

Date: 27 May 2025
Application: 251223



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

WBC Ecology Newts

Development Management &
Compliance

P.O. Box 157

Shute End, Wokingham

Berkshire, RG40 1BN

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Dear WBC Ecology Newts,

Full Planning Approval Consultation

Application Number: 251223

Applicant: Mr LEWIS GALLAGHER

Site Address: 121 Nash Grove Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4HG

Parish: Finchampstead

Grid Reference: Easting - 479327, Northing - 166217

Type of Development: Minor Dwellings (1-9)

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

Case Officer: Connie Davis

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 251223. 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 found on the Z Drive at: [Z:\Standard Planning Conditions](#).

Your observations are required in respect of this application within **10 working days** of the above date or **15 working days** if the development type is classed as a major development.

Yours sincerely,
Development Management & Compliance

MEMORANDUM

From:	NatureSpace District Licensing Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology Newts	App No:	251223
Address:	121 Nash Grove Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4HG.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. dwelling, following demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings.		
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9)		
Site Visit Made:	No		

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

Recommended action

I recommend the following informative if you are minded to approve the application:

The applicant is reminded that, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to (amongst other things): deliberately capture, disturb, injure or kill great crested newts; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; deliberately obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Planning approval for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under these acts. Should great crested newts be found at any stages of the development works, then all works should cease, and Natural England should be contacted for advice.

Application location in the context of GCN

The development falls within the red impact risk zone for great crested newts (GCN). 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 18 ponds within 500m of the development proposal, 6 of which are situated within 250m of the proposed development. The majority of these ponds are located to the east of the site. There is only limited connectivity between the application site and nearby ponds because of substantial existing built development.

There are many records of great crested newts in this area, the nearest of which are within 250m of the proposed development and date to 2021.

Ecological information supplied

The applicant has supplied a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA; AA Environmental Ltd, April 2025). I am satisfied that the PEA demonstrates that the habitats within the application site are of relatively low value to GCN and there are substantial barriers to newt dispersal between the nearest ponds (and GCN records) and the application site. Namely, the residential areas along Waverly Way, Nash Grove Lane, and Gilbert Way include a high density of unsuitable/low-suitability habitats and physical barriers such as buildings, brick walls, and close-boarded fencing. Given the above factors, the risk of impacts on great crested newts and/or their habitats is considered to be low.

Conclusion and recommendations

Natural England Standing Advice guidance for planning authorities advises that GCN surveys on ponds up to 500m from development sites should be requested. Given the findings of the PEA, a GCN survey should not be necessary in this case as it could be disproportionate to the scale and likely impacts of the development. The PEA also recommends avoidance measures for reptiles which would concomitantly act to safeguard GCN in the unlikely event they are present. While it is considered unlikely great crested newts are present within the application site, the site is within a red impact risk zone and the species is confirmed to be present within the landscape. Therefore, I recommend the following informative is appended to any consent issued:

The applicant is reminded that, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to (amongst other things): deliberately capture, disturb, injure or kill great crested newts; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; deliberately obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Planning approval for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under these acts. Should great crested newts be found at any stages of the development works, then all works should cease, and Natural England should be contacted for advice.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

None.

Date:	09/06/2025	Signed:	NatureSpace
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