

Technical Note



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Project: Hall Farm, 1 Main Street, Dadlington,
Nuneaton CV13 6HX

Our Reference: 250421.HSI

To: Kate Walker

Date: 12 February 2026

Subject: Great Crested Newt Habitat
Suitability Index Assessment

Prepared by: Imogen Holloway

Introduction and methodology

Following on from comments made by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council on the 20 January 2026, to identify potential presence of great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* within ponds within 250m of the Site, Croft Ecology was commissioned by Kate Walker to undertake a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment with regards to GCN for the proposed construction of 1no. holiday let at Hall Farm, 1 Main Street, Dadlington, Nuneaton CV13 6HX.

A Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Note and an Indicative Gain Plan for the proposed development of 1no. holiday let were completed by Croft Ecology in 2025. The red line boundary provided by the Proposed Site Plan (25 79 03B – As Proposed Site Plan – Scheme 02 – Sept 2025.pdf) was used for this report.

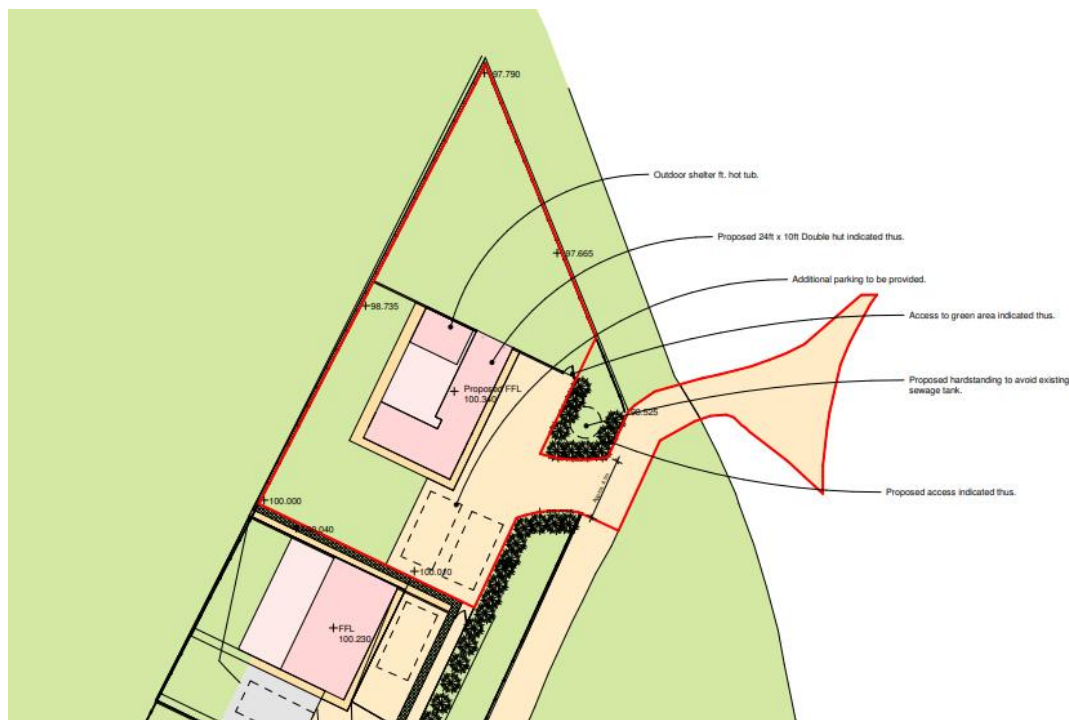


Figure 1. Red line boundary of the Site sourced from the Proposed Site Plan (25 79 03B – As Proposed Site Plan – Scheme 02 – Sept 2025.pdf

The Site lies within an amber risk zone for GCN according to NatureSpace, which lists amber zones as containing main population centres for GCN and comprising important connecting habitats that aid natural dispersal.

Two ponds were identified within a 250m radius of the Site (Figure 2). The closest pond (P1) was subject to a Habitat Suitability Assessment (HSI). The second pond within 250m was unable to be accessed as it was located on private land.

The scope of the survey was to identify whether the pond (P1) was suitable to support a population of GCN. GCN are afforded full protection under European and British law which makes it an offence to deliberately kill or injure individuals, damage their breeding or resting places, and/or obstruct access to their breeding or resting places.

The HSI assessment is a widely accepted method to determine if a waterbody is suitable for GCN by assessing ten 'suitability' criteria, namely:

- geographic location,
- pond area,
- frequency of drying,
- water quality,
- perimeter shading,
- waterfowl presence,
- fish presence,

- pond density within 1km,
- terrestrial habitat quality, and
- macrophyte cover.

The methods used to measure each variable are provided within ARG advice note 5 (2010). The mean of these ten variables then calculates a score to determine if additional investigation is necessary (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Scale of Pond Suitability used in HSI Assessments

HSI Score	Pond Suitability
< 0.50	Poor
0.50 – 0.59	Below Average
0.60 – 0.69	Average*
0.70 – 0.79	Good*
> 0.80	Excellent*

**Pond typically requires further surveys if it is to be impacted by development proposals*

Personnel

The survey and assessment were undertaken by Imogen Holloway BSc (Hons), Assistant Ecologist at Croft Ecology and Anna Scott-Swift MCIEEM, Director of Ecology at Croft Ecology.

Imogen has three years' experience of conducting bat surveys, carrying out emergence and re-entry surveys, and bat transect surveys. Imogen also has experience writing PEA reports.

Anna has over 20 years of experience working in the field of ecology and has undertaken and reviewed dozens of Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, Habitat Suitability Index Assessments, GCN surveys and Ecological Impact Assessments. Anna holds a Level 2 survey licence for bats (2025-82204-CL18-BAT)10527-CLS-CLS), a Level 1 survey licence for GCN (2025-82200-SCI-CL08) and a survey licence for barn owl (2026-88081-CL29-OWL).

Survey Date and Conditions

The survey was undertaken on 3 February 2026.

Weather conditions at the time of the survey were dry with a moderate breeze, 100% cloud cover and a temperature of 3°C.

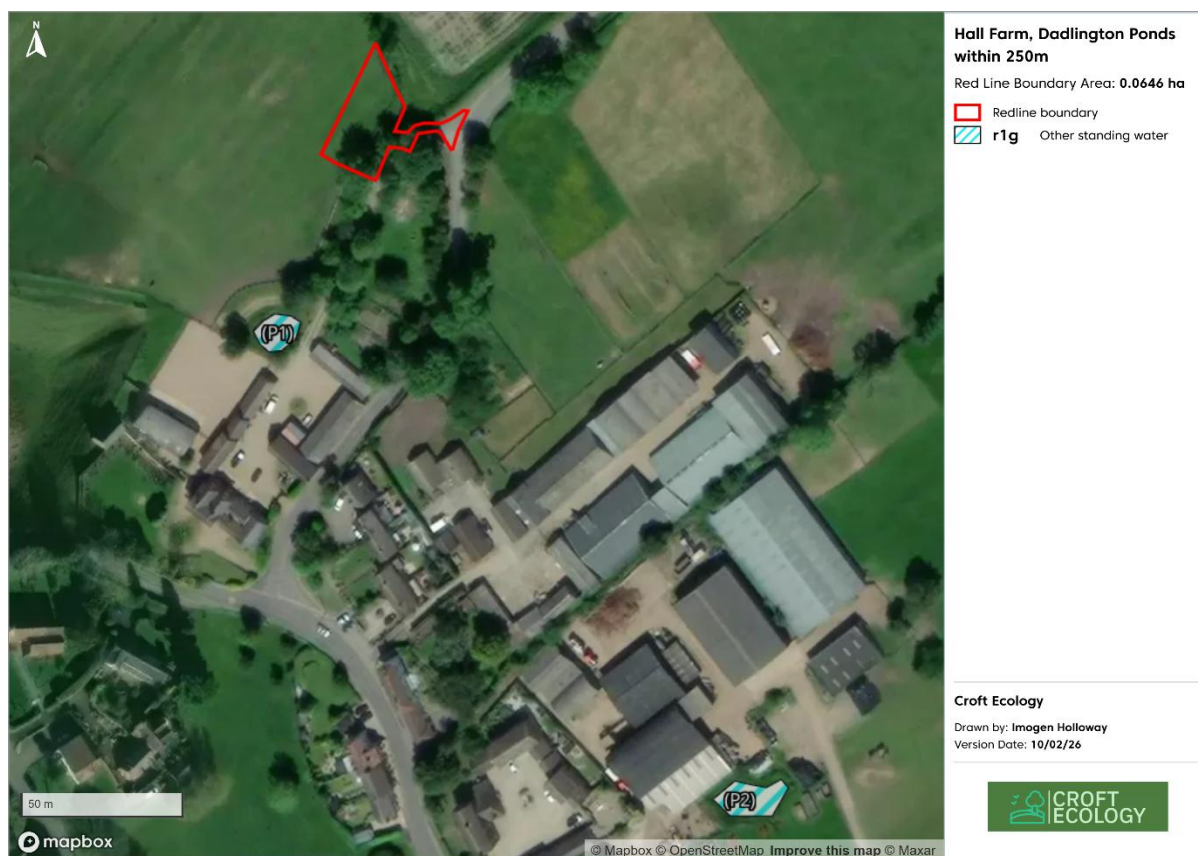


Figure 2. Hall Farm red line boundary and ponds within 250m.

Results

The result of the HSI assessment was 'Poor' for the pond P1 (Photo 1). This was predominantly due to the presence of fish (koi carp and goldfish) within the pond and the limited foraging and sheltering opportunities offered by the neighbouring habitat. The results are presented below in Table 2.

The vegetation surrounding the pond consisted of abundant Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, and rarely recorded pampas grass *Cortaderia selloana*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, and soft shield fern *Polystichum setiferum*. Marsh marigold *Caltha palustris* and yellow flag-iris *Iris pseudacorus* were also recorded at the margins of the pond. Silver birch *Betula pendula*, downy birch *Betula pubescens* and an Acer sp. were recorded on the banks of the pond; however, none had exposed roots so did not provide ideal terrestrial sheltering habitat for GCN. The pond was fed by runoff from the neighbouring parking area and rainwater runoff from the roof of a nearby building. Taking all of the above into account, it was considered unlikely that GCN would inhabit the pond, thereby reducing the likelihood of the species using terrestrial habitats within the Site.

Table 2. HSI results

HSI Category	P1 HSI Result	P1 HSI Numerical Score
Location	A	1
Pond Area	150 m ²	0.1
Pond Permanence	Never Dries	0.9
Water Quality	Moderate	0.67
Shade	0-60%	1
Waterfowl Effect	Minor	0.67
Fish Presence	Major	0.01
Pond Density within 1km	12	1
Terrestrial Habitat	Poor	0.33
Macrophyte Cover	0- 10%	0.4
HSI Score	Poor	0.37



Photo 1. P1 within the Site boundary, with a HSI result of poor.

MAGIC maps show no Class survey licence returns or pond surveys within 1km of the Site boundary.

The Site is within the amber GCN risk zone according to NatureSpace. NatureSpace lists amber zones as containing main population centres for GCN and comprising important connecting habitats that aid natural dispersal.

Terrestrial habitat on Site was dominated by other neutral grassland, in poor condition (Photo 2). Other neutral grassland does provide suitable terrestrial habitat for foraging and sheltering GCN; however, the habitat connecting the Site and the pond was dominated by developed land or heavily managed modified grassland (Photo 3). The suitability of the grassland is also reduced as it does not sit within a habitat mosaic of other more suitable habitats such as woodland or scrub.



Photo 3. Other neutral grassland throughout the Site.



Photo 4. Developed land and modified grassland connecting the Site and the pond.

The terrestrial habitat surrounding the Site was predominantly arable farmland which provides limited suitability for GCN (See Figure 3 below). Ashby Canal runs to the north and west from approximately 430m to the west of the Site, posing as a potentially significant barrier to GCN movement. Pockets of woodland and hedgerows in the surrounding landscape would provide suitable terrestrial habitat for commuting, foraging and sheltering GCN but these are limited in extent and not immediately adjacent to the pond or the Site.

Despite the Site being in an amber risk zone for GCN, and having some suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN, the low HSI score of the on-Site pond, the lack of records within 1km of the Site and the lack of suitable terrestrial habitat connecting the pond to the Site indicate that the Site is of **low** value for this species.

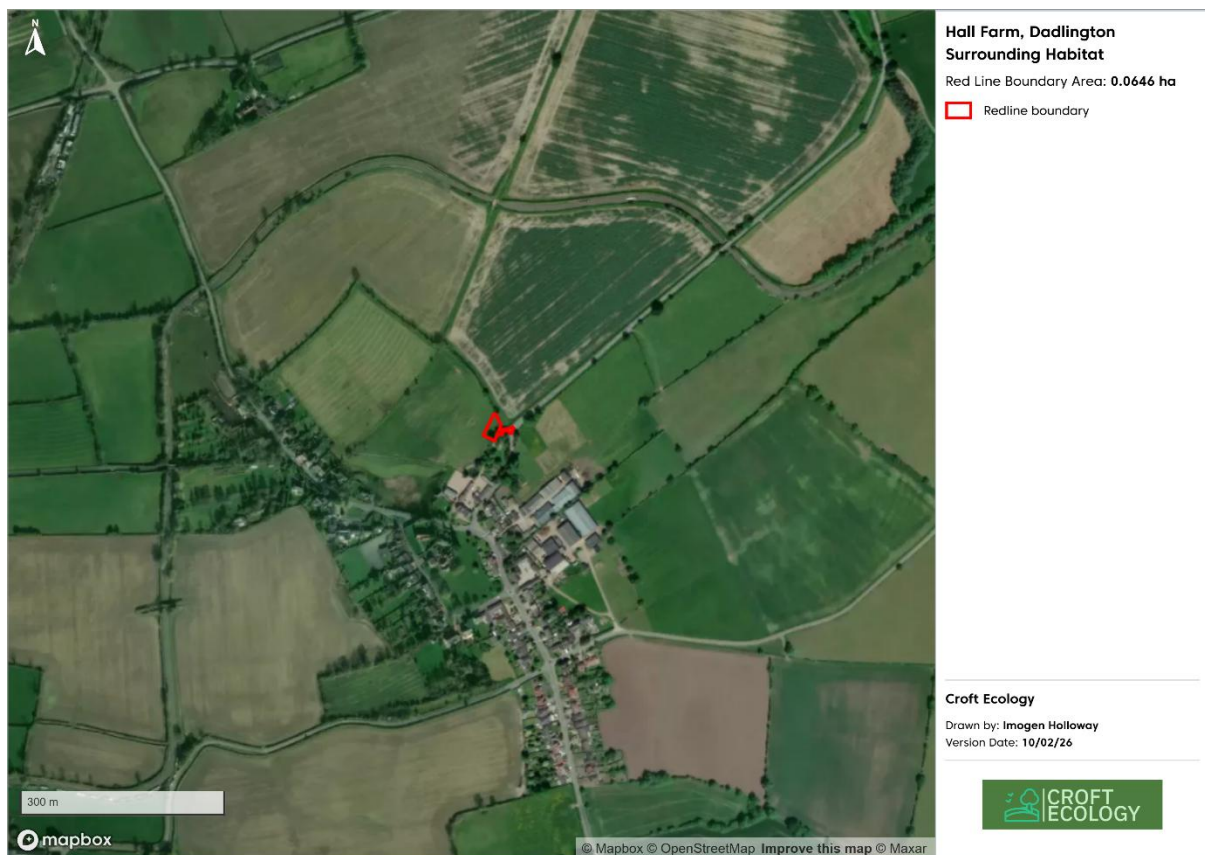


Figure 3. Habitats surrounding the Site.

Recommendations

No further GCN surveys are recommended.

For the reasons stated above GCN are not expected to be present within the Site. Instead, it is proposed that reasonable avoidance measures (RAMS) for GCN will be sufficient and it is a proportionate response to ensure there are no impacts to GCN as a result of the development. The following RAMS are recommended:

- Before works commence, a log pile measuring 1m x 1m must be created in an area of the Site, or within the client ownership adjacent to the Site, away from the proposed works and close to boundary/connective features. Any common amphibians encountered during the works can be relocated to the log pile, which will also act as an enhancement post-development.
- Vegetation clearance should take place between March to October as this is within the active period for GCN and avoids the low possibility of disturbing hibernating GCN. The vegetation clearance should be undertaken in a phased directional manner beginning within the centre of the Site and clearing towards the retained vegetated habitats outside of the Site extents. This will allow any sheltering individual fauna to disperse and encourage them to enter the adjacent vegetation offsite, undisturbed by works.
- Any storage on-site will be located on areas of bare ground or hardstanding, and materials will be stored off the ground on wooden pallets or similar to discourage GCN, and other fauna, from sheltering underneath them.
- All spoil material will be compacted at the end of each day to prevent the formation of cracks or crevices in the soil that could inadvertently provide shelter for GCN.
- All waste should be kept in skips or removed from Site as soon as possible to avoid creating new areas of habitat suitable for GCN during the works.
- Any trenches left open overnight should have a scaffold plank or similar placed in them to provide a means of escape for any trapped animal. The trenches should be checked each morning by a competent person. If any GCN are found the works must stop and advice sought, as below. If any common amphibians or other fauna are found, they should be carefully moved to a safe area outside of the development Site.
- If GCN are found at any stage of the process, works must stop immediately, the GCN left untouched, and advice sought from an ecologist and Natural England.
- The proposed works must implement appropriate pollution control measures to ensure the nearby pond (P1) is not contaminated with works materials, although this is considered unlikely given it is uphill of the red line boundary. All fuels, oils, and chemicals will be stored in appropriate containers located away from drainage pathways and at least 10m from pond P1. Additionally, cement, concrete and grout mixing will take place in a designated area away at least 10m from the pond P1.