Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd
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Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, Roselands, 3 Cross Green, Formby, L37 4BH

Great Crested Newts – Reasonable Avoidance Measures Statement (RAMS)

Site: Pickhill Farm, Cross Lanes, Wrexham, LL13 0UL

Project Ref: PR-0427-24

Method Statement Objectives

As part of a granted planning application with Wrexham Council (Reference: P/2026/0207[1]) concerning Pickhill Farm, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd undertook a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA).

Proposals are understood to involve the demolition of an existing extension, and renovation of two existing extensions. The application was granted on 8th September 2026, subject to a number of conditions.

Condition 5 of the granted decision notice states the following:

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

- *Details of fence design, construction and maintenance, including the erection of a one-way amphibian fence prior to and throughout the duration of construction operations.*
- *Proposals for the clearance of individuals from working areas.*
- *Details of the timing, phasing and delivery of reasonable avoidance measures.*

The Plan of Reasonable Avoidance Measures shall be carried out in accordance with the approved detail."

Development related activities such as demolition, remediation, piling, vegetation clearance or excavation in areas of suitable amphibian habitat may potentially impact great crested newts (GCN) that may inhabit the local area. As a result, safeguards must be applied to protect this species; the Method Statement below outlines sequential measures to be implemented to ensure these objectives are achieved, thus satisfying **Condition 5.**

Before Any Works

- Before any site-preparation or clearance works commence at Pickhill Farm, all contractors will be briefed by 'Toolbox' talk of the potential for protected amphibians to occur on site, what to look out for and what to do in the event that any are found. This talk will be provided by a great crested newt licensed Ecologist and will cover identification aids and the legal ramifications of a wildlife offence through reckless behaviour.
- Contractors will have the opportunity to ask any questions as required following the toolbox talk, before signing the Audit Form (see overleaf) which will be kept by the Ecologist for audit reasons.
- Following the toolbox talk an "Environmental Champion" will be appointed, who will be responsible to report to the Ecologist throughout the work schedule at pre-agreed phases.
- Photograph(s) of amphibians will be displayed at the site office and / or kept by the contractor's personal being for visual reference purposes.
- Construction works are to only take place during daylight hours as opposed to the night-time, when GCN are most active.

[1] See: https://register.wrexham.gov.uk/pr/s/detail/a0lSq0000022fNhIAI?language=en_GB&c__r=Arcus_BE_Public_Register

Pre Works

- Juvenile and adult GCN are most vulnerable to harm during their hibernation period which is considered to be November to February inclusive. Site clearance / preparation works should avoid this sensitive period. If this is not possible works carried out during this sensitive period (between November – February) should take into account the potential presence of hibernating wildlife.

- Pre-commencement check – a site walkover is to take place by an Ecologist/ECoW before commencement of works, in order to pinpoint areas in which there may be a higher chance of encountering herpetofauna, which might include beneath paving slabs or piled materials.

- Any necessary buffer zones will be demarcated out using hazard / coloured tape and / or signage to avoid any encroachment / over-management occurring from the development site within this sensitive area.

- Following pre works checks, temporary one-way amphibian fencing will be erected along the site boundaries to direct newts away from the site during the works; the installation will be supervised by the licensed Ecologist and the Environmental Champion will monitor and repair the fence on a daily basis. Newt grids will also be installed at the site entrance.

- Fencing will be comprised of a suitably durable plastic membrane, buried to a depth of 200mm and supported by wooden posts on the outer side, secured by pads and nails/staples (but not batons). All trenches dug for the fence will be infilled on the same day to prevent amphibians seeking shelter in the uncompacted soil.

- Fencing will be sloped at an angle of between 40 and 45 degrees, to allow amphibians to exit the site but not re-enter. The fencing will have an overhang or 'top curl' to prevent newts from climbing over the fence.

- See **Figures 1 – 2** for indicative specification of the newt fencing and grid and **Figure 3** for indicative locations over the red line boundary.

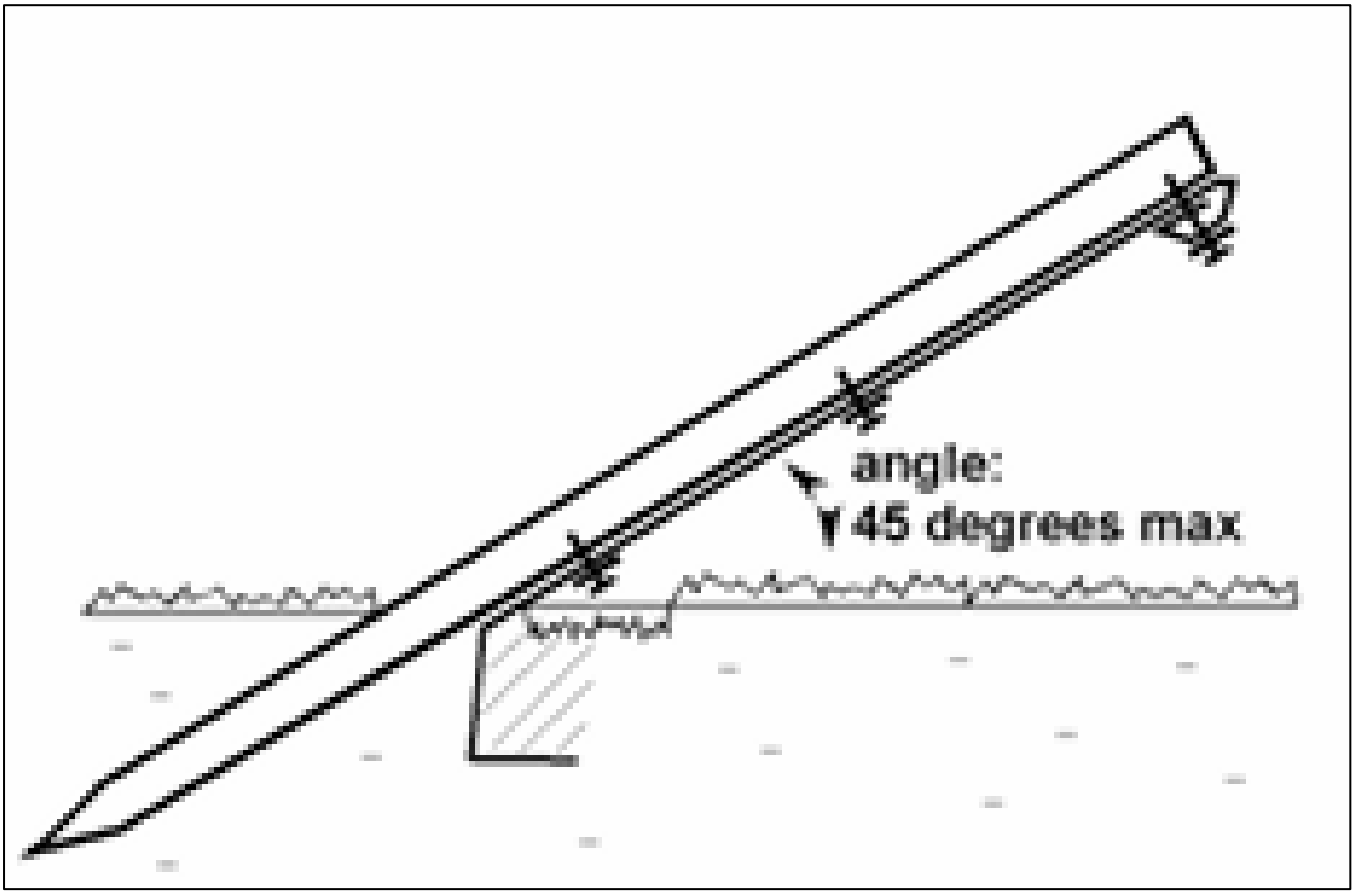


Figure 1 – *Indicative specification of GCN exclusion fencing (© Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines, 2001)*

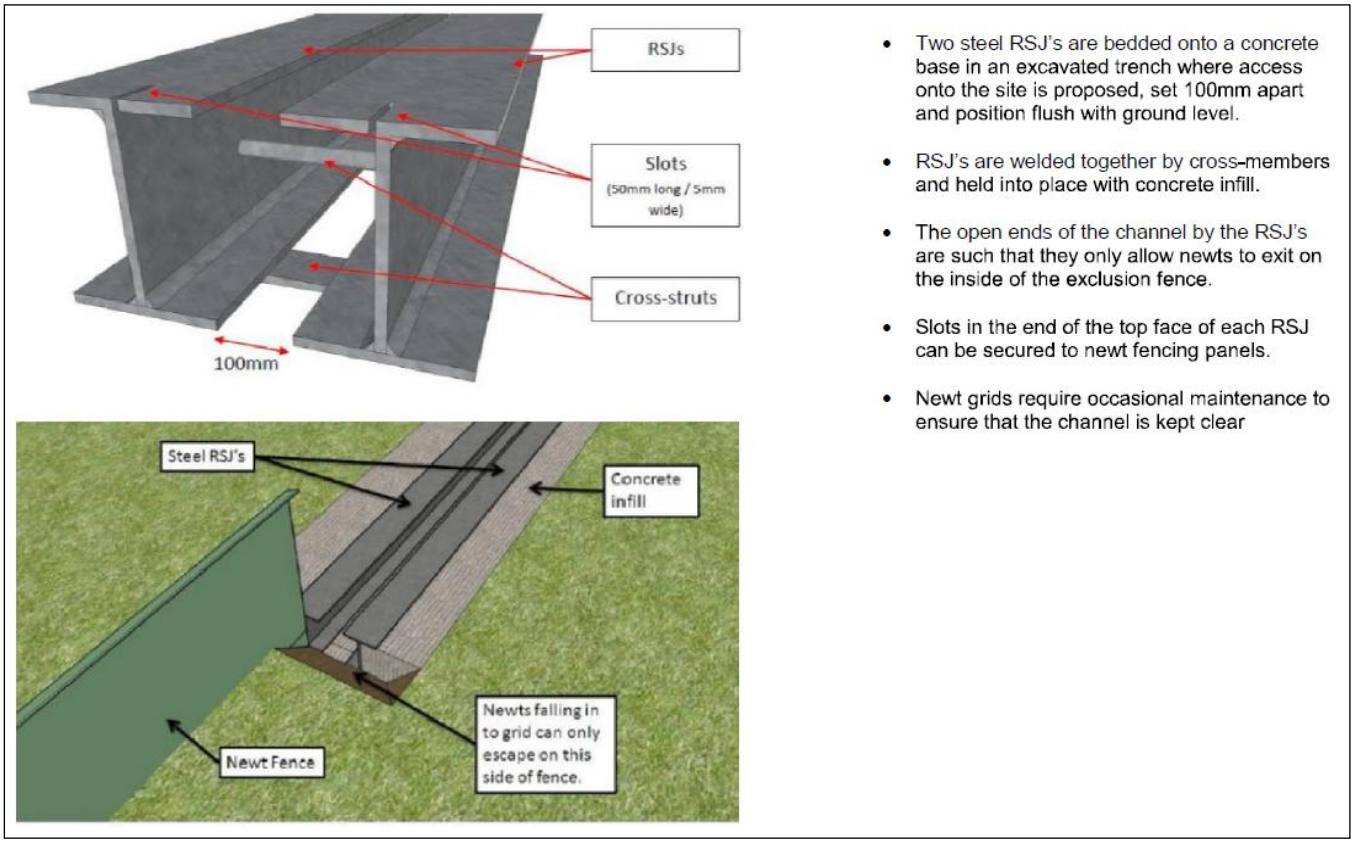


Figure 2 – *Newt grid site access illustration*

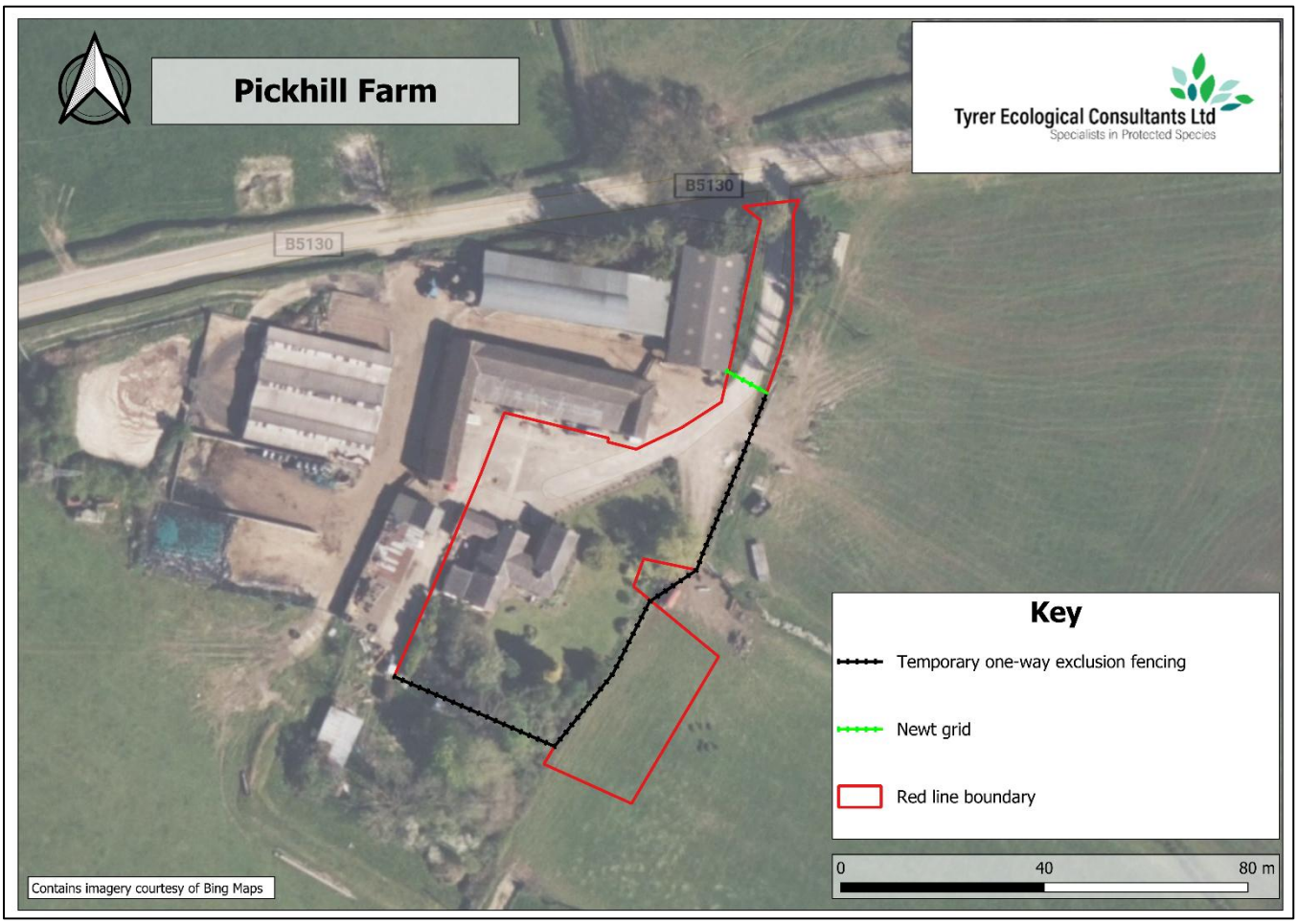


Figure 3 – *Location of temporary exclusion fencing and newt grid against site red line boundary*

During Works

- Any clearance works to areas of suitable terrestrial habitat / potential refugia as considered applicable by the Ecologist delivering the toolbox talk (such as brick / log piles, garden equipment, plant pots, etc) or loss of existing vegetative features (dense grass and tall ruderal herbs etc.), will only commence after a careful visual inspection (site walkover) and fingertip search has been carried out and the Ecologist has determined that no animals are present and is satisfied no animals are at risk.

- Any clearance works shall proceed from the north of the site extending to the south, to allow any faster-moving fauna that might be present to move out of the site into the wider woodland and fields to the south.

- Any animals found which are not protected species will be removed from harm's way and placed into suitable buffer zones at the discretion of an Ecologist, species pending and following correct protocols / biosecurity measures.

- The impact of works on adjacent habitats will be avoided by the clear demarcation of the works area. For the full duration, no works are to extend outside of the works area. No pallets, skips or otherwise are to be placed upon areas of dense vegetation and will instead only be placed on flat, cleared ground to avoid animals getting underneath.

- Work will be carried out adopting industry standard pollution prevention measures.

- Contingency / emergency plans will be drawn up to address chemical spillage, drainage, collision, etc.

- Machinery and materials to remain on bare ground and reasonable efforts must be made to avoid creating piles, or accumulated aggregates. Materials that require piling will be stored within areas of bare ground above ground level, using pallets to prevent amphibians from seeking shelter below.

- Any excavated materials or soils stored overnight will be searched prior to being used as infill.

- Where excavations / trenches are excavated it will be ensured that they are not left open overnight to avoid amphibians incidentally falling into them and becoming trapped. If trenches cannot be filled in after the working day for whatever reason, an escape mechanism such as wooden planks of 5cm wide as a minimum will be placed in them at a 45º diagonal angle, to serve as an escape mechanism.

- Excavations will be checked in the morning on a daily basis for the presence of any animals that may have fallen in during the night.

- All site operatives will maintain a watching brief throughout the work schedule and report any issues, anomalies or discrepancies to the Ecologist or responsible Wildlife Champion, as appointed.

- If an amphibian is found in the absence of supervision that cannot be identified, work must stop immediately, and contact will be made with the assigned licensed, qualified Ecologist.

- Any (common) newts, frogs, toads or small mammals (hedgehog etc.) found will be carefully caught by the Ecologist, or appointed individuals, placed (where capture is possible and humane) in a ventilated box using dampened gloved hands and released into suitable nearby like for like habitat that will be unaffected by the proposed works. Toads should not be touched using non-gloved hands as they secrete a toxin through their skin, and they should not be handled for longer than is necessary.

- Plastic netting, wire coils or similar hazardous features will not be left on the ground, to avoid entanglement. Aggregates/constructional materials should be stored on pallets as opposed to the storing on the ground.

- **In the event a suspected great crested newt is found work must cease**; the Ecologist will be made aware of the finding and will appraise the situation providing further advice. Site staff must be made aware that if **great crested newts** are found there is a correct procedure in place to follow, and failure to halt works may result in committing an offence.

- At no point should any person handle a **great crested newt** or suspected **great crested newt**. Unlicensed handling is illegal and untrained handling may cause the newt unnecessary stress and injury.

A Guide to Timings

Operation	Months												Notes
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Early understanding													
Toolbox Talk	Any time prior to works												Soon as all site workers are on site
Appoint Wildlife Champion	Following toolbox talk												-
Pre-works													
Buffer zone demarcation & signage	Pre-habitat manipulation & site walkover												To avoid encroaching in sensitive areas
Erection of newt exclusion fencing	Pre-habitat manipulation & hand search												To prevent GCN from accessing the site
Site Walkover by Ecologist			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Prior to habitat manipulation
										Recommended timeframe			Y

Identification Aids

Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)



Identification Tips

- Largest newt in the UK, up to 17cm in length, but juveniles are smaller,
- Black animal with rough, warty skin,
- Orange/yellow colouring on belly,
- Irregular black blotches on belly,
- Toes banded black/orange (yellow toenails),
- Male has a jagged crest on its back which sags when not in the water, and a separate smoother crest along tail, with white stripe on tail too.

DO	DON'T
If a GCN is discovered during works, **STOP ALL WORKS** in the area, inform your site manager and contact the project ecologist **IMMEDIATELY**.	Do not touch or handle a GCN they are very delicate – and it is against the law. Penalties for breaking the law include unlimited fines, imprisonment and seizure of equipment. **DO NOT RISK BREAKING THE LAW**

For any questions call Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd

Tel: 01704 875 781

Toolbox Talk Audit Form

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Site: Pickhill Farm		**Ecologist**:	**Licence no**:
I can confirm I have attended the formal Toolbox talk held by the named Ecologist. I confirm I have been made aware of the legislation in relation to the relevant protected species that may be in the locale. I confirm I will endeavour, to the best of my capability, to follow the measures outlined in this RAMS document to avoid and/or minimise harm and I know what to do if I encounter a protected species.			
Name:		*Signed:*	
Company:		*Date:*	
Name:		*Signed:*	
Company:		*Date:*	
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