



ARBOR VITAE

ECOLOGY • FORESTRY • LAND USE

GREAT CRESTED NEWT METHOD STATEMENT

**LAND AT PONTROBERT
PLANNING REF P/2016/1337**

FEBRUARY 2023

Arbor Vitae Environment Ltd, Lower Betton Farm, Cross Houses, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, SY5 6JD

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1 BACKGROUND

Arbor Vitae were commissioned in November 2016 to carry out a Phase One Habitat Survey of land at Pontrobert. Outline Planning Consent has now been granted for the construction of up to nine new dwellings.

The habitat survey identified a pond within 280 metres of the site which has 'average' suitability as a breeding site for great crested newts. Given the distance between the pond and the site, along with the sub-optimal suitability of the site for GCN, it was concluded that the risk to GCN was very low.

However, in order to remove and residual risk, it was recommended that a Method Statement be adopted incorporating Reasonable Avoidance Measures.

Condition 6 of the planning consent stipulates that a Method Statement be submitted prior to commencement of development.

2 METHOD STATEMENT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the method statement are to:

1. Avoid committing an offence under the legislation.
2. To ensure that favourable conservation status of great crested newts (GCN) is maintained.

3 RISK ASSESSMENT

Proximity of great crested newt populations

Given the distance of the pond from the site and sub-optimal habitat conditions of the site, the risk to GCN is negligible. The Reasonable Avoidance Measures outlined below are designed to remove any residual risk to individual GCN.

Potential risks to great crested newts during site clearance

If grazing was ceased for sufficient time for the site to develop rough grassland, which is a more favourable habitat, clearance of the surface vegetation and topsoil would potentially pose a risk to any individual GCN.

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Potential risks to great crested newts during construction

Amphibians may disperse across the site, particularly at night, and therefore there is a risk of accidental trapping of newts in excavations or injuring newts crossing the site. Stored materials can act as refuges or shelters for amphibians which can be harmed when materials are moved.

The installation of new drainage can result in amphibians becoming trapped in gullies and drains.

4 REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES

The aim of these avoidance measures is to eliminate as far as possible the risk of killing, injuring or disturbing GCN.

REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES

Induction of contractors

A toolbox talk will be given to all site personnel in order to make them aware of the possible presence of GCN, how to identify this species and the avoidance measures to be used on site. A paper copy of the avoidance measures will be retained on site together with the contact details of the GCN licensed ecologist.

Maintain short sward on development site

The grassland on the development site will be maintained in as low a height as possible by either grazing or mowing prior to ground works beginning.

Finger- tip search

No longer than one week prior to groundworks, a finger-tip search will be carried out by licensed and experience ecologists to ensure that no GCN are present within the site. Any possible objects which may conceal GCN such as large stones, logs or other materials will be inspected and removed from site. If any GCN are found, work should stop and NRW contacted for guidance on appropriate action. Works may only resume on receipt of the appropriate licence issued by NRW.

Timing and duration

Given the unlikelihood of hibernating GCN being present due to the unsuitability of the habitat, it is recommended that ground clearance works are undertaken during the hibernation period for GCN, namely November-February inclusive.

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However, all works should take place during daylight hours when GCN are unlikely to be moving around the area.

Site compound

The site compound should be situated on an area of hard-standing to avoid creating GCN resting places beneath stored materials etc.

All site materials should be stored on pallets or other raised objects to avoid creating resting places/refuges for GCN.

Any toxic or poisonous materials should be safely stored within a locked container.

Construction methods and special precautions

All excavations on site will be covered at night or ramps will be provided to allow amphibians to exit excavations. All excavations will be checked for amphibians each morning prior to the re-commencement of works.

All exposed new pipework and drains will be capped at night so as to avoid trapping amphibians.

All excavated materials/waste will be stored in skips or similar and not on the ground where it could be used as a refuge/resting area by amphibians. Alternatively, all waste will be removed from site daily.

All stored building materials that might be used as temporary resting places by amphibians will be stored off the ground on pallets or similar.

Drainage

All new gully pots will be installed with an ACO wildlife kerb stone or similar on the adjacent kerb in order to minimise the risk of trapping of amphibians in the long term.

Procedure if GCN found on site

If any GCN are found on site by the Ecological Clerk of Works or by contractors, work must stop immediately and NRW contacted for advice. Works may only resume on receipt of the appropriate licence issued by NRW.

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