	E	E	E
50	E	E	F	E
51	E	E	E	E
52	E	E	E	E
53	E	E	E	E
54	E	E	E	E
55	E	E	E	E
56	E	E	E	E
57	E	E	E	E
58	E	E	E	E
59	E	E	E	E
60	E	E	E	E
61	E	E	E	E
62	E	E	E	E
63	E	E	E	E
64	E	E	E	E
65	E	E	E	E
66	E	E	E	E
67	E	E	E	E
68	E	E	E	E
69	E	E	E	E
70	E	E	E	E
71	E	E	E	E
72	E	E	E	E
73	E	E	E	E
74	E	E	E	E
75	E	E	E	E
76	E	E	E	E



Reading Golf Club, Reading – DORMOUSE SURVEY REPORT

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	May	June	July	August
Completion date	22/05/20	26/06/20	24/07/20	28/08/20
77	E	E	E	E
78	E	E	E	E
79	E	E	E	E
80	E	E	E	E
81	E	E	E	E
82	E	E	E	E
83	E	E	E	E
84	E	E	E	E
85	E	E	E	E
86	E	E	E	E
87	E	E	E	E
88	E	E	E	E
89	E	E	E	E
90	E	E	E	E
91	E	E	E	E
92	E	E	E	E
93	E	E	E	E
94	E	E	E	E
95	E	E	E	E
96	E	E	E	E
97	E	E	E	E
98	E	E	E	E
99	E	E	E	E
100	E	E	E	E