



**Field House, Maggots End, Maggots End Road,
Manuden, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 1BJ**

Method Statement for great crested newts (GCNs)

In pursuance of the discharge of Condition 4

Planning ref. no. UTT/23/2743/HHF

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Uttlesford District Council granted planning approval in March 2024 for the following alterations at the property:

Proposed two bay cartshed, rear extension to existing garage and new pool building. Replacement balcony to existing dwelling, rear two storey and rear single storey extensions.

Condition 4 of the planning permission states the following:

Prior to the commencement of the works 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 Newt during the construction phase. The measures and/works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

There is a pond within the garden of the property, but as explained in the EclA addendum (Denny Ecology 2023), GCNs are unlikely to be present in the pond. If they are, none of the work will pose any more than a very low risk to the species and we predict no likely significant impacts on GCNs. However, as there are small areas of suitable GCN habitat within the proposed development impact zone, we recommend works proceed using appropriate precautionary working methods using non-licensable Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs). Precautionary working methods will be employed to ensure no GCNs are killed or injured, and that suitable mitigatory action is taken should one be discovered during work, providing legislative compliance. In particular, the areas of shrubs should be removed carefully by hand, under supervision of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) and following a finger-tip search, as this habitat provides some potential support GCNs.

These RAMs will also ensure other terrestrial priority species, such as hedgehogs and common toads, which may be present, will not be harmed.

Pre-clearance/construction mitigation across working areas under the supervision of an ECoW:

- **Shrub patches to be removed should either be pulled by hand or, if this isn't possible, be cut to no closer than 50mm above ground level using hand-held power tools to avoid disturbance to the ground. Cut woody vegetation should be stacked well away from the construction area or removed from site. At least some of the logs/brush should be retained as material for building habitat piles around the pond. These cut areas should then be left for at least two days before the roots can be dug out by hand using a fork or spade. However, care should be taken not to impact nesting birds at this time, which could be nesting in such features - the ECoW should take a view on whether this is likely.**
- **Open grassland habitats over 100mm high are unlikely to be impacted by the planned works. However, if they are, these areas should initially be cut using a hand-held strimmer, to a height of 100mm and left for at least two nights to allow any amphibians time to disperse. This should be followed within a week by a further cut to 50mm and maintained at this height, along with any other shorter grassland areas on the site, prior to work commencing.**
- **Amphibians and other small animals will shelter in cracks and under piles of rubble, debris and logs. It is unlikely any such habitat features will be impacted by the planned works. However, if they are, they should be subject to finger-tip search prior to careful removal by hand, if possible, or by careful machine clearance, if and where necessary. Any such piles should be removed in the period March-October when amphibians are active.**
- **Following cutting of vegetation and removal of rubble/debris piles, a finger-**

tip search should be made of the planned working area to ensure no great crested newts or reptiles are present prior to any stripping of vegetation to bare earth to enable grading works to commence. Any features found which are considered to present amphibian habitats (e.g. small mammal burrows and cracks and fissures in the ground or around concrete slabs and building footings) should be paid particular attention and marked on the ground. These areas should undergo a careful destructive search during the vegetation/ground stripping phase.

To avoid construction phase impacts, the following measures will be adopted:

- **As a precautionary measure, any building materials (such as stacks of bricks), which provide potential amphibian habitat, stored on site overnight should be stored in skips, bins, or on pallets lifted from the ground.**
- **To ensure animals do not become trapped overnight, any pits or trenches created during the site investigations, clearance and construction phases will either be covered over every night, or escape ramps will be placed in each one, made of wooden planks at least 20cm wide.**
- **High visibility tape and fencing will be used to ensure that contractors do not stray into areas outside of the development area and that habitats that are to be retained are not damaged. This is particularly the case for hedgerows, which present optimal amphibian habitat and should be protected with standard tree protection fencing.**
- **Pollution prevention measures will be adhered to, such as ensuring spill kits are present on site at all times; storage of fuel, oil and chemicals will be away from sensitive vegetation and ideally not stored on site at all; appropriate checks of machinery will be undertaken to ensure no leaks.**
- **Toolbox talk - Prior to works commencing at the site, the ecologist will conduct a toolbox talk to contractors working on the site, to explain how to identify great crested newts, their legal status, who to call if a newt is suspected to have been found on the site, and any mitigation measures that need to be adhered to during the works.**
- **Should great crested newts be found on the site, work should cease immediately, and an ecologist contacted for further advice.**