

3.6 Mammals (excluding bats)

3.6.1 Badgers

The mammal surveys yielded few signs of badger activity within 150 m of the Application Site, the standard search radius for sites within the Republic of Ireland where blasting or piling is to occur (NRA, 2005). Two badger setts, which were considered to be *inactive* during the field surveys, were observed within the existing quarry footprint (see **Plate 15**, **Plate 16** and burrow 1 and 2 in **Figure 12**). This was based on no observed field signs (prints, hairs etc.) in the vicinity of the setts and vegetation growth around the entrance holes. Additionally, two occurrences of suspected badger droppings were observed in areas of scrub in the west and east of Application Site. Both the inactive setts and field signs were recorded outside of the footprint of the extension.

As such, there is limited evidence to indicate that the Application Site provides important foraging or breeding habitat for badger at present, and that the footprint of the works overlaps with any badger resting sites.



3.6.2 Other Mammals

Some, albeit limited, evidence of fox activity was found within the Application Site, including a print, faeces, mammal trails and one potential inactive fox burrow (burrow 3), identified alongside the inactive badger setts within the existing quarry footprint (see **Figure 12**). There was also an inactive, unidentified mammal burrow (burrow 4) located in the southern edge of the Application Site, with the potential to be a fox den. There were no active dens located within the footprint of the extension or within the Application Site boundary.

Hares were observed several times during field surveys and trails frequently used by them were also recorded throughout the southern section of the Application Site, within the agricultural lands in addition to the field margins.

Existing data from the National Biodiversity Data Centre contained records of pine marten in the 2 km National Grid Squares N28N in which the Application Site is located. Field surveys yielded no evidence of pine marten activity within the Application Site and thus there is no indication that pine martens are utilising the site for resting or foraging. Additionally, though this species can utilise scrubland, there is limited suitable habitat within the Application Site in the form of woodland and forestry plantation.