



Elite Ecology

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**403 Cheadle Road,
Cheddleton**



Great Crested Newt Environmental DNA (eDNA) Survey Report

May 2022



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0. Executive Summary

This report has been prepared at the request of Mrs. Thalia Bode (Proprietor). Elite Ecology was commissioned to undertake an eDNA survey for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) at 403 Cheadle Road, Cheddleton, Staffordshire, ST13 7BH (Central OS Grid Reference: SJ 9680 5087).

Under the current proposals the existing garage will be demolished, and another one built along with a number of dwellings. These works will result in both the permanent and temporary loss and/or alteration of some of the habitats located on the proposed re-development site.

The **HSI water body suitability for the surveyed water features** were as follows:

Pond	HSI Score	HSI Suitability	eDNA Result
Pond 1	0.75	Good	Positive

Recommendations:

Prior to any works, a Natural England Development Licence for great crested newts is required to legally carry out the works. Natural England licences take thirty working days once all the paperwork has been completed and submitted. Alternatively, it is an option to join the local District Level Licensing (DLL) Scheme

Compulsory recommendations are required for this project in relation to great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*). All engaged site staff should be informed about great crested newts and other protected species. If any amphibians are found on site during the development, all works should cease immediately, and an ecologist contacted for advice. Recommendation details are outlined in **Section 6.2**.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Report rationale

This report has been prepared at the request of Mrs. Thalia Bode (Proprietor). Elite Ecology was commissioned to undertake an eDNA survey for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) at 403 Cheadle Road, Cheddleton, Staffordshire, ST13 7BH (Central OS Grid Reference: SJ 9680 5087).

This survey effort involved both a desktop study and field survey.

The main purpose of this assessment was to establish the suitability of the site for great crested newt. The field survey was carried out on the 20th of April 2022 by:

Mr. Matthew Cotterill: PG Dip, BSc (Hons), Principal Ecologist. Natural England GCN Licence Number: 2016-20073-CLS-CLS.

Mr. Peter Royall: BSc (Hons), Ecologist.

1.2 Site description and works

The survey area is situated in a rural location off a main road between the villages of Wetley Rocks and Cheddleton. The site measures approx. 0.3ha and comprises a large residential property with attached garage, a mature garden area dominated by amenity grassland and shrubs/trees, and a semi improved grassland paddock area. Hedgerows and fence lines form the site boundaries. The site is surrounded by residential properties to the north and south, a road to the west (beyond which are agricultural fields) and agricultural fields to the east.

Within the wider landscape, further habitats are present. These come in the form of agricultural land, amenity grassland, a football pitch, hedgerows, ponds (the nearest one is located 95m east from the site), residential structures (and their associated gardens/land), and woodland. The habitats that surround the site also have the potential to be utilised by a variety of protected species.

Under the current proposals the existing garage will be demolished, and another one built along with a number of dwellings. These works will result in both the permanent and temporary loss and/or alteration of some of the habitats located on the proposed re-development site.

The pond within 250m of the site might be indirectly impacted by the proposed works. The Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey is to inform whether the lake has potential to support the breeding population of this protected species.

Figure 1: An aerial map showing the location of the land proposed for re-development at 403 Cheadle Road, Cheddleton.



Figure 2: Proposed re-development site at 403 Cheadle Road, Cheddleton (yellow star) in the context of the wider landscape.

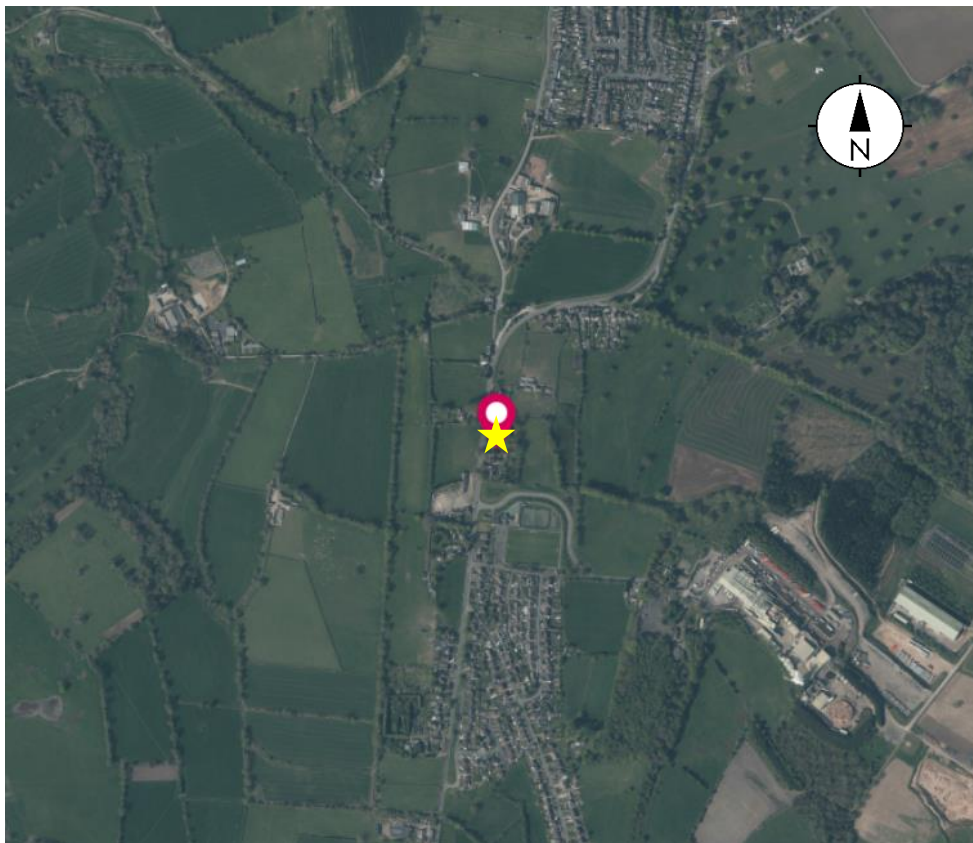
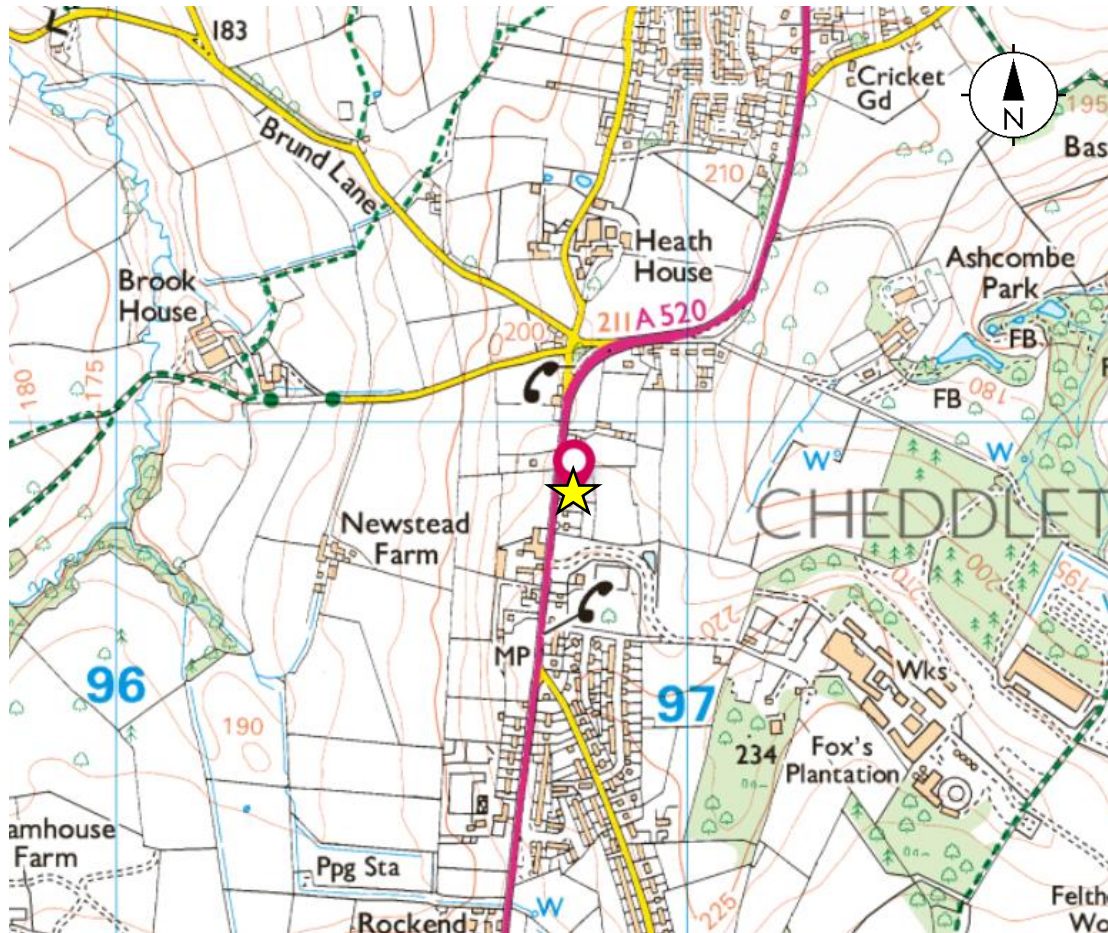


Figure 3: Proposed re- development site at 403 Cheadle Road, Cheddleton (yellow star) in the context of the wider landscape as seen on OS map.



2. Survey Methodology

2.1 Desktop Survey

A variety of resources were independently consulted to assess the known local records within the nearby area and the importance of the site within the local landscape from an ecological perspective. The resources used were www.naturalengland.org.uk, www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk, Google Maps, Google Earth, and Bing Maps. A search of other relevant nature conservation information was made through the use of the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database. The Records Centre used for this study was SER (Staffordshire Ecological Records Centre).

2.2 Field Survey

Walkover Survey:

A walkover survey of the site and adjacent land (up to 250m where land access had been granted) is undertaken to ascertain the presence of habitats and suitable resources that could be utilised by local populations of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and other amphibians. This process includes a visual inspection of these habitats for any amphibians during their terrestrial phase.

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI):

The 'Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI)' is a quantitative measure of habitat quality (Source: Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. [2000]). This is used to evaluate the suitability of aquatic habitats for the great crested newt. This form of survey is used to indicate the likelihood of great crested newt being present and should not be used as a replacement for a presence/absence survey. Ultimately, the HSI can be used to evaluate the need for eDNA analyses on the pond(s) of interest or further presence / absence surveys.

Environmental DNA (eDNA):

If required, an eDNA survey takes twenty water samples from the perimeter of the surveyed water features. This is done to obtain a representative sample of the waterbody and collect as much great crested newt DNA as possible. These samples are taken within close proximity to potentially utilizable great crested newt features (such as emergent vegetation) as well as in open water, to maximise the chances of obtaining great crested newt DNA, if present. Samples collected with a ladle are then placed into a free-standing Whirl-Pak bag where they are shaken up to mix all samples and all potential DNA to create a representative sample from the water feature. 15ml of water from the Whirl-Pak bag is then extracted with a pipette and placed into a conical tube which is already two thirds full of a base liquid. This process is repeated a further five times to produce six conical tubes in total. The tubes are shaken once again (to mix the base liquid with the water samples). They are then sent off to the laboratory for analysis.

Egg Searching:

If required, a surveyor with a licence carefully inspects the aquatic vegetation to identify for the presence or absence of any eggs. This is done to ascertain if that water feature is in use as a breeding pond for great crested newts.

Torch Survey:

If required, the water feature will be surveyed from the perimeter using the beam of a 1,000,000-candle power torch, which is used to penetrate the water's surface once it has gone dark. This enables the surveyors to identify species such as amphibians and aquatic invertebrates that are swimming around in the water. This survey method allows for the presence/absence to be identified within the water features of interest.

Bottle Trapping:

If required, this method involved placing plastic bottles into the surveyed water feature, with the end inverted. This allows for amphibians to enter, but not get out. They are spaced at 2-5m intervals around the water's edge, with them being placed in such a way as to leave an air bubble at the end. These traps are placed out in the evening and left overnight to be collected the following morning. All specimens are identified and sexed for the purpose of this report.

Netting Survey:

If required, a handheld net is used to carefully sweep through the inspected water bodies. The net is then emptied into a plastic tray to be assessed by the surveyors present, with all specimens identified to species and gender level. This survey method allows for the identification of amphibians and aquatic invertebrates that are using that water feature.

3. Desktop Survey Results

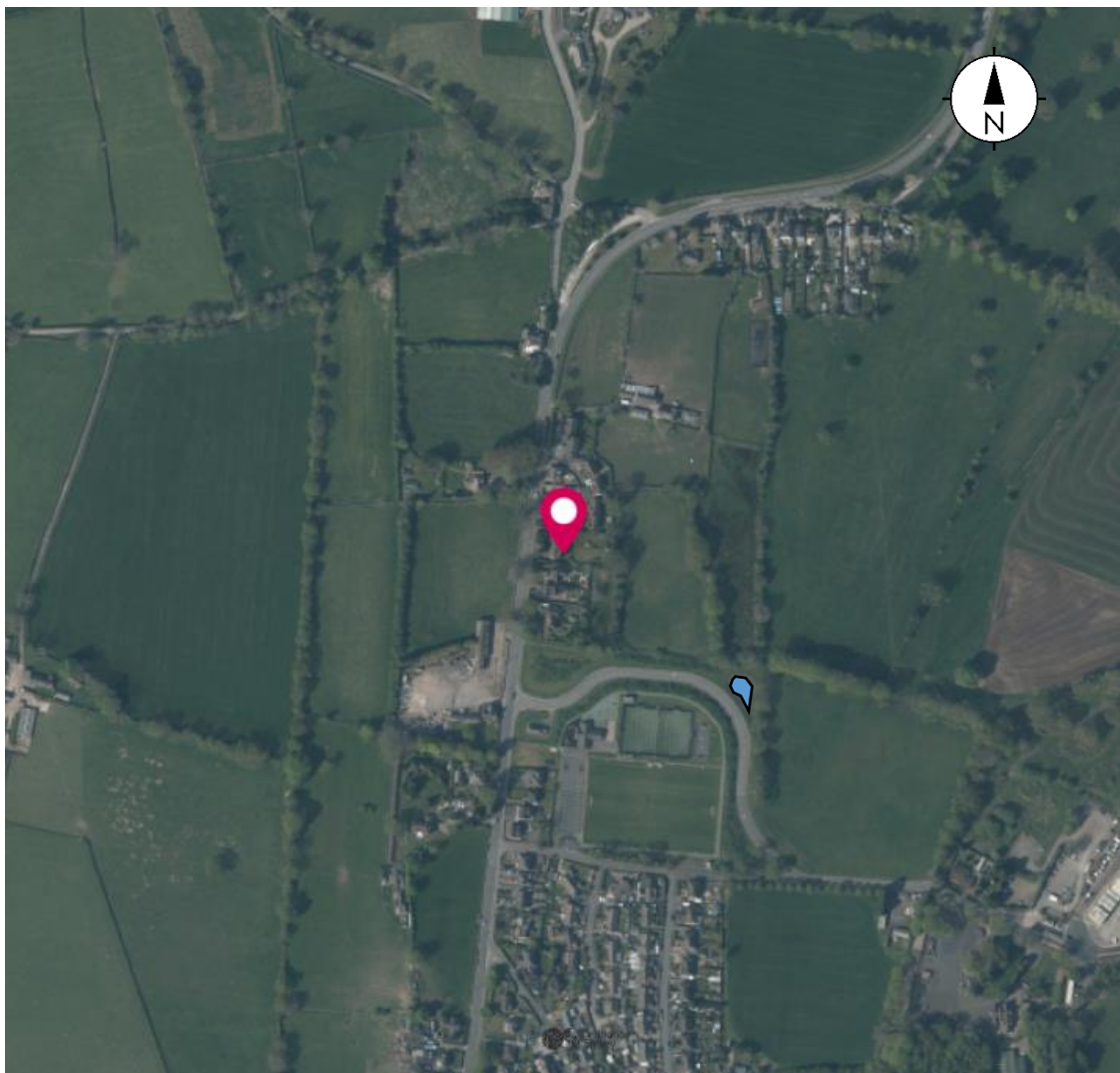
3.1 Ecological Data Results

SER (Staffordshire Ecological Records Centre) returned three records of great crested newts, dating 2019, 2017 and 2009 for sites located 1.2km, 1.5km and 1.4km away (respectively).

3.2 Map analysis results

An inspection of aerial and Ordnance Survey data identified one surveyed pond within a 250m radius. It cannot be discounted that some residential dwellings within 250m of the site contain ornamental ponds within their gardens.

Figure 4: A map showing the waterbodies within a 250m radius of the site highlighted in blue.



4. Field Survey

4.1 Constraints on Obtaining the Survey Data

There were no major constraints to obtaining the survey data at the survey site, and at the pond within the 250m outside the site.

4.2 Environmental variables

The environmental variables on the survey visits can be found within the **Table 1**.

Table 1: The environmental conditions during the days of the surveys.

Environmental variables	EDNA Survey 27/04/2022
Temperature Start:	9°C
Temperature Finish:	8°C
Humidity Start:	58%
Humidity finish:	62%
Cloud Cover Start:	50%
Cloud Cover Finish:	50%
Wind Speed:	6mph
Precipitation:	6mph

4.3 Walkover Survey

The walkover survey of the water features outside of the site were undertaken on the 27th of April 2022.

Pond 1:

This is a pond outside the development site with an approximate area of 430m². There is a low invertebrate diversity, and the water quality doesn't look particularly good with grass throughout. The pond is partly shaded and has poor visibility due to the turbidity seen below the surface. There is occasional presence of waterfowl with mallard observed, but no fish present. The surrounding habitat consists of grassland, scattered trees, and scrub. This provides opportunities for foraging and shelter for amphibian species.

4.4 Habitat Suitability Index (HSI)

A Habitat Suitability Index Survey (HSI) was conducted on the pond within a 250m of the proposed development site (see **Table 2**).

Table 2: Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Results for the water bodies located on and around the site

Water Body Reference:	P1
SI1 – Location	1
SI2 – Pond Area	0.8
SI3 – Pond drying	1
SI4 – Water Quality	0.33
SI5 – Shade	1
SI6 – Fowl	0.67
SI7 – Fish	1
SI8 – Ponds	0.8
SI9 – Terrestrial Habitat	0.67
SI10 – Macrophytes	0.6
HSI Score:	0.75
HSI Category	Good

Categorisation of HSI Scores

HSI - Water Body Suitability

<0.50	Poor
0.50 – 0.59	Below average
0.60 – 0.69	Average
0.70 – 0.79	Good
>0.80	Excellent

4.5 Environmental DNA (eDNA)

An eDNA survey of the waterbodies was undertaken on the 27th of April 2022. These were sent for laboratory testing at SureScreen Scientifics. A summary of the results can be found within **Appendix D**.

Pond 1 came back with a **positive** outcome, with two positive replicates. It can be concluded that great crested newts are present in the surveyed waterbody.

4.6 Egg searching

An egg searching survey was undertaken for the site during the same survey visit. No eggs were found present.

4.7 Torch survey

A torch survey was undertaken for the site during the same survey visit. No great crested newts were identified.

4.8 Bottle trapping

No bottle trapping survey was undertaken for the site during the survey visit.

4.9 Netting survey

A netting survey was undertaken for the site during the same survey visit. Nothing was present.

5. Impact assessment

5.1 Great Crested Newts

Based on the information gathered during the site visit, great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) are likely present on site and confirmed in the nearby pond. Therefore, the impacts from the proposed works are likely **high**, with further action required.

5.2 Other Amphibians

As the pond is outside the development site, and not assessed for other amphibians, their presence/absence cannot be confirmed. The pond could support populations of other amphibians, and therefore further measures are recommended (please see **Section 6**).

6. Recommendations

6.1 Great Crested Newt Natural England Licence

Prior to any works, a Natural England Development Licence for great crested newts is required to legally carry out the works. Natural England licences take thirty working days once all the paperwork has been completed and submitted. Alternatively, it is an option to join the local District Level Licensing (DLL) Scheme.

6.2 Great Crested Newt Method Statement

Compulsory recommendations are required for this project in relation to great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*).

All engaged site staff should be informed about great crested newts and other protected species. If any amphibians are found on site during the development, all works should cease immediately, and an ecologist contacted for advice.

Based on the survey results, the site contains high potential for any terrestrial amphibians, including great crested newts. The proposed works area contains rough grassland, scattered scrub, and hedges. Therefore, the impacts on amphibians will be high during the construction phase. Therefore, the method statement (as outlined below) is deemed the most suitable option for this project. This method statement needs to be adhered to ensure that no amphibians get harmed by the works.

The following methods should be adhered to:

- Keep the vegetation below 15cm in height to ensure that amphibians are deterred from using the site.
- Prior to day one of the works onsite, two artificial hibernacula will need to be created just offsite. The specification for this is found below.
- On day one of the works, a toolbox talk will be undertaken by a licenced great crested newt ecologist. This will educate contractors in relation to the amphibians that could be encountered and the legislation covering them. Associated documentation will be left with the site manager/project manager. This documentation will include contact details for Elite Ecology and the licenced ecologist appointed to the project.
- Prior to the commencement of the construction works, a fingertip search of the area will be undertaken by a licenced great crested newt ecologist. Any rubble on site will need to be removed by hand, under the supervision of the licenced ecologist. The overnight temperature before this fingertip search is required to be 5°C or higher. This is to ensure that no hibernating amphibians are affected by the works and therefore put at undue risk by translocation.
- Any open excavations and trenches should be backfilled before nightfall or, alternatively, escape ramps should be installed to allow newts to escape if they become trapped. If any amphibians are found within trenches dug into the ground, the licenced ecologist shall be contacted, and these amphibians translocated to the chosen site. In addition to this, if any great crested newts are found during the construction phase, then works will stop immediately and the licenced ecologist contacted.
- At the end of every working day, all construction materials need to be stored on raised platforms (i.e. pallets). This is to deter the amphibians from using the construction materials as temporary resting sites.

- At the completion of the works, Elite Ecology will produce a letter statement to detail all amphibians captured and translocated. This will include photographic evidence of the works, the amphibians translocated and the site at the completion of the works.

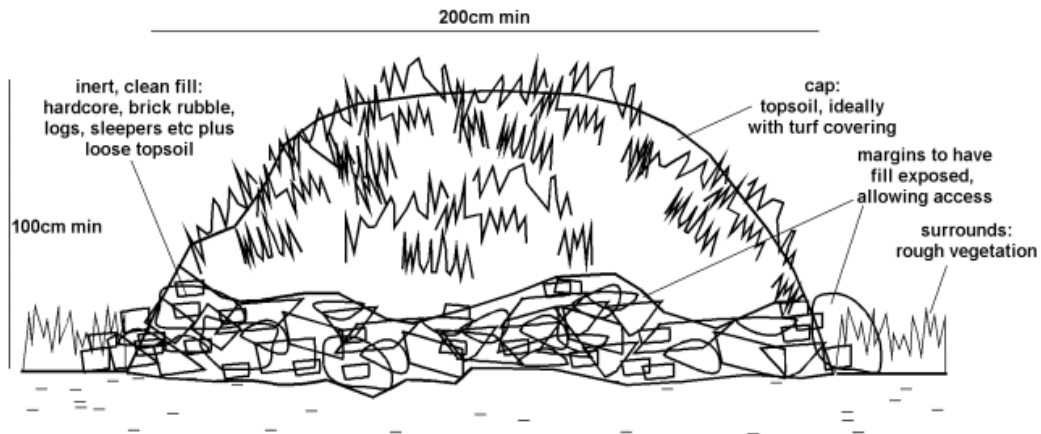
Please note: If any great crested newts are encountered during the above methods, then works need to cease, with both the Local Planning Authority and Natural England contacted for more information.

Figure 5: Annotated site plans and the proposed hibernaculas to be used as translocation sites (blue stars).



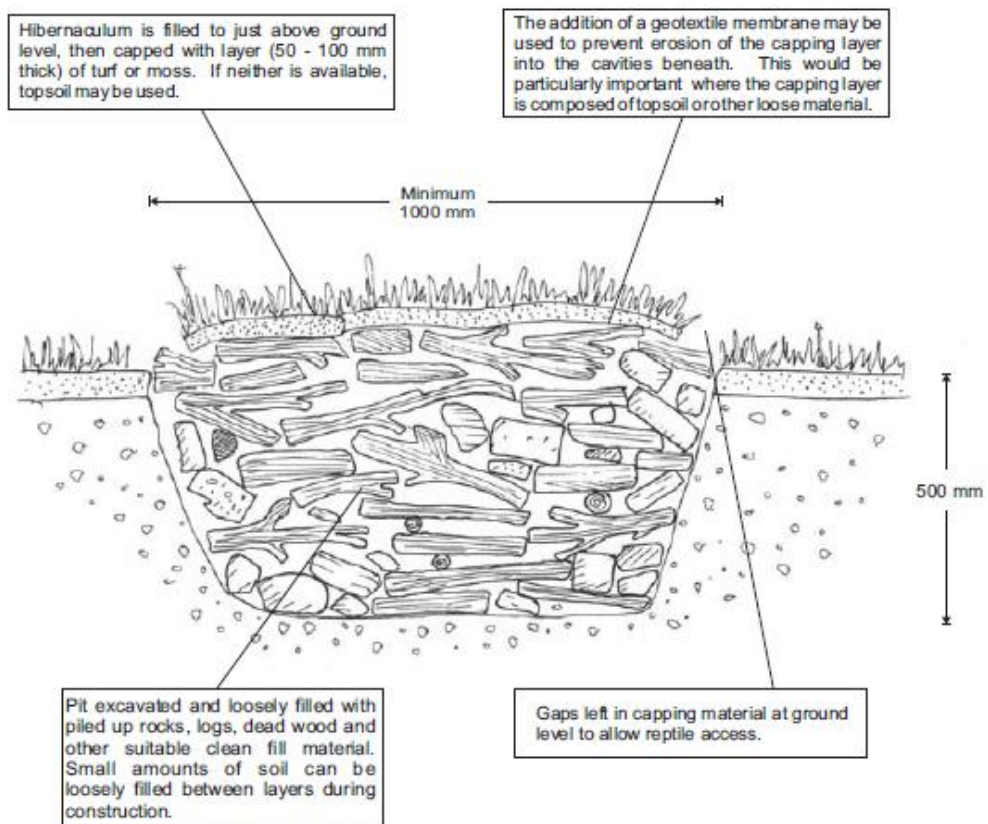
It is recommended that scrubland, hedgerows, and/or rough grassland is retained and improved around the site. It is also recommended that at least two hibernacula are included into the design scheme. These are usually comprised of rubble, rock, log piles and earth banks. An example design for the hibernacula can be seen within **Figure 6** and subsequent diagrams.

Figure 6: A diagram illustrating the recommended hibernacula (GCN Mitigation Guidelines)



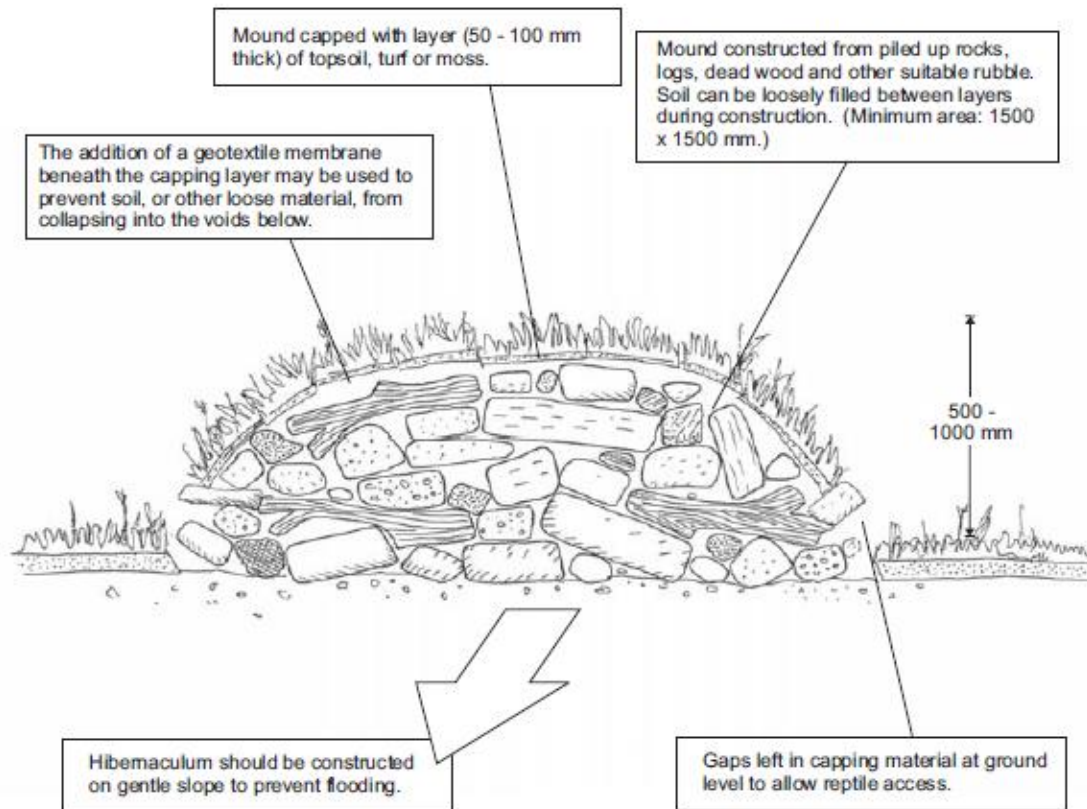
Hibernaculum on free-draining ground

Where ground conditions allow, the hibernaculum should be incorporated into a shallow pit. This design is more likely to remain frost-free, and will be less obtrusive and thus unlikely to be subject to interference.



Hibernaculum on impermeable ground

Where ground conditions are impermeable, then an 'above-ground' or mounded design should be utilised in order to prevent the hibernaculum from flooding. This design should also be used if it is not possible to excavate a pit for any other reason.



Ponds

The new site proposals should include as a minimum a pond, with the following features:

- Varying depths.
- The ponds should have the capacity to contain water for a minimum of one summer in every three years.
- Substantial cover of submerged and marginal vegetation (**Figure 7**).
- Good populations of aquatic invertebrates and amphibians.
- Cluster ponds together rather than have them as isolated features within the landscape.
- Ensure the southern shore of the ponds remains vegetation free.
- The ponds should not be stocked with any fish species.
- A low density or absence of waterfowl.
- Open areas.

A sloping profile is recommended for any ponds produced on the site due to the potential presence of children within the residential dwellings in the future. It is recommended that scrubland, hedgerows, woodland and/or rough grassland is included around near the ponds to encourage use by a number of species.

Marginal:

- Brooklime – (*Veronica beccabunga*)
- Bungle – (*Ajuga reptans*)
- Common Spike-rush- (*Eleocharis palustris*)
- Creeping Bent – (*Agrostis stolonifera*)
- Creeping Jenny – (*Lysimachia nummularia*)
- Fleabane – (*Pulicaria dysenterica*)
- Flowering Rush – (*Butomus umbellatus*)
- Fool's Watercress – (*Apium nodiflorum*)
- Gipsywort – (*Lycopus europaeus*)
- Great Willowherb – (*Epilobium hirsutum*)
- Hemp Agrimony – (*Eupatorium cannabinum*)
- Lady's Smock – (*Cardamine pratensis*)
- Marsh Foxtail – (*Alopecurus geniculatus*)
- Marsh Marigold – (*Caltha palustris*)
- Marsh Woundwort – (*Stachys palustris*)
- Meadowsweet – (*Filipendula ulmaria*)
- Purple Loosestrife – (*Lythrum salicaria*)
- Ragged-Robin – (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*)
- Silverweed – (*Potentilla anserina*)
- Soft Rush – (*Juncus effusus*)
- Water Avens – (*Geum rivale*)
- Water Dock – (*Rumex hydrolapathum*)
- Water Forget-me-not – (*Myosotis scorpioides*)
- Water Pepper – (*Persicaria hydropiper*)

Further advice and resources can be found [here](#).

Emergent:

- Branched Bur-reed – (*Sparganium erectum*)
- Amphibious Bistort – (*Persicaria amphibium*)
- Arrowhead – (*Sagittaria aquatilis*)
- Water Crowfoot – (*Ranunculus aquatilis*)
- Water Mint – (*Mentha aquatica*)
- Flowering Rush – (*Butomus umbellatus*)
- Water Plantain – (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*)
- Water Forget-me-not – (*Myosotis Scorpiodes*)
- Stinking Iris – (*Iris foetidissima*)
- Marsh Cinquefoil – (*Potentilla palustris*)
- Greater Pond-sedge – (*Carex Riparia*)

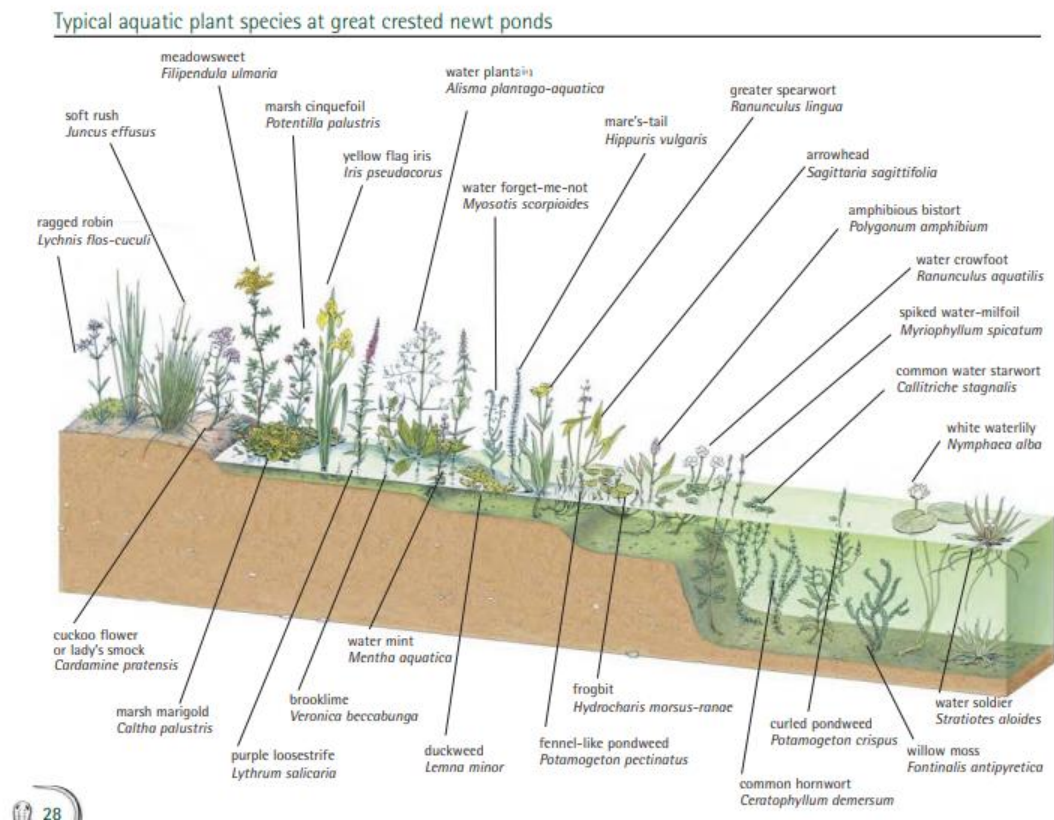
Submerged but with floating leaves:

- Bladderwort – (*Utricularia spp*)
- Broad-leaved Pondweed – (*Potamogeton natans*)
- Curled Pondweed – (*Potamogeton crispus*)
- Frogbit – (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*)
- Water Crowfoot/Buttercup – (*Ranunculus aquatilis*)

Totally submerged:

- Fennel Pondweed – (*Potamogeton pectinatus*)
- Horned Pondweed – (*Zannichellia palustris*)
- Hornwort – (*Ceratophyllum demersum*)
- Shining Pondweed – (*Potamogeton lucens*)
- Spiked Water-milfoil – (*Myriophyllum spicatum*)
- Water Starwort – (*Callitriche stagnalis*)

Figure 7: A diagram illustrating the recommended submerged and marginal vegetation for the ponds (GCN Conservation Handbook).



6.3 **Biodiversity Net Gain**

Biodiversity Net Gain needs to be ensured within the scheme of works and this will be devised. Please refer to the separate report for this.

7. References

Countryside and Rights of Way Act. Joint Nature Conservation Committee.
GCN eDNA Protocol. Freshwater Habitats Trust.

Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Natural England. Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines.

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.

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations. HMSO.

Wildlife and Countryside Act. Williams, P.

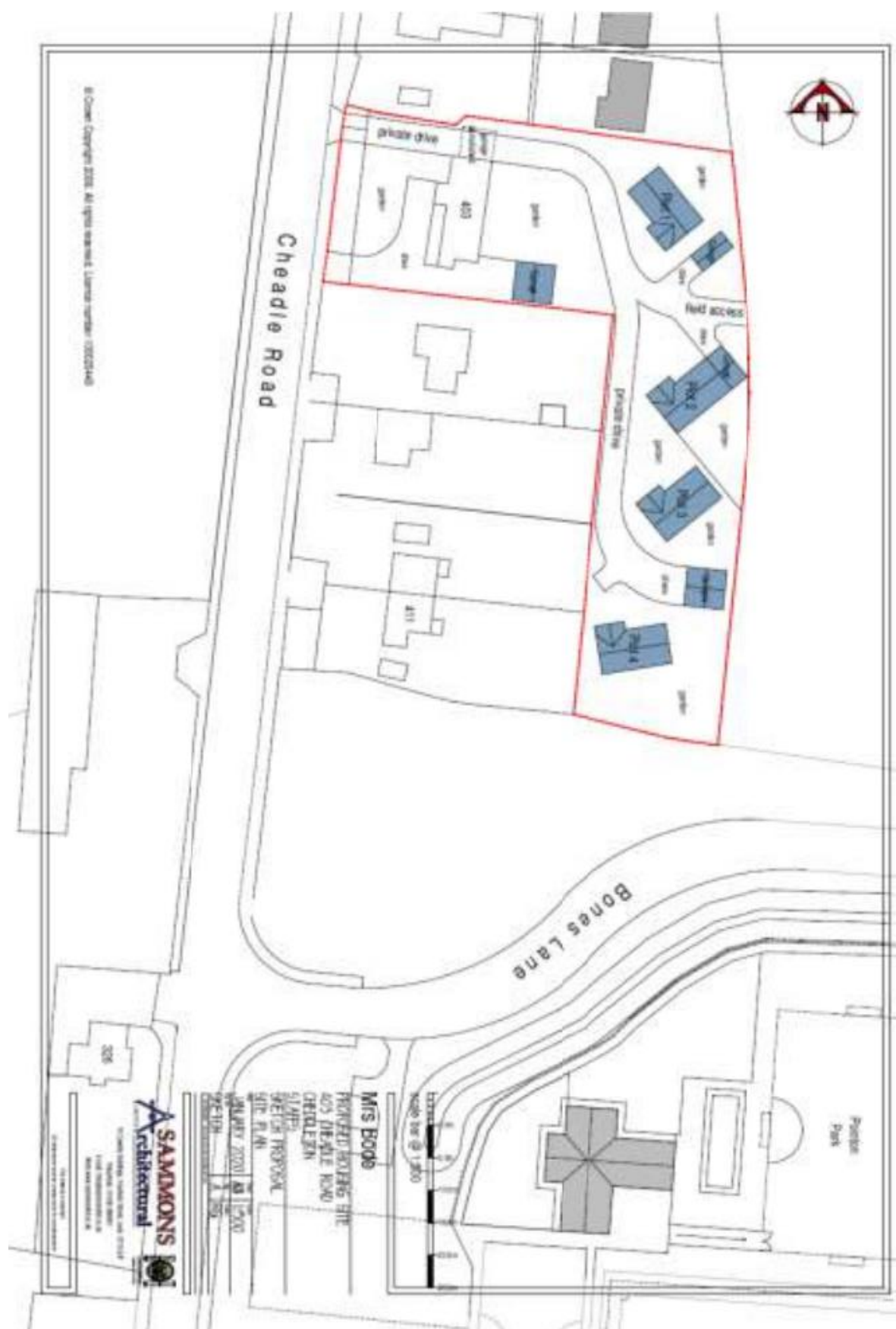
8. Appendices

Appendix A: Site Plans

Appendix B: Photographic Record

Appendix C: Legislation and Policy

Appendix D: Environmental (eDNA) results

Appendix A: Site Plans

Appendix B: Photographic Records

Plate 1: View of the pond 95m away from the main site. The water levels are likely to change over the year due to the amount of grass exposed and under the surface.



Plate 2: The same pond from a different viewpoint.



Plate 3: The same pond from a different viewpoint.



Appendix C: Legislation and Policy**Great Crested Newt**

The Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) is fully protected under a variety of legislation and conventions. These include:

- Bern Convention (Appendix II)
- Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) 2010
- EU Habitats Directive (Annex II and IV)
- Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- NERC Act 2006 (Section 41 England; Section 42 Wales)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

In addition to this, the great crested newt has been listed as a priority species on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).

This legislation covers all aspects of newt life stages (eggs, efts and adult newts) and makes it illegal to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter, protection or breeding, and to intentionally disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Licenses can be obtained from Natural England (DEFRA) under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994, to permit activities for the purposes of:

- Regulation 44(2)(e): Preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, or
 - Regulation 44(2)(f): Preventing the spread of disease
 - Regulation 44(2)(g): Preventing serious damage to any form of property or fisheries
- Or
- If there is no satisfactory alternative.

The above regulations allow people to carry out activities which would otherwise be illegal.

Appendix D: Environmental DNA (eDNA) Results

Folio No: E13180
Report No: 1
Purchase Order: 403 Cheadle Rd
Client: ELITE ECOLOGY
Contact: Admin

TECHNICAL REPORT**ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DNA IN POND WATER FOR THE DETECTION OF GREAT CRESTED NEWTS (TRITURUS CRISTATUS)****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 analysing water samples, we can detect these small traces of environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm GCN habitation or establish GCN absence.

RESULTS

Date sample received at Laboratory: 03/05/2022
Date Reported: 10/05/2022
Matters Affecting Results: None

Lab Sample No.	Site Name	O/S Reference	SIC	DC	IC	Result	Positive Replicates
3158	403 Cheadle Rd- Pond	SJ 96930 50771	Pass	Pass	Pass	Positive	2

If you have any questions regarding results, please contact us: ForensicEcology@surescreen.com

Reported by: Esther Strafford

Approved by: Jennifer Higginbottom



Forensic Scientists and Consultant Engineers
SureScreen Scientifics Ltd, Morley Retreat, Church Lane, Morley, Derbyshire, DE7 6DE
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Company Registration No. 08950940

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METHODOLOGY

The samples detailed above have been analysed for the presence of GCN eDNA following the protocol stated in DEFRA WC1067 'Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt, Appendix 5.' (Biggs et al. 2014). Each of the 6 sub-sample tubes are first centrifuged and pooled together into a single sample which then undergoes DNA extraction. The extracted sample is then analysed using real time PCR (qPCR), which uses species-specific molecular markers to amplify GCN DNA within a sample. These markers are unique to GCN DNA, meaning that there should be no detection of closely related species.

If GCN DNA is present, the DNA is amplified up to a detectable level, resulting in positive species detection. If GCN DNA is not present then amplification does not occur, and a negative result is recorded.

Analysis of eDNA requires scrupulous attention to detail to prevent risk of contamination. True positive controls, negative controls and spiked synthetic DNA are included in every analysis and these have to be correct before any result is declared and reported. Stages of the DNA analysis are also conducted in different buildings at our premises for added security.

SureScreen Scientifics Ltd is ISO9001 accredited and participate in Natural England's proficiency testing scheme for GCN eDNA testing. We also carry out regular inter-laboratory checks on accuracy of results as part of our quality control procedures.

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

- SIC:** **Sample Integrity Check** [Pass/Fail]
When samples are received in the laboratory, they are inspected for any tube leakage, suitability of sample (not too much mud or weed etc.) and absence of any factors that could potentially lead to inconclusive results.
- DC:** **Degradation Check** [Pass/Fail]
Analysis of the spiked DNA marker to see if there has been degradation of the kit or sample between the date it was made to the date of analysis. Degradation of the spiked DNA marker may lead indicate a risk of false negative results.
- IC:** **Inhibition Check** [Pass/Fail]
The presence of inhibitors within a sample are assessed using a DNA marker. If inhibition is detected, samples are purified and re-analysed. Inhibitors cannot always be removed, if the inhibition check fails, the sample should be re-collected.
- Result:** **Presence of GCN eDNA** [Positive/Negative/Inconclusive]
Positive: GCN DNA was identified within the sample, indicative of GCN presence within the sampling location at the time the sample was taken or within the recent past at the sampling location.
Positive Replicates: Number of positive qPCR replicates out of a series of 12. If one or more of these are found to be positive the pond is declared positive for GCN presence. It may be assumed that small fractions of positive analyses suggest low level presence, but this cannot currently be used for population studies. In accordance with Natural England protocol, even a score of 1/12 is declared positive. 0/12 indicates negative GCN presence.
Negative: GCN eDNA was not detected or is below the threshold detection level and the test result should be considered as evidence of GCN absence, however, does not exclude the potential for GCN presence below the limit of detection.



9. Notice to Readers: Conditions of this Report

All reports are certified products and cannot be shown, copied, or distributed to third parties without the written permission of Elite Ecology. No liability is accepted for the contents of the report, other than to that of the client(s). If any part of this report is altered without the written permission of Elite Ecology, then the whole report becomes invalid.

Elite Ecology agrees to supply ecological consulting services and advice of a preliminary or thorough nature as advised or commissioned. Upon commissioning Elite Ecology to undertake the work, the client(s) grant access to the site upon the agreed date. If no site access is available upon this date, Elite Ecology holds the right to charge the client(s) for lost staffing time and additional travel costs.

Elite Ecology undertake all site surveys with reasonable skill, care, and diligence, within the terms of the contract that has been agreed with the client and abiding by the Elite Ecology Terms and Conditions. The actions of the surveyors on site, and during the production of the report, were undertaken in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct for the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

The latest good practice guidelines put in place by Natural England or the relevant statutory conservation bodies have been followed by the surveyors on site. If those methodologies fail to identify a protected species during the survey efforts, no responsibility can be attributed to Elite Ecology. If any of these guidelines are adapted between the date(s) of the surveys being undertaken and the submission of this report, then Elite Ecology takes no responsibility for this.

Should any equipment be damaged or lost on site at the fault of the client(s), then Elite Ecology withholds the right to charge 100% above the current market value for that exact product or the nearest similar product.

The survey results purport the current status of the site and its potential for protected species utilisation at the time of surveying. It should not be viewed as a complete list of the possible flora and fauna species that could be using the site at different times of the year.

Elite Ecology has been provided with full payment for this report and thus the product has been released to the client(s) for the purpose of their planning application. If any part of the report is lost or altered without the written permission of Elite Ecology, then the entire report becomes invalid. Due to the potential for continual change within the natural world, this report is valid for **2 years only** from the date of the last survey visit. If this report is submitted after the 2 year deadline, then a further updated inspection will be required to ascertain whether the site remains in the same condition as it was when initially inspected.

No reliance should be made on any such comments in relation to the structural integrity of the features located on the surveyed site. All information within the report is based solely on evidence that has been found on site during the service provided. No individual opinion or inference will be made other than that of the suitably qualified ecologist appointed to the project.