

**From:** Wells, Sandra [Sandra.Wells@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 28 November 2014 16:18  
**To:** Victoria Gilbey; Watkins, David  
**Cc:** david.kenyon@amec.com; Victoria Robinson  
**Subject:** RE: Brechfa Forest Connection - Meeting follow up

Hi Victoria

The dormouse comments were included on Dave's attachment, and the bat comments were in his covering email.

Hope that covers it?

Best wishes

Sandra Wells  
Planning Ecologist/Ecolegydd Cynllunio

**Please note that my usual working days are Tuesday-Friday.  
Plis nodwch y diwrnodau dwi'n gweithio fel arfer yw Dydd Mawrth i Dydd Gwener**

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email: [sandra.wells@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.wells@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk)

**From:** [VGilbey@rsk.co.uk](mailto:VGilbey@rsk.co.uk) [<mailto:VGilbey@rsk.co.uk>]  
**Sent:** 27 November 2014 14:02  
**To:** Watkins, David  
**Cc:** [david.kenyon@amec.com](mailto:david.kenyon@amec.com); [vrobinson@rsk.co.uk](mailto:vrobinson@rsk.co.uk); Wells, Sandra  
**Subject:** RE: Brechfa Forest Connection - Meeting follow up

Hi Dave,

Don't worry, it happens to us all!

Can I just check that that is the correct attachment though? I don't see any comments from Sandra in it?

Thanks  
Victoria

**From:** Watkins, David [<mailto:David.Watkins@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk>]  
**Sent:** 27 November 2014 13:47  
**To:** Victoria Gilbey

**Cc:** [david.kenyon@amec.com](mailto:david.kenyon@amec.com); Victoria Robinson; Wells, Sandra  
**Subject:** Re: Brechfa Forest Connection - Meeting follow up

Victoria,

Attached are Sandra's comments.  
Apologies for delay but it seems my send button is not as effective as I first thought!

In addition to attached comments please note the following advice as well;

We confirm that Species Team agree with the proposed approach however we would urge the applicant to consider hedgerow tranlocation wherever possible, rather than replanting with semi-mature stock (ie. make as much use as possible of what is already there, rather than destroying that and starting again).

Hope this assists and any further enquiries please donot hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

Dave

[Eich Enw](#)/ David Watkins

[Teitl swydd](#)/Job title. Senior Development Planning Advisor.

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Our purpose is to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, enhanced and used, now and in the future.

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**From:** [VGilbey@rsk.co.uk](mailto:VGilbey@rsk.co.uk) <[VGilbey@rsk.co.uk](mailto:VGilbey@rsk.co.uk)>

**Sent:** 27 November 2014 12:34

**To:** Wells, Sandra

**Cc:** [david.kenyon@amec.com](mailto:david.kenyon@amec.com); [vrobinson@rsk.co.uk](mailto:vrobinson@rsk.co.uk); Watkins, David

**Subject:** RE: Brechfa Forest Connection - Meeting follow up

Hi Sandra,

We haven't received a response so far – is there anything else you need from us in order to provide a response?

Many thanks

Victoria

**From:** Wells, Sandra [<mailto:Sandra.Wells@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk>]  
**Sent:** 06 November 2014 09:27  
**To:** Victoria Gilbey  
**Subject:** RE: Brechfa Forest Connection - Meeting follow up

Hi Victoria

I understood that Dave Watkins was compiling an NRW response; the planning teams are supposed to act as the single point of contact for developers and their advisors. However, I am just checking this.

Regards

Sandra

**From:** [VGilbey@rsk.co.uk](mailto:VGilbey@rsk.co.uk) [<mailto:VGilbey@rsk.co.uk>]  
**Sent:** 05 November 2014 15:30  
**To:** Wells, Sandra; Watkins, David  
**Cc:** [vrobinson@rsk.co.uk](mailto:vrobinson@rsk.co.uk); [david.kenyon@amec.com](mailto:david.kenyon@amec.com)  
**Subject:** FW: Brechfa Forest Connection - Meeting follow up

Hi Sandra,

I hope you're well.

I wondered if you had any thoughts or queries on my previous email below regarding the bat activity surveys? We are finalising the draft ES this week so it would be good to try to incorporate anything specific where possible.

Also regarding the suggested November Dormouse checks, I have copied the summary results table from our draft EPS method statement below. You can see from the table that a number of the sites have achieved over 20 points already and where this hasn't been possible nut searches have been undertaken. My feeling is that the level of survey effort that has been undertaken at each of the survey sites is sufficient therefore we are not proposing to carry out any November checks. I would like us all to be in agreement with this however so I am happy to discuss further. Could I ask that you let me know your thoughts on this ASAP as we do need to give certain landowners 14 day notices to be able to carry out the checks if we decide to go ahead with them.

Dormouse Survey Area	No. of Tubes	Number of Checks	Points	Nut search Y/N
1	50	6	22	No, presence confirmed
2	25	3	14	Y
3	50	6	22	No, not enough fruiting hazel
4	50	4	16	Y
5	50	5	18	Y

Dormouse Survey Area	No. of Tubes	Number of Checks	Points	Nut search Y/N
6	30	4	25	No, immature hazel only
7	50	7	23	No, not enough fruiting hazel
8	50	4	16	Y
9	16	5	17	Y
10	50	4	18	Y
11	50	6	22	No, not enough fruiting hazel
12	50	4	16	Y
13	50	6	22	No, immature hazel only

Thank you  
Victoria

**From:** Victoria Gilbey  
**Sent:** 08 October 2014 16:32  
**To:** 'sandra.wells@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk'; 'David.Watkins@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk'  
**Cc:** Victoria Robinson; 'Kenyon, David'  
**Subject:** Brechfa Forest Connection - Meeting follow up

Hi Sandra,

Apologies it has taken me a while to follow up on our meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> September. We met with Huw and David last week so were able to discuss the remaining points in our table and I was able to give them a summary of what we discussed with regard to the bat activity survey scope.

It was agreed with Dave and Huw that I would update the table and circulate for comment. Dave, please find attached.

As requested at our meeting I have summarised what we discussed with regard to the changes in bat activity survey scope below, if you have any questions please feel free to give me a call.

#### Scoping Clarification for Proposed Brechfa Wind Farm Connection – Bat Activity Surveys

With the removal of the Bryn Llywelyn wind farm connection, further design optimisation work has been carried out and the majority of the overhead connection will now be supported by single wooden poles. As a result, the clearance for the construction and maintenance of the route corridor has been significantly reduced.

The maximum clearance of hedgerows/lines of trees in areas where 'open cut' construction is proposed is 8 m and hedgerow breaches will be replanted with semi-mature stock to reduce the

length of time taken to reinstate. As discussed at the meeting, RSK have extensive experience in monitoring impacts of hedgerow breaches relating to construction. For instance, 20 m gaps created by the construction of the Milford Haven to Aberdullais gas pipeline were monitored prior to and following construction and it was concluded that bats were not dissuaded from crossing 20m gaps, including Horseshoe bats. Therefore, as discussed at the meeting, we do not propose to carry out bat activity surveys on open cut hedgerows.

With regard to the clearance required within woodland blocks/riparian tree lines for the overhead sections, as discussed trees under and adjacent to the line would only be removed if they are tall enough to be of risk of falling on the line or immediately underneath the line. The 'clearance zone' under the lines will be managed on a five year rotating basis as part of the WPD tree and hedgerow cutting schedule, referred to as 'resilience cutting'. This seeks to maintain a 5 m clearance from the conductor to the top of the tree/hedgerow/vegetation (the average conductor height is 12-13 m), and so ground cover will always be present. Large trees are sensitively pruned, and retained wherever possible, and small trees such as hazel are coppiced and encouraged to grow under the line. As a result, the installation of the overhead lines will not create gaps in flight lines and commuting routes for bats. The photograph that we presented at the meeting (also attached) is taken from a site in the Brecon Beacons NP where 'resilience' cutting has taken place and it shows clearly the retained connective habitat under the line and an example of a pruned mature tree adjacent to the line.

As discussed, as a result of the above we have focused our bat activity surveys on woodland parcels (including riparian woodlands) or significant mature tree lines where a number of mature trees may need to be felled. The aim of these surveys has been to understand what bat species are using the feature in order to inform our assessment (and to support the roost surveys), rather than to make a detailed appraisal of bat foraging/commuting activity levels (as we do not believe this will be affected by the proposed scheme, for the reasons outlined above). Based on this objective our surveys have consisted of summer (August) and autumn (September) automated SM2 surveys, supported by manual activity surveys during the summer deployment. Our rationale for the manual surveys was that surveyors could observe whether lots of bats were commuting from a roost early on in the evening or a smaller number of bats were making repeat passes. They were also able to record details on flying heights etc.

As discussed at our meeting this is a deviation from the survey scope outlined in the Brechfa Scoping Report, however as we agreed in principle the level of survey we have undertaken is appropriate for the scale of impact anticipated in this case.

Finally on a different note I am just reviewing the Dormouse survey data and I will be sending through a separate email on this. Basically we have reached our 20 points on a number of the sites and we are considering whether the October/November checks will be necessary at some of the sites, but I will send through further details on this in due course.

Thanks again for your time and please let me know if you would like any further information or clarifications.

Victoria

**Victoria Gilbey (BSc (Hons) MSc CEnv MCIEEM)**  
Principal Ecological Consultant

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