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Robin Ward
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16th September 2025

Dear Rob Ward

Re: Non-Licensed Method Statement for Great Crested Newts

Due to the potential for individual great crested newt to be present on site, the works will take place under a Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) for Great Crested Newt (GCN). A NLMS details a method of works to ensure the construction does not impact GCN, their breeding sites, or their resting places, all of which are protected by UK and European law.

The below NLMS details how impacts upon GCN will be minimised and/or avoided, thereby avoiding the need to obtain a licence for the development or complete mitigation processes such as translocation exercises.

It is proposed that the mitigation measures employed include the following measures (as appropriate):

- An *Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW)* will be appointed to provide a watching brief during all site works which have potential to impact great crested newt. The ECoW will be a suitably experienced ecologist who is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Managers (CIEEM). The ecologist will hold, or be an Accredited Agent under a great crested newt survey licence from Natural England. At

no point should any unlicensed worker handle a Great Crested Newt or a suspected Great Crested Newt. Unlicensed handling is illegal, and untrained handling may cause the newt unnecessary stress and injury.

- A *toolbox talk* will be delivered by the ECoW to the Site Manager and all site operatives prior to commencement of work within the site. The toolbox talk will detail the protection measures outlined within this NLMS required during construction and will induct contractors on the potential to encounter protected species such as reptiles, amphibians, birds and hedgehogs, where they may be found, what they look like, the legal protection afforded and best practice methodologies.
- **Timings:** All works which may impact great crested newt should be undertaken during the day and in suitable weather conditions (above 10°C, light breeze, and dry).
- **Hibernacula identification:** No existing hibernacula (deadwood, fallen trees, brash piles etc) with the potential to support hibernating GCN can be disturbed during the months of November to January. Hibernacula that fall within the designated works area will either need to be fenced off during this period or it will need to be identified, dismantled and moved off-site under ECoW supervision outside of these critical months to ensure that hibernating individuals are not disturbed. No potential hibernacula were identified on site during the habitat walkover survey.
- **Maintaining Unsuitable Habitats:** The grassland habitat on site will be maintained as mown short (sward <100mm) until construction commences to maintain the sub-optimal nature of these habitats for amphibians. Should the grassland or areas of vegetation grow to longer than 30cm in height, they will be cleared via a two-stage cut under supervision by a suitably qualified ecologist. This will involve strimming under the careful supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist during temperatures above 10°C. The strimming will be carried out in a two-stage cut, with the first cut to 15 centimetres and the second to ground level. This cut will take place in one direction from south to north, towards areas of suitable habitat in order to give any newts a chance to leave the area and disperse to the wider landscape.
- All arisings from the strimming and clearance will be immediately removed from the works area to prevent any newts sheltering within it.
- A buffer of at least 2m will be maintained around retained hedgerows to prevent any damage occurring in the event that great crested newts disperse through the site.
- **Fingertip search:** A fingertip search of the work area will be conducted by a GCN licensed ecologist immediately prior to works to ensure an absence of amphibians within the working area boundary. If any individuals are found, they will be removed by hand and placed in an area of suitable habitat within the wider site area.

- *Access routes:* Works will be restricted to the designated development area, and the impact of works on adjacent habitats avoided by the clear demarcation of the works area. A pre-agreed access plan should be produced prior to works commencing, outlining key access routes through site to aid in restricting vehicular movement across site.
- *Excavations:* Any excavations or trenches on site must be covered whilst works are paused (such as overnight), or a ramp should be provided in order to prevent animals from becoming trapped. Open excavations should be sloped to prevent entrapment.

In the unlikely event that great crested newt or common amphibians are found within the development area during the works, all works should be stopped and the project manager should contact an ecologist to supervise the removal and release of these individuals.

Overall, Darwin Ecology Ltd. assesses that any likely impacts to newts within the local area are low and that, due to the small amount of habitat removal, an offence is unlikely.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Senior Ecologist Neil Carter-Whitehead BSc MSc

