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Landscape and Ecology Management Plan, Mythe Farm

Intended for:

Mr. & Mrs. J Garland

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1. The Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) has been prepared by Ecologyia Ltd on behalf of Mr and Mrs J. Garland. It is in respect of the full planning application for *Retrospective change of use of land to provide secure caravan storage and associated infrastructure and creation of a new wildlife pond* (25/00915/FUL).
- 1.1.2. The purpose of this document is to provide details on the long-term management objectives, maintenance activities and responsibilities for the landscape and ecology management of the land.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

- 1.2.1. This report will include the following:
- Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
 - Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
 - Aims and objectives of management.
 - Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
 - Prescription of management actions.
 - Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
 - Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan.
 - Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.
- 1.2.2. The report should be read in conjunction with the following reports, also found in appendices 1 and 2:
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report – Mythe Farm (Ecologyia Ltd, August 2025, Doc reference number: CTPL_020_02_R1_18092025).
 - Great Crested Newt Survey & Recommendation Report – Mythe Farm (Ecologyia Ltd, August 2025, Doc reference number: CTPL_020_02_R2_18092025).

1.3. DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION OF FEATURES TO BE MANAGED

- 1.3.1. An Ecological Appraisal was undertaken by Ecologyia Ltd. (Ecologyia Ltd, August 2025, Doc reference number: CTPL_020_02_R1_18092025) for Mr and Mrs J. Garland in relation to land at Mythe Farm, Pinwall Lane, Sheepy Magna, Atherstone (CV9 3PF). The assessment aimed to determine the ecological value of the site, identify potential constraints to development, review historical ecological conditions, and outline any necessary mitigation or enhancement measures.

- 1.3.2. The appraisal comprised an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, a desk-based study and an evaluation of historical ecological impacts.
- 1.3.3. The results of the assessment indicated that the site does not form part of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites, and with appropriate pollution prevention measures, no effects on designated sites are anticipated during creation of the biodiversity enhancement area.
- 1.3.4. No significant impacts to protected or notable species are expected from the development of the caravan storage facility, except a potential temporary disturbance risk to breeding birds, dependent on construction timing.
- 1.3.5. Precautionary measures are recommended to protect habitats and species during construction, including Reasonable Avoidance Measures for:
 - Birds;
 - Badgers (*Meles meles*); and
 - Great Crested Newts (GCN) (*Triturus cristatus*).
- 1.3.6. Existing woodland to the north will be retained, with ecological buffers integrated into the design.
- 1.3.7. A GCN Survey was undertaken by Ecologyia Ltd. (Ecologyia Ltd, August 2025, Doc reference number: CTPL_020_02_R2_18092025) for Mr and Mrs J. Garland at Mythe Farm, Pinwall Lane, Sheepy Magna, Atherstone (CV9 3PF). The purpose of the assessment was to establish the presence or likely presence of GCN and their habitats, understand historical ecological conditions, and evaluate any potential impacts associated with past development. The survey also aimed to provide recommendations for further survey or mitigation where required.
- 1.3.8. The assessment incorporated:
 - a desk-based data review;
 - a walkover survey;
 - Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessments; and
 - Presence / likely absence surveys.
- 1.3.9. A marked population decline of GCN has occurred in the wider area between surveys conducted in 2010 and those carried out in 2024.
 - Pond P1: reduced from a Medium population (2010) to a Small population (2024).
 - Pond P2: population lost entirely. The decline is considered likely attributable to landscape changes over this period and a reduction in pond suitability, evidenced through decreasing HSI scores. This suggests a natural reduction of what was previously a population of Local importance.

- 1.3.10. Historical aerial imagery indicated that suitable core habitat (breeding, foraging, resting/hibernation) has been largely confined to land directly around Pond P1. Land between P1 and P2 has changed from agricultural to amenity use, reducing its capacity to support GCN.
- 1.3.11. Biodiversity enhancement measures are proposed to support the recovery and long-term viability of the local GCN population. These measures, focus within the proposed biodiversity enhancement area and include creation of one new pond designed specifically for GCN breeding, construction of one hibernaculum to provide suitable overwintering habitat for common amphibians and GCN, establishment of varied-sward grassland, improving foraging opportunities and supporting safe commuting routes to the wider environment
- 1.3.12. The survey confirmed a significant historical decline in the local GCN population, likely driven by habitat loss and reduced pond suitability. The proposed biodiversity enhancements are considered appropriate to help restore habitat quality, support species recovery, and strengthen ecological resilience within the site and surrounding landscape.

2 ECOLOGICAL TRENDS AND CONSTRAINTS ON SITE THAT MIGHT INFLUENCE MANAGEMENT

2.1. CONSTRUCTION

- 2.1.1. The construction of the biodiversity enhancement area has the potential to affect several protected species, if appropriate precautionary measures are not implemented. Species of concern include GCN, breeding birds, and badgers¹.
- 2.1.2. A GCN Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement (RAMS) has been prepared by Ecologyia Ltd (Section 8 of Great Crested Newt Survey & Recommendation Report – Mythe Farm, Ecologyia Ltd, CTPL_020_02_R2_18092025). The RAMS provides procedures to ensure that construction activities within the biodiversity enhancement area:
- Avoid committing an offence under relevant wildlife legislation by reducing the risk of encountering GCN as far as practicable;
 - Maintain the favourable conservation status of GCN populations within the wider landscape; and
 - Ensure no harm or injury to any great crested newt.
- 2.1.3. For badgers, a pre-works inspection within 6 weeks prior to construction must be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist, to confirm the absence of active badger setts directly within, or within 30m, of the proposed enhancement area. If any setts are identified, the ecologist will advise on appropriate mitigation and licensing requirements.
- 2.1.4. For breeding birds, vegetation clearance or other disturbance-creating activities should be scheduled outside the main bird nesting season (March to September inclusive). Where this is not possible, an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) must be present on site to undertake pre-works nesting bird checks. Should active nests be found, the ECoW will delineate suitable exclusionary buffer zones and determine whether works can proceed or must be postponed until chicks have fledged.

2.2. MANAGEMENT

- 2.2.1. The ecological features within the proposed enhancement area, namely the pond, other neutral grassland and hibernacula, will have the potential to support a range of protected and priority species. As such, management must be sensitively delivered to prevent disturbance, harm or habitat degradation.
- 2.2.2. The following species or species groups may be impacted by routine vegetation or habitat management if not appropriately timed or carried out:

GCN and other amphibians

¹ As detailed in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report.

2.2.3. GCN and other amphibians may be present within the pond (breeding), surrounding neutral grassland (foraging), and hibernacula (overwintering). Management activities pose risks of:

- Direct harm through cutting, strimming or heavy machinery use;
- Damage to refuges or hibernation sites; and
- Disturbance to pond margins or shallow water zones used for breeding.

Common reptile species

2.2.4. Likely to utilise grassland, tussocky vegetation and hibernacula for basking, shelter and foraging. Risks include:

- Injury from mowing or strimming;
- Destruction of refuges or hibernation features; and
- Disturbance during the active season (March – October).

Breeding Birds

2.2.5. The grassland, scrub edges and pond margins provide nesting habitat for a variety of bird species. Risks include:

- Destruction of active nests during vegetation management; and
- Disturbance of adults or fledglings.

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3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES AND MANAGEMENT

3.1. LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

3.1.1. The primary aim of the management and maintenance proposals is to ensure the successful establishment of new planting. They have been grouped into two main objectives:

- Ecological Protection and Enhancement: Safeguard the ecological interest of the proposed biodiversity enhancement area, by creating a variety of new habitats to support biodiversity.
- Sustainable Planting: Ensure new planting thrives in challenging conditions.

3.1.2. The management and monitoring prescriptions necessary to achieve these objectives are outlined in the following sections of this document.

3.2. OBJECTIVES FOR FLORA

3.2.1. The proposals seek to create a range of habitats to provide opportunities for GCN to recover from the historical, natural decline. The following habitat creation is proposed within the northern section of the application red line boundary (the biodiversity enhancement area).

Creation of 1 x pond suitable for GCN breeding

3.2.2. The aim is the creation of a pond suitable for GCN.

3.2.3. The Ecology and Landscape habitat objectives are:

- Create and maintain a high-quality freshwater pond suitable for GCN breeding;
- Provide a fish-free waterbody with varied aquatic vegetation for egg-laying, cover, and refuge;
- Establish a structurally diverse pond margin supporting emergent, marginal, and bankside flora;
- Support aquatic and terrestrial invertebrate communities to enhance the food resource for amphibians;
- Ensure water quality is maintained through natural processes and sensitive management;
- Maintain open, unshaded areas of the pond to maximise solar gain and support amphibian development; and
- Provide safe access routes between the pond and surrounding terrestrial habitats.

Creation of 1x hibernacula suitable for common amphibian and GCN hibernation

3.2.4. The aim is the creation of a high-quality terrestrial refuge and overwintering feature (hibernaculum) suitable for GCN, other amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates.

3.2.5. The ecology and Landscape objectives are:

- Create and maintain a stable, frost-free underground refuge that provides year-round shelter and overwintering opportunities for GCN and other amphibians;
- Provide a variety of internal voids and crevices using logs, rubble and stone to ensure safe, undisturbed microhabitats;
- Incorporate natural, breathable materials (e.g., soil, turf, dead wood) to support stable humidity levels suited to amphibian hibernation;
- Position the hibernaculum within suitable terrestrial habitat, ensuring connectivity to the pond and surrounding grassland to allow safe movement for GCN;
- Create a buffering zone of grassland around the feature to provide foraging, shelter and dispersal habitat;
- Avoid shading by maintaining partial sun exposure, helping to regulate internal temperature and maintain habitat suitability across seasons;
- Protect the hibernaculum from disturbance, including trampling, vegetation removal, or accidental damage during site management;
- Enhance the feature for a wider range of wildlife, including terrestrial invertebrates and reptiles, through the incorporation of deadwood and varied substrate layers; and
- Ensure long-term structural integrity of the hibernaculum through periodic checks and sensitive management.

Provision of grassland of varied sward to facilitate foraging and commuting to the wider environment (other neutral grassland in moderate condition).

3.2.6. The aim is the creation of other neutral grassland on moderate condition.

3.2.7. The Ecological and Landscape habitat objectives are:

- To allow wild flora to develop and emerge on newly created areas;
- Promote a diversity of native wild flora;
- Provide opportunities for enhanced nectar availability for insect population;
- Provide places of refuge for small mammals; and
- Keep free of litter.

3.3. OBJECTIVES FOR FAUNA

3.3.1. Habitat creation and the introduction of a management regime will ensure enhanced opportunities for wildlife to continue to be present within the proposed biodiversity enhancement area. This will be of benefit to GCN and other amphibians and other key species, such as bats, birds and invertebrates.

GCN and other amphibians

- 3.3.2. The creation of a new pond, areas of neutral grassland, and a hibernaculum will significantly improve the quality and availability of habitat for GCN across the site. Together, these features provide the essential components required to support all stages of the species' life cycle and facilitate movement across the landscape.
- 3.3.3. The new pond could provide high-quality aquatic habitat designed specifically for GCN requirements, including suitable water depth and permanence, no fish presence, emergent and submerged vegetation for egg-laying. This could increase breeding capacity and support recovery of the local population following previously documented declines.
- 3.3.4. Newly created neutral grassland with a varied sward structure could support a diverse invertebrate community. This could provide abundant food resources for both juvenile and adult newts, enhancing foraging opportunities throughout the active season.
- 3.3.5. Grassland structure, tussocks, and areas of rough vegetation could offer natural daytime shelter and moist refugia. The hibernaculum provides additional artificial refuges using materials (e.g., logs, rubble, soil) that maintain cool, damp microclimates suitable for amphibians. The proposed hibernaculum could offer a secure, frost-free overwintering location where newts can safely hibernate. Additional opportunities will arise from naturally developing features within the grassland (e.g., root plates, cracks, dense vegetation), providing a range of hibernation sites with varying microhabitats.
- 3.3.6. The combined network of grassland, field edges, and pond margins forms a safe commuting corridor between habitats. This enhances permeability of the landscape and improves connectivity between terrestrial and aquatic habitats, supporting the movement of adults and dispersing juveniles.

Bats

- 3.3.7. Enhancement of bat foraging/commuting opportunities could be provided through the planting of other neutral grassland and the pond creation. These will create enhanced foraging and commuting opportunities for bats within the Site.

Birds

- 3.3.8. The proposed planting of other neutral grassland along with the creation of the pond together could enhance opportunities for foraging and nesting birds.

Reptiles

- 3.3.9. Habitats within the open space around the pond will be managed for the benefits of ecology, including the management of grassland habitats to create a rough, tussocky sward to provide opportunities for breeding, sheltering, foraging and dispersal could provide additional foraging resources for reptiles).

4 APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR ACHIEVING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1. GENERAL

- 4.1.1. Although Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is not the primary focus of this LEMP, the habitat condition criteria from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric have been applied to both the 'other neutral grassland' and the 'pond'. Using these condition assessment benchmarks provides clear guidance on the criteria and management actions required to support the successful establishment and long-term maintenance of the proposed habitat types. The targets set for this scheme are for both the pond and the grassland to achieve 'Moderate' condition.

4.2. TARGET HABITAT: HIBERNACULUM

- 4.2.1. According to the Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook (Baker et al, 2011) hibernacula should be located close to a breeding site (within 250m maximum), in an area unlikely to flood, within habitat likely to be used by amphibians and in an area with minimal disturbance.

- 4.2.2. Material for hibernacula creation should be sourced locally.

4.3. TARGET HABITAT: POND

- 4.3.1. Table 4.3-1 below describes the actions to be taken (coloured green) to achieve aims and objectives of this LEMP.

. Table 4.3-1: Description of management options for achieving aims and objectives².

Condition Assessment criteria	Targeted	Management
Target habitat: Pond		
A. The pond is good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution. Turbidity is acceptable if the pond is grazed by livestock.	Yes	Avoid the introduction of nutrients (e.g., fertilisers, runoff from arable land) into the pond, as these can increase algal growth and turbidity. Ensure no waste, chemicals or contaminated surface water enters the pond from surrounding land.
B. There is semi-natural habitat moderate distinctiveness or above surrounding the pond, for at least 10m from the pond edge for its entire perimeter	Yes	Creation of other neutral grassland around the pond that extends at least 10m from the pond edge.
C. Less than 10% of the water surface is covered with duckweed <i>Lemna spp.</i> or filamentous algae	No	
D. The pond is not artificially connected to other waterbodies, such as agricultural ditches or artificial pipework	Yes	Maintain no connectivity to other artificial waterbodies.
E. Pond water levels can fluctuate naturally throughout the year. No obvious artificial dams, pumps or pipework. .	Yes	Maintain no connectivity to other artificial waterbodies.

² Condition criteria were extracted from the statutory biodiversity metric condition assessment spreadsheet (found at [Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments - July 2025.xlsx](#))

Condition Assessment criteria	Targeted	Management
Target habitat: Pond		
F. There is an absence of listed non-native plant and animal species	Yes	Use only local plant species
G. The pond is not artificially stocked with fish. If the pond naturally contains fish it is a native fish assemblage at low densities.	Yes	Do not introduce fish to the pond
H. Emergent, submerged or floating plants (excluding duckweed) cover at least 50% of the pond area which is less than 3m deep	No	
I. The pond surface is no more than 50% shaded by adjacent trees and scrub.	Yes	Control scrub.

4.4. TARGET HABITAT: OTHER NEUTRAL GRASSLAND

4.4.1. Table 4.4-1 below describes the actions to be taken (coloured green) to achieve aims and objectives of this LEMP. Achieving the below objectives (marked as yes) will ensure that the grassland is of moderate condition and suitable to support wildlife.

5 Table 4.4-1: Description of management options for achieving aims and objectives³.

Condition Assessment criteria	Targeted	Management
Target habitat: Other neutral grassland		
A. The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type.	Yes	Prepare the ground and sow grass seed in accordance with recommended specifications (wildflower species list by JustSeeds.com or similar and approved). Wildflowers • <i>Alliaria petiolata</i> – Garlic Mustard • <i>Allium ursinum</i> – Ramsons • <i>Campanula trachelium</i> – Nettle-leaved Bellflower • <i>Digitalis purpurea</i> – Foxglove • <i>Filipendula ulmaria</i> – Meadowsweet • <i>Galium mollugo</i> – Hedge Bedstraw • <i>Geum urbanum</i> – Wood Avens • <i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i> – Bluebell • <i>Hypericum perforatum</i> – Perforate St John's Wort • <i>Silene flos-cuculi</i> – Ragged Robin • <i>Primula vulgaris</i> – Primrose • <i>Prunella vulgaris</i> – Selfheal • <i>Silene dioica</i> – Red Campion • <i>Stachys officinalis</i> – Betony • <i>Stachys sylvatica</i> – Hedge Woundwort • <i>Teucrium scorodonia</i> – Wood Sage Grasses • <i>Agrostis capillaris</i> – Common Bent • <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> – Sweet Vernal-grass • <i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i> – False Brome • <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i> – Crested Dogstail

³ Condition criteria were extracted from the statutory biodiversity metric condition assessment spreadsheet (found at [Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments - July 2025.xlsx](#))

Condition Assessment criteria	Targeted	Management
Target habitat: Other neutral grassland		
		• <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> – Tufted Hair-grass • <i>Festuca rubra ssp. juncea</i> – Slender-creeping Red-fescue • <i>Poa nemoralis</i> – Wood Meadow-grass
B. Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	Yes	Allow grass to create a varied height sward.
C. Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	Yes	Monitor development and carry out targeted seeding/planting works
D. Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.	Yes	Maintain no bracken cover in the grassland through cutting/spraying any developing patches.
E. Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	Yes	Have designated access routes that are set out so over time it is easy to identify and identify in varying weather conditions.
F. There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m ² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition.	No	

5 PRESCRIPTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AND WORK SCHEDULE

5.1. GENERAL

5.1.1. To ensure the successful establishment of the habitat types, the following maintenance and management works have been scheduled for the management plan period and will cover the entire area of the site.

5.1.2. The following table (Table 6-1.1) sets out detailed prescriptions for management actions required to achieve the objectives outlined in this LEMP. Each prescription specifies the habitat or feature to be managed, the actions to be undertaken and timing and frequency. These measures are designed to maintain and enhance biodiversity and support long-term sustainability of the site.

. Table 6-1.1: Management actions and work schedule

Ref	Management Activity	Frequency	Timing
Other neutral grassland			
Establishment			
	Prepare the ground and sow grass seed in accordance with recommended specifications. Prepared areas shall be cultivated to a medium tilth by removing the top 150 mm of topsoil and harrowing the subsoil. All debris and litter must be cleared, and undesirable weeds such as nettles, and thistles shall be spot-treated. The soil surface will then be rolled to create a firm and level planting bed.	Do not cultivate during periods of waterlogging, frozen or snowy conditions	Year 0
	Sow designated areas with the Grassland seed mix supplied by JustSeeds.com (or similar and approved) at the recommended application rate, then roll the surface to ensure good seed-to-soil contact.	Between March to October	Year 0
	Carry out a minimum of three cuts during the first year, ensuring all arisings are removed from the site. Any remaining perennial weeds, such as docks, should be dug out and disposed of appropriately.	Between April to September	Year 0-2
	Any areas where grassland have failed to establish will be re-seeded to encourage full coverage in appropriate conditions when it is moist and mild.	Between April to October	Year 0-2
	Carry out litter picks	As necessary	Year 0-2
	Water to field capacity during initial establishment particularly with the first six weeks since seeding	As necessary	Year 0-2
Management			
	To help reduce soil nutrient levels, all wildflower areas should be cut twice annually to a height of 40–70 mm. Cuttings should be left in place for one week to allow seed drop, then removed from the site.	Between April to September	Year 2-30
	Cut to 100–150 mm first, then lower only if required to spring up species growth. Use a phased cut (e.g., cut 50–75% of the area at a time) to allow wildlife escape routes. Walk through check prior to cutting to ensure no reptiles, amphibians or nesting birds are present.		Year 2-30
	Re-seed monitor the extent of scrub cover, including bramble, and implement control or removal measures if coverage exceeds the threshold of 5%.	Between March to October	Year 2-30

Ref	Management Activity	Frequency	Timing
	Control the spread of weed species, such as nettles, and thistles, by cutting, pulling if they exceed 5% cover within the grassland area. No chemicals to be used, discuss with ecologist.	Between March to October	Year 2-30
	Inspect for invasive non-native species (INNS)	As necessary	Year 2-30
	Carry out litter picks	As necessary	Year 2-30
Pond⁴			
Establishment			
	Excavate pond to varied depths with gently sloping edges to provide shallow shelves and deeper centre zones. Ensure no fish or waterfowl are introduced at any stage. Allow the pond to fill naturally or use clean, chlorine-free water. Leave 20–30% of pond margin open and unmanaged to encourage natural colonisation. Avoid polluted inflows. Maintain natural hydrological variation as amphibian ponds are dynamic systems.	Establishment and as necessary	Year 0 - 5
	Introduce only native species consistent with local pond flora. Plant submerged, floating, and emergent vegetation in small clusters across the pond edges. Avoid overplanting—allow natural succession to establish additional species. Maintain open sunny conditions by preventing excessive scrub shading.	Establishment and as necessary	Year 0 - 5
	Prevent nutrient inputs by avoiding use of fertilisers, pesticides, or herbicides within 10m of the pond. Cut back overhanging vegetation annually in winter to reduce shading and leaf litter. Prevent livestock access.	As necessary	Year 0 - 5
	Monitor colonisation twice yearly (spring and autumn). Supplement with additional native marginal or submerged species if vegetation cover is <30% after Year 2. Remove excessive algal growth manually if required, avoiding disturbance to amphibians. Avoid removing silt or vegetation during initial establishment unless absolutely required. No introduction of ornamental plants or non-native.	Annually	Year 0 - 5
	Prevent unintended vehicle access. Maintain surrounding terrestrial buffer habitat (grassland, tussocks) to support connectivity. Cut or strim on a high cut in October each year. Rake up cuttings and compost elsewhere on site or remove from the site completely. Remove all litter twice monthly.	As necessary	Year 0 - 5
Management			
	Cut back 10-20% of surrounding scrub every 5-10 years	Every 5 years	Year 5-30
	Maintain at least half of pond perimeter in full or partial sun	Undertake pond vegetation removal or margin cutting	Year 5-30
	Remove no more than one-third of dense vegetation in any one year.		Year 5-30
	Alternate sections to maintain refuge for amphibian.		Year 5-30

⁴ Baker et al. (2011) and Pond creation Toolkit (https://freshwaterhabitats.b-cdn.net/app/uploads/2022/11/MPP-Toolkit-core-sheets-1-8_June2011.pdf)

Ref	Management Activity	Frequency	Timing
	Remove slit in late autumn if water depth has significantly reduced.	outside the GCN breeding season (mid-March–June) and ideally in autumn (September–October). Hand tools preferred; avoid heavy or tracked machinery near pond edges.	Year 5-30
	Always leave spoil on the bank for 24 hours to allow amphibians to escape before disposal.		Year 5-30
	Continue monitoring for accidental fish introductions. If fish appear carefully remove them during appropriate seasons following best practice.	Annual	Year 5-30
	Annual checks of water levels	Annual	Year 5-30

5.1.3. To construct a hibernaculum the methodology presented in the Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook (Baker et al., 2011) should be followed, also presented below:

- Remove the turf from the footprint of the hibernaculum and set aside.
- On well-drained soil excavate to a depth of approximately 50cm and set aside spoil.
- Fill the footprint or pit with core material. Materials likely to retain moisture are preferable, such as cut timber, brash and grubbed up tree roots. Other material such as inert hardcore, bricks, rocks, and building rubble may also be used.
- Pack the larger spaces within the core materials with wood chippings, loose topsoil or spoil.
- Cover the hibernaculum with the turves removed from the footprint.
- Take care not to create structures that might attract rodents, such as piles of rubble with many entrance holes.

5.1.4. Once built, the hibernaculum should not be moved or dismantled. Avoid disturbance during amphibian hibernation periods (typically October – March).

5.1.5. Vegetation around the hibernaculum should be maintained on a rotational basis, carried out only during dry weather between April and September, when amphibians are least likely to be using the feature.

5.1.6. Vegetation surrounding the hibernaculum should not be reduced below 150mm.

5.1.7. Only hand tools should be used near the hibernaculum to avoid disturbance.

5.1.8. Keep free of litter.

5.2. GENERAL PRECAUTIONS AND ECOLOGICAL SAFEGUARDS

- 5.2.1. Toolbox talks to all contractors on protected species and RAMS requirements.
- 5.2.2. No works during bird nesting season (March–August) unless a nesting bird check is completed by a competent ecologist immediately beforehand.
- 5.2.3. No chemical herbicides within 10m of the pond.
- 5.2.4. Avoid night works to reduce disturbance to wildlife.
- 5.2.5. Maintain undisturbed habitat corridors between pond, grassland and hibernacula.
- 5.2.6. All arisings or debris should be removed promptly.

6 MAINTAINANCE RESPONSIBILITIES – DETAILS OF THE BODY OR ORGANISATION RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

- 6.1.1. Mr and Mrs J. Garland will have ultimate responsibility for the creation, management and maintenance of the biodiversity enhancement area in accordance with this management plan.
- 6.1.2. It is the responsibility of Mr and Mrs J. Garland to instruct appropriate experienced contractors to establish the various features and habitats proposed, and also to instruct appropriately experienced and qualified ecologists to assess and supervise the work as set out in this management plan, where necessary.

6.2. CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.2.1. All materials used during the development of the biodiversity enhancement area, as well as any operations, will be in accordance with British Standards, and relevant wildlife legislations.
- 6.2.2. A review of the LEMP shall be undertaken every five years to determine its success. If warranted, appropriate remedial actions to the management plan will be undertaken to ensure that the landscaping and ecological aims of the management plan are achieved.

7 ON GOING MONITORING AND REMEDIAL MEASURES

- 7.1.1. This LEMP should be reviewed every 5 years by a suitably qualified landscape architect and ecologist following a monitoring visit with remedial measures captured at those points and the LEMP updated accordingly and re-issued to Mr and Mrs J. Garland.

8 REFERENCES

Baker, J., Beebee T., Buckley, J., Gent, A. and Orchard, D. (2011). Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook. Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bournemouth.

Great Crested Newt Survey & Recommendation Report – Mythe Farm (Ecologyia Ltd, August 2025, Doc reference number: CTPL_020_02_R2_18092025).

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report – Mythe Farm (Ecologyia Ltd, August 2025, Doc reference number: CTPL_020_02_R1_18092025).

Sayer, C.D., Biggs, J., Greaves, H.M., & Williams, P. (2023) Guide to the restoration, creation and management of ponds. University College London, London, UK.

APPENDIX 1 PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

Ecologyia Ltd.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report – Mythe Farm

Intended for:

Mr. & Mrs. J Garland

Date:

August 2025

Project Number:

CTPL_020_02

Document Number:

CTPL_020_02_R1_18092025

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Handling Instructions

This report has been prepared by Ecoloyia Ltd. with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the Services and the Terms agreed between Ecoloyia Ltd. and the Client. Ecoloyia Ltd. disclaims any responsibility to the Client and others in respect of any matters outside the agreed scope of the agreed Services.

This report is confidential to the Client, and Ecoloyia Ltd. accepts no responsibility whatsoever to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known, unless formally agreed by Ecoloyia Ltd. beforehand. Any such party relies upon the report at their own risk.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.3. This report presents an Ecological Appraisal in relation to and at Mythe Farm, Pinwall Lane, Sheepy Magna, Atherstone, CV9 3PF (the development site). The Appraisal was undertaken by Ecology Ltd. on behalf of Mr and Mrs J. Garland.
- 1.1.4. The aims of the study were to assess the conservation value of the survey area, the likely presence of rare, protected and / or notable species, and to identify any features, habitats or species which would constitute potential constraints to the development and provide an interpretation of potential historical habitats and ecological features prior to the construction of the development and provide an appraisal of any potential impacts the development may have had on these. Mitigation and enhancement measures are also discussed (where applicable).
- 1.1.5. The Ecological Appraisal comprises three elements: an extended Phase 1 habitat survey, desk-based study and evaluation of the historical impacts.
- 7.1.2. The development comprises an area of hard standing surrounded by a large earth bund and perimeter security fencing. The development has a portable site office and associated time-limited lighting present within the site. The biodiversity enhancement area comprises a section of arable land within the corner of an agricultural field. Vehicular access to the biodiversity enhancement area, is provided by existing farm access to the west.
- 1.1.6. The Application Site does not form part of any statutory or non-statutory designated site and with the implementation of appropriate pollution prevention and control measures, no impacts on designated sites in the wider area are anticipated during the construction of the biodiversity enhancement area.
- 1.1.7. No impacts on protected and / or notable species are anticipated as a result of the works to create the caravan storage facility, with the exception of breeding birds which may have received a level of disturbance during construction, although this would be subject to the timing of works.
- 7.1.3. Precautionary measures are recommended to protect habitats and species during the construction of the biodiversity enhancement area, including Reasonable Avoidance Measures for birds, badgers and great crested newts (See existing report produced by Ecology Ltd. for and on behalf of the Mr and Mrs J. Garland (doc ref: Mythe Farm Great Crested Newt Survey Report _CTPL_020_02_R2_23082025_Iss_23082025). Woodland to the north of the site will be retained, and appropriate buffers applied within the development design to safeguard these features.
- 7.1.4. With appropriate layout and design measures in place, it is considered that adverse effects on protected / notable species and habitats have and can be avoided.

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2 INTRODUCTION

2.1. BACKGROUND

2.1.1. Ecologyia Limited. (EL) was commissioned by Mr and Mrs J. Garland on 22 March 2024 to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land at Mythe Farm, Pinwall Lane, Sheepy Magna, Atherstone, CV9 3PF. The land is subject to a retrospective planning application in relation to the construction of a caravan storage facility, to include an area of hard standing, perimeter security fencing, portable site office, associated lighting (here on in known as ‘the development’) and a separate section of land to be utilized for biodiversity enhancement. The approximate center of the retrospective application lies at grid reference 431387, 299455 and the biodiversity enhancement area at grid reference 430876, 299634.

2.1.2. The objectives of the study were to:

- Provide baseline information on the current habitats and ecological features both on-site and in the immediate surrounding area;
- Provide an interpretation of potential historical habitats and ecological features prior to the construction of the development and provide an appraisal of any potential impacts the development may have had on these;
- Identify the presence or potential presence of any protected species or habitats and provide an appraisal of any potential effects the development may have on these;
- Identify the proximity of any sites designated for nature conservation interest and provide an appraisal of any potential effects the development may have had on these; and
- Provide recommendations for further survey work and / or mitigation measures, if required.

2.1.3. The study comprised a field survey, in combination with a desk-based review of existing data and freely available online resources. The areas of interest related to the footprint of the development itself and associated works and the biodiversity enhancement area, henceforth referred to as the development site (Figure 1).

2.2. DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

2.2.1. The Site subject to the retrospective planning application is a secure caravan storage facility, comprising an area of hard standing surrounded by a large earth bund and perimeter security fencing. The development has a portable site office and associated time-limited lighting within the caravan storage facility. The section designated for biodiversity enhancement is located within the corner of an arable field, with woodland to the north. The development is located some 389 m south of Pinwall Lane, accessed from internal farm tracks.

2.3. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.3.1. The assessment comprises two elements: the development and access routes.

- 2.3.2. The development comprises an area of hard standing surrounded by a large earth bund and perimeter security fencing. The development has a portable site office and associated time-limited lighting present within the site.
- 2.3.3. An access route has been created to provide vehicular access to the secure area, running from an existing farm access to the east.
- 2.3.4. The wider landscape is characterized by a network of arable and grazed fields with occasional woodland blocks and hedgerows, marshland areas and the Rivers Anker and Sence to the south and south-east respectively, interspersed with small roads. The Town of Atherstone lies just over 560 m to the south of the development.
- 2.3.5. The biodiversity enhancement area comprises a section of arable land within the corner of an agricultural field. Vehicular access to the biodiversity enhancement area, is provided by existing farm access to the west.

2.4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK & PLANNING POLICY

2.4.1. Reference has been made to the following key pieces of legislation, policy and guidance listed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Legislation, policy and guidance.

European
• Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (hereafter referred to as the ‘Habitats Directive’); and • Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conservation of wild birds (codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended) (hereafter referred to as the ‘Birds Directive’).
National
• The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended (hereafter referred to as the ‘Habitat Regulations’); • The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); • Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; • Protection of Badgers Act 1992; • Hedgerows Regulations 1997; • Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006); • The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); • The United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP); • Governments Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England’s Wildlife and Ecosystem Services (2020); and • ‘Birds of Conservation Concern 5’ (2021);
Local
• Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan.

2.4.2. Many species of animal and plant receive some degree of legal protection. For the purpose of this survey, legal protection primarily refers (but may not be limited) to:

- Species included on Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), excluding species that are only protected in relation to their sale (see Section 9[5] and 13[2]); and
- Species included on Schedules 2 and 5 of The *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended) (the ‘Habitats Regulations’).

Legislation relating to bats

2.4.3. All British bat species are listed in Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*. They are afforded full protection under Section 9(4) of the Act and Regulation 41 of the Habitats Regulations. These make it an offence, inter alia, to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal;
- Deliberately disturb any such animal, including in particular any disturbance which is likely:
 - to impair its ability to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young;
 - to impair its ability to hibernate or migrate; and
 - to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of that species.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any such animal (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not);
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any of these animals while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that any of these animals uses for shelter or protection.

2.4.4. In addition, five British bat species are listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. These are:

- Greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*);
- Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*);
- Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*);
- Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*); and
- Greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*).

2.4.5. In certain circumstances where these species are found the Directive requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to ensure that their populations are maintained at a favorable conservation status. Outside SACs, the level of legal protection that these species receive is the same as for other bat species.

Legislation relating to Badgers

2.4.6. The badger is widespread and common in many parts of the UK and as such is not considered a conservation priority.

2.4.7. Badgers are however protected under the *Protection of Badger Act 1992*. In essence this act makes it an offence to willfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so; or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett.

2.4.8. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it. A sett is defined as 'any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger'. Natural England has released guidance on the interpretation of disturbance in relation to badgers occupying a sett. This guidance is available in full on the Natural England website, but in summary Natural England

believes that badgers are ‘relatively tolerant of moderate levels of noise and activity around their setts’ and that such levels of disturbance would not normally require a licence (Natural England, 2009). Examples are given for activities that are not considered likely to cause disturbance. This includes:

- Development, or other activities occurring close to badger setts (use of hand tools and/or machinery), where there is no reason to believe that the ‘disturbance’ will be greater than that which badgers commonly tolerate; and
- Vegetation removal (including felling small trees and shrubs) over or adjacent to setts (using hand tools and/or machinery).

2.4.9. Under Section 10 (1)(d) of the Protection of *The Badgers Act* 1992, a licence may be granted by Natural England to interfere with a badger sett for the purpose of development, where disturbance is unavoidable, during the period July to November.

2.4.10. A licence should be sought from Natural England where works likely to disturb badgers or interfere with a sett showing signs of current use cannot be avoided.

Legislation relating to Water Vole

2.4.11. The water vole is listed in Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act* 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a water vole;
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a water vole; or
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a water vole while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

2.4.12. Where offences under the Habitat Regulations 2010 cannot be avoided a European Protected Species (EPS) licence issued by Natural England may be required. A licence application requires full Method Statement and a Reasoned Statement of Application.

2.4.13. An EPS licence application cannot be made until full planning consent is obtained.

2.4.14. Water vole is also listed on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) which makes them a priority species for conservation.

Legislation relating to Otter

2.4.15. The otter is protected under Schedule 5 of Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), see. The otter is also listed on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and therefore receives further protection: The Habitat Regulations 2010 make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill an otter;
 - Deliberately disturb an otter (disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance to which they belong); or
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or rest place (otter holt).
- 2.4.16. An otter holt includes hovers and couches, which are otter resting places above ground. Artificial holts are not considered as holts under the legislation until they are known to be used by otters.
- 2.4.17. Where offences under the Habitat Regulations 2010 cannot be avoided a European Protected Species (EPS) licence issued by Natural England may be required. A licence application requires full Method Statement and a Reasoned Statement of Application.
- 2.4.18. An EPS licence application cannot be made until full planning consent is obtained.
- 2.4.19. Otter is also listed on the UK BAP which makes them a priority species for conservation.

Legislation relating to Great Crested Newts

- 2.4.20. See existing report produced by Ecology Ltd. for and on behalf of the Mr and Mrs J. Garland (doc ref: Mythe Farm Great Crested Newt Survey Report _CTPL_020_02_R2_17082025_Iss_17082025).

Legislation relating to Nesting birds

- 2.4.21. The primary legislation protecting wild birds in England is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (subject to a number of amendments, including the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006). The basic principle of this Act is that all wild birds, their nests, and eggs are protected by law and some rare species are afforded additional protection from disturbance during the breeding season.
- 2.4.22. The Act creates the following offences:
- Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
 - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built;
 - Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;
 - Have in one's possession or control any wild bird (dead or alive) or any part of a wild bird which has been taken in contravention of the Act;
 - Have in one's possession or control any egg or part of an egg which has been taken in contravention to the Act; or
 - Disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 3.1.1. A desk study was undertaken to identify statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest within a 5 km radius of the development through a review of the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) and Natural England (NE) websites.
- 3.1.2. Biological records data were requested from the Warwickshire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) and Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC).
- 3.1.3. The following data search parameters were used. Both the WBRC and LRERC data searches focused on the approximate center point of the development site (grid reference 431387, 299455):
- All statutory designated sites within a 5 km radius;
 - Non-statutory designated sites within a 2 km radius;
 - Records for all protected and / or notable species within a 2 km radius.
- 3.1.4. Reference was also made to Ordnance Survey maps of the wider area and online aerial images (www.google.co.uk/maps) to identify any feature of nature conservation interest in the wider landscape.

3.2. FIELD SURVEY

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 3.2.1. An extended Phase 1 habitat survey utilizing UKHab (V2.01, 2023) was undertaken on 05 May and 15 September 2024 by Dr. S. A. Graham MCIEEM, CEcol., CEnv.; a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist (See Section 3.3). The extent of the survey area is detailed in Figure 1.
- 3.2.2. The methodology employed was based upon that outlined in the 'Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey' (JNCC, 2010) whereby all habitats within the study area are mapped and described using a series of 'Target Notes' (TNs) to provide an overview of the development Site. Habitats are mapped utilizing the system provided within UKHab (V2.01, 2023). This habitat survey method was extended through the additional recording of specific features indicating the presence, or likely presence, of protected species such as bats, birds, great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, badger *Meles meles*, otter *Lutra lutra*, water vole *Arvicola amphibius* and other species of conservation significance.
- 3.2.3. This survey does not constitute a full protected species survey, but enables experienced ecologists to obtain an understanding of the site such that it is possible either:
- To confirm the conservation significance of the development site and assess the potential for impacts on habitats / species likely to represent a material consideration in planning terms; or
 - To establish the scope and extent of any additional specialist ecological surveys that will be required before such confirmation can be made.

Great Crested Newt Scoping Survey

- 3.2.4. A single pond is located immediately adjacent to the development footprint. Acknowledging that 250 m is the upper limit over which most great crested newts typically disperse from breeding ponds (English Nature, 2001; Langton et al., 2001); a desk-based assessment identified a further four ponds within 250 m of the development site boundary.
- 3.2.5. See existing report produced by Ecology Ltd. for and on behalf of the Mr and Mrs J. Garland (doc ref: Mythe Farm Great Crested Newt Survey Report _CTPL_020_02_R2_23082025_Iss_23082025).

Bat Scoping Survey

- 3.2.6. An assessment was made of the development Site's suitability to support bat species, with particular attention paid to any trees on or immediately adjacent to the site which may contain bat roosts. This included a ground-based daytime inspection of the development Site (including the exterior and surrounds of the trees), together with an assessment of the suitability of surrounding habitats for bat foraging, commuting and roosting. The survey included looking for the range of characteristic signs from which an experienced ecologist can assess current / recent use of a potential roost site by bats.
- 3.2.7. Bat surveys were undertaken utilizing a torch and binoculars, in accordance with practices detailed in both the Bat Conservation Trusts (BCT) Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines (4th Ed.) and Joint Nature Conservation Committee Bat Workers Manual (3rd Ed.).
- 3.2.8. Highlighted features were visually assessed from the ground and were allocated to one of the following categories:
- **None:** Either no Potential Roost Features (PRF's) in the tree or highly unlikely to be any.
 - **FAR:** Further assessment required to establish if PRF's are present in the tree.
 - **PRF:** A tree with at least one PRF present.
 - **PRF-I:** PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
 - **PRF-M:** PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.
- 3.2.9. The assessment was undertaken on 05 May and 15 September 2024 by a Natural England Level 2 bat worker (Dr. S. A. Graham MCIEEM, CEcol., CEnv, Natural England Licence Number: 2015-13792-CLS-CLS) who satisfies all necessary field survey competencies as set out by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Badger Scoping Survey

- 3.2.10. The survey was undertaken by suitably qualified ecologist Dr. Stuart Graham MCIEEM, CEcol, CEnv, FLS on 05 May and 15 September 2024. The development footprint plus an approximate 50 m buffer of land, out with, was surveyed (outlined in blue on Figure 1). All parts of the site were accessed for survey.

- 3.2.11. The survey involved a walkover of the habitats within and immediately adjacent to the development area. The survey entailed searching favorable habitats including hedgerows, road / track verges, woodland, embankments and fence lines for evidence of badger activity. The walkover involved searching for acceptable badger field signs such as setts, footprints, dung pits, guard hairs and runs (Bang and Dahlstrom, 2001); field signs were recorded based on classifications described in CIEEM (2013), Neal and Cheeseman (1996), Harris *et al.* (1994) and within Andrews (2013).
- 3.1.1. For any badger setts identified, the number of entrances was noted. In addition, the setts were also classified into one of the categories provided in Table 3.1 and activity level noted into categories as per Table 3.2.

Table 3.1: Badger sett classification.

Type of Sett	Characteristics
Main	Continuously used with many signs of activity around, such as a large number of holes and visible spoil mounds. Often with established paths at the entrances and marked with latrines.
Annexe	Commonly located close to the main sett, often within less than 150m, connected to it by well-used paths. Annexe setts may not be continuously occupied and can have several entrances.
Subsidiary	Comprising a few entrances and without associated well used paths. Subsidiary setts are not continuously occupied and are less frequently used.
Outlier	Usually consist of one or two holes with no obvious paths. Sporadic use, often inhabited by foxes or rabbits when not used by badger.

Table 3.2: Badger sett activity classification.

Sett activity	Characteristics
Well used	Clear of debris, trampled soil mound and obviously active with signs of presence such as footprints and guard hairs around entrances.
Partially used	Some associated debris around the entrances. Could be used with minimal excavation.
Disused	Partially or completely blocked sett entrances.

Water vole and Otter Scoping Survey

- 3.2.12. A single pond is located immediately adjacent to the development footprint. A further four ponds were identified within 250 m of the development site boundary, with the Rivers Anker and Sence located to the south and south-east of the development.

- 3.2.13. The survey was undertaken by suitably qualified ecologist Dr. Stuart Graham MCIEEM, CEcol, CEnv, FLS; a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist (See Section 3.3). on 05 May and 15 September 2024.

Water vole

- 3.2.14. Water vole surveys were conducted adopting the guidelines in The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (2016) and Water Vole Conservation Handbook (Strachan and Moorhouse, 2006) which recommends two surveys be undertaken at least two months apart over the course of the breeding season. Two surveys were conducted at all ponds, each of which consisted of surveying 2 m up the bank (where applicable). The surveys were conducted from all banks and within the pond, where accessible. The surveys included searching for water vole field signs such as sightings, footprints, faeces, feeding remains and stations, latrines and burrows.

Otter

- 3.2.15. Whilst conducting the water vole surveys, surveys were extended to include the presence / likely absence of otter. Otter surveys were undertaken in accordance with the Competences for species surveys: Otter (CIEEM, 2013), and the Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Mammals (JNCC, 2004). This was undertaken looking for habitats or suitability and field signs adapting methodologies described in Monitoring the Otter (Chainin 2003). The ponds and banks were searched for evidence of otter activity including spraints (otter dropping), footprints, runs and slides.
- 3.2.16. The survey also aimed to identify the presence of any Holts including any couches or other above ground resting places. Holts are places of covered shelter that are used on a permanent basis and are commonly located within riparian vegetation or root systems of bank side trees. Natal holts are used for rearing young and can be difficult to locate and can be some distance from river (Chanin 2003).

3.3. PERSONNEL

- 3.3.1. Surveys have been undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist;
- 3.3.2. Dr. S. A. Graham BSc (Hons), MSc, CEcol, CEnv, MCIEEM, FLS is A highly experienced Chartered Ecologist and Chartered Environmentalist with 18 yrs. of national and international experience in consultancy and scientific research.
- 3.3.3. Stuart has undertaken surveys and provided specialist technical advice for major infrastructure projects across the utility, rail, highways, renewable energy and industrial sectors. Furthermore, Stuart provides strategic / scientific advice to Governmental Panels and Statutory Agencies.

3.4. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

- 3.4.1. Some habitats and features of interest outside the development boundary were observed and recorded from within the client's land ownership boundary or from public access areas, using binoculars where necessary. Therefore, habitats outside of this were not subject to a full habitat survey, although broad habitat types were recorded.

- 3.4.2. No significant survey constraints were experienced. Surveys have been undertaken within the accepted survey seasons.
- 3.4.3. The lack of evidence of a protected species does not preclude their possible presence at a later date. This is particularly true for highly mobile species; their use of a particular feature can significantly vary, not only on a seasonal basis, but also from day to day. Any survey represents only a 'snapshot' of possible species activity. Importantly, lack of evidence of a species does not guarantee their absence and therefore consideration should be given to the need to update the data in the future in the event of substantial delay to the implementation of development.
- 3.4.4. This report is valid for a period of 24 months from the time of survey, not report production. Reliance on the findings of this report, post this period, should seek clarity from the report author, as per the CIEEM (2019) and LERC (2022) Guidance.

4 RESULTS

4.1. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.1.1. Biological records data was received from both Warwickshire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) and Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) on 03 April 2024.
- 4.1.2. Four statutory designated site was identified within a 5 km radius around the approximate center of the development site as summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Statutory designated sites within 5 km. SSSI; Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Site Name	Designation	Distance	Reason for Designation
Sheepy Fields	SSSI	c. 3.45 km north-east of the development site boundary.	The site contains some of the best remaining examples of neutral grassland in Leicestershire and is representative of hay meadow plant communities developed on neutral soils in the English Midlands.
Bentley Park Wood	SSSI	c. 3.54 km south-west of the development site boundary.	This site is a large and important ancient woodland in north Warwickshire. It comprises Bentley Park Wood, sectors of the adjacent Monks Park Wood and a small, detached area out with the main wood known as the Birchleys. Bentley Park Wood lies mainly on Carboniferous sandstones, a substantial portion of which is overlain by boulder clay. In Monks Park Wood there are also areas of marl, sandstones and shales of the Coal Measures as well as earlier Cambrian shales with igneous intrusions. The majority of the wood lies on light, strongly acidic soils and is dominated by sessile oak, <i>Quercus petraea</i> . Alongside the deeply incised streams the soils are base rich and support alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> . The range of acid sessile oak on the better drained soils, and alder, on the wetter soils, found in Bentley Park Wood can be seen in only a limited number of other British Woods including Charnwood Forest, Chaddesley Woods and Wyre Forest. On this site there is an unusual and widespread juxtaposition of sessile oak and alder and there is a wider ecological range of alder woodland than possibly any other wood in Britain.
Birches Barn Meadow	SSSI	c. 3.84 km north-west of the development site boundary.	Birches Barn Meadows comprises two unimproved fields adjacent to the south bank of the River Anker. They are situated at the extreme north of Warwickshire near the town of Atherstone and have been managed as hay meadows since 1913. The meadows are on alluvium and overlie Keuper sandstone with ridge and furrow topography in part.

Site Name	Designation	Distance	Reason for Designation
Woodlands Quarry	SSSI	c. 4.67 km south-east of the development site boundary.	This disused quarry exposes a sequence of rocks laid down beneath the sea some 570 million years ago, during late Precambrian to early Cambrian times, and is of international significance because of the early Cambrian fossils which are found here. Fossils of this age are exceptionally rare, and are found at no other locality in Britain, the nearest comparable assemblages being found in Siberia and Scandinavia. The site is of great importance because of the information which it yields concerning the evolution of Britain and Western Europe during this period.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.1.3. The desk study identified a total of 38 non-statutory designated sites within a 2 km radius around the approximate center of the development site as summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Non-statutory designated site within 2 km. LWS: Local Wildlife Site: pLWS potential Local Wildlife Site.

Site Name	Designation	Distance	Reason for Designation
49/29 River Anker	pLWS	c. 210 m south.	The site supports a good range of aquatic plants and is important for nesting birds.
River Sence at Ratcliffe Bridge	LWS	c. 350 m east.	No recent survey data – not known if the site still has value.
Pinwall woodland	LWS	c. 400 m north-east.	No recent survey data – not known if the site still has value.
Pinwall Lane hedgerow	LWS	c. 435 m north.	Hedgerow
Pinwall Lane hedgerow	LWS	c. 515 m north-east.	Small river or stream
09/39E River Anker	pLWS	c. 550 m east of the development site boundary.	The River Anker in SP39 includes areas around the source/tributaries east of Nuneaton. This area is largely arable and improved grassland, although the river/streams are often tree lined and dotted along the length of the river are a series of species rich meadows from the source east of Nuneaton to Atherstone to the northwest. Evidence of otters <i>Lutra lutra</i> and water voles <i>Arvicola amphibius</i> has been recorded.
649/39 River Anker Meadows	LWS	c. 643 m south-east.	A series of meadows adjacent to the 'River Anker' pLWS. The middle part of the site is designated as 'River Anker Meadows' Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Meadow to the left of the LWS is

Site Name	Designation	Distance	Reason for Designation
			identified as 'River Anker Meadows , (possible extension to SINC)' pLWS. A large area of unimproved agricultural land adjacent to the River Anker. Some fields are grazed by cattle others by horses and some are cut for hay. More notable species present include pignut <i>Conopodium majus</i>, great burnet <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>, bulbous buttercup <i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>, lesser knapweed <i>Centaurea nigra</i>, bird's-foot trefoil <i>Lotus corniculatus</i>, common vetch <i>Vicia sativa</i>, cuckooflower <i>Cardamine pratensis</i> and meadow saxifrage <i>Saxifraga granulata</i>. The hedges are also fairly diverse with hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>, blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>, crab apple <i>Malus sylvestris</i>, elder <i>Sambucus nigra</i> and dog rose <i>Rosa canina</i>.
Mythe Farm hedgerow & tree	LWS	c. 769 m east.	Small river or stream
Atherstone Road hedgerow, west	LWS	c. 795 m north-west.	Hedgerow
Farm hedgerow	LWS	c. 820 m south-east.	Hedgerow
Riverside Willow	LWS	c. 830 m north-east.	Hedgerow
Atherstone Road verge	LWS	c. 830 m south-east.	Hedgerow
Atherstone Road hedgerow, east	LWS	c. 840 m north-west.	Hedgerow, mature tree
White Gate hedgerow	LWS	c. 945 m south-east.	Hedgerow
B5000 hedgerows, tree & verge	LWS	c. 1.01 km north-west.	Hedgerow
Mythe Lane hedgerow 2	LWS	c. 1.04 km south-east.	No recent survey data – not known if the site still has value.
Crow Lane / Sheepy Road hedgerow	LWS	c. 1.14 km north.	Hedgerow
Parish hedgerow, Pinwall	LWS	c. 1.15 km north-east.	Woodland
09/39J River Anker	LWS	c. 125 km south-east.	The river in this section runs adjacent to species-rich meadows. Otters <i>Lutra lutra</i> and water voles <i>Arvicola amphibius</i> are known to be present.

Site Name	Designation	Distance	Reason for Designation
90/29 ALDI Warwehouse Gds & Atherstone Pool	LWS	c. 1.30 km south-west.	Site has been deferred by Local Wildlife Site (LWS) panel. The site consists of a series of grasslands and a pool. One of the grasslands is semi-improved, with the species including field woodrush <i>Luzula campestris</i>, pignut <i>Conopodium majus</i>, bulbous buttercup <i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i> and lesser stitchwort <i>Stellaria graminea</i>. Another of the grassland areas was seeded in the early 1990's with a wildflower mix. The pool is fringed with alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and willow <i>Salix</i> sp. on the banks and has good stands of marginal vegetation.
Mythe Lane hedgerow	LWS	c. 1.32 km south-east.	Hedgerow
Sheepy Pond	pLWS	c. 1.42 km north-west.	Mature Willow
Ratcliffe Lane hedgerow	LWS	c. 1.42 km north-east.	Hedgerow, mature tree
Crow Lane hedgerow	LWS	c. 1.44 km north-west.	Hedgerow
Newhall Farm hedgerow	LWS	c. 1.49 km north-east.	Mature tree
Frog Hall Oak	LWS	c. 1.52 km north-west.	Hedgerow
Sheepy Pond	pLWS	c. 1.54 km north-west.	Hedgerow
98/29 Atherstone Coal Wharf	LWS	c. 1.65 km south-west.	The south of the site has been destroyed. Wetland area originating as a coal-barge loading wharf, now filled in. Wetter areas are dominated by reed-mace <i>Typha latifolia</i>, greater pond-sedge <i>Carex riparia</i> swamp with reed canary-grass <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>, reed sweet-grass <i>Glyceria maxima</i>, water dock <i>Rumex hydrolapathum</i> and great willowherb <i>Epilobium hirsutum</i> at the edges. Elsewhere, meadowsweet <i>Filipendula ulmaria</i> is dominant with frequent nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> and occasional angelica <i>Angelica sylvestris</i>, cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and rosebay willowherb <i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>. The area is surrounded by hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>, blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> and willow <i>Salix</i> sp. scrub which encroaches into the wetland area in places. At one end is a canal arm with a very diverse mix of species at its edges. These include: Lady's-smock <i>Cardamine pratensis</i>, gipsywort <i>Lycopus europaeus</i>, water mint <i>Mentha aquatica</i>, water figwort <i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>, skullcap <i>Scutellaria galericulata</i>, remote sedge <i>Carex</i>

Site Name	Designation	Distance	Reason for Designation
			<i>remota</i> , male fern <i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> and rush <i>Juncus</i> sp. There are also areas of unvegetated coal spoil. The disused railway is mainly wooded with silver birch <i>Betula pendula</i> , hawthorn and elder <i>Sambucus nigra</i> over nettle, dog's mercury <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> and rosebay willowherb. Part is more open and supports a diversity of species including common knapweed <i>Centaurea nigra</i> , creeping cinquefoil <i>Potentilla reptans</i> , mouse-ear hawkweed <i>Pilosella officinarum</i> , field wood-rush <i>Luzula campestris</i> and great mullein <i>Verbascum Thapsus</i> .
581/39 Grassland east of Thorn Spinney	pLWS	c. 1.68 km south-west.	Unmanaged and disturbed area between the canal and railway, with the remains of a concrete trackway and much fly-tipping. The area supports tussocky rank grassland, dominated by false oat-grass <i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>, cock's-foot <i>Dactylis glomerata</i> and red fescue <i>Festuca rubra</i>, while flatter areas have scattered willow <i>Salix</i> spp. And bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg scrub and are species-rich, with, among others creeping cinquefoil <i>Potentilla reptans</i>, hogweed <i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>, cut-leaved cranesbill <i>Geranium dissectum</i>, red clover <i>Trifolium pratense</i>, common vetch <i>Vicia sepium</i>, beaked hawksbeard <i>Crepis vesicaria</i>, field wood-rush <i>Luzula campestris</i>, mugwort <i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> and most notably goldenrod <i>Solidago virgaurea</i>. A damp area is dominated by yorkshire fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i>, with clumps of pendulous sedge <i>Carex pendula</i> and hard rush <i>Juncus inflexus</i>. There is a strip of sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> woodland along the railway, which supports wood avens <i>Geum urbanum</i> and lady's smock <i>Cardamine pratensis</i>. More open parts have scattered hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>, water dock <i>Rumex hydrolapathum</i>, bulrush <i>Typha latifolia</i>, gipsywort <i>Lycopus europaeus</i> and wild angelica <i>Angelica sylvestris</i>.
Sheepy Magna, Crow Lane, Old sand pit	pLWS	c. 1.74 km north-west.	Hedgerow
River Sence & tributary	LWS	c. 1.94 km north-east.	No recent survey data – not known if the site still has value.
Sheepy, Highfield farm pond	pLWS	c. 1.94 km north-west.	Mesotrophic grassland

Site Name	Designation	Distance	Reason for Designation
46/29 Coventry Canal	pLWS	c. 2 km west.	An important wetland habitat with a range of aquatic plants, as with all linear features the site is likely to be used by a variety of wildlife.
37/29 The Outwoods - Merevale Park	LWS	c. 2.02 km south-west.	Parts of this site is designated as 'Merevale Park Grassland' Local Wildlife Site (LWS) (centre), 'Merevale Lake Woodlands' Local Wildlife Site (LWS) (south-east) and 'Wards Hill' (east). Many other sections throughout the park have been identified as 'Monks Park Wood and Bratts Waste' pLWS (centre and south), 'Black Pool & Abbey Pool' pLWS (north-west) and 'Woods North of Mancetter Quarries' pLWS (north-east and east). Good mixed ancient woodland with lakes supporting mostly wildfowl. Grounds of a late 17th Century mansion and gardens. Parkland with many mature trees together with an area of acid grassland with harebells <i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>. Some of the slopes are steep and covered with bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>. In 1996 some of the site was planted with conifers.
88/29 A5, Wych Elm Hedgerow	Unspecified	c. 2.06 km south-west.	Hedgerow with wych elm <i>Ulmus glabra</i> .
73/39 Merevale Park	LWS	c. 2.31 km south-west.	Parts of the site is designated as 'Wards Hill and Merevale Lake Woodlands' Local Wildlife Site (LWS). The remainder if the site is identified as 'Woods North of Mancetter Quarries' pLWS. The site has mixed ancient woodland with lakes in the grounds of a late 17th century mansion and gardens. There are also areas of parkland with many mature trees together with an area of acid grassland with harebell <i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>. Some of the slopes are steep and covered with bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>.
09/39I River Anker	pLWS	c. 2.70 km south-east.	The River Anker in SP39 includes areas around the source/tributaries east of Nuneaton. This area is largely arable and improved grassland, although the river/streams are often tree lined and dotted along the length of the river are a series of species rich meadows from the source east of Nuneaton to Atherstone to the northwest. Evidence of otters <i>Lutra lutra</i> and water voles <i>Arvicola amphibius</i> has been recorded.

4.2. HABITATS ASSESSMENT

- 4.2.1. The habitats identified across and immediately adjacent to the development site are detailed in Figure 2: Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan. Photographs are provided in Appendix A.
- 4.2.2. The main habitats and land-use on or adjacent to the development site are summarized, ranged by size / location:
- **Artificial unvegetated – unsealed surface** (UkHab classification: U1c);
 - **Pond – non-priority** (UkHab classification: R1 / 41);
 - **Ruderal or ephemeral** (UkHab classification: 81);
 - **Broad-leaved woodland screen planting** (UkHab classification: W1g Other broadleaved woodland);
 - **Arable field** (UkHab classification: C1c Cereal crops);
 - **Building** (UkHab classification: u1b5); and
 - **Built linear feature** (UkHab classification: U1e);
- 4.2.3. A number of these habitats have potential to support protected and notable species. A more detailed description of the habitats is provided below.
- 4.2.4. The development Site is immediately surrounded by arable fields, areas of semi-mature and mature woodland, hedgerows, amenity areas comprising grassland and hard standing associated with the adjacent farm. The surrounding wider landscape also supports a number of pockets of broad-leaved semi-natural woodland; residential and commercial buildings of an agricultural nature were present to the east.
- 4.2.5. The biodiversity enhancement area is proposed within an intensively managed arable field. The arable land would appear to have received a crop in 2024, with signs of dry stubble amongst the predominantly bare ground. Species which are starting to colonize this area include pineapple weed *Matricaria discoidea*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, white clover *Trifolium repens* and slender speedwell *Veronica filiformis*.
- 4.2.6. The caravan storage facility now consists of a large area of permeable hard-standing surrounded by a vegetated bund and a pond surrounded by a remnant section of woodland; which has not been disturbed. A review of historical aerial imagery identified a significant change in habitat between April 2020 and June 2021, as shown in Figure 3. From the historical aerial imagery, it would be anticipated that the habitats present on and immediately adjacent to the site prior to the development would have been similar in nature to those currently present to the immediate west of the site. Habitats present in this area comprise a mixture of bare ground, small pockets of ruderal or ephemeral and unmanaged, other neutral grassland.
- 4.2.7. A permanent access track is already in place for both the caravan storage facility and the biodiversity enhancement area, from the adjacent Atherstone Road and adjacent farm complex (respectively). Access routes will utilize this existing network.

- 4.2.8. A single pond is located immediately adjacent to the development Site boundary of the caravan storage facility. No ponds were identified within the boundary of the biodiversity enhancement area. A further four ponds were located within 250 m of the development Site. No other ponds were identified from OS maps or identified on the ground at the time of survey.

4.3. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES ASSESSMENT

- 4.3.1. This section incorporates field observations and results from the data searches provided by WBRC and LRERC. Each species or species group is discussed in turn below.

Birds

- 4.3.2. The datasets provided by WBRC and LRERC identified 70 records of birds for 21 species within a 2 km radius of the development site. A full list of the species, their conservation status and distance from the development site is provided in Table 4.3. Some distances are listed as Confidential. Distances for these species can be provided upon request, with an appropriate justification, due to the sensitivity of the records.
- 4.3.3. A further ten species were recorded during survey, indicated as “on site” in Table 4.3.
- 4.3.4. The habitats present on and immediately adjacent to the development site offer a variety of suitability for nesting birds. The retained grassland, pond, trees and shrub layer around the pond and tall ruderal and grasses present on the earth bunds are likely to support common farmland and woodland species and have potential to be used by nesting birds in the breeding season. The arable field forming the biodiversity enhancement area have little in the way of nesting opportunity. These habitats were also observed to support the species” in Table 4.3 as a foraging resource.
- 4.3.5. A review of historical aerial imagery identified a significant change in habitat between April 2020 and June 2021, as shown in Figure 3. From the historical aerial imagery, it would be anticipated that the habitats present on site prior to the development would have similarly provided support to common farmland and woodland species and have potential to be used by nesting birds in the breeding season. Foraging habitat would also have been available. The arable field forming the biodiversity enhancement area remains constant as a habitat type.
- 4.3.6. Taking into account, the surface area of the hard standing which now occupies the development site and the probable surface area of the perimeter bunds, alongside the historical recreation use of the development site prior to the development, it is not anticipated that there would be a significant loss in breeding and / or foraging habitat lost as a result of the development. Likewise, as for the area of arable field for the biodiversity enhancement site, it is not anticipated that there would be a significant loss in foraging habitat as a result of the development.

Table 4.3: Bird species records by WBRC / LRERC. CONFIDENTIAL represents sensitive species information available on request.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Year	Distance from Site (m)	European protected	UK Protected	Principle Concern	Rare	Invasive
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Skylark	2015 - 2018	1201			✓	✓	
<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Kingfisher	2012	CONFIDENTIAL	✓	✓			
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard	On site	On site				✓	
<i>Apus apus</i>	Swift	2019	1380				✓	
<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Black-headed Gull	On site	On site				✓	
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Woodpigeon	On site	On site				✓	
<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Rook	On site	On site				✓	
<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Cuckoo	2012	1268			✓	✓	
<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Yellowhammer	2018 - 2022	1268			✓	✓	
<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Reed Bunting	2018	1815			✓	✓	
<i>Falco columbarius</i>	Merlin	2015	CONFIDENTIAL	✓	✓			
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine	2012	CONFIDENTIAL	✓	✓			
<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Moorhen	On site	On site				✓	
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Swallow	2014 - 2022	1201			✓	✓	
<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Linnet	2018	1881			✓	✓	
<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Red Kite	2018 - 2020	CONFIDENTIAL	✓				
<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Grey Wagtail	On site	On site				✓	
<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Yellow Wagtail	2022	1268			✓	✓	
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow	On site	On site			✓	✓	
<i>Passer montanus</i>	Tree Sparrow	2022	1268			✓	✓	
<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Grey Partridge	2022	1268			✓	✓	
<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Dunnock	2020 - 2021	1240			✓	✓	
<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Bullfinch	On site	On site			✓	✓	
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling	2012 - 2021	1240			✓	✓	
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Wren	On site	On site				✓	
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Song Thrush	2019	1243			✓	✓	
<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Fieldfare	2018	1595	✓		✓		
<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn Owl	2005 - 2020	CONFIDENTIAL	✓	✓			

Scientific Name	Common Name	Year	Distance from Site (m)	European protected	UK Protected	Principle Concern	Rare	Invasive
<i>Phasianus coclicus</i>	Ring-necked Pheasant	On site	On site					

Bats

- 4.3.7. The datasets provided by WBRC and LRERC identified 19 records of bats for three species / species groups within a 2 km radius of the development site. Species records provided by WBRC and LRERC include Daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii* (1 record), Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus* (1 record), Pipistrelle sp. (3 records), and 14 records of unidentified bats Chiropter sp. Species records date from 1997 – 2021, with the closest record located some 920 m south from the development site.

Tree scoping survey

- 4.3.8. A scoping survey of the trees immediately adjacent to the development Site (see Figure 1) was also undertaken, to assess their potential to support roosting bats.
- 4.3.9. No identifiable European Protected Species (EPS) derogation licences have been granted by Natural England within a 2km radius of the proposed scheme in relation to bats.
- 4.3.10. No trees were identified within or immediately adjacent to the development as providing suitable bat roosting features. Comprising of mature / semi-mature oak *Quercus robur*, willow *Salix alba*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and pine *Pinus sylvestris*.
- 4.3.11. A number of mature oaks, present along the farm track to the south of the development site did, however, contain features which would provide suitability for roosting bats. Likewise, two trees present along the woodland edge to the north of the biodiversity enhancement site contain features which would provide suitability for roosting bats. Features include tree hollows, rot holes, loose bark and woodpecker holes. Trees along this farm track represent trees of PRF-I (only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats) to PRF-M (suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony).

Commuting and foraging habitat

- 4.3.12. Suitable foraging and commuting habitat are provided across and immediately adjacent to the development site through the presence of the pond and tall ruderal habitats present across the perimeter of the earth bund. The invertebrates these habitats attract are favorable as a prey species for bat species. In addition, the tall bund, and habitats present on it now provide connectivity to adjacent hedgerow networks.
- 4.3.13. Additionally, suitable foraging and commuting habitat are provided across habitats adjacent to the development site by the hedgerows and areas of immature screen planting to the east of the development Site. The biodiversity enhancement area provides little opportunity for foraging and / or commuting, but suitable habitat is provided along the woodland edge to the north.
- 4.3.14. A review of historical aerial imagery identified a significant change in habitat between April 2020 and June 2021, as shown in Figure 3. From the historical aerial imagery, it would be anticipated that the habitats present on site prior to the development would have similarly provided suitable foraging and commuting habitat. As no trees were identified within the development as providing suitable bat roosting features, and no further trees identified from the historical aerial images, it is not anticipated that the development site would have

provided habitats suitable for roosting. The arable field forming the biodiversity enhancement area remains constant as a habitat type.

- 4.3.15. Taking into account, the surface area of the hard standing which now occupies the development site and the probable surface area of the perimeter bunds, it is not anticipated that there would be a significant loss in foraging habitat lost as a result of the development. Furthermore, the bunds now provide suitable linear features which might provide connectivity to the hedgerow systems to the north of the development site. Likewise, as for the area of arable field for the biodiversity enhancement site, it is not anticipated that there would be a significant loss in foraging habitat as a result of the development.

Badgers

- 4.3.16. Three records of badger were provided by WBRC and LRERC within 2 km of the approximate Site center. Records comprised evidence of presence, with the nearest record located c. 595 m west of the Site boundary. The record originated from between 2007 and 2009, with two records representing sett locations.
- 4.3.17. No badgers and / or their signs were identified during the course of the site surveys.
- 4.3.18. The majority of the habitats present on site are not suitable for foraging badgers, being either hard standing or arable field. The development site does however provide suitable embankments, in the form of the earth bunds, for sett creation. Opportunity for sett creation is limited by the presence of the perimeter security fence, although there is a small possibility of entrance into the site under the entrance gates.
- 4.3.19. A review of historical aerial imagery identified a significant change in habitat between April 2020 and June 2021, as shown in Figure 3. From the historical aerial imagery, it would be anticipated that the habitats present on site prior to the development would have provided suitable foraging and commuting habitat. As it would appear that the development site was predominantly flat, with an absence of any earth mounds or ditches, it is unlikely that sett building locations were widely available, should badgers have been present.
- 4.3.20. Taking into account, the lack of access into the site due to the presence of the perimeter security fence, alongside the historical recreation use of the development site prior to the development, it is not anticipated that there would be a significant loss in sett building locations as a result of the development. A loss of foraging and commuting habitat would have been experienced, should badgers have been present.

Otter and Water vole

- 4.3.21. The datasets provided by WBRC and LRERC identified 14 records of otter within a 2 km radius of the development site. The records are from between 2006 – 2022, with the closest record being 786 m from the development Site. No direct connectivity pathways between the development Site and location of records have been identified.
- 4.3.22. No records for water vole were provided within a 2 km radius of the development site.
- 4.3.23. A single pond is present immediately adjacent to the development site which is anticipated to dry annually. In general, the riparian habitats immediately adjacent to the application site comprised steep sided ditches (>45 – 90 deg) with earth banks. The bank side vegetation was

dominated by tall grass with occasional or frequent short grass, herbs, mature trees and bushes. Submerged and / or aquatic vegetation is absent. The water is anticipated to be c. 1 m deep at its center. The adjacent land use consists of sheep grazed pasture, amenity grassland and small pockets of woodland, connected by a hedgerow network, with an absence of wet ditches.

- 4.3.24. No signs of otter or water vole were observed during surveys undertaken between 13 April and 15 June or on the 15 September 2024. A single brown rat *Rattus norvegicus* was observed swimming in the water on 13 April 2024. Rat and signs of bank vole *Myodes glareolus*, in the form of feeding remains were observed during all surveys, although burrows were not located.
- 4.3.25. A review of historical aerial imagery identified no significant change in aquatic habitats and / or their connectivity between April 2020 and June 2021, as shown in Figure 3. It is not anticipated that suitable foraging and / or resting provision would have been available prior to the development.

Amphibians (including Great Crested Newts)

- 4.3.26. See existing report produced by Ecology Ltd. for and on behalf of the Mr and Mrs J. Garland (doc ref: Mythe Farm Great Crested Newt Survey Report _CTPL_020_02_R2_23082025_Iss_23082025).

Reptiles

- 4.3.27. No records of reptiles were identified within the datasets provided by WBRC and LRERC. An absence of records may not represent a true reflection of species presence / likely absence, being a typically under-recorded species group.
- 4.3.28. The habitats present on and immediately adjacent to the site do, provide moderate suitability for foraging, basking and resting / overwintering reptiles; specifically Common Lizards *Zootoca vivipara* and grass snakes *Natrix helvetica helvetica*. A review of aerial imagery shows limited connectivity with further areas anticipated to provide suitable habitat in the wider environment. The presence of a number of ring-necked pheasants does reduce their potential presence; being known to be a significant predator to native herpetofauna. No reptiles were identified during the course of the site survey.
- 4.3.29. A review of historical aerial imagery identified a significant change in habitat between April 2020 and June 2021, as shown in Figure 3. From the historical aerial imagery, it would be anticipated that the habitats present on site prior to the development would have similarly provided habitats to support common reptile species for foraging and commuting. As it would appear that the development site was predominantly flat, with an absence of any earth mounds or ditches, it is unlikely that hibernacula were widely available, should reptiles have been present.
- 4.3.30. Taking into account, the surface area of the hard standing and arable land in respect of the biodiversity enhancement area, which now occupies the development site and the probable surface area of the perimeter bunds, alongside the historical recreation use of the development site prior to the development and presence of a number of ring-necked pheasants, it is not anticipated that there would be a significant loss in breeding and / or foraging habitat lost as a result of the development.

Other Notable Species

- 4.3.31. No other notable species were returned on and / or within 250m of the development site by WBRC and LRERC, with connectivity to the development site. Species recorded outside of this buffer include European eel *Anguilla Anguilla* and the European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*.
- 4.3.32. No signs of either species were observed during survey. Habitats on site do provide a level of suitability for the European hedgehog, although opportunity for access to the site is limited by the presence of the perimeter security fence, although there is a small possibility of entrance into the site under the entrance gates. The site provides no suitability for the European eel due to the absence of suitable habitats and / or connectivity.
- 4.3.33. A review of historical aerial imagery identified a significant change in habitat between April 2020 and June 2021, as shown in Figure 3. From the historical aerial imagery, it would be anticipated that the habitats present on site prior to the development would equally provide no suitability for the European eel due to the absence of suitable habitats and / or connectivity.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1. OVERVIEW

- 5.1.1. This section seeks to identify potential current and historical effects on protected and notable species. The proximity of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and potential effects on their qualifying interests is discussed. To this extent, recommendations are made for further survey work and / or mitigation, if required.
- 5.1.2. This section also introduces opportunities for habitat enhancement on and / or adjacent the development site for the benefit of local biodiversity, where applicable.
- 5.1.3. This section is based on the layout of the existing caravan storage facility and indicative location of the biodiversity enhancement area provided by CT Planning on 10 September 2024.

5.2. DESIGNATED SITES AND HABITATS

- 5.2.1. The development site does not form part of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation. The nearest site is located c. 210 m south of the caravan storage facility.
- 5.2.2. It does, however, fall within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone for a number of SSSI's. It does not meet the development type description for any adjacent SSSI. Natural England will therefore not need to be consulted alongside the application.
- 5.2.3. Sheepy Fields SSSI lies approximately 3.45 km north-east of the development site and is designated for its neutral grassland – the best remaining examples of neutral grassland in Leicestershire and is representative of hay meadow plant communities developed on neutral soils in the English Midlands. The SSSI does not have mobile qualifying or associated species that would regularly use / would have utilized the habitats within the development site and the development site is considered sufficiently distant and separated from the SSSI to have no likely pathway for effect. The habitats of the SSSI are not considered to be ecologically or hydrologically linked to the development site.
- 5.2.4. The nearest pLWS designated for ecological interest is located approximately 210 m distance from the development site boundary and is not considered likely to have experienced / will experience any direct or indirect effects from the development due to the separation distances involved and lack of connectivity between them.
- 5.2.5. The caravan storage facility now consists of a large area of permeable hard-standing surrounded by a vegetated bund and a pond surrounded by a remnant section of woodland; which has not been disturbed. A review of historical aerial imagery identified a significant change in habitat between April 2020 and June 2021, as shown in Figure 3. From the historical aerial imagery, it would be anticipated that the habitats present on site prior to the development would have been similar in nature to those currently present to the immediate west of the site. Habitats present in this area comprise a mixture of bare ground, small pockets of ruderal or ephemeral and unmanaged, other neutral grassland. The biodiversity enhancement area is proposed within an intensively managed arable field. The arable field forming the biodiversity enhancement area remains constant as a habitat type.

- 5.2.6. The intensively managed arable farmland forming the biodiversity enhancement area is generally of low value to wildlife with little structural or species diversity. Boundary habitats to the north (mature woodland) offer more valuable habitat at a local level. The development has been designed to retain these more valuable features and habitat loss associated with the proposed development footprint will be limited to arable habitats in this area.
- 5.2.7. It is anticipated that the caravan storage facility would have caused the loss of habitats present in this area, however, the creation and subsequent vegetation of bunds around the perimeter of the site have increased the vegetated structural diversity of the site. This may offer more valuable habitat at a local level. The development was designed and has retained the more valuable features, in the form of pond and mature trees immediately adjacent.
- 5.2.8. Site access will be via an existing farm entrance and track network from the adjoining farm to the east, adopting existing farm track through Mythe Farm to the caravan storage facility. No vegetation will be required to be removed during construction and is not considered to have a discernible effect on habitat availability or connectivity.
- 5.2.9. The development maintained a buffer from the adjacent pond and its banks during construction to protect the waterbody and wildlife within it.
- 5.2.10. To protect off-site habitats, particularly in relation to the construction of the biodiversity enhancement area, pollution prevention and control measures will be implemented during works, in line with Environment Agency guidance during the construction and operation phases of the proposed development. Onsite drainage measures, which have the potential to disrupt the quantity and / or quality of surface and groundwater linked to designated sites, are not proposed as part of this application.

5.3. BIRDS

- 5.3.1. No impacts are anticipated on the ornithological interests of any nearby statutory designated sites.
- 5.3.2. Construction effects are generally anticipated to be of short duration and relatively low impact however, there is potential for breeding birds to have been displaced by the construction phase of the caravan storage facility development, either directly or indirectly, via disturbance impacts.
- 5.3.3. The former habitat beneath the footprint of the development is anticipated to have been of limited value for most ground nesting birds, due to constant disturbance through it recreational and business use. Construction works could have directly impact small numbers of ground breeding birds if conducted during the breeding season. However, it is considered unlikely that these species will be significantly affected by the presence of development Site in the long term.
- 5.3.4. Some localised disturbance could also have occurred on nesting birds within adjacent field boundary vegetation or on any birds nesting in trees around the pond margin, again depending on the timing of works. In the long term, adjacent boundary habitat comprising the pond and woodland, field margins, hedgerows and trees will remain as part of the development and there will be no loss of these potential nesting habitats.

- 5.3.5. All birds receive some level of protection during the breeding season. In order to avoid impacts on nesting birds and to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Birds Directive and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is recommended that any initial ground works and any associated vegetation removal for the construction of the biodiversity enhancement area take place outside of the bird breeding season (March to September inclusive) thereby avoiding any potential impacts on breeding birds. If vegetation works are necessary during the breeding season, a nest-search of all suitable habitats would be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to works commencing.
- 5.3.6. Potential disturbance to nesting birds would have / will only apply where construction works were / are undertaken during the breeding bird season. In these circumstances suitable protection and mitigation measures should have / would be implemented.

5.4. BATS

- 5.4.1. The desk study returned numerous records for bat species, but this is not considered a reliable indication of the likely level of activity as it is likely that species are under recorded in the area. The arable farmland, hard standing and / or amenity grassland within and adjacent to the development Site generally provides limited opportunities for foraging and more favorable habitat comprising woodland and hedgerow corridors are widely available in the surrounding landscape. The waterbody and tall ruderal areas and adjacent planting to the south and east all provide opportunities as foraging and commuting habitat; however, these habitats out with the development Site boundary will remain unaffected by the proposed development.
- 5.4.2. No potential roosting sites have been identified within or immediately adjacent to the development site boundary. No impacts on potential roost sites are therefore anticipated to have occurred will occur during the construction of the biodiversity enhancement area.
- 5.4.3. Removal of well-structured vegetation is not anticipated to have been undertaken / is required to facilitate the construction of the biodiversity enhancement area. With no loss of adjacent hedgerows or trees, the severance of any commuting routes for bats is not anticipated to have been undertaken / will be undertaken as a result of the development.
- 5.4.4. The operational development site will not be permanently lit, with existing operational lighting on a timer and therefore no effects are anticipated in this regard.

5.5. BADGER

- 5.5.1. No badgers and / or their signs were identified during the course of the site surveys.
- 5.5.2. The majority of the habitats present on site are not suitable for foraging badgers, being either hard standing or arable field. The development site does however now provide suitable embankments, in the form of the earth bunds, for sett creation. Opportunity for sett creation is limited by the presence of the perimeter security fence, although there is a small possibility of entrance into the site under the entrance gates in the caravan storage facility area. No opportunity exists for sett creation in the biodiversity enhancement area.
- 5.5.3. A review of historical aerial imagery identified that the habitats present on site prior to the development would have provided suitable foraging and commuting habitat. As it would appear that the development site was predominantly flat, with an absence of any earth

mounds or ditches, it is unlikely that sett building locations were widely available, should badgers have been present.

- 5.5.4. It is anticipated that the development would not have provide valuable habitat which is not widely available in the surrounding landscape for this species and no significant impacts are anticipated to have resulted from the development.

5.6. OTTER & WATER VOLE

- 5.6.1. No otter and / or water vole and / or their signs were identified during the course of the site surveys.
- 5.6.2. The development Site does not provide valuable foraging habitat or resting site opportunities for these species and no significant impacts are anticipated on otter and / or water vole as a result of the development.
- 5.6.3. With standard pollution prevention measures in place during the construction of the biodiversity enhancement area, in line with Environment Agency guidelines, the any waterbody in the wider environment is expected to experience negligible effects.

5.7. AMPHIBIANS (INCLUDING GREAT CRESTED NEWTS)

- 5.7.1. See existing report produced by Ecology Ltd. for and on behalf of the Mr and Mrs J. Garland (doc ref: Mythe Farm Great Crested Newt Survey Report _CTPL_020_02_R2_23082025_Iss_23082025).

5.8. REPTILES

- 5.8.1. No common reptiles and / or their signs were identified during the course of the site surveys.
- 5.8.2. From a review of historical aerial imagery, it would be anticipated that the habitats present on site prior to the development would have provided habitats to support common reptile species for foraging and commuting. As it would appear that the development site was predominantly flat, with an absence of any earth mounds or ditches, it is unlikely that hibernacula were widely available, should reptiles have been present.
- 5.8.3. Taking into account, the surface area of the hard standing and arable land in respect of the biodiversity enhancement area, which now occupies the development site and the probable surface area of the perimeter bunds, alongside the historical recreation use of the development site prior to the development and presence of a number of ring-necked pheasants, it is not anticipated that there would be a significant loss in breeding and / or foraging habitat lost as a result of the development.
- 5.8.4. No significant impacts are anticipated on reptile species

5.9. OTHER NOTABLE SPECIES

- 5.9.1. No other notable species were returned on and / or within 250m of the development site by WBRC and LRERC, with connectivity to the development site. Species recorded outside of this buffer include European eel and the European hedgehog.

- 5.9.2. No signs of either species were observed during survey.
- 5.9.3. There is limited potential for hedgehogs to be present in the wider area, including on a historical basis. Some habitats found across the development site provide suitable foraging for this species, although limited due to severance the perimeter security fence, limiting potential for any individual to gain access to the site. Care should be taken when the biodiversity enhancement area, which provides foraging but no resting places for this species, with any individual found during construction, moved to a suitable location in the wider environment.
- 5.9.4. No other species are considered pertinent to the proposed development.

5.10. SUMMARY – ECOLOGICAL PRIORITY MATRIX

Category	Status / Legal Protection	Recommended Further Survey Effort	Recommended Mitigation / Enhancement Measures
Designated Sites	Statutory and non-statutory sites	N/A	Pollution prevention measures during construction of biodiversity enhancement area following EA guidance.
General habitat	N/A	N/A	Pollution prevention measures during construction of biodiversity enhancement area following EA guidance.
Birds	WCA 1981	N/A	Vegetation clearance of biodiversity enhancement area to avoid breeding season (March to September inclusive) where possible.
Bats	WCA 1981, Habitat Regs. 2010.	N/A	N/A
Badgers	Protection of Badgers Act 1992	N/A	Pre-works check of biodiversity enhancement area.
Otter & Water vole	WCA 1981, Habitats Regulations 2010 (otter only)	N/A	N/A
Amphibians (incl GCN)	WCA 1981, Habitat Regs. 2010	See existing report produced by Ecology Ltd. for and on behalf of the Mr and Mrs J. Garland (doc ref: Mythe Farm Great Crested Newt Survey Report _CTPL_020_02_R2_17082025_Iss_17082025).	
Reptiles	WCA 1981	N/A	N/A
Hedgerows	Hedgerow regulation 1997	N/A	N/A
Other notable species	Species specific	N/A	N/A

Legal Protection: WCA 1981 - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); Habitat Regs. 2010 - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended); UKBAP – UK Biodiversity Action Plan

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<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/browse>

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FIGURE 1: DEVELOPMENT SITE

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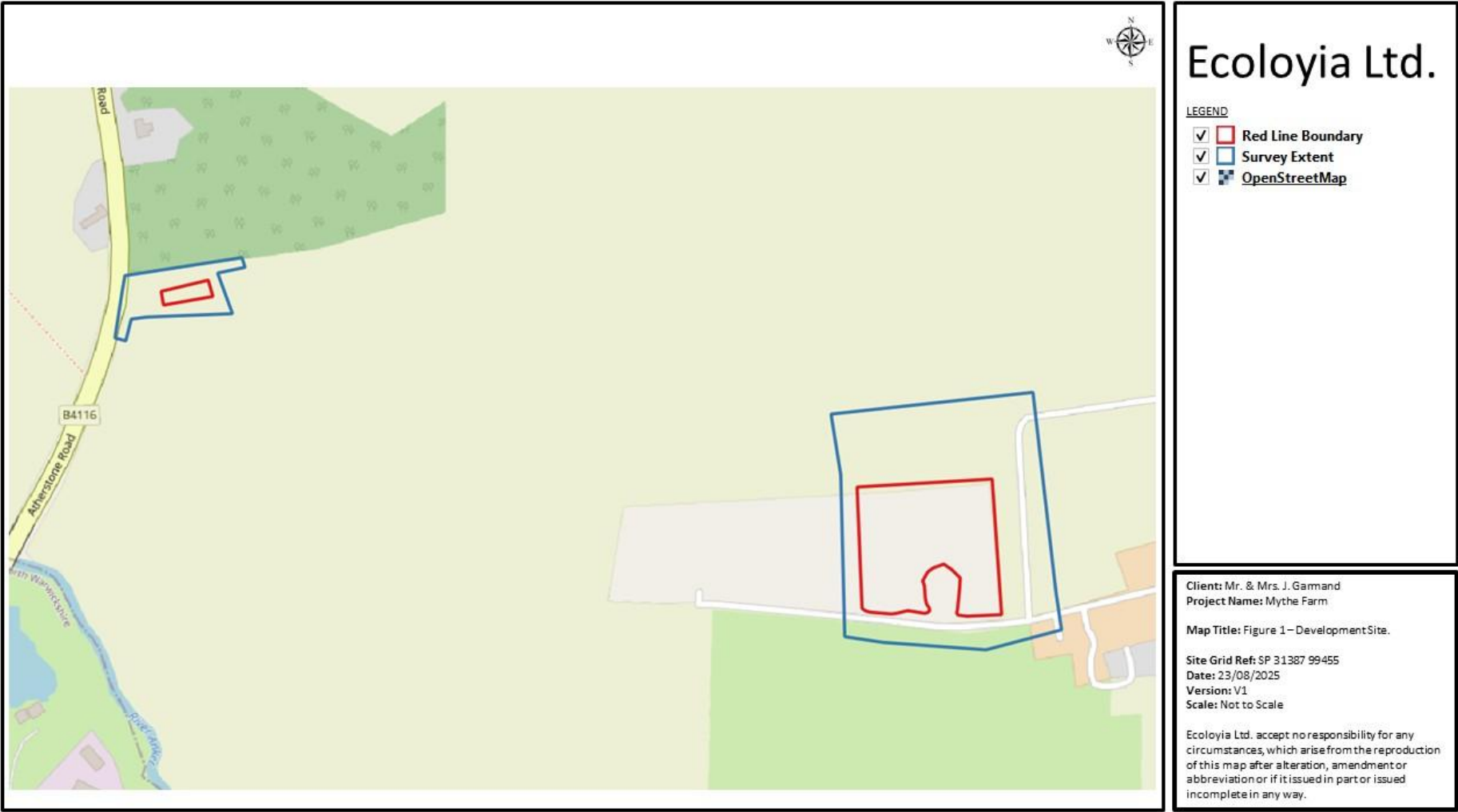


FIGURE 2: EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY PLAN

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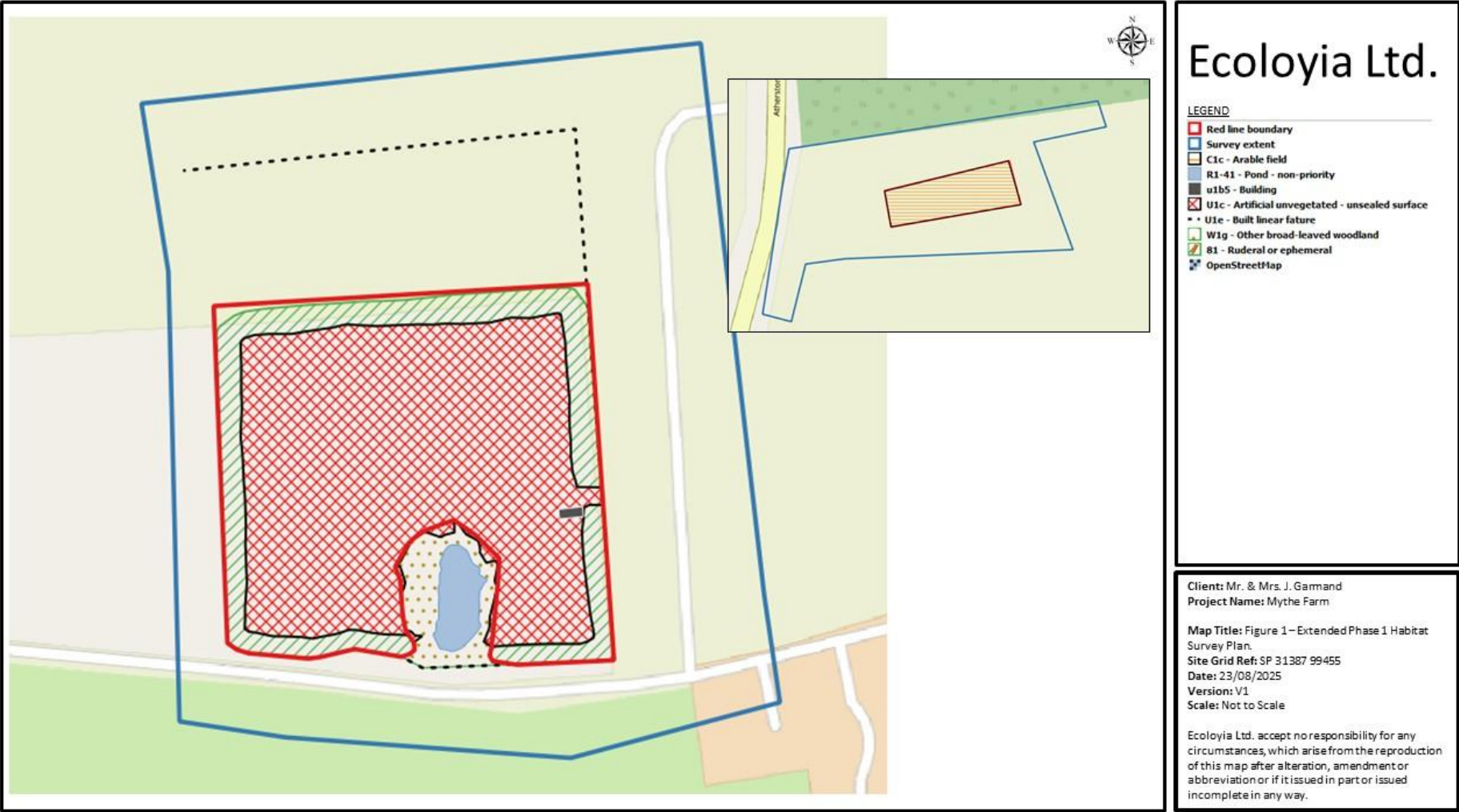


FIGURE 3: HISTORICAL AERIAL IMAGES

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APPENDIX A: SITE IMAGES

Image 1: Image looking west from the entrance of the caravan storage facility showing hard standing, office building and retained pond immediately adjacent to the site.



Image 2: Image looking north-west from the south-eastern corner of the caravan storage facility showing hard standing and office building.



Image 3: Image looking south from the entrance of the caravan storage facility showing hard standing, retained pond and trees immediately adjacent to the site and office building.



Image 4: Image looking north-west showing exterior of the entrance to the caravan storage facility showing security perimeter fence and vegetated bund.



Image 5: Image looking north shown interior of the caravan storage facility showing vegetated bund and hard standing.



Image 6: Image looking south showing western security perimeter fence and vegetated bund.



Image 7: Image looking west showing southern security perimeter fence and vegetated bund.



Image 8: Image looking north showing western security perimeter fence and vegetated bund.



Image 9: Image looking east showing amenity grassland to the north of the caravan storage facility.



Image 10: Image looking west showing the pond and mature trees present immediately adjacent to the site the caravan storage facility.



Image 11: Image looking north showing the pond and mature trees immediately adjacent to the site the caravan storage facility.



Image 12: Image looking north showing the pond and mature trees immediately adjacent to the site the caravan storage facility.



Image 13: Image looking east showing the entrance to and arable field where the biodiversity enhancement area is proposed.



Image 14: Image looking east showing the entrance to and arable field where the biodiversity enhancement area is proposed.



Image 15: Image looking east showing the mature tree line to the north where the biodiversity enhancement area is proposed.



APPENDIX 2: GREAT CRESTED NEWT SURVEY AND RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Ecologyia Ltd.

Great Crested Newt Survey & Recommendation Report – Mythe Farm

Intended for:

Mr. & Mrs. J Garland

Date:

August 2025

Project Number:

CTPL_020_02

Document Number:

CTPL_020_02_R2_18092025

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Revision Summary

Paragraph Modified	Details of Modification

Handling Instructions

This report has been prepared by Ecoloyia Ltd. with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the Services and the Terms agreed between Ecoloyia Ltd. and the Client. Ecoloyia Ltd. disclaims any responsibility to the Client and others in respect of any matters outside the agreed scope of the agreed Services.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1. This report presents a Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* survey of land at Mythe Farm, Pinwall Lane, Sheepy Magna, Atherstone, CV9 3PF. (the development site). The Appraisal was undertaken by Ecology Ltd. on behalf of Mr and Mrs J. Garland.
- 1.1.2. The aims of the study were to identify the presence or potential presence of *Triturus cristatus* and their habitats and provide an interpretation of potential historical habitats and ecological features prior to the construction of the development and provide an appraisal of any potential impacts the development may have had on these. The report also aimed to Provide recommendations for further survey work and / or mitigation measures, if required.
- 1.1.3. The Great Crested Newt survey comprises a multifaceted approach: a desk study review, walkover survey, Habitat Suitability Index survey and presence / likely absence survey.
- 1.1.4. A significant decline in the population status of GCN present in the wider environment has been identified between surveys undertaken in 2010 and those undertaken in 2024. Pond P1 has experienced a decline from a “Medium” population to that of a “Small” population and the population at Pond P2 has lost the population altogether.
- 1.1.5. With a population decline identified to have experienced in both ponds P1 and P2, a comparison in the reduction of numbers, when reviewed in relation to the dramatic change in the landscape over the same period of time and reduction in pond suitability to support GCN, identified through the HSI scores, could explain a natural population decline of what was considered to be a population of Local importance in 2010.
- 1.1.6. A review of historical land use on aerial imagery could suggest that the core habitat for breeding, foraging and resting / hibernating is limited to within close proximity of pond P1. Habitats between pond P1 and P2 have changed from agricultural to amenity.
- 1.1.7. Biodiversity enhancement measures, to be implemented as part of the application, to provide opportunities for the GCN population to recover from the experienced historical, natural decline have been proposed. The following enhancement is proposed within the northern section of the red line boundary (known and the biodiversity enhancement area):
- 1.1.8. Change of use from intensively managed agricultural land to include, but not limited to the creation of 1 x pond suitable for GCN breeding, the creation of 1 x hibernacula suitable for common amphibian and GCN hibernation and provision of grassland of varied sward to facilitate foraging and commuting to the wider environment.

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2 INTRODUCTION

2.1. BACKGROUND

2.1.1. Ecologyia Limited. (EL) was commissioned by Mr and Mrs J. Garland on 22 March 2024 to undertake a Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* survey of land at Mythe Farm, Pinwall Lane, Sheepy Magna, Atherstone, CV9 3PF. The land is subject to a retrospective planning application in relation to the construction of a caravan storage facility. Two areas of land are included, the first including an area of hard standing, perimeter security fencing, portable site office and associated lighting (here on in known as ‘the development’) and a section of an arable field to act as a biodiversity enhancement area. The approximate center of the retrospective application lies at grid reference 431387, 299455 and the mitigation site at: 431387, 299455.

2.1.2. The objectives of the study were to:

- Identify the presence or potential presence of *Triturus cristatus* and their habitats;
- Provide an interpretation of potential historical habitats and ecological features prior to the construction of the development and provide an appraisal of any potential impacts the development may have had on these;
- Identify the proximity of any sites designated for nature conservation interest in relation to *Triturus cristatus* and provide an appraisal of any potential effects the development may have had on these;
- Identify the Favorable Conservation Status of *Triturus cristatus* at the development and provide an appraisal of any potential effects the development may have had on that; and
- Provide recommendations for further survey work and / or mitigation measures, if required.

2.1.3. The study comprised a field survey, in combination with a desk-based review of existing data and available online resources. The areas of interest related to the footprint of the development itself and associated works (Figure 1).

2.2. DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

2.2.1. The Site subject to the retrospective planning application is a secure caravan storage facility. The development comprises an area of hard standing surrounded by a large earth bund and perimeter security fencing. The development comprises an area of some ca. 7960 square m. The development has a portable site office and associated time-limited lighting. The development is located some 389 m south of Pinwall Lane, accessed from internal farm tracks.

2.2.2. The biodiversity enhancement area comprises the corner or a field currently under arable use.

2.3. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.3.1. The assessment comprises two elements: the development and biodiversity enhancement site.

- 2.3.2. The development comprises an area of hard standing surrounded by a large earth bund and perimeter security fencing. The development has a portable site office and associated time-limited lighting present within the site.
- 2.3.3. The biodiversity enhancement site comprises the corner or a field currently under arable use located just to the south of an area of mature woodland.
- 2.3.4. The wider landscape is characterized by a network of arable and grazed fields with occasional woodland blocks and hedgerows, marshland areas and the Rivers Anker and Sence to the south and south-east respectively, interspersed with small roads. The Town of Atherstone lies just over 560 m to the south of the development.

2.4. LEGISLATION

WIDESPREAD AMPHIBIAN SPECIES

- 2.4.1. Widespread amphibians (common frog *Rana temporaria*, common toad *Bufo bufo*, smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*, palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus*) are protected via part of Section 9(5) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

- 2.4.2. Widespread amphibians (common frog, common toad, smooth newt, palmate newt) are protected via part of Section 9(5) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) against:
 - I. Selling, offering or exposing for sale, or having in possession or transporting for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild animal or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal; or
 - II. Publishing or causing to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying buying or selling, or intending to buy or sell, any of those things.

Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

- 2.4.3. Section 40 of Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) carries an extension of the earlier Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000) biodiversity duty to public bodies and statutory undertakers to ensure due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. Section 41 requires the Secretary of State, as respects England, to publish a list of species and habitats which are of 'principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity'. These lists generally reflect the species and habitats previously listed under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

PROTECTED AMPHIBIAN SPECIES: GREAT CRESTED NEWT

- 2.4.4. Great Crested Newts *Triturus cristatus* (GCN) are a European Protected Species, meaning that they are protected by law under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, (as amended). Great Crested Newts are additionally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

2.4.5. The principal means by which the European Habitats Directive is transposed in England and Wales. Regulation 41 creates the following offences relating to European Protected Species (EPS):

- deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species e.g. GCN
- deliberately disturb animals of any such species in such a way as to be likely to:
 - impair their ability to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young, hibernate or migrate;
 - significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
 - deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal; and
 - damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

2.4.6. However, the actions listed above can be made lawful through the granting of licences (European Protected Species License) by the appropriate authorities (Natural England).

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

2.4.7. The Act creates the following offences:

- To intentionally kill, injure, or take, possess, or trade in any wild animal listed in Schedule 5, and interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places;
- Certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking wild animals listed in Schedule 6;

2.4.8. It also provides a mechanism making any of the above offences legal through the granting of licenses by the appropriate authorities.

3 RELEVANT GUIDANCE

3.1.1. Any ecological mitigation methodology, the subsequent interpretation and mitigatory advice provided by the ecologist will make reference to the following guidance documents:

- All UK (and individual UK countries) legislation can be viewed at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/browse>
- ARG UK (2017). *ARG UK Advice Note 4: Amphibian Disease Precautions: A Guide for UK Fieldworkers*. Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the United Kingdom.
- Biggs J., Ewald N., Valentini A., Gaboriaud C., Griffiths R.A., Foster J., Wilkinson J., Arnett A., Williams P. and Dunn F. (2014a). *Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt*. Appendix 5. Technical advice note for field and laboratory sampling of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) environmental DNA. Freshwater Habitats Trust, Oxford.
- English Nature (2001). *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough
- Gent, T. & Gibson, S. (eds). (2003). *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual* (revised reprint), JNCC, Peterborough, ISBN 1 86107 450 6.
- Langton, T.E.S., Beckett, C.L., and Foster, J.P. (2001), *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*, Froglife, Halesworth.
- 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.
- Rees H.C., Baker C.B., Maddison B.C. (2023). *An evidence review for great crested newt eDNA monitoring protocols*. Natural England Commissioned Reports, Number NECR476.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 4.1.1. A desk study was undertaken to identify statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest for *Triturus cristatus* within a 5 km radius of the development through a review of the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) and Natural England (NE) websites.
- 4.1.2. Biological records data were requested from the Warwickshire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) and Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC).
- 4.1.3. The following data search parameters were used. Both the WBRC and LRERC data searches focused on the approximate center point of the development site (grid reference 431387, 299455):
- All statutory designated sites within a 5 km radius;
 - Non-statutory designated sites within a 2 km radius;
 - Records for *Triturus cristatus* within a 2 km radius.
- 4.1.4. Reference was also made to Ordnance Survey maps of the wider area and online aerial images (www.google.co.uk/maps) to identify any feature of nature conservation interest in the wider landscape.
- 4.1.5. Additional reference was also made to historical site reports provided by the client:
- Ecolocation Ltd. (2010). *Great Crested Newt Report and Mitigation Strategy at Mythe Farm, Sheepy Magna, Warwickshire*. Warwickshire.

4.2. FIELD SURVEY

Great Crested Newt Site Walkover Survey

- 4.2.1. A walkover survey was undertaken to identify and document all permanent / temporary waterbodies within 250 m from the development footprint.

Great Crested Newt Terrestrial Habitat Suitability Survey

- 4.2.2. GCN utilize different habitats at different times of year, satisfying different ecological requirements.
- 4.2.3. Habitats across the development site and in the wider environment, along with inferred historical habitats were assessed for their suitability to support GCN, satisfying these different ecological requirements. The following functional requirements were assessed.

Connectivity

Are connectivity features present within or immediately adjacent to the site boundary which could be utilize by GCN as a pathway throughout the site / wider environment, between suitable areas of habitat.

Breeding

Are waterbodies present on site, in suitable condition (see Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Survey), which could be utilized by GCN for breeding.

Foraging

Does the site contain habitats of a varied sward height and structure, providing a diversity of habitats for prey items.

Shelter / Hibernation

Does the site contain habitats which would provide temporary shelter from dehydration and predation during a GCN's active period and / or sufficient thermal stability to provide overwintering (hibernation) success.

Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Survey

4.2.4. The HSI is a measure of habitat suitability using a numerical index between 0 and 1. The index is derived from an assessment of the following variables known to influence the probability of GCN presence (Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the United Kingdom, 2010);

- Waterbody size;
- Surface area;
- Water depth;
- Water quality;
- Amount of shade;
- Macrophyte cover;
- Presence of fish and waterfowl;
- Number of waterbodies within 1 km; and
- Type of marginal / aquatic vegetation.

4.2.5. During the HSI assessment, locations of potential GCN terrestrial habitat and naturally occurring hibernacula was additionally noted.

4.2.6. The HSI assessment scores were used to rate the suitability of each waterbody for GCN following the classifications shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Waterbody Suitability Rating (Oldham, 2000).

HSI Score	GCN Suitability Rating
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< 0.5	Poor
0.5 – 0.59	Below Average
0.6 – 0.69	Average
0.7 – 0.79	Good
> 0.8	Excellent

Great Crested Newt Presence / Likely Absence Survey

- 4.2.7. A presence / likely absence survey, extended to population size-class assessment in the eventuality that Great Crested newts were identified in an individual pond was undertaken in accordance with the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature, 2001).
- 4.2.8. For presence / likely absence surveys three methods (torch survey, bottle-trapping and egg search) per visit were utilized, with four visits undertaken in suitable weather conditions between mid-March to mid-June, with at least two of these visits during mid-April to mid-May. Where this was extended to population size-class assessments, six visits were undertaken in suitable weather conditions between mid-March to mid-June, with at least three of these visits during mid-April to mid-May.
- 4.2.9. Survey were undertaken utilizing the following methods:

Torchlight Survey

- 4.2.10. The water body was thoroughly searched using a 1,000,000 candle power torch between dusk and midnight. The surveyor walked slowly around the perimeter of the water body once (where access was possible), checking for newts in the torch beam every 2 – 3 m, paying particular attention to marginal vegetation and potential display areas on the pond bottom. Surveys of each section of the bank was considered complete when all visible water area had been scanned with the torch beam and no further amphibians were encountered. Care was taken with the torch to minimise disturbance to the newts and other wildlife which may have been present (e.g. nesting birds).

Egg searching

- 4.2.11. Suitable egg laying material in the form of submerged and floating aquatic vegetation in all ponds was inspected (where possible) for evidence of Great Crested newt eggs during torching surveys. Once eggs were discovered in a particular waterbody, no further egg searches were undertaken although incidental observations of breeding activity were noted. Other evidence of breeding activity, e.g., courtship and egg-laying were also recorded where observed.

Bottle trapping

- 4.2.12. Bottle traps were set around the margin of the water body, where accessible, in the evening and left overnight to catch adults during the breeding season. Traps were set at an appropriate density of one trap per two meters of shoreline dependent upon individual site variations. The guidelines set out by Natural England, Froglife, and the Herpetofauna Workers Manual was followed strictly to ensure the welfare of trapped newts and other aquatic organisms.
- 4.2.13. Submerged bottle traps containing an air bubble did not go unchecked for longer than 17 hours overnight and checked between 06:00 and 11:00 hours. If used without an air bubble, they must not be left unattended longer than 12 hours in March-April, 10 hours in May, 8

hours in June, 7 hours in July / August and 8 hours in September-October. They were held firmly in place to prevent tilting and loss of the air bubble. The top of the canes used to secure bottle traps in place were marked with high-visibility, electrical tape to make it easier to find all traps in poor light or heavily vegetated areas.

- 4.2.14. Bottle traps were not set in full summer sunlight or at night during periods of very hot weather, as the temperature of water inside the trap may rise considerably and oxygen levels reduced. Larvae are especially prone to such risks.

Netting

- 4.2.15. Using a long-handled dip-net, with a 2 – 4 mm mesh, the entire banks of the waterbody was surveyed for fifteen minutes per 50m of pond shoreline (where accessible).

Biosecurity

- 4.2.16. Great crested newt and / or common amphibian in some parts of the world are declining because of disease.
- 4.2.17. This section identifies and manages the risk of spreading diseases during site survey. It further sets out how the guidance is to be applied by all site surveyors during fieldwork.
- 4.2.18. It is also intended that the guidance should help prevent the spread of invasive plants or animals during the course of survey work. However, please note that more stringent precautions may apply should invasive species be identified during the course of field surveys.

Generic Biosecurity Precautions

- 4.2.19. To avoid the spread of these diseases a guidance for activities that carry a risk is provided:
- Handle sensitive common amphibians only when necessary.
 - If handling common amphibians, wear powder-free disposable vinyl gloves which you rinse before contact with the common amphibians. Use vinyl rather than latex or nitrile because the latter two may be harmful to common amphibians.
 - Use a fresh pair of gloves for each site visit. For higher risk activities, it may be appropriate to change gloves between handling individual common amphibians, even within the same site (see below).
 - Disinfect survey equipment or containers used to hold common amphibians between each site visit (see disinfection procedures below).
 - Wash all clothing on a 40oC cycle with biological detergent, after exposure to common amphibians.
 - Do not release common amphibians anywhere except at the place of safety.
 - Treat dead or sick common amphibians as a high infection risk and do not handle unless necessary.

Disinfection Procedures

4.2.20. Disinfect all field equipment that has come into contact with common amphibians. This includes footwear, buckets, carry bags, etc.

4.2.21. To disinfect equipment in the field the following will be required:

- a bucket or washing up bowl
- a brush
- disinfectant (bleach or Virkon)
- disposable or washing up gloves (to wear while disinfecting)
- a source, or container, of clean water
- bin bags for waste and wrapping field equipment.
 - A. Use brush to scrub off any debris, plant fragments, mud etc.
 - B. Rinse with water (pond water will suffice).
 - C. Soak in bleach solution for at least 5 minutes, or Virkon for at least one minute (5 minutes where Bsal is suspected).
 - D. Rinse with clean water.
 - E. If possible, allow to dry for before next use.
 - F. Keep field equipment inside plastic bags during transit and storage (after thorough drying) to reduce the chance of transmitting pathogens.

4.2.22. Dispose of disinfectant solutions following the supplier's instructions. Unless otherwise stated, it is recommended that used disinfectant solutions should be poured directly into a drain connected to the sewerage system and flushed with clean water (note that not all drains are connected to sewerage systems), or disposed of as hazardous waste. Used gloves should be disposed of as domestic rubbish. Fabrics including clothes worn while doing amphibian fieldwork can be washed on a 40°C cycle with biological detergent (see comments above regarding clothing requiring colder washes).

Disinfection solutions

- Bleach (diluted with water to produce a 4% solution).
- Virkon (10mg/ml, as per supplier's instructions).
- Virkon-S (licensed for veterinary/animal livestock applications but not human use) can also be purchased in tablet form. One 5mg tablet can be dissolved in 500ml of water.

4.2.23. Pond water can be used to make up solutions so long as it contains little or no organic matter (as this reduces disinfectant efficacy).

4.3. PERSONNEL

- 4.3.1. Surveys have been undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist: a Great Crested Newt Level 2 licensed ecologist (Dr. S. A. Graham MCIEEM, CEcol., CEnv, Natural England Licence Number: 2015-18403-CLS-CLS) who satisfies all necessary field survey competencies as set out by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
- 4.3.2. Dr. S. A. Graham is a practicing Ecological Consultant and Honorary Research Fellow at Bangor University with over sixteen years' experience, holding a BSc (Hons), MSc in Environmental Science and PhD in Herpetology as well as being a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM), a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London (FLS) and both a Chartered Ecologist (CEcol) and Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv). Dr. S. A. Graham is additionally a member of the British Herpetological Society (BHS) a member of Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) and of the Bangor University Herpetological Society as well as being Co-Chair of the Shropshire and Staffordshire Amphibian and Reptile Group (SAS ARG).
- 4.3.3. Dr. S. A. Graham is widely published in the field of herpetology as well as having presented numerous conference papers on UK Native herpetofauna at UK conferences and lectured on native herpetofauna at Bangor University and Wolverhampton University. Additionally, Dr. S. A. Graham is an advisor to the Welsh Amphibian & Reptile Link (WARL) and Welsh Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Groups for Amphibians and Reptiles as well the Scientific Advisor to the Welsh Assembly Government *Pelophylax* Working Group.

4.4. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

- 4.4.1. No significant survey constraints were experienced. Surveys have been undertaken within the accepted survey season.
- 4.4.2. The lack of evidence of a protected species does not preclude their possible presence at a later date. This is particularly true for highly mobile species; their use of a particular feature can significantly vary, not only on a seasonal basis, but also from day to day. Any survey represents only a 'snapshot' of possible species activity. Importantly, lack of evidence of a species does not guarantee their absence and therefore consideration should be given to the need to update the data in the future in the event of substantial delay to the implementation of development.
- 4.4.3. This report is valid for a period of 24 months from the time of survey, not report production. Reliance on the findings of this report, post this period, should seek clarity from the report author, as per the CIEEM (2019) and LERC (2022) Guidance.

5 RESULTS

5.1. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.1.1. Biological records data was received from both Warwickshire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) and Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) on 03 April 2024.
- 5.1.2. No statutory designated site was identified which specifically relate to *Triturus cristatus* within a 5 km radius around the approximate center of the development site.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.1.3. No non-statutory designated site was identified which specifically relate to *Triturus cristatus* within a 2 km radius around the approximate center of the development site.

Data Search

- 5.1.4. The datasets provided by WBRC and LRERC identified nine records of amphibians for four species within a 2 km radius of the development site. Species records provided by WBRC and LRERC include Great Crested newts (2 records), Common toad (1 records), Common frog (3 record) and Smooth newt (3 records). Species records date from 2010 - 2019, with the closest record located in pond P2 on the development site.
- 5.1.5. No identifiable European Protected Species (EPS) derogation licences have been granted by Natural England within a 2km radius of the proposed scheme in relation to GCN.
- 5.1.6. Three GCN Class licence Survey Licence Returns / GCN Pond Survey results (2017 – 2019) have been identified within a 2km radius of the proposed scheme. The returns are all located to the north-east and east. All three record locations are separated from the site by the River Anker.

Historical Survey Report

- 5.1.7. A summary of survey results detailed in Ecolocation Ltd. (2010) Great Crested Newt Report and Mitigation Strategy at Mythe Farm, Sheepy Magna, Warwickshire. Warwickshire ss provided below in italics:
- 5.1.8. A summary of the 2010 HSI survey results are provided in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: HSI Assessment of site (Ecolocation, 2010).

Pond Ref	Pond 1	Pond 2	Pond 3
<i>SI1 – Location</i>	1	1	1
<i>SI2 – Pond area</i>	0.85	1	0.09
<i>SI3 – Pond drying</i>	0.9	0.5	0.5
<i>SI4 – Water quality</i>	0.67	0.67	0.67
<i>SI5 – Shade</i>	1	0.6	1
<i>SI6 – Fowl</i>	0.67	1	1
<i>SI7 – Fish</i>	1	1	1
<i>SI8 – Ponds</i>	1	1	1
<i>SI9 – Terr’l habitat</i>	0.67	0.67	0.67
<i>SI10 – Macrophytes</i>	0.4	0.7	0.5
HSI	0.79	0.79	0.80

5.1.9. *Using categorization of scores developed by Lee Brady equates to values between 0.79-0.80 for all three ponds which suggests good-excellent pond suitability for Great Crested Newt.*

5.1.10. *Great Crested Newts were recorded in both ponds 1 & 2,*

5.1.11. *Although the HSI gave Pond 3 as having an excellent score for Great Crested Newt suitability, the pond had dried up considerably by the time of the initial survey and continued to dry out. No newts were found during the survey dates, although Smooth Newt eggs were discovered on the last survey visit on the 18th May 2010. By this date the pond was almost completely dry affecting its viability as a breeding pond this season.*

5.1.12. *The maximum adult count per waterbody (obtained from torching/bottle trapping) can be conveyed as a peak count per waterbody. Population size can be classed as:*

‘Small’ for maximum counts up to 10.

‘Medium’ for maximum counts between 11 and 100.

‘Large’ for maximum counts over 100.

5.1.13. *Table 5.2 shows the population class size assessment for the ponds surveyed in 2010.*

Table 5.1: Population size class assessment (Ecolocation, 2010).

Pond	Maximum Count of Adult GCN	Relative population size
<i>Pond 1</i>	48	<i>‘Medium’</i>
<i>Pond 2</i>	19	<i>‘Medium’</i>

5.1.14. *The results of the surveys show that there is a ‘medium’ breeding population of Great Crested Newt in the ponds. The site appears to be relatively isolated. It is unknown whether there are any other ponds in the area that could support the population.*

5.1.15. *There is suitable terrestrial habitat for Great Crested newt adjacent to the ponds and in local area providing both foraging and hibernating opportunities.*

5.1.16. *The Great Crested Newt is currently widespread throughout the sub-region of Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull. Although, there are areas in the extreme south, north-west and north-east of the region with few records from pond surveys.*

5.1.17. *Due to the isolation and the numbers of Great Crested Newt recorded this site is considered to be of local importance.*

5.2. FIELD SURVEY

Great Crested Newt Site Walkover Survey

5.2.1. A walkover survey was undertaken on 22 March 2024. A single pond was located immediately adjacent to the development footprint. Four additional permanent / temporary waterbodies were identified within 250 m from the development footprint (see Figure 1). Acknowledging that 250 m is the upper limit over which most great crested newts typically disperse from breeding ponds (English Nature, 2001; Langton et al., 2001). The desk-based assessment identified no further ponds within 250 m of the proposed development site. A description of each pond is provided below:

P1: Large linear pond, believed to be an old moat. The pond has steep sides. The pond is surrounded by mature trees on all four sides forming a predominantly closed canopy over the pond. Small areas of aquatic vegetation were present within the pond to the east and north-western corner. Although the water level appeared to be ca. 50 – 100 cm deep, the tree water depth could not be established. Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) were present on the pond at time of survey. See Appendix A: Image 1.

P2: Large pond, with steep sides, located immediately adjacent to caravan storage facility. The pond is surrounded by mature trees on all four sides forming a predominantly closed canopy over the pond. No aquatic vegetation was present in the pond, with the base of the pond formed by dense leaf-litter and detritus. Although the water level appeared to be ca. 50 – 80 cm deep, the tree water depth could not be established. Mallard ducks (*Anas platyrhynchos*) were present on the pond at time of survey. See Appendix A: Image 2.

P3: Large linear pond, with shallow sides, dominated by terrestrial grasses. Aquatic vegetation was present, although choked and suppressed by terrestrial grasses in the eastern section. No aquatic vegetation was present in the western section. The pond is considered to be ca 100 - 120 cm deep at the center, with wheel ruts indicating that it frequently dry's; facilitating movement through it. The pond is surrounded by mature trees on three sides. See Appendix A: Image 3.

P4: Small natural depression adjacent to a farm track. The pond is surrounded by immature plantation woodland and bramble scrub on three sides. The pond is considered to be ca 50 cm deep at the center with no aquatic plants, although terrestrial grasses were present indicating that it may typically dry annually. See Appendix A: Image 4.

P5: Small ornamental pond in garden of farmhouse, The pond is plastic lined with a number of ornamental plants and rocks scattered throughout. The pond is considered to be ca 40 cm deep and contains a number of large fish. See Appendix A: Image 5.

- 5.2.2. A single Great Crested Newt egg was identified on aquatic vegetation present along the eastern bank of Pond P1 during the course of the survey. The presence of the egg confirmed the pond to be a Great Crested newt breeding pond.

Great Crested Newt Terrestrial Habitat Suitability Survey

- 5.2.3. Habitats across the proposed development site and in the wider environment were assessed for their suitability to support GCN, satisfying these different ecological requirements (see Appendix A: Images 6 – 11). The following functional requirements were assessed.

Connectivity

Connectivity would be limited to the wider environment through a network of mature hedgerows to the south and north and small pockets of woodland to the east and south-west. These habitats may provide connectivity to more favorable habitat in the wider environment.

The proposed development site is considered to provide **Low - Moderate** connectivity opportunity for GCN.

Breeding

A single pond, pond 2, was located immediately adjacent to the development footprint. Four additional permanent / temporary waterbodies were identified within 250 m from the development footprint

The proposed development site is considered to provide **Low** breeding opportunity for GCN.

Foraging

The majority of the wider area is well maintained amenity grassland with a species poor sward, or field which are actively sheep grazed / intensively farmed for crop. Foraging opportunities are generally limited to areas immediately surrounding ponds, small woodland pockets to the east and south-west and hedgerow bases. Opportunistic foraging is additionally afforded by the grassland to the west of pond 2 and materials occasionally stored on site. In summary, it is anticipated that the site typically would attract a low species diversity / availability of prey items to sustain intensive foraging by GCN.

The proposed development site is considered to provide **Low** suitable for foraging by GCN.

Shelter / Hibernation

The majority of the wider area is well maintained amenity grassland with a species poor sward, or field which are actively sheep grazed / intensively farmed for crop. Hibernation opportunities are generally limited to areas immediately surrounding ponds. Rubble, earth and stone piles were observed to be present to the west of pond 2 along with the earth bund which part forms the perimeter of the development site along with scattered

materials occasionally stored on site. It is considered that these are of a size and depth to support sufficient thermal stability to provide overwintering (hibernation) success.

In addition, the mature hedgerow bases to the north and south of the site could provide additional overwintering (hibernation) success.

The development site is considered to provide **Moderate - High** suitable for sheltering / hibernation by GCN.

- 5.2.4. In summary, the site is currently considered to provide an overall **Moderate** suitability for GCN.
- 5.2.5. Habitats across the proposed development site and in the wider environment were further assessed for their suitability to support GCN in a historical context. The review looked to identify changes in the different ecological requirements since surveys undertaken in 2010.
- 5.2.6. The review identifies a change in agricultural practices to the east and north of the site from 2010 as shown in Figures 2 - 4. Previously utilized for crop production, the fields have changed to amenity grassland. The area to the east of the caravan storage facility has additionally changed. It has remained as a business / recreational off-road track, however, the vegetation structure looks to have improved into a more diverse sward. Woodland planting to the southwest has also developed over time to provide semi-mature woodland blocks.
- 5.2.7. The existing hedgerow network appears to have improved over time through the creation of hedge lines to the north and west of the site, improving connectivity throughout the landscape.
- 5.2.8. The tree canopy above Pond 2, present immediately adjacent to the caravan storage facility, appears to have developed and completely closed since 2010. Additionally, although not evident on Figures 2 - 4, with the woodland planting to the southwest having developed over time to provide semi-mature woodland blocks, it is anticipated that this pond would have been more enclosed, resulting in a deterioration of both ponds for their suitability for breeding GCN.

Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Survey

- 5.2.9. A HSI survey of Ponds P1 to P5 was undertaken on 13 April 2024. Weather conditions at the time of survey were dry, 16oC with 60 % cloud cover.
- 5.2.10. The results of the great crested newt HSI survey on Ponds P1 to P5 (Shown in Figure 1) are provided in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3: 2024 Great crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index survey results for Mythe Farm, Sheepy Magna, Atherstone.

Criteria	Score (P1)	Score (P2)	Score (P3)	Score (P4)	Score (P5)
Location	1	1	1	1	1
Pond area	1	0.8	0.7	0.05	0.01
Pond drying	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.9
Water quality	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67
Shade	0.8	1	1	1	1
Fowl	0.67	0.67	0.67	1	1
Fish	0.67	1	1	1	0.01
Ponds	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Terrestrial habitat	0.67	1	1	1	1
Macrophytes	0.35	0.35	0.5	0.5	0.35
Score	0.72	0.62	0.64	0.51	0.33

- 5.2.11. The results of the great crested newt HSI survey on Ponds P1 to P5 indicate that P1 offers “Good” suitability, ponds P2 and P3 offer “Average” suitability, pond P4 offers “Below average” suitability and pond P5 offers “Poor” suitability for great crested newts.

Great Crested Newt Presence / Likely Absence Survey

- 5.2.12. A suit of presence / likely absence surveys, extended to population size-class assessment in the eventuality that Great Crested newts were identified in an individual pond was undertaken between 13 April and 15 June 2024, in accordance with the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature, 2001).
- 5.2.13. Dates of survey and environmental parameters are provided in Appendix B: Table B1. The results of the great crested newt presence / likely absence surveys, extended to population size-class assessment in the eventuality that Great Crested newts were identified on Ponds P1 to P5 (Shown in Figure 5) are provided in Appendix C, Tables 1 - 6.
- 5.2.14. In summary, GCN were only identified to be present in Pond 1. A ‘Small’ population, comprising a maximum count of 9 individuals was recorded in 2024. GCN eggs were additionally recorded in the pond, indicating its utilization as a breeding pond.
- 5.2.15. No GCN were identified to be utilizing ponds 2, 3, 4 or 5 in 2024. Smooth newts and common frog were identified to be utilizing Pond 2 during a number of surveys. No indication of breeding was identified for this species during survey.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1. OVERVIEW

- 6.1.1. This section seeks to identify potential current and historical effects on GCN. The proximity of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and potential effects on their qualifying interests is discussed. To this extent, recommendations are made for further survey work and / or mitigation, if required.
- 6.1.2. This section also introduces opportunities for habitat enhancement on and / or adjacent the development site for the benefit of GCN and local biodiversity, where applicable.
- 6.1.3. This section is based on the layout of the existing caravan storage facility and indicative location of the biodiversity enhancement area provided by CT Planning on 10 September 2024.

6.2. DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

- 6.2.1. The development site does not form part of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation in relation to GCN.
- 6.2.2. The datasets provided by WBRC and LRERC, along with a review of freely available electronic resources identified a number of historical records for common amphibian species and GCN in the wider landscape, although these all separated from the site by the River Anker. No identifiable European Protected Species (EPS) derogation licences have been granted by Natural England within a 2km radius of the proposed scheme in relation to GCN.
- 6.2.3. Historical surveys, incorporating ponds present immediately adjacent to the caravan storage facility and its surrounds, recorded a 'Medium' population of GCN, comprising a maximum count of between 19 - 48 individuals was recorded in 2010.
- 6.2.4. The survey also recorded HSI values between 0.79-0.80 for all three ponds surveyed, suggesting good-excellent pond suitability for GCN.

6.3. FIELD SURVEY

Great Crested Newt Site Walkover Survey

- 6.3.1. A walkover survey was undertaken on 22 March 2024. A single pond was located immediately adjacent to the caravan storage facility footprint. Four additional permanent / temporary waterbodies were identified within 250 m from the development footprint (Figure 1). Acknowledging that 250 m is the upper limit over which most great crested newts typically disperse from breeding ponds (English Nature, 2001; Langton et al., 2001).
- 6.3.2. A single Great Crested Newt egg was identified on aquatic vegetation present along the eastern bank of Pond P1 during the course of the survey. The presence of the egg confirmed the pond to be a Great Crested newt breeding pond.
- 6.3.3. Prior to and during the development period in 2023, a review of historical aerial imagery identified a change in agricultural practices to the east and north of the site from 2010. Previously utilized for crop production, the fields have changed to amenity grassland. The area

to the east of the caravan storage facility has additionally changed. It has remained as a business / recreational off-road track, however, the vegetation structure looks to have improved into a more diverse sward. Woodland planting to the southwest has also developed over time to provide semi-mature woodland blocks.

- 6.3.4. The existing hedgerow network appears to have improved over time through the creation of hedge lines to the north and west of the site, improving connectivity throughout the landscape.
- 6.3.5. The tree canopy above Pond 2, immediately adjacent to the caravan storage facility, appears to have developed and completely closed since 2010. The woodland planting to the southwest having developed over time to provide semi-mature woodland blocks, it is anticipated that this pond (pond 3) would have been more enclosed, resulting in a deterioration of both ponds for their suitability for breeding GCN.

Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Survey

- 6.3.6. The results of the great crested newt HSI survey in 2024 on Ponds P1 to P5 indicate that P1 offers “Good” suitability, ponds P2 and P3 offer “Average” suitability, pond P4 offers “Below average” suitability and pond P5 offers “Poor” suitability for great crested newts.
- 6.3.7. This represents a degradation in condition against all ponds survey in 2010. Pond 1 was still considered to provide good habitat suitability, although the HSI score has reduced. Both ponds P2 and P3 have been downgraded to “Average” suitability. No comparison can be made for the remainder of the ponds.
- 6.3.8. Degradation of Pond 2, specifically closure of the tree canopy above and lack of aquatic vegetation is anticipated to have undertaken up to and including the time when the development was taking place, indicating a potential reduced suitability at the time of development.

Great Crested Newt Presence / Likely Absence Survey

- 6.3.9. GCN were only identified to be present in Pond 1 during the 2024 surveys. A ‘Small’ population, comprising a maximum count of 9 individuals was recorded in 2024. GCN eggs were additionally recorded in the pond, indicating its utilization as a breeding pond.
- 6.3.10. No GCN were identified to be utilizing ponds 2, 3, 4 or 5 in 2024. Smooth newts and common frog were identified to be utilizing Pond 2 during a number of surveys. No indication of breeding was identified for this species during survey.

6.4. POPULATION STATUS ASSESSMENT

- 6.4.1. A significant decline in the population status of GCN present across the site and in the wider environment has been identified between surveys undertaken in 2010 and those undertaken in 2024. Pond P1 has experienced a decline from a “Medium” population to that of a “Small” population and the population at Pond P2 has lost the population altogether. Population trend data cannot be undertaken for the remained of the three ponds (P3, P4, and P5).
- 6.4.2. With a population decline identified to have experienced in both ponds P1 and P2, a comparison in the reduction of numbers, when reviewed in relation to the dramatic change

in the landscape over the same period of time and reduction in pond suitability to support GCN, identified through the HSI scores, could explain a natural population decline.

- 6.4.3. A review of historical land use on aerial imagery could suggest that the core habitat for breeding, foraging and resting / hibernating is limited to within close proximity of this pond. Habitats between pond P1 and P2 have changed from agricultural to amenity.

6.5. POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

- 6.5.1. The general effect upon great crested newts and their Favorable Conservation Status (FCS) from the creation of the caravan storage facility was calculated; see Table 6.1 below showing the calculation using Natural England's "Risk Assessment" Tool. The calculations were based on no mitigation measures being implemented and take a generalist evaluation based on area only.

Table 6 – Natural England GCN 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
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)	0.5 - 1 ha lost or damaged	0.3
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.3
Rapid risk assessment result:	AMBER: OFFENCE LIKELY	

- 6.5.2. The result from the Risk Assessment Tool show that without appropriate mitigation, an offence is generally considered likely. A text description from the Natural England Tool is provided below:

"Amber: offence likely" indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that an offence is likely. In this case, the best option is to redesign the development (location, layout, methods, duration or timing; see Non-licensed avoidance measures tool) so that the effects are minimized. You can do this and then re-run the risk assessment to test whether the result changes, or preferably run your own detailed site-specific assessment. Bear in mind that this generic risk assessment will over- or under-estimate some risks because it cannot take into account site-specific details, as mentioned in caveats above. In particular, the exact location of the development in relation to resting places, dispersal areas and barriers should be critically examined. Once you have amended the scheme you will need to decide if a licence is required; this should be done if on balance you believe an offence is reasonably likely.

- 6.5.3. A review of the caravan storage facility impacts in relation to site specific conditions, has been undertaken. The site-specific impacts upon great crested newts and their Favorable Conservation Status (FCS) from the creation of the caravan storage facility are considered below:

Fragmentation and isolation

No fragmentation or isolation issues are envisaged to result from the construction of the caravan storage facility. **Low** possibility of impact anticipated.

Breeding site loss

In the absence of mitigation, no breeding site loss has been undertaken as a result of the construction of the caravan storage facility. **No** possibility of impact anticipated.

Foraging habitat loss

In the absence of mitigation, potential and / or actual foraging habitat for great crested newts may have been destroyed during GCN active season. **Low** possibility of impact anticipated considering evaluation in Sections 6.3 and 6.4.

Shelter / Hibernation Place loss

In the absence of mitigation, potential and / or actual resting locations for great crested newts may have been destroyed during GCN active season. **Low** possibility of impact anticipated considering evaluation in Sections 6.3 and 6.4.

Post-development interference impacts

In the absence of mitigation, no post interference impacts have been envisaged.

- 6.5.4. Considering all of the parameters of the site-specific impacts upon great crested newts and their Favorable Conservation Status (FCS) from the creation of the caravan storage facility in review of the context of the Natural England's "Risk Assessment" Tool, it is considered unlikely to occur. A text description from the Natural England Tool is provided below:

"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. However, bearing in mind that this is a generic assessment, you should carefully examine your specific plans to ensure this is a sound conclusion, and take precautions (see Non-licensed avoidance measures tool) to avoid offences if appropriate. It is likely that any residual offences would have negligible impact on conservation status, and enforcement of such breaches is unlikely to be in the public interest.

7 BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT

7.1. OVERVIEW

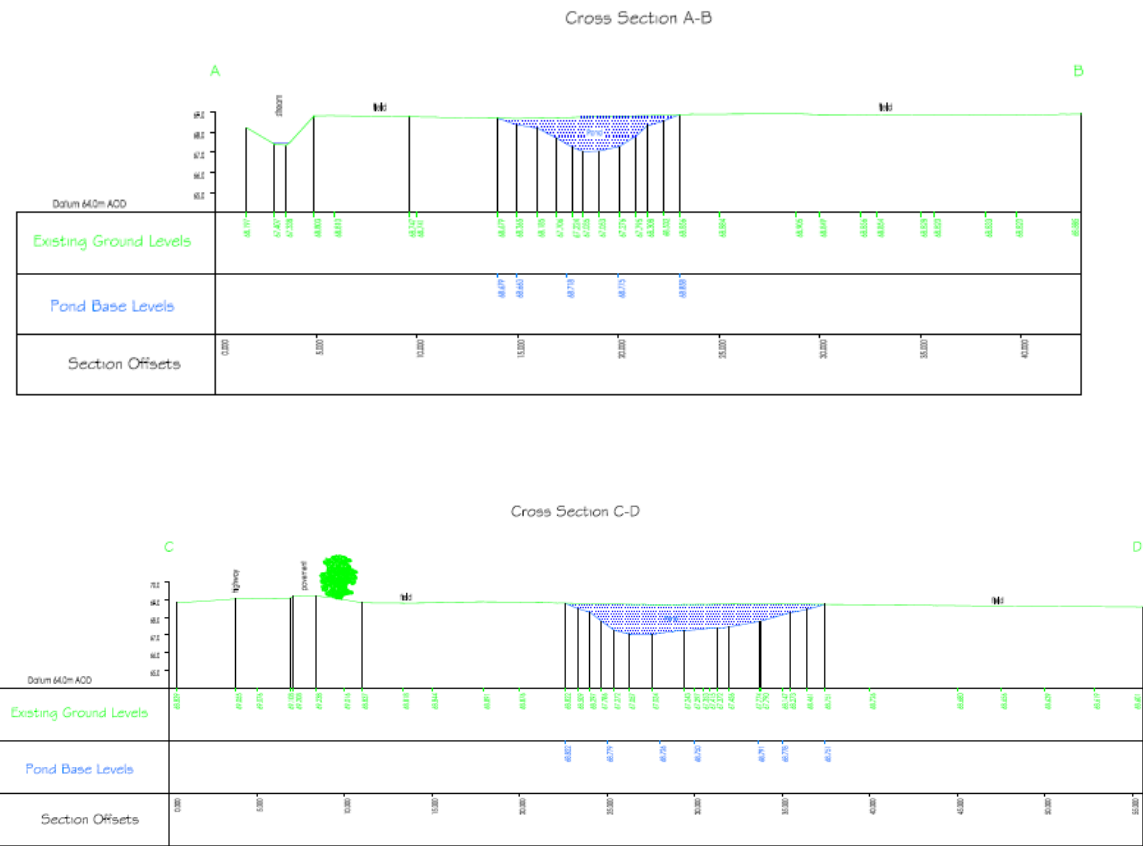
- 7.1.1. A significant decline in the population status of GCN has been identified between surveys undertaken in 2010 and those undertaken in 2024. Pond P1 has experienced a decline from a “Medium” population to that of a “Small” population and the population at Pond P2 has lost the population altogether. Population trend data cannot be undertaken for the remained of the three ponds (P3, P4, and P5).
- 7.1.2. With a population decline identified to have experienced in both ponds P1 and P2, a comparison in the reduction of numbers, when reviewed in relation to the dramatic change in the landscape over the same period of time and reduction in pond suitability to support GCN, identified through the HSI scores, could explain a natural population decline of what was considered to be a population of Local importance in 2010.
- 7.1.3. A review of historical land use on aerial imagery could suggest that the core habitat for breeding, foraging and resting / hibernating is limited to within close proximity of pond P1. Habitats between pond P1 and P2 have changed from agricultural to amenity.
- 7.1.4. This section details enhancement measures to be implemented as part of the application to provide opportunities for the GCN to recover from the historical, natural decline. The following enhancement is proposed within the northern section of the red line boundary (known and the biodiversity enhancement area):

Change of use from intensively managed agricultural land to include, but not limited to:

- Creation of 1 x pond suitable for GCN breeding;
- Creation of 1 x hibernacula suitable for common amphibian and GCN hibernation; and
- Provision of grassland of varied sward to facilitate foraging and commuting to the wider environment.

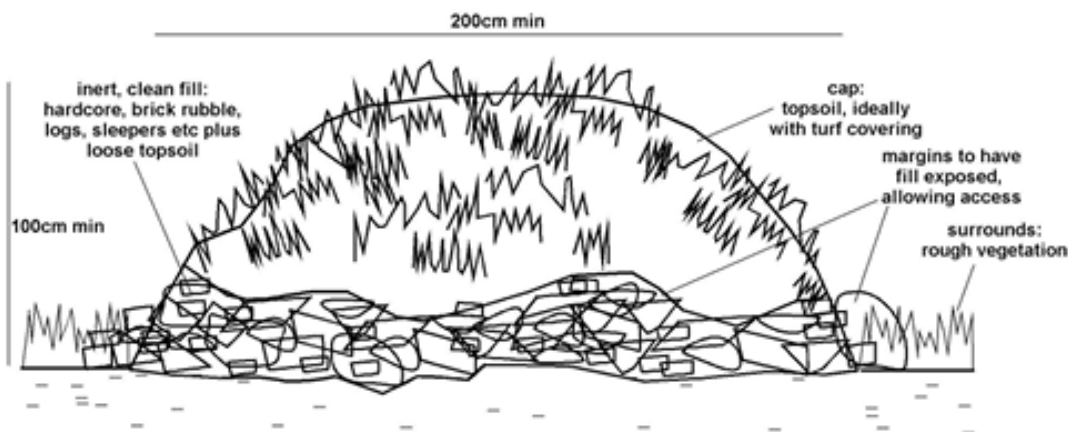
- 7.1.5. Indicative pond and hibernacula design schematics are provided:

Biodiversity enhancement pond design.



7.1.6. It is proposed that the newly created pond is left to natural colonize with aquatic plant species.

Biodiversity enhancement hibernacula design.



8 GCN REASONABLE AVOIDANCE METHOD STATEMENT

8.1.1. The objectives of this Reasonable Method Statement are to:

- Avoid committing an offence under the legislation detailed in Section 3 by minimising the risk of encountering great crested newts as far as practically possible during the construction of the biodiversity enhancement area;
- To ensure that the favorable conservation status of great crested newts is maintained; and
- Ensure that no harm or damage comes to any great crested newt.

8.1.2. Any work-related activities on the site, such as mobilization / demobilization, vegetation clearance, excavations, and / or storage of materials may potentially affect great crested newts. As a result, safeguards must be implemented to protect great crested newts and this Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement details measures to be implemented on site to ensure these objectives are achieved. Through the implementation of the Reasonable Avoidance Measures detailed below, the risk of committing an offence under the above legislation and therefore impacting great crested newts and / or the favorable conservation status of individual great crested newts is significantly reduced and considered highly unlikely.

Generic Mitigation

8.1.3. Both the site Foreman / Supervisor and the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will ensure all Planning Consents are correct and up to date prior to the commencement of works.

8.1.4. The following mitigation measures must be adopted throughout all works activities, including mobilization and demobilization.

- The Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be informed of the works footprint, duration and sequence before the first day of works;
- Prior to the commencement of works, all site staff shall attend a toolbox talk briefed by the ECoW on the ecological risk and legislation protection afforded to great crested newts and common amphibians including any mitigation in place, as stated in this document;
- The Toolbox Talk and this RAMs document shall be kept on site, accessible to everyone in attendance on site, and available throughout the works period;
- If great crested newt and / or common amphibian habitat features are identified within or immediately adjacent to the works area, works will cease and machinery turned off until an assessment of the feature has been made by the ECoW;
- **No site operative will be permitted to disturb a great crested newt and / or common amphibian including their habitat until investigated by the ECoW;**
- Amphibians will be handled only when necessary;
- **If a great crested newt or “other” protected species is found on site all works shall stop and further consultation with the ECoW would be required in regard to further**

mitigation measures and / or the requirement for a Natural England Derogation Licence;

- If other amphibians such as smooth newts, palmate newt, common toads, and common frogs are found, these will be moved to suitable habitat outside of the development footprint to ensure no harm comes to these animals during vegetation clearance and construction;
- No night works unless agreed by the ECoW;
- No deep excavations to be left open overnight unless agreed by the ECoW and a means of escape provided;
- Open deep excavations will be kept to a minimum across the whole Site. All excavations shall be profiled and / or contain ramps to allow any great crested newt and / or common amphibian to escape. Excavations shall be checked daily by the ECoW / appropriated trained and appointed site representative;
- No Vehicular and / or pedestrian access within vegetated areas unless under the direct supervision / agreement of the ECoW. Vehicles should be parked in hard standing / designated areas as far as possible from vegetated areas;
- No vehicular and / or pedestrian access within 2 m of semi-natural habitats, unless agreed / under the direct supervision of the ECoW;
- All equipment and materials to be stored off the ground and away from semi-natural habitats e.g., stick to hard standing (unless agreed with the ECoW);
- Quite working methodology to be always enforced on site (e.g., Turn off engines when not in use, no raised voices, reduced movement of vehicles); and
- All storage of earth (in place for longer than 24 hrs) or materials will be checked for the presence of sensitive ecological receptors prior to being moved unless under agreement and the direct supervision of the ECoW;

Vegetation clearance specific Mitigation

8.1.5. The following mitigation measures detail the specific mitigation measures to be adopted during vegetation and hibernacula clearance:

- Where practicably possible vegetation clearance works should be appropriately timed to avoid sensitive periods; hibernation periods for great crested newt and / or common amphibian (November to February).
- The ECoW shall conduct a 'fingertip' search of the works area prior to any activity commencing on site;
- Any required vegetation clearance will only be carried out upon approval of the ECoW after a 'finger-tip' search (as deemed suitable by the ECoW);

- Scrub / tall vegetation will be cut to a height of c.250 mm with all arising removed using hand tools, i.e. rakes and wheel barrows, and stored above ground level, to prevent potential areas of refuge for reptiles to shelter in;
- 24hrs later the ECoW will conduct a hand search, and any amphibians (with the exception of great crested newts) found will be captured for translocation;
- The remaining vegetation will then be cut, using hand tools, to a height of c. 150 mm, with all arisings removed as above – This should be directional, sweeping from least suitable habitat towards most suitable retained habitat;
- 24hrs later a further hand search by the ECoW and following soil strip can commence – This should also be directional; and
- The area will be maintained as bare earth to minimise the likelihood of newts recolonizing.
- It is best practice to restrict vegetation clearance and soil stripping to as soon as possible before works are to commence in each area, to reduce the likelihood of recolonization by newts.
- If a great crested newt, or their potential resting features are identified within or immediately adjacent to the works area, works will cease and machinery turned off within 10 m of the area until an assessment of the feature has been made by the ECoW;
- No site operative will be permitted to disturb a great crested newt and / or common amphibian until investigated by the ECoW;
- **If a great crested newt or “other” protected species is found on site all works shall stop and further consultation with the ECoW would be required in regard to further mitigation measures and / or the requirement for a Natural England Derogation Licence.**

Ecological Clerk of Works

- The Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist.
- An ECoW will be present on Site during all the vegetation removal works (unless deemed otherwise by the ECoW).
- A log of all Site checks, sightings of great crested newt and / or common amphibian and infringements of the RAMs document (to include advice given and actions taken to rectify) will be kept by the ECoW.

Biosecurity

- 8.1.6. Great crested newt and / or common amphibian in some parts of the world are declining because of disease.

8.1.7. This section aims to identify and manage the risk of spreading diseases during any vegetation and topsoil clearance and construction works. It further sets out how the guidance is to be applied by all operatives and ECoW related fieldwork.

8.1.8. It is also intended that the guidance should help prevent the spread of invasive plants or animals during the course of work. However, please note that more stringent precautions may apply to should invasive species are identified during the course of works.

Generic Biosecurity Precautions

8.1.9. To avoid the spread of these diseases a guidance for activities that carry a risk is provided:

- Handle sensitive common amphibians only when necessary.
- If handling common amphibians, wear powder-free disposable vinyl gloves which you rinse before contact with the common amphibians. Use vinyl rather than latex or nitrile because the latter two may be harmful to common amphibians.
- Use a fresh pair of gloves for each site visit. For higher risk activities, it may be appropriate to change gloves between handling individual common amphibians, even within the same site (see below).
- Disinfect survey equipment or containers used to hold common amphibians between each site visit (see disinfection procedures below).
- Wash all clothing on a 40oC cycle with biological detergent, after exposure to common amphibians.
- Do not release common amphibians anywhere except at the place of safety.
- Treat dead or sick common amphibians as a high infection risk and do not handle unless necessary.

Disinfection Procedures

8.1.10. Disinfect all field equipment that has come into contact with common amphibians. This includes footwear, buckets, carry bags, etc.

8.1.11. To disinfect equipment in the field the following will be required:

- a bucket or washing up bowl
- a brush
- disinfectant (bleach or Virkon)
- disposable or washing up gloves (to wear while disinfecting)
- a source, or container, of clean water
- bin bags for waste and wrapping field equipment.

- G. Use brush to scrub off any debris, plant fragments, mud etc.
- H. Rinse with water (pond water will suffice).
- I. Soak in bleach solution for at least 5 minutes, or Virkon for at least one minute (5 minutes where Bsal is suspected).
- J. Rinse with clean water.
- K. If possible, allow to dry for before next use.
- L. Keep field equipment inside plastic bags during transit and storage (after thorough drying) to reduce the chance of transmitting pathogens.

8.1.12. Dispose of disinfectant solutions following the supplier's instructions. Unless otherwise stated, it is recommended that used disinfectant solutions should be poured directly into a drain connected to the sewerage system and flushed with clean water (note that not all drains are connected to sewerage systems), or disposed of as hazardous waste. Used gloves should be disposed of as domestic rubbish. Fabrics including clothes worn while doing amphibian fieldwork can be washed on a 40°C cycle with biological detergent (see comments above regarding clothing requiring colder washes).

Disinfection solutions

- Bleach (diluted with water to produce a 4% solution).
- Virkon (10mg/ml, as per supplier's instructions).
- Virkon-S (licensed for veterinary/animal livestock applications but not human use) can also be purchased in tablet form. One 5mg tablet can be dissolved in 500ml of water.

8.1.13. Pond water can be used to make up solutions so long as it contains little or no organic matter (as this reduces disinfectant efficacy).

9 EMERGENCY PROVISIONS

- 8.1.14. The ecologist will have suitable provision to initially take care of any great crested newt and / or common amphibian. Such provision will include, but not be limited to appropriate personal protective equipment, a suitable box for transportation.
- 8.1.15. In the unlikely event that any injured great crested newt and / or common amphibian are encountered during works, they will be taken to the local vet (in the case of an emergency) or an appropriate wildlife hospital, the details of which are known to the ecologist and provided below.

Pool House Veterinary Hospital

Fosseway Lane
Lichfield
Staffordshire
WS13 8JY

- 8.1.16. Should a great crested newt and / or common amphibian be required to be taken into care for rehabilitation, the local species-specific group (Shropshire & Staffordshire Amphibian & reptile Group) will be contacted for further advice and guidance.

10 RERERENCES & SOURCE OF REFERENCE

All UK (and individual UK countries) legislation can be viewed at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/browse>

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Baker, J., Beebee T., Buckley, J., Gent, A. and Orchard, D. (2011). Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook. Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bournemouth.

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H.M.S.O. (2017) The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act as amended. London

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H.M.S.O. (1981) The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). London.

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FIGURE 1: GCN SURVEY AREA

SEE OVER PAGE



FIGURE 2: HISTORICAL AERIAL EMAGES

SEE OVER PAGE

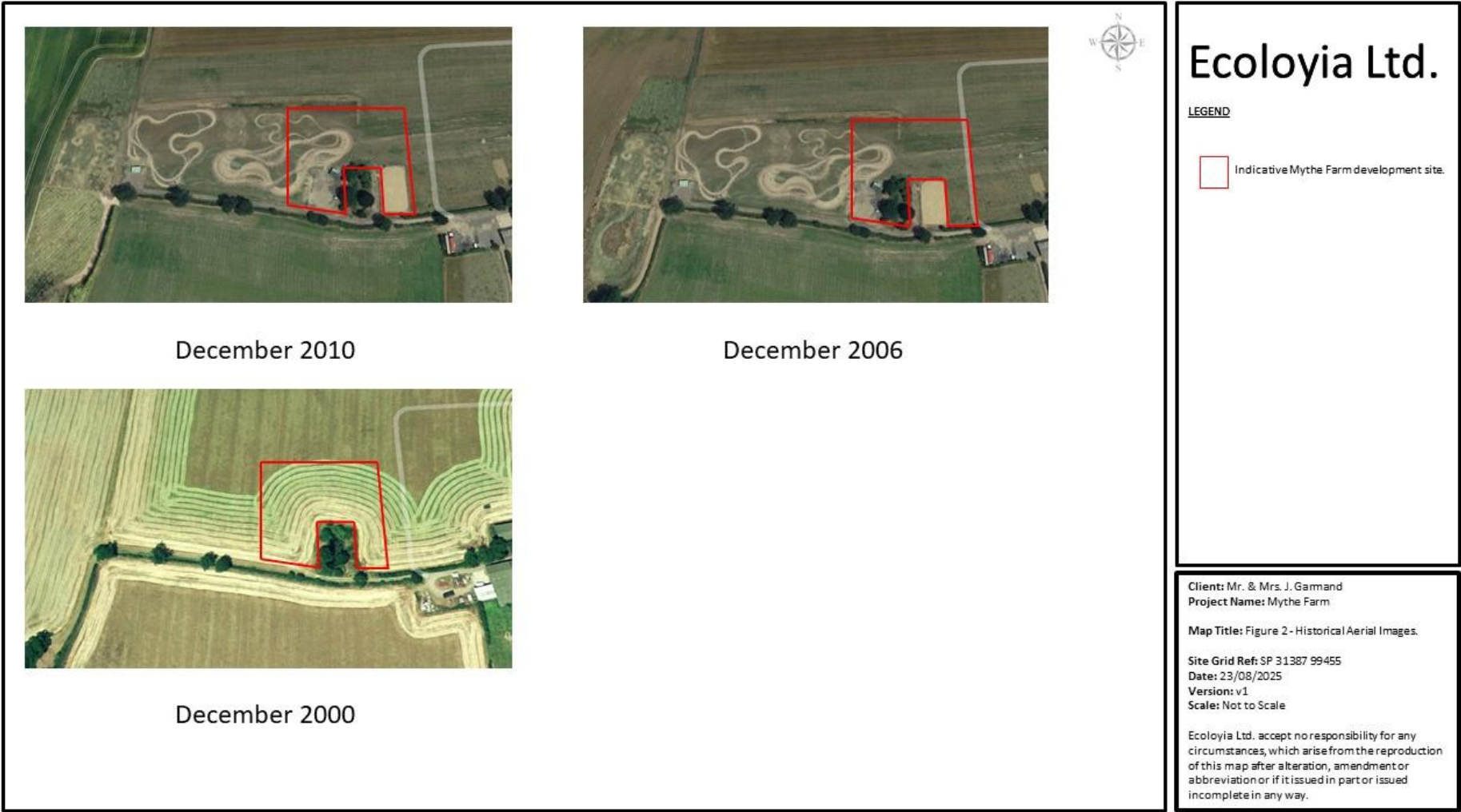


FIGURE 3: HISTORICAL AERIAL EMAGES

SEE OVER PAGE



FIGURE 4: HISTORICAL AERIAL EMAGES

SEE OVER PAGE



January 2022



June 2021



April 2020



Ecologyia Ltd.

LEGEND

 Indicative Mythe Farm development site.

Client: Mr. & Mrs. J. Garmand
Project Name: Mythe Farm

Map Title: Figure 4 - Historical Aerial Images.

Site Grid Ref: SP 31387 99455
Date: 23/08/2025
Version: v1
Scale: Not to Scale

Ecologyia Ltd. accept no responsibility for any circumstances, which arise from the reproduction of this map after alteration, amendment or abbreviation or if it issued in part or issued incomplete in any way.

FIGURE 5: 2024 GCN SURVEY RESULTS

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APPENDIX A: SITE IMAGES

Image 1: Image looking north at pond P1.

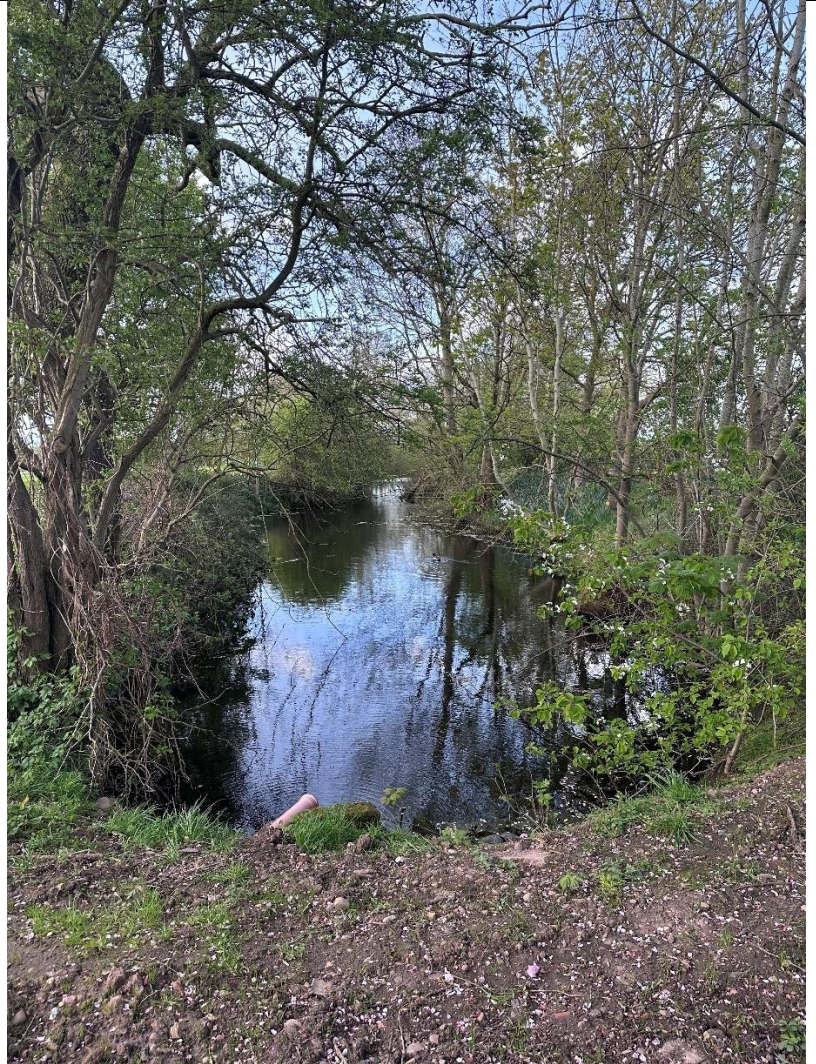


Image 2: Image looking north at pond P2.



Image 3: Image looking west at pond P3.



Image 4: Image looking east at pond P4.



Image 5: Image looking south at pond P5.



Image 6: Image looking west from the entrance of the caravan storage facility showing hard standing, office building and retained pond.



Image 7: Image looking north-west from the south-eastern corner of the caravan storage facility showing hard standing and office building.



Image 8: Image looking south from the entrance of the caravan storage facility showing hard standing, retained pond and trees and office building.



Image 9: Image looking east showing amenity grassland to the north of the caravan storage facility.



Image 10: Image looking north showing grassland used for business and amenity off-roading.



Image 11: Image looking north-west showing exterior of the entrance to the caravan storage facility showing amenity areas.



Image 12: Image looking east showing the entrance to and arable field where the biodiversity enhancement area is proposed.



Image 13: Image looking east showing the entrance to and arable field where the biodiversity enhancement area is proposed.



Image 14: Image looking east showing the mature tree line to the north where the biodiversity enhancement area is proposed.



APPENDIX B: SURVEY TIMINGS & WEATHER DATA

SEE OVER PAGE

Table B.1: Great Crested Newt surveys and weather timings.

Survey No.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Date	13/04/2024	27/04/2024	14/05/2024	24/05/2024	08/06/2024	15/06/2024
Start Time (PM)	18:15	18:10	19:00	19:30	21:00	20:45
End Time (PM)	21:30	21:30	22:30	22:30	22:30	22:00
Start Time (AM)	07:20	07:15	05:50	07:00	07:40	07:30
End Time (AM)	09:00	08:45	07:15	08:30	08:30	08:30
Air Temp* (PM)	16	8	16	13	14	12
Air Temp* (AM)	9	6	13	13	11	12
Precipitation (PM)	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry
Precipitation (AM)	Dry	Light rain	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry
Cloud Cover# (PM)	5	7	7	7	1	7
Cloud Cover# (AM)	1	8	8	3	5	7

* = measured in °C, # = measured in Oktas

APPENDIX C: GREAT CRESTED NEWT RAW SURVEY RESULTS

SEE OVER PAGE

Table C.1: Great Crested Newt raw survey results – Survey 1.

Survey 1	Method	Common Frog				Common Toad				Smooth Newt				Palmate Newt				GCN				Turbidity	
Pond No.		M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	(1 – 3)	
1	T																	1					1
	E																						
	B																	1					
	N																						
2	T										1												1
	E																						
	B									5	2												
	N																						
3	T																						1
	E																						
	B	1																					
	N																						
4	T																						1
	E																						
	B																						
	N																						
5	T		1																				1

Number of Bottle Traps deployed (PM)	90
Number of Bottle Traps recovered (AM)	90

(B) = Bottle Trap, (T) = Torch, (E) = Egg search, (N) = Net search

Table C.2: Great Crested Newt raw survey results – Survey 2.

Survey 2	Method	Common Frog				Common Toad				Smooth Newt				Palmate Newt				GCN				Turbidity	
Pond No.		M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	(1 – 3)	
1	T	1																1					1
	E																						
	B																						
	N																						
2	T																						1
	E																						
	B																						
	N																						
3	T																						1
	E																						
	B																						
	N																						
4	T	1																					1
	E																						
	B	1																					
	N																						
5	T																						1

Number of Bottle Traps deployed (PM)	87
Number of Bottle Traps recovered (AM)	87

(B) = Bottle Trap, (T) = Torch, (E) = Egg search, (N) = Net search

Table C.3: Great Crested Newt raw survey results – Survey 3.

Survey 3	Method	Common Frog				Common Toad				Smooth Newt				Palmate Newt				GCN				Turbidity
Pond No.		M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	(1 – 3)
1	T																	1				1
	E																					
	B																	2	7			
	N																					
2	T																					1
	E																					
	B									1	2											
	N																					
3	T	3																				1
	E																					
	B																					
	N																					
4	T																					1
	E																					
	B																					
	N																					
5	T																					1

Number of Bottle Traps deployed (PM)	90
Number of Bottle Traps recovered (AM)	90

(B) = Bottle Trap, (T) = Torch, (E) = Egg search, (N) = Net search

Table C.4: Great Crested Newt raw survey results – Survey 4.

Survey 4	Method	Common Frog				Common Toad				Smooth Newt				Palmate Newt				GCN				Turbidity	
Pond No.		M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	(1 – 3)	
1	T	1																					1
	E																						
	B																		6				
	N																						
2	T					1																	1
	E									1	1												
	B																						
	N																						
3	T	2			1																		1
	E																						
	B																						
	N																						
4	T	1																					1
	E																						
	B																						
	N																						
5	T																						1

Number of Bottle Traps deployed (PM)	90
Number of Bottle Traps recovered (AM)	90

(B) = Bottle Trap, (T) = Torch, (E) = Egg search, (N) = Net search

Table C.5: Great Crested Newt raw survey results – Survey 5.

Survey 5	Method	Common Frog				Common Toad				Smooth Newt				Palmate Newt				GCN				Turbidity
Pond No.		M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	(1 – 3)
1	T																					1
	E																					
	B																	1				
	N																					

Number of Bottle Traps deployed (PM)	40
Number of Bottle Traps recovered (AM)	40

(B) = Bottle Trap, (T) = Torch, (E) = Egg search, (N) = Net search

Table C.6: Great Crested Newt raw survey results – Survey 6.

Survey 6	Method	Common Frog				Common Toad				Smooth Newt				Palmate Newt				GCN				Turbidity
Pond No.		M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	M	F	Pair	Larvae	(1 – 3)
1	T																					1
	E																					
	B																		1			
	N																					

Number of Bottle Traps deployed (PM)	40
Number of Bottle Traps recovered (AM)	40

(B) = Bottle Trap, (T) = Torch, (E) = Egg search, (N) = Net search

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