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Ecological Excellence

Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, Formby Business Centre, 42 Duke Street, Formby, L37 4AT

Reasonable Avoidance Measures for Great Crested Newt

November 2021

Pindar Bungalow

Kiln Lane

Cross Lanes

LL13 0TA

National Grid Reference: SJ36284643

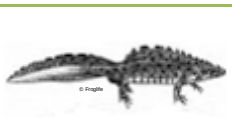


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1.0 Introduction & Objectives

- 1.1 As part of proposals to demolish the existing dwelling Pindar Bungalow off Kiln Lane in Wrexham to allow for the subsequent creation of a new dwelling and detached garage with associated landscaping and access, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd attended the site during June 2021 to undertake an inspection & assessment in relation to bats & breeding birds, and again in July and August to undertake the two dusk emergence surveys recommended in the June 2021 report.
- 1.2 Following consultation with Wrexham County Borough Council's Ecology and Biodiversity Officer, and due to the location of the application site within a Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) stronghold and a pond network, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd were recommissioned by Blueprint Architectural Ltd to create a Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) Method Statement detailing measures to avoid risk of harm to GCN.
- 1.3 For context the ecological document in relation to GCN issued thus far is as follows:
- July 2021 – '*Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds*' – Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd
 - September 2021 – '*Dusk Survey Results*' – Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd

2.0 Method Statement

Objectives

- 2.1 Development related activities on the application site (named above), such as building demolition, piling, vegetation clearance, or excavation in areas of suitable newt habitat, for example, may potentially affect Amphibians that may inhabit the local area. As a result, safeguards must be applied to protect these species; the Method Statement below outlines sequential measures to be implemented to ensure these objectives are achieved.

Summary

- 2.2 To avoid harm to individual GCN, it is proposed temporary amphibian fencing is erected along the application site boundaries to deter GCN that may be present within the vicinity from entering the site from the direction of the nearby ponds during the works. Within the fenced area, vegetation will be cut back under the supervision of a licensed ecologist and carefully hand searched for GCN before complete clearance. Any rubble or brash piles will be similarly hand searched immediately prior to clearance. Should Great Crested Newts be found during the search, works must cease immediately and a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) will likely to be required from NRW prior to continuation of the works.

Pre-works understanding

- 2.3 Before any works commence at the application site all site contractors/stakeholders will be briefed with a 'Tool-box' talk of the potential for protected species to occur on site by an assigned Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), including amphibians and reptiles, what to look out for and what to do if animals are found. This talk should cover ID aids and legal ramifications of an offence through reckless behaviour.
- 2.4 Contractors/stakeholders will ask any questions as required following the toolbox talk, before signing the Audit Form (see overleaf) which will be kept by the Ecologist/ECoW for audit trail.

- 2.5 Following the toolbox talk an “Environmental Champion” will be appointed, likely to be the Site Manager, who will be responsible henceforth to report to the ECoW throughout the work schedule at agreed intervals in the absence of ecological supervision.
- 2.6 Photograph(s) of relevant protected species will be displayed at the site office memo board and/or kept by the contractor’s personal being for visual reference purposes.
- 2.7 Construction works are to only take place during daylight hours 8.00am-6.00pm as opposed to the night time, when amphibians are most active.

Pre-works

- 2.8 Timings:
- Juvenile and adult amphibians are most vulnerable to harm during their **hibernation period considered to be November to February** inclusive. Where possible site clearance works should avoid this sensitive period. If this is not possible works carried out during this sensitive period (between November – February) should take into account the potential presence of hibernating animals within rubble piles, assorted items lay about site, areas of dense vegetation, for example.
 - Pre-works erection of temporary one-way amphibian fencing along site boundaries to direct newts away from the site during the works; the installation will be supervised by the licensed ecologist and the Environmental Champion will monitor and repair the fence on a daily basis (see Figure 2.1). Newt grids will be installed at the site access points (see Figure 2.2).
 - Pre-commencement check - a walkover and hand search is to take place by an Ecologist/ECoW before any rubble, pile, bulky item or vegetation clearance.
- 2.9 Habitat manipulation prior to works (March-Oct)
- 3 to 5 days prior to stripping the site bare of vegetation in prep for development, it is recommended that habitats are first trimmed in phases; initially strimmed to 150mm in height using mowers, brush cutters or similar approved cutting method. Strimming should commence directionally south to north across the site at all cutting phases allowing animals to move off site, or towards desired or retained areas. ***N.B. To avoid impacts to nesting birds, some vegetation may require clearance prior to March (for example dense scrub or ivy). Thus clearance should be undertaken under supervision of the ecologist, and only when GCN are likely to be active, i.e. when night time temperatures remain above 3°C and there have been no ground frosts or snowfall in the preceding week.***
 - Once vegetation is cut to 150mm a further hand search should take place within 72 hours. Following the hand search, when herpetofauna are confirmed absent, the vegetation should then be cut to ground level (or below 100mm), raked bare and maintained at this sward thereafter during the construction period. Habitat manipulation like this will discourage animals from using the areas thus less likely to be harmed by works on site.
 - Brash piles to be accumulated on hardstanding and all brash piles to be removed within 48 hours of dumping to avoid being utilised by species seeking shelter.

During works

- 2.10 Any clearance works to areas of interest/ refugia as considered applicable by the Ecologist (such as log piles, brick piles) or loss of existing dense vegetative features, should only commence after a careful visual inspection (Hand Search) has been carried out and the Ecologist has determined that no animals are present and is satisfied no animals are at risk. Any animals found that are not European Protected Species (EPS) will be removed from harm's way and placed into the hibernaculum, species pending and following correct protocols/biosecurity measures.
- 2.11 In order to ensure the temporary amphibian fence is maintained in an appropriate condition, the Environmental Champion will undertake daily checks at the end of the working day, and any overhanging vegetation will be removed to ensure the barrier cannot be breached. If minor tears are noted in the membrane, these will be repaired using duct tape.
- If there are major breaches in the fencing, the ecologist will be contacted, and a repair programme devised to ensure there is no risk of GCN accessing the construction site.
- 2.12 For the full duration no works are to extend off site in the areas adjacent to the red line boundary or within agreed buffer zones/fencing. No pallets, skips or otherwise are to be placed upon areas of dense vegetation and should instead only be placed on flat, cleared ground.
- 2.13 The impact of works on adjacent habitats will be avoided by the clear demarcation of the works area. All work must strictly be in accordance with all relevant Pollution Prevention Guidelines published by the Environment Agency which may include, but is not limited to, PPG1 (general), PPG5 (works in, near, or liable to affect watercourses) and PPG6 (work at construction & demolition sites).
- 2.14 Contingency/emergency plans should be drawn up to address chemical spillage, drainage, collision, etc.
- 2.15 Machinery and materials to remain on bare ground and reasonable efforts must be made to avoid creating piles, or accumulated aggregates. Materials that require piling will be stored within areas of bare ground above ground level, using pallets to prevent reptiles and amphibians from seeking shelter below.
- 2.16 Any excavated materials stored overnight will be searched prior to being used as infill.
- 2.17 Where excavations/trenches are excavated it should be ensured that they are not left open overnight to avoid amphibians falling into them and becoming trapped. If trenches cannot be filled in after the working day for whatever reason, an escape mechanism such as wooden planks of 10 cm wide should be placed in them at a 45-degree diagonal angle, to serve as an escape mechanism to small animals including mammals and herpetofauna.
- 2.18 Excavations should be checked in the morning on a daily basis for the presence of any animals that may have fallen in during the night. Excavations should be backfilled as soon as possible.
- 2.19 All site operatives will maintain a watching brief throughout the work schedule and report any issues, anomalies or discrepancies to the ecologist or wildlife champion as appointed.
- 2.20 If any newts are found work must stop immediately and contact should be made with the assigned licensed, qualified ecologist / ECoW.
- 2.21 At no point should any person handle a reptile without the express permission of the Ecologist.

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- 2.22 Any frogs or toads found should be carefully caught using wet gloves, placed (where capture is possible and humane) in a ventilated box using dampened gloved hands and released into suitable nearby like for like habitat that will be unaffected by the proposed works. Toads should not be touched using non-gloved hands as they secrete a toxin through their skin, and they should not be handled for longer than is necessary.
- 2.23 Plastic netting, wire coils or similar hazardous features should not be left on the ground, to avoid entanglement. Aggregates/constructional materials should be stored on pallets as opposed to the storing on the ground.
- 2.24 If in the event a GCN is found work must cease; the Ecologist will be made aware of the finding and will appraise the situation providing further advice. Site staff must be made aware that if GCN are found there is a correct procedure in place to follow, and failure to halt works may result in committing an offence. At no point should any person handle a GCN or suspected GCN. Unlicensed handling is illegal and untrained handling may cause the newt unnecessary stress and injury.

A guide to timings

- 2.25 Table 2.1 below outlines the correct timings in which to undertake the prescribed RAMs.

Table 2.1: Timings for RAMs to be undertaken at Pindar Bungalow

Operation	Months												Notes
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Early understanding													
Toolbox Talk	Any time prior to works												Soon as possible for early understanding
Appoint Wildlife Champion	Following toolbox talk												-
Pre-works													
Buffer zone demarcation & signage	Pre-habitat manipulation & hand search												To avoid encroaching in sensitive area
Erection of newt exclusion fencing	Pre-habitat manipulation & hand search												To prevent GCN from accessing the site
Hand-search on site by Ecologist			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Prior to habitat manipulation
Habitat Manipulation			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				Staggered, as described, to allow animals to move away

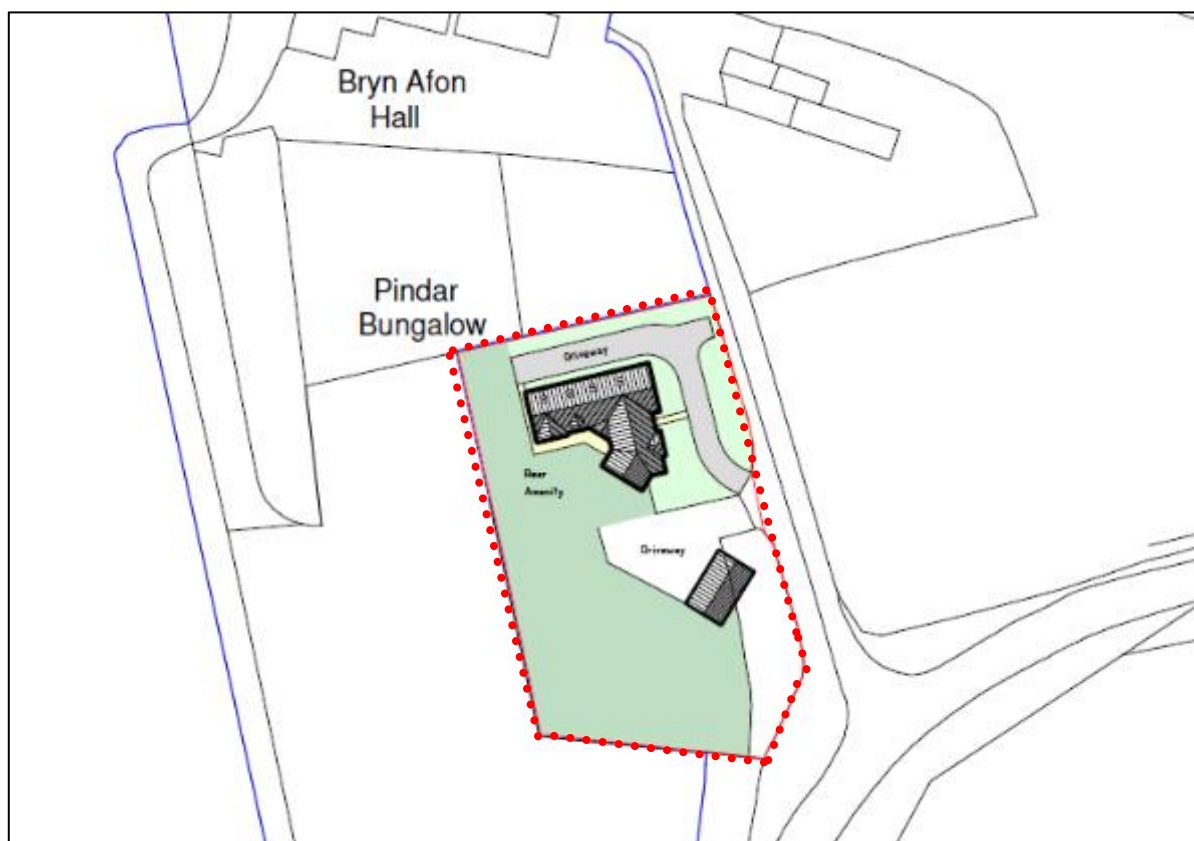


Figure 2.1: The application site with the proposed one-way, temporary amphibian exclusion fencing marked in red.

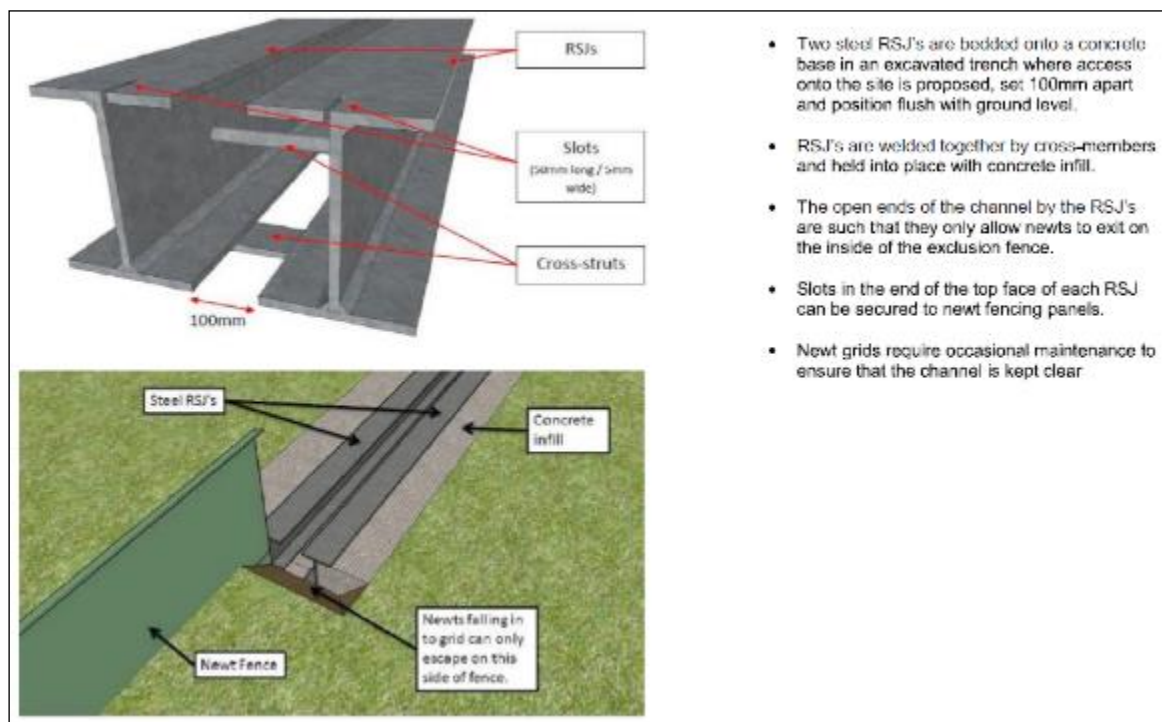


Figure 2.2: Newt grid site access illustration.

Identification Aids:

Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)



Identification Tips

- Largest Newt in the UK, up to 16cm in length, but juveniles are smaller,
- Big & black animal with rough, warty skin,
- Orange/yellow colouring on belly,
- Irregular black blotches on belly,
- Toes banded black/orange (yellow toe nails),
- Male has a jagged crest on its back which sags when not in the water, and a separate smoother crest along tail, white stripe on tail too,

DO If a GCN is discovered during works, STOP ALL WORKS in the area, inform your site manager and contact the project ecologist IMMEDIATELY .	DON'T Do not touch or handle a GCN they are very delicate – and it is against the law. Penalties for breaking the law include unlimited fines, imprisonment and seizure of equipment. DO NOT RISK BREAKING THE LAW
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For any questions call Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd

Tel: 01704 875 781

Toolbox Talk Audit Form

Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd



Site:		Ecologist(s):	
I can confirm I have attended the formal Toolbox talk held by the named Ecological Consultant. I confirm I am aware of the legislation in relation to herpetofauna species that may be in the locale. I confirm I will endeavour, to the best of my capability, to follow the measures outlined in the RAMS to protect all animals from harm, and know what to do if I encounter protected species.			
Name:		Signed:	
Company:		Date	
Name:		Signed:	
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