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ECOLOGY

## **BEECH COURT, HURST**

Condition 3 - Precautionary Working  
Method Statement for Great Crested Newts

June 2025

Report ref: SWE-P24-0098-R3  
Planning consent ref: 242200

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**PROJECT:** Beech Court, Wokingham Road, Hurst, Wokingham, RG10 0RQ

**CLIENT:** Pinnacle Property Management Ltd

**PREPARED BY:** Sam Watson BSc (Hons) MCIEEM

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Erection of 1 no. single storey storage building in association with the existing use of Beech Court, plus changes to parking layout and landscaping.

**REPORT SCOPE:** Condition 3 - Precautionary Working Method Statement for Great Crested Newts

**REPORT REF:** SWE-P24-0098-R3

**PLANNING CONSENT REF:** 242200

**DATE OF ISSUE:** June 2025

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Background

- 1.1 Sam Watson Ecology (SWE) has been retained by Pinnacle Property Management Ltd to provide technical ecological input to the discharge of condition 3 attached to the planning consent obtained for the site known as Beech Court, Hurst (consent ref: 242200). The site was previously surveyed by SWE to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of the proposal (report ref: SWE-P24-0098-R1) prepared in support of the planning application.

### Condition 3

- 1.2 Condition 3 attached to the planning consent obtained for the proposal states –

*“3. Great Crested Newts - No ground works shall commence until a licence for development works affecting GCN has been obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England) and a copy has been submitted to the council. Thereafter mitigations measures approved in the licence shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details. Should the applicant conclude that a licence for development works affecting GCN is not required for all or part of the works the applicant is to submit a report to the council detailing the reasons for this assessment and this report is to be approved in writing by the council prior to commencement of works.*

*Reason: Reason: There is a known great crested newt breeding population nearby which may be affected by the proposals. This condition will ensure that GCNs, a material consideration, are not adversely affected by the development.”*

- 1.3 The site contains a mix of short, well-maintained amenity grassland, ornamental flowerbeds, hedgerows and hardstanding. SWE is satisfied, based on the previous visit to the site, that these do not have significant value to great crested newts and that the proposal does not present a significant risk to this species. On the basis of this assessment no requirement for the proposal to be carried out under a derogation licence has been identified. The following reasonable avoidance measures will, nevertheless, be implemented on an abundance of caution basis.



## 2.0 REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES

### 2.1 The following precautions will be implemented

- The information sheet at Appendix 1 will be included as part of the induction information given to all personnel working at the site and will be displayed in the site office for the duration of the work, for reference.
- Immediately prior to the commencement of development, including prior to any soil stripping/site clearance, a thorough search of the site for great crested newts will be carried out. This will include features in which a great crested newt might be present, if found on the site at that time, such as under piles of material e.g. raked leaves, rubble and logs, and in taller vegetation, such as the flowerbeds. Any such features that are to be directly affected, will then be carefully dismantled by hand in a slow and methodological manner, so that if a great crested newt is present, it can be found and appropriate action can be taken.
- It will be made clear to all on-site personnel that no trenches or excavations are to be left uncovered overnight, to prevent a great crested newt becoming trapped. If such features do need to remain open or the addition of a cover is not practical, wooden planks and/or soil will be used to create shallow escape ramps in each excavation to allow animals to leave should they fall in. Prior to re-commencing work each morning, the site manager (or other appointed personnel) will undertake a check of each excavation to ensure no newts are present.

### If a newt is found

- As there is assessed to be no confirmed or significant risk to great crested newts, the above precautions can be carried out by the site manager. However, in the unlikely event that a newt of any species is found anywhere and/or at any point during construction, **all works must stop immediately and a suitably licensed ecologist must be contacted for advice.** This is so that the species can be confirmed and appropriate action can be taken, if necessary.
- If the newt is confirmed as being a great crested newt by the ecologist, the requirement for the work to continue under a derogation licence will be reviewed.
- Only once the advising ecologist is satisfied that there is no or negligible residual risk to great crested newts will the work be allowed to continue without additional ecologist supervision.

### Rules for siting and storage

- In order to limit the risk of a great crested newts sheltering under or within any materials stored on site, these will be stored on areas of existing hardstanding and/or held off the ground by placing them on a pallet. In addition, any excavated material and



other waste that has to be kept on site over at least one night, will be placed immediately into a skip or other container, and not on the ground, to prevent great crested newts being able to access it.



## **APPENDIX 1**



## GREAT CRESTED NEWTS SITE INFORMATION SHEET



Great crested newts are the largest of the UK's three native species. In comparison to the smooth newt and the palmate newt, the great crested newt is significantly larger, growing up to 17cm in length.

Great crested newts are dark brown or black in colour with a distinct 'warty' skin. The underside is bright orange with irregular black blotches.

Great crested newts live not just in ponds, but also on land, in areas of rough grassland, scrub and woodland.



Great crested newts are protected by law with penalties for breaking the law including large fines, imprisonment and the seizure of equipment. The advice below should be followed to avoid potentially committing an offence.

If a newt is found on site, do the following:

- Cease all works and report it to the site manager/ supervisor **immediately**, so they can contact the project ecologist for advice.
- Avoid handling newts unless they are at imminent risk of being injured or killed.
- If handling a newt is unavoidable, it should be kept in a safe place, such as a box with a lid that contains damp leaves/grass, until the project ecologist is available to provide further advice.
- **If in any doubt or you are unsure, always seek advice from the project ecologist.**

