



**Lindsell, Dunmow**

**Great Crested Newt & Amphibian  
Method Statement**

**On Behalf of KANE GOODCHILD  
PROPERTY LTD**

**This Method Statement is in relation to great crested newts and other amphibians. Refer to additional documents in support of this application for information with regards to other protected species. This document forms part of the works package for the site and should be issued and adhered to by all contractors and site personnel. Deviation from the methods and control measures as set out in this document could result in a breach of wildlife legislation and violation of planning policy.**

## Document Control

Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by
01	12 <sup>th</sup> August 2022	V1	Alex Jessop MSc	Sammi Smith MSc

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<b>Ecological Clerk of Works</b>	TBC	TBC	TBC

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## 1. Preface

### 1.1 Project Background

Practical Ecology Ltd was commissioned by KANE GOODCHILD PROPERTY LTD to produce a method statement to protect amphibians at Lindsell, Dunmow, herein referred to as the 'Site'. This came about after a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) by T4 Ecology<sup>1</sup> which noted that great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) were unlikely to be present onsite, although a number of ponds within 250m of the Site appear on maps and are not mentioned within the report. A method statement protecting amphibians was noted as a planning condition (Condition 10)<sup>2</sup>.

The PEA identified a small butyl lined pond onsite which did not provide suitable habitat for great crested newts. Other ponds noted within 250m include one assessed as having 'poor' suitability lying 100m north, and one isolated pond 110m southwest of the Site. Further ponds were noted within the production of this document.

This Method Statement would provide information on great crested newts as well as set out a precautionary method of works to mitigate for any low residual risk to this European Protected Species during the site clearance and throughout the construction phase of the development.

### 1.2 The Site

The Site is approximately 0.5ha (central OS grid reference TL 64032 27982, postcode CM6 3QL) and is located in Lindsell, Dunmow in Essex. The Site comprises of a bungalow dwelling with outbuildings and car breaking facilities. The surrounding landscape is comprised of the village of Lindsell and predominantly of arable land to the wider area, with areas of woodland, lines of trees and hedgerows.

### 1.3 Proposals

The proposed development of the Site includes demolishing the bungalow dwelling and one outbuilding to construct five residential dwellings.

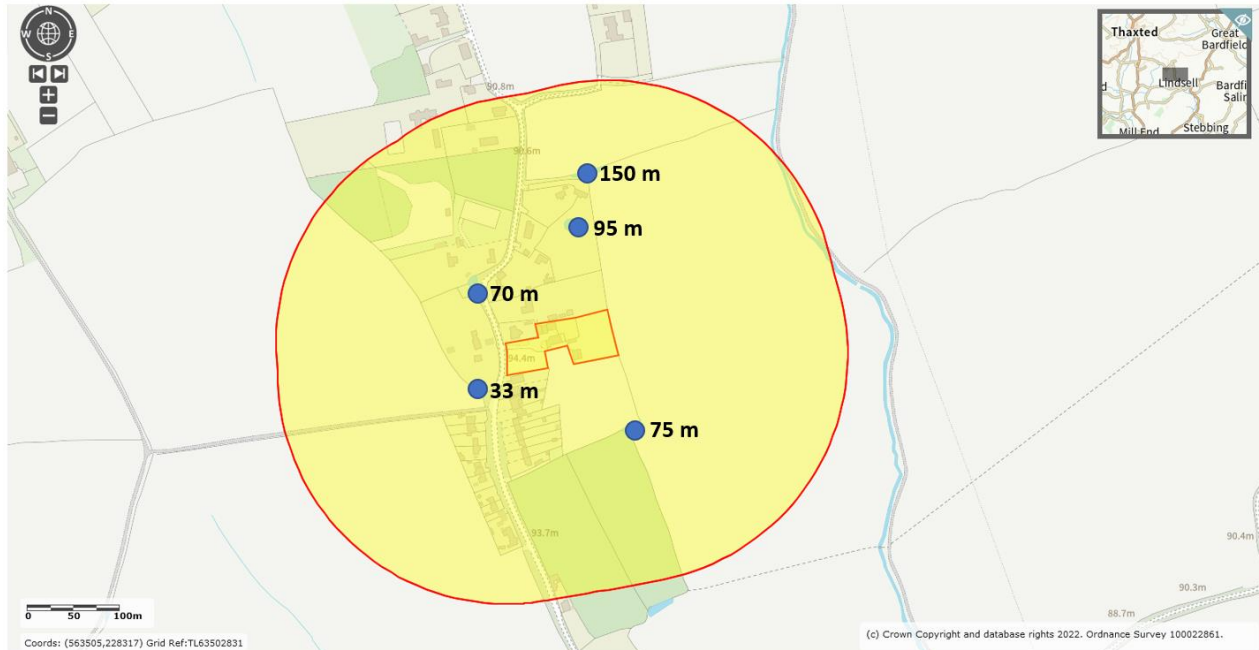
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<sup>1</sup> T4 Ecology Ltd, 2021, PEA Report for Lindsell, Dunow, Essex, January 2021

<sup>2</sup> Uttlesford District Council, 2021, Planning Permission Granted: Application Number: UTT/21/0690/OP

## 2.1 Habitat Assessment

By using Ordnance Survey maps and aerial images of the Site and surrounding land, five ponds, in addition to a small onsite pond, have been identified within 250m of the Site. This is an increase on those identified within the T4 Ecology Ltd report<sup>1</sup>. The location of the ponds in relation to the Site are illustrated in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1: Ponds Within 250m of the Site**

The pond 95m north of the Site is considered within the T4 Ecology Ltd report<sup>1</sup> and considered to have poor suitability for great crested newts when an HSI (habitat suitability index) assessment was undertaken in 2019; the pond was stocked with carp. A pond 110m southwest of the Site was located near an arable field (not shown in Figure 1) was considered not to have suitable habitat connecting it to Site.

The data search which is included within the T4 Ecology Ltd report<sup>1</sup> notes only two records of great crested newts, with records dating to 2002 and 1988. A record of a great crested newt submitted as part of a class licence return is located 980m northwest of the Site.

The low number of records for great crested newts in the area does not necessarily confirm lack of presence, as the species is frequently under recorded. While habitats within the development footprint of the Site are of negligible value for great crested newts, potential refugia habitat is present as a small log pile onsite and in areas adjacent to the Site, and there are three ponds are within 100 m where there is potential for great crested newts to be present.

Great crested newts can use suitable terrestrial habitat up to 500m from a breeding pond, although newts are likely to travel no more than 250m when suitable habitats for foraging and hibernation exist within this

radius of their pond and are likely to occur only within 100m of a pond when highly suitable habitat is present<sup>3</sup>.

Given the notably poor potential value of the onsite habitat, a non-licensed method statement is considered suitable mitigation to ensure that the development will not impact great crested newts.

## 2.2 Legislation

Great crested newts are primarily protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a great crested newt;
- Deliberately disturb great crested newts (affecting their ability to survive, breed or rear young) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young;
- Deliberately disturb great crested newts impairing their ability to hibernate or affecting their local distribution and abundance; and
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a great crested newt.

## 2.3 Great Crested Newt Ecology

Great crested newts breed in still water bodies such as ponds and ditches during spring and early summer. Newts spend a large proportion of their lives on land; adults leave breeding ponds from late May and return February-March while juveniles spend their first two to four years on land.

While on land great crested newts require refuge and foraging opportunities. Areas of woodland, hedgerows, scrub and rough (especially tussock rich) grassland provide suitable habitats. Newts also require places in which to hibernate such as underground crevices or tree and hedge roots and may hibernate from October to February.

Great crested newts will disperse through suitable terrestrial habitats in search of suitable breeding ponds. Generally, the terrestrial habitat of great crested newts can extend to include habitats up to 500m from a breeding pond (Natural England, 2001<sup>4</sup>). However, if suitable terrestrial habitat is present, great crested newts are more likely to stay within 250m of their breeding pond (Cresswell & Whitworth, 2004<sup>5</sup>).

## 2.4 Rationale as to why a Method Statement is appropriate

Natural England's Guidance Note: European Protected Species and the Planning Process ((WML-G24(01/11) Natural England's Application of the Three 'Tests' to Licence Applications) states that "Licence applications for a development should be regarded as the last available option where all other reasonable alternative ways of avoiding or minimising impacts on the protected species have been discounted and the

<sup>3</sup> Warren Cresswell and Rhiannon Whitworth (2004) Number 576, An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. English Nature

<sup>4</sup> Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, 2001

<sup>5</sup> Cresswell & Whitworth (2004) English Nature Research Report Number 576, An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. English Nature

action is nonetheless likely to result in an offence or offences under the species protection provisions of the Regulations.”

Additionally, as per the supporting text in Natural England’s Method Statement template for great crested newt mitigation licenses, “Natural England is concerned about the trend for increasingly risk-averse mitigation”.

For this project there is no risk of offences through development, so long as the proportional and reasonable mitigation as detailed in this document is properly undertaken. As such there is no legal need, and little benefit to great crested newt conservation, in undertaking works under a development license.

Natural England also state that “Even where there technically is an offence, such as the destruction of a small, distant area of resting place or habitat, it is arguable that impacts beyond the core area often have little or no tangible impact on the viability of populations. Mitigation in such circumstances is of questionable value in conservation terms”.

Given the poor onsite habitat, minimal number of records and evidence of great crested newts within the Site and surrounding 500m, the presence of the species onsite is unlikely, but possible given the species ecology and history of being under recorded.

As recommended by Natural England the exact location of the development in relation to resting places, dispersal areas and barriers have been critically examined and a detailed site-specific risk assessment is provided below.

Table 2 (below) provides a summary of the potential offences and the non-licenced avoidance measures to be employed.

**Table 2: Site Specific Risk Assessment**

Offences	Site Specific Risks	Risk (without mitigation)	Non-licenced Avoidance Measure	Residual Risk
<p><b>Deliberately or recklessly capture a great crested newt</b></p>	<p><b>If there are newts onsite, there is a risk that they would become entrapped in excavations during clearance.</b></p> <p><b>Justification:</b></p> <p>The onsite habitats are of minimal value for great crested newts and nearest ponds not considered to be suitable.</p> <p>It is therefore unlikely that great crested newts would reach the construction Site, though not impossible.</p>	<p>Unlikely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of Project Ecologist</li> <li>• Hand searches of the Site by ecologist</li> </ul>	<p>Highly unlikely</p>
<p><b>Disturbance including that which impairs the ability to survive, breed or reproduce, rear or nurture their young, hibernate, migrate or affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species.</b></p>	<p><b>If there are newts utilising the Site, clearance of the Site, and in particular refugia, presents a risk of disturbance.</b></p> <p><b>Justification:</b></p> <p>As given in the argument above, there is a low residual risk of great crested newts utilising the Site for foraging.</p>	<p>Unlikely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a Project Ecologist</li> <li>• Hand searches of the Site by ecologist</li> <li>• Supervised and seasonal clearance of refugia</li> </ul>	<p>Highly unlikely</p>



### 3 Method Statement

Non-licensed control measures detailed within Table 3 are to be implemented in full and signed off by an appropriately authorised person. The method statement is specifically designed to ensure the safety of great crested newts and reptiles during the construction and post development phases.

**Table 3: Non-licensed Control Measures for Works Affecting Great Crested Newts**

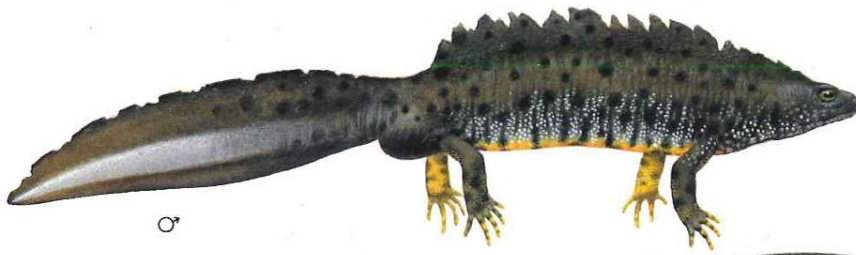
	Area or feature targeted	Item number	Details of control measures	Signed off (Give name and date)- To be completed after successful implementation of control measures
Pre-construction Phase	Possible refugia	1	<p>Any possible refugia such as plant pots or other stored materials on Site that could be used by great crested newts to be carefully lifted and removed from Site at any time prior to commencement of works.</p> <p>If at any point a great crested newt is identified during the removal of any possible refugia, then works will cease and Practical Ecology or another ecological consultant is to be notified immediately.</p>	
Construction Phase	Site preparation works	2	<p>Any open excavations should be left with an exit ramp and checked the following morning for wildlife that may have fallen in.</p> <p>All rubble generated is to be put into skips and removed off Site as it is generated.</p>	

	Area or feature targeted	Item number	Details of control measures	Signed off (Give name and date)- To be completed after successful implementation of control measures
Construction Phase	Materials	3	<p>Onsite storage of materials to be kept to a minimum. If materials are to be stored onsite, they should be stored on unsuitable habitats (e.g., bare ground, boards, or pallets) to ensure they do not provide suitable refuge for newts.</p> <p>Any unused building materials to be exported offsite ASAP (preferably the same day), to avoid creating suitable newt refuge habitat.</p>	

## 4 Timing of works

Proposed Activity	Comments	2020												2021											
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Key Works – timings permissible with regards to Great Crested Newts and reptiles																									
<b>Method Statement Timings</b>																									
<b>Pre-construction</b>																									
Removal of possible refugia removal																									
<b>Construction Phase</b>																									
Construction	Throughout construction																								
Material storage	Throughout construction																								

## Appendix 1- Great Crested Newt Identification Sheet

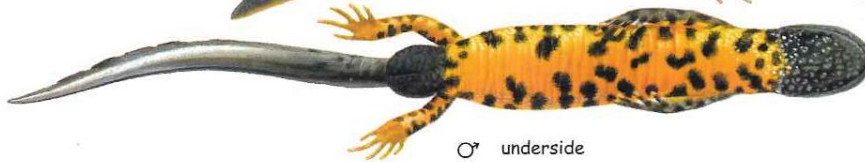


♂

Great crested newt  
*Triturus cristatus*



♀



♂ underside



♀



♂



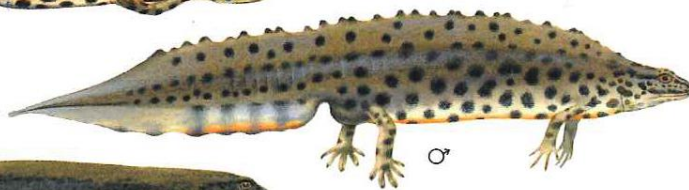
♂ underside

Palmate newt  
*Triturus helveticus*



♂ underside

Smooth newt  
*Triturus vulgaris*



♂



♀

## Appendix 2 - Record of Attendance

### Record of Attendance

To be signed by all staff to confirm they have read the Method Statement with regards to great crested newts

Name	Date	Signature
