Statement of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for Great Crested Newt

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Objectives

This Statement of RAMs provides a series of actions that should be implemented for the precautionary protection of amphibians potentially associated with the proposed development at Lower Rackery Farm, Dark Lane, Rossett, Wrexham, LL12 0AG (National Grid Reference SJ 3270 5754).

The aim of these RAMs is to eliminate as far as possible, the risk of killing, injuring or disturbing amphibians during works.

The main potential impacts are:

1. Amphibians being killed or injured as a result of being within the working areas when works begin.

2. Amphibians becoming trapped in excavations

3. Amphibians taking refuge in stored/waste materials

4. Amphibians being directly injured by general activity on site

Required Actions

Site Clearance and Vegetation Removal

In the lead up to works starting, the proposed construction zone should be kept tidy and free from piles of debris, logs, spoil, or construction materials. This is so that there are no features in which Amphibians will seek shelter.

Vegetation within the proposed works areas should be continued to be mown/cut for at least two weeks before the start of works. Any vegetation should be kept at this low height up to the start of works to perturb great crested newt from taking refuge in the works area.

Installation of Temporary One-Way Amphibian Fencing

Precautionary one-way amphibian fencing will be installed around the southwestern and north western perimeter of the development site prior to the commencement of any construction activities. The fencing is designed to exclude great crested newts (GCN) and other amphibians from entering the construction zone while allowing any individuals present within the site to disperse safely into adjacent habitats. The fencing will remain in place for the duration of the construction phase and will be removed once works are complete.

The fencing will consist of a durable polythene membrane supported on approximate 700mm timber stakes at 2–3m intervals. *The lower edge of the membrane will be buried to a depth of approximately 0.2* m and backfilled to prevent animals passing underneath. The upper section will extend at least 0.5 m above ground level, with a 45° downward-angled overhang positioned on the outer face of the fence to prevent re-entry (see Figure 2). This creates a one-way system that allows amphibians to climb out from the site side but not re-enter from surrounding habitats.

Installation will be carried out by hand to minimise disturbance. All joins will be overlapped and securely fastened to ensure a continuous barrier, with corners and junctions sealed to avoid gaps. The fence will be inspected regularly, particularly following adverse weather, to ensure its integrity is maintained and to carry out any necessary repairs.

At the end of the construction phase, the fencing will be fully removed by hand, including buried sections, and the ground reinstated to avoid leaving any plastic waste or obstructions in situ

The proposed fencing extent and a design for fencing is shown in Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix.

Storage of Materials

All stored building materials that might be used as temporary resting places by amphibians should be stored off the ground on pallets or similar.

Excavations

Where new trenches are to be excavated, these should not be left open overnight in case dispersing amphibians fall into them. Where this is not possible, trenches should be fitted with wooden ramps or excavated with battered back sides to allow wildlife to escape.

Construction Works

All exposed new pipework and drains should be capped at night so as to avoid trapping amphibians.

Scaffold footings should be placed on sand to prevent newts taking temporary refuge underneath the footings.

Discovery of Amphibians

In the unlikely event that a newt of any kind is encountered during works, works within vicinity of the newt should immediately stop and advice sought from an appropriately qualified ecologist.

Figure 1- GCN Fencing Location

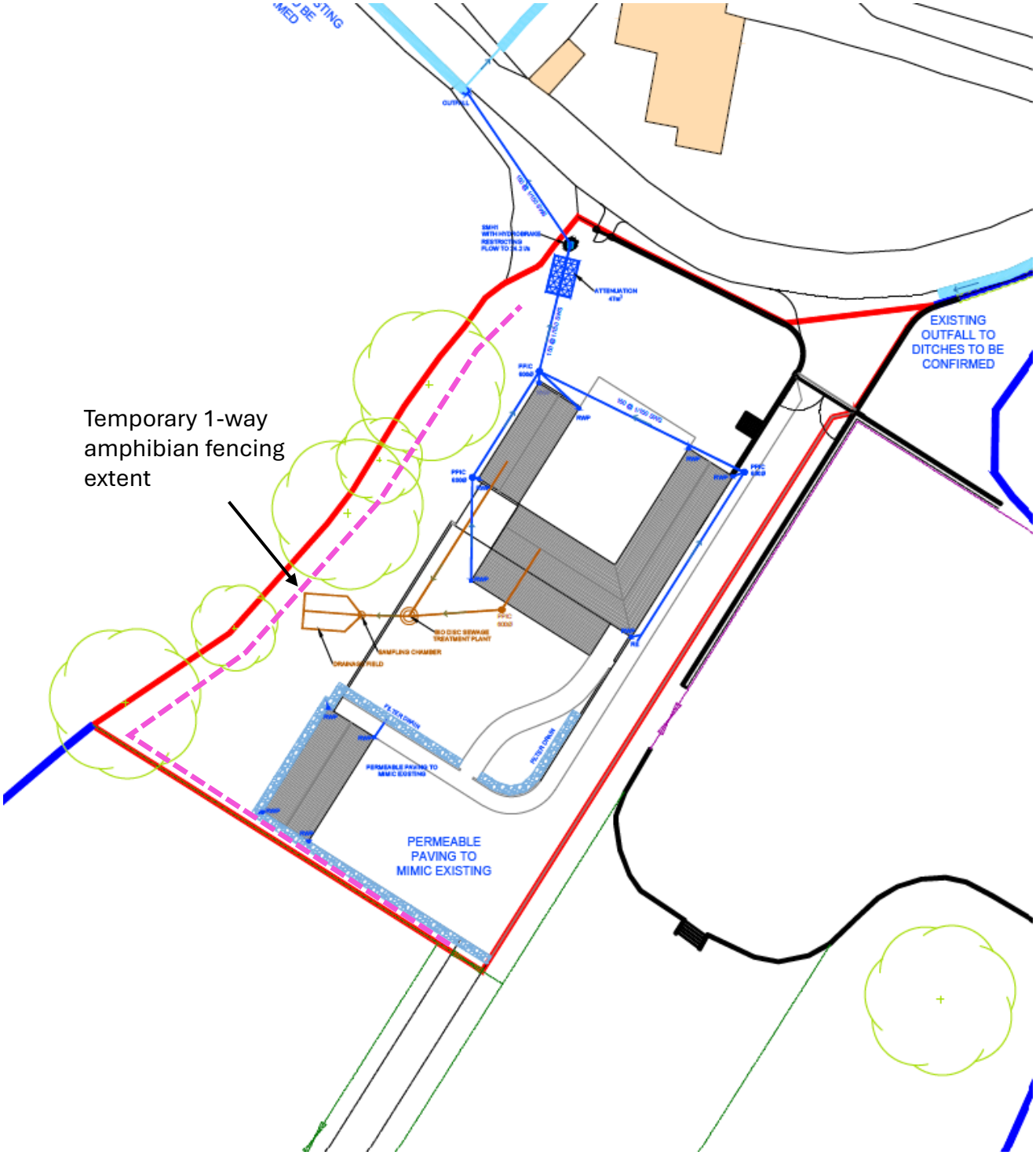


Figure 2- One-Way Fencing Design

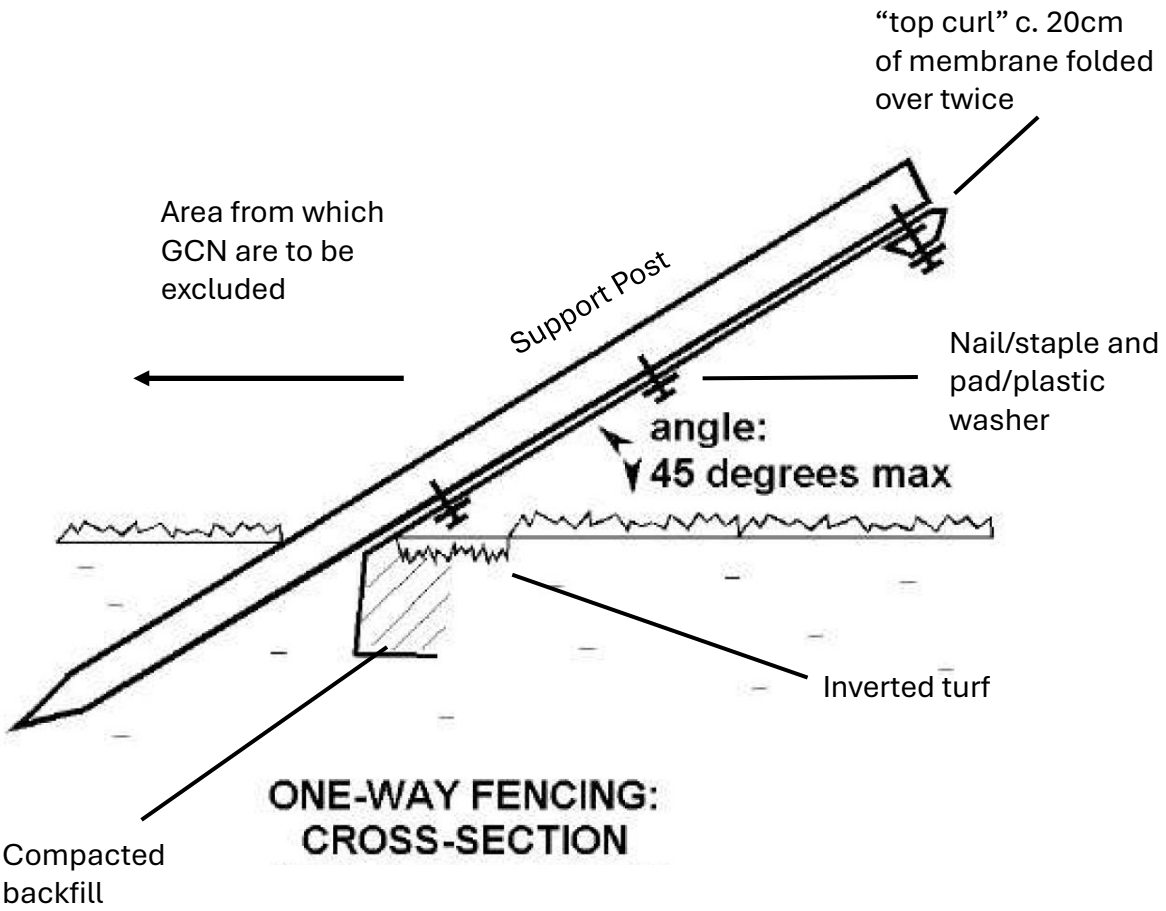


Figure taken from Natural England's GCN Mitigation Guidelines