

Property: Land at Duck Egg Farm adj to Highfield Park Wokingham Berkshire RG2 9PP

Application: Proposed change of use of the land for the standing of 3 no static caravans for human habitation and ancillary works.

Planning Authority; Wokingham

Ref:

GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

1. Land in the vicinity of Highfield Park is identified by Natural England as not being suitable for Great Crested Newts in their national project that published its results in 2019. The project was funded by MHCLG. This is shown at **Tab 1**.
2. The same land in the vicinity of Highfield Park is identified by Wokingham Council as having a high probability of supporting populations of Great Crested Newts. This is shown at **Tab 2**.
3. The Wokingham impact risk zones appear to have been developed by an organisation known as Naturespace that relies upon volunteers for its information. This is shown at **Tab 3**.
4. Natural England identifies the ponds in the vicinity of Highfield Park. This is shown at **Tab 4**. The majority of these ponds do not exist (tinted red). There are ponds in the vicinity (tinted green). These were developed as balancing ponds to support development. Natural England further identifies that there have been no licences sought to enable Great Crested Newt surveys. This is also shown at **Tab 4**.
5. There has been detailed biological surveys of the area. This is shown at **Tab 5**. The surveys identify that the probability of Great Crested Newts being present is low.

6. There is a possibility that nature conservation organisations have sought to introduce the Great Crested Newt into the area, despite the available habitat being identifiable as not being suitable (lack of Great Crested Newts). This is increasingly common. There are substantial populations of Great Crested Newt (former Brick works) in areas of England, and it is known that these are often relocated by people licensed by Natural England.
7. Nature conservation data is often falsified by those involved in the decision-making process. This can be inadvertent. However, this means that there cannot be trust and confidence in the information that they make available.
8. The habitat on the land is suitable for Great Crested Newts that do not form part of a breeding population due to lack of suitable ponds. Any local population present is doomed to become extinct.

CONCLUSION

9. Finger tip searches of the land are to be undertaken prior to any development and in the unlikely event of Great Crested Newts being found a person holding a Natural England or District Newt Licence contacted to relocate any newts found.
10. There is comprehensive survey data available from DEFRA provided by Natural England and this identifies that the probability of Great Crested Newts being present is negligible, The proposed work to take account of great Crested Newts is in conformance with the **non-statutory** guidance published by Natural England and is proportionate. The guidance is shown at **Tab 6**.

Stuart H CARRUTHERS

January 2026

Natural England's Geoportal: England-wide data for great crested newts now available

[Natural England](#), 17 December 2019 - [Wildlife](#)

Jen Almond, Natural England's District Level Licensing Programme Manager, on the new data that will benefit great crested newts and developers alike.

Natural England has now [uploaded baseline survey data](#) on great crested newts (GCN) to make it available to all. The project – taking three years to complete – is the largest ever survey of its type for great crested newts across England, and was funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Why is the project important?

This England-wide survey data has enabled Natural England's district level licensing programme – without this data we couldn't have developed this significant new licensing option, an approach that better supports GCN populations, as well as reducing delays for developers.

We hope the data will bring other benefits: it is a fantastic resource coming out of the district level licensing programme, available to all. The data will mean that Local Environmental Record Centres and other groups such as the Wildlife Trusts can help better protect the species. Whilst only a sample of ponds were surveyed, the data will help inform conservation efforts. We hope making the data available will mean that GCN habitats can be better managed as well as linked-up on a landscape scale, helping the species to thrive.

The plan should monitor GCN and their habitats, including ponds, during and after development. It should include carrying out management works to habitats and additional survey work to check that mitigation measures are working as intended, followed by remedial work if needed.

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