

Village Hall, Stoke Golding

GCN Non-Licensed Method Statement

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Site Details

Report	GCN Non-Licensed Method Statement
Site Name	Stoke Golding Village Hall, Hall Drive, Stoke Golding, Nuneaton CV13 6EA
Central OS Grid Reference	SP 40107 97010
Client	Stoke Golding Parish Council

Document Control

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Disclosure:

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1 INTRODUCTION

Croft Ecology was commissioned by Stoke Golding Parish Council to prepare a Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) regarding great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN) for the installation of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Stoke Golding Village Hall, Hall Drive, Stoke Golding, Nuneaton CV13 6EA (central grid reference: SP 40107 97010).

1.1 Purpose and scope

The purpose of this statement is to:

- Provide a method of working to any future contractors working at the Site to minimise any ecological impacts to GCN and other amphibians.

The scope of this document is provided by the planning advice given by the Ecology Officer – Leicestershire, in relation to the planning permission 25/00897/FUL dated 21 October 2025 for the “*Proposed Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)*”:

Recommended Actions:

“Prior to commencement a Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) for Great Crested Newts, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development must be carried out in accordance with the approved NLMS.”

Reason:

“It is accepted that the site has limited ecological value however, there is a GCN positive pond within 130m of the application site and several more GCN positive ponds in the area. The site does not have suitable GCN terrestrial habitat present and the connective habitat between the application site and pond is considered poor. However, a working method statement will be required to ensure no GCN are harmed during construction.”

1.2 Baseline information

1.2.1 Existing baseline summary

A baseline habitat survey was undertaken on 12 August 2025 to gather information as the basis for the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment, as detailed in the BNG Technical Note (Croft

Ecology, 2025). The proposed location of the MUGA and BNG enhancements comprised two areas of modified grassland managed as a playing field, a small area of concrete used for ball games and a brick wall.

The modified grassland was in poor condition due to the lack of species diversity. The species present included dominant perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, occasional ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, and rarely occurring dandelion *Taraxacum sp.*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, pineappleweed *Matricaria discoidea*, and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*.

At the north end of the Site was a small area of developed land sealed with concrete, to create an area to play ball games. Further north just behind the concrete was a brick wall supporting a basketball hoop. The brick wall had no missing mortar or gaps and was only two bricks wide, and so did not have potential to support hibernating GCN.



Figure 1. Site boundary (red)

A full Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was not carried out to assess the Site for protected species, however a GCN mitigation strategy for a nearby development was produced by Focus Environmental Consultants in 2020, following a PEA that was conducted in 2019. In addition, DEFRA's MAGIC map and the Natural England GCN Risk Zones map for Leicestershire were consulted by Croft Ecology.

A search of MAGIC identified no ponds within 250m of the Site however Focus Environmental Consultants recorded 11 ponds and a ditch within 500m of development proposed 130m to the south of the Site. In 2019 landowners of all 12 waterbodies were contacted to gain access for eDNA surveys, with five allowing access. Out of the five waterbodies surveyed, three ponds and the ditch returned positive results for GCN eDNA, confirming GCN presence at the time of survey. The pond closest to the Site was 100m southwest and was positive for GCN.

A search of the GCN Risk Zones map for Leicestershire indicated that the Site is within an amber zone where impacts to GCN are considered possible. However, it is unlikely that GCN would use the Site due to the sparseness of the habitats providing no areas for foraging or sheltering. It is possible that GCN could still enter the Site on occasion when commuting between waterbodies, however the likelihood of this is considered very low given the short modified grassland on Site and the surrounding built-up habitats.

While there is the potential for GCN to be on Site, it was deemed disproportionate based on the condition and small scale of the Site and the proximity of built-up landscape to require further surveys in respect of GCN to be conducted. However, it was recommended that a precautionary working statement such as a Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) be produced detailing best practice procedures for before and during the works to mitigate for potential impacts to GCN.

1.2.2 Potentially damaging construction activities

Although GCN are considered unlikely to be present on Site, their presence cannot be completely ruled out, therefore, the construction of the new MUGA – which will include the stripping of the existing turf to install the new surface and boundary fences - has the potential to impact this species, as well as common amphibians, due to the proximity of the ponds and records.

2 METHOD OF WORKING

2.1 Responsibilities

The Principal Contractor will be in charge of employing and delegating tasks to appropriate and suitable personnel, meaning those with the correct training and experience for the role. Where there are any queries relating to the implementation of this document, these should be referred to the ecologist for specialist advice.

2.2 Reasonable Avoidance Measures for GCN

GCN is a 'European Protected Species' and are fully protected under Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). They are also protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These pieces of legislation combine to give substantial protection to GCN and their breeding ponds and terrestrial habitat, making it an offence to deliberately take, injure, or kill the animal; to intentionally or recklessly disturb the animal whilst they are in a 'place used for shelter or protection' or damage or destroy a breeding or resting place (even when the animal is not present). It is also illegal to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a place of shelter or protection; or to possess, control, sell, or transport live or dead individuals or their body parts.

The following precautionary methods of work should be followed on Site to avoid and minimise potential impacts to GCN:

- A toolbox talk should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to any work commencing on Site, to ensure all personnel on Site are aware of the presence of ponds and GCN records in the local area, their legal protection and the requirements to ensure works do not cause disturbance. This mitigation strategy should be available on Site for the duration of the works and a copy present within the Site office for reference by site workers.
- Identification sheets for GCN and common amphibians will be permanently available at the site office, and all contractors should familiarise themselves with the identification sheets and working practices.
- Vegetation within the Site must be maintained in its current condition, keeping grass swards short to a height less than 7cm to prevent it becoming suitable for GCN in the interim. If allowed to establish, additional methods of work will be required for the

vegetation clearance, which would include careful timings of the works, working in a phased and directional manner towards retained areas of vegetation, and supervision by an ecologist.

- While not present on Site at the time of survey, if any log piles or other habitat features develop that could conceal sheltering GCN, they should be dismantled carefully under the supervision of an ecologist.
- Any storage on-Site will be located on areas of bare ground or hard standing and materials will be stored off the ground on wooden pallets or similar to discourage GCN, and other fauna, from sheltering underneath them.
- All spoil material will be compacted at the end of each day to prevent the formation of cracks or crevices in the soil that could inadvertently provide shelter for GCN.
- All waste should be kept in skips or removed from Site as soon as possible to avoid creating new areas of habitat suitable for GCN during the works.
- Any trenches left open overnight should have a scaffold plank or similar placed in them to provide a means of escape for any trapped animal. The trenches should be checked each morning by a competent person. If any GCN are found the works must stop and advice sought, as below. If any common amphibians or other fauna are found, they should be carefully moved away from the area work is being carried out on.
- If GCN are found at any stage of the process, works must stop immediately, the GCN left untouched, and advice sought from an ecologist and Natural England.

3 PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancements for GCN, and other amphibians, should include the provision of sheltering opportunities nearby. Based on the localised nature of the works and very low potential for great crested newts, the creation of one small brash or log pile at the based of the hedgreows of the boundary of the wider park is recommended (indicative locations are noted in Figure 2). This feature should comprise logs and branches of a mixture of sizes arranged such that cavities of various sizes are created suitable for amphibians to use for refuge; and topped with a cap of topsoil and turf.. Vegetation surrounding the brash pile will be left uncut to provide additional shelter and protection.



Figure 2: Possible hibernaculum locations (yellow). A brash pile should be created at one of these (or alternate suitable location).

4 REFERENCES

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