



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**Land at:
Bob Lane and Wineham Lane
Wineham
West Sussex**



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Wineham
West Sussex

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Executive Summary

Context

- The proposed development site is a former agricultural field.
- The proposal is to construct an agricultural building with associated access and parking.
- There are no protected sites within 500m of the site.
- There are priority habitats within 500m of the site. The nearest are a block of ancient woodland c. 165m to the east and a block of deciduous woodland c.75m to the south-west.
- The habitats within the red-line boundary are limited to ruderal habitat, bramble scrub and poor quality grassland.
- The site lies within a red impact risk zone for great crested newts.
- There is habitat suitable for reptiles and common breeding birds.
- [REDACTED]
- Hazel dormice and bat roosts may be present in the wooded areas along the boundary of the landholding but the proposed development would have no adverse impact on this habitat or these species.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- No further ecological surveys are required, unless eDNA testing of the nearby pond for great crested newts is preferred rather than opting to enter the District Licencing scheme.
- The habitats that would be lost are of limited ecological value and their loss can be compensated for and overall ecological enhancement through habitat creation on site and in the wider landholding.
- Potential harm to reptiles and breeding birds can be avoided through implementation of standard precautions and enhancing habitat elsewhere on site.
- The proposal is subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. This can be delivered on-site and is addressed in a separate report.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Future Nature Consulting has been commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) to inform a proposal to construct an agricultural building with associated access.
- 1.2 A PEA is a review of the ecological features present, or potentially present, within a site and its surrounding area. Its purpose is to:
 - Identify any likely ecological constraints associated with the proposed project, such as proximity to protected sites or presence of protected species.
 - Identify if any additional surveys are required.
 - Identify any mitigation measures likely to be required.
 - Identify the opportunities offered by a project to deliver ecological enhancement.
- 1.3 This appraisal was undertaken by Peter Massini, Director of Future Nature Consulting Ltd. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

2. The Site

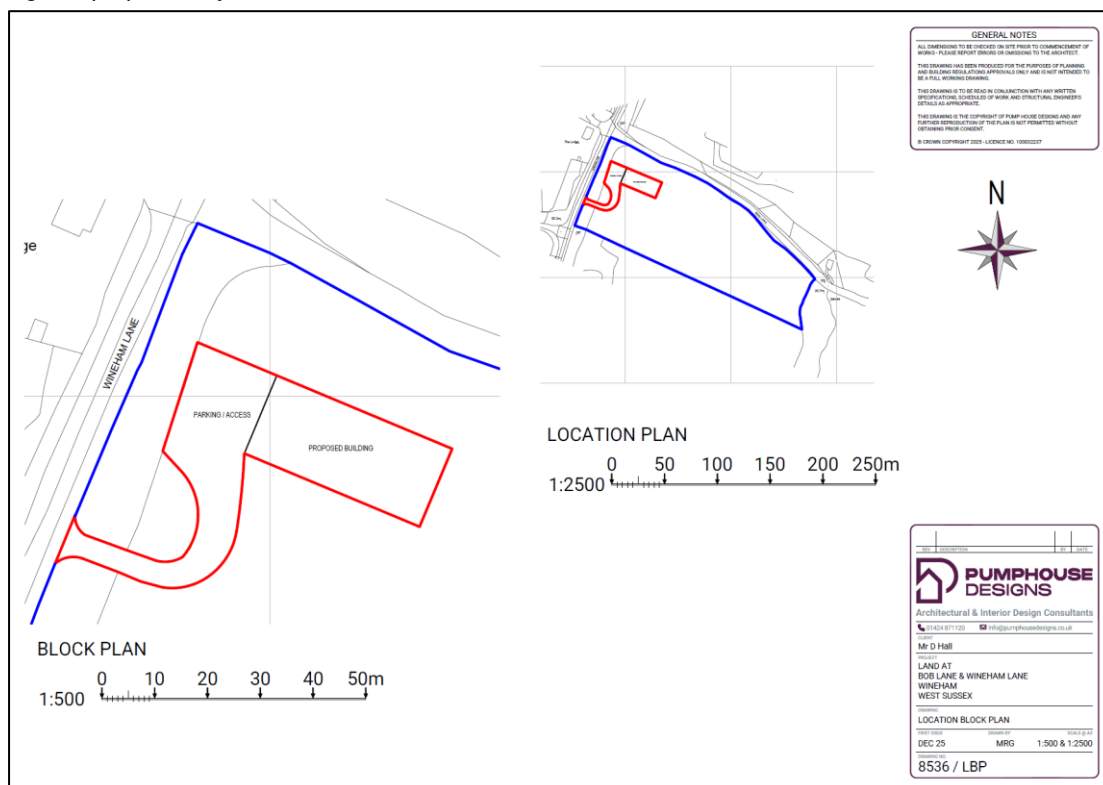
The site is a former agricultural field at the junction of Wineham Lane and Bob Lane. The location is shown in Figure 1.

Fig. 1 – site location



- 2.1 The proposal is for an agricultural barn and parking, with access from Wineham Lane. The proposed layout is shown in Figure 2.

Fig. 2 – proposed layout



3. Approach to appraisal

- 3.1 An initial desktop study, based on an examination of MAGIC¹ - the Defra website providing geographic information about the natural environment – and Mid-Sussex District Council planning policy maps and supporting documents², showed that:
- There are no statutory nature conservation sites - e.g. Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - within 1km of the site.
 - There are no non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites within 500m of the site.
 - There are several blocks of ancient woodland and deciduous woodland within 500m of the site. These are habitats listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (i.e. UK priority habitats³). The nearest are a block of ancient woodland c. 165m to the east and a block of deciduous woodland c.75m to the south-west.
- 3.2 Due to the sites relatively small size of the site (c. 0.12 ha) and several previous ecological surveys having been undertaken of the wider landholding, it was considered unnecessary to acquire additional data from the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre⁴. These data are unlikely to provide additional useful insights into the ecology of the development site.

¹ [MAGIC \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/)

² [Mid Sussex District Plan - Mid Sussex District Council](#)

³ [UK BAP Priority Habitats | Advisor to Government on Nature Conservation | JNCC](#)

⁴ [Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre](#)

- 3.3 A site visit was undertaken on 27th January 2026 to assess the potential of the site to support protected species and/or other features of nature conservation value.

4. Results of Appraisal

Description of site

- 4.1 The site is a former grazed agricultural field. It has previously been topped occasionally but recently has been allowed to grow wild with a small number of paths cut through the vegetation.
- 4.2 The landholding within which the proposed development site is bordered to the north and west by a belt of woodland, to the east by a large block of woodland, and to the south by former grazed fields which are occasionally topped.

Detailed description of habitats on site

- 4.1 The majority of the proposed development site and the surrounding land is comprised of ruderal vegetation with patches of bramble *Rubus fruticosus*.
- 4.2 The ruderal vegetation is dominated by common fleabane *Pulsicaria dysenterica* with clustered dock *Rumex conglomeratus*, willowherbs *Epilobium* spp., pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*, marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre*, bristly oxtongue *Helminthotheca echioides*, soft rush *Juncus effusus* and teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*.
- 4.3 In grassy patches the ruderal vegetation is replaced by coarse grasses such as Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, with creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, nettle *Urtica dioica*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, and dove's-foot cranesbill *Geranium molle*.
- 4.4 Beyond the red-line boundary to the north and west, the ruderal vegetation transitions into a mix of young scrub (comprising dog rose *Rosa canina*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and bramble) which borders a woodland belt dominated by oak *Quercus robur* with an understorey of field maple *Acer campestre*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, ivy *Hedera helix*, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, hawthorn and blackthorn.
- 4.5 The woodland beyond the site boundary to the east is ancient woodland. There are also ancient woodland indicator species in the woodland belts to the north and east. These include spurge laurel *Daphne laureola*, stinking iris *Iris foetidissima* and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*. However, these wooded belts are not formally identified as ancient woodland.
- 4.3 Views of the site are provided in images 1 - 4.

1. View across site from western boundary



2. View of proposed development site looking north-west



3. View across site looking east



4. View of woodland at site boundary



Rare or notable species

- 4.4 No rare or notable species were recorded. However, surveys undertaken in 2018⁵ and 2020⁶ recorded a number of notable species.
- 4.5 These included plants associated with an area of parched, scraped ground which provided suitable habitat for species such as round-leaved fluellen *Kickxia spuria* and hairy buttercup *Ranunculus sardous*. The habitat for these species no longer occurs but could be recreated by scraping.
- 4.6 The 2018 survey also recorded 2 invertebrate species which were of note, the Nationally Rare tortoise beetle *Pilemostoma fastuosa*, and the Nationally Scarce, jumping spider *Ballus chalybeius*. Additional notable invertebrates found in 2021 included the spiders *Sibianor aurocinctus* and *Styloctetor compar*, and the beetles *Squamapion cineraceum*, *Protapion difforme* and *Kykliocalles roboris*.

Protected species

- 4.7 The site lies in a red impact risk zones for **great crested newts** *Triturus cristates*. Impact risk zones have been identified by NatureSpace⁷ who have been contracted by the local planning authority to provide advice on great crested newts. The impact risk zones for Mid-Sussex District Council are shown in Appendix 1.
- 4.8 The habitat on site is suitable for **reptiles** such as slow worm
- 4.9 There is habitat on site that is suitable for **breeding birds**.
- 4.10 There were no structures of trees within the footprint of the proposed development site that would provide potential roost sites for **bats**. However, the woodland edge provides good quality foraging habitat for bats and trees within the wooded areas are likely to provide bat roosts.
- 4.11 The woodland belts along the northern and western boundary provides habitat suitable for **hazel dormouse** *Muscardinus avellanarius*. However, the woodland an adjacent scrub would not be adversely affected by the proposal. Consequently, hazel dormice are not considered further in this report.

- 4.13 There is no habitat on site that is suitable for other protected species.

5. Assessment

- 5.1 The evaluation of the ecological value of the site is based on professional judgement and *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*⁸ published by CIEEM.

Assessment of potential impact on protected sites

- 5.2 As there are no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation sites within 500m of the site, there would be no adverse impact on any protected site.

⁵ Walk over survey and recommendations for management of Ghyll Farm, Wineham, West Sussex. Graeme Lyons. (August 2018)

⁶ Walk over survey and recommendations for management of Ghyll Farm, Wineham, West Sussex. 2020 Update. Graeme Lyons. (January 2021)

⁷ [Impact Risk Zone Maps - NatureSpace Partnership Limited](#)

⁸ [Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal \(GPEA\) | CIEEM](#)

Assessment of potential impact on priority habitats

- 5.3 Although there is a small area of deciduous woodland to the south-west and a block of ancient woodland to the east, these are both too distant (i.e. c.75m and c.165m respectively) from the proposed new building to be adversely affected.
- 5.4 The wooded belts to the north and east have characteristics of ancient woodland but the proposal would not have any adverse impact on these as the proposed building is c. 10m from the wooded areas and there is bramble and scrub bordering the wooded areas. Furthermore, the existing the access into the site from Wineham Lane has long existed.

Assessment of potential impact on other habitats

- 5.5 The proposal would result in the loss of small areas of ruderal habitat, bramble scrub and rough grass covering an area of c.0.12 ha within a site with a total area of 1.75 ha. The loss of this habitat would not result in any significant loss of habitat for the species present on site as the majority of the wider site comprises these common and widespread habitats.
- 5.6 N.B Most of the notable species recorded in the 2018 and 2021 are dependent upon bare ground (which is no longer present) or the wooded areas and associated edge habitat, neither of which would suffer any significant adverse impact.

Assessment of potential impact on protected species

- 5.7 Protected species are a material consideration in the planning process. Planning applications need to show whether protected species are present in the area and how they use the site. If protected species are present, it is necessary to demonstrate how development proposals would avoid, reduce, or manage any negative impacts.

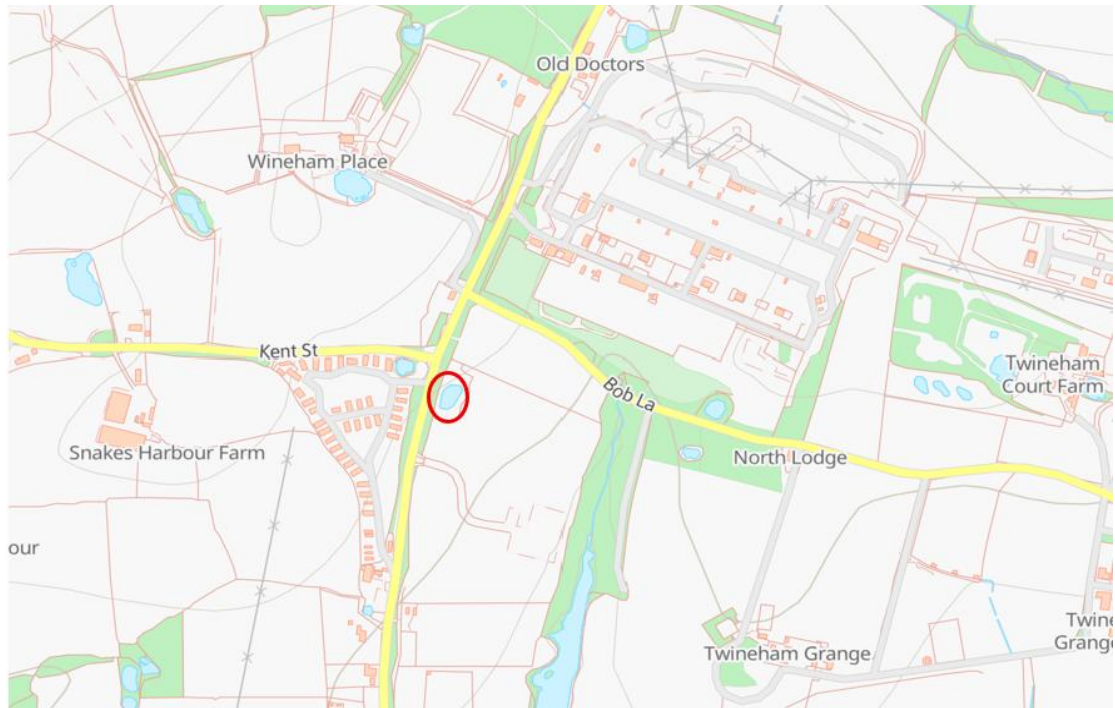
Great Crested Newts

- 5.8 Great crested newts are strictly protected under the provisions the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, and Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations, 2017. It is an offence to kill, injure, capture or disturb great crested newts, or damage or destroy their habitat.
- 5.9 The site lies in a red impact risk zone for great crested newts which indicates that the area has high habitat suitability for great crested newts and great crested newts are very likely to be present in the locality. Furthermore, a previous ecology survey⁹ of the site noted records of great crested newts in a pond that lies c. 60m to the south of the proposed access track and agricultural building.
- 5.10 Great crested newts require breeding ponds and suitable terrestrial habitat such as grassland, scrub and woodland.
- 5.11 No ponds would be directly affected by the proposal. However, there are many ponds within 500m of the site – the pond c. 60m to the south, plus others c.90m to the south-west and c.250m to the north-west. The ponds within 500m of the site are shown in Figure 3.
- 5.12 The pond with records of great crested newts is circled in red. Views of this pond are provided in image 5.

⁹ Report prepared for: Mr. A Pryke, For the Site of: Land at the corner of Bob Lane and Winham Lane, Henfield, BN5 9AY. Cherryfield Ecology. July 2018.

- 5.13 This pond was subject to a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment during the 2018 survey by Cherryfield Ecology. This gave a score of 0.62 which indicates that the pond is of 'average' suitability for great crested newts. The quality of the pond has not change significantly since 2018; therefore the pond is considered still to be of average quality for great crested newts.

Fig. 3 – ponds within 500m



5. View of pond to south



- 5.14 Natural England¹⁰ recognise that a proportionate response is required when determining the likely impact that development might have on the conservation status of great crested newts. It has developed a rapid risk assessment tool¹¹ that indicates the potential for development proposals to cause harm based on the amount of suitable habitat that would be lost and the distance of this habitat from breeding ponds.
- 5.15 When inputted into the rapid risk assessment, the loss of 0.12ha of habitat within 60m of a breeding pond, results in an outcome indicating that the proposal is likely to result in harm to great crested newts - albeit with an amber rating rather than a red rating. See Figure 4.

Fig. 4 – outcome of rapid risk assessment

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 score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.5
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0.5
Rapid risk assessment result:		AMBER: OFFENCE LIKELY

- 5.16 Consequently, the proposal may result in any harm to great crested newts due to loss of terrestrial habitat close to a potential breeding pond.
- 5.17 There are two options for addressing the potential presence of great crested newts:
- Option 1 – undertake a survey for great crested newts (e.g. an eDNA survey) to confirm presence or absence of great crested newts in the nearby pond. See Section 6 for further details. If great crested newts are confirmed as absent, no further surveys or mitigation would be necessary. If great crested newts are confirmed as present, the development (if permitted) would need to be undertaken under licence.
 - Option 2 – address the loss of habitat, and potential adverse impacts on great crested newts, through entering the District Licencing scheme operated by NatureSpace¹². See Appendix 2 for further information.

Reptiles

- 5.18 The proposed development site provides suitable habitat for reptiles. Consequently, there is the potential to harm reptiles during site clearance and construction.
- 5.19 However, the area of the proposed development site is small, only a small number of animals would likely be affected, and there is a large area of habitat for reptiles across the wider site.
- 5.20 Consequently, harm to reptiles could be avoided by implementation of standard precautions during site clearance and construction, and by improving habitat for reptiles beyond the development site boundary. Further details are provided in Section 6.

¹⁰ [About us - Natural England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/about-us)

¹¹ Embedded within the method statement template for great crested newt mitigation licence [gcn-method-statement.xlsm \(live.com\)](#)

¹² [Developers - NatureSpace Partnership Limited](#)

Bats

- 5.21 Bats are protected under both the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations, 2017. It is an offence to deliberately kill or injure bats, or intentionally disturb, damage or destroy a bat roost.
- 5.22 Although there are likely to be bat roosts in some of the trees in the wooded areas to the north and west, no bat roost would be directly affected by the proposed development.
- 5.23 However, if the proposed development would require exterior lighting, this could have an adverse impact on commuting and foraging bats which are very likely to be using the woodland and woodland edge habitats.
- 5.24 Nevertheless, the adverse impacts of any exterior lighting are likely to be minor and can be mitigated further by implementation of a bat-friendly lighting scheme. See Section 6 for further details.

Breeding birds

- 5.25 The nests, eggs and young of most birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. It is an offence to intentionally damage or destroy nests or eggs.
- 5.26 The woodland, scrub, bramble patches and other dense vegetation on site provide potential nesting sites for common species of bird. However, adverse impacts on breeding birds are likely to be minor, provided standard precautions are implemented. See Section 6 for further information.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 6.1 The proposed development is unlikely to result in any significant adverse ecological impact.
- 6.2 However, to ensure compliance with nature conservation legislation and policy the following requirements will need to be addressed.

Further surveys

- 6.3 Unless the District Licencing route is taken (Option 2 in para 5.18), a minimum of one eDNA survey will be required to determine presence/absence of great crested newts. eDNA surveys need to be undertaken between mid-April – June.
- 6.4 Determining presence/absence of great crested newts through an eDNA survey, or entering the District Licencing scheme, should be undertaken prior to the submission of a planning application.

Mitigating for loss of habitat

- 6.5 The development proposal would result in the loss of c. 1200m² of ruderal habitat and bramble scrub. This would not have any significant adverse ecological impact and can be mitigated by delivering habitat creation or enhancement on land elsewhere on the landholding. This could include, for example, allowing natural regeneration of woodland in the eastern part of the land-holding adjacent to the ancient woodland, planting an orchard on an area of existing ruderal habitat, mowing sinuous paths through the ruderal habitat/bramble scrub to create structural diversity and creating a pond or ephemeral wetland scrape.

- 6.6 These options for habitat creation or enhancement could be implemented in addition to the measures required to deliver the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement which are set out in a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, a separate report accompanying this PEA. See Section 7 for further details.

Avoiding harm to protected species

Great Crested Newts

- 6.7 See paragraph 5.18.

Reptiles

- 6.8 As the proposed development site is likely to support reptiles, but the wider landholding contains large areas of suitable reptile habitat, harm to reptiles can be avoided by implementing precautionary working methods and enhancing habitat for reptiles across the wider site. These measures are summarised below:

- 6.9 Precautionary working methods would include:

- Removing any potential reptile refugia (such as logs, brash, etc.) within the proposed development site prior to site clearance.
- Clearing the site by undertaking an initial cut of vegetation to a height of c.15cm and, after a period of 48 hours, cutting vegetation to ground level. This will encourage any reptiles present to disperse into adjacent habitat.
- Searching the site during site preparation and clearance and carefully removing any reptiles found and relocating them into adjacent habitat.

- 6.10 Habitat enhancement would include:

- Creation of reptile refugia (e.g. log piles) across the wider site.
- Creating woodland edge and scrub/grassland ecotones (i.e. transitional areas between two plant communities) to provide better quality habitat for reptiles.

Breeding birds

- 6.11 There is a small risk of harm to breeding birds. However, this can be avoided by cutting any patches of bramble scrub within the footprint of the proposed development to a height of c.15cm during the period November to February to avoid the bird breeding season.

7. Biodiversity Net Gain

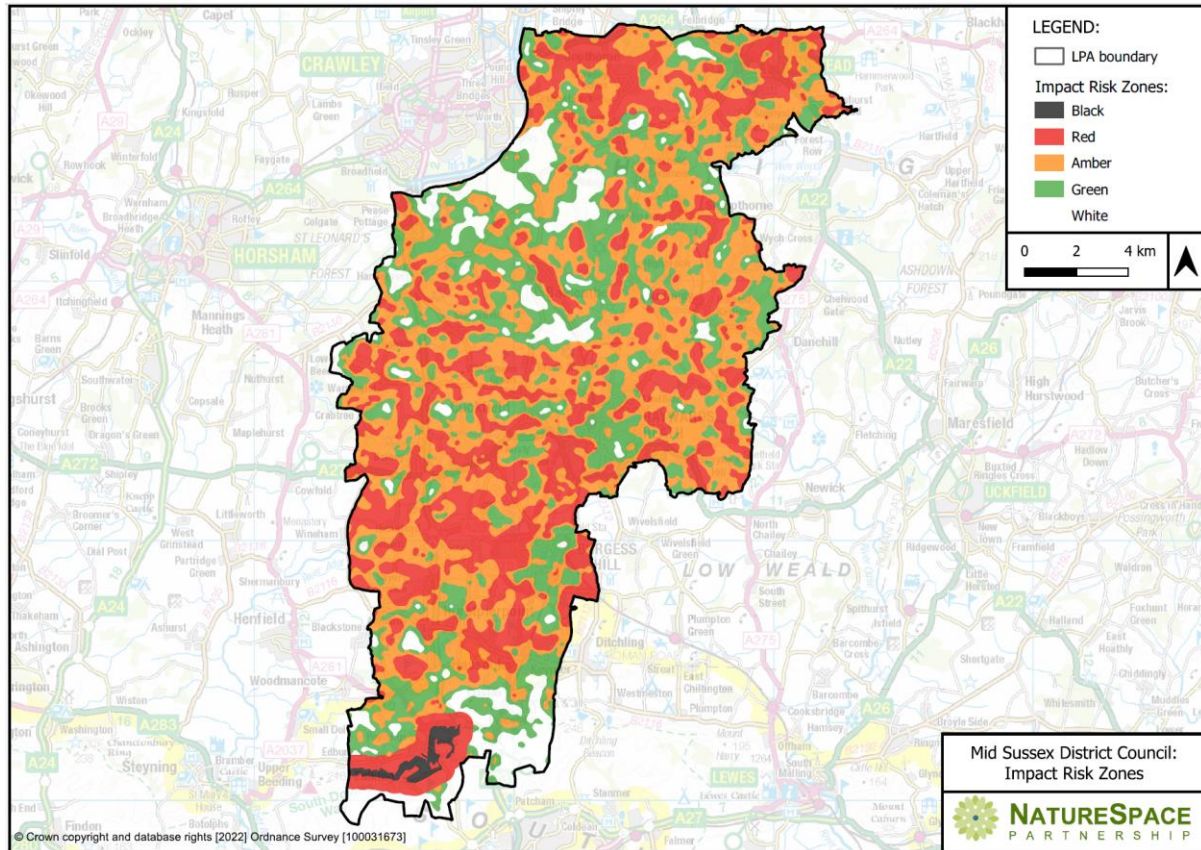
- 7.1 The proposal would result in the loss of more than 25m² of vegetated habitat. Consequently, mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)¹³ applies. This is addressed in a separate report¹⁴.

¹³ [Understanding biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain)

¹⁴ *BNG Assessment (Design Stage). Land at Bob Lane and Wineham Lane, Wineham, West Sussex.* Future Nature Consulting (February 2026)

APPENDIX 1

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones



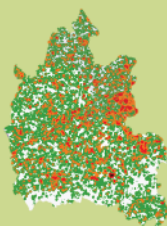
APPENDIX 2

District Licencing information



Developer Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I consider great crested newts in planning?



Great crested newts are a rapidly declining species and are fully protected under UK law, which makes it illegal to harm (or even move) them, or damage their habitat, unless a licence is in place.

Where the NatureSpace District Licence Scheme is available, the statutory guidance for local planning authorities is clear. When development falls into the **red** or **amber** zones on the impact risk map, developers **MUST** prove to their local planning authorities that their development plans pose 'no risk' to great crested newts.

What do I need to do?

In the red and amber zones you **MUST** demonstrate that your development proposal poses 'no risk' to great crested newts, this can be done in one of three ways:

1. Demonstrate that newts don't occur on your site (usually by commissioning an ecological consultant to carry out a site assessment).
2. Apply to Natural England for a Standard Licence – this can only be done after planning permission. You will need to commission an ecologist to carry out a survey and design a great crested newt mitigation scheme.
3. Join the NatureSpace District Licence Scheme, which usually provides the quickest, most certain and least risky option where a licence is required.





What do I get out of joining the scheme?

By joining the District Licence Scheme you save yourself the time, cost and effort of:

- Commissioning surveys during the 3 month breeding season, sometimes over several years (dependent on development proposal).
- Carrying out lots of on-site mitigation (requiring pre-approval from Natural England), including months of trapping and miles of plastic fencing (often with high costs and rarely finding newts).
- Setting aside a lot of on-site land for newt mitigation that cannot be developed and creating habitats for newts on-site before the start of any development works.
- Committing to managing and monitoring your newt mitigation for years after development has finished.



You can submit your certificate alongside your planning application, rather than having to wait for planning permission first (as with the Standard Licensing) – saving you time.

Most importantly, if you are authorised under the scheme and great crested newts do turn up on-site, you do not have to stop development, you can simply move the newts and carry on.



www.NatureSpaceUK.com

The District Licence Scheme Conservation Strategy

Our District Licensing Scheme has been carefully designed to offer numerous benefits both to developers and planners, but also to protect and conserve great crested newts.

That is why together with our partners, the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust, the Freshwater Habitats Trust, and the Newt Conservation Partnership, we have developed a long-term, fully-funded landscape-scale conservation strategy for great crested newts – the first of its kind in the UK.

When developers enter our scheme, the funds are used for scheme delivery which provides large-scale, upfront and long-term habitat creation, management and monitoring at compensation sites across the region. We aim to increase the number of high-quality, clean water ponds which are connected by suitable terrestrial habitat, creating a network of high-quality habitats where newt populations can thrive.

For every pond occupied by great crested newts that is lost through development, we create or restore at least four high-quality ponds, and ensure suitable surrounding terrestrial habitat is in place.



Compensation Ratio **4:1**



How the District Licence Scheme works

High Impact Developments



QUICK → SIMPLE → CERTAIN → SUSTAINABLE



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There are two routes within the scheme depending on the development type:

Low Impact

If you fit the 'low impact' criteria e.g. householders or infill, you make a single payment to NatureSpace of either £500, £1,000 or £2,000 plus VAT. You will then receive a certificate within 5 working days to prove that you can be covered under the District Licence, which can then be submitted to your local planning authority alongside your planning application. You will then get 'authorised' to use the District Licence by the Council - alongside the granting of planning permission.



High Impact



If you are a 'high impact' development e.g. more than two houses, there are three stages to the process.



1. Prior to applying for planning permission, you pay either £5,000 or £10,000 plus VAT (depending on the development size) and receive a NatureSpace report within 10 working days. This report will detail our analysis of your development and the impact on great crested newts and will also outline the second stage fee for off-site compensatory habitat creation. The second stage fee allows the Newt Conservation Partnership to provide the compensatory habitats needed for the District Licence to be used. The sum within the report is guaranteed and will not change (unless there are any significant development changes). It is then up to you to decide if you wish to enter the District Licensing Scheme.

2. If you decide to enter the scheme, you simply submit the report with your planning application to the local planning authority and they will condition any planning consent accordingly.

3. After receiving planning permission, you pay the second stage fee and apply to the council to discharge the relevant planning condition with a copy of your NatureSpace certificate and then get authorised to use the Council's District Licence.

HIGH OR LOW
IMPACT?

Enquire today to
find out!

Why might I have a second stage fee and how much would this be?

NatureSpace applies a Natural England approved 'District Licence Impact Metric' to the habitat maps your ecologist provides during the application process. The metric is precautionary and calculates fees on the aquatic, terrestrial and linear impacts of the development proposal. It considers lots of factors in the assessment including, but not limited to:

- habitat type
- condition for great crested newts
- connectivity and distance from a pond
- prospects
- impact type
- whether the habitat will be damaged, degraded or removed

The metric result will depend on the ecological information submitted, which is fine-tuned to pick up small details your ecologist submits. We are held to very strict and objective protocols to ensure that conservation status is improved as a result of the scheme being used.



www.NatureSpaceUK.com



Director: Peter Massini MCIEEM

This report has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. I confirm that the opinions expressed are true and professional opinions.