



Dormouse Survey Report 2025

Land at West Hoathly Road

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living creatures are capable of migration and whilst protected species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

The views and opinions contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Devine Homes to undertake an assessment for presence/likely absence of dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) on the proposed development site on land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead, RH19 4RQ, hereafter referred to as the 'site' (Figure 1).
- 1.2 This document provides findings of the dormouse surveys completed by The Ecology Partnership in 2025 in order to support the planning application for the proposed development. Section 2 of this report sets out the methodology of The Ecology Partnership's survey, the results in Section 3 and the implications discussed in Section 4.

Site Context and Status

- 1.2 The site is located east of West Hoathly Road in the town of East Grinstead, East Sussex (TQ 39244 36695). The site covers approximately 2.0ha and comprises woodland, sheep-grazed grassland and boundary hedgerows and treelines. The southern boundary is adjacent to further deciduous woodland. The surrounding area consists of grazed fields to the east and a playing field to the north.
- 1.3 The site red line application boundary is shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Approximate location of the red line application boundary

Relevant Legislation

- 1.3 Hazel dormice are a European protected species (EPS) and as such are protected from deliberate killing, injury or disturbance and its breeding sites and resting places are absolutely protected with no requirement to show that their destruction was deliberate or reckless. The aim of this law is to protect the favourable conservation status (FCS) of the species. The dormouse is further protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This law provides protection to individual animals as well as breeding and resting places, making the deliberate killing or injuring of individual dormice unlawful.

2.0 Dormouse Survey Methodology

- 2.1 Using the methodology provided in the Mammal Society Hazel Dormice Mitigation Handbook a habitat quality assessment of the southern woodland and boundary hedgerow/ treeline onsite was undertaken (Wells *et al* 2025). This involves a combination

of structural complexity and species diversity. On average both habitats were considered to support a high species diversity, as greater than 6 suitable species were present throughout. The structural complexity of the northern woodland was considered medium suitability; on this basis the habitat was considered to be of ‘good’ quality. The boundary scrub was considered to be of high suitability; therefore, the habitat was considered to be of ‘**excellent**’ suitability for dormice.

2.2 As such, in accordance with the guidance, a total of 50 Dormouse nest tubes were established within the woodland, hedgerow and treeline habitats on 1st September 2025. Each dormouse tube was established as per Natural England guidelines, attached to the underside of a suitable branch. Checks were undertaken in September, October and November 2025 during suitable weather conditions. It should be noted that the October and November checks were undertaken in the first seven days of the following month, as permitted in the aforementioned dormouse guidelines. Surveys were carried out by Alexia Tamblyn’s (The Ecology Partnership) accredited agents.

3.0 Results

3.1 Surveys undertaken between September-December 2025, with the results shown within Table 1 below.

Table 1: Survey Dates and Results

<i>Date of check</i>	<i>Observation</i>
1 st September 2025	<i>Set up</i>
30 th September 2025	No evidence
5 th November 2025 (October check)	No evidence
3 rd December 2025 (November check)	No evidence of dormice. Two potential wood mouse nests.

3.2 No evidence of dormice was found during the course of the survey period. During the November check, two potential wood mouse nests were identified, which were loosely constructed with leaves and had acorn caches (see Appendix 1).

- 3.3 As such, is considered that dormice are likely to be absent from the site and therefore the development is not constrained by this species and no further survey or mitigation is required in relation to this species.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The site at West Hoathly Road was considered to have potential to support dormice, due to the presence of deciduous woodland, scrub and treelines with good connectivity to a wider network of further suitable habitat.
- 4.2 A total of 50 dormice nest tubes were set up in September 2025 and checks were carried out from September until December inclusively.
- 4.3 No evidence of dormice presence was found during the survey period. It is considered that dormice are likely to be absent from the site and therefore the development is not constrained by this species.
- 4.4 As such, no mitigation specific to dormice is considered necessary.

References

The Ecology Partnership (2025) Land at West Hoathly Road – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Wells, D., Chanin, P. & Gubert, L. (2025) *Hazel Dormouse Mitigation Handbook*. The Mammal Society.

Appendix 1: Photographs

Photograph 1: Potential wood mouse nest located in the northern tree line. Loosely constructed and contained acorn cache.



Photograph 2: Acorn from inside wood mouse nest. Nibble markings are not indicative of dormice.



Photograph 3: Potential wood mouse nest along western native hedgerow.



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