

## **Statement from Classic Builders (SW) regarding clearance works at the former WAAF Site, Cambrose.**

I can confirm that all the works undertaken are compliant with the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and have not resulted in the killing/injuring of a badger, damage/ destruction/ obstruction of a sett or disturbance of a badger when occupying a sett. The location of the proposed site investigation works have been informed by numerous ecological surveys (undertaken by our project ecologists GE Consulting) including two badger surveys to identify any badger setts on site. Furthermore, all physical works on site have been undertaken under supervision of GE Consulting, who have and will be on site to identify any badger setts found and to ensure compliance with the relevant wildlife legislation.

I understand that there has been suggestions that the vegetation removal works being carried out require a Badger Mitigation Licence from Natural England, however, as advised by GE Consulting, this is not the case. In fact, the government website (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/badgers-protection-surveys-and-licences>) clearly states:

**'You usually won't need a licence to do the following if it's unlikely to disturb a badger in its sett or damage a sett:**

- work with hand tools or machinery above or below ground close to a sett
- clear vegetation near setts, including felling small trees or shrubs, provided they are not uprooted and don't block access to the sett'

To reiterate, all works have been undertaken using powered hand tools and have not resulted in the blocking of access to a sett.

In addition to the badgers, we have sought to mitigate impacts on other protected species e.g. nesting birds by delaying the vegetation clearance works until after breeding bird season (March to August inclusive) thus also ensuring compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

At no point is this site being cleared for any development, it is solely to undertake further detailed ecological surveys (identify any additional badger setts within the dense vegetation), site investigation and groundwater monitoring. These investigatory works are a vital part of the planning application process and without this information, a formal planning application cannot be submitted and thus the site not developed to provide affordable housing. Once our reports are fully completed these will be issued to the planning portal and the public domain as part of the planning application.

We are aware of the sensitivities surrounding this site which is why we are ensuring that every element of works that take place are fully compliant with any guidelines and laws.