

**From:** Laura Downs <Laura.Downs@naturespaceuk.com>  
**Sent:** 23 December 2025 16:14:58 UTC+00:00  
**To:** "Joanne Fisher" <joanne.fisher@midsussex.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** NatureSpace consultation - DM/25/2474 | Land South Of Hammerwood Road  
Ashurst Wood West Sussex

Good afternoon Joanne,

Thank you for reconsulting us on the above application. I have reviewed the applicant's GCN technical note and have the following comments:

The applicant has determined that the site does not provide opportunity for GCN due to the dominance of cherry laurel and a resultant lack of ground flora. As stated in our original comments, there are many sheltering and hibernating opportunities for the species due to the presence of tree root hollows/cracks and crevices within stems, dead wood, fallen debris and any rotting stumps. These are key habitats for great crested newts, a lack of ground flora in this instance does not make the site unsuitable.

The applicant also references a buffer of 50m around a pond as providing the core terrestrial habitat for GCN. However GCN utilise a variety of habitats/land uses within 500m of breeding ponds, and indeed demonstrate dispersal distances beyond 1000m. The ponds closest to this site are around the 250m mark and so well within dispersal distance, additionally they are well connected to the development site through woodland with no significant barriers.

Without any survey information on these ponds and taking into account a whole site loss of suitable habitat within the red zone, the applicant has not adequately demonstrated that there will no impact to great crested newts and/or their habitat as a result of the development being approved.

Therefore, we default to our original comments which determined that further information is still required.

Best wishes,

Laura Downs (*she/her*)  
District Licensing Officer (Great Crested Newts) – West Sussex

***Season's Greetings from NatureSpace!***

***Please note I will be away for the festive period from the 25<sup>th</sup> of December to 4<sup>th</sup> of January. Any messages received during this time will be picked up when I return.***

**NatureSpace Partnership**

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