

APPENDIX A: Amphibian Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement (RAMMS)



Ash Road South, Wrexham Industrial Estate

Great Crested Newt Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement

January 2016

Report Ref: 5351.006 Version 1

Genesis Centre
Birchwood Science Park
Warrington
WA3 7BH

T: 01925 844004
F: 01925 844002
E: tep@tep.uk.com
W: www.tep.uk.com



**ASH ROAD SOUTH, WREXHAM INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
GREAT CRESTED NEWT
REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES
METHOD STATEMENT
January 2015
Report Ref: 5351.006 Version 1**

Prepared by:

**TEP
Genesis Centre
Birchwood Science Park
Warrington
WA3 7BH
Tel: 01925 844004
Fax: 01925 844002
e-mail: tep@tep.uk.com**

for

**Meadow Vale Holdings Ltd
18/19 Wilkinson Court
Clywedog Road South
Wrexham Industrial Estate
Wrexham
LL13 9XS**

Written:	Checked:	Approved:
FW	LG	LG

CONTENTS	PAGE
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 PROPOSED WORKS	3
3.0 POTENTIAL IMPACTS	3
4.0 RAMS MITIGATION	4
5.0 REFERENCES & FURTHER READING	6

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Planning Permission
Appendix 2:	Images of great crested newts
Appendix 3	Photographs of Site

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 TEP was commissioned by Meadow Vale Holdings Ltd to assist in the implementation of great crested newt mitigation works, associated with development of land off Ash Road South on Wrexham Industrial Estate (WIE).
- 1.2 This document details how vegetation will be cleared from the site, using Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAM's) to prevent killing or injury to great crested newts (GCN).
- 1.3 The RAM's was discussed with Matthew Elliis (Natural Resources Wales Species Officer) following a gcn licence application which was decline by NRW on planning grounds.

Site Location

- 1.4 The site is situated within the Wrexham Industrial Estate, to the east of Wrexham. The approximate central grid reference of the site is SJ 382 497. The site is shown in Figure 1.



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2015

Figure 1: Location of Wrexham Industrial Estate

Site Description

- 1.5 The site is approximately 0.8ha in aerial extent. It is situated at the southern end of Ash Road South at the junction with Bridge Road North. The site comprises an area of undeveloped land which has been previously cleared of vegetation and has subsequently naturally regenerated. It is bordered on three sides by temporary amphibian fencing (TAF). There is no TAF along the western site boundary.

- 1.6 The site is bordered to the south by Bridge Road North. A row of three business units with associated car parking areas borders the site to the west. An area of dense scrub/woodland borders the site to the north and a large commercial unit exists to the east.

Habitat Description

- 1.7 The site comprises an area of undeveloped land which has been previously cleared of vegetation and has subsequently naturally regenerated. Habitats present on the site include modified neutral grassland, species-poor natural grassland, tall ruderal herb, bare ground, and scattered scrub. Rubble piles are also present on site. There are no waterbodies within the site.
- 1.8 There is no breeding habitat on site but the terrestrial habitat is of moderate quality for GCN in terms of ranging and foraging. The habitat to the north and beyond of the site provides ample foraging, breeding and refuge in the form of hedgerows, scrub and ponds/ ditches. Connectivity from the surrounding habitats to those on site is severed by the enclosed amphibian fencing. Yet sections damaged sections of the fence offer a small possibility for GCN to access.

History of Great Crested Newt (GCN) on / around Wrexham Industrial Estate

- 1.9 Great crested newts are known to be present throughout Wrexham Industrial Estate. The site is located within the Wrexham County Borough which has the highest numbers of great crested newt records in the northeast of Wales.
- 1.10 Planning consent was previously granted for the Ash Road South by Wrexham Borough Council in August 2007 under consent number P/2007/0433 (Appendix A). A GCN licence was granted by Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) on 15th April 2008 (licence number GCN/1194/WAG/IND). Upright temporary amphibian fencing (TAF) was installed around the site perimeter and a trapping scheme carried out. TEP understand that there were no GCN recorded on site.
- 1.11 While partial development was carried out a significant portion of the site remained undeveloped due to the downturn in the economy and the planning consent has now expired. The TAF remained in place and has been damaged leaving the site partially accessible to amphibians. Although there is no TAF along the western site boundary, the area adjacent to this is hardstanding with a kerb edge limiting opportunities for amphibians to enter the site.
- 1.12 The site is now under the ownership of Meadow Vale Holdings Ltd.

2.0 PROPOSED WORKS

- 2.1 It is proposed that the site will be cleared of all modified neutral grassland, tall ruderal vegetation and scattered scrub. Vegetation removal will commence March 2016 (or when weather conditions are suitable) using Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAM's) to prevent killing or injury to great crested newts. In anticipation of future development of the site.

3.0 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 3.1 During November to February great crested newts will be hibernating, often underground in mammal burrows and potentially under the TAF currently present on site. Rubble/ log piles provide suitable refuges above ground.
- 3.2 Replacing of the TAF (that is damaged), scrub clearance and vehicular access to remove the cuttings could have the following effects on these species:
- Killing/injury to great crested newts;
 - Damage to great crested newt hibernation sites; and
- 3.3 Killing or injury to great crested newts or damage to their hibernation sites is a criminal offence under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and the *Conservation Regulations 2010* (as amended).
- 3.4 Biosecurity measures should also be considered. In order to minimise the risk of contamination and spread of animal and plant pests and diseases and non-native species. If required, a biosecurity method statement will be produced.

4.0 BEST PRACTICE MEASURES

- 4.1 The following precautionary working measures are therefore set out to avoid any potential impact on GCN from the proposed works.
- 4.2 As part of the site induction process, all staff working on site will be made aware of the potential presence of GCN on site, their status as a UK and European Protected Species and the working requirements required relating to this. An ecological toolbox talk will be provided to present this information. Evidence/assurance of who has been inducted will be provided through a requirement for each staff member to sign and date an induction form following completion of the site induction.
- 4.3 Drawing 1 (Images of Great Crested Newts), is to be displayed in the site office, at the site entrance and within each working area so that staff are aware of what these animals look like. In the event that a great crested newt is identified, TEP is to be contacted. The TEP Ecology Team can be contacted on 01925 844 004.
- 4.4 GCN 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 WG. **If a great crested newt is identified, it must not be moved or handled and all works on site must cease until advice from a TEP ecologist is obtained** – it is possible in such circumstances that works may need to be suspended until a development licence is obtained.
- 4.5 The following methods will be implemented on site during the site during clearance works, with particular emphasis on the foundation excavation phase of the works:
- All sections of the upright temporary amphibian fencing (TAF) will be repaired to a good state. The sections of TAF in poor condition will be repaired or removed and replaced within the same working day. This will be carried out under the supervision of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) who will be an experienced amphibian ecologist holding a WG Great Crested Newt Licence..Hand searching will be implemented where required
 - Any amphibians uncovered during fence removal & repair, will be released by the ECoW into the adjacent land to the north. This habitat provides good cover in terms of dense scrub and woodland with connectivity. Captured animals will be transported in containers which have compartments for each amphibian species.
 - All vegetation on site will be strimmed to 150mm. The vegetation cut will be removed from site and not left in situ. It is important to remove the cuttings off site in order to prevent GCN using the piles of vegetation for hibernating.
 - The areas cut will be left for 24 hours prior to ECoW commencing a hand-search across the areas where vegetation has been strimmed. Should any animals be found, they will be released onto the adjacent land to the north.
 - Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and hand-searching conducted by an ECoW. Should any animals be found, they will be released onto the adjacent land to the north.

- Areas of bare ground with tussock hedges will be hand-searched by an ECoW. Should any animals be found, they will be released onto the adjacent land to the north.
- Works will be carried out at appropriate times of the year and in suitable weather conditions; temperature above 5°C.
- Further clearance of any possible GCN present will be conducted via an ECoW surveying temporarily placed artificial refugia if required. Pieces of carpet of minimum dimensions 1m x 0.75m will be placed along the inside of the exclusion fencing surrounding the development site, at intervals of one tile every 10m. These measurements are based on a small population of GCN. The artificial refugia will be inspected for 5 days, with all tiles being checked before 11:00am each day.

Works will avoid the nesting bird season there will be no requirements for nesting bird checks.

Table 1: Timetable of Reasonable Avoidance Measure's

Task	Timeframe	Date
Repair of newt fencing	2 days	March/ April 2016 where appropriate weather conditions permit
Vegetation strimmed to 150mm	3 days	March/ April 2016 where appropriate weather conditions permit
Hand-search of sections of site	During all works where required	March/ April 2016 where appropriate weather conditions permit
Rubble piles dismantled and hand-searched	1 day	March/ April 2016 where appropriate weather conditions permit
Artificial refugia placed across site	0.5 days	March/ April 2016 where appropriate weather conditions permit
Checking of artificial refugia	5 days	March/ April 2016 where appropriate weather conditions permit

- 4.6 A TEP licensed ecologist will meet with the clearance team on site prior to the commencement of works. They will run through the proposed works and ensure that all contractor personnel are aware of:
- Areas to be avoided;
 - The procedure to follow if newts are found in an area programmed for clearance;
 - Scrub clearance methods;
 - Keeping access to existing tracks where possible;
 - Minimising vehicle movements where possible;
 - Avoiding disturbance to other vegetation where possible;
- 4.7 After the initial TEP induction, TEP will provide supervision at each stage of the works as required.

REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

ENGLISH NATURE (2001) *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature. Peterborough