



STEPHEN CUTMORE BSc(Hons), MICFor, MArborA
Arboricultural & Ecological Services
SURVEYS, INSPECTIONS, REPORTS



**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
LAND TO REAR OF WILLOW COTTAGES
GLAN-LLYN ROAD
BRADLEY
WREXHAM
LL11 4AY**

Great Crested Newt Survey Results

- The Cofnod (Local Ecological Records Centre) website was accessed (www.cofnod.org.uk) and a Cofnod Data Request [E08020] was made for a data search for Priority Species and designated wildlife sites within a 1km radius of the site. There are 24 records of great crested newt (1992-2019) within 1km radius of the survey site, according to the Data Search.
- No signs of great crested newts (GCN) were observed during the survey. The hedgerows in [A4] provide some limited potential for use by GCN for foraging and emigration corridors. Sections of the conifer hedges on the West boundary have been stripped to leave standing bare trunks, with short grassy vegetation cover beneath. The amenity grass [A3] provides limited potential for foraging GCN, due to the grass swathe being kept short via regular mowing, so does not provide sufficient cover and would leave these species prone to predators. The piles of rubble [A5] provide some potential for hibernating GCN.
- The nearest record of GCN is over 700m from the site. Two ponds indicated on the OS map for the area are located within approx. 200m and 350m to the South of the site. Other ponds are indicated to the North and South of the site, but these are all over 500m distance from the site. Under normal circumstances further population surveys of the two nearest ponds would be required, to determine if any breeding GCN are present. However due to the current Covid19 restrictions in place, it is not possible to carry out pond surveys at this time. Matthew Ellis, local NRW Officer (Buckley Office) advised that as surveys are not possible at this time, assume there is a population of GCN present and take the necessary mitigation measures.



PRO3755



UK/I 0343A

Great Crested Newt Survey Results

- Sections of hedge, some trees and some grass vegetation will need to be removed, to facilitate the proposed development, which will result in some loss of habitat. New tree/shrub/hedge planting will compensate for any loss of habitat. There will be no loss of connectivity to the site. If mitigation is provided and Reasonable Avoidance Methods (RAM) are implemented to minimise risk of GCN being injured during the works, the proposed development should have no detrimental effect on the favourable conservation status of bats, great crested newts and other amphibians.

Reasonable Avoidance Methods

Site Induction

- As part of the site induction process, all staff working on site will be made aware of the potential presence of GCN within the immediate landscape, and their status as a UK and European Protected Species.
- The toolbox talk will set out what measures are being implemented to avoid affecting amphibians and will also give details of how to recognise GCN and a photographic reference summary of how to recognise GCN will be displayed in the site compound cabin at all times.
- Contractors will be instructed to cease work in the unlikely event that they discover a GCN within the site, and to contact a licenced ecologist and NRW (Buckley Office). Contact details will be displayed alongside the photographic identification sheets.
- A site log should be kept to ensure that all these precautionary measures are implemented, with dates and names of who implemented them.

Drift fencing and pit-traps

As further population surveys of the two ponds [within 200m and 350m to the South of the site] are not possible under current Covid19 restrictions, NRW advise to assume that breeding GCN are present. Drift fencing and pit-traps will therefore be need to be installed as mitigation. An NRW licence would be required to install the fencing.

Vegetation clearance

- The objective is to deter GCN from the grasslands and hedge habitats within the site by making habitats unsuitable for use.
- For the initial stages of the development, vegetation clearance should be undertaken in a phased manner under the supervision of an ecologist. The optimum time for vegetation clearance is October-February, when GCN are hibernating and not dispersing across the site.
- All potential natural refugia such as piles of rubble, piles of logs and metal debris will be dismantled by hand by an ecologist prior to or following the winter hibernation period (November – March) in a careful and controlled manner, with constant vigilance for any sheltering GCN and/or any other potential species. Where possible and practical, the piles of rubble/logs etc. should be transferred to a suitable location adjacent the area to be developed, to provide alternative natural refugia for GCN and other species.



Vegetation clearance

- Areas of tall, rough grass around the boundaries should be strimmed to a height of 150mm under supervision of the ecologist and checked for GCN. All arisings should be immediately removed or stacked in a habitat pile outside the area to be developed, (to prevent risk of GCN using these as hibernacula or refugia). These cut areas must then be left undisturbed for at least 48 hours. Thereafter, areas which have been strimmed must be hand searched by the ecologist.
- Following any required tree felling/hedge removal, all rootballs should be removed by machine under the supervision of an ecologist, who will check the stump for crevices beforehand and inspect the rootball once removed. Large bucket machinery will reduce potential for injury of any amphibians present.
- In order to ensure the development area remains unfavourable to GCN it is essential that the grassland is maintained as a short sward during the growing season.

Soil stripping

- Light machinery with a gross weight of less than 1.5 tonnes will be used to clear the topsoil, under ecological supervision. First the top few centimetres of ground will be removed. Following this, larger and deeper excavations can be made.
- Appropriate method of working – all other vehicles to remain on existing surfaced tracks/hardstanding.
- Should any GCN be encountered on site during construction, works will stop and not recommence until GCN active season (March – September/October inclusive).
- Should any individual GCN be encountered during the active season, they will be transferred in a bucket by the ecologist and placed in suitable adjacent habitat.

Construction work

- Any loose aggregates and materials delivered to site in relation to the development are to be stored in bags on the site and not loose, to prevent amphibians from seeking shelter within the materials.
- Any building materials should be raised above ground by storing on pallets, to prevent amphibians from seeking shelter underneath. All waste materials should be removed from site immediately or placed in skips.
- If any trenches are to be excavated in grassed areas, a strip either side of the proposed site should be cut first, to create a short swathe, so there is no cover for foraging or resting newts. The short swathe should be checked each morning for newts, before commencing any works.
- Trenches should have a leading slope, so that any animal that enters the trench may escape.
- Where possible, any trenches that need to be excavated should be backfilled on the same day. The trench should be checked for newts before backfilling.

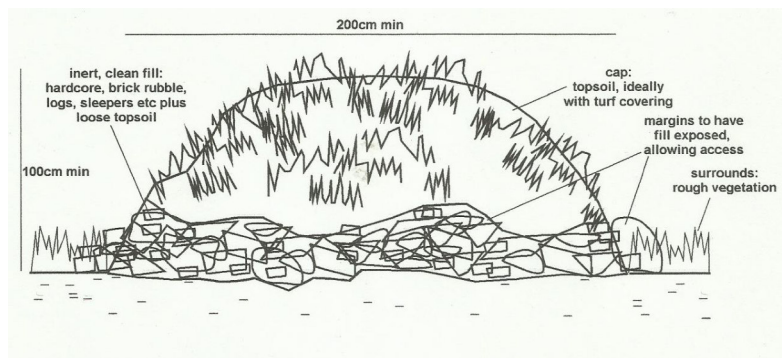


Construction work

- If a trench is to remain open overnight, ensure that it is covered with sheet material and the edges sealed. The edges can be sealed with soil, which must be compressed down to prevent amphibians and other species from entering the trench.
- If any pipework (drainage etc.) are to be installed in the trench, the ends of the pipes must have baffles fitted, to prevent amphibians and other species from entering the pipe.
- No piles of rubble, soil or other debris should be left on site after the completion of works, unless they are left deliberate for mitigation (e.g. creation of artificial shelter/hibernacula).

Biodiversity improvements

- New shelter/hibernacula sites should be created on site (e.g. near the North boundary), by forming uncompacted mounds/banks of topsoil, mixed with clean rubble, logs etc. The mound/bank should have minimum dimensions 2m length x 1m width x 1m height and be covered with turf.



- New hedgerows should be planted on the East and West boundaries, to help maintain connectivity and to provide wildlife corridors for use by GCN for foraging and emigration.

