

Date: 20 March 2026
Application: 260611



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

WBC Ecology Newts

Development Management &
Compliance

P.O. Box 157

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Dear WBC Ecology Newts,

Full Planning Approval Consultation

Application Number: 260611

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Pearce

Site Address: 65 New Road, Ruscombe, Wokingham, RG10 9LN

Parish: Ruscombe

Grid Reference: Easting - 479546, Northing - 176774

Type of Development: Minor Dwellings (1-9)

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. dwelling following demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuilding.

Case Officer: James Fuller

Development Management has received the above application, and we require your comments on the proposal using the recommended memorandum below. The documents associated with this are available to view in NEC DM using the application number 260611. Alternatively, public documents are available to view on the Council's planning application search page: [Wokingham Borough Council Online Planning](#).

Please index your response into NEC DM against the application. If you are recommending conditions, you should give a reason with reference to relevant policies. A list of standard conditions can be requested from the case officer.

Your observations are required in respect of this application by **12 April 2026**.

Yours sincerely,
Development Management & Compliance

MEMORANDUM

From:	Berkshire District Licensing Officer
Service	WBC Ecology Newts
App No:	260611
Address:	65 New Road, Ruscombe, Wokingham, RG10 9LN.
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. dwelling following demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuilding.
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9)
Site Visit Made:	Yes

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
- ☐ No objection
- ☐ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☒ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
- ☐ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

Summary

- The development falls within the red impact risk zone for great crested newts. Impact risk zones have been derived through advanced modelling to create a species distribution map which predicts likely presence. In the red impact zone, there is highly suitable habitat and a high likelihood of great crested newt presence.
- There are 6 ponds within 500m of the development proposal. The closest of these is approximately 70m southeast of the site boundary. Please be aware that not all ponds are displayed in the image below.
- There are records spanning from 2010 to 2019 of great crested newts (GCN) in multiple locations within 500m of the site.



Figure above: Outline of the site (red) in the context of the surrounding landscape, including the Impact Risk Zones for GCN. Ponds are shown in light blue. A 250m buffer is shown around the site in green and a 500m buffer in blue. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

Ecological Information

The applicant has provided ecological information: 'Updated notes in response to Wokingham District Councils Ecology Officers comments regarding great crested newts in relation to planning consent at 65 New Road', Crossman Ecology, February 2026. Within this report it states:

- "The lack of connectivity to nearby ponds precludes the presence of great crested newts on site."
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A precautionary working method is suggested to mitigate impacts to GCN.

Conclusion

We are not satisfied that the applicant has adequately demonstrated that there will be no impact to great crested newts and/or their habitat as a result of the development being approved.

Multiple records of GCN are located within 500m of the site boundary dating as far back as 2010, and as recently as 2019. It is therefore likely that the ponds in this area form a well-established metapopulation, with regular movement between waterbodies. Due to the GCN presence in the landscape, and in the absence of eDNA testing on the pond 70m to the southeast of the site, GCN presence must be assumed here.

The site falls well within the typical dispersal distance for GCN from their breeding waterbodies (usual dispersal distance ranges from 250-500m from a breeding pond, but >1000m when colonising new ponds). While New Road may have some limited effect as a barrier to GCN movement, the species is capable of crossing areas of suboptimal habitat. The hedging along New Road is also described as a barrier to movement within the ecological information, however, hedgerows often aid in facilitating GCN dispersal and migration. The fencing that is also described as a limiting factor to GCN movement has large gaps that would allow a GCN to move through.

The suitability of the habitat on site may also increase as a result of demolition and construction activities. Newts may take shelter in rubble piles or beneath stored materials, and there is also a risk of individuals becoming trapped in open excavations.

Given the reasons described above and in line with the guidance from Natural England ([Great crested newts: District Level Licensing for development projects, Natural England, March 2021](#)), there is a reasonable likelihood that great crested newts will be impacted by the development proposals and therefore, at this time, the applicant has the following options:

1. Provide further information (eDNA of ponds within 500m with connectivity to the site) in line with Natural England's Standing Advice, which may be able to rule out impacts to great crested newts. Note that surveys for great crested newts are seasonally constrained and can only take place between April and June. If a positive result is returned, then a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) may be required with further population assessments necessary.

OR

2. Apply to join the Great Crested Newt District Licence Scheme. This does not require further survey work and can be done at any time. Please contact NatureSpace for a quote and further information.

If it is determined from further survey work that the likelihood of impacts to great crested newts is very low, then the precautionary working statement in the form of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs)/Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) strategy documents completed by the ecologist may be acceptable for the development.

However, if survey work confirms the presence of great crested newts, then it is likely that a licensing option will need to be considered (see below for more information).

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Please use this section to detail any conditions that are required to make this development acceptable in planning terms. All conditions should be accompanied by reasons.

Date:	08/04/2026	Signed:	NatureSpace
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