

Holme Grange School
Heathlands Road
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 3AL

GCN Habitat Assessment

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<i>Report Quality Control Information</i>	
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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Michelle Riddy of Holme Grange School to undertake a Great Crested Newt (GCN) habitat assessment at Holme Grange School in Wokingham to accompany a full planning application submitted to Wokingham Borough Council for the proposed construction of a new multi-use games area (MUGA) with floodlights following removal of an existing tennis court, open-air swimming pool, horticultural and play areas and associated structures (Planning application ref: 250451).
- 1.1.2** The application site falls within a 'Red' GCN Habitat Zone and therefore the Council require a statement demonstrating how the proposals will safeguard against the risk of harming GCN. The aim of the GCN habitat assessment was to determine the suitability of the habitats for GCN on site and whether further survey and/or mitigation would be required for the proposals.
- 1.1.3** The survey methods comprise a desk-based study for GCN, site walkover survey, Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) and an impact risk assessment. There were no significant survey limitations.
- 1.1.4** The desk study revealed seven ponds (Ponds 1 to 7) within 250m and three ponds (Ponds 8 to 10) within 500m of the application site boundary that could potentially support breeding GCNs. The study revealed no ponds with known GCN presence within 500m from the site.
- 1.1.5** The application site is within the school grounds and comprises a swimming pool surrounded by hard standing and a woodland with a playground with bare ground and wood chip beneath the trees, i.e. terrestrial habitats of low to moderate value to GCN. The pond onsite at the school (Pond 2) and a pond to the south of the ditch offsite to the south (Pond 6) were assessed using the HSI and were calculated to be below average suitability for GCN. A second pond beyond the ditch to the south of the site (Pond 4) was calculated to have good suitability for newts and an eDNA test revealed a negative result for GCN being present in the pond. Pond 3 and Pond 10 were surveyed by Ethos Environmental Planning in 2025 and an eDNA test revealed a negative result for GCN being present in the ponds. Ponds 1, 5 and 7 were not accessible; however, previous surveys undertaken by ECOSA Ltd in 2019 revealed a negative result for GCNs in Pond 1 and

Pond 2, and ponds 5 and 7 were ruled out as suitable breeding sites because they had dried out. A pond surveyed by Ethos Environmental Planning in 2025 revealed the presence of GCN in a pond in 2025 approximately 790m south east to the site.

- 1.1.6** The development footprint is small and will impact an existing swimming pool, hard standing and a playground beneath the trees in a woodland, which was predominantly bare ground with some sparse wood chip (i.e. terrestrial habitats of low value to GCN).
- 1.1.7** The Natural England GCN Rapid Risk Assessment Tool was used to assess the risk of the development proposals adversely affecting GCN and the proposed works were considered highly unlikely to result in an offence.
- 1.1.8** In line with the guidance contained in the Tool and the impact assessment presented above, the nature and scale of the proposed development is unlikely to breach legislation protecting GCN or their habitats. However, in the absence of mitigation there is a low risk that individual GCNs could potentially be injured and/or killed during the construction activities if traversing across the woodland on site. To avoid this, it is recommended that reasonable avoidance measures to minimise the risk of killing individual GCNs are implemented before and during the construction phase – as set out in **Section 6.3** below.
- 1.1.9** This report will likely be valid for up to 18 months; after which point a professional ecologist may need to review the report's validity (CIEEM 2019b).

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Michelle Riddy of Holme Grange School to undertake a Great Crested Newt (GCN) habitat assessment at Holme Grange School in Wokingham to accompany a full planning application submitted to Wokingham Borough Council for the proposed construction of a new multi-use games area (MUGA) with floodlights following removal of an existing tennis court, open-air swimming pool, horticultural and play areas and associated structures (Planning application ref: 250451).

2.1.2 The application site falls within a 'Red' GCN Habitat Zone (see NatureSpace Impact Risk Maps) and therefore the Council require a statement demonstrating how the proposals will safeguard against the risk of harming GCN.

2.2 Site Location and Context

2.2.1 The development site is situated on the western edge of the school buildings at Holme Grange School (OS grid reference SU 82678 67197).

2.2.2 The Holme Grange School site is situated to the south of Wokingham and the school site is set within parkland habitat and established tree line and hedgerows. The wider land is predominantly farmland used for arable crops, pasture and vegetable growing. There are parcels of mostly coniferous plantation woodland over 500m to the south of the site. These farmland and woodland habitats provide suitable foraging and commuting habitats for bats in the local area

2.3 Report Objectives

2.3.1 For planning applications that are in a red or amber risk zone (from NatureSpace modelling for GCN district licensing) and within 50m of a known pond, a GCN Statement is required to either demonstrate that harm is unlikely (e.g. through non-licensable measures) or that the risk of harm needs to be mitigated through licensable measures (e.g. district licensing).

3 LEGISLATION AND POLICY

3.1 Relevant Legislation

3.1.1 In England and Wales, GCNs found in the wild are fully protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); the regulations are commonly referred to as the Habitat Regulations and hereafter referred to as such. The Habitat Regulations refer to European Protected Species (EPS) and the GCN is an EPS. Although the UK left the European Union on the 31st January 2020 and is therefore no longer tied to European legislation, the Habitat Regulations have been retained in their current format.

3.1.2 The legal framework underpinned by the WCA and Habitat Regulations makes these specific actions an offence as follows:

- Deliberately kill, injure, capture or take a wild GCN;
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb GCNs; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate, or to significantly affect local distribution or abundance;
- Damage or destroy a place used by a GCN for breeding or resting;
and
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place used by a GCN for shelter or protection.

3.1.3 The GCN is listed as a species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity (a.k.a. priority species) in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

3.2 Planning Policy

3.2.1 The biodiversity duty imposed through the Environment Act 2021 states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) must consider what action they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. Government planning policy, such as the ODPM Circular 06/2005, requires LPAs to account for

the conservation of protected species when considering and determining planning applications.

- 3.2.2** The ODPM Circular 06/2005 states that *'the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat.'* This policy means that in instances where there is a reasonable likelihood of GCNs being present and affected by a development, surveys must be undertaken to inform a mitigation strategy to be agreed prior to granting planning permission.

3.3 Mitigation Licensing

- 3.3.1** The government's statutory nature conservation body, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. An EPS mitigation licence can be issued if the following three tests derived from Regulation 55 have been satisfied:

- (2)(e) – the derogation is for the purposes of *'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.'*
- (9)(a) – there is *'no satisfactory alternative'* to the derogation; and
- (9)(b) – *'the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.'*

- 3.3.2** LPAs have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3)(e) of the Habitat Regulations to consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by planning proposals affecting EPS before granting planning permission. If an EPS mitigation licence is necessary, a licence can be sought once all the necessary planning consents have been granted. Natural England aims to issue a decision on licence applications within 30 working days of submission.

- 3.3.3** The District Level Licensing (DDL) scheme is an alternative approach to traditional mitigation licensing which authorises developments that adversely affect GCNs. Instead of relying solely on site-specific mitigation and

compensation, a 'Conservation Payment' can be made to fund a net increase in GCN habitat elsewhere. Please refer to the NatureSpace guidance for more details.

4 SURVEY METHODS

4.1 Desk Study

- 4.1.1 A desk-based study for Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) (GCN) was undertaken to collate and review existing information about the site and the surrounding land. The study utilised the following open access resources:
- Google Earth and OS maps – satellite imagery and maps were used to identify potential breeding ponds and terrestrial habitat connectivity;
 - MAGIC – examined to locate granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences;
 - A land registry search was undertaken to identify the landowner of ponds within 250m in order to make contact where necessary, and
 - Pre-existing ecology reports – any available reports were obtained from the client or relevant planning portal to provide background information for the site.

4.2 Field Survey

- 4.2.1 The application site was visually assessed for its potential to support GCNs. A Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) (Oldham *et al.* 2000) assessment and a sample of the pond water was taken and sent off for eDNA testing (SureScreen Scientifics) for the farmland pond (Pond 4) on the 20th June 2025 by Vicky Potts MCIEEM, registered under the Natural England GCN Survey Class Licence CL08 and Hannah McEwen an assisting ecologist. A HSI assessment for a second farmland pond (Pond 6) was undertaken on 22nd February 2025 by Vicky Potts.
- 4.2.2 GCNs require standing water for breeding and favour small to medium-sized ponds with surface areas ranging from 50m² to 250m². For larval development to take place and young newts to emerge from ponds, ponds must hold water until the end of August (Langton *et.al.* 2001).
- 4.2.3 GCNs require terrestrial habitats for feeding, movement from pond to pond and for hibernation. Habitats of greatest value to GCNs are those listed below that provide invertebrate prey and provide cover such as under logs or stones:
- Woodland;
 - Rough grassland;

- Scrub;
- Hedgerows; and
- Waste ground.

4.2.4 Terrestrial habitats of highest value to GCNs are those rich in invertebrate prey, which provide cover during periods of cold and dry weather, such as under logs or stones for example. Open habitats, such as closely mown grassland, do not provide important habitats for feeding or shelter but can be traversed by GCNs moving between more preferable habitats (English Nature 2001; Langton *et. al.* 2001).

4.3 Risk Assessment

4.3.1 A rapid risk assessment of the impacts to GCN was carried out using the Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment Tool. The Tool takes into account the impacts of the development on GCN and determines the likelihood of effects on populations in the absence of mitigation.

4.4 Survey Constraints

4.4.1 There were no significant survey limitations because GCN habitat assessments and a HSI for GCN can be carried out at any time of year under any weather conditions and the application site was fully accessible. The eDNA sampling was undertaken during the time of year which is acceptable by Natural England i.e. samples must be collected between April 15th and June 30th.

4.4.2 Pond 6 was not accessible during the survey undertaken in June 2025 due to dense vegetation restricting access, however it was surveyed on 22nd February 2025 by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy during a walkover survey, and therefore details from that visit was used for this report.

4.4.3 Access to Pond 1, 5 and 7 was not possible during the survey and therefore previous survey results have been used for the purpose of the report.

4.4.4 This report will likely be valid for up to 18 months; after which point a professional ecologist may need to review the report's validity (CIEEM 2019b).

5 SURVEY FINDINGS

5.1 Desk Study

- 5.1.1** The data search undertaken by TVERC in 2023 for a previous project on the school grounds revealed no GCN records for the application site. The GCN records returned inside a 1km radius of the application site are detailed in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. GCN records within a 1km radius of the application site (Source: TVERC).

Location	Grid reference	No. of records	Types of record	Most recent record	Distance from site boundary (m)
Locks House Pond	SU806712	1	Field record	08/11/2005	885 NE
Green Drive Pond	SU820679	2	Field record	02/06/2014	983 NW

- 5.1.2** No European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences have been granted for GCN within a 1km radius of the application site. However, there have been two GCN Class Survey Licence Returns within a 1km radius of the site, as detailed in **Table 2** below.

Table 2. GCN Survey Class Licence Returns within a 1km radius of the site boundary (Source: DEFRA).

Grid reference	Survey date	GCN presence	Distance (m)
SU83386776	20/06/2017	Confirmed	983 NW

- 5.1.3** OS mapping on MAGIC revealed that there are ten waterbodies that could potentially support breeding GCNs: 35m west (Pond 1); 153m northwest (Pond 2), 250m northeast (Pond 3); 215m southwest (Pond 4); 175m south (Pond 5); 203m southwest (Pond 6); 178m south (Pond 7); and 270m

southwest (Pond 8), 262m south (Pond 9) and 294m northeast (Pond 10) – as illustrated in **Figure 1** below.

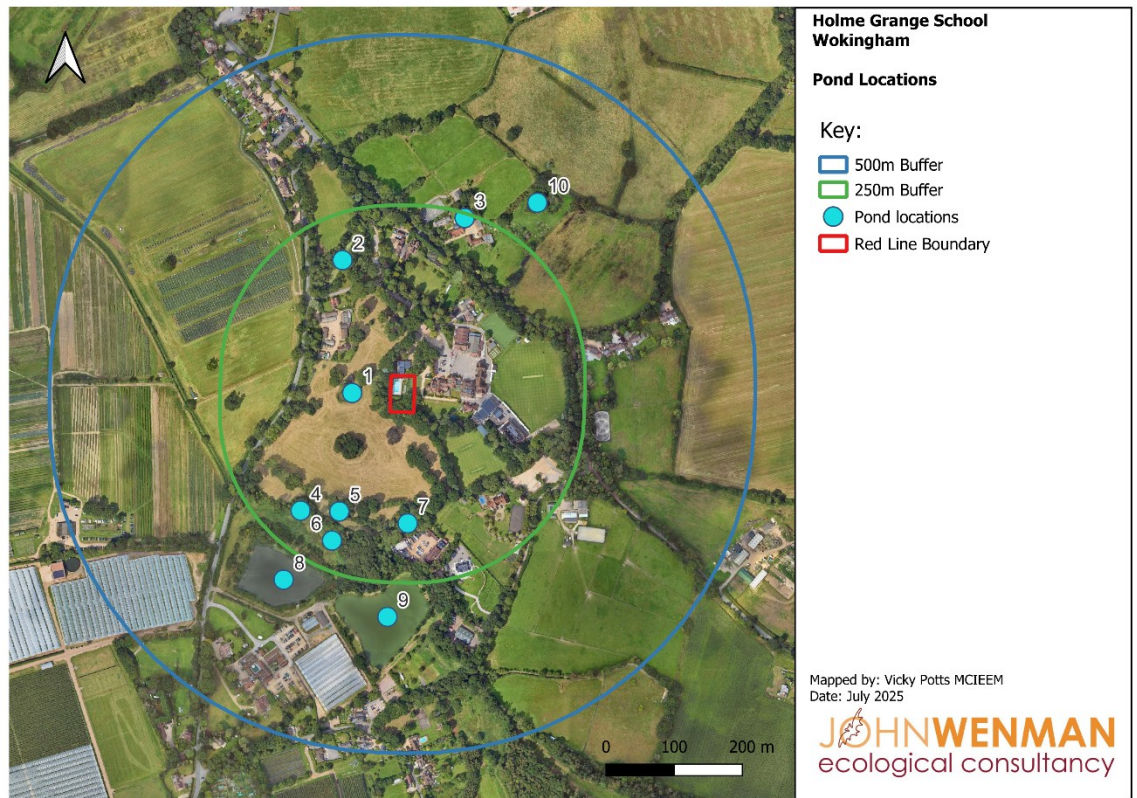


Figure 1. Pond Location Plan.

5.1.4 Previous surveys undertaken by ECOSA Ltd in 2019 as part of the South Wokingham Road SDL works revealed a negative result for GCNs in Pond 1 and Pond 2, and ponds 5 and 7 were ruled out as potential breeding ponds because they had dried out. Ponds 8 and 9, which are large fishing reservoirs, were also ruled out and were considered not suitable for GCNs - refer to **Figure 2** below.

5.1.5 Pond 3 and Pond 10 were surveyed by Ethos Environmental Planning in 2025 and an eDNA test revealed a negative result for GCN being present in the two ponds. A further pond surveyed by Ethos Environmental Planning in 2025 revealed presence of GCN in a pond in 2025 approximately 790 m southeast to the site (Grid ref: SU 83412 66850) – refer to **Figure 2** below.

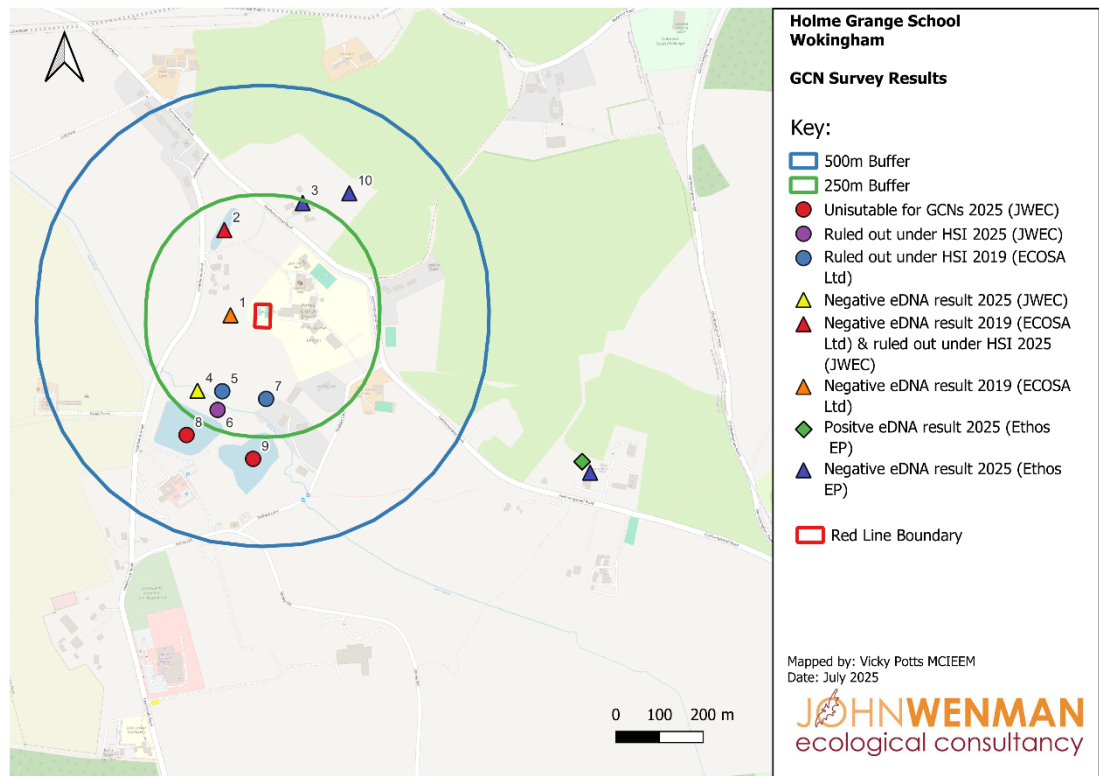


Figure 2. GCN Record Plan.

5.1.6 The application site falls within a 'Red' GCN Habitat Zone (see NatureSpace Impact Risk Maps) – these zones contain suitable habitat and are the most important areas for GCN (except areas that are nationally important sites designated for GCNs).

5.2 Field Survey

5.2.1 The findings of the visual inspection of the development site and the ponds surveyed: Pond 2, which was within the school site, and Ponds 4 and 6, which were off site, are described with photographs as follows:

5.2.2 The application site was part of the school grounds with a woodland dominated by a shrub layer of Portuguese laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*) and mature oak trees (*Quercus robur*) in the canopy. Beneath the trees was a school playground with some sparse wood chip and the edges of the woodland towards the west of the site comprised of bare ground (**Photographs 1 – 3**). The rest of the application site comprised a swimming pool surrounded by hard standing and a small patch of amenity grassland (**Photographs 4 & 5**).



Photograph 1. Woodland on the application site used as a playground.



Photograph 2. Woodland on the application site used as a playground..



Photograph 3. Bare ground beneath the trees at the western side of the site..



Photograph 4. Swimming pool surrounded by hard standing on the application site. .



Photograph 5. Small patch of grassland around the eastern side of the swimming pool.

- 5.2.3** Pond 2 was within the school grounds 153m to the northwest of the application site (**Photograph 6**). The pond was almost dried out at the time of the survey. The pond was surrounded by managed amenity grassland, trees and shrubs, and an access road onto the school was present to the south (**Photograph 7**).



Photograph 6. Pond 2 drying out viewed from the south.



Photograph 7. Amenity grassland to the east of the pond.

- 5.2.4** Pond 4 was present 215m to the south of the site and a ditch was present between the application site and the pond (**Photographs 8 & 9**). The pond was surrounded by ruderal vegetation dominated with thistle and nettle (*Urtica dioica*).



Photograph 8. Pond 4



Photograph 9. Tall ruderal vegetation surrounding the pond.

- 5.2.5** Pond 6 was surveyed on 22nd February 2025 by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy which was situated 203 m to the south of the application site (**Photograph 10**). The pond had a pumping mechanism present with constant moving water present.



Photograph 10. Pond 6 with a pumping mechanism present.

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI)

5.2.6 A HSI assessment for Ponds 2 and 6 produced a score between 0.5 and 0.59 and consequently categorised the ponds as below average suitability for GCN, and Pond 4 produced a score between 0.7 and 0.79 consequently categorised the pond as good suitability for GCN – see **Tables 1 and 3** below.

Table 1. Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) for the school pond – Pond 2.

Category	Description	SI Score
SI ₁ Location	Zone A (optimal)	1
SI ₂ Pond area	Pond with approximately 600m ² .	1
SI ₃ Pond drying	Almost dried out at time of survey and known to dry out annually.	0.1
SI ₄ Water quality	Low invertebrate diversity	0.33
SI ₅ Shade	80% shade (boundary shrubs / trees)	0.6
SI ₆ Fowl	Waterfowl present and no submerged vegetation.	0.67
SI ₇ Fish	No records of fish and unlikely as it dries annually.	1
SI ₈ Pond count	Ten waterbodies within 500 m	1
SI ₉ Terrestrial habitat	Amenity grassland with shrubs, tall ruderal vegetation and trees (habitat with good structure)	1
SI ₁₀ Macrophytes	10% estimate of macrophyte cover – some iris present on the edge of the pond where water dried out flag iris present otherwise no submergent or emergent vegetation and covered in duckweed.	0.3
HSI Score		0.59

Table 2. Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) for Pond 4 at Holme Grange Craft Village.

Category	Description	SI Score
SI ₁ Location	Zone A (optimal)	1
SI ₂ Pond area	Pond with a radius of 3m and approximately 40m ² .	0.1
SI ₃ Pond drying	Unlined rural pond. Never dries.	0.9
SI ₄ Water quality	Moderate invertebrate diversity	0.67
SI ₅ Shade	50% shade (boundary shrubs / trees)	1
SI ₆ Fowl	Waterfowl absent (pond too small)	1
SI ₇ Fish	Not evident.	1
SI ₈ Pond count	Ten waterbodies within 500 m	1
SI ₉ Terrestrial habitat	Unmanaged grassland and tall ruderal vegetation and shrubs and trees (habitat with good structure)	1
SI ₁₀ Macrophytes	80% estimate of macrophyte cover – floating emergent plants present on the water	1
HSI Score		0.76

Table 3. Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) for Pond 6 at Holme Grange Craft Village.

Category	Description	SI Score
SI ₁ Location	Zone A (optimal)	1
SI ₂ Pond area	Pond approximately 75m ² .	0.1

SI ₃ Pond drying	Unlined rural pond. Never dries.	0.9
SI ₄ Water quality	Moderate invertebrate diversity	0.33
SI ₅ Shade	50% shade (boundary shrubs / trees)	1
SI ₆ Fowl	Waterfowl absent (pond too small)	0.67
SI ₇ Fish	Not evident.	0.67
SI ₈ Pond count	Ten waterbodies within 500 m	1
SI ₉ Terrestrial habitat	Tall ruderal vegetation and shrubs and trees (habitat with good structure)	1
SI ₁₀ Macrophytes	10% estimate of macrophyte cover – no floating plants but some bulrush and common reed present.	0.4
HSI Score		0.59

5.3 Risk Assessment

5.3.1 An eDNA sample of Pond 4 off site came back with a negative result for the presence of GCNs. Based on the assumption that none of the ponds within 250 m support breeding GCNs but one pond greater than 250 m from the application site does support GCN the Natural England GCN Rapid Risk Assessment Tool was used to assess the risk of the development proposals adversely affecting GCN. The development footprint is less than 0.5ha and the Tool indicates that the loss of or damage to 0.1ha – 0.5ha of land >250m from a breeding pond is highly unlikely to result in an offence – see **Figure 3** below.

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.005
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0.005
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

Guidance on risk assessment result categories

"Green: offence highly unlikely" indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that it is highly unlikely any offence would be committed should the development proceed. Therefore, no licence would be required. However, bearing in mind that this is a generic assessment, you should carefully examine your specific plans to ensure this is a sound conclusion, and take precautions (see **Non-licensed avoidance measures tool**) to avoid offences if appropriate. It is likely that any residual offences would have negligible impact on conservation status, and enforcement of such breaches is unlikely to be in the public interest.

Figure 3. Natural England GCN Rapid Risk Assessment Tool.

6 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Assessment of Habitat Suitability

- 6.1.1** The desk study revealed no ponds with confirmed GCN presence within 500m from the application site and the ponds have been ruled out as being suitable for GCNs during previous surveys. The closest pond with confirmed GCN presence was a pond 790m from the application site.
- 6.1.2** The application site falls within a 'Red' GCN Habitat Zone – these zones contain suitable habitat and are the most important areas for GCN (except areas that are nationally important sites designated for GCNs). The walkover survey found no waterbody in the application site but one waterbody is present within the ownership boundary – Pond 2, however it seasonally dries out and was assigned as below average for GCNs and furthermore had a negative eDNA result for GCNs in 2019. Pond 1 is the closest waterbody to the application site, approximately 35m to the west, which had a negative result in 2019 for a eDNA sample taken. Based on the previous survey results with negative eDNA results and the lack of any ponds nearby supporting GCNs it is highly unlikely that GCNs would have colonised the closest pond.
- 6.1.3** The application site was within the grounds of a school and comprised a swimming pool surrounded by hardstanding and formal grassland, and a patch of woodland with a playground. The woodland offers terrestrial habitat of low value to GCN for foraging and shelter, as there was no ground cover only woodchip within the playground area and bare ground along the woodland edge.
- 6.1.4** The HSI of the pond on site (Pond 2) and a pond to the south of the site within 250m (Pond 6) was below average suitability for GCN and there was no evidence of GCN presence during the visual assessment. The HSI of a second pond to the south of the site (Pond 4) was good suitability for GCN however the eDNA test revealed a negative result for GCN presence in the pond.
- 6.1.5** The application site had no standing water, i.e. GCN breeding habitat, and primarily bare ground with wood chipping and hardstanding, i.e. low quality

terrestrial habitat for GCN. The woodland could provide temporary refuge for individual GCN opportunistically traversing across the site.

6.2 Impact Assessment and Required Actions

- 6.2.1** The development proposals involve removal of the swimming pool and ground beneath the trees in the woodland, with a footprint of less than 0.5ha. The development footprint will impact existing playground and bare ground beneath the woodland trees, which is heavily used (i.e. terrestrial habitats of low value to GCN).
- 6.2.2** The Natural England GCN Rapid Risk Assessment Tool was used to assess the risk of the development proposals adversely affecting GCN and it was considered highly unlikely that the proposed works would result in an offence – see **Figure 3** above.
- 6.2.3** In line with the guidance contained in the Tool and the impact assessment presented above, the nature and scale of the proposed development is highly unlikely to breach legislation protecting GCN or their habitats. However, in the absence of mitigation there is a risk that individual GCNs could potentially be injured and/or killed during the construction activities if traversing across the habitats on site. To avoid this, it is recommended that reasonable avoidance measures to minimise the risk of killing individual GCNs are implemented during the construction phase – as set out in **Section 6.3** below.

6.3 Reasonable Avoidance Measures

- 6.3.1** It is likely that any residual offences would have negligible impact on the conservation status of a local GCN population and the enforcement of such breaches is unlikely to be in the public interest. Therefore it is considered that a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence or a District Level Licence would not be required to allow the works to proceed lawfully, but the following reasonable avoidance measures should be adopted to minimise the extremely low risk of harming individual GCNs:

Pre-commencement of construction activities

- A suitably licensed ecologist will provide a ‘toolbox’ talk briefing the contractors working on site about GCN identification, what to do if GCN are found and the reasonable avoidance measures to be adopted;

- Any removal of wood chipping will be carefully removed by hand held tools under supervision by a suitably licensed ecologist if required; and
- The formal mowing of the grassland around the swimming pool should be maintained prior to the commencement of site work to minimise the likelihood of GCN of being present during excavations.

During construction activities

- Any stored building materials or waste, such as bricks or debris etc., that might offer shelter for GCN will be kept raised off the ground on pallets or on existing hard standing, and efforts should be made to process and remove from site as soon as possible;
- Excavation works will be avoided after dusk and any open excavations or trenches will be backfilled (after a check for GCN presence) or left with escape ramps to prevent GCN from becoming trapped; and
- If any extensive groundworks are required, a destructive search using a machine with a toothed bucket will be undertaken in the presence of a suitably licensed ecologist.

- 6.3.2** In the unlikely event that a GCN is found during the course of construction, works will stop immediately and a licensed ecologist will be called onto site to ensure the GCN is not harmed and provide further advice on how to proceed; work will recommence only once further written advice has been received.

Enhancement Opportunities

- 6.3.3** The value of the application site to wildlife could be enhanced by adding features suitable for sheltering and hibernating GCN, such as creating a hibernacula within the woodland edge.

7 REFERENCES

English Nature (2001). *Great crested newt mitigation guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

Langton, T.E.S, Beckett, C.L., and Foster, J.P. (2001). *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*, Froglife, Halesworth.