

LAND AT MULSFORD FARM

**GREAT CRESTED NEWT
REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES**

**PLANNING REF P/2017/0799
APP/H6955/A/18/3208119**

**DISCHARGE OF CONDITION 5
REVISION 1**

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LAND AT MULSFORD

REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

Condition 5 of the planning consent specifies:

Development shall not commence until a scheme of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) in respect of great crested newts has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall thereafter only take place in strict accordance with the RAMs scheme as approved.

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1 REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES

The aim of these avoidance measures is to eliminate as far as possible the risk of killing, injuring or disturbing GCN.

All of the works being carried out to exclude GCN from the site, including fencing, trapping and translocation, are covered by the NRW development licence (See below: Section2).

The RAMS outlined below refer to general works on site prior to and following exclusion of GCN from the working area. If GCN exclusion has been successful, no GCN should be present within the working area. Nevertheless, in order to avoid any residual risk, the following RAMS should be adopted.

Induction of contractors

A toolbox talk will be given to all site personnel 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.

GCN exclusion

Installation of the GCN exclusion fence will involve some limited ground disturbance, as will installation of bucket traps. Any tall vegetation along the route of the fence should be mown prior to fence erection and the process overseen by the Ecological Clerk of Works.

Timing & duration

Once GCN have been removed, the risk to GCN should be nil. However, the following restrictions will be maintained:

The pre-construction works will only be undertaken between March and October when night time temperatures are above 5°C in order to avoid disturbing hibernating amphibians.

All works should take place during daylight hours when GCN are unlikely to be moving around the area.

Site compound

This will be situated within the fenced area cleared of GCN.

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.

Discovery of a great crested newt

If a GCN is discovered at any point during the works all work will cease immediately and the retained licensed ecologist will be contacted for further guidance. Contractors are prohibited from handling GCN.

2 GCN EXCLUSION WORKS

NRW development licence

All the works to exclude GCN from the working area will be carried out in accordance with an NRW development licence, an application for which has been submitted.

Fence specification

(See Appendix 1 for fence location)

An amphibian proof fence will be erected to encompass all of the working area to be disturbed. This will follow standard specifications with 1 metre high polythene fencing supported by wooden stakes at 2 metre intervals with the top 10cms of fence rolled to form a lip and the base 20cms of fence buried below ground level. In addition, two drift fences will be erected to sub-divide the site internally in order to increase trapping success.

The fence will be monitored daily to ensure that its effectiveness has not been compromised by physical damage. Any damage will be repaired immediately. The exclusion fence and bespoke barrier will remain in-situ until the building works have been completed.

Trapping programmes

Pit-fall traps will be placed at 10 metre intervals, consisting of plastic buckets sunk into and flush with the ground. Buckets will be covered until the start date of trapping. All buckets will be equipped with a 'ladder' offering a means of escape to small mammals. Traps will be located along the inside (i.e. working area edge) of the perimeter fence and also along both sides of the drift fences.

In addition, refugia sheets made for 0.5 metre square Onduline sheets will be placed at 10 metre intervals between each pitfall trap.

Traps will be inspected daily before 9am. All of the above will be undertaken or supervised by a licensed ecologist and/or accredited agents or assistants they have trained. Training will include how to identify, sex and categorise the age of GCN, appropriate working methods in line with this method statement and translocation protocols.

All work will follow the bio-security protocol (annexe J.1).

Relocation of individuals

Any GCN found in traps or beneath refugia will be placed in a covered bucket amongst damp vegetation and translocated immediately to compensatory habitats (see below) where they will be released into covered, secure resting places by hibernacula.

3 GCN COMPENSATION AREA

0.5 ha of woodland and 1.0 ha of grassland habitat will be created as a compensation area between the two breeding ponds and the site. In addition, four refuges will be created. These will be based on the design in the GCNMG figure 3, will be located some 5m away from each of the two breeding ponds. These will be constructed prior to the erection of amphibian fencing and trapping.

Creation and maintenance of the compensation area will be as follows:

Rough grassland

1. Correct area to be marked out with stakes and checked for accuracy.
2. Sowing of herb-rich grassland to be carried out in September 2019 following harvest of cereal crop,
3. Area to be cut by topping annually in September.
4. Invasive weeds such as thistle to be spot-treated as necessary.
5. Grass areas to be cut additionally in March/April if woody species become established.

Scrub

1. A 5 metre zone of scrub is to be allowed to develop by natural regeneration on border of rough grassland adjacent to woodland area.
2. No topping of grass in this area is to be undertaken until low scrub develops and thereafter this will be kept low by cutting every 3 years.

Woodland

1. Correct area to be marked out with stakes and checked for accuracy
2. Trees to be planted in first available planting season (November 2019) and protected by rabbit guards. Planting will be at 2 metre centres using native species of trees and shrubs.
3. Trees to be checked annually for 3 years for losses and any losses replaced in first available season.
4. Trees to be maintained weed-free by biennial control for 3 years or until established.
5. Grass growth between trees is to be retained and allowed to develop naturally,

All tree, shrub and herbaceous species used in planting schemes will be native and of local provenance where available.

4 TIMING: WORKS SCHEDULE

- Construction of 2 refuges within 5 metres of each of 2 likely breeding ponds.
- Erection of amphibian fencing to completely enclose the working area. This will essentially route the fence around the edges of the field to enable use of large machinery without risk to the fence.
- Trapping and translocation of GCN using pitfall traps, refugia sheets (Onduline sheets), hand searches and soft destruction of any potential resting places.

July 2019 - December 2019

- Improvement of access track

- Maintenance of amphibian barrier
- Construction of new units

September 2019 -November 2019

- Sowing of grassland in compensation area
- Planting of new woodland area near ponds

March 2020 onwards

- Removal of exclusion fencing
- Monitoring begins and continues until (and including) 2022

5 ECOLOGICAL COMPLIANCE AUDIT

An audit will be carried out in line with NRW Ecological Compliance Audit notes. It is regarded that the scheme comprises a Tier 2 level audit: the scheme is large scale (over 1 ha) but involves arable land and therefore a low risk to GCN. A Tier 2 audit will involve a Licence Return Form and an internal audit by the scheme ecologist.

The template for the audit is provided as an appendix to this document (SEE BELOW).

6 SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE SCHEMES

The drainage system from the building and surrounding hard-standing will be designed to be amphibian-friendly:

Water from the roof will be routed through gutters and down pipes directly into covered/closed grids with no access to amphibians.

Yards will be graded so as to spill water into stone drains on their perimeters, thus avoiding grids. If any grids are necessary, these will be fitted with BHS Amphibian ladders.

Appendix 1 Fence location



Appendix 2 Compliance Audit template

Natural Resources Wales licence reference number:		Site name:	MULSFORD FARM
		Site grid reference:	
Name of licence holder:		Name of developer if different from licence holder:	
Name of ecological consultant:		Date/s of audit (dd/mm/yy):	
Date licence issued (dd/mm/yy):	Date licence expired:	Licence implemented between (dd/mm/yy)	
		From:	To:

No	Performance Indicator	Evidence required - this list should be adapted to reflect the agreed method statement	Pass (Yes/No), comments	What action is required as a result of findings?
1	Before starting work the licensee will advise NRW Species Officer of the date the works will start.	Written or electronic documentation of notification of start of works.		
2	A suitably experienced licensed ecologist will be appointed and retained during the life time of this licence to provide on-site advice.	Letter, contract or other document outlining the appointment of an Ecologist for the lifetime of the project.		
3	Prior to the start of any works on site, all site workers will be inducted by the Project	Copy of documents from ecological induction, showing content of induction.		

	Ecologist or an accredited agent. This induction will cover the legal status of the species, the method of working, and action to be taken if protected species are encountered.	List of induction attendees		
4	Implementation of a bio-security risk assessment as detailed in Section and Annex J3 of 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		
	E1 GCN capture and exclusion			
5	Design and installation of amphibian fencing to the specifications provided in the method statement:	Log and field observation show that exclusion/ drift fencing have been installed as detailed in the method statement, including: - fencing has been installed so there is a minimum 1 m access strip left for maintenance on all sides		

		- fencing layout does not contain gaps through which newts may pass. - vehicle access points do not contain gaps through which newts may pass. - fencing membrane has been installed without noticeable creases or folds; - joints in the membrane have been 'curl-joined' and well secured to a post with pads and nails.		
6	Amphibian fencing has been subject to inspection and maintenance according to CCW guidance sheets/ EN (2001) and as detailed in the method statement throughout the translocation and construction periods.	A fence inspection log of all inspections and all repairs required has been maintained and is available to NRW at 48 hours notice to show that: - the fence has been inspected by the project ecologist or one of their agents at least twice a week. - any repairs have been completed within 12 hours throughout the duration of construction works. - that 99% or more of the length of the exclusion fencing has been		

		maintained in a satisfactory condition - fencing has been kept clear of vegetation or other materials that may enable newts to climb over the fence		
7	Works within amphibian habitats will not commence until working areas are confirmed to be clear of amphibians by the licensed ecologist.	Log of activities, including clearance activities, is available for inspection recording captures.		
8	Any works outside the amphibian fence are to be in accordance with a methodology as approved by NRW supervised by a licensed person.	Log of works undertaken, including evidence of licensed person on site, available for inspection.		
	E2/E3 GCN habitat modification and creation for mitigation and compensation			
9	All mitigation and compensation measures have been implemented as per section E2 and E3 of the Method Statement:	Log of works demonstrates habitat creation /enhancement implementation Design and installation of refuges:		

		log and field observation show installation was in accordance with the method statement including: - dimensions - construction materials - number and locations		
10	The compensation/receptor site has been subject to appropriate management during construction as specified in section E2.1 of the Method Statement	Log and field observation show that appropriate management activities have been implemented eg - Tree-planting and subsequent woodland management - Grassland establishment and management		
	F and H: Long Term Site proposals			
11	Implementation of <u>population monitoring</u> as detailed in F2 of the method statement	If audit undertaken <u>during development phase</u>: - monitoring plan demonstrates measures are in place to undertake GCN population monitoring post-development. If audit undertaken <u>post-</u>		

		<u>development:</u> - log or report demonstrate monitoring plan has been implemented - log or report demonstrate results passed to local record centre		
	Any other points to note/comments from auditor:			

Auditor name and organisation	Signature	Date