

**Bluegates  
Bardfield End Green  
Thaxted  
Dunmow  
Essex  
CM6 3PY**

## **GCN Method Statement**

**UTT/23/2282/FUL Condition 3**

**On behalf of:**

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Dunmow  
Essex  
CM6 3PY**

**Prepared by:**

**Essex Mammal Surveys**

**December 2023**

## Summary

As part of a planning application involving an outbuilding at Bluegates, Bardfield End Green, Thaxted, Dunmow, Essex CM6 3PY, a site visit was conducted on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023 to determine whether the site had the potential to be occupied by protected species, which would be affected if any proposed development were to go ahead. At that time, the survey found no evidence of protected species at the site and the report concluded: ‘...therefore it is considered that the planning proposal for this site will not have a detrimental effect on the local bat population.’

However, planning condition 3 states: ‘Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, a Great Crested Newt Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This will contain precautionary mitigation measures and/or works to reduce potential impacts to Great Crested Newts during the construction phase. Thereafter, the measures and/or works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details and shall be maintained as such at all times.

*REASON: To conserve and enhance protected and priority species and habitats and allow the local planning authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), s40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (priority habitats & species) as updated by the Environment Act 2021, s17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, in accordance with the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan Policies GEN7, ENV8, and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).’*

## Method Statement

The survey site is bordered by short, maintained grass, gravel hardstanding, residential properties and an arable field. The management regime at the site means that there is no suitable terrestrial dispersal habitat for great crested newts.

Given that mowing management is undertaken across the site, that the proposed development is to be undertaken on a small part of the site bordered by unsuitable habitat for great crested newts, and that features such as ponds and boundary features are unaffected by the project, it is not considered that further presence/absence surveys would be an appropriate course of action for this site.

## Analysis of potential impact

Consent has been granted for the **The replacement of an existing outbuilding with a new studio building (non-residential), ancillary to the previously approved sui generis live/work unit in the adjacent barn. at Bluegates Farm Bardfield End Green Thaxted Essex CM6 3PY**

- No ponds or water bodies will be affected by the proposal
- The footprint area comprises an area of gravel hardstanding (see Photo 1) and it is not considered to offer potential terrestrial opportunities for amphibians

Taking the above into account, it is considered that the level of risk to the species is negligible. As a proportionate and reasonable response to the level of risk, appropriate precautionary actions for the construction phase have been identified and will be implemented as part of the proposal.



**Photo 1:** Western elevation. The proposal is to demolish and replace the building with a studio

## Precautionary actions

### Non-Licensed Precautionary Method Statement

- Prior to any works commencing, the site will be defined by poles connected by warning tape to prevent inadvertent incursion by vehicles;
- Given that no GCN habitat will be affected, it is considered improbable that GCNs will be encountered. Therefore, an ongoing watching brief by an Ecological Clerk of Works is not considered appropriate or proportionate in the context of this proposal;
- In line with the existing management regime for the site, the grass areas and boundaries should be maintained, kept short, mown and managed up to the point of construction commencing to prevent potential foraging/dispersal habitat developing through neglect;
- Access onto the site shall only be via the existing hardstanding areas and drive leading to the site;

- During the construction phase, vehicles, machinery and materials shall be stored on existing hardstanding areas;
- All materials to be stored above ground on pallets on existing areas of hardstanding;
- No parking shall be permitted on the grass area;
- Nonetheless, during the works, all contractors should be made aware of the levels of protection afforded to great crested newts. In the highly improbable event of a GCN being found, work must stop in the area and the ecologist should be contacted.

Essex Mammal Surveys were requested to compile a methodology to ensure compliance with biodiversity recommendations for great crested newts at this site. The identification of protected species is vital in the proposed development of a site to comply with existing legislation and also allows any work that may otherwise be detrimental to bats to be appropriately scheduled. John Dobson, a bat worker and trainer licensed by Natural England (Licence No. 2015-15258-CLS-CLS) and author of *Mammals of Essex* (Essex Field Club, 2014), compiled this document on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and received the David Bellamy Award for natural history in 2015.