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Sally-Ann Hurry of Mountfield Ecology

# PLANET

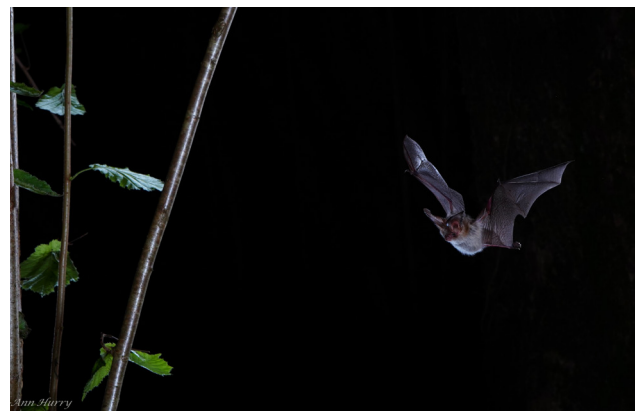
## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

### Protecting One of the UK’s Rarest Mammals: Safeguarding a Grey Long-Eared Bat Roost

A major biodiversity milestone emerged in 2025 with the confirmation of an endangered grey long-eared bat roost at one of our sites in north Kent, an exceptionally rare finding well beyond the species’ usual southern distribution. Listed as Endangered on the Red List for British Mammals, and with fewer than 1,000 individuals known to remain in the UK, the grey long-eared bat is one of the nation’s rarest mammals. The discovery, verified twice through DNA sequencing, represents a significant and unexpected record for a species largely confined to the south and southwest of England.

The finding arose during a Tarmac-commissioned bat assessment carried out near Rochester by ecologist Sally-Ann Hurry of Mountfield Ecology. During her inspection of the roof void, a small number of fresh droppings were collected and submitted to Ecotype Genetics for DNA analysis. The results confirmed the presence of the grey long-eared bat, and a second test verified the identification beyond doubt.

Sally-Ann reflected on the importance of the discovery and its unusual location:



**“The identification of a grey long-eared bat roost in north Kent has been surprising while considering the species’ known distribution and range being mainly associated with the south coast of England. Furthermore, north Kent has not been identified during former habitat mapping and research as being an area likely to become suitable for the species.”**

Sally-Ann Hurry of Mountfield Ecology

While further monitoring is underway to understand how the bat uses the roost, the confirmation alone marks a highly significant ecological record, and an important moment for conservation efforts in the region.

### **Priority Protection Measures Now Underway**

Following the discovery, protecting the roost became a key priority. Tarmac is working closely with Mountfield Ecology to ensure that essential building works can proceed without disturbing the bat, with strict safeguarding measures now in place. Additional conservation actions are being introduced in the surrounding area to enhance local habitat conditions, providing better foraging, roosting and movement corridors for this rare species.

The grey long-eared bat depends on a network of large open foraging areas, hedgerows, woodlands and spacious roof voids, habitats that have become increasingly fragmented due to changes in land use, agricultural practices and declines in insect populations. Enhancing these features around the Kent roost is essential to supporting the species' survival and potential range expansion.

### **Strengthening Habitat Networks Through Landscape-Scale Collaboration**

Tarmac's recent affiliate membership of the new North Kent Woods and Downs National Nature Reserve is also helping to create opportunities to strengthen habitat connections across the wider landscape. By working with neighbouring landowners, conservation organisations and local ecology networks, the company is contributing to broader initiatives aimed at improving ecological resilience and supporting threatened species.

Tarmac and Mountfield Ecology have shared the Kent finding with the wider bat conservation community to build awareness and help inform fieldworkers and ecologists across the region. With only nine known maternity colonies left in the UK, knowledge sharing is vital to improving the national understanding of the species and ensuring emerging roosts are identified and protected.

### **Looking Ahead**

The discovery of a grey long-eared bat roost in north Kent marks an important moment for national conservation efforts and highlights the value of Tarmac's proactive ecological assessments. By acting quickly to protect the roost, enhancing surrounding habitats and supporting landscape-scale conservation partnerships, Tarmac is helping safeguard one of the UK's rarest mammals.

As monitoring continues, the Kent finding offers hope that the grey long-eared bat may be expanding its range, and reinforces the importance of collaboration, ecological vigilance and responsible land stewardship in securing the future of this highly threatened species.