

**The Barn House, Cuckfield Road
Cuckfield, Ansty, West Sussex, RH17 5AG**

**Great Crested Newt Appraisal Report and
Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS)**



**For
Mr. M. Dykes**

Report 20th January 2026



**9 Pitfold Avenue,
Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 1PN
www.gpmecology.co.uk**

1.0 Background

Mr. M. Dykes is proposing to convert an existing timber framed barn outbuilding (The Barn House) to living accommodation for guests to the main house (**Cover Photo and Photo 1**, TQ 2959 2333). GPM Ecology was commissioned by Mr Dykes on 26th November 2025 to conduct a Great Crested Newt *Tristurus cristatus* appraisal of the application site, nearby ponds and to provide an outline mitigation report.

The great crested newt (GCN) is protected through Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981), Habitat Regulations (as amended 2017), Countryside Rights of Way Act (2000) and other amendments to these Acts. In summary legislation prohibits the following:

- *intentional disturbance or harm,*
- *reckless damage to a breeding site or resting place or a place used for shelter and protection*
- *intentionally obstructing a place used as shelter*

Advice to Mid Sussex District Council was provided by NatureSpace (5th November 2025), with the following observations made in relation to great crested newts (GCN):

The development falls within the amber impact risk zone for great crested newts. Impact risk zones have been derived through advanced modelling to create a species distribution map which predicts likely presence. In the amber impact zone, there is suitable habitat and a likelihood of great crested newt presence.

Ecological Information

The applicant has not provided any ecological information for the site. Therefore, it cannot be determined if there is a likely impact.

Conclusion and recommendation for conditions

There are four waterbodies located either within the red line boundary or within close proximity of it. Two of the four ponds (including the onsite pond) were positive for GCN eDNA in 2022. Additionally, photos from the Bat survey report show that there are piles of hibernacula on site, as well as gaps within the brick work of the barn, both of which could offer sheltering and hibernation opportunities for GCN. As no ecological information has been submitted in support of this application, the applicant has not demonstrated that the impacts of the development works on GCN have been appropriately assessed and/or mitigated for.

The NatureSpace (November 2025) advice goes on to note:

And so, in line with the guidance from Natural England (Great crested newts: District Level Licensing for development projects, Natural England, March 2021), there is a reasonable likelihood that great crested newts will be impacted by the development proposals and therefore, the applicant must either:

- *Submit a NatureSpace Report or Certificate to demonstrate that the impacts of the proposed development can be addressed through Mid Sussex District Council's District Licence. This method of licensing often removes the need for survey work and onsite mitigation for great crested newts as it provides compensation habitats off site. (more details can be found at www.naturespaceuk.com); or*

- *Provide further information (PEA), in line with Natural England's Standing Advice, to rule out impacts to great crested newts*, or demonstrate how any impacts can be addressed through appropriate mitigation/ compensation proposals**; or*

If it is determined that there is no suitable habitat impacted on site and the likelihood of great crested newts is very low, then a precautionary working statement in the form of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs)/Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) strategy documents completed by a suitably qualified ecologist may be acceptable for the development.

2.0 Survey Methodology

A walk-over assessment was conducted to determine potential impacts and likelihood for the site to support GCN. Ponds were assessed for their potential to support GCN, using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI, Oldham et al 2000¹), a useful tool to determine pond suitability to support GCN (see **Figure 1**). The HSI index scores a pond as 0 (unsuitable for GCN breeding) to 1 (ideal for GCN breeding). A desk-study was also conducted to assess the landscape for GCN via www.magic.gov.uk and historic maps via <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/>.

3.0 Survey Results and Evaluation

Natural England risk assessment below considers that an offence is highly unlikely to occur due to the small size of the application site (see **Table 1** below), if a GCN breeding pond is within 100m from the site. The works area (see **Cover Photo**) is very small at 60m² (0.006ha) and the barn is being converted into living accommodation over its existing concrete base, so minimal impacts will take place around the building margins (see **Photo 1**).

Table 1: Likelihood of an Offence (Extract from NE EPS Licence Form, version 2020)

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
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	0.001 - 0.01 ha lost or damaged	0.05
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:		0.05
Rapid risk assessment result:		GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY

Table 2 below provides a summary of an assessment of three ponds near to the site, with more detailed assessments in **Appendix I**. It is understood from NatureSpace comments (from November 2025) that GCN eDNA has been recorded in Pond 1 (see **Photo 2**), during an eDNA survey in 2022.

Table 1: Summary of GCN Pond Assessment (Habitat Suitability Index – HSI)

Pond	Distance	HSI	GCN breeding	Likely reasons for absence
1	~30m	0.83 (Good)	Likely presence	Not Applicable (GCN likely to breed in pond)
2a	<40m	0.64 (Average)	Likely absence	Seasonality, eggs/larvae unlikely to develop in time
2b	~65m	0.46 (Poor)	Likely absence	Seasonality, size and shading

¹ Oldham RS, Keeble J, Swan MJS and Jeffcote M 2000. Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the great crested newt. The Herpetological Journal Vol.10, No. 4 (WITH REVISIONS)

While Pond 1 had a 'Good' HSI and from the NatureSpace assessment is likely to support GCN, Ponds 2a and 2b were both shallow, seasonal and considered unlikely to provide suitable breeding habitat for GCN. A fourth pond about 85m east of the site was on a different land-holding and not accessed or assessed for GCN presence.

All four ponds around the site are historical ponds (see **Figure 1**) appearing on 25-inch OS Maps from 1892 to 1914 (<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/>). The landscape supports a very high pond density, with about 32 ponds within 1km of the site and GCN eDNA recorded on www.magic.gov.uk at Copyhold Farm about 1km to the east of the Barn. However, the eDNA results of the 2022 survey of the ponds adjacent to the proposed development (as noted by NatureSpace) had not been recorded by www.magic.gov.uk.

The site is considered unlikely to support GCN as the conversion of the barn does not extend beyond the 60m² concrete base (see **Cover Photo**). The barn is surrounded by garden (short mown grass) on two sides, a shingle drive to the north and a hedge-bank to the west (**Photo 1**). GCN could however utilise this hedge-bank (approximately 15m in length) to the rear of the property as a place of rest and shelter, with a mature ash tree and a recently planted beech-hedge growing to the rear of the Barn House. GCN could be located resting beneath this hedge-bank, when the bank is cleared of leaf litter and top-soil to expose and re-point brick work, if required.

4.0 Recommendations and Non-licensed Method Statement (NLMS)

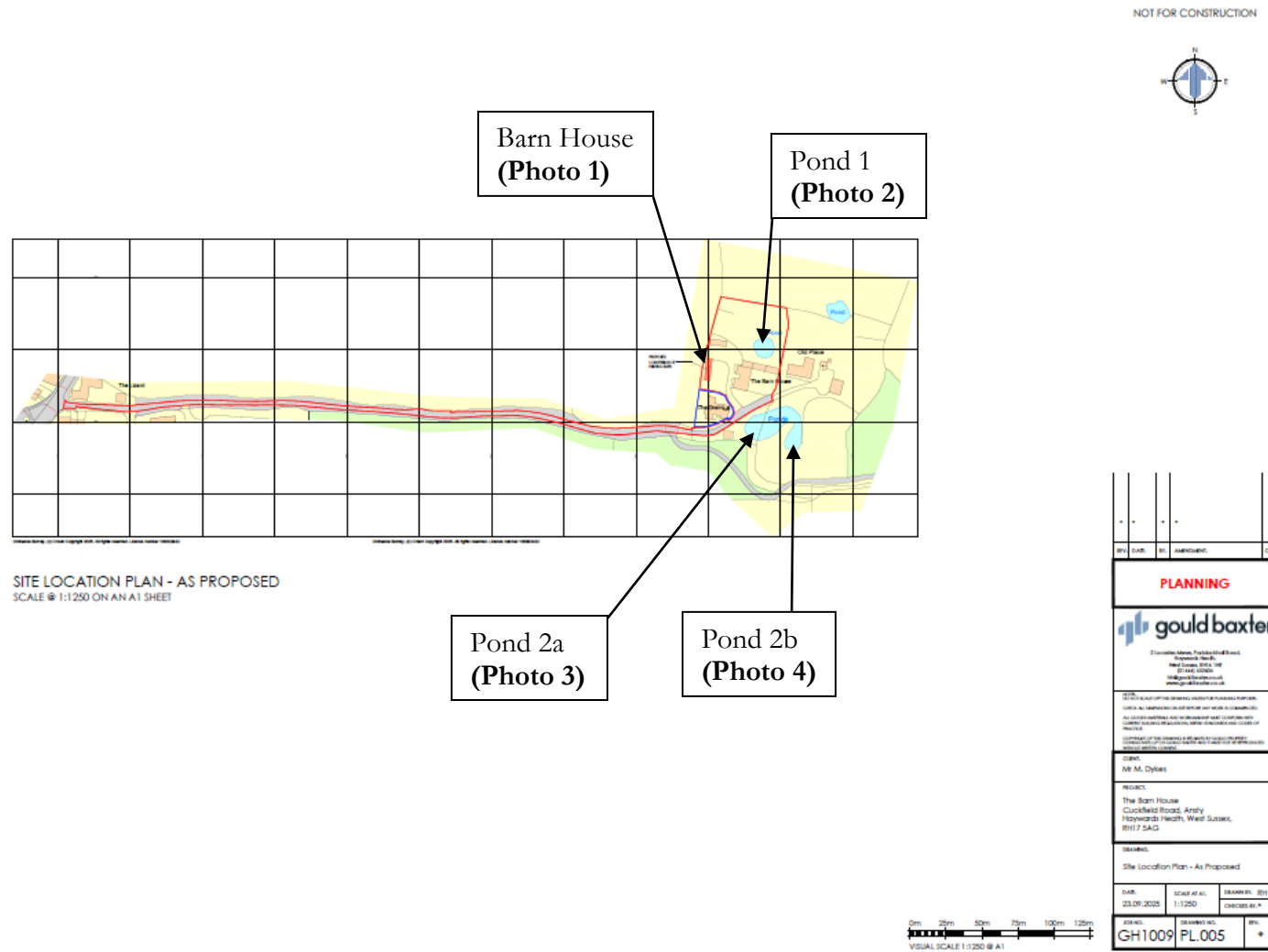
Although the works area is very small, Pond 1 about 30m east of the site is likely to support GCN (eDNA reported in 2022) and they could utilise the 15m long hedge-bank to the rear of the Barn. Natural England risk assessment (**Table 1**) considered that a GCN development license is unlikely to be required. Therefore, the following non-licensed mitigation method statement is recommended (see **Figure 2**):

1. All contractors will be briefed by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) on the likely presence of amphibians around the site boundary, through a site-specific **Tool-box Talk** (see **Appendix II**).
2. A suitable release site will be identified within the grounds of the main property, for any amphibians found during site works (e.g. composting bins, see **Figure 2**).
3. Works to remove leaf litter and top-soil beneath the hedge-bank, next to the brick work of the Barn, will be conducted under supervision of an SQE. Such inspections will take place outside of hibernation, from March to September.
4. If GCN are located during site clearance and inspections then development works may need to temporarily stop while a Low Impact Class License is issued by Natural England, prior to works re-commencing.

As habitats alter over time and protected species are highly mobile, ecological surveys have a restricted lifespan of 12 months to 3-years (CIEEM 2019²), therefore an updated GCN appraisal is required if the site remains undeveloped for over 1-year.

² CIEEM 2019, Advice Note, ON THE LIFESPAN OF ECOLOGICAL REPORTS & SURVEYS, Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Managers, Winchester, April 2019

Figure 1: Location Plan of Ponds
Great Crested Newt Assessment
The Barn House, Ansty, Cuckfield
GPM Ecology January 2026



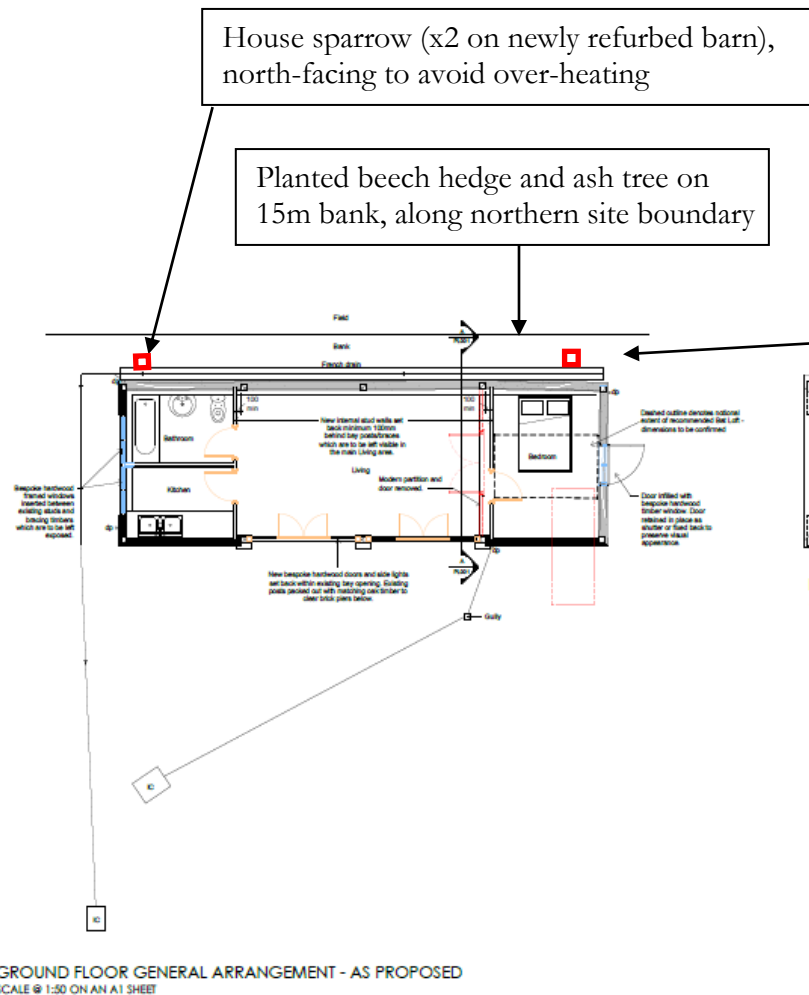
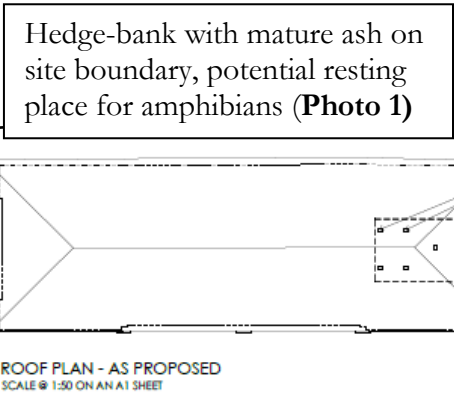


Figure 2: Non-licensed Mitigation
Great Crested Newt Assessment
The Barn House, Ansty, Cuckfield
GPM Ecology January 2026



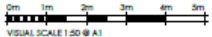
FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

Amphibian release site, such as pair of compost bins, within grounds

Mitigation: Prior to site clearance and barn conversion, a supervised inspection for GCN by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist along the northern site boundary (March to September)

MR	DATE	BY	APPROVED	CHK
PLANNING				
21 Cavendish Avenue, Parkfield Road, Horsham, Sussex, BN12 9AF Tel: 01323 810000 www.gouldbaxter.co.uk				
DATE: 23.09.2025 BY: MR M. Dyles PROJECT: The Barn House, Cuckfield Road, Ansty, Horwicks Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5AG				
DRAWING: Ground Floor General Arrangement and Roof Plan - As Proposed				
DATE: 23.09.2025	SCALE: 1:50	DRAWN BY: BHT	CHECKED BY: *	
APP: GH1009	REV: PL001	MR	*	



PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BARN HOUSE, ANSTY - APPLICATION SITE



Photo 1: The Barn House surrounded by maintain lawn and hedge-bank to rear



Photo 2: Pond 1, good habitat suitability to support great crested newts (GCN)



Photo 3: Pond 2a, a seasonal, ephemeral pond, with average GCN suitability



Photo 4: Pond 2b, over-shaded, seasonal, formally part of Pond 2a (poor GCN suitability)

APPENDIX I: DETAILED GREAT CRESTED NEWT SURVEY DATA

Background Information						
Pond Number:	1	Site name:	Barn House Pond			
National Grid Ref:	TQ 2963 2335	Distance:	30m from Barn House			
Land owner:	Mr M. Dykes					
Access:	Via drive-way to Barn House					
History:	Pond 1					
Habitat Suitability						
						Key reason waterbody screen out / HSI-value
Location (SI ₁):	Good					1
Pond Area (SI ₂):	Approximately 0.015ha (150m sq)					0.3
Permanence (SI ₃):	Understood to occasionally dry					0.5
Water Quality (SI ₄):	Good - Likely good quality, with no fish, minor wildfowl, no obvious pollution Turbidity: 2.5					1
Shading (SI ₅):	25% shading with willow pollard, ash coppice and <i>Eucalyptus</i> spp.					1
Waterfowl (SI ₆):	Wildfowl, nor evidence (grazing) not observed' though occasional breeding during spring-summer					0.67
Fish (SI ₇):	None observed and owners believe they are not present, with pond occasionally drying					1
Pond Density (SI ₈):	10/km ²					1
Habitat (SI ₉):	32 ponds within 1km of pond Good - mature gardens and woodland					1
Macrophytes (SI ₁₀):	Likely about 90% macrophytes summer cover Bogbean, Iris, Water-lily and sweet float-grass					0.9
Survey results:	Current HSI - 'Good' suitability for GCN					0.83
Surveyors	Date	Eggs	Lamping	Traps	Min/max	Other trap data
GPM	11/12/2025					
GCN - Great Crested Newt; PN - Palmate Newt; SN - Smooth Newt; Td - Toads; Fg - Frogs						
Presence / absence: Unknown Population class: L Unknown						
Habitat Suitability Index for GCN is 'Good', though only 0.1 points from 'Excellent' suitability.						
GCN should be considered to be likely present due to the high HSI-score, very high pond density in the vicinity of the site, lack of negative features and GCN are known to be present about 1km east of hte site						

Background Information																																				
Pond Number:	2a / b																																			
National Grid Ref:	TQ 2963 2329																																			
Land owner:	Adjacent property																																			
Access:	Via drive-way to Barn House																																			
History:	Pond 2a / b																																			
Site name: Barn House Pond																																				
Distance: ~40m from Barn House																																				
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APPENDIX II: AMPHIBIAN TOOL-BOX TALK

TOOL BOX TALK: GREAT CRESTED NEWTS THE BARN HOUSE, ANSTY

Great crested newts and Legislation

All species of newt live on land for most of their life and visit ponds during spring, when they breed. However, it is only the great crested newt (GCN) that is protected from harm and disturbance. Reckless harm to GCN and their habitat can result in a custodial sentence and £5,000 fine. It is illegal to handle all life-stages of great newt crested newts (including eggs) without a license. Toads and common newts (not protected from harm) may also be on site. GCN hibernate from October to February, when GCN searches should NOT take place.

Identification (great crested newts)

GCN adults grow up to 12cm in length; they are dark-grey with white warts, black spots on flanks, an orange belly and have stripy toes. The crest re-absorbs into the body when on land.



When should we be careful not to harm great crested newts?

GCN may be located during site clearance. The following precautions will be made during site inspections and clearance work, with this tool-box talk provided to all contractors working on site:

1. These works are allowed under a Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) for GCN, due to their presence in a pond 30m from the site (see Fig. 1). The NLMS report will be kept on site during construction.
2. The Barn House is adjacent amenity lawn, regularly cut short and unlikely to be utilised by GCN. However, the hedge-bank north of the Barn could be used by GCN as a resting place.
3. The leaf litter and top-soil beneath the bank and next to the barn should be removed under supervision of a Suitably Qualified Ecologist. The appointed site Ecologist (contact below), will determine an appropriate release site for amphibians if they are found. All amphibians located on site will be released at the agreed release site in the grounds of the main property. GCN exude toxins from their skin when stressed, so handle with clean gloves.
4. In the event amphibians are located during works when the site ecologist is absent, the ecologist will be contacted immediately, to assess if supervision / mitigation is needed. If GCN are located during works a Low Impact Class License to disturb GCN maybe required.

January 2026

Site Ecologist: