

**Date:** 11 March 2026  
**Application:** 260596



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

WBC Ecology Newts

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Development Management &  
Compliance

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Dear WBC Ecology Newts,

**Full Planning Approval Consultation**

**Application Number:** 260596

**Applicant:** Ms & Ms Mary and Breda Doherty

**Site Address:** Land Opposite Junction Of Forest Road &, Foxley Lane, Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire

**Parish:**

**Grid Reference:** Easting - 483391, Northing - 170820.6

**Type of Development:** Minor All other developments

**Proposal:** Full application for the proposed erection of stable block, consisting of no.3 stable stalls with associated hardstanding driveway.

**Case Officer:** Annabelle Jones

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 260596. 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 **1 April 2026**.

Yours sincerely,  
Development Management & Compliance

# MEMORANDUM

|                             |                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>From:</b>                | Berkshire District<br>Licensing Officer                                                                                                   |
| <b>Service</b>              | WBC Ecology Newts                                                                                                                         |
| <b>App No:</b>              | 260596                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Address:</b>             | Land Opposite Junction Of Forest Road &, Foxley Lane,<br>Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire.                                                  |
| <b>Proposal:</b>            | Full application for the proposed erection of stable block,<br>consisting of no.3 stable stalls with associated hardstanding<br>driveway. |
| <b>Type of Development:</b> | Minor All other developments                                                                                                              |
| <b>Site Visit Made:</b>     | 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

### 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 16 ponds within 500m of the development proposal. The closest of these is 15m from the site boundary. Please note that not all ponds are shown on the map below.
- There are suitable features within the site that may be used by great crested newts that warrant further survey effort, specifically the tree lines, woodland and area of scrub.
- There is high connectivity in the surrounding area due to lines of trees, hedgerows, and woodland parcels, enabling movement between ponds.
- There are records of GCN in 5 separate locations within 500m of the site. The most recent of these are from 2019, 180m southeast of the site boundary.

- Natural England Standing Advice guidance for planning authorities advises that surveys on ponds up to 500m from development sites should be requested.

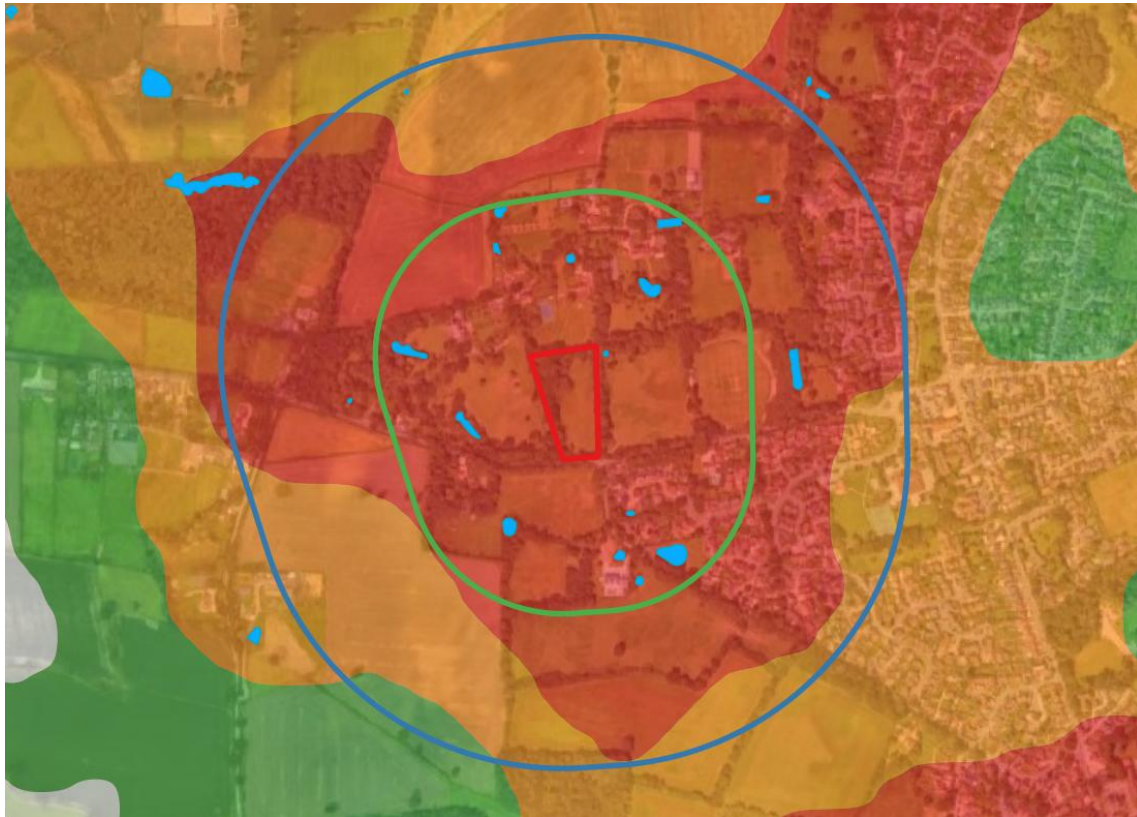


Figure above: Outline of the site (red) in the context of the surrounding landscape, including the Impact Risk Zones for GCN. Ponds are shown in light blue. A 250m buffer is shown around the site in green and a 500m buffer in blue. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government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

### Ecological Information

The applicant has provided ecological information: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 'Land Location off Forest Rd, Binfield, Bracknell', EBS Environmental Business Solutions, October 2025. The majority of the site consists of pasture, bordered by mature trees with a small area of scrub. The Phase 1 Habitat Map also shows the site bordered by seminatural broadleaved woodland. The report states:

- "As there are numerous ponds within 500m of the site of which most are not accessible a set of Reasonable Avoidance Measures should be agreed prior to works commencing."
- "Further surveys may be required for the following species: GCN"

### Conclusion

The position of this site places it in the centre of a large network of ponds (16 ponds), the closest of which is <15m from the northeastern site boundary. It is highly likely that these ponds form a meta population, a conclusion supported by the fact that there are GCN records in 5 of these ponds. The closest of these recordings are from 180m (2019) and 210m (2016) southeast of the site boundary. The further three are historical recordings (2013) located within 500 m of the site to the east and northeast. The potential for the site to be used during GCN dispersal and migration

cannot therefore be ruled out without further survey.

Suitable habitat is also present on the site. This is in the form of the scrub patch to the southwest, as well as the woodland surrounding the entirety of the site which looks to have scrubby ground coverage. No management regime is mentioned in the PEA for the grassland on site. In the pictures provide, the sward height looks uniform and managed. However, tussocky patches around the field peripheries adjacent to the woodland and scrub could be utilised by GCN. Overall, there are opportunities for GCN foraging, movement and sheltering.

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 a precautionary working statement in the form of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs)/Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) strategy documents completed by a suitably qualified 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.

|              |            |                |             |
|--------------|------------|----------------|-------------|
| <b>Date:</b> | 01/04/2026 | <b>Signed:</b> | NatureSpace |
|--------------|------------|----------------|-------------|