



**BJ Collins**  
PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYORS

## GREAT CRESTED NEWT RISK ASSESSMENT

LAND AT 16 EQUITY ROAD EAST  
EARL SHILTON  
LEICESTERSHIRE

A report to:

**Hayward Architects**  
19 Station Road  
Hinckley  
Leicestershire  
LE10 1AW

By:

**B J Collins – Protected Species Surveyors Ltd**  
Elvina Cottage  
Wilson's Lane  
Morton  
Southwell  
Nottinghamshire  
NG25 0UF  
[www.bjcollins.co.uk](http://www.bjcollins.co.uk)

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|               |                                    |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Client:       | The executers of Mr M Reynolds     |
| Report Title: | Great Crested Newt Risk Assessment |

|                    |                                                                    |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Survey Site/Job:   | Land at 16 Equity Road East, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire. LE9 7FY |
| OS Grid Reference: | SP 4659 9715                                                       |

|                 |                               |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Survey Date(s): | 12 <sup>th</sup> of June 2026 |
| Lead Surveyor:  | B J Collins MSc MCIEEM        |

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Architect/Agent:    | Hayward Architects |
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### Versioning and Quality Assurance

| Report Status | Date       | Author(s)                 | Reviewed by               |
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**RELIANCE** - The report describes the conditions and ecological features on the site (and possibly its environs) at the time of survey and that this may (is likely to) change over time. Reliance upon the findings of this report should be determined in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management guidance on the longevity of ecological surveys, see Advice Note (April 2019) *On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys* CIEEM.

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## SUMMARY

This Great Crested Newt Risk Assessment has been prepared by BJ Collins – Protected Species Surveyors Limited for Hayward Architects. The report reviews and assesses the potential ecological impact upon special protected amphibians from the development proposal at 16 Equity Road East, Earl Shilton.

The risk assessment was carried out by this consultancy on 12 June 2026. This comprised of a walkover of the site and a habitat suitability assessment of the ditch to the boundary of the site.

The ditch was assessed using the Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) (Oldham *et al*, 2000) and was categorised as being of “negligible potential” to support the specially protected great crested newt.

The ecologist attended with an eDNA sample kit, but the dry ditch prevented the use of the kit, also preventing any risk of breeding great crested newts.

The ditch is of negligible value to great crested newt, and is ranked as ‘green –offence highly unlikely’ by Natural England’s rapid risk assessment.

No further consideration for specially protected species is required, the precautionary actions included within the PEA report remain valid.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to Commission

BJ Collins Protected Species Surveyors Limited was commissioned by Hayward Architects to carry out a phase II amphibian survey for the development proposal on the residential garden of 16 Equity Road East, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire, after a request for further information from the Planners' ecological advisor.

The ecological support was in the form of an amphibian habitat suitability assessment. The site survey was undertaken on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2026, within the designated survey season.

## 1.2 Description of Project

The development proposal involves the change of usage from an extensive residential garden with ornamental lawns and shrubberies to a residential development of two properties.

## 1.3 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to address the requirement for further information regarding the ditch on site and its potential to support specially protected amphibians.

## 1.4 Site Description

The site (indicated by the yellow boundary in Figure 1 below) is located off of Equity Road East in Earl Shilton at (central Ordnance Survey Grid Reference – SP 4659 9715). The site comprises a residential garden with lawns, shrubberies and trees.

The wider landscape comprises of residential development to the south, west and north, with a band of trees surrounding agricultural land immediately east of the site and extending further to a Local Wildlife Site.



Figure 1: The site encircled in yellow, in relation to the surrounding landscape, courtesy of Google Earth.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1 Habitat Suitability Assessment

The ditch on site was assessed for its potential value to great crested newt. This assessment was carried out in accordance with the industry standard<sup>1</sup>. This consisted of an assessment to support great crested newt utilising the industry standard Habitat Suitability Index (HSI)<sup>2</sup>. HSI is a quantitative measure of habitat quality and evaluates the suitability of the water body and surrounding land to support great crested newts. The HSI is a number between 0 and 1 which is derived from an assessment of ten habitat variables known to influence the presence of newts. These variables include quality of the terrestrial habitat, water quality in the pond, presence of fish and fowl, and aquatic macrophyte cover.

In general, waterbodies with a higher score are more likely to support GCN than those with a lower score and suitability for GCN is determined according to the scale outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: HSI Scoring Criteria

| HSI score  | Pond Suitability |
|------------|------------------|
| <0.5       | Poor             |
| 0.5 - 0.59 | Below average    |
| 0.6 – 0.69 | Average          |
| 0.7 – 0.79 | Good             |
| >0.8       | Excellent        |

### 2.2 Rapid Risk Assessment

The results of the habitat suitability index assessment and the supporting ecological surveys were then assessed in accordance with the Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment, contained within the Great Crested Newt Method Statement for EPS Licence Application. This assessment identified the potential for the site to impact upon the species and whether or not mitigation measures or alternatively mitigation licences are required in support of the development.

### 2.3 Great crested newt eDNA surveys

To establish the presence/absence of great crested newt, in accordance with the standard protocol an eDNA sampling kit was acquired and the ecologist attended site to undertake that assessment.

The ditch was dry on arrival, and there was no sign of it having contained any water that season.

### 2.4 Personnel

The assessment was undertaken by B J Collins MSc MCIEEM, an experienced amphibian ecologist trained in undertaking eDNA sampling holding the Natural England licence (2015-18783-CLS-CLS).

<sup>1</sup> Natural England. 2001 *Great crested newt mitigation guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough

<sup>2</sup> Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000). *Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus)*. Herpetological Journal 10 (4), 143-155.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1.1 Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI)

##### Pond 1

The Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) determined the following. The ditch is located within zone A of Great Britain, It is of 80 m<sup>2</sup> in area approximate, the ditch was dry at the time of survey and clearly dries annually, as a result water quality was poor, there was 100% shoreline shade, there was no waterfowl, there were no fish, there are 2 ponds within the local area, the terrestrial habitat surrounding was poor, and finally there was 0% emergent vegetation.



Photograph 3 – The ditch habitat

|                         |                     | Equity Road Ditch |             |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------|
|                         |                     | Results           | Scores      |
| SI <sub>1</sub>         | Location            | A                 | 1.00        |
| SI <sub>2</sub>         | Pond area           | 80m <sup>2</sup>  | 0.16        |
| SI <sub>3</sub>         | Pond drying         | Annually          | 0.10        |
| SI <sub>4</sub>         | Water quality       | Bad               | 0.01        |
| SI <sub>5</sub>         | Shoreline shade     | 100%              | 0.20        |
| SI <sub>6</sub>         | Fowl                | Absent            | 1.00        |
| SI <sub>7</sub>         | Fish                | Absent            | 1.00        |
| SI <sub>8</sub>         | Pond count          | 2                 | 0.52        |
| SI <sub>9</sub>         | Terrestrial habitat | Poor              | 0.33        |
| SI <sub>10</sub>        | Macrophytes         | 0%                | 0.30        |
| <b>HSI</b>              |                     |                   | <b>0.26</b> |
| <b>Pond suitability</b> |                     |                   | <b>Poor</b> |

Figure 2 – HSI scores for Pond 1

## 4. GCN RAPID RISK ASSESSMENT

The above considerations were then placed into the Natural England Rapid Risk assessment tool.

| 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)      | No effect                                                                                                                                           | 0                                     |
| 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:                                 |                                                                                                                                                     | 0                                     |
| Rapid risk assessment result:            |                                                                                                                                                     | <b>GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b> |

"Green: offence highly unlikely" indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that it is highly unlikely any offence would be committed should the development proceed. Therefore, no licence would be required.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessment concludes that the ditch on site is of negligible potential for breeding great crested newt.

No further consideration or mitigation is required beyond the recommendations within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (extended).