

From: Laura Downs <Laura.Downs@naturespaceuk.com>
Sent: 20 April 2026 14:36:46 UTC+01:00
To: "Andy Watt" <andy.watt@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/26/0764 | Franc Jean Farm The Street Bolney Haywards Heath
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Good afternoon Andy,

Thank you for consulting us on the above application. I have reviewed the applicants ecological report, *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Land at Fran-Jean Farm, Bolney, phlorum, January 2026*, which states:

- *"The site comprised buildings, developed land – sealed surface, built linear feature, modified grassland, scattered scrub, bare ground, and individual trees."*
- *"During the survey no water was seen on site. However, the habitat contained features that could support foraging and commuting newts. This was primarily the modified grassland on-site. Additionally, there were five water bodies within 500 m including one approximately 50 m to the south of the site."*
- *"It is recommended that targeted surveys in respect to great crested newts is undertaken in order to determine presence or likely absence. Alternatively, a District Level Licence can be obtained from NatureSpace."*

The above report has noted that the modified grassland on site could support foraging and commuting newts. Looking at site photos, the overgrown barn onsite also could offer opportunities for newts. The applicant has suggested that either further surveys are undertaken for GCN or that a DL is secured. It should be noted that the applicant has enquired into the District Licensing Scheme but has yet to join. If the applicant wishes to take this route, they must submit a NatureSpace Report or Certificate prior to determination. 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 and how to enquire can be found at www.naturespaceuk.com

If the applicant does not enter the District Licensing Scheme, they must either:

- Provide further information (presence/absence surveys), 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 the likelihood of great crested newt presence 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.

*i.e., to show that any ponds within 500m are not suitable for great crested newts and/or show how any potential impacts can be avoided.

*To do so, surveys to determine presence/likely absence and population size class assessments may need to be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist in accordance with Natural England's Standing (Great crested newts: advice for making planning decisions – GOV.UK) (and if using eDNA surveys, the Great Crested Newt Environmental eDNA Technical Advice Note (Natural England 2014)). If GCN are identified, appropriate mitigation and compensatory measures will need to be identified to satisfy planning requirements and a site-based mitigation licence may be required. Surveys are seasonally constrained.

Best wishes,

Laura Downs (*she/her*)

District Licensing Officer (Great Crested Newts) – West Sussex

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