



Elite Ecology

Passionate about Ecology

**Slaugham Garden Nursery,
Slaugham**



Amphibian Method Statement

June 2026



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0. Executive Summary

This report has been prepared at the request of WS Planning & Architecture. It relates to the proposed re-development works at Slaugham Garden Nursery, Staplefield Road, Slaugham, West Sussex, RH17 6AG (Central OS Grid Reference: TQ 25474 28139). A biodiversity enhancement plan has been requested for the site.

Under the current proposals, the existing barn is to be converted into a residential dwelling, with associated driveway and landscaping works. Overall, this will result in both the permanent and temporary loss and/or alteration of some of the habitats located on the proposed re-development site. The site plans can be found in

Appendix A.

Please refer to **Section 4** for the recommendations for this project, including the method statement to be adhered to.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Report Rationale

This report has been prepared at the request of WS Planning & Architecture. It relates to the proposed re-development works at Slaugham Garden Nursery, Staplefield Road, Slaugham, West Sussex, RH17 6AG (Central OS Grid Reference: TQ 25474 28139). A biodiversity enhancement plan has been requested for the site.

This report is in relation to condition nine of the decision notice (Application: DM/24/2409), which states:

Prior to the commencement of the development a precautionary working method statement in respect of Great Crested Newts is required to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

This statement should be written by a suitably qualified ecologist and it is recommended that this statement include ecology supervision, vegetation removal measures, correct materials storage and what to do in the event a Great Crested Newt is discovered.

Reason: To conserve and enhance protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and to accord with Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031.

1.2 Site Description

The site is located in the small village of Slaugham, located in the mid-Sussex district of West Sussex.

The site measures approximately 0.3ha and contains a number of habitats. These include buildings, built linear features, developed land, sparsely vegetated urban land, and woodland. The habitats on site could have the potential to support a number of protected species.

Within the wider landscape further habitats are present. These come in the form of amenity grass, arable land, hard standing ground, hedgerows, improved grassland, residential dwellings (and their associated gardens/yards), scattered trees, standing water, and woodland. This shows that the habitats in the area surrounding the site have the potential to support protected species.

Under the current proposals, the existing barn is to be converted into a residential dwelling, with associated driveway and landscaping works. Overall, this will result in both the permanent and temporary loss and/or alteration of some of the habitats located on the proposed re-development site.

Figure 1: An aerial map showing the boundary of the site at Slaugham Garden Nursery, Slaugham (as shown by the red outline).



Figure 2: An aerial map showing the site at Slaugham Garden Nursery, Slaugham (as shown by the yellow star) in relation to some of the local landscape.

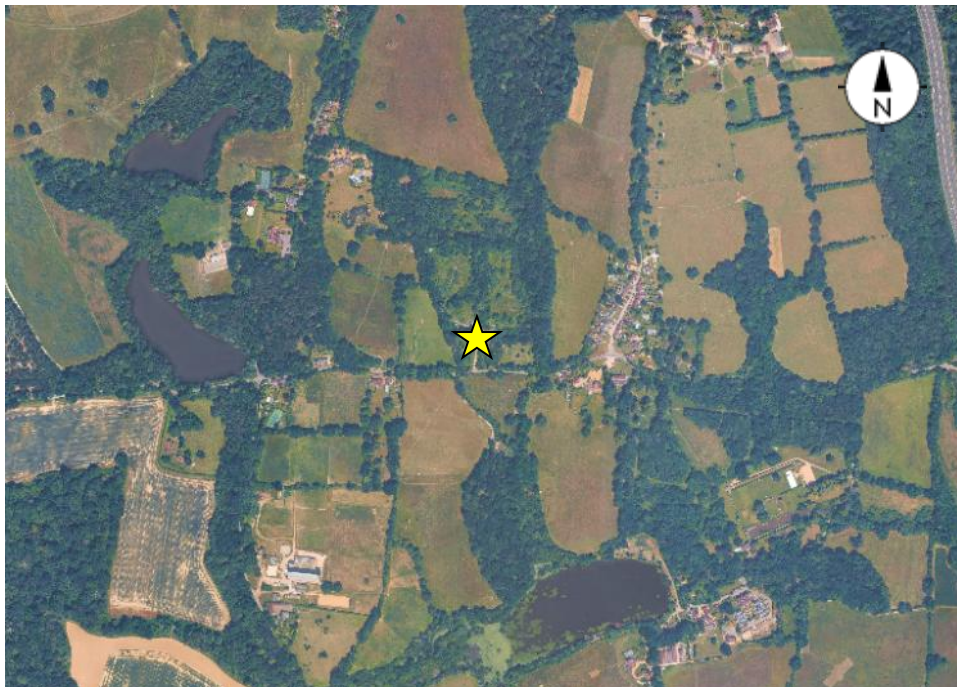
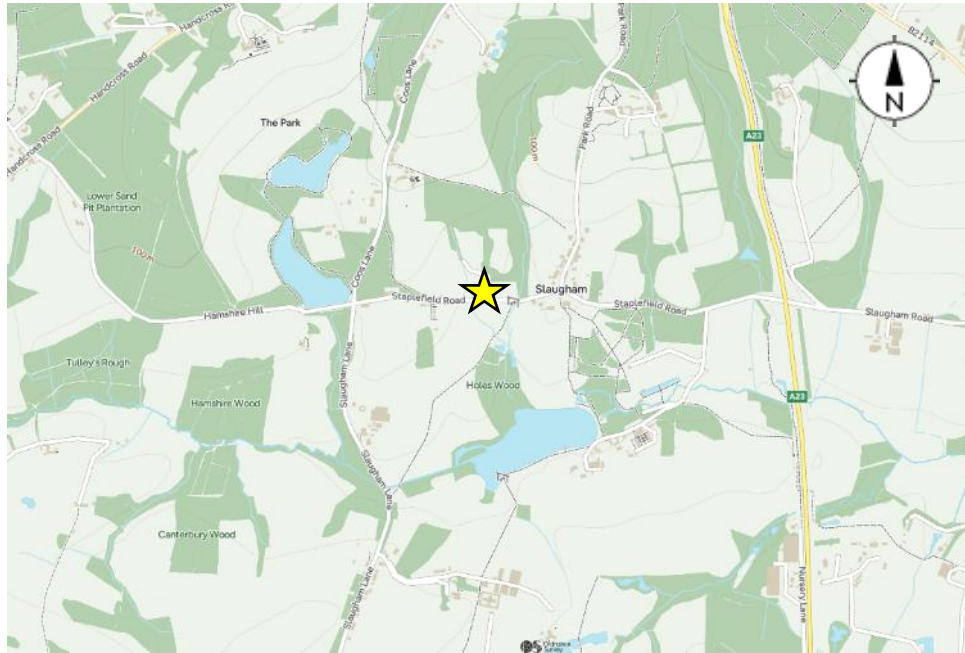


Figure 3: An OS map obtained from the Ordnance Survey website showing the location of Slaugham Garden Nursery, Slaugham (as shown by the yellow star).



2. Desktop Survey

A variety of resources were independently consulted to assess the known local records within the nearby area and the importance of the site within the local landscape from an ecological perspective. The resources used were the Local Records Centre, www.naturalengland.org.uk, www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk, Google Maps, Google Earth, and Bing Maps. A search of other relevant nature conservation information was made through the use of the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database.

The local records centre was contacted to provide data on all protected species and sites within 2km of the proposed development site. Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SBRC) was the relevant local record centre for this project.

2.1 Species Records

2.1.1 Amphibians

Within the ecological data search provided by SBRC, five amphibian species were revealed within 2km of the survey site. These were common frog (*Rana temporaria*), common toad (*Bufo bufo*), great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), palmate newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*), and smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*). The closest record to the site was of common frog, recorded approximately 695m to the west of the site centroid.

The ecological data available on the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database revealed that there have been four Great Crested Newt Survey Licence returns within 2km of the survey site. The closest occurrence to the site was located approximately 1,474m to the south-east of the site centroid and confirmed the presence of great crested newts. In addition, one great crested newt pond survey was revealed to have taken place between 2017 and 2019 within 2km of the site. The survey was located approximately 1,984m to the south-east of the site centroid and revealed that the pond had poor suitability to support great crested newts, and that they were absent from this pond. The ecological data also revealed that there has been one granted European Protected Species Application for great crested newts within 2km of the development site. This was located 1,586m to the north-west of the development site.

3. Field Survey

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken by Elite Ecology in August 2025. During this field survey of the site, seven habitat types were present. These are as follows (in habitat code order):

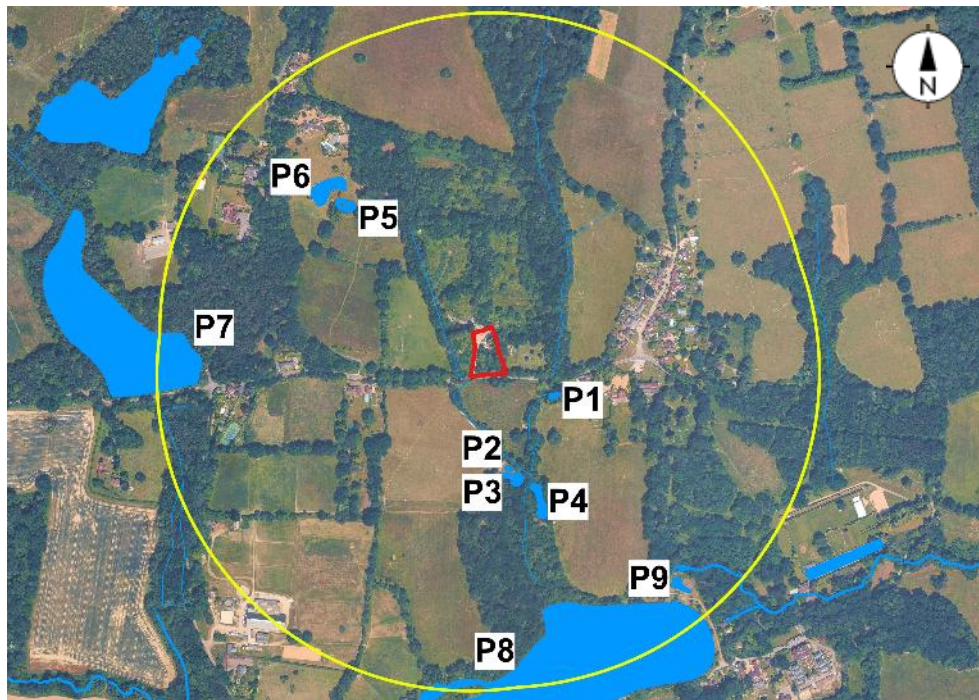
- **u1b – Developed Land; Sealed Surface.**
- **u1b5 – Buildings.**
- **u1f – Sparsely Vegetated Urban Land.**
- **u1e 612 – Built Linear Features.**
- **w1h6 33 – Other Woodland; Mixed – Mainly Broadleaved.**

The woodland located on site has the potential to support amphibians whilst in their terrestrial phase and there is suitable habitat located adjacent to the site in the form of tall forbs. However, there are no ponds located on-site or immediately adjacent.

There are nine ponds located within a 500m radius of the development site. This can be seen in **Figure 4**. The closest waterbody to the site, **P1**, is located approximately 80m to the south-east of the site, situated in a private garden. There are two additional ponds **P2** and **P3** located in an adjacent field approximately 220m from the site and the ponds **P8** and **P9** are located 480m to the south. There is a small road separating **P1** to **P3**, and **P8** and **P9** from the site, but this is not likely to be a significant constraint as the road is narrow, and not likely to be busy. The waterbodies **P5** and **P6** are located approximately 310m to the north-west of the development site, with no significant barriers between them and the site. The waterbody **P7** is located approximately 478m to the west of the development site, and is well connected, with only a small road separating it from the site.

As such, the site has the potential to contain amphibians. Under the current proposals, the site is to be converted for residential use, which will not result in significant disturbance or extra footfall. The woodland area is to be retained, with only three trees removed centrally, and a small strip to be removed adjacent to the existing building.

Figure 4: An aerial map of the site at Slaugham Garden Nursery, Slaugham (red outline) showing the location of ponds (blue fill) and ditches (blue lines) within a 500m buffer zone (yellow outline) of the site.



4. Impact Assessment

4.1 Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*)

Based on the information gathered, the proposed scheme of works at Slaugham Garden Nursery, Slaugham will have a **low** impact on the local amphibian populations during the construction phase. This is because there is a small amount of suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians on site that will be lost under the current scheme of works. Furthermore, bodies of standing water are present in the wider landscape.

The site area falls within the amber risk zone for great crested newts based on maps from NatureSpace.

A Rapid Risk Assessment was carried out on the site at Slaugham Garden Nursery, Slaugham, to determine the likely impacts of the development on great crested newt populations without any licenced mitigation. This has gone under the assumption that the closest pond supports a breeding assemblage of great crested newts, as a worst-case scenario assessment. The results are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Rapid Risk assessment for Great Crested Newts for Slaugham Garden Nursery, Slaugham.

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)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.01
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.001
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0.01
Rapid risk assessment result:		GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY

The rapid risk assessment carried out on the site at the Slaugham Garden Nursery, Slaugham indicate that the development works are likely to cause an offence. It is therefore considered that the implementation of the measures detailed in **Section 5** of this report will be suitable in ensuring no detriment to the local great crested newt and other amphibian populations will occur by the works.

This amphibian method statement is only relevant to the habitats located on site and presents a best practice working approach to ensure that otherwise legitimate works do not inadvertently harm amphibians and/or cause a breach in the law.

5. Method Statement

Based on the survey results, the site contains potential for any terrestrial amphibians, including great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*). The proposed works area contains broadleaved woodland and hedgerows. Therefore, the impacts on amphibians will be low during the translocation of the hedgerow. Therefore, the method statement (as outlined below) is deemed the most suitable option for this project. This method statement needs to be adhered to ensure that no amphibians get harmed by the works.

The following methods should be adhered to:

- Keep the vegetation below 15cm in height to ensure that amphibians are deterred from using the site.
- Prior to day one of the works onsite, one artificial hibernaculum will need to be created just offsite. The specification for this is found below.
- On day one of the works, a toolbox talk will be undertaken by a licenced great crested newt ecologist. This will educate contractors in relation to the amphibians that could be encountered and the legislation covering them. Associated documentation will be left with the site manager/project manager. This documentation will include contact details for Elite Ecology and the licenced ecologist appointed to the project.
- Prior to the commencement of the construction works, a fingertip search of the area will be undertaken by a licenced great crested newt ecologist. Any rubble on site will need to be removed by hand, under the supervision of the licenced ecologist.

The overnight temperature before this fingertip search is required to be 5°C or higher for five consecutive nights. This is to ensure that no hibernating amphibians are affected by the works and therefore put at undue risk by translocation.

- Any vegetation clearance will need to be carried out with an ecologically friendly method and supervised by a suitably-qualified ecologist. The ecologist will carry out a fingertip search prior to any clearance and safely remove any amphibians that are found.
- Vegetation clearance will move in a suitable direction. The figure below shows the directions of which vegetation should be removed. This will encourage any amphibians on site to move out on their own and will prevent any amphibians being isolated in fragmented sections of vegetation.
- Once this has been done, the site can be declared vacant of amphibians, and the works can commence without creating a negative impact. Clearing the vegetation in this way will ensure that the site becomes unsuitable to the local Amphibians populations and discourages their return to the site for the scheme of works.

- Any open excavations and trenches should be backfilled before nightfall or, alternatively, escape ramps should be installed to allow newts to escape if they become trapped. If any amphibians are found within trenches dug into the ground, the licenced ecologist shall be contacted, and these amphibians translocated to the chosen site. In addition to this, if any great crested newts are found during the construction phase, then works will stop immediately and the licenced ecologist contacted.
- At the end of every working day, all construction materials need to be stored on raised platforms (i.e. pallets). This is to deter the amphibians from using the construction materials as temporary resting sites.
- At the completion of the works, Elite Ecology will produce a letter statement to detail all amphibians captured and translocated. This will include photographic evidence of the works, the amphibians translocated and the site at the completion of the works.

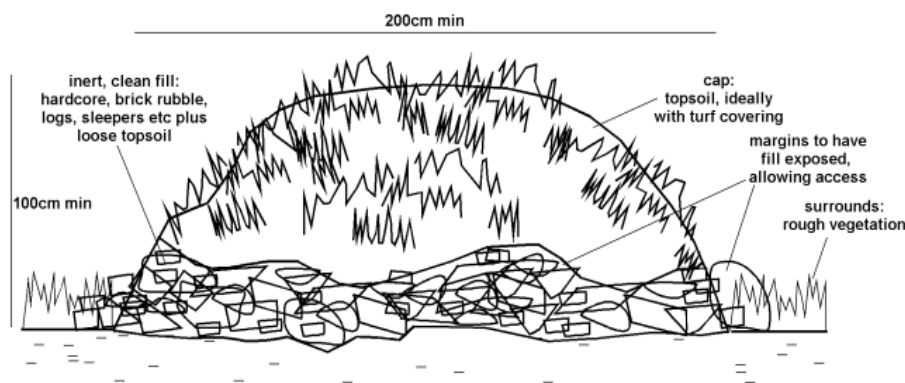
Please note: If any great crested newts are encountered during the above methods, then works need to cease, with both the Local Planning Authority and Natural England contacted for more information.

Figure 5: Aerial image obtained from Google, showing the approximate location of the hibernaculum to be used as a translocation site (blue star) and the vegetation removal directions (yellow arrows) .



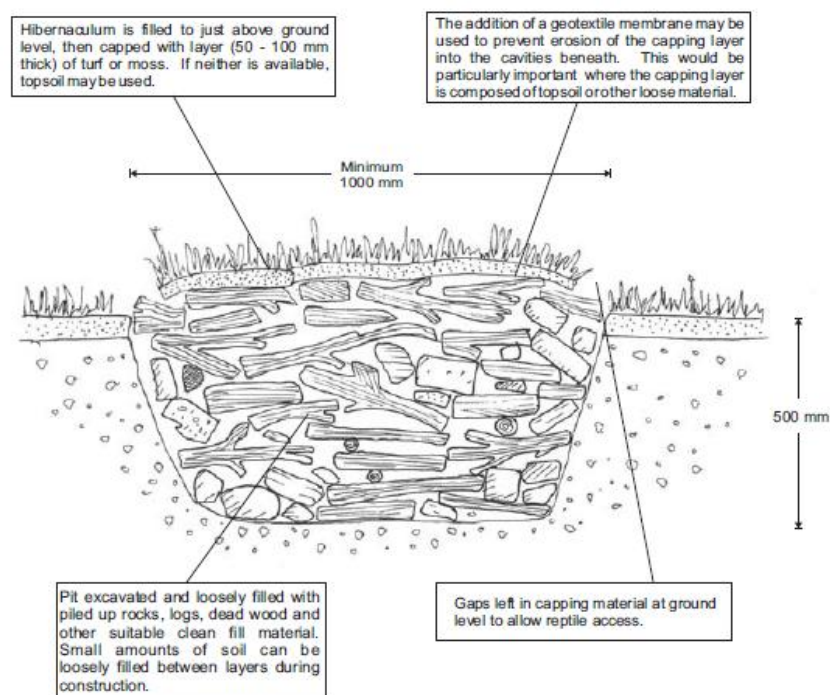
It is recommended as much scrubland, hedgerows, woodland, and/or rough grassland as possible is retained around the site. It is also recommended that at least one hibernaculum is included into the design scheme. These are usually comprised of rubble, rock, log piles and earth banks. An example design for the hibernaculum can be seen within **Figure 6** and subsequent diagrams.

Figure 6: A diagram illustrating the recommended hibernacula (GCN Mitigation Guidelines)



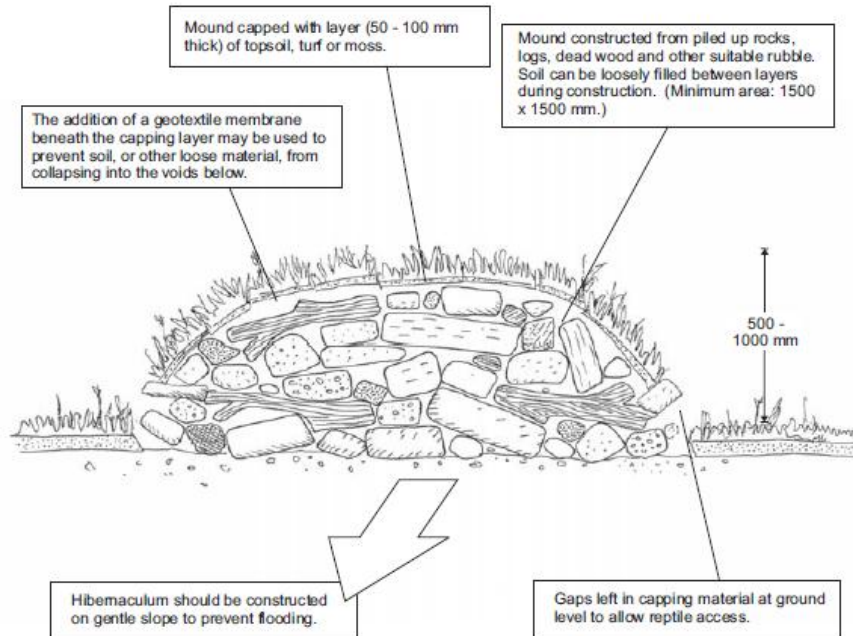
Hibernaculum on free-draining ground

Where ground conditions allow, the hibernaculum should be incorporated into a shallow pit. This design is more likely to remain frost-free, and will be less obtrusive and thus unlikely to be subject to interference.



Hibernaculum on impermeable ground

Where ground conditions are impermeable, then an 'above-ground' or mounded design should be utilised in order to prevent the hibernaculum from flooding. This design should also be used if it is not possible to excavate a pit for any other reason.



6. References

Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (1990). Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey.

Natural England (2001). Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines.

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994. HMSO.

Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981).

Williams, P. (2013). GCN eDNA Protocol. Freshwater Habitats Trust.

7. Appendices

Appendix A: Site Plans

Appendix B: Legislation and Policy

Appendix A: Site Plans



Appendix B: Legislation and Policy

The great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) is fully protected under a variety of legislation and conventions. These include:

- Bern Convention (Appendix II)
- Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- EU Habitats Directive (Annex II and IV)
- Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- NERC Act 2006 (Section 41 England; Section 42 Wales)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

In addition to this, the great crested newt has been listed as a priority species on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).

This legislation covers all aspects of newt life stages (eggs, efts and adult newts) and makes it illegal to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter, protection or breeding, and to intentionally disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Licenses can be obtained from Natural England (DEFRA) under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994, to permit activities for the purposes of:

- Regulation 44(2)(e): Preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, or
- Regulation 44(2)(f): Preventing the spread of disease
- Regulation 44(2)(g): Preventing serious damage to any form of property or fisheries

Or

- If there is no satisfactory alternative.

The above regulations allow people to carry out activities which would otherwise be illegal.

8. Notice to Readers: Conditions of this Report

All reports are certified products and cannot be shown, copied, or distributed to third parties without the written permission of Elite Ecology. No liability is accepted for the contents of the report, other than to that of the client(s).

Elite Ecology agrees to supply ecological consulting services and advice of a preliminary or thorough nature as advised or commissioned. Upon commissioning Elite Ecology to undertake the work, the client(s) grant access to the site upon the agreed date. If no site access is available upon this date, Elite Ecology holds the right to charge the client(s) for lost staffing time and additional travel costs.

Elite Ecology undertake all site surveys with reasonable skill, care, and diligence, within the terms of the contract that has been agreed with the client and abiding by Elite Ecology's Terms and Conditions. The actions of the surveyors on site, and during the production of the report, were undertaken in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct for the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

The latest good practice guidelines put in place by Natural England or the relevant statutory conservation bodies have been followed by the surveyors on site. If those methodologies fail to identify a protected species during the survey efforts, no responsibility can be attributed to Elite Ecology. If any of these guidelines are adapted between the date(s) of the surveys being undertaken and the submission of this report, then Elite Ecology takes no responsibility for this.

Should any equipment be damaged or lost on site at the fault of the client(s), then Elite Ecology withholds the right to charge 100% above the current market value for that exact product or the nearest similar product.

The survey results purport the current status of the site and its potential for protected species utilisation at the time of surveying. It should not be viewed as a complete list of the possible flora and fauna species that could be using the site at different times of the year.

Elite Ecology has been provided with full payment for this report and thus the product has been released to the client(s) for the purpose of their planning application. If any part of the report is lost or altered without the written permission of Elite Ecology, then the entire report becomes invalid. Due to the potential for continual change within the natural world, this report is valid for **2 years only** from the date of the last survey visit. If this report is submitted after the 2 year deadline, then a further updated inspection will be required to ascertain whether the site remains in the same condition as it was when initially inspected.

No reliance should be made on any such comments in relation to the structural integrity of the features located on the surveyed site. All information within the report is based solely on evidence that has been found on site during the service provided. No individual opinion or inference will be made other than that of the suitably qualified ecologist appointed to the project.