

# **Hoodlands Farm Pond 1**

## **Wildscapes Planning Application**

### **Hoodlands Farm, Fulshaw Lane, Penistone, S36 9FD**

## **Planning Statement**

### **Overview**

The Great Crested Newt is a species protected under law and is recognised in the UK as an “at risk” species. Its protection is in part due to the loss of habitat from human development of the environment. In response, Natural England has established a programme of District Level Licensing to offer a route for developers to compensate for the development. Developers can meet their responsibility to preserve Great Crested Newts where their projects and developments impact or cause loss to Great Crested Newt habitat. This scheme is part of a range of measures set out by Natural England as part of DEFRA's policy of promoting Biodiversity Net Gain.

Wildscapes CIC have been commissioned by Natural England, under the District Level Licensing scheme, to deliver a set of ponds in Barnsley. This is designed to mitigate the loss of habitat for Great Crested Newts, an at risk species, to increase local populations.

### **Objective**

In 2023 after a successful planning application a DLL pond was created on land at Hoodlands Farm. Following discussions with the landowners at Hoodlands Farm, Wildscapes CIC have identified an area which is suitable to hold two more ponds. These ponds are commissioned to be built under the District Level Licensing scheme. The site has been identified as being within a Strategic Opportunity Area for this scheme. As close enough to existing populations of Great Crested Newts, the creation of appropriate ponds will offer a significant opportunity for colonisation and population increase.

### **Local Context**

The proposed development site lies on agricultural grazing land, providing a range of habitat options for wildlife. The broader area around the site is predominantly agricultural, interspersed with land drains with adjacent farmhouses. The region the site sits is typified as a lowland wetland region with a high alluvial content.

Evidence of current and previously existing pond structures can be seen in the surrounding area, including those lost to agricultural development. Creation of ponds on this site will return these features to the landscape and enhance the local wildlife and biodiversity. As a local feature this is in keeping with the existing landscape and offers a significant opportunity for enhancement.

### **Local Need**

Under the GCN District Level Licensing Framework, which Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council has engaged with as a local planning authority, developers are

encouraged to offset their development via the DLL route. As a result, a number of ponds suitable for the habitation and increasing population of Great Crested Newts must now be created or restored within Barnsley.

As the commissioned delivery body for this scheme, Wildscapes CIC has solicited interest from landowners within Barnsley to host ponds. Of those landowners that have expressed an interest, Wildscapes CIC has identified this site as one which meets the standards and criteria set out by Natural England as ideal for the creation of habitat for and enhancement of the population of Great Crested Newts. Therefore this development meets an identified local need.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 carries a presumption in favour of sustainable development, including environmental sustainability with the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, This is a key strategic strand of the policy.

This application bears direct relevance to chapter 19: 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment':

- Item N2.1.a *Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced (including through requirements for biodiversity net gain where these apply);*
- Item N1.1.b *Identify opportunities for the conservation, enhancement and recovery of landscapes, sensitive waterbodies, habitats and priority or threatened species, including through habitat restoration, the use of nature-based solutions, and the creation and strengthening of ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures (including opportunities which exist at a catchment or landscape scale across plan boundaries)*

In both of these elements, this application meets those requirements by creating carefully constructed and appropriate habitat for an "at risk" species as well as potential habitat for other species.

The District Level Licencing scheme supports developers and the local planning authority in chapter 19.N2.2 for developments within amber and green risk zones, as set out by Natural England. Wildscapes will deliver new ponds, provided by the compensation, to mitigate the harm and loss of biodiversity and habitats. Ponds offer a significant ecological value uplift to habitats as aid the protection of Great Crested Newts and supporting other amphibian and invertebrate species.

District level Licensing ponds meets Chapter 5 'Meeting the challenge of climate change' CC1.1.d as supports nature recovery and the resilience of Great Crested Newts.

The land has been identified as a target area of conservation for Lapwings (*Vanellus vanellus*), a priority species. To meet framework chapter 19.N2.f the work will be done outside bird nesting season, October to February. The British Trust of Ornithology 2026, shows ponds as a common breeding season habitat for Lapwings.

Ponds are the third most utilised habitat by Lapwings, so it is expected that the pond creation will have a positive impact on any potential local populations.

References:

British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) (2026), *Lapwing*. Available at <https://www.bto.org/learn/about-birds/birdfacts/lapwing>

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2026) *National Planning Policy Framework - Plan-making and national decision-making policies* Available at ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a8334c03bd75b81e2329ac4/National\\_Planning\\_Policy\\_Framework.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a8334c03bd75b81e2329ac4/National_Planning_Policy_Framework.pdf))