



Nicholas Smith

FISC 3, GCN Level 1 Licence

Consultant Ecologist

Email: nicholassmith@arbtech.co.uk

Arbtech Consulting Ltd

arbtech.co.uk

Great Crested Newt eDNA Sampling

Survey site:

Workhouse Lane, Burbage, Hinckley, LE10 2JW

Client:

Cameron Homes

Survey date:

12th May 2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. The proposal is described as:
Residential development of the site.

Survey methodology and legislation can be found in Appendix 5.

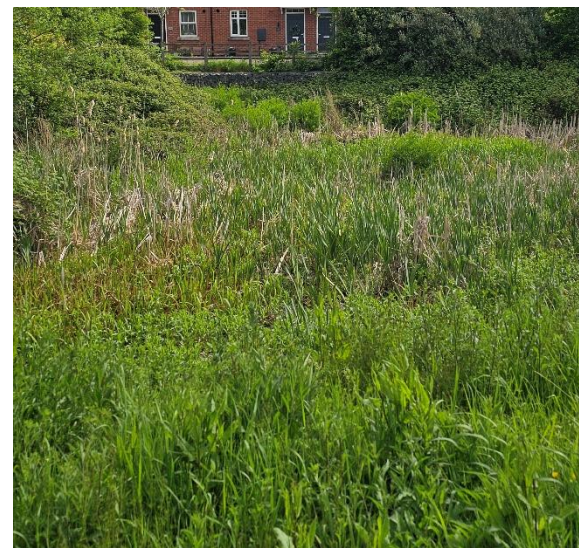
The site survey was undertaken by Consultant Ecologist Nicholas Smith, who holds a GCN Level 1 Licence, a FISC 3 and is an accredited agent on a Natural England Bat Licence (licence details can be provided on request).					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (mph)	Rain
12/05/2026	14	59	70	7	None

Ecological Survey Factor	Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.
Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations	
See Pond Location in appendix 1, Location Plan in appendix 2, Proposal Plans in appendix 3, and eDNA results in appendix 4).	
<i>Scope of report</i>	This report describes the suitability of the habitats on the site and any surveyed ponds for GCN and identifies the presence or absence of GCN in these ponds. It identifies possible constraints in relation to GCN as a result of the proposed development and summarises the requirements for further surveys and mitigation measures to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve planning or other statutory consent and to comply with wildlife legislation. To achieve this, the following steps have been taken: • A field survey has been undertaken, including an assessment of the suitability of the site and any ponds within influencing distance of the site for GCN. • An outline of potential impacts on GCN has been provided, based on the proposed development. • Recommendations for further surveys and mitigation have been made, along with advice on the requirements for a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) for GCN if appropriate. Opportunities for the enhancement of the site for GCN have been set out.

Site location and context	The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SP 44243 91857 and has an area of approximately 2.5ha. The site comprises an area of grassland, currently utilised for haylage purposes, whilst being encapsulated by hedgerows, that run around the boundary of the site. The site is bound by Workhouse Road to the east, dwellings to the north and south, and further agricultural fields to the west and south. It is located within the village of Burbage, on the fringe of the town of Hinckley, south-west Leicestershire. The wider landscape comprises a mosaic of agricultural fields and residential development.									
Field survey results	Pond descriptions A review of OS and aerial imagery identified eight ponds within 500m of the site, two of these were subject to survey (Pond P1 & P2). The remaining ponds were not surveyed because due to the distance between the site and the ponds. A full map showing the location of all eight ponds is included in Appendix 1. Full pond descriptions are provided in table 1 below. Table 1: Surveyed Ponds <table><tr><th colspan="3">Table 1: Surveyed Ponds</th></tr><tr><th>Pond Ref</th><th>Description</th><th>Photograph</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td> Pond P1 related to the pond located approximately 10m north of the site. Pond P1 comprises a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs). The pond measures approximately 26m in length, 16m in width and therefore has an area of 416m². The pond had a dominant cover of bulrush. As the pond is not artificially fed, it is likely to dry up over warm periods. </td><td></td></tr></table>	Table 1: Surveyed Ponds			Pond Ref	Description	Photograph	1	Pond P1 related to the pond located approximately 10m north of the site. Pond P1 comprises a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs). The pond measures approximately 26m in length, 16m in width and therefore has an area of 416m². The pond had a dominant cover of bulrush. As the pond is not artificially fed, it is likely to dry up over warm periods.	
Table 1: Surveyed Ponds										
Pond Ref	Description	Photograph								
1	Pond P1 related to the pond located approximately 10m north of the site. Pond P1 comprises a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs). The pond measures approximately 26m in length, 16m in width and therefore has an area of 416m². The pond had a dominant cover of bulrush. As the pond is not artificially fed, it is likely to dry up over warm periods.									

2

Pond P2 related to the pond located approximately 10m north of the site and was also a SuDs. The pond measures approximately 17m in length and 14m in width and therefore has an area of 238m². The pond comprised a dense cover of bulrush. This pond is also not artificially fed and therefore is likely to dry over warm periods.



Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment

Ponds were assessed for their suitability to support GCN using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment Methodology (Oldham et al, 2000).

HSI is a standard measure of calculating the suitability of a pond to support breeding great crested newts, based on an assessment of 10 characteristics (indices), including size, shading, depth and vegetation profile. The assessment generates a number between 0 and 1 for each of the indices which are combined to provide an overall assessment of a pond's suitability to support GCN on a categorical scale (Table 2). The assessment has not been designed for or tested on other waterbodies such as ditches. HSI assessment results are provided in Table 3 below.

Table 2: HSI Suitability Scores

HSI Score	Suitability	Predicted GCN Occupancy of Ponds in each Category
<0.5	Poor	3%
0.5 to 0.59	Below Average	20%
0.6 to 0.69	Average	55%

0.7 to 0.79	Good	79%
>0.8	Excellent	93%

Table 3: HSI Assessment Results

SI Description	P1	P1
Geographic location	1.00	1.00
Pond Area	1.00	0.40
Pond permanence	0.10	0.10
Water quality	0.67	0.67
Shade	1.00	1.00
Waterfowl effect	0.67	0.67
Fish presence	1.00	1.00
Pond Density	0.80	0.80
Terrestrial habitat	0.67	0.67
Macrophyte cover	0.90	0.90
HSI score	0.27	0.68
HSI category	Average	Average

eDNA Sampling

Sample kits and analysis was provided by SureScreen. Sampling followed the relevant sections of the method set out in the DEFRA funded study endorsed by Natural England (Biggs et al 2014). In summary the sampling protocol is as follows:

- 20 samples were taken from around the entire perimeter of the waterbody.
- The surveyor stayed out of the water while taking the samples (extension poles were used in situations where open/sufficiently deep water was at a distance from the dry banks.
- Survey locations were distributed around the pond perimeter but micro-siting was used to select locations most likely to be used by GCN.
- At each sample location the water column was stirred prior to taking the sample but care was taken to avoid disturbing the sediment on the base of the pond.

	- Once all 20 samples were taken, 15ml of the total sample were pipetted into each of the 6 sampling tubes, whilst ensuring that the water in the sample bag was mixed before taking each 15ml sample and that only one sample tube was opened at any one time. - At all times the surveyor ensured that the risk of contaminating the sampling equipment was minimised by avoiding the placement of the ladle or pipette on the ground or on any otherwise potentially contaminated surfaces and by changing gloves between the initial sampling stage and the pipetting stages of the method. Samples were sent to SureScreen for analysis. Full eDNA results are provided in Table 4. The SureScreen lab results are included in Appendix 4. <i>Table 4: eDNA Survey Results</i> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Pond Ref</th><th>eDNA Result</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>P1</td><td>Negative (0/12)</td></tr> <tr> <td>P2</td><td>Negative (0/12)</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Pond Ref	eDNA Result	P1	Negative (0/12)	P2	Negative (0/12)
Pond Ref	eDNA Result						
P1	Negative (0/12)						
P2	Negative (0/12)						
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	When all factors are entered in the Rapid Risk Assessment calculator provided by Natural England, a result of "Amber: offence highly unlikely" is produced. Given the distance between the next closest pond (220m west) and the negative result of the ponds within close proximity to the site, it is considered disproportionate for further surveys and it is considered suitable for site clearance to be carried out under a precautionary working method. Ponds located over 250m from the site produce a Green Risk Score, stating 'Offence Highly Unlikely.'						

<i>Recommendations</i>	Owing to the negative result of the eDNA testing, GCN licencing is considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: • A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any amphibians to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter amphibians from the working area. • Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats that amphibians could use. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. • In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
------------------------	--

Appendix 1: Pond Location



Appendix 2: Location map



Appendix 3: Proposed plan

Not available at time of writing report.

Appendix 4: eDNA results

Folio No: 1566-2026
Purchase Order: LE10 2JW
Contact: Arbtach
Issue Date: 29.05.2026
Received Date: 14.05.2026



GCN eDNA Analysis

Summary

When great crested newts (GCN), *Triturus cristatus*, inhabit a pond, they continuously release small amounts of their DNA into the environment. By collecting and analyzing water samples, we can detect these small traces of environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm GCN habitation or establish GCN absence.

Results

Lab ID	Site Name	OS Reference	Degradation Check	Inhibition Check	Result	Positive Replicates
GCN26 05405	Workhouse Lane - P2	SP 44169 91870	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12
GCN26 05406	Workhouse Lane - P1	SP 44232 91942	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12

Matters affecting result: none

Reported by: Ruby Fielding

Approved by: Alice Cunningham



Appendix 5: Legislation and planning policy

LEGAL PROTECTION

The great crested newt receives full protection under Habitats Regulations through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species
- Deliberate disturbance of species in such a way as:
 - To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;
 - To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
 - To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

This species are also listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority habitats and species (considered likely to be those listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; measurable gains in biodiversity in and around developments are incorporated; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity'. This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage) will be required for works likely to affect the breeding sites or resting places of great crested newts protected. A licence will also be required for operations liable to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licences are to allow derogation from the relevant legislation, but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficacy to be monitored.

Limitations and CopyrightLegal

Arbtech Consulting Limited has prepared this report for the sole use of the above-named client or their agents in accordance with our General Terms and Conditions, under which our services are performed. It is expressly stated that no other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by us. This report may not be relied upon by any other party without the prior and express written agreement of Arbtech Consulting Limited. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report are based upon information provided by third parties. Information obtained from third parties has not been independently verified by Arbtech Consulting Limited.

© This report is the copyright of Arbtech Consulting Limited. Any unauthorised reproduction or usage by any person other than the addressee is strictly prohibited.

Version control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Final	1.0	Nicholas Smith Consultant Ecologist	04/06/2026