

METHOD STATEMENT GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

**SITE: BRYMBO
PROJECT: SPINE ROAD**

May 2014



Author: W V PRESTWOOD BSc

**ARBOR VITAE ENVIRONMENT LTD
LOWER BETTON FARM
CROSS HOUSES
SHREWSBURY
SHROPSHIRE
SY56JD**

BRYMBO: SPINE ROAD

METHOD STATEMENT: GREAT CRESTED NEWTS REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES AND MITIGATION

Background

Planning Permission was granted for the Reclamation and Redevelopment of the former Brymbo Steelworks site in November 1997 (Ref: BRY CB00016).

Condition No 16 of that permission required that reclamation works should not commence until various works had been fully implemented, including:

- Identification or creation of water bodies to receive newts, and
- Transfer of newts from the Hot Pool and other water bodies.

Survey work in 1995, 1999 and 2000 identified great crested newts on the site. These were trapped and translocated (under licence) to a series of pools and within a permanent amphibian fence. The newt protection area was further extended in 2006. Monitoring surveys between 2002 and 2006 demonstrated that a medium population of great crested newts (GCN) were present.

The current proposal to develop the Spine Road affects land within 200-400 metres of the newt protection area. Although it is likely that most GCN in the area are within the protected area, it is possible that further animals utilise other parts of the wider Brymbo site.

Any development related activities on the site, such as excavations in areas of suitable newt habitat may potentially affect this species. As a result, safeguards must be implemented to protect this species and the Method Statement below details measures to be implemented to ensure these objectives are achieved. The condition of the site, as described below, is such that the estimated risk to GCN is low.

Condition of site

The part of the site designated for the Spine Road has been subject to remediation; it has all been excavated and covered with five metres of compacted clean backfill. No soils have been imported to this area and consequently, vegetation cover is very sparse. No water bodies exist on the former steelworks site. As a consequence of the above, the site represents very poor habitat in terms of great crested newts.

Photographs in the Appendix demonstrate the current site condition.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

1. Any works to disturb the existing land should be carried out where possible between early May and July as this is the season when most adult newts will be at breeding sites.
2. At least one week prior to ground clearance activities, a licensed and qualified ecologist will carry out two walk-over surveys of the land. One of these should be after dark and another in daylight.
3. The walkover survey will involve inspecting the ground for any objects such as stones, logs, rubble or litter which may provide shelter for GCN. These items will be moved and a visual search carried out.
4. Any animals found will be removed from the area to be disturbed and placed within the designated GCN protection area in a concealed location.
5. Should any trenches and excavations be required, an escape route for animals that enter the trench must be provided, especially if left open overnight. Ramps should be no greater than of 45 degrees in angle. Ideally, any holes should be securely covered.
6. All excavations left open overnight or longer should be checked for animals prior to the continuation of works or infilling.
7. Back filling should be completed immediately after any excavations, ideally back-filling as an ongoing process to the work in hand.
8. If a GCN is found, work must stop immediately and contact should be made with a licensed, qualified ecologist, who will liaise with Natural Resources Wales.
9. Contractors on site will be briefed prior to commencement of the project and all machines/contractors will have a 'cab-card' on identification of GCN or Smooth Newts with instruction as to what to do should any newts be found.
10. The cab-card shall include the contact for a licensed ecologist and the agent managing the development.

LEGISLATION

Great crested newts and their habitat are fully protected under national (Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)) and European law (The Habitats and Species Regulations 2010) as a European Protected Species (EPS). The combined legislation makes it illegal to:

- Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill or injure a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used for shelter and protection including resting and breeding places, whether occupied or not;
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt when in a place of shelter;
- Possess a great crested newt, or any part of it, unless acquired lawfully; or
- Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale great crested newts or parts of them.

APPENDIX: PHOTOGRAPHS



