



13th February 2023

2022/0115 - GREAT CRESTED NEWT SURVEYS AT SHAW LANE (LAND NORTH OF) CARLTON, BARNSELY, NORTH YORKSHIRE - 2022

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was instructed by Network Space to carry out ecological surveys to assist with a planning application at a proposed development site. The site is situated on the north of Shaw Lane, in Carlton (O.S. grid reference: SE 37404 10325) and is the subject of an outline planning application with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) for the construction of up to 215 dwellings with associated car parking/garages, landscaping, public open space including both equipped and non-equipped areas of play, SUDS and drainage, with details of a new vehicular access onto Shaw Lane (planning reference: 2022/0115).

As a part of the planning application, comments were provided by Katie Lawrence (Planning Ecologist, BMBC), requesting further information relating to Great Crested Newt prior to determination. Katie's comments were:

"The ecology report notes the presence of a pond on site and a ditch to the southern boundary in association with a hedgerow; in addition to this it notes the presence of three water bodies within 250m of the proposals site to the south and east. The report rules out a potential impact upon GCN due to the sub-optimal conditions and severance by Shaw Lane of ponds beyond the site boundary. We are not in agreement with this assessment and feel it would be prudent to further consider the presence/absence of GCN on site, with the pond on site to be lost to facilitate the proposals. It is recommended that a data request with BBRC is undertaken to obtain protected species records and eDNA surveys are undertaken during the appropriate season of the water bodies on site and those within 250m of the site to consider the presence/absence of GCN and the potential impacts of the proposed development."

In response to the above comments Rachel Hacking Ecology was instructed to carry out Great Crested Newt surveys of the ponds on site and within 250m of the site boundary.

Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit) and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

RESPONSE

The pond on site is a small waterbody which is heavily overgrown with aquatic vegetation and shaded by trees. The pond held little water at the time of the Phase 1 survey on 6th July 2021 and was dry on a subsequent site visit on the 26th April 2022 and so it was not possible to carry out an eDNA survey of this pond. The lack of aquatic habitat makes the pond unsuitable for GCN breeding.

One pond occurs on the site and three further ponds occur within 250m of the site boundary, a disused section of canal also lies within 250m of the site boundary.

- The nearest pond lies 100m to the south. This pond lies to the south of the site across Shaw Lane which is considered to be a barrier to dispersal
- The second pond lies 200m to the south. This pond also lies to the south of the site across Shaw Lane which is considered to be a barrier to dispersal
- The third lies 215m to the east of the site and is a linear waterbody that occurs on the edge of the industrial estate.
- The disused canal is stocked with fish and therefore is suboptimal habitat for GCN.

A letter was sent to the last know landowners of the ponds listed above on the 16th April 2022, requesting access to undertake a survey. There was no response to these letters and therefore it was not possible to access the ponds within 250m of the site boundary to take samples for an eDNA survey or carry out a GCN survey of the ponds.

The dominant habitat on the site, the field of arable land, is considered a hostile habitat for GCN as it doesn't offer cover from predation or foraging and commuting opportunities. The site does support some suitable GCN terrestrial habitat in the band of tall ruderal herb and the hedgerow bases, and wet ditch. These habitats provide cover from predation as well as foraging and commuting opportunities for GCN. The ponds in the locality have no direct connectivity to the site with Shaw Lane and areas of industrial development acting as barriers to dispersal.

As there is no access to the ponds in the locality to confirm if this species is present in the area of the site, precautionary measures should be taken. Considering the lack of connectivity between the ponds in the locality and the site and that the terrestrial habitats which offer suitable habitat for GCN are restricted to the site boundaries and are retained within the scheme. The following Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) Method Statement must be implemented during the construction phase. This will sufficiently protect any GCN that could occur within the retained boundary habitats.

Should any Great Crested Newt, or any other protected species, be found during construction, work will stop, and a suitably licensed ecologist will be contacted immediately.

- Prior to construction work starting on site, a toolbox talk will be given by an ecologist to all construction personnel. The construction team will nominate a lead member of the team to ensure the RAMs are carried out daily.
- An ecologist will be on call throughout the construction work and will visit site periodically.
- A copy of this RAMs statement will be available at all times on site.
- Prior to commencement of work each day, a brief site walkover will be undertaken by construction personnel to ensure no GCN have entered the construction site overnight particularly any excavations left overnight.



- Heavy vehicles will use existing tracks onto and within the construction zone and avoid driving close to hedgerows.
- It is advisable that only building products to be used on the day are brought and stored on the site. If building products need to be stored on site (e.g. overnight or for a few days) these products will be stored on palettes or retained in bags on palettes to ensure that refuges are not created that will attract newts. If possible, building products should be placed on existing hardstanding.
- All holes created during the construction period (e.g. to lay foundations) will be filled in and finished on the same day so as not to leave any 'pitfall' traps. If this is unavoidable, then one of the following measures needs to be implemented:
 - An escape route is provided overnight from the hole which can be in the form of a wooden plankOR
 - The hole is completely covered by a heavy stone slab which is flush to the surrounding ground, so no newts can access the hole.
- Any spoil resulting from any excavations will be removed from the construction area on the same day and will be taken off site OR placed on hardstanding or on palettes to be removed at a later date.
- All hedgerows will be maintained throughout the construction period.

Kate Reed

Kate Reed
Senior Ecologist

