Robinwood Activity Centre, Maes y Nant

Bangor Rd, Marchwiel, Wrexham LL13 0TF

Great Crested Newt

Reasonable Avoidance Measures - Method Statement

12th August 2026



Produced by Wildbanks Conservation

www.wildbanksconservation.com

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Wildbanks Conservation were commissioned to prepare a Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) – Method Statement for Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) in relation to proposed works at Robinwood Activity Centre, Maes y Nant, Bangor Road, Marchwiel, Wrexham (approx. OS Grid Ref: SJ 37402 46965).

1.2 A Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Great Crested Newt development licence is required to lawfully undertake the proposed works. This document provides the RAMs Method Statement and will be included within the licence application submission pack as Annex K.6.

1.3 Planning Permission was received on the 23/07/2026 Ref: P/2026/0254 Planning condition 4 requires the submission and approval of a RAMs prior to the commencement of development:

"No development, including site clearance, shall commence until a Great Crested Newt (GCN) Reasonable Avoidance Measures Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include, but not be limited to:

- *Measures to ensure working areas are clear of newts prior to commencement*
- *Timing, phasing and delivery of measures*
- *Persons responsible for implementation*
- *Measures to prevent incidental capture or killing*
- *Biosecurity measures addressing invasive non-native species and disease (e.g. Chytrid)"*

1.4 This document should be read alongside the licence application submission pack, which provides the detailed ecological background and mitigation strategy for the site. This RAMs provides a site-specific summary of the working methods to be implemented under the licence.

1.5 This RAMs has been prepared by a suitably qualified NRW-licensed ecologist, Mick Smith (NRW EPS Licence: S091662/1) and reviewed prior to submission by the license named ecologist Max Ellson (EPS Licence: S094753/1). It details the reasonable avoidance measures required to comply with relevant legislation and to maintain the conservation status of Great Crested Newts within the site.

1.6 Great Crested Newts are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). They are also listed under Annex II and IV of the Habitats Directive and the Bern Convention.

1.7 As summarised by Langton, et al. (2001), it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill or injure Great Crested Newts

- Deliberately or recklessly disturb individuals in places of shelter or protection
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to breeding or resting sites
- Possess, transport, sell or exchange Great Crested Newts or parts of them unless legally obtained

2.0 METHOD STATEMENT

2.1 The objectives of this RAMs are to:

- Ensure all works are undertaken in compliance with the NRW EPS licence
- Avoid adverse effects on Great Crested Newts during construction activities
- Ensure the favourable conservation status of Great Crested Newts is maintained

2.2 All site works, including vegetation clearance, ground preparation, excavation and construction activities, will be undertaken in accordance with this RAMs and the NRW EPS licence conditions. The approach is based on a combination of phased habitat manipulation, supervised searches and standard precautionary working methods designed to minimise risk to any animals that may be present.

2.3 A suitably qualified Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Great Crested Newt licensed ecologist will be appointed as the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) for the duration of the licensed works.

2.4 Preparatory works

2.4.1 The ECoW will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the mitigation measures set out within this RAMs and the approved NRW EPS licence. This will include supervising key stages of the works, providing ecological advice to the Principal Contractor, undertaking toolbox talks, and ensuring that all works are carried out in accordance with the approved method statement. This RAMs Method Statement must be strictly adhered to by all site personnel and contractors involved with the works.

2.4.2 The ECoW will have the authority to temporarily halt works where necessary to ensure compliance with the licence and to prevent impacts on Great Crested Newts.

2.4.3 Activities that might effect GCN, in accordance with this Great Crested Newt RAMs, will only be undertaken when the preceding and following night-time temperature does not fall below 5°C and the day-time temperature is warm.

Toolbox Talk

2.4.4 Prior to any works commencing, all site operatives will receive a toolbox talk from the ECoW. This will cover the legal protection of Great Crested Newts, identification features, and the precautionary working methods set out in this RAMS. It will also explain the procedure to follow if a newt is encountered during works. A GCN information sheet will also be displayed on site for reference and is included within this document for reference.

2.5 Working Methods

Site set-up

2.5.1 The working area will be clearly defined on Site in vegetated areas to be delineated by means of , for example, orange netlon fencing and road pins, and or temporary paint markings and agreed with the Site Manager, Principal Contractor and ECoW prior to commencement. No works will be undertaken outside of the agreed area without prior consultation with the ECoW.

2.5.2 An amphibian welfare box will be provided on site and will be present on site at all times. It will include a ventilated box with damp cloth inside it. This will be used to collect and transport any amphibians found during the works.

2.5.3 Temporary carpet tiles will be positioned within the receptor site for the duration of the works to provide additional refugia for any GCN relocated during implementation of the RAMs. These tiles will be removed on completion of the construction works unless otherwise required by the licensed ecologist. Temporary carpet tiles will be placed within the receptor area to provide immediate refuge, with each amphibian species released beneath a separate tile.

Vegetation Clearance

2.5.4 Initial works will involve vegetation clearance undertaken under direct ECoW supervision. Prior to clearance, a visual and hand search of the working area will be undertaken to confirm suitable conditions for works to proceed.

2.5.5 Vegetation will then be cut down to approximately 150 mm above ground level using hand tools only, including loppers, chainsaws and strimmers. No wheeled or tracked machinery will be used within vegetated areas. Arisings will be removed using hand tools, such as rakes, and transported to a designated processing area on existing hardstanding, as agreed with the ECoW.

2.5.6 All vegetation material will be processed as required and removed from site, unless specifically required for ecological enhancement features, such as the proposed hibernaculum. Any material retained for use within the hibernaculum will be temporarily stored within a suitable contained area, such as a skip or similar, until required. Once the initial clearance has been completed, a further detailed hand search will be undertaken across the site, with particular attention given to potential

refugia such as stones, logs, around the base of trees and in leaf litter. Any easily movable refugia will be carefully checked and removed or repositioned as appropriate. A final cut to just above to reflect ground level will then be completed using hand tools only, with all arisings removed from site.

Hand/Destructive Searches

2.5.7 Following vegetation clearance, and prior to any construction works commencing, hand and destructive searches will be undertaken by the ECoW. These will not be carried out immediately after clearance but will only commence following a minimum of two consecutive nights with temperatures above 5°C, to allow any remaining animals to move into more suitable habitat (i.e., out of site).

2.5.8 Destructive searches will include removal of refugia, shrub bases, logs, large stones, rubble, tree stumps, tree roots and existing hardstanding or tarmac, etc, by hand or, where required, assisted (where practicable) by an appropriately sized mini-excavator with toothed bucket. This will assist the ecologist sifting through materials such as tree stumps. Where possible, tree stumps will be pulled out with a chain or similar, rather than scooping out with a bucket. It may also be necessary to gently rake through the soil (with a toothed bucket) to expose and investigate any potential sub-terranean refugia.

2.5.9 The effort expended on such activities will be determined by the licenced ecologist and will take into account capture rates and detailed assessment of each potential feature.

Watching Brief

2.5.10 At the start of each working day, the ECoW or Site Manager will undertake a visual inspection of the working area before construction recommences to confirm the absence of any amphibians or other protected species that may be disturbed, injured or killed during the construction works.

2.5.11 Where vegetation clearance or groundworks extend over several days, additional visual checks will be completed each morning prior to works commencing to confirm the absence of any amphibians or other protected species that may be disturbed, injured or killed during the construction works.

2.5.12 During construction, any excavations should be backfilled at the end of each working day wherever practicable so that overnight amphibians or small mammals cannot become trapped within them.

2.5.13 Where excavations are required to remain open overnight, suitable escape ramps or timber ladders shall be installed to allow any trapped animals to escape. The angle of the ramp/ladder should not exceed 30 degrees. The base and sides of excavations will be left compacted at the end of each working day, with care taken to ensure there are no cracks, crevices or loose areas that could provide

potential refuge opportunities for great crested newts or other animals. Excavations will be checked each morning by the ECoW prior to works recommencing.

2.5.14 Plant, machinery and construction materials will be stored on existing hardstanding in a remote compound away from the site/ as far away from ponds as possible wherever possible. Refuelling and maintenance will only take place within designated areas. Suitable drip trays and spill kits will be present on site at all times when plant is present.

2.5.15 Materials stored on site will be raised off the ground by 100mm, such as stored on top of timber pallets, where practicable, to prevent the creation of new refugia for amphibians.

2.5.16 No personnel or machinery will enter areas outside the approved working area without prior agreement from the ECoW.

2.5.17 Prior to leaving the site at the end of each day, all machinery and tools/ other materials will be stored securely on existing hard standing.

Procedure if Great Crested Newts are Found

2.5.18 If a Great Crested Newt is found at any time during works when the ECoW is not present the animal should ideally be left in situ and covered over with a thick towel, or similar. If it is not practical to do this, or the individual is in danger of injury or death, then the individual can be collected and placed in the amphibian welfare box. All works will then stop and the ECoW contacted. A course of action will then be agreed that might require the ECoW to visit site before works can commence or that works can commence without this need. The individual will then be transported to the receptor site and released. If necessary, a revised mitigation approach or licence variation will be implemented.

2.5.19 Details of all captures, including the date, location, species and prevailing weather conditions, will be recorded.

2.5.20 Any amphibian handling will be undertaken in accordance with the Biosecurity Risk Assessment (Annex K.7), with appropriate biosecurity measures implemented throughout the construction period to prevent the spread of invasive non-native species and amphibian diseases.

Monitoring and Compliance

2.5.21 The Principal Contractor and ECoW will maintain appropriate records throughout the construction period to demonstrate compliance with this RAMS and the NRW licence.

2.5.22 A site log will be maintained recording ecological supervision, vegetation clearance, destructive searches and any amphibians encountered during the works, together with details of the actions taken.

2.5.23 A photographic record will also be maintained where appropriate to demonstrate compliance with the approved methodology. This may include photographs of vegetation clearance, ecological supervision and any ecological incidents encountered during the works.

2.5.24 Upon completion of the licensed works, the ECoW will confirm that the mitigation measures detailed within this RAMS have been implemented.

2.5.25 Where required by the NRW licence, or upon request by Natural Resources Wales or the Local Planning Authority, a compliance summary will be prepared detailing the ecological supervision undertaken, monitoring records and confirmation that the approved mitigation has been successfully implemented.

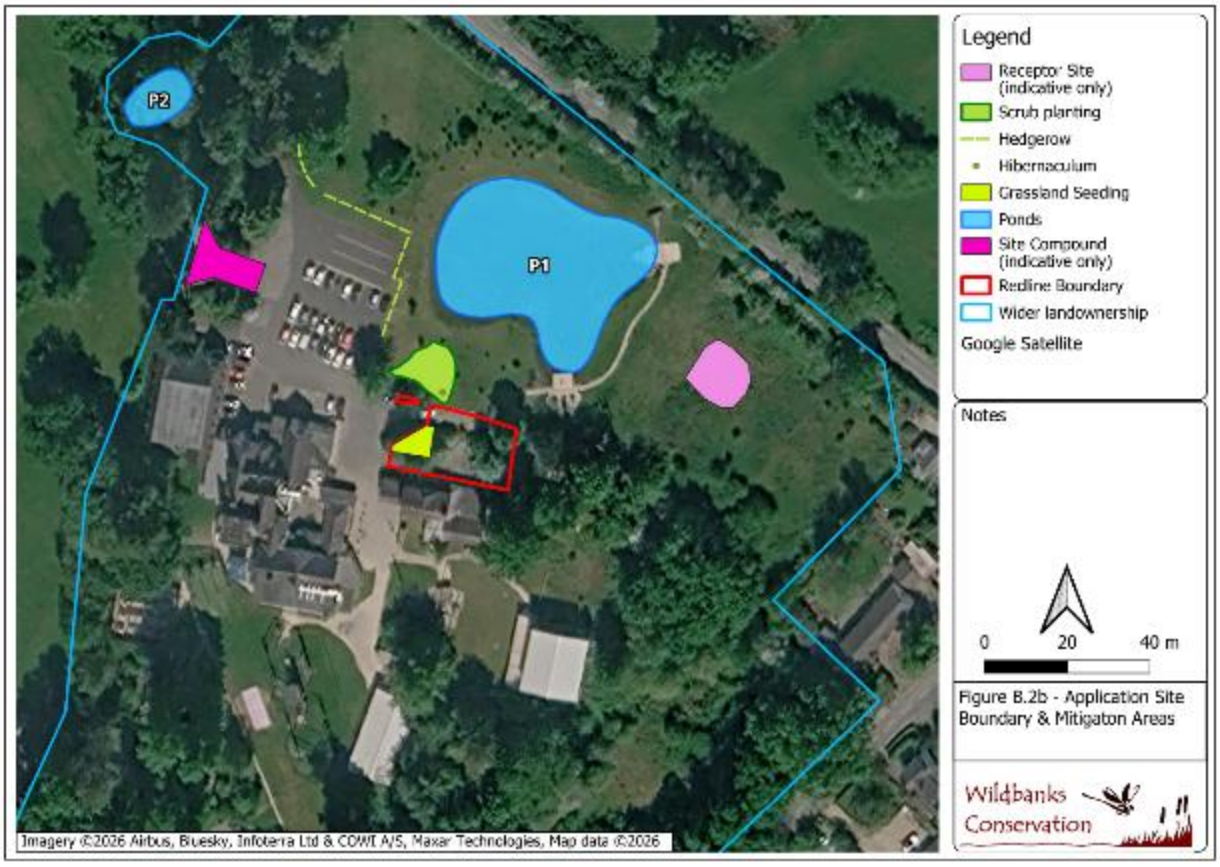


Figure 1. Aerial view of the Site showing position of receptor site coloured pink. (Imagery ©2026 Airbus, Bluesky, Infoterra Ltd & COWI A/S, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2026)

3.0 REFERENCES

- Langton, T.E.S., Beckett, C.L., and Foster, J.P. (2001). *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*. Froglife, Halesworth.

- Natural Resources Wales (undated). *Development licence – Method Statement – Great crested newts*. Online licence application form.

Great Crested Newt Information Sheet

Great Crested Newts are the largest of the three British species of newt; adult males can reach 15 cm in length, with females slightly larger at 18 cm (the photos/ pictures below are not life-size). The upper surface and flanks are black and warty, with a row of silver dots present along the side of the head and body. The belly is dark orange or yellow with a pattern of black blotches.

The Great Crested Newt may be confused with the Smooth Newt, although adults of this species are generally smaller (at 10-11 cm – again, the pictures below are not life-size). The smooth newt male has brown/dark green skin with black spots, and the female is light brown with darker spots.



Above: Adult GCN. Female on left, male on right.



Above: Adult GCN female on left, adult smooth newt female on right.



Above: Juvenile GCN



Above: Drawings from Field Studies Council's guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of Britain and Ireland (1999).

I confirm that I have attended the site induction and have read and understood the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS), including the approved working methods, mitigation measures and associated risks.

I understand my responsibilities regarding the protection of Great Crested Newts while working on this Site and agree to follow the procedures and requirements detailed within the RAMS at all times.

Date	Inductee Name	Signature
