

Your Ref: HAN P/2020/0100
Our Ref: MAN.244.003.EC.R.001A

Date: 10th September 2020
Email: chris.schofield@Enzygo.com

FAO: Carlton Holdings Partnership
c/o Richard Lee
29 Clonners Field,
Nantwich,
Cheshire
CW5 7GU

By Email: rlpp@sky.com

Dear Richard,

RE: Condition 13 GCN Mitigation Measures – Land at Hanmer Arms, Hanmer

Following the recent granting of outline planning permission for change of use of land at Hanmer Arms, Hanmer Village road, Hanmer, Whitchurch, SY13 3DE, please find enclosed details to support the discharge of Condition 13 in relation to Great Crested Newt (GCN) mitigation measures.

Background

On 27th July 2020, outline planning permission was granted for the “*change of use of land to provide a Touring Caravan Park, amenity building and associated works*” at land at Hanmer Arms, Hanmer (planning reference HAN P/2020/0100). The development would comprise siting 10 holiday lodges, with associated amenity block reception building, and gravelled access road and pitches. A site access would be created at the south-east boundary to connect to the existing access road to Hanmer Arms Public House. Refer to Insert 1 below for the site location.

Insert 1: Site Boundary

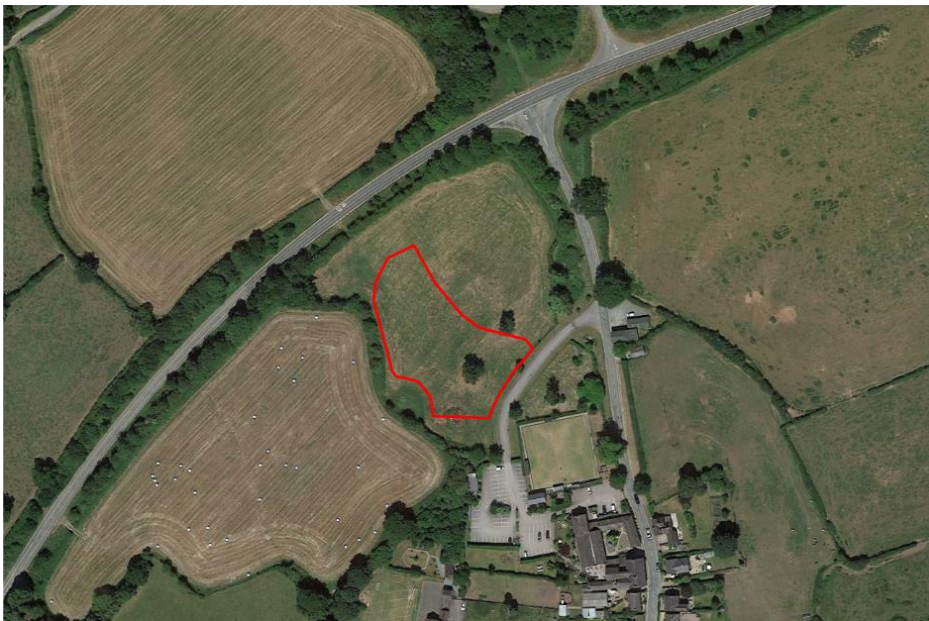


Image courtesy of Google Image Pro 7.3.2.5491, [Grid Ref: SJ 45425 39971 and 82m Elevation]. Imagery date 27th June 2018. Image accessed 27th January 2020.

This application was supported by an Ecological Desk Study Addendum (Enzygo, 2020a) and a HRA Stage 1 Screening Report (Enzygo, 2020b), with further baseline ecological assessment provided by previous Phase I Habitat Survey and Protected Species Assessment (EVR Ecology, 2018) and GCN Ecological Impact Assessment (Life & Wild, 2018).

The 2018 GCN Ecological Impact Assessment (Life & Wild, 2018) confirmed no GCN presence in the four surveyed ponds and that no Natural England EPSM licence is required to permit the proposed development, although outline best practice precautionary reasonable avoidance measures to be implemented during the construction period. The updated 2020 Desk Study Addendum (Enzygo, 2020a) supports these findings following review of local records data, local policy and other available online information.

Following the findings of these reports and assessment, Condition 13 of the July 2020 Decision Notice states:

“Prior to commencement of development, full details of the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The report shall include an Ecological Method Statement demonstrating / identifying any measures of protection / compensation / mitigation and demonstrate management in the short or long term. The recommendations as approved shall be implemented in strict accordance with timescales to be agreed.”

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this document is to provide the necessary Great Crested Newt mitigation measures, including full details of the measures to be implemented during the construction phase to minimise the already significantly low risk of impacts to GCN to a negligible level. This letter shall be made available to the relevant site staff and a copy can be kept at the site office. In addition, further details are provided related to the proposed enhancement measures for GCN and management prescriptions upon occupation and operation of the site.

Reasonable Avoidance Mitigation Measures

The following Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) offer a comprehensive approach to mitigation and minimise the risk of killing/injury of GCN to a negligible level therefore avoiding any significant adverse impacts of the proposals on this species. All relevant contractors must be made aware of this document:

- Prior to the commencement of works, a toolbox talk will be given by a suitably experienced Ecologist to the Site Manager and all relevant contractors. This toolbox talk will inform the site staff on the potential for GCN to be present, this mitigation strategy, information on their behaviours and identification, and the protocol should a GCN be detected or suspected during initial site clearance works;
- No night-working will be permitted, with construction activities restricted to daylight hours (as GCN are particularly active during the night);
- Prior to any top-soil stripping, a suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works (ECow) will supervise and/or undertake the strimming/flailing of vegetation down to a maximum of 0.15m in height alongside a comprehensive hand-search of habitats. Any potential refuge piles will be carefully dismantled by hand to uncover any wildlife sheltering within. All amphibians, small mammals and other wildlife will be carefully translocated in a clean bucket to a safe location outside of the construction area (i.e. a sheltered location at the field boundary hedgerows);

- Within the construction area, the vegetation shall be cut to 0.15m in phase manner from the centre to the boundaries of the site which will encourage any wildlife present to disperse outside of the construction boundary;
- If any significant time expires between the initial clearance to a maximum of 0.15m and the soil strip, such that the vegetation has again grown in height, it may be necessary for further cutting/flailing undertaken by (or under the supervision) of an ECoW;
- Any trenches or other excavations should ideally be back-filled or covered overnight to prevent any amphibians falling in and become trapped. If this is not possible, all excavations must be checked carefully each morning by site contractors to determine if any wildlife has fallen in and become trapped;
- Where possible, construction materials which may provide attractive shelter and refuge for amphibians should be stored above ground (e.g. on pallets);
- Any wildlife (with the exception of GCN) which is found by site contractors during the construction period will be carefully moved into a clean bucket using gloves, and translocated to a safe, undisturbed, sheltered location outside the construction area;
- ***In the unlikely event that a GCN is discovered or suspected***, all works in the area must cease immediately and site contractors are to inform the Site Manager. Natural Resources Wales or a suitably qualified Ecologist (e.g. Enzygo) should be contacted immediately for further advice and to inform what measures to take;
- Only in the event a Great Crested Newt is in imminent risk of killing/injury should anyone other than a licensed Ecologist handle and move the animal to a safe location.

As no opportunities for hibernating GCN or other amphibians are present within the construction area, no timing restrictions on the works are to be specified. The above mitigation measures are to be implemented throughout the course of the construction phase, however long that should be.

Additional Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

No further avoidance or mitigation measures are recommended to ensure GCN are protected throughout the proposals. However, additional enhancement measures are presented in the submitted Ecological Desk Study Addendum (Enzygo, 2020a) which are relevant to GCN.

Informal deadwood hibernacula are to be created and located at the western site boundary adjacent to the retained hedgerow. This will provide enhanced opportunities for sheltering, refuge and hibernating wildlife, including GCN and other amphibians. The arisings from any proposed shrub clearance will provide a suitable material for these informal hibernacula. No monitoring or management of these informal hibernacula is required once established.

In addition, the proposed landscape scheme is to incorporate planting which will provide additional opportunities for terrestrial amphibians such as GCN. To ensure suitable foraging, refuge and shelter opportunities are provided in the long-term this planting is to be brought into active management. Full details of the planting proposals, which are to include measures for ecological enhancement, are to be submitted in support of Condition 5, and Condition 6 requires the submitted plans to be implemented in full.

Conclusion

It is confirmed through review of the submitted assessment information in relation to Great Crested Newt, there will be no disturbance/loss of aquatic breeding habitat, no significant loss of suitable terrestrial habitat, no fragmentation effects during the construction period, and no significant operational impacts have been identified.

It is considered the proposed unlicensed approach through the full implementation of the precautionary Reasonable Avoidance Measures described here will serve to minimise the risk of killing/injury of GCN to a negligible level. Assuming full implementation of this mitigation approach, any impact on the favourable conservation status of GCN is reasonably discounted.

The proposals also present the opportunity to provide ecological enhancements for GCN, through soft landscaping and management in the long-term, and through the provision of informal deadwood piles provide enhanced refuge and hibernation potential for amphibians.

I trust this document satisfies your requirements.

Please contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely



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Enzygo Ltd