

From: Laura Downs <Laura.Downs@naturespaceuk.com>
Sent: 22 July 2026 18:00:00 UTC+01:00
To: "Joanne Fisher" <joanne.fisher@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/2474 | Land South Of Hammerwood Road Ashurst Wood West Sussex

Good afternoon Joanne,

Planning reference: DM/25/2474 | Land South Of Hammerwood Road Ashurst Wood West Sussex

Thank you for consulting me on the above planning application. The applicant had provided an ecological report in the form of *Great Crested Newt report, Land to the South of Hammerwood Road, Ashurst Wood, Deepdene Ecology, June 2026*, - which states:

- *"The scope of the assessment was to provide more information on the presence/likely absence of great crested newts at the Site. This report presents the results of a great crested newt eDNA survey of ponds within 500m undertaken in May 2026"*
- *"Ponds 1, 4 & 5 were all noted to either not exist or not hold water at the time of the survey. • Ponds 6, 7 & 8 were all at least 380m from the Site and beyond significant barriers to dispersal that if great crested newts were present within the ponds, they would not be able to access the Site. • Pond 3, a small garden pond, approximately 245m west of the Site was found to support great crested newts with the eDNA sample showing positive evidence of great crested newts. • Pond 2 to the south of the Site was found to be negative for great crested newt eDNA"*
- *"Overall, when the habitats within the Site, the distance from the Site, the optimal habitat between the pond and Site are all considered, it is not considered likely that great crested newts would be regularly using the habitat on the Site. However, in order to reduce this residual risk even further, a Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) Method Statement should be followed."*
- Precautionary measures for great crested newts are outlined within the report

The applicant has now undertaken eDNA surveys on waterbodies within 250m and has recorded a positive result for P2. It has been determined that due to the habitats onsite, distance from site and higher quality habitat around the positive pond, that RAMS will cover residual risk. Due to the ornamental nature of the pond and due to the distance from the site, we believe that RAMS may be an option for this development. However, we do feel it important to note that we are still of the opinion that the many tree crevices and stumps which will need to be removed to facilitate development do provide suitable habitat for GCN, and therefore we do believe there are risks associated with the proposed approach with confirmed GCN presence in the landscape.

If the applicant still wishes to use RAMS then the statement should be secured via condition. If the applicant wishes to completely avoid any risks relating to great crested newts, they have the option to enquire for Mid Sussex District Council's District Licence, which provides full legal cover for any impacts to great crested newts and therefore removes the risk of having to stop works if great crested newts are found on site. More details on the District Licensing Scheme operated by the council can be found at www.naturespaceuk.com

Best wishes,

Laura Downs (*she/her*)

District Licensing Officer (Great Crested Newts) – West Sussex

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