Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales

Ein cyf/Our ref: CAS-303252-B1N6
Eich cyf/Your ref: P/2026/0030

Wrexham County Borough Council
The Guildhall
Wrexham
LL11 1AY

Dyddiad/Date: 25 March 2026

Annwyl Syr/Madam/Dear Sir/Madam,

BWRIAD/PROPOSAL: Erection of single storey wood chip store building

LLEOLIAD/LOCATION: Higher Hall Farm, Bowling Bank, Wrexham, LL13 9RT

Thank you for consulting Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru (CNC)/Natural Resources Wales (NRW) about the above, which we received on 13 March 2026.

We have concerns with the application as submitted. However, we are satisfied that these concerns can be overcome if the document identified below is included in the approved plans and documents condition on the decision notice:

Approved Documents: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Higher Hall Farm, revision 1, dated 14/01/2026, Switch Ecology

Please note, without the inclusion of this document we would object to this planning application. Further details are provided below.

Protected Species

Great crested newts (GCN)

We have reviewed the following information which has been submitted in support of the application: (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Higher Hall Farm, revision 1, dated 14/01/2026, Switch Ecology).

The information has identified that great crested newts (GCN) are material to the application site. Section 4.3.1 states that abundant records for GCN within 2km of the application site were found, however the closest record was located 1.25km away. Several ponds have also been identified within 500m of the application site, 2 of the ponds are within 250m of the application site.

Section 5.3.1 of the report provides details regarding precautionary working methods for amphibians. We concur with this approach.

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 the 3rd test “demonstration of no detriment to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of European protected species”. We advise that before any consent is given, as informed by the provisions of Regulation 9 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) the LPA satisfy itself as to whether the scheme satisfies the other two tests, namely a relevant Habitats Regulations purpose and whether there is no satisfactory alternative to the proposal.

We consider that the above report provides an adequate basis upon which to consider the potential impacts of the scheme on this species and inform the decision-making process.

Therefore, we advise that the following document is included in the approved list of plans / documents condition within the decision notice: (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, reference C541/2.0, dated 16/12/2025, Marches Ecology).

Bats

We note that the information submitted in support of the above application (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, reference C541/2.0, dated 16/12/2025, Marches Ecology) has identified that bats are unlikely to be using the application site for roosting. Referring to the existing farming activities on site, section 4.3.3.5 of the report states “The works will also leave the general disturbance on the site unchanged. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that the proposals will have an impact on foraging or commuting bats”.

We therefore have no comments to make on the application as submitted in respect of bats.

We recommend that you discuss the need to secure further measures/ avoidance measures with your internal ecological advisor.

Protected Sites

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

- Pollution prevention

The development site is located adjacent to a watercourse, which is hydrologically connected to the River Dee Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is part of the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

From the information provided, we consider that providing the developer adheres to standard industry-wide best practice measures (which would be applied onsite independently of the HRA process) the proposal would not result in a likely significant or adverse effect.

Due to the presence of a watercourse adjacent to the site, we consider that the proposal may affect the SAC and have identified 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 adheres to standard pollution prevention guidelines. For further guidance please refer to GPP 5 and PPG 6 at the following link: Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP) documents | NetRegs | Environmental guidance

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/SPA/Ramsar site, 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.

- Foul Drainage

We note the application site is within the catchment of the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC). In line with our Advice to Planning Authorities for Planning Applications Affecting Nutrient Sensitive River Special Areas of Conservation, under the Habitats Regulations, Planning Authorities must consider the impact of proposed developments on water quality within SAC river catchments.

However, recognising the specific nature of the application submitted, we are satisfied that there is unlikely to be a source of additional nutrients and/or a pathway for impacts. As such, in our opinion, it would be reasonable for your Authority to screen out this proposal as not likely to have a significant effect on the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC in relation to nutrient inputs.

Site of Special Scientific interest (SSSI)

We consider the proposed development has the potential to damage the River Dee SSSI. Providing the impact pathways referenced above in relation to pollution prevention measures for the SAC are adequately addressed, NRW consider the notified features of the SSSI will also be adequately safeguarded.

Flood Risk Activity Permit

Our mapping indicates that the Is y Coed Drain main river runs along the eastern boundary of the application.

Please advise the Applicant that the Environmental Permitting Regulations (2016) require them to obtain a bespoke Flood Risk Activity Permit for any works or structures located in, under, over or within 8 metres of the Is y Coed Drain, a designated “main river”. Further advice and guidance is available on our website at: Natural Resources Wales / Check if you need a flood risk activity permit (FRAP)

Other Matters

The advice in this letter relates to matters which are included on our consultation topics list. We do not rule out the potential for the proposed development to affect other environmental interests that are not included on this list.

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 about the above, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yn gywir / Yours faithfully,

Rachael Burke
Cynghorydd - Cynllunio Datblygu/Advisor - Development Planning
Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales

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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.