

From: Laura Downs <Laura.Downs@naturespaceuk.com>
Sent: 09 July 2026 11:08:02 UTC+01:00
To: "Andrew Horrell" <andrew.horrell@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/26/1480 | Nether Walstead East Mascalls Lane Lindfield Haywards Heath

Good morning Andrew,

Thank you for consulting me on the above planning application. The applicant has provided an ecological report in the form of - Ecological Assessment, Nether Walstead, East Mascall's Lane, Lindfield, West Sussex, RH16 2QJ, which states:

- "Suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN includes long grass, tall ruderal vegetation, woodland and scrub, as well as wood and rubble piles that may provide sheltering and/or hibernating opportunities. Suitable aquatic habitat includes ponds and wet ditches."
- "All the waterbodies that were holding water (WB1, WB2 and WB4) were sampled, and sent to a specialist laboratory for testing for the presence of GCN DNA. The results from all three ponds were 'Negative'"
- "The implementation of the sensitive working strategy recommended for reptiles below will ensure the welfare of GCN is maintained in the highly unlikely event that they are present within the Site."

Following the return of three negative eDNA results from the nearby ponds, we are in agreement with the above report that Reasonable Avoidance Measures would be a suitable option here to adequately mitigate for any potential risks to the species, taking in to account the one unsurveyed pond (dry at the time) and the suitable habitat onsite. At this stage, the above report has only provided a statement for reptiles which whilst it does contain some measures which will protect GCN, there are some key points missing. We would therefore recommend that the applicant submit a GCN method statement (resubmit the EclA with a GCN statement added) which includes details on the following measures:

- Material storage
- Managing ditches/ trenches
- Steps to take should GCN be discovered onsite

Best wishes,

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

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