



ARBOR VITAE

ECOLOGY • FORESTRY • LAND USE

AMPHIBIAN CONSERVATION PLAN

Project name: Land at Chirk Park, Halton, Chirk, Wrexham

Species: Great Crested Newt

Grid Reference: SJ30083964

Date: 06/07/2021

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Checked by: William Prestwood BSc Director

Requested by: Roger Parry and Partners

Background

Planning consent is being sought for “Erection of drive thru coffee shop with parking and associated works and erection of electric vehicle service area” under reference number: P/2021/0249 at Wrexham Borough Council.

Natural Resources Wales are concerned that great crested newt could have a historic distribution through the area and have therefore requested that works on site only proceed once an Amphibian Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The following document has been prepared to ensure that the proposed works have no impact upon great crested newt and ultimately enhance the local environment to increase the amount of terrestrial habitat available to all wildlife.

Risk Assessment

The Preliminary Ecological Assessment for the site found one pond present within 250m of the site. This was located to the north at 95m distance. Upon inspection, the pond was dry at the time of the survey and the area is dominated by vegetation including reedmace, knapweed, cock’s foot and bramble. The area is used as a balancing pond for surface water run-off and does not provide any suitable aquatic habitat for breeding amphibians.

Local Biological Records have been purchased for this site and reveal that a medium population of GCN exists 500m to the west, within a garden pond. The pond lies on the far side of the A5, a major barrier to dispersal, and there are no other records of GCN within 1km of the site.

The risk to GCN through the development of the land is very low as is the likelihood of this species being present on site. It is unlikely that the works would cause an offence under the legislation and therefore the development will not require a European Protected Species Development Licence.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures will be implemented as per the following information.

Legislation

Great Crested Newts (GCN) are a European Protected Species (EPS) and they and their habitats are fully protected under national (Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)) and European law (The Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)). The combined legislation makes it illegal to:

- deliberately capture, kill or injure a great crested newt;

- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place
- intentionally or recklessly 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;
- sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale great crested newts or parts of them.

Site induction

- A toolbox talk will be given to all site personnel before works begin in order to make them aware of the possible presence of GCN, how to identify this species and the avoidance measures to be used on site.
- A paper copy of the avoidance measures will be retained on site together with the contact details of the GCN licensed ecologist.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

One-way fencing

- One-way fencing will be installed around the proposed development site boundary at least 30 days before works begin on site. The fencing will be installed as an avoidance measure on the recommendation of NRW Development Planning Advisor.
- One-way fencing will be installed at a 45° angle to the ground, the fence making contact with the ground on the development side.
- There will be a minimum gap of 2m between the inner most part of the one-way fence and the development boundary to ensure the fence remains undamaged throughout development on site.
- A bespoke newt gate will be installed within the fence line to allow machinery to access the site whilst preventing GCN from gaining access to the site. The gate will consist of a heavy plastic flap secured to the base of a timber structure. The plastic flap will sit flush with the concrete ground and will be weighed down with sandbags overnight. The gate will be closed every evening after works have finished.
- The fence line will be marked on the ground using spray paint and all vegetation will be maintained at 10cm height or less in the lead-up to fencing.
- A licenced ecologist will carry out a finger-tip search of the fence line on the day it is installed to ensure that there are no GCN present on site.

- If GCN are found at any point during the search, works will not continue until a European Protected Species Development Licence is obtained from NRW.



Photo credit: Contract Ecology and Landscapes.

Monitoring & Maintenance

- The one-way fencing will be inspected daily by on-site personnel. Any breaches in the fence line will be repaired immediately using heavy duty water-proof tape.
- The fence line will be kept clear of all vegetation throughout the duration of the project.
- The fence line will be inspected by a licenced ecologist every 30 days to ensure the barrier remains an effective tool to prevent amphibians from entering the site.
- The newt-proof gate at the entrance to the site will also be inspected daily and monthly.

Timing & duration

- After the one-way fencing has been in place for 30 days, works on site can commence.
- All works will take place during daylight hours when GCN are unlikely to be moving around the area.

Table 1. Timetable of activities.			
Activity	Date	Estimated duration	Responsible person
Fence installation	April 2022	4 days	Site manager assigned by land owner.
Site clearance	May 2022	14 days	Site manager assigned by land owner.
Construction period	June 2022- December 2022	6 months	Site manager assigned by land owner.
Fence removal	January 2022	2 days	Site manager assigned by land owner.

Site clearance

- All improved grassland to be disturbed on site will be maintained at a height of 10cm before March (in any given year) in order to reduce the number of potential resting/feeding opportunities on site.
- All clearance will be carried out during the GCN active season to ensure that potential hibernation sites are not disturbed.
- Any possible objects which may conceal GCN such as large stones, logs or other materials will be inspected by a licenced ecologist and removed from site as long as they are not in use by GCN.
- If any GCN are found, work will stop and NRW contacted for guidance on appropriate action. Works may only resume on receipt of the appropriate licence issued by NRW.

Site compound

- The site compound will be situated on an area of existing hard-standing to avoid creating GCN resting places beneath stored materials etc.
- All site materials will be stored on pallets or other raised objects to avoid creating resting places/refuges for GCN.
- Any toxic or poisonous materials will be safely stored within a locked container.

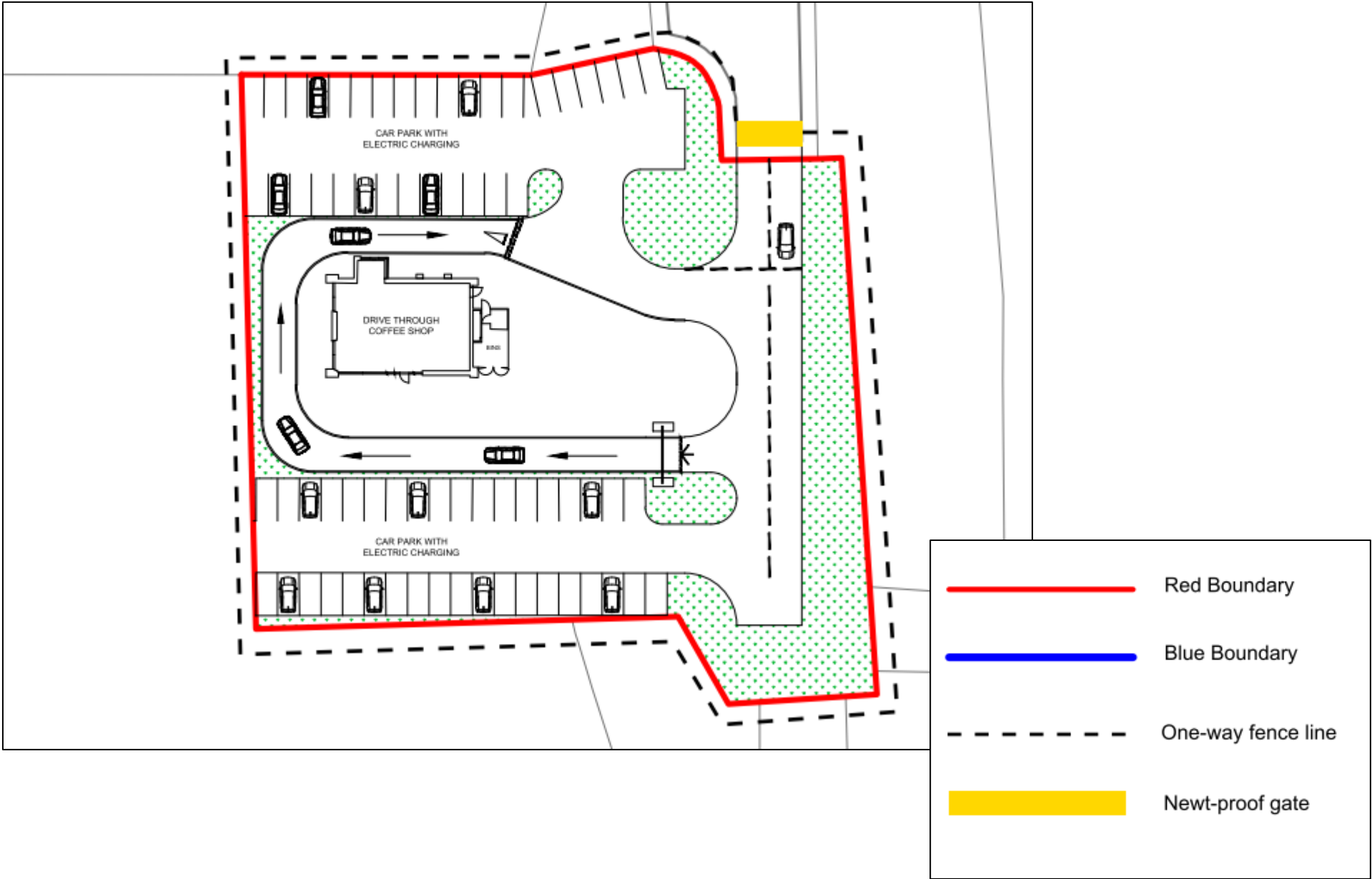
Construction methods and special precautions

- All excavations on site will be covered at night or ramps will be provided to allow amphibians to exit excavations.
- All excavations will be checked for amphibians each morning prior to the re-commencement of works.

- All exposed new pipework and drains will be capped at night so as to avoid trapping amphibians.
- All excavated materials/waste will be stored in skips or similar and not on the ground where it could be used as a refuge/resting area by amphibians. Alternatively, all waste will be removed from site daily.
- All stored building materials that might be used as temporary resting places by amphibians will be stored off the ground on pallets or similar.

If GCN are found at any point during the development or activities outlined above, works will stop and an appropriately qualified ecologist will be contacted for advice, as well as Natural Resources Wales. Contractors are prohibited from handling GCN.

One-way Fence Plan



Biosecurity Risk Assessment

Species	Potential Contamination Route	Likelihood of Risk	Operational Procedures/Actions required to minimise risks
Himalayan balsam	Introduction of species via construction machinery. Introduction of seeds via contaminated soil.	Low. Himalayan Balsam is not known to be present on site or in the locality. Low. There are no requirements to import soil.	Ensure owner and contractors know what Himalayan Balsam looks like. If any plants are identified these should be pulled up and left to dry before the seeds set (July/August).
Japanese knotweed	Introduction of species via construction machinery. Introduction of fragments via contaminated soil.	Low. Japanese knotweed is not known to be present on site or in the locality. Low. There are no requirements to import soil.	Ensure contractors know what Japanese knotweed looks like. If it is identified on site, refer to the Environment Agency's Japanese knotweed Code of Practice.
Tree diseases including Chalara, Phytophthora	Planting of infected trees.	Low	Ensure trees purchased from nurseries registered as disease-free.

Ecological Compliance Audit

No	Key Performance Indicator	Evidence required - this list should be adapted to reflect the agreed method statement	Pass (Yes/No) Comment	What action is required as a result of findings?
1	A suitably experienced licensed ecologist will be appointed and retained during the life time of this project to provide on-site advice.	Letter, contract or other document outlining the appointment of an Ecologist for the lifetime of the project.		
2	Before starting work the Ecological Clerk of Works will advise Powys Local Planning Authority of the date the works will start.	Written or electronic documentation of notification of start of works.		
3	Prior to the start of any works on site, all site workers will be inducted by the ECoW. This induction will cover the agreed GCN Method Statement, the legal status of the species, the method of working, and action to be taken if protected species are encountered.	Copy of documents from ecological induction, showing content of induction. List of induction attendees.		
4	Preparation and implementation of a bio-security risk assessment as detailed in the method statement.	Bio-security risk assessment is available for inspection. Log of implementation of bio security measures is available for inspection and shows that they have been implemented. Field observation shows that bio security measures are in place e.g. foot washes.		
	E.1 GCN exclusion			
5	Installation of one-way fencing as an avoidance measure. The grass sward on the site will have been closely mown and kept	Record and photographs of measures.		

	short throughout. A finger-tip search for GCN will have been carried out prior to groundworks starting.			
	F and H: Long Term site enhancements			
6	Obtain licence from NRW if needed for off-site habitat enhancements.	Awarding of licence to be acknowledged, as necessary.		
7	On-going maintenance of habitat features.	Confirmation from landowner as measures are implemented.		
Any other points to note/comments from auditor:				
Auditor name and organisation		Signature	Date	