

Report : Great Crested Newt Assessment:
Proposed development at Old Hayes Farm,
Burroughs Road, Ratby, Leicester LE6 0XZ

Reference : CS/3332/25.1

Date : 18 September 2025

Client : Mrs. C. Swain
Old Hayes Farm, Burroughs Road, Ratby, Leicester LE6 0XZ

Proposed development : Construction of a single-storey side extension (to the Old Hayes Farm house) and the erection of a new pool building

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**Great Crested Newt Assessment:
Proposed development at Old Hayes Farm,
Burroughs Road, Ratby, Leicester LE6 0XZ.**

1. Introduction

In August 2025 Star Ecology was commissioned by Mrs. C. Swain, the owner of Old Hayes Farm, to carry out a Great Crested Newt Assessment at Old Hayes Farm.

The Great Crested Newt Assessment was requested to inform a proposed development at Old Hayes Farm.

1.1 Proposed development

There is a proposal to:

- construct a single-storey extension on to the central area of the east elevation of the Old Hayes Farm house, at approximate National Grid Reference (NGR) 449055, 306485.
- construct a new swimming pool building on an area of lawn to the northeast of the Old Hayes Farm house, at approximate NGR 449105, 306500.

The proposed single-storey extension to the house will be built on part of an existing patio and will have an approximate footprint of 36m² (0.0036 hectare).

The proposed swimming pool building will be built on an area of lawn and will have an approximate footprint of 110m² (0.011 hectare).

The total proposed development footprint is approximately 146m² (0.0146 hectare); however, according to Mrs. C. Swain, it is unlikely the proposed extension and the pool building will be constructed at the same time.

Full details of the proposed development may be obtained from Mrs. C. Swain and/or JDUtopia Limited, the project architects.

1.2 Ponds

There are:

- two mapped ponds within 100m; and,
 - four mapped ponds between 100m and 250m
- of the location of the proposed extension to the house and the location of the proposed swimming pool building.

Details of these ponds and their approximate positions from the proposed location of the extension to the house and the location of the proposed swimming pool building are provided below:

Pond	Northing	Easting	Position from the proposed	
			Extension	Swimming pool building
1	449045	306500	12m north	25m west
2	449135	306530	85m northeast	30m northeast
3	448995	306595	120m northwest	140m northwest
4	449525	306430	195m southeast	150m southeast
5	449220	306305	230m southeast	210m southeast
6	449050	306360	210m south	225m southwest

There are twelve mapped ponds between 250m and 500m of the proposed development site. These ponds are too far away to be of significant concern and are not fully considered in this assessment.

1.3 Survey

On 30 August 2025, a Great Crested Newt Assessment was carried out to determine the likely impact of the proposed development having a negative impact on Great crested newt.

Dr. R. M. Jones, experienced field biologist, surveyor and Natural England licensed newt worker (Licence number 2016-19615-CLS-CLS) carried out the assessment.

2. Legislation

Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) legislation it is illegal to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill a Great crested newt;
- deliberately disturb Great crested newt. This includes in particular, disturbance in a way any such which is likely to (i) impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; (ii) impair their ability to hibernate or migrate; or (iii) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a Great crested newt;
- to be in possession or control, to keep, transport, to sell or exchange, or to offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead Great crested newt, or any part of, or anything derived from such a wild animal.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is illegal to:

- intentionally or recklessly disturb a Great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a Great crested newt uses for shelter or protection.

A European Protected Species (EPS) Development Licence from Natural England will be required for development works triggering Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) offences against Great crested newt.

3. Historical records of Great crested newt

A formal search of historical records of Great crested newt at and within the vicinity of Old Hayes Farm was not commissioned. Considering the nature, scale and location of the proposed development; the constraint of not carrying out an historical biodiversity record search is considered negligible.

4. Habitat of the proposed development site

4.1 Proposed extension

A photographic record of the location of the proposed extension is contained in Appendix 1.

The proposed extension will be constructed on part of a patio.

The patio is formed by stone slabs with jointing compound and is in good condition.

No discernible features that Great crested newt may potentially use for rest or shelter were present.

The area of patio does not provide habitat suitable for Great crested newt to use for rest or shelter; though Great crested newt may traverse it.

4.2 Proposed swimming pool building

A photographic record of the location of the proposed swimming pool building is contained in Appendix 2.

The proposed swimming pool building will be constructed on part of a frequently mown lawn.

The area of lawn does not provide habitat suitable for Great crested newt to use for rest or shelter; though Great crested newt may traverse the area of lawn and/or forage on it.

5. Pond suitability

5.1 Surveyed ponds

Pond 1 and Pond 2 are within 100m of the proposed development site, are under the ownership of Mrs. C. Swain and were surveyed.

Pond 3 is between 100m and 250m of the proposed development site, is under the ownership of Mrs. C. Swain and was surveyed.

Pond 4, Pond 5 and Pond 6 are between 100m and 250m of the proposed development site and are under separate ownership.

Pond 4, Pond 5 and Pond 6 were not surveyed.

The continued existence and suitability of Pond 4, Pond 5 and Pond 6 for Great crested newt to use for breeding purposes has not been ascertained.

5.2 Method

The likelihood of Great crested newt using the three closest ponds to the proposed development site (Ponds 1 – 3) for breeding purposes was assessed using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI)⁽¹⁾ using the National Amphibian and Reptile Recording Scheme HSI calculation method⁽²⁾.

The HSI for Great crested newt is a measure of habitat suitability, but is not a substitute for formal Great crested newt surveys.

In general, ponds/waterbodies with high HSI scores are more likely to support Great crested newt than those with low scores.

5.3 Results

5.3.1 Pond 1

Pond 1 is part of a former moat.

On the date of survey, the mapped area of Pond 1 was completely dry.

However, the maximum surface area of Pond 1 was indicated by Mrs. C. Swain.

A photographic record of part of Pond 1 is contained in Appendix 3.

The HSI Score for Pond 1 was calculated as follows:

HSI variable	Comment	Score
SI1 - Location	Zone A	1.00
SI2 - Pond area	Informed maximum area $\approx$ 200m ²	0.40
SI3 - Pond drying	Informed value: 'sometimes dries'	0.50
SI4 - Water quality	Informed value: 'bad' (as no water present)	0.01
SI4 - Shade	Informed value: $\approx$ 90%	1.00
SI6 - Fowl	Informed value: 'minor'	0.67
SI7 - Fish	Informed value: 'absent'	1.00
SI8 - Nearby ponds	Mapped or known ponds within 1km $\approx$ 40	1.00
SI9 - Terrestrial habitat	Informed value: 'poor'	0.33
SI10 - Macrophytes	Informed value during the months of spring: $\approx$ 10%	0.40
HSI		0.42

The HSI score of Pond 1 is 0.42.

Pond 1 provides 'poor' habitat for Great crested newt to use for breeding purposes.

5.3.2 Pond 2

Pond 2 was created in year 2005, or thereabouts, and is used for the rearing of ducks and geese.

A photographic record of part of Pond 2 is contained in Appendix 3.

The HSI Score for Pond 1 was calculated as follows:

HSI variable	Comment	Score
SI1 - Location	Zone A	1.00
SI2 - Pond area	Total mapped area $\approx 850\text{m}^2$	1.00
SI3 - Pond drying	Informed value: 'never dries'	0.90
SI4 - Water quality	Informed value: 'poor'	0.33
SI4 - Shade	Informed value: $\approx 10\%$	1.00
SI6 - Fowl	Informed value: 'major'	0.01
SI7 - Fish	Informed value: 'absent'	1.00
SI8 - Nearby ponds	Mapped or known ponds within 1km ≈ 40	1.00
SI9 - Terrestrial habitat	Informed value: 'moderate'	0.33
SI10 - Macrophytes	Informed value during the months of spring: $\approx 10\%$	0.40
HSI		0.46

The HSI score of Pond 2 is 0.46.

Pond 2 provides 'poor' habitat for Great crested newt to use for breeding purposes.

5.3.3 Pond 3

Pond 3 is a small ($\approx 35\text{m}^2$) field pond that has silted-up and is covered with and surrounded by scrub.

The HSI Score for Pond 3 was calculated as follows:

SI variable	Comment	Score
SI1 - Location	Zone A	1.00
SI2 - Pond area	Total mapped area $\approx 35\text{m}^2$	0.05
SI3 - Pond drying	Informed value: 'dries annually'	0.10
SI4 - Water quality	Informed value: 'bad' (as no water present)	0.01
SI4 - Shade	Informed value: $\approx 100\%$	0.20
SI6 - Fowl	Informed value: 'absent'	1.00
SI7 - Fish	Informed value: 'absent'	1.00
SI8 - Nearby ponds	Mapped or known ponds within 1km ≈ 40	1.00
SI9 - Terrestrial habitat	Informed value: 'good'	1.00
SI10 - Macrophytes	As pond dry, lowest value used	0.30
HSI		0.28

The HSI score of Pond 3 is 0.28.

Pond 3 provides 'poor' habitat for Great crested newt to use for breeding purposes.

6. Risk Assessment

6.1 Method

Research undertaken by Natural England (previously English Nature)⁽³⁾ indicates the distances from breeding ponds within which Great crested newts are most likely to be encountered.

In relation to the appropriate use of Great crested newt mitigation measures, Natural England⁽³⁾ determines:

"The most comprehensive mitigation, in relation to avoiding disturbance, killing or injury is appropriate within 50m of a breeding pond. It will also almost always be necessary to actively capture newts 50-100m away. However, at distances greater than 100m, there should be careful consideration as to whether attempts to capture newts are necessary or the most effective option to avoid incidental mortality.

At distances greater than 200-250m, capture operations will hardly ever be appropriate."

Natural England's valuation of habitats according to distance from Great crested newt breeding ponds has been adopted within the Natural England European Protected Species Licence application form for Great crested newts and within their 'rapid risk assessment' tool (contained in Form 'WML-A14-2.xls')⁽⁴⁾.

6.2 Results – Pond 1 and Pond 2

Pond 1 and Pond 2 are within 100m of the proposed development site.

Should Pond 1 and/or Pond 2 be used by Great crested newt for breeding purposes and, assuming the proposed development is carried out in the absence of (Great crested newt) mitigation measures; the Natural England 'rapid risk assessment' tool shows the potential affect of:

- the proposed construction of the extension to the house, only (i.e. a total of 0.0036 hectare area of land) on Great crested newt is:
 - 'Green: Offence Highly Unlikely'.
 - Notional offence probability score 0.05.
- the proposed construction of the swimming pool building, only (i.e. a total of 0.011 hectare area of land) on Great crested newt is:
 - 'Amber: Offence Likely'.
 - Notional offence probability score 0.3.
- the proposed construction of the extension to the house and the swimming pool building (i.e. a total of 0.0146 hectare area of land) on Great crested newt is:
 - 'Amber: Offence Likely'.
 - Notional offence probability score 0.3.

6.2 Results – Ponds 3 – 6

Pond 3, Pond 4, Pond 5 and Pond 6 are between 100m and 250m from the proposed development site and (considered individually) are too far away to be of significant concern.

Should Pond 3, Pond 4, Pond 5 and/or Pond 6 be used by Great crested newt for breeding purposes and, assuming the proposed development is carried out in the absence of (Great crested newt) mitigation measures; the Natural England 'rapid risk assessment' tool shows the potential affect of:

- the proposed construction of the extension to the house, only (i.e. a total of 0.0036 hectare area of land) on Great crested newt is:
 - 'Green: Offence Highly Unlikely'.
 - Notional offence probability score 0.005.
- the proposed construction of the swimming pool building, only (i.e. a total of 0.011 hectare area of land) on Great crested newt is:
 - 'Green: Offence Highly Unlikely'.
 - Notional offence probability score 0.01.
- the proposed construction of the extension to the house and the swimming pool building (i.e. a total of 0.0146 hectare area of land) on Great crested newt is:
 - 'Green: Offence Highly Unlikely'.
 - Notional offence probability score 0.01.

7. Conclusion

The proposed development will result in the loss of a small area of patio and a small area of mown lawn.

The area of patio is unlikely to be used by Great crested newt for foraging, rest or shelter; though Great crested newt may traverse the area.

The area of lawn is unlikely to be used by Great crested newt for rest or shelter; however Great crested newt may traverse and/or forage on the area of lawn.

There are two mapped ponds (Pond 1 and Pond 2) within 100m of the proposed development site.

Pond 1 is part of a former moat, was completely dry on the date of survey, is known to often dry and, all matters considered, is extremely unlikely to be used by Great crested newt for breeding purposes.

Pond 2 is used for the rearing of ducks and geese and, being devoid of suitable newt laying substrate, is unlikely to be used by Great crested newt for breeding purposes.

Should Pond 1 and/or Pond 2 be used by Great crested newt for breeding purposes; the Natural England 'rapid risk assessment' tool indicates that the proposed development is likely to have a negative affect on Great crested newt.

However, the 'rapid risk assessment' tool is not able to take into account:

- the habitat of the proposed development site;
- the aquatic nature of Pond 1 and Pond 2 and their (lack of) suitability to be used by Great crested newt for breeding purposes;
- the nature of the proposed development; and,
- non-licensed mitigation measures (such as 'Risk Avoidance Measures') for Great crested newt may be used to reduce the likelihood of Great crested newt being negatively affected by the proposed development.

There are four mapped ponds (Ponds 3 – 6) between 100m and 250m of the proposed development site.

Pond 3 is completely dry and covered with scrub and does not provide Great crested newt breeding habitat.

The existence and suitability of Pond 4, Pond 5 and Pond 6 to be used by Great crested newt for breeding purposes has not been ascertained. However, the Natural England 'rapid

risk assessment' tool indicates that Pond 4, Pond 5 and Pond 6 are too far from the proposed development site to be of significant concern.

There are twelve mapped ponds between 250m and 500m of the proposed development site. Whilst individually these ponds are too far from the proposed development site to be of concern, it is possible that Great crested newt are present in the local landscape and may, on occasion, be present on the proposed development site.

All matters considered; there is a very small risk that Great crested newt may, on occasion, be present on the proposed development site and, in the absence of Great crested newt specific mitigation; there is a (very small) risk that the proposed development of The Site may cause the killing and/or injury of Great crested newt.

Given the habitats of the proposed development site and the scale of the proposed development site, it is considered that the potential risk of the development affecting Great crested newt may be assuaged by the adoption of a non-licensed Precautionary Working Method Statement.

A Precautionary Working Method Statement for Great crested newt, to be adopted during the proposed development of the proposed development site, is contained in Appendix 4.

Adoption of the Precautionary Working Method Statement will negate any potential impact of the development on Great crested newt and other wildlife, including common amphibians and small mammals.

With the adoption of mitigation measures (contained within the Precautionary Working Method Statement); it is not considered likely that development of the proposed development site will trigger Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) or Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 offences.

8. References

- 1: Oldham, R.S., Keeble, J., Swan, M.J.S., and Jeffcote, M (2000). *Evaluating the Suitability of Habitat for the Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus)*. Herpetological Journal, Vol. 10, pp. 143-155.
- 2: Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the United Kingdom (2010). ARG UK Advice Note 5: Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index.
- 3: English Nature/Natural England (2006). An Assessment of the Efficiency of Capture Techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, Report Number 576.
- 4: Natural England (2020). European Protected Species Method Statement document. Form WML-A14-2.xls.

Appendix 1. Location of the proposed extension



Photograph 1.

View of the location of the proposed extension to the house.
Looking south from north.



Photograph 2.

View of the location of the proposed extension to the house.
Looking north from south.

Appendix 2. Location of the proposed swimming pool building



Photograph 3.

View of the location of the proposed swimming pool building.
Looking south from north.



Photograph 4.

View of the location of the proposed swimming pool building.
Looking north from south.

Appendix 3. Location of the proposed swimming pool building



Photograph 5.
View of the east area of Pond 1.
Looking west from east.



Photograph 6.
View of the west area of Pond 1.
Looking east from west.



Photograph 7.
View of the north area of Pond 2.
Looking southeast from northwest.



Photograph 8.
View of the southeast area of Pond 2.
Looking southwest from northeast.

Appendix 4. Mitigation: precautionary method of work

Adoption of the mitigation measures is *precautionary*, but may avoid the killing or injury of Great crested newt that may traverse the development site or be attracted to it during the construction phase. (E.g. animals may seek refuge or shelter within spoil heaps or building materials).

A. Ecological Clerk of Works

- A.1 A suitably qualified and experienced ecologist will be employed as an Ecological Clerk of Works to advise the development and oversee development work which *may* impact on Great crested newt.
- A.2 Specifically, the Ecological Clerk of Works will be required to oversee all work involved in the clearance of the development site.
- A.3 The Ecological Clerk of Works will need to be consulted on all development work to take place on the development site and advise as necessary.
- A.4 Contact details for the Ecological Clerk of Works will need to be provided to all main/lead contractors and be published on site and remain available for the duration of the development.

B. Site worker induction

- B.1 All personnel working on the development site shall be made aware of the potential for Great crested newts to be present in the vicinity of the development site and the requirement for these mitigation measures to be adhered to.
- B.2 All site personnel will be informed:
Should Great crested newt, or a suspicion of their presence, be found, work must immediately cease and the Ecological Clerk of Works and/or Natural England (Telephone 0845 600 3078) be contacted.

C. Grass clearance

- C.1 Should the sward height of grass growing at the location of the swimming pool building be above 50mm at the time that development work is to commence; action will be required to negate any likelihood of Great crested newt being present:
 - a) Immediately prior to development works commencing: the Ecological Clerk or Works will walk and inspect the development site for the presence of Great crested newt;
 - b) Should Great crested newt be found, it may be necessary for the development-work schedule to be reassessed and Natural England be consulted;
 - c) If no Great crested newt is found, the central area of the development site will be cut to a height of no less than 50mm:
 - Cutting/strimming will start within the southwest boundary and work progressively towards the northeast boundary; and,
 - All cut vegetation site will be removed from the development site by hand.
- C.2 Where appropriate, the grassland habitat on the development site should be kept to a minimum sward height (ideally less than 50mm) for the duration of the development.

D. Building material storage

- D.1 It is recommended that any materials stored on the development site during the construction phase are done so on pallets and at as great a distance as possible from (retained) trees, hedges and shrubs.
This will:
- a) minimise the likelihood of Great crested newt that may reside or traverse within/over trees, hedges and shrubs from using building materials as a place for rest or shelter.
 - b) ensure the protection of the root systems of the trees, hedges and shrubs.
- D.2 Where suitable, construction materials should be stored on pallets (or other structures such as 'skips') to keep them off the ground and potentially prevent Great crested newt from resting underneath them.
- D.3 Pallets and other stored materials should not be kept on bare ground and in the same place for more than 3-4 weeks to prevent them from creating potentially suitable resting places for Great crested newt.
- D.4 If possible building materials should be stored within (a) secure compound(s), such as 'skip(s)'.
- D.5 Where appropriate, the areas immediately surrounding (the) building material storage area(s) should be kept clear of debris and/or vegetation, and (where appropriate) grassland sward height will be kept to a minimum.

E. Excavations

- E.1 Excavated footings, post-holes, pipe trenches etc. will be filled on the same day as they are opened.
- E.2 Should the time between excavation and filling of foundations or trenches need to be extended, due to unforeseen circumstances, it will be necessary to prevent any chance of Great crested newt becoming trapped in excavations.
- a) This may be achieved by covering the excavations with ply-board sheeting or similar, ensuring a good seal between the bottom edge of the board and firm ground substrate.
 - b) Should it not be possible to cover all excavations, wooden boards should be placed extending from the bottom of excavations to the surrounding surface. Should Great crested newt become trapped in excavations, these 'ramps' may potentially allow Great crested newt a method of escaping on their own accord.
- E.3 Prior to works re-commencing excavations will be inspected for the presence of Great crested newt.
- E.4 In the event that Great crested newt should be found, work will immediately cease and Natural England contacted for advice.
- E.5 Should no Great crested newt be found; the piles of brash and/or rubble will be removed by hand under the supervision of the Ecological Clerk of Works.

F. Arisings and/or waste materials

- F.1 (Waste) excavated stone and soil (and any other arisings) will be removed from the development site on the same day as their creation.
- F.2 (Soil) arisings that are to remain on the development site, perhaps for landscaping for example, will either need to be placed in (a) secure compound(s) (such as) (a) skip(s)) and returned to site when required, or placed immediately on the development site where they are required post-development. Should the latter be required, soils will need to be compacted and dressed to the required finished level on the same day (or as soon after as possible) as they were excavated.
- F.3 Waste materials, such as builders rubble, generated within the development process should be stored within purpose-made refuge containers (such as 'skips') and or (a) secure compound(s).
- F.4 Where appropriate, the areas immediately surrounding the storage areas of (soil) arisings and/or waste materials will be kept clear of debris and/or vegetation, and (where appropriate) grassland sward height will be kept to a minimum.