Cae Brynner Cottage
Isycoed

Protected Species Assessment

Commissioned by:
Mr K Braithwaite
Cae Brynner Cottage
Holt Road
Isycoed
Wrexham
LL13 9RL

Prepared by: Jane Atkinson IEEM C.Env
All Things Trees
Ty Newydd
Cloy Lane
Overton
Wrexham

Telephone: 01978 710661
E-Mail: jane@allthingstrees.co.uk

Contents

Summary 3

Introduction 3

Site Description 3

Legal Position 3

Desktop Survey 3

Historical records 3

Methodology 3

Possible Threats 4

Results 4

Reasonable Avoidance Measures 5

Appendices

Site Photographs
Location Plan
HSI Results

Summary

- A site visit to assess for Great Crested Newts (GCN) was carried out on 24th September 2014
- Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) have been prepared
- The development will not have an impact on the local population of Great Crested Newts if the RAMs are followed.

1 Introduction

Cae Brynner Cottage is situated on the B5130 Crosslanes to Holt Road approximately 0.5 km north of Bowling Bank, Grid Reference SJ 3997 4916. An application has been granted by Wrexham County Borough Council for the erection of a stable for horses subject to an updated ecological assessment.

Site description

The location of the new stable is on the boundary of gravel and lawn between the house and the road. A 7.2m section of native broadleaved hedge is to be removed and 15m2 of lawn lost.

There is one midfield pond (pond 1) within 200m of the proposed stable. It is 145m SE of Cae Brynner Cottage and this is situated across the road at Grid Ref SJ 4007 4911.

2 Legal Position

Great Crested Newt

The GCN is protected by national and international legislation; The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) regulations 1994 (as amended), which fully protects the GCN, its breeding site and resting places. It is an offence to deliberately kill, injure, capture or disturb the species; damage or destroy its breeding site or resting place.

3 Desktop Survey

Protected Species: Cae Brynner Cottage is within an area of high great crested newt activity and GCN are assumed present in area.

Protected Sites: There are no SSSI's or other protected sites within the immediate area; the nearest SSSI is the River Dee1.3 km east.

Methodology

An assessment survey was carried out on 24th September 2014 for GCN presence and habitat. The pond was inspected and assessed using the HSI score.

4 Possible Threats

GCN

Great Crested Newts spend the majority of their life on land within 200 metres of the breeding pond, only using the pond for breeding during April and May, although some adults will remain in the pond for longer. Juvenile GCN start to leave the pond in early August travelling up to 500m and remaining on land for two-three years before maturing. When GCN are on land they will use hedges, walls and other linear features to travel along and forage in grassland especially rough grassland. They use tree roots, wood piles, buildings, stored items and rubble to name but a few to find shelter.

Loss of high quality accessible foraging habitat within 500m of a pond is a threat to GCN. The storage of building materials and subsequent use/disturbance during autumn/winter is a threat to GCN as they may use them as shelter.

5 Results

GCN

GCN are assumed to be present in the area.

Pond 1 is a midfield pond situated across the B5130. An open pond with no shading and a good range of aquatic submerged and marginal plants it is a potential GCN breeding pond. It is in an arable field with no buffer or field margin around the pond and the foraging habitat surrounding this pond is poor. There are no linear habitat features connecting this pond to Cae Brynner Cottage. The pond has a HSI score of 0.77 meaning it is 'good' for GCN (see appendix 3)

The garden hedge to be removed is a mixed species hedge planted approximately 10 years ago by Mr Braithwaite. A hand search of the hedge bottom did not find any obvious resting places, it borders a gravel drive one side and closely mown lawn the other. There is no rough grass, small mammal burrows or obvious resting places for GCN. It is not high quality GCN resting or foraging habitat.

The building of the stable and loss of part of the hedge and lawn is not going to impact on the local GCN population. The loss of 15m2 poor quality foraging habitat is not considered significant.

6 Reasonable Avoidance Measures for GCN

- **Storage of Materials:** All materials to be used during the building works should be raised from the ground on pallets and stored on the existing gravel turning area.

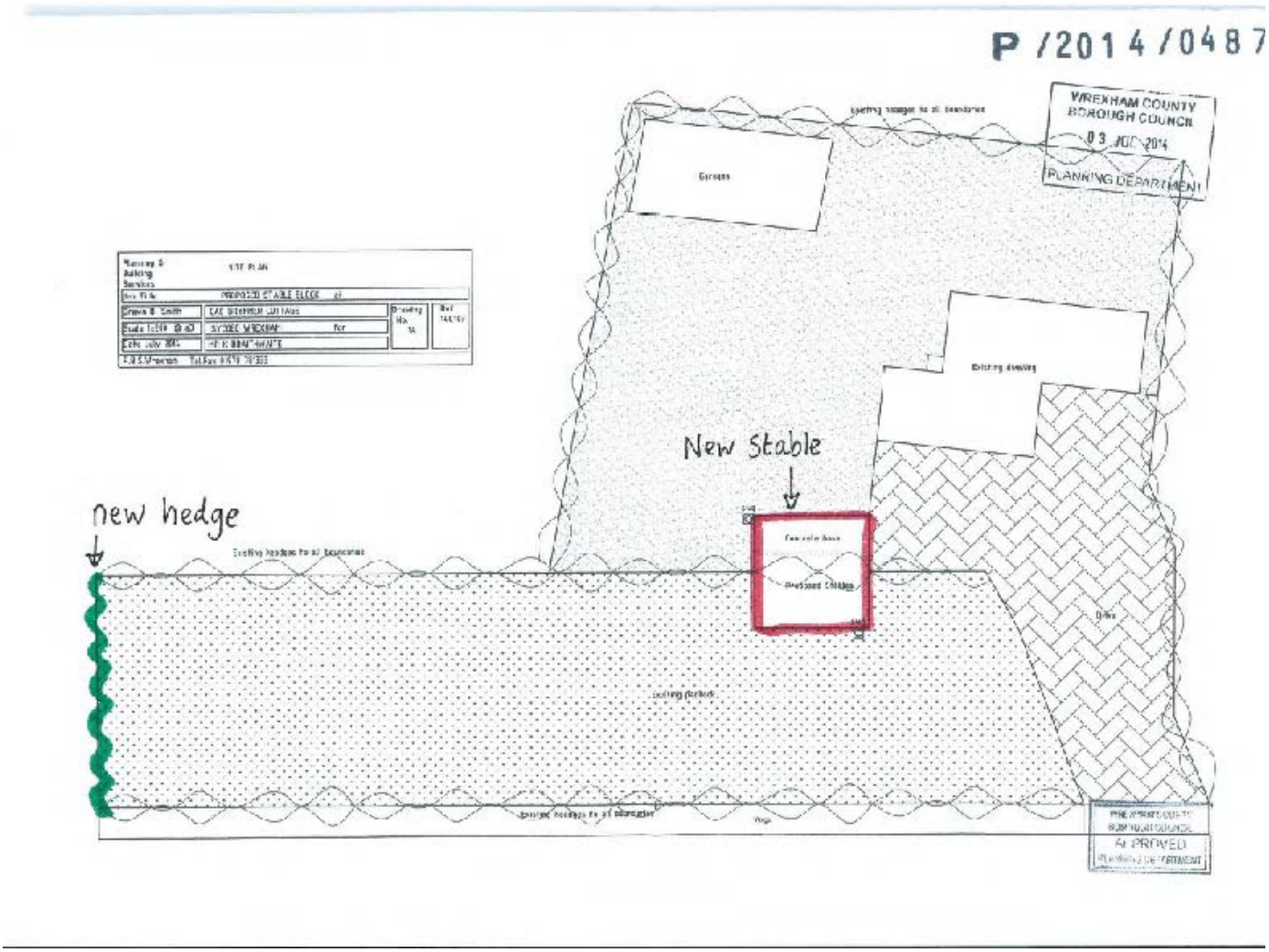
- **Mitigation:** 15m of new mixed species hedge consisting of hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, dog rose and field maple is to be planted on the southern boundary of the property in Autumn 2014.

Appendix 1: Photographs

	Plate 1: West side of hedge to be removed for the stable. Part of the stable will be on the gravel.
	Plate 2: East side of hedge, with closely mown lawn where the majority of the stable will be located.
	Plate 3: B5130 – the main Cross lanes-Holt road between pond 1 and Cae Brynner Cottage.

	Plate 4: Pond 1: This is the nearest potential GCN breeding pond located across the road in an arable field.
	Plate 5:. Pond 1: An open pond with a good range of marginal vegetation, it is a potential breeding pond. It is unfortunately surrounded by poor quality habitat. There is a 1 m buffer of reed canary grass, willow herb and branched bur-reed before the arable crop stubble.

Appendix 2: Location plan of Cae Brynner Cottage: showing new hedge to be planted in green and new stable edged in red.



Appendix 3: Habitat Suitability Index (HSI score)

Notes: The Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) for the great crested newt was developed by Oldham et al. (2000) as a means of evaluating habitat quality and suitability. An HIS is a numerical index, between 0 and 1. 0 indicates unsuitable habitat, 1 represents optimal habitat.

HSI		**Pond suitability**
<0.5	=	Poor
0.5-0.59	=	below average
0.6-0.69	=	average
0.7-0.79	=	good
>0.8	=	excellent

Pond Number	**1**
SI1 - Location	1
SI2 - Pond area	1
SI3 - Pond drying	0.9
SI4 - Water quality	0.67
SI4 - Shade	1
SI6 - Fowl	0.67
SI7 - Fish	0.67
SI8 - Ponds	1
SI9 - Terr'l habitat	0.33
SI10 - Macrophytes	0.8
HSI	**0.77**

The HSI score of pond 1 is 0.77 meaning it is of good suitability for GCN.