

From: Dan Maughan <Dan.Maughan@aspect-ecology.com>
Sent: 12 May 2026 11:24:16 UTC+01:00
To: "Laura.Downs@naturespaceuk.com" <Laura.Downs@naturespaceuk.com>
Cc: "Steven King" <steven.king@midsussex.gov.uk>; "Matthew Caiels" <Matthew.Caiels@aspect-ecology.com>; "Jordan Van Laun" <jordan.vanlaun@wates.co.uk>; "Judith Ashton (judith@judithashton.co.uk)" <judith@judithashton.co.uk>
Subject: RE: RE: DM/26/0577 | Land West Of Turners Hill Road And North Of Huntsland Including Hurst Farm Turners Hill Road Crawley Down West Sussex

Hi Laura

I've been passed your comments regarding Great Crested Newt at the above site.

As set out in our technical note, we were proposing a non-licensed precautionary approach in regard to pond P10, considered to be proportionate given its separation from the site (150m) and the nature of habitats within the site and in closer proximity to the pond.

Noting your comments, we have reviewed this further based on the advice within Natural England's licensing method statement template (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-crested-newts-apply-for-a-mitigation-licence>). This advises against a risk-averse approach to mitigation, instead recommending a proportionate approach to mitigation informed by an assessment of likely risks. The risk assessment tool included within the method statement template indicates that an offence is highly unlikely where less than 0.5ha of terrestrial habitat is affected within 250m of breeding ponds, as set out below:

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)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.1
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.1
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

Under the proposed scheme, 0.1ha of grassland/scrub/tall ruderal habitat is affected by construction of an attenuation basin, together with 0.41ha affected by built development (buildings and roads). However, 0.06ha of this is managed as a chicken coop with associated grazing pressure and predation risk, forming unsuitable newt habitat as a result. The remaining area within 250m of the pond comprises existing buildings and hardstanding also providing unsuitable newt habitat. As such, the total area of suitable habitat within 250m of the pond affected by the proposals is 0.45ha, less than the 0.5ha threshold indicated under Natural England's risk assessment.

Given a precautionary approach would be adopted during vegetation clearance (including cutting back of vegetation to a low sward height under ecological supervision), and a lack of tussocky grassland

within the affected area (the Ecological Appraisal notes such areas are subject to occasional mowing), the risk to Great Crested Newt under the proposals, even if present at pond P10, is considered to be low, and a non-licensed approach is considered to be appropriate.

I would be pleased to have further comments on this basis.

Kind regards

Daniel

Daniel Maughan

Director

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From: Laura Downs <Laura.Downs@naturespaceuk.com>

Sent: 11 May 2026 17:30

To: Steven King <Steven.King@midsussex.gov.uk>

Subject: Re: RE: DM/26/0577 | Land West Of Turners Hill Road And North Of Huntsland Including Hurst Farm Turners Hill Road Crawley Down West Sussex

Good afternoon Steve,

Thank you for re-consulting us on the above application. I have reviewed the applicant's recent GCN report, *Technical note 05, Land West of Turners Hill Road and North of Huntsland, including land at Hurst Farm, Crawley Down, aspect ecology, May 2026*, which states that:

- *"A planning consultation response has been received from NatureSpace in relation to the application (dated 1st April 2026), raising a concern that the applicant has not adequately demonstrated that there will be no impact to Great Crested Newts and their habitat, given surveys could not be completed at ponds P8, P9 and P10 due to ponds being dry at the time of survey and access availability."*
- *"Following the comments from Naturespace, the site was revisited in April 2026. Ponds P8 and P9 were recorded to hold water during this visit, and accordingly were subject to eDNA surveys to investigate the presence/absence of Great Crested Newt. Attempts were also made again to secure survey access to offsite ponds P10 and P11 (including knocking on resident's doors) although access was not granted.... The eDNA survey returned a negative result for both ponds P8 and P9, indicating absence of Great Crested Newt from these ponds."*
- *"No access was secured to ponds P10 and P11, these located approximately 150m and 180m from the site respectively. These ponds are well separated from the site, with areas of wooded vegetation providing higher quality terrestrial habitat located between the ponds and the site."*
- *"Pond P11 is also located on the opposite side of Turners Hill Road, forming a potential barrier to newt movement. On this basis, it is unlikely that development of the site would result in any significant impact on populations of newts associated with these ponds if present."*

Within the above report, it is stated that a revisit to the site revealed p8 and p9 were now holding water and as such an eDNA survey could be carried out. These both came back as negative which has therefore evidenced that these ponds are unlikely to support the species, the concerns raised for these waterbodies have therefore been addressed.

However, the justification provided for scoping out p10 (which could not be surveyed due to access issues), is that it is well separated from the site as there is suitable habitat surrounding the pond, and therefore onsite habitats will not be utilised. Firstly, it should be noted that the woodland surrounding the waterbody is not considered to separate the pond from the development site, instead it may act as a dispersal corridor which can facilitate the use of the habitats onsite. Although the habitat surrounding the pond is suitable, the tussocky grassland located within the northern parcels of the site are also suitable. As GCN utilise a variety of habitat types within 500m of a breeding pond (Matos 2017 (Jehle, 2000; Gustafson, 2011; Jarvis, 2012)), and as the pond is located within 150m of the site boundary which is well within dispersal distance, it is not believed that the applicant has demonstrated why this pond can be ruled out from consideration. Without eDNA on this waterbody, GCN presence should be

assumed and should this waterbody support GCN, it is considered likely that the species would utilise the suitable habitat types onsite. We would therefore anticipate a potential impact as a result of site works and have concerns with the development proceeding under Reasonable Avoidance Measures in lieu of survey data. If the applicant cannot provide further information/justification as to why this waterbody can be discounted from consideration without posing a risk to the species, then a licence may be required for the development.

Please let me know if you have any questions on the above,

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

NatureSpace Partnership

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From: Steven King <Steven.King@midsussex.gov.uk>

Sent: 11 May 2026 10:02

To: Laura Downs <Laura.Downs@naturespaceuk.com>

Cc: NatureSpace Partnership <info@naturespaceuk.com>

Subject: RE: RE: DM/26/0577 | Land West Of Turners Hill Road And North Of Huntsland Including Hurst Farm Turners Hill Road Crawley Down West Sussex

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Hi Laura

Following on from my previous e mail, do you know when you would be able to respond please?
The applicants are pushing for the application to be reported to the next District Planning Committee meeting and to do this I should have the report completed by the end of the day on 12th May.

Regards

Steve

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From: Steven King
Sent: 06 May 2026 08:49
To: Laura.Downs@naturespaceuk.com
Cc: 'info@naturespaceuk.com' <info@naturespaceuk.com>
Subject: RE: DM/26/0577 | Land West Of Turners Hill Road And North Of Huntsland Including Hurst Farm Turners Hill Road Crawley Down West Sussex

Hi Laura

Further to my e mail yesterday regarding the above, I've received the attached revised version of the attached document from the applicant. The version they sent yesterday had the wrong plan included, Could I ask for your comments on this document please.

Thanks

Steve

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