

K4 Keppel
Daedalus Park
Daedalus Drive
Lee on the Solent
PO13 9FX
27th July, 2026

Parcel N, Arborfield Green (RM application 252379 pursuant to outline consent O/2014/2280); GCN

Background

This Technical Note has been produced to provide some further information after concerns were raised by Wokingham Borough Council and Nature space on the potential presence of GCN on-site (see **Fig 1** for location plan). This was largely after a nearby resident had reported having GCN in his back garden along with the assertion that GCN are “....migrating in from the deep wet ditch that runs just behind the gardens”. In order to address these comments, an additional site visit was undertaken by Ecosupport on the 26th June to assess the ditch (conduct a Habitat Suitability Index) and take an updated eDNA water sample from the large pond the ditch is connected to. In addition to the above work, a map is provided which shows the ponds that were subject to eDNA water testing by ACD during the 2025 active season (requested by Wokingham Borough Council ecology)

Figure 1. Redline boundary of the site.



Ponds Tested in 2025 (ACD)

As part of the body of work undertaken to support the RM application in 2025 by ACD, eDNA water sampling was completed covering 6 ponds within 250m of the site. The map of the ponds that were tested along with their corresponding numberings is shown below in **Fig 2** with a screenshot of the eDNA result as provided by SureScreen scientific shown in **Fig 3**.

Figure 2. Plan showing the numberings of the ponds subject to eDNA testing by ACD in 2025 (with the results provided by SureScreen indicated in Fig 3) (**NB no results were provided for P7 in 2025 as the pond was dry**)

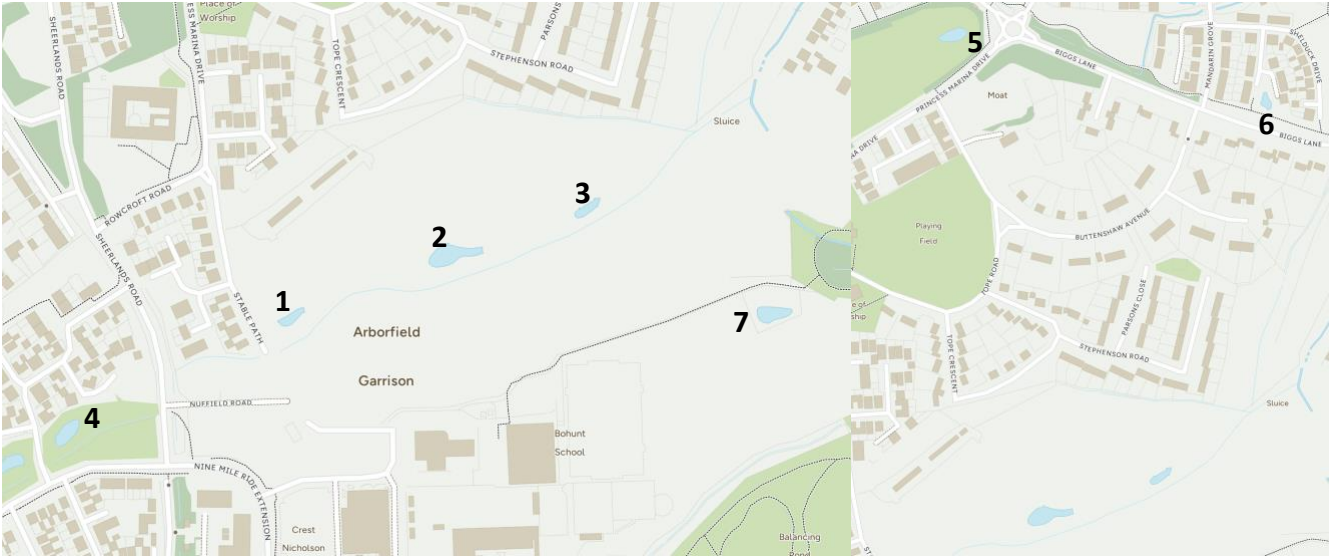


Figure 3. Results for ponds 1 – 6 after eDNA sampling by ACD in 2025 (**NB these results are still in date as per the most recent CIEEM guidance ¹**)

Folio No: 476-2025
Purchase Order: CREST 24802
Contact: ACD Environmental Ltd
Issue Date: 07.05.2025
Received Date: 22.04.2025



GCN eDNA Analysis

Summary

When great crested newts (GCN), *Triturus cristatus*, inhabit a pond, they continuously release small amounts of their DNA into the environment. By collecting and analyzing water samples, we can detect these small traces of environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm GCN habitation or establish GCN absence.

Results

Lab ID	Site Name	OS Reference	Degradation Check	Inhibition Check	Result	Positive Replicates
GCN25-0535	Arborfield Green - Pond 4	SU 76639 65115	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12
GCN25-0540	Arborfield Green - Pond 6	SU 77244 65760	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12
GCN25-0544	Arborfield Green - Pond 3	SU 77131 65337	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12
GCN25-0545	Arborfield Green - Pond 5	SU 76890 65831	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12
GCN25-0546	Arborfield Green - Pond 2	SU 77002 65292	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12
GCN25-0547	Arborfield Green - Pond 1	SU 76852 65226	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12

Matters affecting result: none

Reported by: Lauryn Jewkes Approved by: Lauryn Jewkes

¹ <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>

Updated Work (Ecosupport 2026)

The ditch that runs behind the houses along the northern boundary of the site (shown in **Fig 4** below) was assessed firstly to see if it was possible to obtain a water sample for eDNA testing. As the ditch was complexly dry, this was not possible so instead, the large pond (indicated in **Fig 4** below) was tested as the ditch is linked to this pond. This pond came back negative with a screenshot of the results provided in **Fig 5** below

Figure 4. A map of the ditch running behind the residential properties where an anecdotal record of GCN presence was provided and the large pond this ditch is connected to that was subject to an eDNA sample test in 2026.



Ditch referred to by local resident. It was completely dry in late June with no evidence of macrophyte growth indicating it is only likely to hold water over winter / into spring (but will dry completely during summer). A HSI of this ditch returned a score of 0.49 (poor suitability)



Large pond that was subject to eDNA test in June 2026 as the ditch is linked to this waterbody (came back negative)

Figure 5. Result from the 2026 eDNA sample of the large pond connected to the dry ditch.

Folio No: 3236-2026
Purchase Order: PO 00231/ L GAGE
Contact: Ecosupport Ltd
Issue Date: 30.06.2026
Received Date: 30.06.2026



GCN eDNA Analysis

Summary

When great crested newts (GCN), *Triturus cristatus*, inhabit a pond, they continuously release small amounts of their DNA into the environment. By collecting and analyzing water samples, we can detect these small traces of environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm GCN habitation or establish GCN absence.

Results

Lab ID	Site Name	OS Reference	Degradation Check	Inhibition Check	Result	Positive Replicates
GCN26 01961	Arborfield Green - Pond	SU 77403 65843	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12

Matters affecting result: none

Reported by: Ruby Fielding

Approved by: Alice Cunnington

Conclusion

Following updated work undertaken by Ecosupport in 2026 (eDNA and HSI) and accounting for the work that was done by ACD in 2025, the evidence suggests that GCN are likely to be absent from the site and the immediate vicinity. Despite the anecdotal commentary from a local resident about the presence of GCN in his garden (and the adjacent ditch), thorough survey effort over 2 seasons has indicated that GCN are not present in any of ponds in or around this development and it should therefore be concluded that GCN will not pose a constraint on the development of the site. Notwithstanding this, out of an abundance of caution, a passive dispersal strategy submitted by Ecosupport to address the very low population of Grass Snake on site will ensure that works are carried out in a way that account for the low risks of any amphibian presence on site (two stage strim, topsoil strip under ECoW supervision). If (in the unlikely event), any GCN are found during these works, works will stop and a licence sought from Natural England.

Following additional feedback from Nature Space, the full PWMS has been added to this document below with some additional points requested by Nature Space

Updated PWMS

The following methods will be undertaken to ensure that no reptiles are harmed during the works in the event that individuals are present on site.

The days prior to ground works commencing:

- Toolbox talk – Prior to any grounds commencing, a toolbox talk will be delivered by a licenced ecologist to all of the subcontractors working on the site. This will cover what GCN and Grass Snakes look like, the methods of clearance and the procedures if any reptiles / amphibians are found.
- Stage 1 vegetation cut : During the first stage, the vegetation will be cut down to a height no lower than 20cm. Cutting will occur directionally, working towards suitable habitat to be retained along the site boundaries to encourage reptiles to these areas. This will be done under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist.
- Stage 2 vegetation cut: A second cut (the following day) will take it down to ground level. At this time, the supervising ecologist will do a fingertip search of any tussocky areas. Any potential refugia (i.e., deadwood, rubble, earthbanks) will also be searched and removed. Any potential reptiles encountered will be captured and relocated to areas of retained habitat on the margins of the site to the north-east Linear Park Phase 3 boundary which will be subsequently subject to reptile capture and translocation following approval. This will be done under the supervision of a SQE.
- The ecologist on site will then hand search any denser areas of cover such as leaf litter where these areas are to be directly impacted upon.
- All vegetation on site must be kept managed during the development to ensure that amphibians / reptiles don't establish whilst works take place.
- Materials must not be stored along the boundary vegetation on site and must be kept raised off of the ground (i.e., stored on pallets).

Following the two-stage clearance, a destructive search may be carried out under the supervision of the suitably qualified ecologist depending on the habitat type present. Topsoil will be gently stripped to 100mm depth using a digger with a toothed bucket. The supervising ecologist will capture any reptiles found and relocate them to the retained boundary habitat. Please note, any suitable habitat within the root protection zone will not have the topsoil stripped and will only be maintained cut at ground level. These works will be undertaken during the active amphibian / reptile period (April – October) when temperatures are above 10°C with sunshine. This area of habitat will be regularly managed and maintained unsuitable for amphibians / reptiles for the duration of the works and will be cordoned off from the site to prevent vehicles entering the area. The arisings will be removed, and any materials will be stored off the ground using pallets or skips if stored in the grassland to prevent sheltering reptiles.

NB Excavation Safeguards :all excavations must either be backfilled overnight or contain an escape ramp (made from earth, wooden planks, or logs etc) placed at an angle no steeper than 45 degrees.

Final point; In the unlikely event that Great Crested Newts are discovered during works, activities must be suspended in the affected area immediately and advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Kind regards,

Adam Jessop MSc MCIEEM

Principal Ecologist