



**PLOT AT HILL CREST
PENLEY
WREXHAM
LL13 0NL**

Great Crested Newt Survey Results

- The Cofnod (Local Ecological Records Centre) website was accessed (www.cofnod.org.uk) and a Cofnod Data Request [E12011] was made for a data search for Priority Species and designated wildlife sites within a 1km radius of the site. There are records of amphibians (Great Crested Newts, Common Frog, Common Toad, Smooth Newt) within 1km radius of the survey site, according to the data search (nearest GCN record 270m).
- There are no ponds on the site. The nearest pond is some 220m to the North, with other ponds approx. 260m to the East and approx. 330m to the West.
- The scrub and adjacent woodland have potential as terrestrial habitat to be used by GCN and other amphibians for foraging and emigration corridors. The piles of brash (from previous coppicing work) at the edge of the woodland have some potential as resting places/hibernacula for amphibians.
- The scrub will need to be removed, to facilitate the proposed development, which will result in some minimal loss of habitat. The piles of brash may need to be removed, if they are within the development area. New tree/shrub/hedge planting will compensate for any loss of habitat. There will be no loss of connectivity to the site.
- Disturbance through increased human presence, noise and changes in site layout may have a detrimental effect on GCN, particularly site clearance, topsoil stripping and drainage installation. The remaining risk is that emigrating GCN may stray onto the development site, seek shelter in temporary construction materials or fall into temporary trenches, during the construction works.
- If mitigation and Reasonable Avoidance Measures are implemented, the proposed development should have no detrimental effect on the favourable conservation status of GCN or other amphibians.

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, natterjack toads and pool frogs are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). Great crested newts, natterjack toads and pool frogs are also protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended) and listed under Annex II and Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive. This has been amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. 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.
- Contractors will be instructed not to handle or move a GCN, (unless NRW issue specific instructions), as that could constitute an offence.
- A site log should be kept to ensure that all these precautionary measures are implemented, with dates and names of who implemented them.

Drift fencing and pit-traps

- The nearest pond is some 220m to the North, with other ponds approx. 260m to the East and approx. 330m to the West and there are records of GCN within 270m of the site. As there is a possibility that GCN in the vicinity could use the scrub on site and the adjacent woodland as foraging and emigration corridors, temporary drift fencing and pit-traps will therefore be need to be installed as mitigation, to exclude them from the site. An NRW licence would be required to install the fencing.
- The working area is to be fenced out with a temporary amphibian fence. A slip trench approximately 150mm wide by 250mm deep is to be cut around the work area. The fence is to set into the slip trench by a minimum 250mm with a 150mm return and backfilled with friable compactable material.
- The fence is to be supported at a max. 1.2m c/c's with 50 x 50mm tantalised stakes. The fence material is to be 1m wide geotextile and pinned to the posts top middle and bottom with doughty washers and galvanised clout nails. The top of the fence is to receive a 50mm roll (min 4 folds) to create an overhang at approximately 500mm above ground level.



Reasonable Avoidance Methods

Drift fencing and pit-traps

- Pitfall traps and tiles are to be set against the fence at approx. 10m c/c's. Traps are to be dug in level and tight to the fence line. Traps to receive a habitat raft and mammal stick. The traps are to be checked each morning before 10am and any animals caught translocated to refugia outside of the working area.
- A minimum 15-day trapping period, or as agreed with NRW, is to be undertaken in suitable weather conditions. i.e. average night temperatures above 8 degrees C, preferable in warm wet conditions. Trapping is to cease in frosty or drought conditions.

Vegetation clearance

- The objective is to deter GCN from the scrub habitat within the development area of 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.
- A 1m wide margin strip of vegetation should be retained around the boundaries of the site, to provide a wildlife corridor for foraging and emigration.
- All potential natural refugia such as piles of logs & brash that need to be removed will be dismantled by hand by an ecologist **prior to or following** the winter hibernation period (November – 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 logs/brash etc. should be transferred to a suitable location adjacent the area to be developed, to provide alternative natural refugia for GCN and other species.
- Areas of tall vegetation on site which need to be cleared should be strimmed (using hand-held tools, not a tractor and flail) to a height of 150mm under supervision of the ecologist and checked for GCN. All arisings should be immediately removed or stacked in a habitat pile outside the area to be developed, (to prevent risk of GCN 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.
- Should any GCN be encountered on site, works will stop and not recommence until NRW have been consulted. As an NRW licence would already need to be issued in order to carry out the work to install the amphibian fencing, the named ecologist would then be required to carefully take the GCN by hand and translocate it to a suitable receptor site.
- In order to ensure the development area remains unfavourable to GCN it is essential that the vegetation within the construction areas is maintained as a short sward during the growing season. This will only be relevant if the development work is delayed.



Reasonable Avoidance Methods

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. A larger machine with a long reach, using a large, toothed bucket could be used, if the machine could be positioned outside the working area, to avoid soil compaction. 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, works will stop and not recommence until NRW have been consulted. As an NRW licence would already need to be issued in order to carry out the work to install the amphibian fencing, the named ecologist would then be required to carefully take the GCN by hand and translocate it to a suitable receptor site.

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).

Gully pots and kerbs

- To reduce the risk of amphibian mortality and minimise the impact on all amphibian species, the gully pots and kerbs on the road will be modified. The gully pots will be located to allow a gap of approx. 10cm between them and the kerbs to allow amphibians following the lower edge of the kerb to bypass the gully pot. Kerbs will also be lowered at intervals to allow migrating amphibians an easy route off the road.



Reasonable Avoidance Methods

Biodiversity improvements

- A new shelter/hibernacula site should be created on the mitigation land (e.g. in the woodland area adjacent to the West boundary [prior permission required from the landowner]), by forming an uncompacted mound/bank of topsoil, mixed with clean rubble, logs etc. The mound/bank should have minimum dimensions 2m length x 1m width x 1m height and be covered with turf.

