



**Durham Bat group**

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation  
Registered Charity No 1170672

## **Durham Bat Group**

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### **Trustees' Annual Report 2022**

### **Durham Bat Group Trustees**

<b>Trustee Name</b>	<b>Committee Position</b>	<b>Dates serving as a trustee in 2022</b>
Claire Dewson	Chair	01/01/2022 – 31/12/2022
Clare Rawcliffe	Treasurer Trainer	01/01/2022 – 31/12/2022
Tony Purcell	Asset Manager	01/01/2022 – 31/12/2022
Gwynevere Kipling	Bat Care Coordinator	01/01/2022 – 18/10/2022
Barry Anderson	Secretary	01/01/2022 – 08/08/2022
Jodie Morgan	Events Coordinator	01/01/2022 – 31/12/2022
Melissa Young	Recorder	20/10/2022 – 31/12/2022
Ian Bond	Secretary	18/10/2022 – 31/12/2022

### **Non-Trustee Committee Members**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Committee Position</b>	<b>Dates serving as a committee member in 2022</b>
David Sowerbutts	Advisor	01/01/2022 – 31/12/2022
Alistair Lockett	Communications Officer Membership Coordinator	01/01/2022 – 31/12/2022

## **Trustees**

The Trustees have acted with due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit with respect to Durham Bat Group's charitable activity, and in particular to Public Benefit Guides PB1, PB2 and PB3. This report is prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102).

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Bond', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ian Bond (secretary)

## **Governing Document**

The constitution of Durham Bat Group was adopted on 20 October 2016, and is based on the Charity Commission's model 'Association' constitution for Charitable Incorporated Organisations.

The group is further governed by byelaws adopted on 20 February 2018 which define criteria for membership, the structure of the governing committee, and group policies on bat work training, partnerships with other organisations, providing advice to the public, group meetings, data and financial management, and insurance.

## **Objectives and Activities**

The objectives of the Durham Bat Group (DBG) are promotion of the conservation and welfare of bats, primarily within the geographic area between the rivers Tees and Tyne, but also including parts of Durham south of the Tees and excluding parts of Northumberland south of the Tyne. This includes the provision of practical advice and help to any individual or organisation with regard to bats, education of the public about bats by means of public talks, bat walks, talks to school groups etc., and encouragement of community participation in bat related activities. It also includes the study of bats to further understanding of their biology and ecology and working with other organisations sharing similar aims.

Durham Bat Group is the umbrella body for bat workers within its area of activity. It holds indoor meetings during the winter months and field activities at all times of the year but focusing on the main period of bat activity from May to October.

DBG maintains a database of bat records within its area of activity. The group provides records, via an agreement with ERIC NE (the local records centre), to further the understanding of bats and to ecological consultants carrying out records searches.

The group has a network of bat carers who rehabilitate sick and injured bats found by the public for release back into the wild where possible. Bat carers must receive training from group members experienced in bat care before carrying out any bat rehabilitation independently. DBG works closely with Durham Cathedral to care for grounded bats found regularly in the Cloisters, primarily in late summer / early autumn.

DBG maintains and monitors bat box schemes in the county, undertakes surveys and runs bat walks for the public. It also works with other groups and organisations to provide educational talks and bat walks and benefits the public through bat conservation activities.

Occasional financial donations to bat-related scientific or charitable work by outside individuals or bodies are assessed on their merits and voted on by members during group meetings. Grants may be provided to groups or individuals whose activities are considered to provide added value for bat conservation to those of Durham Bat Group.

The membership of Durham Bat Group stands at 120 (figure as of 01/10/2023).

## **2022 Meetings**

### **General Indoor Meetings of Members**

27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – Member Mike Wilson called a meeting in conjunction with artist David De La Haye to discuss the potential to undertake a collaborative acoustic art project using bat sounds at Durham Cathedral.

### **2022 Meetings of the Board of Trustees**

The Trustees met on 12/01/22, 10/08/22, 08/09/22, 07/11/2022 and 28/11/2022 to facilitate the running of the Group.

### **2022 Annual General Meeting**

The 2022 AGM was held at the WWT Washington Wetlands Centre on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and attended by 15 members. The minutes of the 2021 AGM were agreed, as were the 2021 financial report and trustees annual report.

As required by the constitution, Gwynevere Kipling and Jodie Morgan stood down as Trustees. Jodie Morgan was re-elected, and Ian Bond was appointed as a new trustee.

There followed bat surveys of the Wetlands Centre grounds including harp trapping as part of the National Nathusius Project. There was also discussion with members about the future activities and direction of the group.

## **Records**

A new arrangement was negotiated with the Environmental Records Information Centre North East (ERIC NE) by which "All commercial, public, or academic data enquiries...received by DBG will be forwarded to ERIC for response". This arrangement was implemented in July 2022. Prior to implementation, nine data searches were undertaken by David Sowerbutts. ERIC NE undertook 266 data searches between 12<sup>th</sup> July and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 which included DBG data in the results.

## **Training**

18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 – A National Bat Monitoring Project (NBMP) Level 2 "Using Your Ears" Bat Detector Workshop was held at Houghall College, Durham – open to the public and DBG members, delivered by Clare Rawcliffe on behalf of the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and assisted by Claire Dewson.

Opportunities to handle and ID bats were offered to all members with appropriate vaccinations and PPE at all of the Washington WWT bat box checks by C Rawcliffe.

Opportunities to handle and ID bats were offered to all members with appropriate vaccinations and PPE at all of the National Nathusius Pipistrelle Project survey nights by C Rawcliffe.

Opportunities to participate in bat surveys using detectors were offered to all members at the Greenabella Marsh and RSPB Saltholme survey events.

## **Media**

20<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – DBG Member Gwyn Kipling was interviewed about bat care by the RSPCA which was put out on social media.

## **Projects**

### **Durham Cathedral**

Jodie Morgan managed the Cathedral's bat patrol rota which is aimed at collecting and providing first aid to grounded bats during the summer period. As per the guidance regarding Covid-19, volunteers were advised on appropriate PPE to handle bats and a telephone rota was provided to the Cathedral porters for emergencies. Bat patrols were carried out as normal by volunteers. Cathedral staff were also trained, during organised sessions, in basic bat care by lead volunteer and Trustee Jodie Morgan in a safe environment.

Volunteers contributed to a daily bat patrol on rota and an 'on call' basis, awaiting a bat rescue call from Durham Cathedral to recover and rehabilitate grounded bats during the annual Common Pipistrelle swarming period in the Cathedral cloister.

### **Hamsterley Forest**

A bat box check was undertaken at Hamsterley Forest on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2022 led by Tricia Snaith. Four bats were recorded in total, 2 x noctule bats and 2 x pipistrelle species.

### **WWT Washington Bat Box Checks**

Most of the bat boxes at the Wetlands Centre have now been moved onto a hook system allowing checking to take place without the need for ladders. This makes the process safer and quicker. This has allowed more frequent checks of the boxes to understand how they are used year-round.

The boxes were checked by Clare Rawcliffe, assisted by other Members plus staff and volunteers from the Wetlands centre on the following dates:

- 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022 – 2 bats were recorded using the Kent style bat boxes. They were observed from the ground using torches and were therefore not identified to species level.
- 24<sup>th</sup> July 2022 - 4 bats were recorded in total. One was identified as a soprano pipistrelle; the others were not identified to species level.



- 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022 – 8 bats were recorded in total, all soprano pipistrelles. Of these, a male and a female were roosting singly, the remaining 6 were together in a box comprising 1 male and 5 females in breeding condition and believed to be a mating roost.
- 25<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – 11 bats were recorded in total. Of these 8 were identified as soprano pipistrelles, a female roosting singly, a male roosting singly and a box with 1 male and 3 females together, presumed to be a mating roost. Three other bats were recorded using the Kent style bat boxes. They were observed from the ground using torches and were therefore not identified to species level.
- 6<sup>th</sup> November 2022 - 6 bats were recorded using the Kent style bat boxes. They were observed from the ground using torches and were therefore not identified to species level.

### **National Nathusius Pipistrelle Project**

Craig Bulga co-ordinated and led acoustic surveys for the Nathusius Pipistrelle project within the DBG area.

21<sup>st</sup> September 2022 – Survey at WWT Washington Wetlands Centre led by Clare Rawcliffe & Tony Purcell who are on the national project licence. Some technical issues led to only one acoustic lure being operational. 2 bats were caught – a female soprano pipistrelle and a male whiskered bat.

### **National Small Myotis Project**

The National Small Myotis project aims to further the understanding of the distribution, habitat preferences and key identification features for whiskered, brandts and alcahloe bats across England. Clare Rawcliffe is named on the national project licence.

This allows targeted trapping surveys at any sites likely to be used by the target species. Specific data and dropping samples from any of the target bat species will be collected during any surveys.

21<sup>st</sup> September 2022 – Survey at WWT Washington Wetlands Centre for the National Nathusius Project, but as a whiskered bat was caught, data for the small myotis project was taken.

### **Pilot British Bat Survey (BBatS)**

Durham Bat group were approached by the Bat Conservation Trust to suggest suitable sites to take part in a pilot survey technique. BBatS is a passive acoustic monitoring survey that will allow BCT to estimate trends in UK bat species occupancy and activity and will form part of the National Bat Monitoring Programme in the future. DBG Member Andrew Diamond participated in the project at his place of work, Washington Wetlands Centre, setting up the audio moth for passive monitoring and returning the equipment to BCT for analysis.

### **Other Events / Activities**

13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 – Training session, New College Durham.

An introduction to bats, their ecology and how they use buildings was held by New College, Durham, delivered by Durham Bat Group. The session was led by Jonathan Pounder, assisted by Noel Jackson and Clare Rawcliffe.

17<sup>th</sup> July 2022 – Survey, Haswell Plough

Following the report of a maternity roost at a semi-detached house in Haswell Plough, Melissa Young and other members of the bat group carried out a dusk survey to establish location, species and number of bats present. Bats were seen emerging from an area on the gable end and identified using bat detectors to be common pipistrelle bats. A total of 39 bats were seen emerging. As a dead female with a baby attached had been found in the front garden following a cat attack it is presumed this is a maternity roost.

29<sup>th</sup> July 2022 – Bat Walk & Talk, Sunderland

A bat walk and talk was organised by the International Community Organisation of Sunderland at Backhouse Park in Sunderland, led by DBG Member Clare Rawcliffe and attended by ~25 people.

20<sup>th</sup> August 2022 - Bat Walk & Talk, Bowlees, North Pennines

A Bat walk & talk was organised by the North Pennines AONB Partnership and delivered by DBG Member Alistair Lockett.

26<sup>th</sup> August 2022 - Bat Walk & Talk, Chopwell Woods

An evening bat walk was organised by the Friends of Chopwell Woods and delivered by DBG Member Melissa Young. The event involved a stroll through the woods using bat detectors after an introductory talk about UK Bats. 20 people attended and species seen included Noctule, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Daubentons.

14<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – Bat Walk & Talk

A bat walk and talk was organised by Sustrans and delivered by DBG Members Rachel Hepburn and Debbie Goldsmith.

20<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – Cubs Bat Night, Hartlepool

A bat walk was organised by Hartlepool cubs and delivered by DBG Member Melissa Young. The evening started with some fun games learning about bats and concluded with a walk around the local area looking for bats in the park.

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 – Survey, Greenabella Marsh

Ian Bond organised and led a survey of Greenabella Marsh in North Tees attended by several DBG Members.

29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – Survey, RSPB Saltholme

Ian Bond organised and led a survey of RSPB Saltholme attended by several DBG members.

## **National Bat Helpline Support**

Durham Bat Group Members assisted with calls received by National Bat Helpline run by the Bat Conservation Trust in 2022. The call types received included:

- Natural England roost-related enquiries which required a roost visit and were referred to licenced Volunteer Bat Roost Visitors (VBRVs).

- Roost-related enquiries which did not require a visit, and
- Bat care related calls to advise and assist with grounded and injured bats.

## Financial Review

### Summary

	2022	2021	2020
<b>Receipts</b>			
Data searches	£125.00	£ 1,525.00	£ 3,320.00
Donation - bat care		£ -	0
Donation - talk	£600.00	£ 200.00	0
<b>Income sub Total for year</b>	<b>£725.00</b>	<b>£ 1,725.00</b>	<b>£ 3,320.00</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Room hire & Refreshments	£ 218.00	£ -	£ 301.68
Printing, Postage & Stationary	£ 636.00	£ 1,054.00	0
Insurance	£ 100.00	£ 100.00	£ 100.00
Bat Care	£ 56.70	£ 281.00	£ 250.02
ICT Expenditure	£ -	£ 117.00	0
Equipment	£ 1,329.41	£ -	0
Bat flight cage (materials and labour)		£ 1,824.00	£ 1,836.79
BCT Donation	£ 1,000.00		0
General expenses	£ 12.00	£ 39.00	
<b>Expenditure total for year</b>	<b>£ 3,352.11</b>	<b>£ 3,415.00</b>	<b>£ 2,488.49</b>
<b>Income minus expenditure</b>	<b>-£ 2,627.11</b>	<b>-£ 1,690.00</b>	<b>£ 831.51</b>
Balance brought forward from previous year	£ 22,285.45	£ 23,873.00	£ 23,042.21
<b>End of year balance</b>	<b>£ 19,658.34</b>	<b>£ 22,184.00</b>	<b>£ 23,873.72</b>
DBG has no restricted funds or endowed funds			

The income shown as received in 2022 does not include income from the 2022 ERIC NE data searches because the money was received into the account in the 2023 financial year.

The main equipment expenditure in 2022 was a set of 12 new Magenta bat detectors and FSC Bat ID guides for use in training and public walks and talks. These were purchased to replace old and failing bat detectors that were proving to be unreliable and not fit for purpose.