



STEPHEN CUTMORE BSc(Hons), MICFor, MArborA

Arboricultural & Ecological Services



SURVEYS, INSPECTIONS, REPORTS

FORMER RUGBY CLUB WAEN RHUDDLAN RHYL DENBIGHSHIRE LL18 5RS

Great Crested Newt Survey Results

- The Cofnod (Local Ecological Records Centre) website was accessed (www.cofnod.org.uk) and a Cofnod Data Request [E07584] was made for a data search for Priority Species and designated wildlife sites within a 1km radius of the site. There are records of great crested newts within 1km radius of the site according to the data search.
- There is one pond on the site, near the North boundary, to the East of the pavilion building, which has two records of GCN (1993-2004). The pond is now overgrown with encroaching Willow scrub and Bramble, with no open water visible. According to the OS map, there are 26 ponds within 500m radius of the site boundaries, 15 of these ponds are within 350m radius.
- The scrub and scattered trees, woodland and the longer vegetation around the boundaries have potential to be used by GCN for foraging, emigration corridors and hibernation. The amenity grass (rugby pitches) are still mown, so have a short swathe, which does not provide suitable conditions for foraging GCN, as lack of cover will leave GCN prone to predation by birds etc.
- As there are records of GCN within 1km radius, further abundance surveys of ponds in close proximity of the site are required between March-May, to determine GCN populations within the locality.
- Assuming GCN are present in the locality, mitigation will be required in the form of Reasonable Avoidance Measures to minimise risk of GCN being injured during the works.
- There will be no loss of connectivity to the site. The conclusion is that the proposed development would have a low scale of impact on the favourable conservation status of the locally recorded Great Crested Newts.



PRO3755



UK/I 0343A

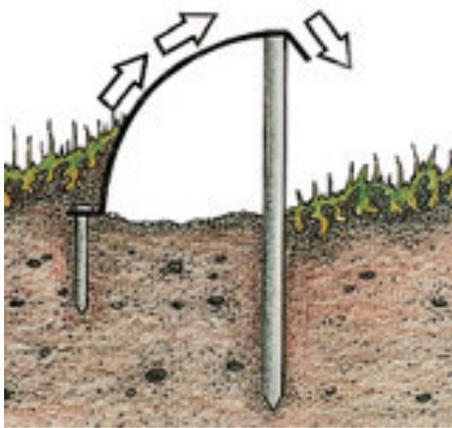
Reasonable Avoidance Methods

Site Induction

- As part of the site induction process, all staff working on site will be made aware of the potential presence of GCN within the immediate landscape, and their status as a UK and European Protected Species. Great Crested Newts are protected in the UK under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and under Regulation 40 of the Habitats Regulations 2010. It is an offence to handle these animals without either a survey licence or a development licence obtained from Natural Resources Wales.
- The toolbox talk will set out what measures are being implemented to avoid affecting amphibians and will also give details of how to recognise GCN and a photographic reference summary of how to recognise GCN will be displayed in the site compound cabin at all times.
- Contractors will be instructed to cease work in the unlikely event that they discover a GCN within the site, and to contact a licenced ecologist and NRW (Buckley Office). Contact details will be displayed alongside the photographic identification sheets.
- A site log should be kept to ensure that all these precautionary measures are implemented, with dates and names of who implemented them.

One-way fencing

- One-way fencing will be installed around the margins of the site during January. Any GCN that may be on site will be able to cross the fence as they emerge from hibernation and migrate to the ponds in the locality. As this will not hinder GCN from migrating towards the ponds to breed, no offence will occur, so an NRW licence will not be required.



Vegetation clearance

- The objective is to deter GCN from the grasslands/tall herb/scrub habitats within the site by making habitats unsuitable for use.
- For the initial stages of the development, vegetation clearance should be undertaken in a phased manner under the supervision of an ecologist. The optimum time for vegetation clearance is October-February, when GCN are hibernating and not dispersing across the site.
- Any potential natural refugia such as piles of rubble, piles of logs and metal debris which need to be removed, will be dismantled by hand in a 'soft demolition' by an ecologist prior to or following the winter hibernation period (November – February/March) in a careful and controlled manner, with constant vigilance for any sheltering GCN and/or any other potential species. Where possible and practical, the piles of rubble/logs etc. should be transferred to a suitable location adjacent the area to be developed, to provide alternative natural refugia for GCN and other species.
- A 5m wide buffer zone is to be retained around the boundaries as a wildlife corridor. Areas of tall, rough grassland and scrub elsewhere on site which need to be cleared should be strimmed to a height of 150mm under supervision of the ecologist and checked for reptiles. All arisings should be immediately removed or stacked in a habitat pile outside the area to be developed, (to prevent risk of reptiles using these as hibernacula or refugia). These cut areas must then be left undisturbed for at least 48 hours. Thereafter, areas which have been strimmed must be hand searched by the ecologist.
- Following any required tree felling, all rootballs should be removed by machine under the supervision of an ecologist, who will check the stump for crevices beforehand and inspect the rootball once removed. Large bucket machinery will reduce potential for injury of any amphibians present.
- In order to ensure the development area remains unfavourable to GCN it is essential that the grassland is maintained as a short sward during the growing season. This will only be relevant if the development work is delayed.

Soil stripping

- If any soil stripping is required, light machinery with a gross weight of less than 1.5 tonnes will be used to clear the topsoil, under ecological supervision. First the top few centimetres of ground will be removed. Following this, larger and deeper excavations can be made.
- Appropriate method of working – all other vehicles to remain on existing surfaced tracks/hardstanding.
- Should any GCN be encountered on site during hibernation season (October – February/March), works will stop and not recommence until GCN active season (February – September/October inclusive).
- Should any individual GCN be encountered during the active season, they will be transferred in a bucket by the ecologist and placed in suitable adjacent habitat.



Construction work

- Any loose aggregates and materials delivered to site in relation to the development are to be stored in bags on the site and not loose, to prevent amphibians from seeking shelter within the materials.
- Any building materials should be raised above ground by storing on pallets, to prevent amphibians from seeking shelter underneath. All waste materials should be removed from site immediately or placed in skips.
- If any trenches are to be excavated in grassed areas, a strip either side of the proposed site should be cut first, to create a short swathe, so there is no cover for foraging or resting newts. The short swathe should be checked each morning for newts, before commencing any works.
- Trenches should have a leading slope, so that any animal that enters the trench may escape.
- Where possible, any trenches that need to be excavated should be backfilled on the same day. The trench should be checked for newts before backfilling.
- If a trench is to remain open overnight, ensure that it is covered with sheet material and the edges sealed. The edges can be sealed with soil, which must be compressed down to prevent amphibians and other species from entering the trench.
- If any pipework (drainage etc.) are to be installed in the trench, the ends of the pipes must have baffles fitted, to prevent amphibians and other species from entering the pipe.
- No piles of rubble, soil or other debris should be left on site after the completion of works, unless they are left deliberate for mitigation (e.g. creation of artificial shelter/hibernacula).

Biodiversity improvements

- The existing overgrown pond is to be restored, by clearing the encroaching scrub vegetation. Some of the silt/sediment will need to be removed, to allow the pond to re-fill with water. The pond should have varying depths, but gently sloping sides, so wildlife can easily access the pond. The pond should be stocked with locally sourced native floating and submerged aquatic plants, but retaining open areas for GCN courtship behaviour. Marginal plants should be planted around the edges of the pond.
- New shelter/hibernacula sites should be created on site (e.g. near the pond and in other scrub/woodland areas), by forming uncompacted mounds/banks of soil (use silt/sediment from pond), mixed with clean rubble, logs etc. The mound/bank should be have minimum dimensions 2m length x 1m width x 1m height and be covered with turf.

