

GREAT CRESTED NEWT SURVEY REPORT

**TOTTENHAM HOUSE & ESTATE, GREAT
BEDWYN, MARLBOROUGH, WILTSHIRE,
SN8 3BE**

for

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CONTROL SHEET

Corrigan Gore / Size Group

Tottenham House and Estate, Great Bedwyn, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3BE

Great Crested Newt Survey Report

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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Due to the presence of a great crested newt breeding ponds on the site, a Natural England Mitigation (development) licence¹ will be required prior to works occurring on the site, such as the removal of the former swimming pool (Pond 4). To apply for a Natural England licence, full planning permission must be in place (if required) and all relevant (great crested newt) Conditions discharged. This licence may only be granted subject to the following tests having been met²:

- The development must demonstrate that it is required for reasons of *'over-riding public interest'*;
- There must be *'no satisfactory alternative'* to the development proposals as submitted and;
- The proposals must not be detrimental to the *'favourable conservation status'* of the species affected (great crested newts).

2. Where the Natural England mitigation licence route is selected (rather than DLL), an appropriate scheme of mitigation, compensation and enhancement for this project will need to be agreed with the client, appropriate to the scale of impact. However, it should include the features listed briefly below.

- When ponds are proposed for removal, these should be replaced on a 2:1 ratio. New waterbodies should be created as close to the pond being lost as possible. New ponds should be designed in line with guidance in Langton, Beckett & Foster, 2001.
- Retention and protection of on-site great crested newt terrestrial habitat (e.g. rough grassland, hedgerows).

¹ **Wiltshire lies within Natural England's District Level Licensing (DLL) area for great crested newts. This represents an alternative option to the traditional licensing route. Further details can be found in Section 3 of this report.**

² Natural England operate a charging system for great crested newt mitigation (development) licence, unless the licence is issued for a purpose which is exempt from charges. Focus Environmental Consultants will provide further advice on charges attributable to your project.

- Installation of newt exclusion fencing, where appropriate to aid the trapping schedule.
 - Implementation of a great crested newt trapping and translocation/relocation program. Based on the 'medium' population size, the minimum number of trap days appropriate for this site is 60 days (with reference to English Nature, 2001).
 - Progressive cutting (over a number of days) of areas of longer grass (within work area) to encourage amphibians (and other vertebrate fauna) to move to safe locations on site.
 - Destructive searches (under direct supervision of Named Ecologist) of all potential great crested newt habitats to be removed from the site.
 - Re-location of potential great crested newt habitat features (e.g. logs, trunks, compost heaps, etc) to safe, suitable locations on site.
 - Construction of suitable great crested newt hibernacula.
 - Post-development monitoring of waterbodies (existing and newly created). Natural England indicate for a 'medium' population and 'high' impact six years of population size class assessment surveys will be required.
3. It is considered that works specific to the Walled Garden (e.g. repair of the footings etc.) are unlikely to require a mitigation licence given that vegetation is short and maintained as such around the base structure. However, prior to the commencement of large-scale vegetation removal within the Walled Garden itself, a licence (in accordance with the above recommendations) will need to be applied for and granted by Natural England.

4. Natural England (2020) state in the scenario where '*Pond(s) lost or damaged, with or without other habitat loss or damage*', that the maximum age of survey data is 2 breeding seasons, where Breeding Season 1 is 2024 (year of survey).

2. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

‘The Site’, centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SU 24977 63921 was previously the subject of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Focus Environmental Consultants, 2024). Seven ponds were identified within the Site. This survey recommended that further specialist surveys for great crested newts were conducted in the optimal survey season.

Pond 1 was outside the construction zone so not surveyed. Pond 2 and Pond 3 were found to be dry during the survey season.

A presence/ absence survey for great crested newts was conducted of Pond 4, Pond 5, Pond 6 and Pond 7 between April and June 2024 by suitably experienced and licensed surveyors from Focus Environmental Consultants. This was elevated to a population size class assessment once great crested newts were confirmed as present. A combination of survey techniques (bottle trapping, egg search, torching) was employed, following the *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines* (English Nature, 2001) and Natural England (2022).

The survey work has confirmed the presence of great crested newts at Pond 4 (former swimming pool), Pond 5 and Pond 7. No evidence of great crested newts was found in Pond 6.

Table 1: Summary of population size class assessment for each confirmed great crested newt pond at the Site.

Pond	GCN Peak Count	Population Size
Pond 4	7	Small
Pond 5	2	Small
Pond 7	23	Medium
Metapopulation Assessment for Site		Medium

3. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The surveys carried out at Tottenham House and Estate have confirmed that Pond 4 and Pond 5 support 'small' populations of great crested newts and Pond 5 supports a 'medium' population of great crested newts. Due to the presence of three great crested newt ponds within a 500m radius, a metapopulation for the Site of 'medium' should be assumed.

No evidence of breeding was noted in the form of great crested newt ova/ efts. However, access to survey for ova was significantly limited in all three great crested newt ponds. Therefore, although, no evidence of breeding was found, the ponds are suitable, so breeding has been assumed.

Due to the strict legal protection afforded to this amphibian and its breeding sites and resting places (both aquatic and terrestrial) the impact of the proposed development must be assessed to establish the potential need for a Natural England 'Mitigation' (development) licence.

The proposals for the Site include the removal of the former swimming pool (Pond 4). Pond 4 is a confirmed great crested newt pond. To assess the likelihood of committing an offence the Natural England risk assessment has been completed (see below), based on the scenario of removing Pond 4. The result of the assessment is 'Red: Offence Likely'.

Figure 1: Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment for the Site

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)	Damaged or destroyed	1
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)	No effect	0
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	1
Rapid risk assessment result:	RED: OFFENCE HIGHLY LIKELY	

It is therefore considered that the proposed removal of Pond 4 will have a 'high' impact (as defined by Natural England, 2022) on great crested newts and an offence is highly likely, therefore recourse to a Natural England Mitigation (development) licence is recommended.

Wiltshire lies within Natural England's District Level Licensing (DLL) area for great crested newts. Tottenham House and Estate is within the 'amber' zone, this zone is defined as *'having great crested newt populations, habitats and dispersal routes'*. Utilisation of the DLL scheme represents an alternative option to obtaining a Natural England Mitigation (development) licence. The *'pros-and-cons'* of the two options should be explored once final plans for the Site have been determined.

To enter the DLL scheme an enquiry form must be submitted, and an enquiry payment made to Natural England. Natural England will assess the information in the enquiry form and send an Impact Assessment and Conservation Payment Certificate (IACPC) document, which represents the agreement to join the scheme. It explains the terms and conditions of the scheme, the cost to join and how Natural England calculates the cost. If the terms are agreeable both the applicant and Natural England must sign the IACPC. A copy of the signed IACPC must then be submitted with the planning application (if required) and is guaranteed to satisfy the local planning authority that great crested newt constraints are resolved.

Once the agreement is signed, any necessary conservation payments have been made and planning permission is granted, the DLL can then be obtained from Natural England. Payments made under the scheme contribute to the creation, long-term management, and monitoring of new great crested newt habitats across the region.

4. ANNEXES

4.1 Photographs

4.2 Plans

4.3 Survey & Third-Party Data

4.4 Survey Objectives

4.5 Limitations

4.6 Methods

4.7 References & Bibliography

4.8 Legislation & Best Practice

4.1 Photographs

All photographs taken in 2024.



Plate 1: Showing Pond 4 (disused swimming pool) to the rear of Tottenham House.



Plate 2: Showing Pond 5 to the north of Tottenham House.



Plate 3: Showing Pond 6 to the east of Tottenham House.



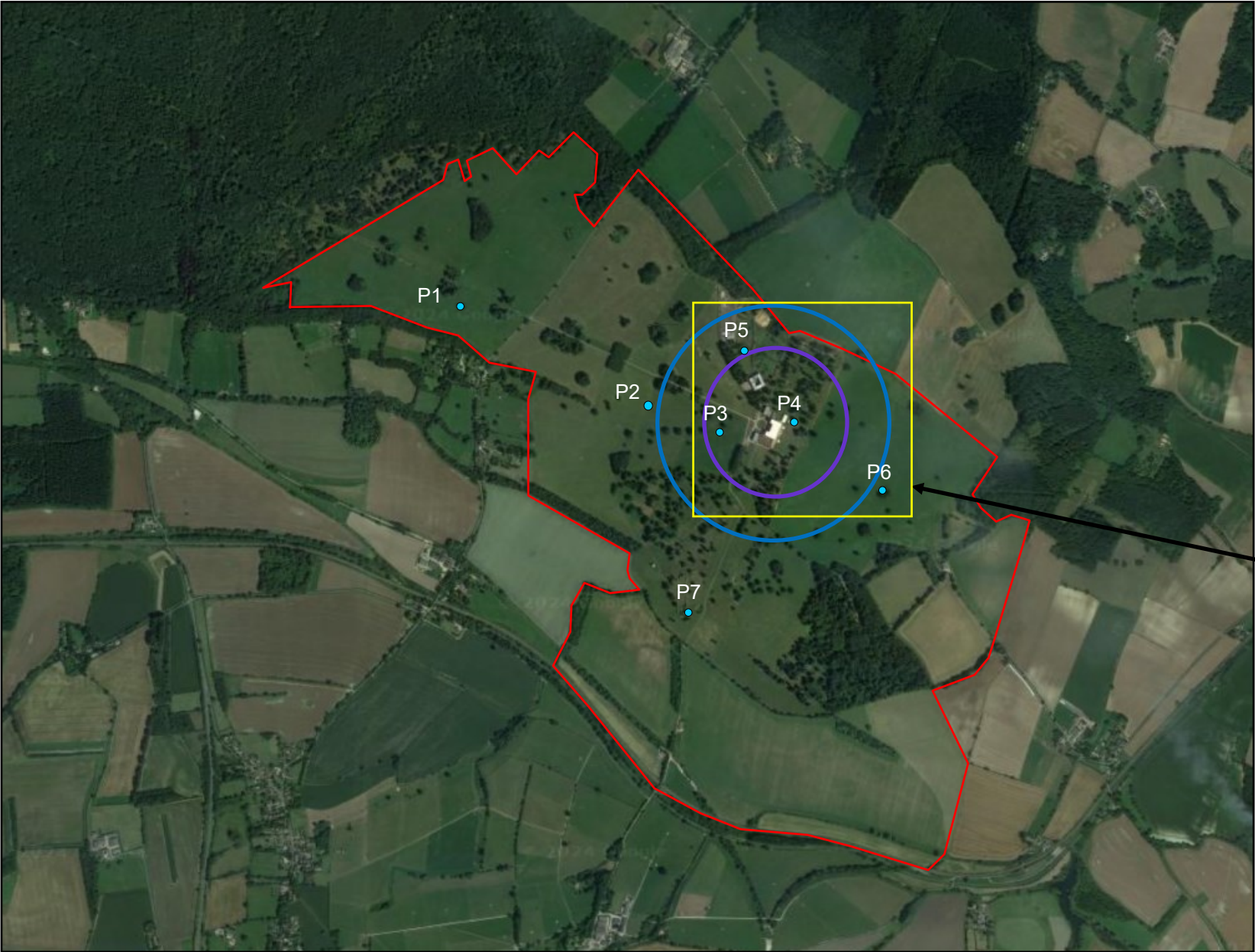
Plate 4: Showing Pond 7 (reservoir) to the south of Tottenham House.

4.2 Plans

Plans:

4.2.1 Great Crested Newt Survey Plan

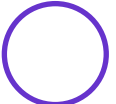
4.2.1. Great Crest Newt Survey Plan



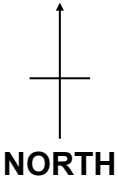
Ponds surveyed:

- Pond 4 (torching and egg searching only)
- Pond 5 (bottle trapping, torching, egg searching)
- Pond 6 (bottle trapping, torching, egg searching)
- Pond 7 (torching only)

Pond 1: outside construction area. Not surveyed.
Ponds 2 and 3: dry during summer months.

 250m radius

 5000m radius



Client: Corrigan Gore / Size Group
Site: .Tottenham House & Estate, Great Bedwyn,
Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3BE
Title: Great Crested Newt Survey Plan
Contract: 2887-1
Date: August 2024

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Please note: this plan is intended only to indicate the approximate location of features and should therefore, not be treated as an accurate scale plan.

4.3 Survey & Third-party Data

All surveys have been completed by appropriately qualified and experienced surveyors from Focus Environmental Consultants.

As part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Focus Environmental Consultants, 2024) for the Site, a 5km third-party data search was completed. The author refers the reader to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for full details of the data search.

Table 2: Summary of great crested newt data provided as part of the third-party data search conducted for the Site.

Source	Information Provided
Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre	Great crested newts: 14 records of great crested newts, all mainly associated with the Savernake Forest.

Table 3: Surveyor details for great crested newt surveys at the Site.

Date	Survey Type	Surveyor Name & Licence No.
05/02/2024	HSI	J. Stuart-Smith: 2017-28488-CLS-CLS
09-10/05/2024	Population Size Class Assessment	J. Stuart-Smith: 2017-28488-CLS-CLS
		A. Franks: 2024-11888-CL08-GCN
29-30/04/2024	Population Size Class Assessment	A. Franks: 2024-11888-CL08-GCN
		Non-licensed Assistant
14-15/05/2024	Population Size Class Assessment	A. Franks: 2024-11888-CL08-GCN
		Non-licensed Assistant
22-23/05/2024	Population Size Class Assessment	A. Franks: 2024-11888-CL08-GCN
		Non-licensed Assistant
29-30/05/2024	Population Size Class Assessment	A. Franks: 2024-11888-CL08-GCN
		Non-licensed Assistant
06-07/06/2024	Population Size Class Assessment	A. Franks: 2024-11888-CL08-GCN
		Non-licensed Assistant

Table 4: Weather conditions for the great crested newt survey visits at the Site.

Date	Weather Conditions	Air Temp.	Overnight Temp above 5°C
29.04.2024	Relative humidity: 75% Cloud Cover: 50% Beaufort Scale: 1	13°C	Yes (7°C)
09.05.2024	Relative humidity: 75% Cloud Cover: 60% Beaufort Scale: 1	15°C	Yes (10°C)
14.05.2024	Relative humidity: 75% Cloud Cover: 40% Beaufort Scale: 0	17°C	Yes (13°C)
22.05.2024	Relative humidity: 75% Cloud Cover: 90% Beaufort Scale: 2	15°C	Yes (9°C)
29.05.2024	Relative humidity: 75% Cloud Cover: 90% Beaufort Scale: 2	16°C	Yes (12°C)
06.06.2024	Relative humidity: 75% Cloud Cover: 10% Beaufort Scale: 0	17°C	Yes (6°C)

Table 5: HSI of Pond 4 at Tottenham House Estate.

Feature	Score	Observation
Sl ₁ Location	1	Zone A, location is optimal
Sl ₂ Pond Area	0.4	Pond approximately 200m ²
Sl ₃ Pond Drying	0.9	Never dries.
Sl ₄ Water Quality	0.67	Moderate: Moderate invertebrate diversity.
Sl ₅ Shade	1	40% shade.
Sl ₆ Waterfowl	0.67	Minor: Waterfowl present, but little indication of impact on pond vegetation. Pond still supports submerged plants and banks are not denuded of vegetation.
Sl ₇ Fish	1	Absent: No records of fish stocking and no fish revealed by netting or observed by torchlight.
Sl ₈ Ponds	0.9	9 ponds in 1km area, ponds blocked by major barriers (e.g. main roads) have not been included.
Sl ₉ Terrestrial Habitat	1	Good: Habitat that offers good opportunities for foraging and shelter (e.g. most semi-natural environments, such as rough grassland, scrub or woodland, also brownfield sites and low intensity farmland) covers more than 75% of available area.
Sl ₁₀ Macrophytes	0.4	10% coverage of macrophytes.
TOTAL SCORE	0.7524	GOOD

Table 6: HSI of Pond 5 at Tottenham House Estate.

Feature	Score	Observation
Sl ₁ Location	1	Zone A, location is optimal
Sl ₂ Pond Area	1	Pond approximately 600m ²
Sl ₃ Pond Drying	0.9	Never dries.
Sl ₄ Water Quality	0.67	Moderate: Moderate invertebrate diversity.
Sl ₅ Shade	1	40% shade.
Sl ₆ Waterfowl	0.67	Minor: Waterfowl present, but little indication of impact on pond vegetation. Pond still supports submerged plants and banks are not denuded of vegetation.
Sl ₇ Fish	0.67	Possible: No evidence of fish, but local conditions suggest that they may be present.
Sl ₈ Ponds	0.9	9 ponds in 1km area, ponds blocked by major barriers (e.g. main roads) have not been included.
Sl ₉ Terrestrial Habitat	1	Good: Habitat that offers good opportunities for foraging and shelter (e.g. most semi-natural environments, such as rough grassland, scrub or woodland, also brownfield sites and low intensity farmland) covers more than 75% of available area.
Sl ₁₀ Macrophytes	0.45	20% coverage of macrophytes.
TOTAL SCORE	0.8017	EXCELLENT

NOTE: $HSI = (Sl_1 \times Sl_2 \times Sl_3 \times Sl_4 \times Sl_5 \times Sl_6 \times Sl_7 \times Sl_8 \times Sl_9 \times Sl_{10})^{1/10}$

Table 7: HSI of Pond 6 at Tottenham House Estate.

Feature	Score	Observation
Sl ₁ Location	1	Zone A, location is optimal
Sl ₂ Pond Area	1	Pond approximately 700m ²
Sl ₃ Pond Drying	0.9	Never dries.
Sl ₄ Water Quality	0.33	Poor: Low invertebrate diversity (e.g. species such as midge and mosquito larvae). Few submerged plants.
Sl ₅ Shade	0.2	100% shade.
Sl ₆ Waterfowl	0.67	Minor: Waterfowl present, but little indication of impact on pond vegetation. Pond still supports submerged plants and banks are not denuded of vegetation.
Sl ₇ Fish	0.67	Possible: No evidence of fish, but local conditions suggest that they may be present.
Sl ₈ Ponds	0.9	9 ponds in 1km area, ponds blocked by major barriers (e.g. main roads) have not been included.
Sl ₉ Terrestrial Habitat	0.67	Moderate: Habitat offers opportunities for foraging and shelter but may not be extensive (25-75%) of available area.
Sl ₁₀ Macrophytes	0.35	10% coverage of macrophytes.
TOTAL SCORE	0.5957	BELOW AVERAGE

NOTE: $HSI = (Sl_1 \times Sl_2 \times Sl_3 \times Sl_4 \times Sl_5 \times Sl_6 \times Sl_7 \times Sl_8 \times Sl_9 \times Sl_{10})^{1/10}$

Table 8: HSI of Pond 7 at Tottenham House Estate.

Feature	Score	Observation
Sl ₁ Location	1	Zone A, location is optimal
Sl ₂ Pond Area	1	Pond approximately 600m ²
Sl ₃ Pond Drying	0.9	Never dries.
Sl ₄ Water Quality	0.33	Poor: Low invertebrate diversity (e.g. species such as midge and mosquito larvae). Few submerged plants.
Sl ₅ Shade	1	0% shade.
Sl ₆ Waterfowl	0.67	Minor: Waterfowl present, but little indication of impact on pond vegetation. Pond still supports submerged plants and banks are not denuded of vegetation.
Sl ₇ Fish	1	Absent: No records of fish stocking and no fish revealed by netting or observed by torchlight.
Sl ₈ Ponds	0.9	9 ponds in 1km area, ponds blocked by major barriers (e.g. main roads) have not been included.
Sl ₉ Terrestrial Habitat	0.33	Poor: Habitat with poor structure (e.g. amenity grassland, improved pasture and arable) that offers limited opportunities (less than 25% of available area) for foraging and shelter.
Sl ₁₀ Macrophytes	0.35	10% coverage of macrophytes.
TOTAL SCORE	0.6785	AVERAGE

NOTE: $HSI = (Sl_1 \times Sl_2 \times Sl_3 \times Sl_4 \times Sl_5 \times Sl_6 \times Sl_7 \times Sl_8 \times Sl_9 \times Sl_{10})^{1/10}$

Table 9: Summary of survey results for Pond 4 at the Site.

Date	Great Crested Newts			Other species	Vegetation Cover Score (0=no vegetation cover; 5= water completely obscured by vegetation)	Turbidity Score (0=completely clear; 5= very turbid)
	Torching	Bottle Traps	Ova			
29.04.2024	2	n/a	No	4x smooth newt	4	1
09.05.2024	3	n/a	No	10x smooth newt	4	1
14.05.2024	0	n/a	No	14x smooth newt	4	1
22.05.2024	0	n/a	No	7x smooth newt	4	1
29.05.2024	4	n/a	No	12x smooth newt	4	1
06.06.2024	7	n/a	No	34x smooth newt	4	1

Table 10: Summary of survey results for Pond 5 at the Site.

Date	Great Crested Newts			Other species	Vegetation Cover Score (0=no vegetation cover; 5= water completely obscured by vegetation)	Turbidity Score (0=completely clear; 5= very turbid)
	Torching	Bottle Traps	Ova			
29.04.2024	0	0	No	4x smooth newt	2	1
09.05.2024	0	1	No	15x smooth newt	2	1
14.05.2024	1	0	No	11x smooth newt	2	1
22.05.2024	2	2	No	14x smooth newt	2	1
29.05.2024	1	0	No	8x smooth newt	2	1
06.06.2024	2	1	No	7x smooth newt	2	1

Table 11: Summary of survey results for Pond 6 at the Site.

Date	Great Crested Newts			Other species	Vegetation Cover Score (0=no vegetation cover; 5= water completely obscured by vegetation)	Turbidity Score (0=completely clear; 5= very turbid)
	Torching	Bottle Traps	Ova			
29.04.2024	0	0	No	0	3	1
09.05.2024	0	0	No	1x smooth newt	3	1
14.05.2024	0	0	No	0	3	1
22.05.2024	0	n/a (water level too low)	No	0	3	1
29.05.2024	0	n/a (water level too low)	No	0	3	1
06.06.2024	0	n/a (water level too low)	No	0	3	1

Table 12: Summary of survey results for Pond 7 at the Site.

Date	Great Crested Newts			Other species	Vegetation Cover Score (0=no vegetation cover; 5= water completely obscured by vegetation)	Turbidity Score (0=completely clear; 5= very turbid)
	Torching	Bottle Traps	Ova			
29.04.2024	0	n/a	No	0	4	3
09.05.2024	13	n/a	No	68x smooth newt	4	3
14.05.2024	17	n/a	No	104x smooth newt	4	3
22.05.20024	23	n/a	No	67x smooth newt	4	3
29.05.2024	12	n/a	No	73x smooth newt	4	3
06.06.2024	4	n/a	No	37x smooth newt	4	3

4.4 Survey Objectives

The objectives of the survey were:

- to undertake a specialised survey for great crested newts, to determine presence/ absence of this species, following the latest survey guidelines (English Nature, 2001, Natural England, 2022);
- to provide specialist advice on the possible presence of legally protected amphibians in relation to the planning process; and
- to report survey results and make appropriate recommendations for further surveys, works and/or licenses as necessary to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation and standard best practice.

4.5 Limitations

- Pond 4 (the Swimming Pool) was too dangerous to bottle trap.
- Pond 7 (the Reservoir) was too shallow to bottle trap.

None of these limitations are regarded as significant considering the results obtained from surveys, weather conditions and survey effort employed.

4.6 Methods

4.6.1 Third-Party Data Trawl

A desk study was conducted in February 2024 to collect any existing data records for great crested newts within the site boundary and a 5km area around the site. Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre was commissioned to provide biological records.

4.6.2 Habitat Suitability Index (HSI)

All ponds within 250m of the site were assessed using the GCN Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) (Oldham *et al.* 2000), where access was permitted. An HSI is a numerical score where 0 indicates unsuitable habitat and 1 represents optimal habitats. The HSI for the great crested newts incorporates ten suitability indices, all of which are factors considered to affect the likely presence or absence of this species.

Categorisation of HSI Scores:

HSI		<u>Pond Suitability</u>
<0.5	=	poor
0.5 – 0.59	=	below average
0.6 – 0.69	=	average
0.7 – 0.79	=	good
>0.8	=	excellent

4.6.3 Presence / Absence Survey

In line with Natural England Guidelines (English Nature, 2001, Natural England, 2022), four surveys were undertaken in the period between mid-March and mid-June. Two of the survey visits were completed between mid-April and mid-May, as is required to provide robust survey results that conform to current survey guidelines. All surveys were completed by surveyors from Focus Environmental Consultants holding appropriate Natural England survey licences. The methods employed on the survey included bottle trapping, torching, and ova searches. All surveys were undertaken in favourable weather conditions, with night air temperature above 5°C, little/ no rain and low wind speeds.

The amphibian ova searches were conducted following Grayson, Parker and Mullaney (1991) and the other survey techniques followed English Nature (2001) and Natural England (2022) using appropriate equipment. Survey equipment included 1 million candlepower torches, bottle traps constructed from 2-litre drinks bottles and a professional hand net (2mm mesh).

4.6.4 Population Size Class Assessment

As great crested newts were found during the presence/ absence surveys, an additional two surveys were undertaken to allow a population size class assessment. In line with Natural England Guidelines (English Nature, 2001, Natural England, 2022), the six survey visits required were undertaken between mid-March and mid-June, with at least three of the visits during mid-April to mid-May.

All surveys were completed by surveyors from Focus Environmental Consultants holding Natural England survey licences. The methods employed on the survey

included bottle trapping, torching and ova searches. All surveys were undertaken in favourable weather conditions, with night air temperature above 5°C, little/ no rain and low wind speeds.

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4.8 Legislation

The great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) (Laurenti, 1758), is a “European Protected Species” (EPS) and listed on Annex II and Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive. The Directive is transposed into UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, thus making it illegal to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill;
- deliberately disturb with the significant likelihood to affect population survival, breeding, local distribution or abundance;
- deliberately take or destroy eggs;
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place;
- possess, control, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any great crested newt or any part of a great crested newt or anything derived from one.

The above applies to all life stages.

Great crested newts are also afforded protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes intentional or reckless damage of, disturbance to, or obstruction of access to, their places of shelter specifically prohibited. This applies to both aquatic and terrestrial habitat.

5. QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

Focus Environmental Consultants® has the expertise to provide sure-fire environmental solutions to a wide range of projects. The company ethos forges the highest standards of professional scientific practice with a best value approach for our clients. Our core area of expertise is in the production of specialist environmental reports and advice to support planning applications. Our comprehensive services include Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEA), Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and fulfilling protected species surveys, licensing and mitigation requirements. Focus Environmental Consultants is a CIEEM Registered Practice, with all ecological staff being members of this professional body. Our flexible approach, range of skills and broad project experience from major infrastructure contracts to small private developments allows us to adapt to your individual requirements. As well as offering a full suite of ecological services, Focus Environmental Consultants can provide expert arboricultural advice and reports and is building an enviable reputation for innovative habitat creation and management solutions. Focus Environmental Consultants is situated in Worcestershire, providing a convenient and central UK location.

Full Q&E details of surveyors and checkers are available on request.