Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales

Ein cyf/Our Ref: CAS-284438-S8C3
Eich cyf/Your Ref: P/2025/0108

Wrexham County Borough Council,
The Guildhall,
Wrexham,
LL11 1AY

Dyddiad/Date: 05 August 2025

Annwyl Syr/Madam / Dear Sir/Madam,

BWRIAD/PROPOSAL: CONVERSION OF CHAPEL TO DWELLING (PREVIOUSLY APPROVED UNDER P/2015/0469)

LLEOLIAD/LOCATION: FORMER METHODIST CHAPEL, PONT Y BLEW, CHIRK, WREXHAM, LL14 5BH

Thank you for consulting Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru (CNC) / Natural Resources Wales (NRW) about the additional information for the above, which we received on 11/07/2025.

We continue to have concerns with the application as submitted because inadequate information has been provided in support of the proposal. To overcome these concerns, you should seek further information from the applicant regarding protected species. If this information is not provided, we would object to this planning application. Further details are provided below.

We also advise that further consideration is required regarding foul drainage. Further details are provided below.

Protected Species

Bats

We have reviewed the following information submitted in support of the application:

- Tyrer Ecological Consultants (July 2025) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Ref: PR-25-0105

We note that the submitted report has identified that bats may be present at the application site. However, section 7.12 of the report advises that further survey work is required in the form of a single emergence survey for Building ‘B1’. We concur with this advice.

We therefore advise that the additional survey work recommended in the report is undertaken and results submitted prior to determination of the application. Surveys should be undertaken in accordance with published best practice. If evidence of bat use is found,

suitable avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures should also be provided as appropriate to the species and their use of the site.

Based on the application, as submitted, we are unable to provide your Authority with any assurance that the proposal would not be likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

We note that the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Tyrer Ecological Consultants (July 2025, Ref: PR-25-0105) submitted in support of the above application has identified great crested newts (GCN) to be material to the application site. Section 7.28 of the report recommends that environmental DNA surveys are required.

GCN and their breeding sites and resting places are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Where GCN are present and a development proposal is likely to contravene the legal protection, they are afforded, the development may only proceed under licence issued by Natural Resources Wales, having satisfied the three requirements set out in the legislation. A licence may only be authorised if:

i. The development works to be authorised are for the purpose of preserving public health or safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;
ii. There is no satisfactory alternative; and,
iii. The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.

To avoid developments with planning permission subsequently not being granted a licence, the Local Planning Authority should take Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 5 into account when considering development proposals where a European Protected Species is present. Please note, for the purposes of providing advice at the planning application stage, our comments are limited to compliance with the third test only.

We consider that there is currently insufficient information to assess potential effects of the proposal on any GCN that may be present. We concur with the recommendations of the ecological report that further information is required to inform the planning application.

We therefore advise that the information as set out in Section 7.29 of the above report is submitted to assess the impact of the scheme on GCN and any conservation measures required. This must demonstrate that the proposed development would not be likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.

Otter

We note the ecological appraisal concludes there to be a limited chance that otter could be impacted by the proposed works. We concur with the proposed Reasonable Avoidance Measures and advise that these are secured to the satisfaction of your Authority.

Protected Sites

River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

- Foul Drainage

We note the application site is within the catchment of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC. In line with our *Advice to Planning Authorities for Planning Applications Affecting Nutrient Sensitive River Special Areas of Conservation* (28 June 2024), under the Habitats Regulations, Planning Authorities must consider the impact of proposed developments on water quality within SAC river catchments. We therefore advise you to consider whether the proposals, as submitted, would increase the volume of foul discharge from the site in planning terms.

We note from both the application form and the plans submitted that a new package treatment plant is to be installed to provide foul drainage for the conversion of the chapel to a three-bedroom dwelling. The development therefore has the potential to increase the amount of nutrients being discharged from the site. We note the Design and Access Statement (dated 2015) states*; 'Foul drainage will be via a sewage treatment unit which will allow clean discharge directly to the watercourse adjacent to the site*.' However, the site plans (dated 2025) illustrate a package treatment plant, with shared use with the neighbouring property and an existing drainage field. Our advice is therefore based on the understanding that the foul discharge for this proposal would be to ground as per drawing ref: SI 07/001 (dated January 2025). We note that the proposed drainage field would be within 40m of a surface water feature (Afon Ceiriog) which is part of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC.

As such, we refer you to our Advice and the section '*What does this mean for development proposals involving private sewage treatment systems?*'. We note that information has been submitted in respect of confirming how foul wastewater will be managed with scale plans showing the location of the proposed private treatment system and drainage field. The percolation tests confirm the ground conditions are suitable for drainage to ground.

Ultimately, the suitability of foul drainage arrangements for the proposed development is a matter for your Authority to determine. We therefore advise you to take the above into account in your determination of whether the development is likely to have a significant effect on the SAC.

Applicants wishing to operate a private sewerage system will need ***either*** to apply to us for an environmental permit ***or*** register with us for an exemption from the permit requirement. Septic tanks and small sewage treatment works that meet certain criteria may be registered as exempt.

A step by step guide to registering an exemption can be found on our website.

If the septic tank or private sewage treatment system is not eligible for an exemption, the Applicant will need to apply for an environmental permit, further details can be found here. Should a permit be required further information may be needed as part of that application process. The Applicant is therefore advised to contact us for pre-application advice at the earliest opportunity to try to ensure that there is no conflict between any planning permission granted and the permit requirements. Further details on how to access our pre-application advice service can be found here.

It is important to note that a grant of planning permission does not guarantee that a permit will be granted. A proposal may be deemed unacceptable either because of environmental risk or because upon further investigation, a connection to mains sewer was feasible. Applicants are encouraged to ensure they have all the required permissions, consents, permits and any other approvals in place prior to commencement of works on the site.

Where private sewage treatment/disposal facilities are utilised, they must be installed and maintained in accordance with British Standard 6297 and Approved Document H of the Building Regulations. We also refer the Applicant to Guidance for Pollution Prevention 4 on the NetRegs website, which provides further information.

- Pollution Prevention

The application site is within 20m of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC.

From the information provided, we consider that the proposal may affect the SAC and have identified construction pollution as a potential impact pathway to features of the site.

However, we consider the above pathway would not result in an adverse effect if the developer implements/adheres to standard pollution prevention guidelines. During the construction phase precaution should be taken to prevent contamination of surface water drains and local watercourses. Oils and chemicals should be stored in bunded areas and spill kits should be readily available in case of accidental spillages. For further guidance please refer to Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP) 5: Works and maintenance in or near water, and GPP 6: Working on construction and demolition sites, which are available on the NetRegs website.

As the competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is for your Authority to carry out the test of Likely Significant Effects for the proposed development. Should you conclude that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on a SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, an appropriate assessment must be made of the implications of the project for that site in view of its conservation objectives. You must for the purposes of the assessment consult NRW and have regard to any representations we make within such reasonable time as you specify.

River Dee Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

The application site is within 20m of the River Dee SSSI.

NRW consider the proposals have the potential to impact upon the River Dee SSSI. Providing the impact pathways referenced above for the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC are adequately addressed, NRW consider the features of the SSSI will also be adequately safeguarded.

Other Matters

Our comments above only relate specifically to matters included on our checklist, *Development Planning Advisory Service: Consultation Topics* (September 2018), which is published on our website. We have not considered potential effects on other matters and do not rule out the potential for the proposed development to affect other interests.

We advise the applicant that, in addition to planning permission, it is their responsibility to ensure they secure all other permits/consents/licences relevant to their development. Please refer to our website for further details.

If you have any queries on the above, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yn gywir / Yours faithfully,

Pauline Gallagher Brown
Cynghorydd - Cynllunio Datblygu / Advisor - Development Planning

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymateb yn Gymraeg, heb i hynny arwain at oedi. / Correspondence in Welsh is welcomed, and we will respond in Welsh without it leading to a delay.