



Wildlife at Etheridge's Farm Wingfield Road Syleham IP21 4LU



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This document was requested by the Cripps family to survey their site for any impact the building of an extension to the west end of their farmhouse would affect any wildlife in the area, predominately, Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*).

For Planning purposes this should be read in conjunction with the mid Suffolk planning documents DC/21/03642 – proposed extension Etheridge's Farm, Wingfield Road, Syleham IP21 4LU

Etheridge's Farm sits in the Parish of Syleham on the border of the neighbouring parish of Wingfield. (See Plan 1)

A site visit was carried out on the 23rd of August 2021 in the afternoon. The weather was dry and sunny with intermittent clouds.

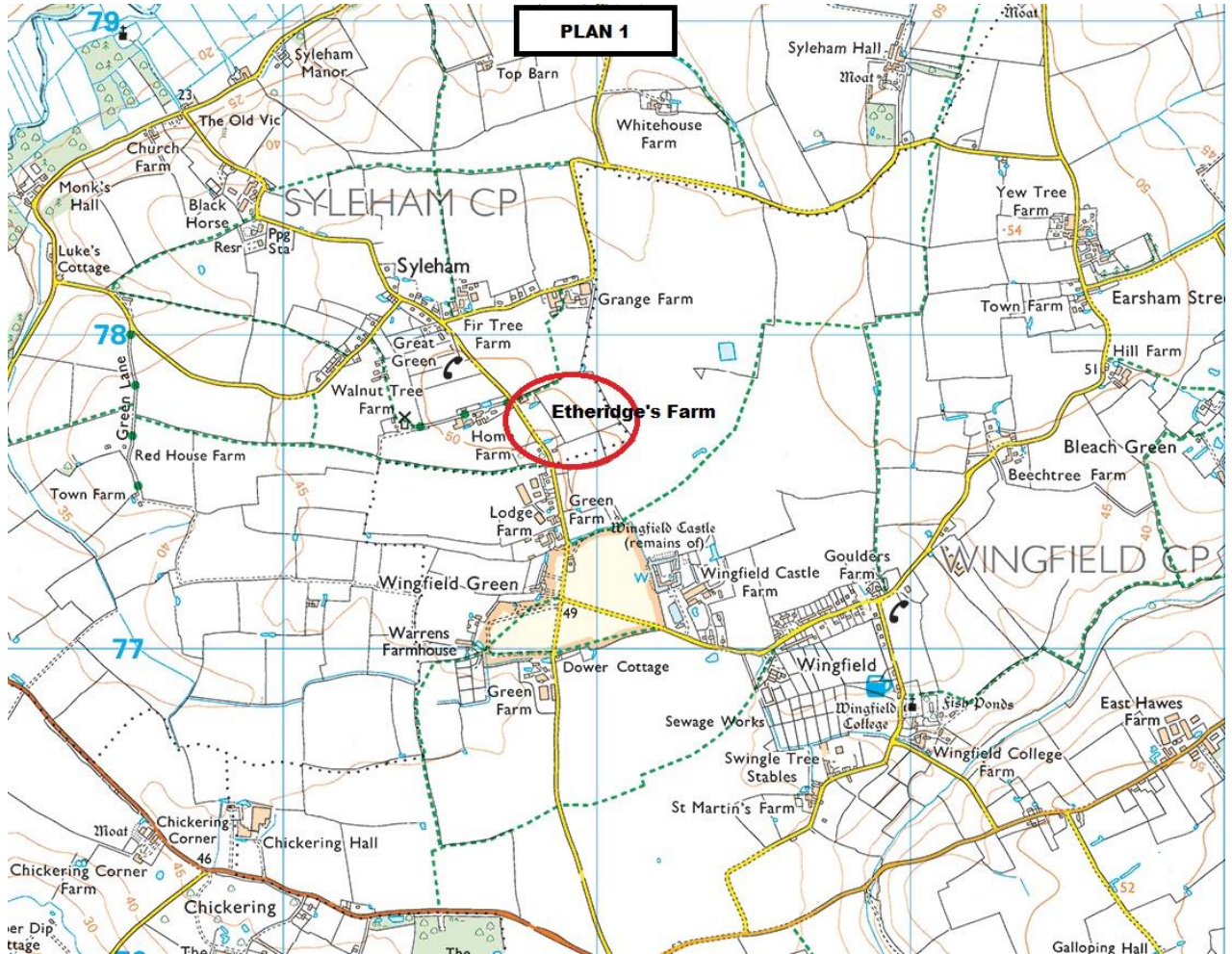
After a site visit and desktop study it was concluded that if careful considerations on how the works are carried out, the proposed extension is unlikely to have an impact on Great Crested Newts in the immediate area.

We recommend: -

- The building materials are stored to the North of the farmhouse on the hard standing area
- Any machinery enters and exits on the North side of the plot
- Any trenches or holes dug are carefully covered overnight and checked in the morning for wildlife
- Any trenches or holes that must be left uncovered have a ramp of sorts to assist wildlife.
- Stacks of building materials should be prior to and as being used for sheltering wildlife.

ETHERIDGES FARM LOCATION

Etheridge's Farm is located in the Waveney Valley in the parish of Syleham on the North Suffolk, South Norfolk border. OS reference TM216767. The farm sits on approximately 1 hectare, on the East side of Wingfield Road, Syleham. (See Plan 1)



HISTORY OF ETHERIDGES FARM

Etheridge's Farm is a traditional farmhouse running East / West with several outbuildings in the curtilage of the house. The house has been extended to the East in 1998 and an erection of a wall and a sunroom were added in 2003. (See Photo 1)



Photo 1

The gardens incorporate a lawned frontage with shrub and herbaceous borders. There is a pond to the Southeast of the house approximately 50 metres away. The plot is surrounded by hedging and semi-mature trees planted mostly by the owners. Beyond the garden area is a wildflower meadow which is also surrounded by hedges and some semi-mature trees. At the far end of the meadow, there is a small pond which is heavily overgrown and dries out in the summer months. (See Plan 2 and Photo 2)

To the Northwest of the house on the boundary is a ditch which is overgrown with rank native vegetation. At some points along this boundary the owners have planted some garden plants. (Photo sheet 4)

There is also a dry ditch to the east of the plot with trees all along it. Beyond this boundary is arable land not part of Etheridge's Farm. (See Plan 2)

Plan 2



Photo 2 *Standing between the Garden and Wildlife Meadow*



METHODOLOGY OF THIS REPORT

This document was requested by the Cripps family to survey their site for any impact the building of an extension to the west end of their farmhouse would affect any wildlife in the area, predominately, Great crested newts.

A desktop study and a site visit undertaken to establish which type of survey should be carried out.

In accordance with the Natural England Biodiversity Metric 3.0, it showed that a biodiversity method statement was required rather than an intensive study. (See below)

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.001 - 0.01 ha lost or damaged	0.005
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.001 - 0.01 ha lost or damaged	0.0005
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.005
Rapid risk assessment result:		GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY

Guidance on risk assessment result categories

"Green: offence highly unlikely" indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that it is highly unlikely any offence would be committed should the development proceed. Therefore, no licence would be required. However, bearing in mind that this is a generic assessment, you should carefully examine your specific plans to ensure this is a sound conclusion, and take precautions (see **Non-licensed avoidance measures tool**) to avoid offences if appropriate. It is likely that any residual offences would have negligible impact on conservation status, and enforcement of such breaches is unlikely to be in the public interest.

"Amber: offence likely" indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that an offence is likely. In this case, the best option is to redesign the development (location, layout, methods, duration or timing; see **Non-licensed avoidance measures tool**) so that the effects are minimised. You can do this and then re-run the risk assessment to test whether the result changes, or preferably run your own detailed site-specific assessment. Bear in mind that this generic risk assessment will over- or under-estimate some risks because it cannot take into account site-specific details, as mentioned in caveats above. In particular, the exact location of the development in relation to resting places, dispersal areas and barriers should be critically examined. Once you have amended the scheme you will need to decide if a licence is required; this should be done if on balance you believe an offence is reasonably likely.

"Red: offence highly likely" indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that an offence is highly likely. In this case, you should attempt to re-design the development location, layout, timing, methods or duration in order to avoid impacts (see **Non-licensed avoidance measures tool**), and re-run the risk assessment. You may also wish to run a site-specific risk assessment to check that this is a valid conclusion. If you cannot avoid the offences, then a licence should be applied for.

All the information collated from the owner, Defra Magic Maps, historical maps, Biodiversity metric 3.0 from Natural England, ICEEM set into a readable document.

Surveys and picture evidence referenced within the report and appendices noted.

Description and evaluation of each pond or waterway.

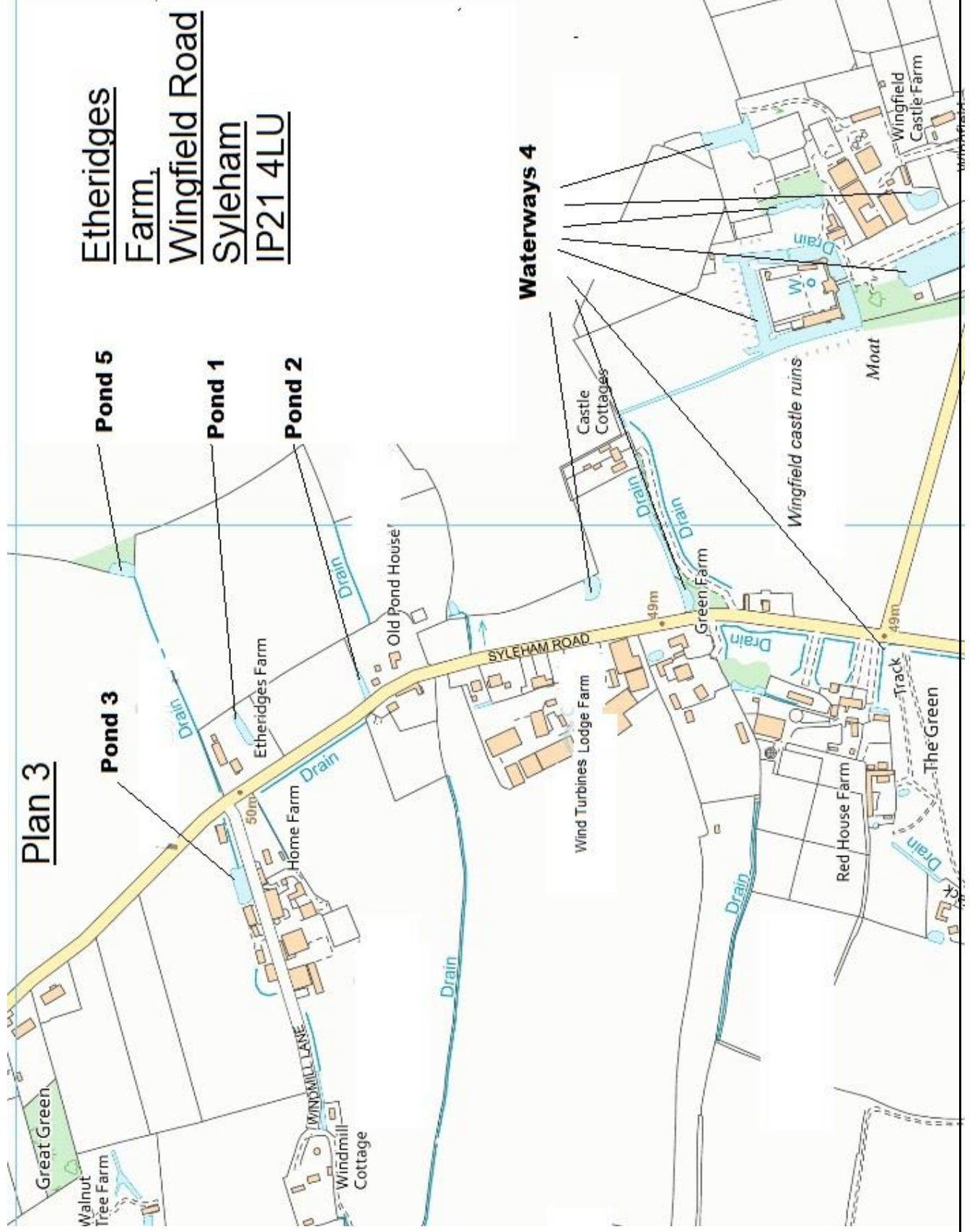
Summarised at the beginning of the report and conclusions at the end of the report.

ANAYSIS OF AREA

PONDS AND WATERWAYS AS IN PLAN 3 FROM THE POINT OF ETHERIDGES FARM ACCOMMODATION.

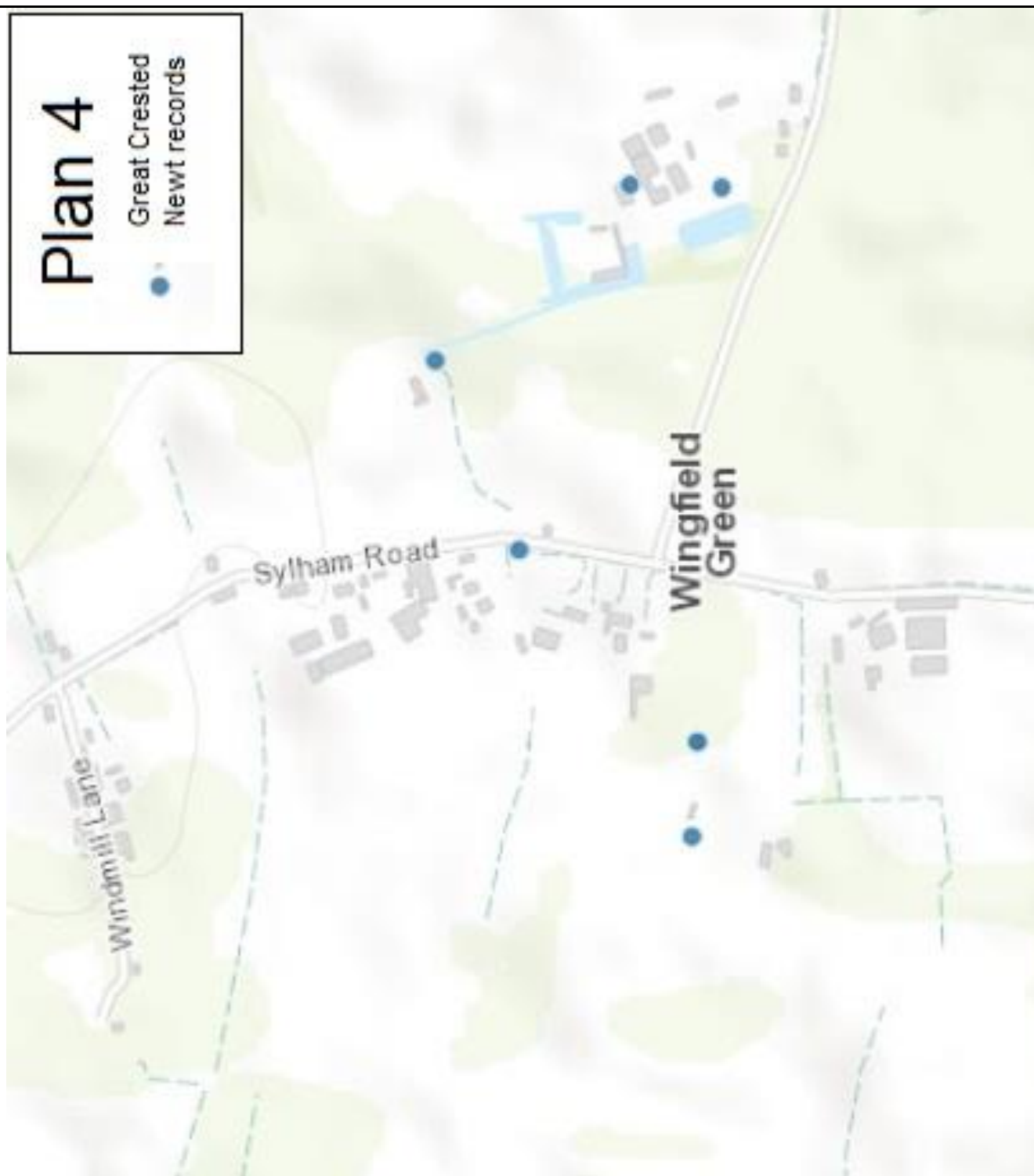
Pond or W/way	Location (approx.)	Usage Past and Present	Bio discharge	Suitability for wildlife	Comments
1	30-50m SE	Most likely to have been a drinking water pond for livestock and domestic unless there was a well. Mainly used for ornamental purposes and for wildlife.	No	Excellent	The pond is approximately 30m x 6m and has been partially netted to stop the ingress of Herons etc. The South side of the pond has a gradient through a shrub and herbaceous bed to the water's edge. At the West end of the pond has vertical shuttered sides to keep the soil from the water in which there are copious amount of Water Lily plants. (See Photo sheet 1). There is a small contained off area housing Koi carp which has a filtration system. (See Photo Sheet 1 and 2). There are some fish in the main pond. In the majority of the water's edge the banks have a steep gradient. There are no koi in the main pond. The main pond has a variety of marginal and oxygenating plants. The owners have informed us that the pond was cleansed within the last 10 years, and we observed a very healthy selection of wildlife. (See pages 13, 14 and 15). This pond is on the site of Etheridge's Farm.
2	150m S	Probably used for the extraction of clay for building purposes because of the shape of the pond. Summertime dry. Currently heavily overgrown and shaded by mainly Salix Caprea (Pussy Willow) and not used for any farming activities.	Not known	Poor	This pond is heavily silted and only holds water during rainy periods. The area is heavily shaded by native flora. This pond is on the site of Etheridge's Farm wildflower meadow. This area could be improved by cleansing and removal of some of the trees and shrubs on the South side. (See (Photo Sheet 2)

Pond or W/way	Location (approx.)	Usage Past and Present	Bio discharge	Suitability for wildlife	Comments
3	75m W across public highway	Probably used for a source of building materials such as clay lump or wattle and daub or if it was chalky, it could have used as a sweetener for farm soil. Presently used as a reservoir for the neighbouring Home Farm in case of fire.	Not Known	Medium/Poor	Partially shaded by trees and shrubs. It is usually heavily covered with floating duckweed. This Pond is on the neighboring property of Home Farm. Limited as regard to newts. (See Plan 3)
4	400-500m + S	Moat around Wingfield Castle dug for defensive purposes. Several ponds and waterways used as a source for building materials, livestock and domestic drinking water prior to mains water. Currently unlikely to be used for any farming activities.	Yes	Between Poor and Excellent	Several of the ponds have been recorded as excellent and as a breeding area for Great crested newts. (See Plan 3, 4 and 5) These ponds and waterways are in the village of Wingfield. For this report the ponds and waterways were not visited. (Plan 3)
5	125m E	Neighbours pond dug originally for clay a source for building materials, livestock, and domestic drinking water. Currently not used for any farming activities.	Not known	Poor-Medium	This pond is located withing a small coppice and partially shaded by trees. This pond was not visited as no permission was sought to access it. The pond is between arable fields of a neighboring property. (See Plan 3)



Plan 4

Great Crested
Newt records



Plan 5 NBA Great Crested Newt sightings

Species : Common Name

- 1. *Bufo bufo* : Common Toad 6
- 2. *Lissotriton vulgaris* : Smooth Newt 13
- 3. *Rana temporaria* : Common Frog 9
- 4. *Triturus cristatus* : Great Crested Newt 27

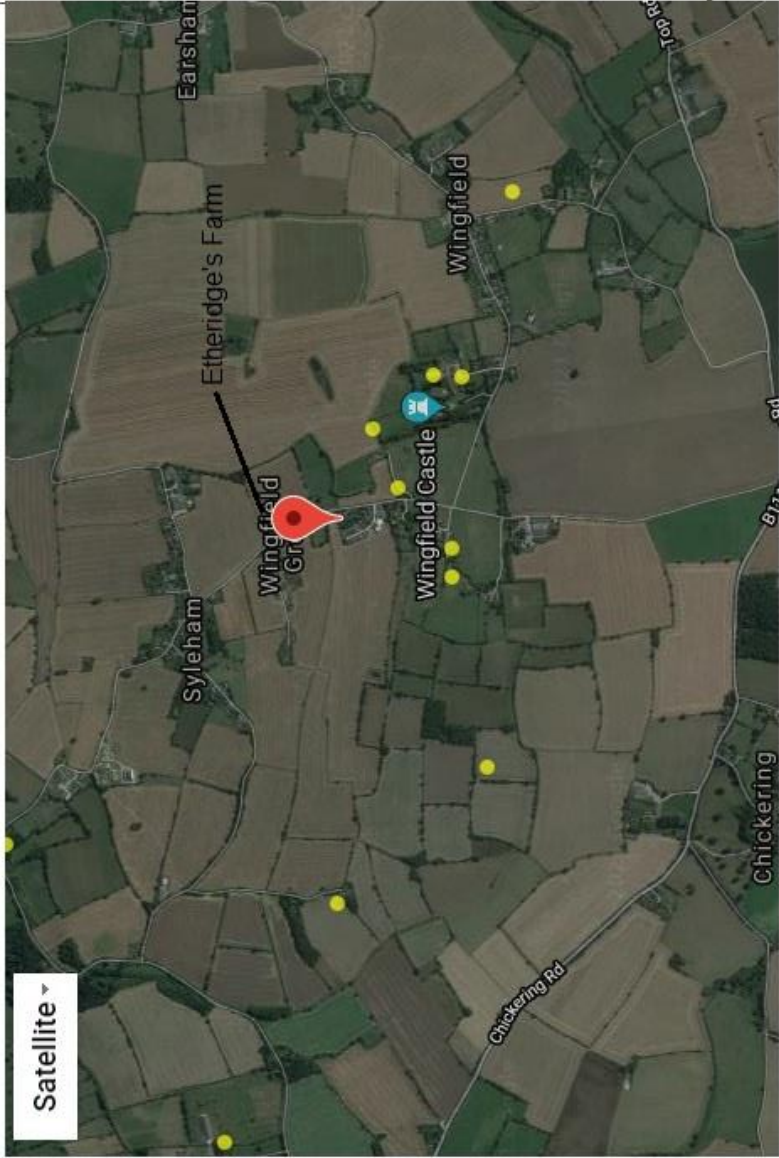


Photo sheet 1



Looking East showing vertical side and Water lilies



Koi Enclosure



Looking towards West showing vegetation and sloping bank

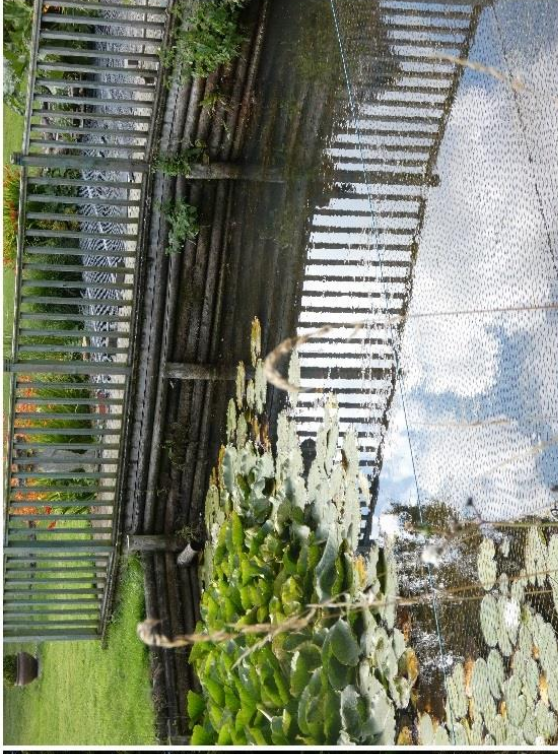


Showing sloping bank through vegetation to waters edge.

Photo Sheet 2



Looking Northwest towards the house.



Koi enclosure separate from the main pond.



East of the Farm buildings showing netting over the pond (Pond 1)



Looking South across the meadow to the overgrown pond Pond 2

WILDLIFE SPECIES OBSERVED IN THE AREA

The main objective of this report was to see whether building works would have an impact on great crested newts if they were present near the site. On the day of the visit to the site, no newts were seen.

Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) are native to the United Kingdom and are found throughout northern and central Europe. Populations have disappeared from many places in Europe, none being found in Ireland. GCN favour large ponds with lots of weed but no fish. They spend a lot of the day at the bottom of ponds or in the flora above and below the water. They feed on invertebrates and tadpoles. They are the largest of the newt species found in the United Kingdom reaching the length of 50-90mm. Their main predators are birds, foxes, rats, badgers, and hedgehogs. Their habitat is threatened by humans cultivating without empathy.

It is an offence in UK law to kill, capture, sell, or to disturb or destroy their habitat.

The owners of the site have bird feeders, bird baths and insect habitations that they have added to their garden areas. There were bird boxes placed around the farm too.

A summary of the information collected is listed below:-

Observed at the time of the survey.

Dragonflies	Common Blue Damselfly	Red Eyed Damselfly	Southern Hawker
	Brown Hawker	Broad Bodied Chaser	Large Red Damselfly
Butterflies	Red Admiral	Large White	Brimstone
Mammals	Common Shrew		
Gastropods	Water snail		
Birds	Swallow	House Martin	Collared Dove
Reptiles and Amphibians	None observed on the day		
Insects including Bees	Buff tailed bumblebees	Red tailed Bumblebees	Pond skaters

The area could be a good habitat for a wide range of species of all wildlife usually seen in the local area as the owners appear to be sympathetic to their individual needs. Pond 1 has the potential to be a good breeding site for Great crested newts and other aquatic creatures. (See Photo sheet 3 and 4)

FLORA AND FUNGI

There is a wide selection of Native British flora on the site but nothing that is particularly rare. Etheridge's Farm likes to ensure there is enough native flora to feed the butterflies and the bees which in return pollinate their plants.

The garden area is a mixture of shrub and herbaceous borders incorporating lawned areas and mature orchard specific and ornamental trees, mainly planted by the present owners. Beyond the garden area is a meadow which is used as a wildflower meadow with paths cut through.

No plant or fungi in the area has ever been declared a of species of Significant Scientific Interest. (See (See Photos 1 and 2 also Photo sheets 1,2 3 and 4)

Photo Sheet 3



Brown Hawker



Common Blue Damselfly



Broad Bodied Chaser



Large Red Damselfly

Photo sheet 4



Echinops ritro a good source of pollen for insects



Pond Skater with oxegenating weed



Native Water Lily



Damp ditch on the Northwest boundary

CONCLUSION

For Planning Purposes, this Biodiversity Statement is to be read in conjunction with Mid Suffolk and Babergh Planning Document DC/21/03642.

At Etheridge's Farm, biodiversity has always been prominent in the design of the land and the buildings on it. Wildlife has been welcomed not shut out.

It is known how activities could affect the land and the inhabitants of it, so the evolution of the site has gained wildlife through the empathy of its custodians.

Bird boxes and insect habitations can be found on the buildings around the site.

There were no signs of the Great crested newts at the time of our visit to Etheridge's Farm, however, the site has potential for a good habitat for both common and Great crested newts along with other aquatic wildlife. It maybe unlikely for the newt to have a thriving colony as there are fish which may eat the newt eggs and larvae.

The site could be enhanced by opening up and cleansing the pond beyond the meadow and leaving it without fish. This may encourage more wildlife to that area of the site.

The proposed extension works on the site will be at the furthest point away from the pond and it would appear that the site equipment will be used and stored on the further side of the Farm near the parking area and not near the pond area.

Currently the site is of short mown lawn and very unlikely to contain protected species.

The building works proposed are unlikely to impact on Great Crested newt activity in the area, however, it is recommended that whenever maintenance or building works are carried out at Etheridge's Farm they should ensure: -

- Habitats are checked for wildlife including amphibians before being moved.
- Wildlife corridors are left to allow the migration of creatures in the area.
- Hedges are never cut when birds are nesting.
- Mature trees are not cut down unless they are considered dangerous.
- Scrubland is left until shrubbery has grown up in another area nearby.
- Native British Flora is left to grow a metre out from the hedgerow to allow movement of small mammals and as a feed for butterfly etc.
- Holes or trenches dug on site are covered over night to prevent creatures from falling into them. They should also be checked in the morning to ensure creatures have not fallen in. If a hole must be left open it is advised to place a ramp to assist creatures to crawl out.
- Water is collected from roofs and low dishes are set around the site for wildlife and the watering of plants.
- Stacks of building materials should be checked for wildlife before being used.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Defra Magic Maps

<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Historical maps

<https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/place/7778>

Biodiversity metric 3.0 Natural England

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720>

ICEEM

<https://cieem.net/>

Froglife.org

<https://www.froglife.org/info-advice/amphibians-and-reptiles/great-crested-newt/>

Gov.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/wildlife-habitat-conservation>