

15th September 2023

Carl Houseley
AT Contracting & Plant Hire Ltd
Moor Barns Lane,
Lutterworth,
Leicestershire,
LE17 4JD

Dear Mr Housey

RE: Water Vole Survey Knowsley Village Stables

A water vole and otter survey was undertaken on 15th September 2023 at ditch D1 (drawing P.1889.23.E02, Water Vole Survey, appendix 2) that flows to the north of Knowsley Village Stables, (hereafter referred to as the site) by Liz Kenyon BSc (Hons) (seven years' experience in undertaking water vole surveys) and assisted by Jack Kay MSc Qual CIEEM. The water vole and otter survey was undertaken during suitable weather conditions (dry, sunny (4/8), calm air (Force 0 on the Beaufort Scale) and 19C).

The survey was carried out in accordance with the Chanin P (2003). *Monitoring the Otter Lutra lutra*. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No. 10, English Nature, Peterborough and Strachan, R., Moorhouse, T., Gelling, M. (2011). *Water Vole Conservation Handbook*, 3rd Edition. Wildlife Conservation Research Unit: Abingdon.

Ditch D1, drawing P.1889.23.E02, water vole survey appendix 1) flows adjacent to the northern boundary to the site, entering the site through a culvert from the east, before becoming dry. The approximate 55m section of the ditch that lies adjacent to the site boundary features soil and stone bolder banks with steep gradients >45°. Scrub and scattered trees line the south bank with a horse paddock beyond. To the northern bank is an existing residential dwelling and associated front /rear gardens.

Off site to the east the water flows into the site via a culvert underneath Knowsley Lane. Due to access restrictions approximately 20m of this stretch could be searched for signs of water vole. The banks are manmade in brick and surrounded by a pocket of trees. The flow of the water was slow within this stretch of the ditch and the water within the section of the ditch that lies adjacent to the northern boundary of the site was standing water.

Limitations with access to the north side of the bank for the stretch of the ditch that lines the site boundary have been taken into account in the conclusions of this report.

Water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) are a Species of Principal Importance and also fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to:

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- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles whilst occupying a structure or place used for that purpose;
- intentionally kill, injure or take water voles;
- possess or control live or dead water voles or derivatives;
- sell water voles or offer or expose for sale or transport for sale; and
- publish or cause to be published any advertisement which conveys the buying or selling of water voles.

No field signs for water vole were observed during the survey and no water vole were seen, indicating water vole do not utilise this section if D1.

Rhododendron (TN1) has been identified within the site. To avoid the spread (complying with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) of these species within the site during site clearance, it is recommended that an **invasive species management plan** is produced and adhered to during the works. It is recommended that the management plan details suitable management of these species, biosecurity measures and avoidance measures where possible.

Conclusions

No field signs for water vole were observed during the survey and no water vole were seen, indicating water vole do not utilise this section if D1. The off-site section of the ditch, in the direction that the water flows is made, providing limited habitat for water vole and providing reduced connectivity to the section of the ditch that lines the northern site boundary.

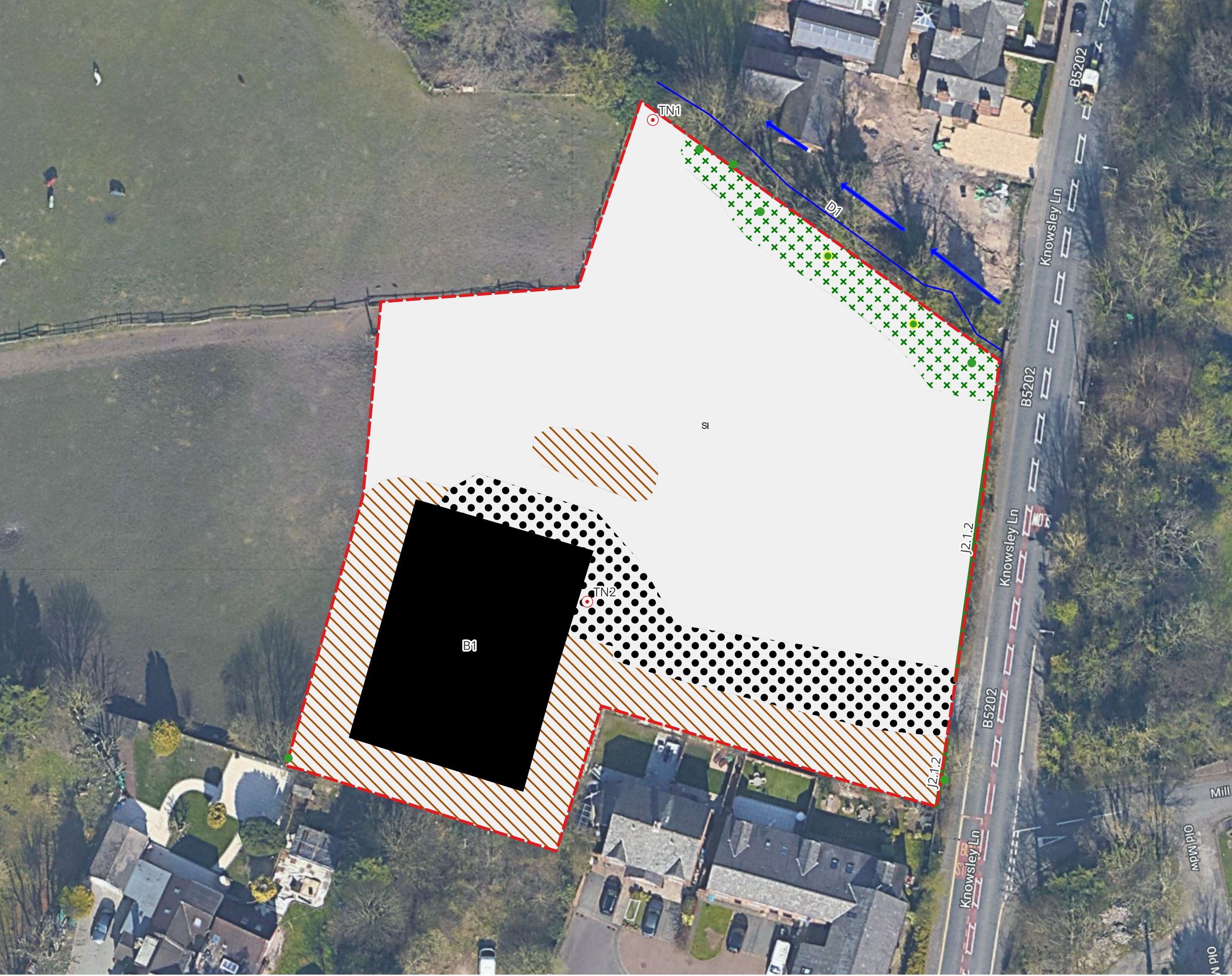
A toolbox talk is also recommended for all construction workers prior to the start of works for water vole if in the event the species are found. Ecological supervision may also be required during works immediately adjacent to the brook following the outcome of the water vole and otter check prior to the works commencing.

In the event that water vole are encountered during the proposed works, all works should stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for advice.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Kenyon
Ascerta

Appendix 1



Key

Survey area

J3.6 - Building

J4 - Hardstanding

SI

B6 - Semi-improved grassland

C3.1 - Tall ruderal vegetation

A2.2 - Scrub

J2.1.2 - Species poor hedgerow

G2 - Wet ditch

A3.1 - Scattered trees

A3.1 - Low BRP

Target notes

TN1 - Rhododendron

TN2 - Muckheap

BRP - Bat Roost Potential

DO NOT SCALE.
ALL COORDINATES RELATED TO LOCAL GRID.
LOCATED TO NG BY BEST FIT TO DETAIL.
EXTRACTED FROM OS DIGITAL DATA.

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CLIENT:

AT Contracting & Plant Hire Ltd

PROJECT:

Knowsley Village Stables

DRAWING TITLE:

Water Vole Survey

SCALE:

NTS@A3

DRAWN BY:

LK

DRAWING No:

P.1889.23.E02

DATE:

15/09/2023

CHKD BY:

CP

REV:

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