ecological design consultant

the cottage
bodrhyddan hall
rhuddlan
denbighshire
LL18 5SB

Proposed footbridge/cycleway development – Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for Great Crested Newt (GCN) potential presence

This Document summarises the reasonable avoidance measure to implement on-site, within the land situated to the south western aspect of the Glan Yr Afon Brook. This project is to be overseen by Ecological Design Consultants (EDC).

Site: Rhostyllen Footpath / Cycleway Route.
Colliery Road,
Wrexham,
LL14 4FG.

Client: SG Estates

Licensed Ecologist: Tobias Hodnett (07765066356)

Site Background: From a historic species data search, a waterbody located 775m to the south west outside of the proposed site works boundary has been highlighted for the potential presence of GCN. This record is described as historic as there are no recent records from the last 2 years available. In the extremely unlikely event that a newt is observed within the site works boundary, below listed is the recommended protocol to follow in order to dimmish the potential impact on the species.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures;

Sensitive Vegetation Clearance - Sensitive and phased vegetation clearance can be undertaken to make habitats less suitable for newts within areas which are soon to be cleared/soil stripped. Best practice is to do this in phases: first cut any scrub and other tall vegetation to a height of c.250mm with all arising's removed; 48hrs later cut remaining vegetation to a height of c.150mm. The second phase should be undertaken in a directional manner, moving towards suitable areas of retained habitat, with arisings removed from the site. Soil strip can progress 48hrs after the second phase of vegetation clearance, again working towards retained habitat areas.

For the purpose of minimising impact on GCN, vegetation clearance and soil stripping can be restricted to areas where works are soon to commence. Once soil strip has been undertaken it is advisable to maintain the area as bare earth to minimise the likelihood of newts re-colonising. In order to be effective vegetation clearance should be undertaken during the active season for newts, typically February to October inclusive when temperatures are >5oC, and should avoid prolonged periods of hot dry weather when newt activity is reduced

Working practices and site housekeeping - For the protection of GCN, retained and offsite areas can be fenced using appropriate site fencing or hoarding, and vehicles, pedestrians and storage of materials excluded from these areas.

Storage of materials/waste is best undertaken on areas of hard standing or bare ground (for example areas which have been subject to the clearance measures identified above). Waste is best stored in skips or removed off site as soon as possible to avoid creating refuges which could be colonised by newts. If possible, storage areas, waste material and site compounds are best placed in areas not adjacent to highly suitable off-site or retained habitat which may act as a source of colonisation by newts. Mounds of soil can be compacted around the base to avoid creating refuges which newts could occupy.

Site working should avoid the creation of temporary waterbodies which may be attractive to newts. For this purpose, excavations can be backfilled as soon as possible following creation, or fitted with ramps to allow a means of escape (for example a wooden plank set at an angle no steeper than 45 degrees). A check for the presence of newts is advisable before excavations are infilled.

Protocol to implement during site preparation works:

Prior to the commencement of any site clearance works, a suitable licensed ecologist should be present on site to implement an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) program. This will ensure if any individuals that are potentially identified, an ecologist is on site to assess the situation immediately.

Protocol to implement if newt presence is identified:

In the unlikely event that a newt is identified within the site works boundary all works must cease temporarily. A suitable licensed ecologist should be then contacted to attend site to further assess the situation. If the Newt is in potential harms way the licensed ecologist should transport the individual to safe section outside of the site works boundary. During the initial works schedule an ecological toolbox talk should be undertaken by all onsite staff so they know the procedures to follow in any situation.