Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales

Our Ref: CAS-305919-X8J0

Your Ref: P/2026/0165

Wrexham County Borough Council
The Guildhall
Wrexham
LL11 1AY

Dyddiad/Date: 13 May 2026

Annwyl Syr/Madam/Dear Sir/Madam,

Bwriad/Proposal: Outline application for erection of up to 34 dwellings (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved)

Lleoliad/Location: Land At Bethania Road, Bethania Road, Acrefair, Wrexham, LL14 3TS

Thank you for consulting Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales (NRW) about the above, which we received on 22 April 2026.

We have **concerns** with the application as submitted. However, we are satisfied that these concerns can be overcome by attaching the following **conditions** to any planning permission granted:

- Condition 1: Protected Species
- Condition 2-6: Land Contamination

We also advise that based on the information submitted to date, the following **document** identified below should be included in the approved plans and documents condition on the decision notice:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA): Land off Bethania Road, Acrefair, reference 260339, Witcher Wildlife Ltd, 15/03/2026
- Existing and Proposed Location Plan, drawing number: R 1069 dated April 2026

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

We also have **concerns** with the application as submitted. To overcome these concerns, further consideration is required regarding **foul drainage**. Further details are provided below.

Protected Sites and 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.

This application for the erection of up to 34 dwellings proposes connection of foul water to the mains sewer. The proposed development could potentially lead to an increase of phosphorus load from the receiving wastewater treatment works into the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC. The majority of the River Dee and Bala Lake catchment is currently failing to meet water quality targets for phosphorus. The nutrient impacts of new connections need to be considered on a case-by-case basis within the Habitats Regulations Assessment process.

Ultimately, the suitability of foul drainage arrangements for the proposed development is a matter for your Authority to determine. We advise your Authority that further consideration is required and to follow our Advice specifically the section titled 'What does this mean for development proposals involving connection to public wastewater treatment works?'

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. Should you conclude that an Appropriate Assessment is required, the Applicant will need to provide whatever evidence they consider appropriate (seeking advice from consultants as necessary) to demonstrate no adverse effect on site integrity.

Please consult us on any Appropriate Assessment under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). However, until the development can demonstrate it will not lead to an increase of phosphorus load from the receiving wastewater treatment works into the river we would be unable to advise you that the proposed development would not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of the site.

Protected Species

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

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA): Land off Bethania Road, Acrefair, reference 260339, Witcher Wildlife Ltd, 15/03/2026

Great Crested Newt (GCN)

Section 4.6.1 of the PEA states that "…with precautionary measures in place during site clearance, there will be no negative impact on amphibians", section 5 provides some details of the measures proposed to be put in place.

GCN have been recorded in the area and the woodland and grassland provide suitable habitat for GCN.

The proposal has the potential to kill, injure, disturb GCN, or damage or destroy their breeding sites and resting places at this site. 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 the current submission is insufficient for the purposes of demonstrating that the proposal is not likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of GCN.

We therefore advise that the additional information is provided in relation to the long-term management of the woodland area in the eastern area of the application site (as shown on the Existing and Proposed Location Plan, drawing number: R 1069 dated April 2026) in addition to the precautionary measures referenced in section 5 of the PEA.

However, we are satisfied that the further information could be provided via a suitably worded condition, included on the decision notice. We therefore advise the following condition in respect of GCN is included on any permission granted:

Condition 1: Protected Species Management Plan

No development, including site clearance, shall commence until a Site Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The provisions of the Management Plan shall include:

- Species interest (great crested newt and bats)
- Management prescriptions
- Tenure (we advise tenure to accord with the definition of a “responsible” body as defined in Part 7 of the Environment Act 2021)
- Financial resources
- Plan review

Justification:

To ensure that great crested newts are protected by the development.

Bats

We note that the report has identified that the application site supports potential bat roosting features in trees and several species were identified foraging including common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule bat, and myotis bat species. Section 5 of the submitted PEA recommends that "…that the final development plan for the site retains the woodland area adjacent to the proposed development site and protects the root zone of the trees".

Bats and their breeding and resting places are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Where bats 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 tests set out in the Regulations (please also refer to Paragraph 6.3.7 of Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning). Please note, for the purposes of providing advice at the planning application stage, our comments are limited to the test relating to "demonstration of no detriment to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of European protected species".

We consider that the above report provides an adequate basis upon which to consider the potential impacts of the scheme on these species and inform the decision-making process. However please see our comments above regarding a Site Management Plan condition, which should also include bats.

We also advise that the ecological report is included in the 'approved list of plans / documents' condition within the decision notice should consent for the project be granted.

We refer you to the Chief Planning Officer's letter dated 1 March 2018 which advises Local Planning Authorities to attach an informative regarding licence requirements to all consents and notices where European Protected Species are likely to be present on site.

Please note, any changes to plans between planning consent and the licence application may affect the outcome of a licence application.

Land Contamination

We note that the development site lies within the former Air Products Social Club landfill site, and therefore has the potential for contamination to be present. Based on the submitted application, we would therefore advise that the conditions below are attached to any planning permission in order to protect controlled waters.

Condition 2: Land affected by contamination

No development or phase of development, shall commence until the following components of a scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination at the site, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

1. A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:

- all previous uses
- potential contaminants associated with those uses
- a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors

- potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site

We acknowledge that this part of the condition has already been largely addressed through the submission of the Geo-environmental desk study report (Desktop Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Site Investigation, Acrefair Sports and Social Club, Bethania Road, Acrefair for Prospect Estates Limited. Eastwood and Partners, 08/07/2021).

2. A site investigation scheme, based on (1) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.

3. The results of the site investigation and the detailed risk assessment referred to in (2) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.

4. A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (3) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

The remediation strategy and its relevant components shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Justification:

To ensure the risks associated with contamination at the site have been fully considered prior to commencement of development as controlled waters are of high environmental sensitivity; and where necessary remediation measures and long-term monitoring are implemented to prevent unacceptable risks from contamination.

Condition 3: Contamination verification report

Prior to the occupation of the development, a verification report demonstrating completion of works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met. It shall also include a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action, as identified in the verification plan. The long-term monitoring and maintenance plan shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Justification:

To ensure the methods identified in the verification plan have been implemented and completed and the risk associated with the contamination at the site has been remediated prior to occupation or operation, to prevent both future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

Condition 4: Unsuspected contamination

If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) shall be carried out until a remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The remediation strategy shall be carried out as approved.

Justification:

To ensure the risks associated with previously unsuspected contamination at the site are dealt with through a remediation strategy, to minimise the risk to both future users of the land and neighbouring land, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks. A site investigation may not uncover all instances of contamination and this condition ensures that contamination encountered during the development phase is dealt with appropriately.

Condition 5: Piling

No development shall commence until details of piling or any other foundation designs using penetrative methods sufficient to demonstrate that there is no unacceptable risk to groundwater have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The piling/foundation designs shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Justification:

Piling/foundation details should be submitted to ensure there is no unacceptable risk to groundwater during construction and methods/design are agreed prior to the commencement of development or phase of development.

Condition 6: Surface water drainage

No infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground is permitted other than with the express written consent of the local planning authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to controlled waters. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approval details.

Justification:

To prevent both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution.

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

E-bost/E-mail: neplanning@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

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.