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Bat Survey Report

Newport Ball Ally Footbridge, Newport, Co. Tipperary

Document Details

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1. Background

Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants have been appointed to provide the information necessary to allow the competent authority to conduct an Article 6(3) Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the proposed construction of a footbridge over the Small River, linking the Newport Ball Alley park to Pound Street L2110 in Newport, Co. Tipperary (Fig. 1). A full description of the proposed works and the findings of the field survey conducted during daylight hours on 14 July 2025 is provided in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report accompanying this document. During field surveying, a number of structures and habitats associated with bats were identified in the area. Although bats area not a qualifying interest of the Lower Shannon SAC [002165], which is adjacent to the site, a dedicated follow-up bat survey was conducted on the evening of 16 July 2025 to assess the presence of bat roosting sites within and adjoining the proposed works area. Findings are outlined below.

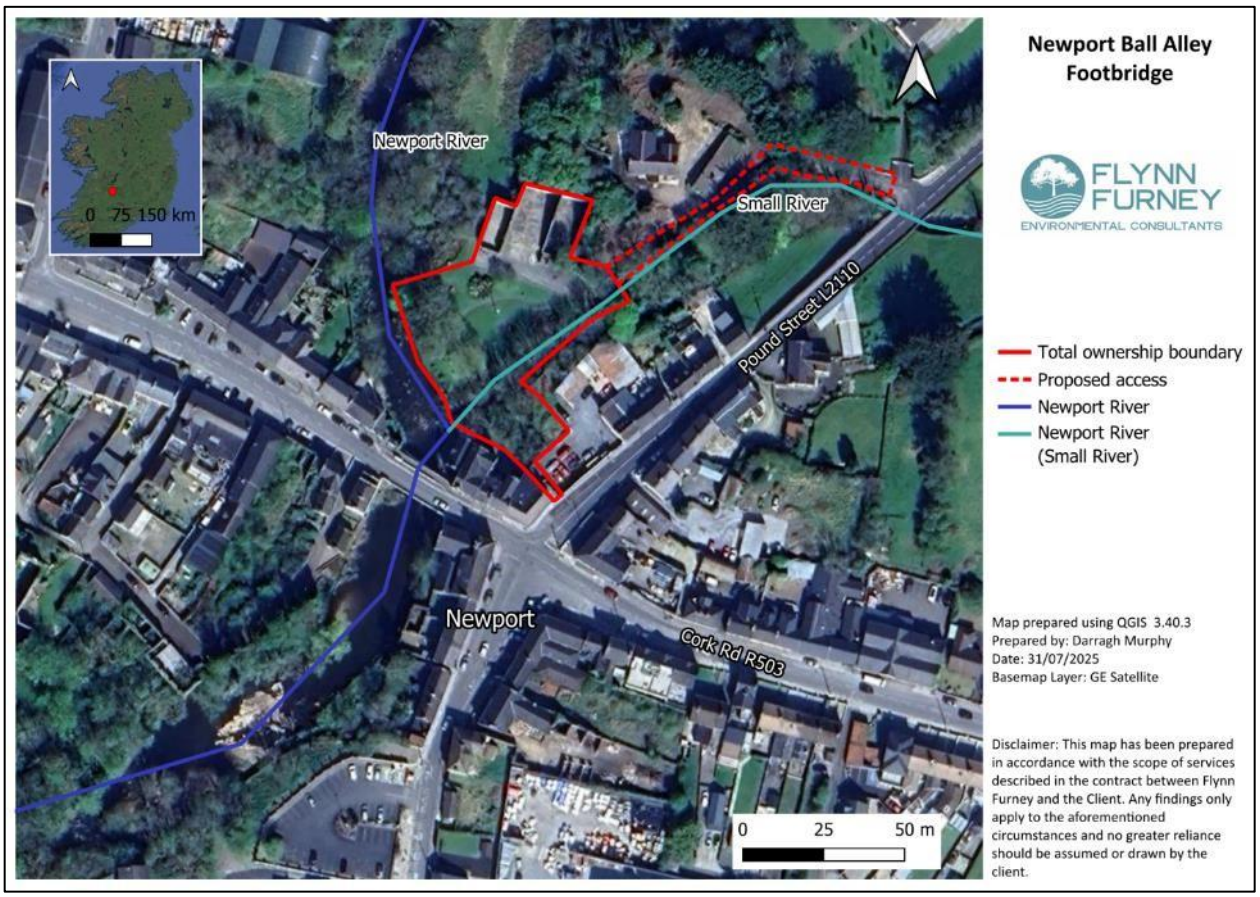

Figure 1 Site of proposed footbridge works over the Small River in the vicinity of the Newport Ball Alley, Newport, Co. Tipperary. Inset: Site location

2. Bat survey

All bat species in Ireland are protected under the Wildlife Act 1976 and the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The lesser horseshoe bat which is found in the Republic of Ireland only is listed in Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, while all bat species are listed in Annex IV of the same Directive. Bat roosts are also protected, meaning it's illegal to disturb or destroy them. It is illegal to intentionally kill, injure, or take a bat, possess a bat (alive or dead), or disturb its roost.

Table 1 Bat habitat suitability index for the area surrounding the proposed works, from Bat Conservation Ireland

Common name	Scientific name	Suitability index
All Bats		34
Soprano pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	47
Brown long-eared bat	*Plecotus auritus*	47
Common pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	52
Lesser horseshoe bat	*Rhinolophus hipposideros*	4
Leisler's bat	*Nyctalus leisleri*	46
Whiskered bat	*Myotis mystacinus*	33
Daubenton's bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	36
Nathusius' pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus nathusii*	1
Natterer's bat	*Myotis nattereri*	40

The area surrounding the proposed works has an overall bat suitability index of 34 and is high for species associated with linear features (treelines, hedgerows) such as and open areas such as long-eared bat, pipistrelles and Leisler's bat, and relatively high for Daubenton's Bat, which feeds and commutes over rivers (Table 1).

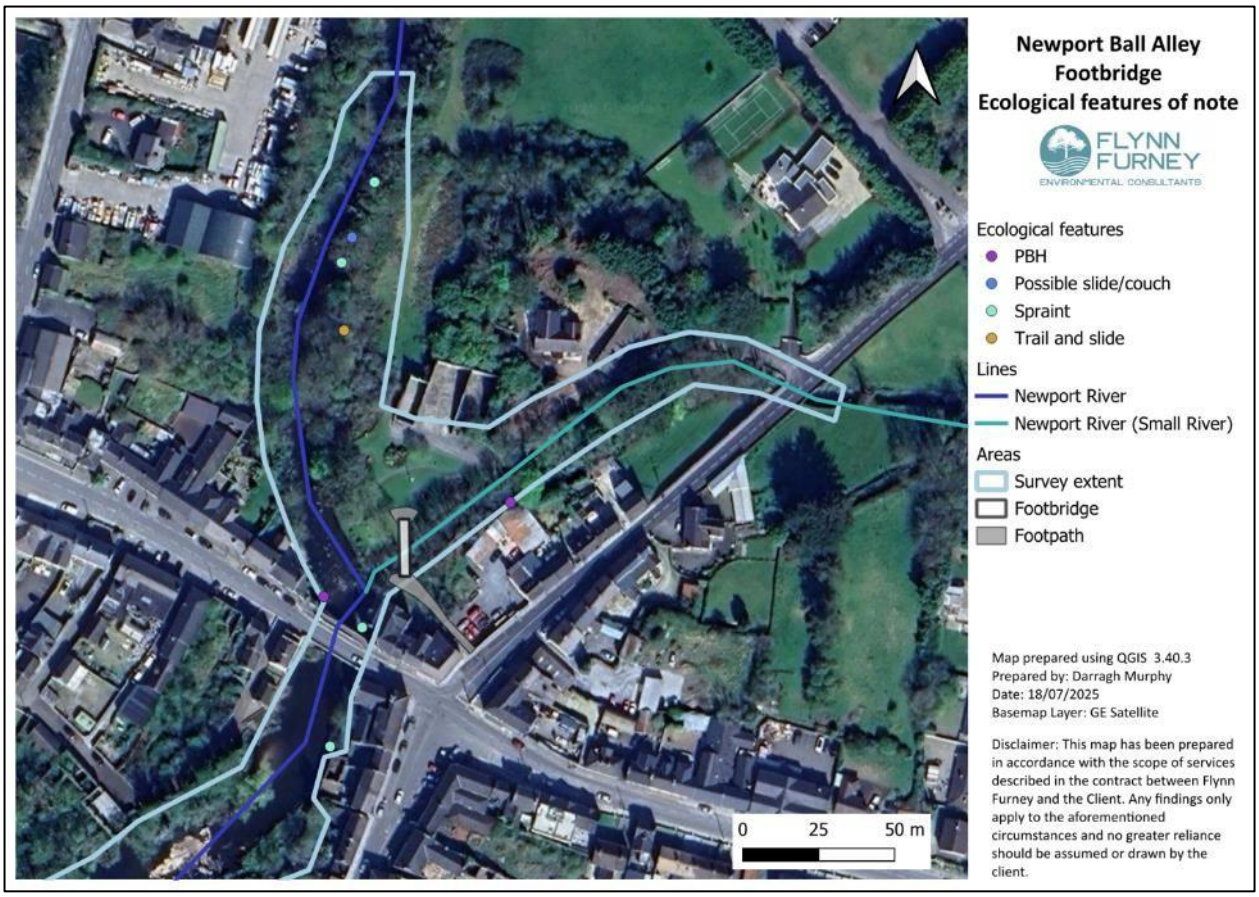

Figure 2 Ecological features of note within the area surveyed on 14th July 2025 around the proposed footbridge works in Newport, Co. Tipperary. Potential bat habitats (PBH) were noted within the old bridge structure over the Newport River and within a stone opening/doorway on the southern bank of the Small River c. 50 m upstream of the works.

During initial surveying on 14 July 2025, the stone-work of the old bridge and in the old doorway along the Small River were noted as potential bat habitats (PBHs; Fig. 2, 3). The consistently wooded riparian margin along the waterways are likely to offer good foraging corridors for bats in the area, as evident in the bat habitat suitability index (Table 1). Good ivy cover on trees in the area was noted, including an alder that is within the zone of works for the proposed footbridge. This tree was relatively small and offers only moderate bat habitat potential.

A dedicated bat survey was carried out on 16th July in which numerous bats were observed along the riparian corridor and within the park area of the handball alley. No emergences of bats from the PBHs in the area was observed. The area is likely to be important for bat foraging, but bat roosts within the zone of influence (ZoI) are unlikely.

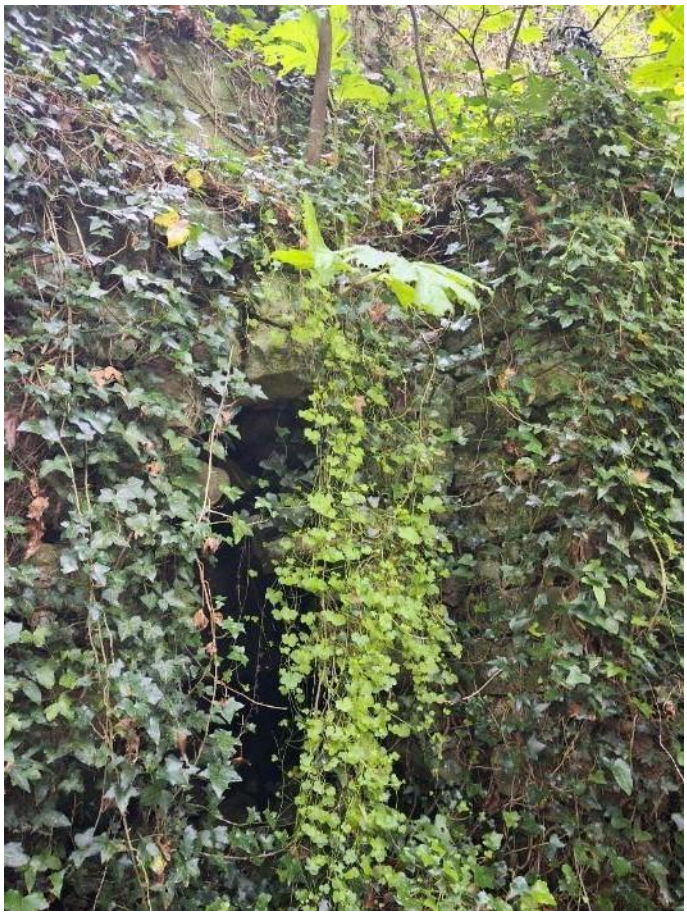

Figure 3 Stone doorway along eastern bank of small river, c. 20m upstream of proposed footbridge. Potential bat habitat

3. Recommendations

While no bat roosts were identified within or adjacent to the works area, the area is believed to be important for bat foraging and commuting. As such, the following is recommended:

1. Works should not take place within emergence or foraging periods for bats, i.e. works are confined to daylight hours only.
2. The use of directional lighting with a luminance of < 0.1lx at the footbridge is recommended so that *spill-over* to adjacent areas is limited and that the effect of artificial light on prey species is minimised, respectively.
3. The replacement of any riparian treelines is recommended to ensure continuous foraging corridors over the river. Planting of species such as willow, oak, poplar and native perennial herbs is also recommended to provide habitats for lepidopteran prey species of bats.

Further bat surveys or physical mitigation structures are unlikely to be necessary. Bats are not a qualifying interest of any designated sites associated with the works.

4. References

1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland.
2. CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal 2nd Edition. The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
3. Collins, J. ed. (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition). The Bat Conservation Trust. London. ISBN – 13 978-1-87-2745-96-1
4. Kelleher, C. & Marnell, F. (2006) Bat Mitigation Guidelines for Ireland. Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 25. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin, Ireland.