



Great Crested Newt eDNA Report 2026

Land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead

The Ecology Partnership, Thorncroft Manor, Thorncroft Drive, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8JB

T +44 (0) 1372 364133 **E** info@ecologypartnership.com **W** ecologypartnership.com

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	3
BACKGROUND	3
SITE CONTEXT.....	3
2.0 METHODOLOGY	4
<i>GREAT CRESTED NEWT EDNA SURVEY</i>	<i>4</i>
3.0 RESULTS.....	5
4.0 DISCUSSION	5
5.0 CONCLUSIONS.....	8
6.0 REFERENCES.....	9
APPENDIX 1: EDNA RESULTS	10

LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing. Whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date. This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated, only dominant species may be recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Devine Homes to undertake environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys of the ponds within 250m of land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead, RH19 4RQ, hereafter referred to as the 'site' (Figure 1).

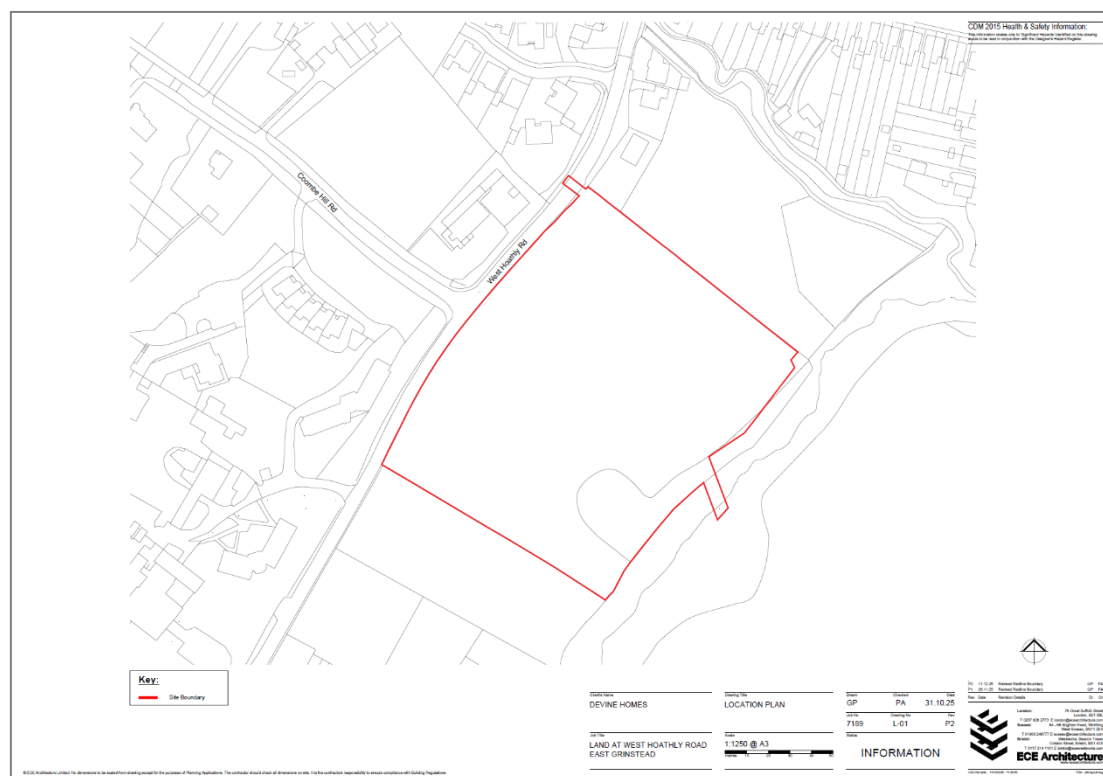


Figure 1: Approximate location of the site, indicated by the red-line boundary.

Site Context

- 1.2 The site is located east of West Hoathly Road in the town of East Grinstead, East Sussex (TQ 39244 36695). The site covers approximately 1.9ha and comprises woodland, sheep-grazed grassland and boundary hedgerows and treelines. The southern boundary is adjacent to further deciduous woodland. The surrounding area consists of grazed fields to the east and a playing field to the north.

Description of proposed development

- 1.3 The erection of 44 new homes with access from West Hoathly Road, vehicle and cycle parking, landscaping, drainage, and associated infrastructure and highway works.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey

- 2.1 No ponds were present on site, though six were identified within 250m of the site boundary, and a further 7 within 500m, labelled in Figure 2 for ease of reference.

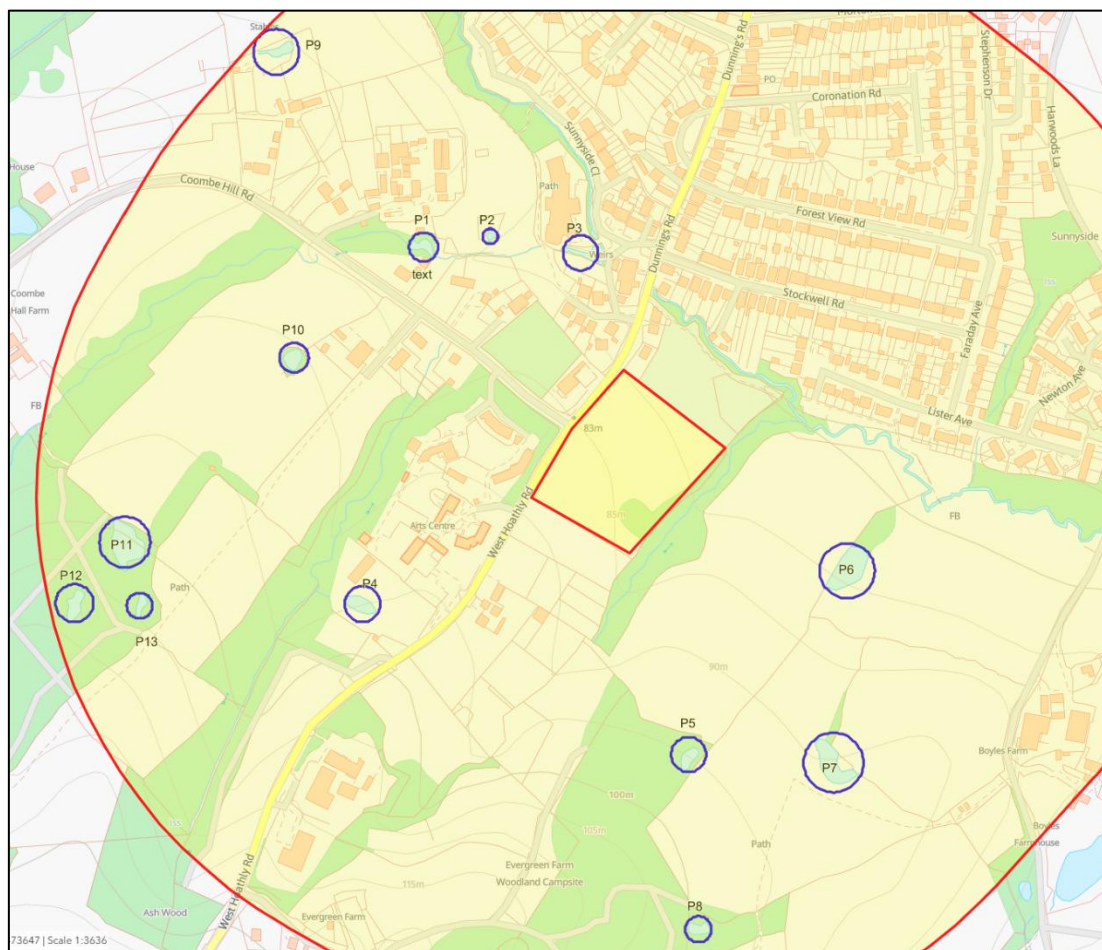


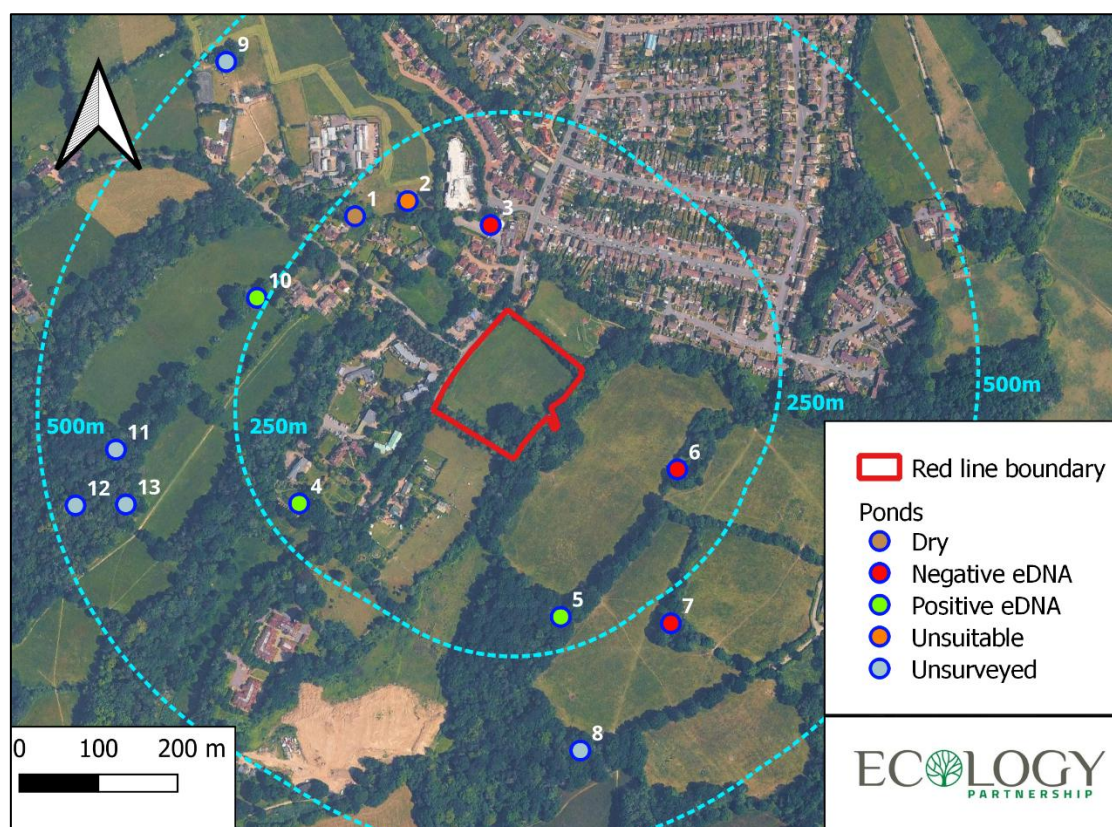
Figure 2: Ponds located within 500m of the site boundary.

- 2.2 Access was granted to all six ponds within 250m (P1-6) as well as the two closest ponds beyond 250m P7 & P10.
- 2.3 Pond 1 was entirely dried up at the time of the survey, so no eDNA sample could be obtained, and Pond 2 was located within a waterfowl enclosure with no marginal vegetation, poor water quality, heavily grazed surroundings and of a small size, and therefore was determined unsuitable to GCN and no eDNA survey was undertaken.

2.4 Ponds 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 were subject to an eDNA survey on 17th April 2026 to determine if great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* have been within the ponds this year. All water samples were analysed by SureScreen Scientifics in accordance with the protocol set out in Appendix 5 of Biggs et al. (2014).

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Of the six surveyed ponds, P4, P5 and P10 returned a positive result and P3, P6 & P7 returned negative results (see Appendix 1).



4.0 DISCUSSION

4.1 The results of the eDNA survey indicate the presence of a GCN population within the local area, with the closest local confirmed presence within P4 and P5 200m south-west and south of the site respectively. The only other confirmed pond was P10 located 265m north-west of the site.

- 4.2 The proposed works will involve the clearance of relatively large areas of sub-optimal terrestrial habitat (grazed pasture) as well as small length of optimal hedgerow habitat. GCN tend to remain in close proximity to their breeding pond and whilst a maximum routine migratory range has been estimated as approximately 250m from a breeding pond (Franklin, 1993; Oldham and Nicholson, 1986; Jehle, 2000), one study by Robert Jehle, (2000) demonstrated a 'terrestrial zone' of 63m, within which 95% of summer refuges were located. A further study (Jehle, R & Arntzen, JW. 2000) showed that after the breeding season 64% of newts were recorded within 20m of the pond edge.
- 4.3 As such, it is considered unlikely that GCN will be within the development area in significant numbers, however, may utilise the retained woodland to the south, and therefore be present in the fringes of the site in low numbers. Considering the above, as well as legislative material and statutory guidelines, it is considered that a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from Natural England should be sought for the scheme. As part of this licence, mitigation measures are required in order to maintain the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of GCNs within the local landscape and ensure that individual GCNs are not injured or killed. This result is largely due to the close proximity of the proposed clearance area to a confirmed GCN pond and clearance of good terrestrial habitat near the GCN pond could cause direct harm to individual newts.
- 4.4 For a European Protected Species Licence to be granted by Natural England, a population estimate for GCN in potential breeding ponds on site must be attained. In order to do this, six surveys should be conducted in pond 4 (if access granted) and pond 5 (within same land ownership as the application site). As pond 10 is over 250m from both the site and ponds 4 or 5, a population estimate of this pond is considered unnecessary.
- 4.5 These surveys must take place within the GCN survey window, during breeding season (March-June), preceding the licence application. These surveys will likely be undertaken in spring 2027 once planning permission has been granted. Ponds must be surveyed using a combination of torch counting and bottle trapping, supplemented by egg searches and possibly hand netting. Three methodologies must be shown during the licence application.

- 4.6 It is considered possible that the development can mitigate against harm to GCN on site. The following outline mitigation strategy assumes up to a worst-case scenario, a high GCN population, as a precaution. However, it is likely the GCN population will be much lower considering that the eDNA assessment only found GCN eDNA in 1 of 12 replicates in both these ponds.

Outline mitigation strategy

- 4.7 The proposed development is considered likely to result in the loss of GCN terrestrial habitat (albeit largely suboptimal) as well as the potential to disturb or harm GCN individuals. The EPSM licence application will detail the methods utilised to maintain the conservation status of the species on site, which may include the following:

- Amphibian fencing around the perimeter of the construction area to exclude GCN during the works.
- A translocation of GCN within the fenced area to retained habitat, using pitfall traps and carpet tiles. Depending on the population estimate resulting in a small, medium or large population, the translocation should take place for a minimum of 30, 60 or 90 days respectively, within the active GCN season (February-October inclusive).
- Following the minimum trapping days, assuming five consecutive days of no capture, a destructive search of the construction area would be undertaken under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. Any remaining individuals will be translocated to retained habitat.
- Enhancement of retained habitat on site, notably the southern and eastern boundaries, through the creation of new native shrub planting, wildflower grassland, a SUDS basin and installation of log pile hibernacula.
- Amphibian-friendly roads should be designed into the scheme, including dropped curbs, underpasses/ culverts and wildlife gully ladders.
- Suitable management of the retained habitats on site post-development to maintain sufficient terrestrial GCN habitat.

- 4.8 It is considered that, should the above measures be implemented, then the favourable conservation status of the species on site can be maintained. The enhancement of the woodland and scrub, as well as the creation of new hibernacula will provide enhanced habitat for the species on site.

- 4.9 These measures will also prevent harm to other amphibians known to be in the area, such as toads, frogs, palmate newts and smooth newts.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Upon visually inspection, ponds 1 and 2 were ruled out for further survey, due to being dry/unsuitable. Ponds 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 were subject to an eDNA survey on 17th April 2026 to determine if great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* have been within the ponds this year.
- 5.2 Ponds 4, 5 and 10 were found to contain GCN eDNA.
- 5.3 Pond 5 is located 200m to the south with direct connectivity to the site and therefore newts originating from this pond may utilise suitable habitat around the edge of the application site.
- 5.4 The proposed works will involve the clearance of relatively large areas of sub-optimal terrestrial habitat (grazed pasture) as well as a small length of more optimal native hedgerow habitat. This habitat is within 250m of ponds identified as containing GCN.
- 5.5 It is considered that a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from Natural England would be necessary for the scheme. As part of this licence, mitigation measures are required in order to maintain the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of GCNs within the local landscape and ensure that individual GCNs are not injured or killed.
- 5.6 For a European Protected Species Licence to be granted by Natural England, population class estimate for GCN in breeding ponds on site must be attained. These must be identified via further GCN survey work of ponds 4 and 5 in 2027, should planning permission be granted.
- 5.7 A mitigation strategy has been outlined in this report to demonstrate that the favourable conservation status can be maintained.

6.0 REFERENCES

ARG., (2010) *UK Advice Note 5: Great crested newt habitat suitability index*. Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the United Kingdom.

Cresswell, W and Whitworth, R (2004) An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. Peterborough, UK.

Franklin, P.S (1993) *The migratory ecology and terrestrial habitat preferences of the great crested newt (Triturus cristatus) at Little Wittenham Nature Reserve*. De Montford University unpublished thesis.

Jehle, R (2000) *The terrestrial summer habitat of radio-tracked great crested newts (Triturus cristatus) and marbled newts (T. marmoratus)*. Herpetological Journal, 10, pp. 137-142.

Langton, T.E.S., Beckett, C.L. & Foster, J.P. (2001), *Great Crested Newt Handbook*. Froglife, Halesworth.

Oldham, R.S. & Nicholson, M (1986) *Status and ecology of the warty newt Triturus cristatus*. Report to the Nature Conservancy Council (Contract HF 3/05/123), Peterborough.

Internet resources:

Google Maps: www.google.co.uk/maps

Magic Interactive Map: www.magic.gov.uk

Appendix 1: eDNA Results

Folio No: 488-2026
Purchase Order: WSUS 8343
Contact: The Ecology Partnership
Issue Date: 05.05.2026
Received Date: 20.04.2026



GCN eDNA Analysis

Summary

When great crested newts (GCN), *Triturus cristatus*, inhabit a pond, they continuously release small amounts of their DNA into the environment. By collecting and analyzing water samples, we can detect these small traces of environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm GCN habitation or establish GCN absence.

Results

Lab ID	Site Name	OS Reference	Degradation Check	Inhibition Check	Result	Positive Replicates
GCN26 00384	West Hoathly - P3	TQ 39205 36897	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12
R26 00178	West Hoathly - P7	TQ 39444 36382	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12
R26 00180	West Hoathly - P10	TQ 38906 36786	Pass	Pass	Positive	11/12
R26 00188	West Hoathly - P5	TQ 39316 36398	Pass	Pass	Positive	1/12
R26 00190	West Hoathly - P6	TQ 39468 36583	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12
R26 00197	West Hoathly - P4	TQ 39000 36519	Pass	Pass	Positive	1/12

Matters affecting result: none

Reported by: Vanessa Hind

Approved by: Vanessa Hind



Appendix 2: Pond Photos

Photograph 1: Pond 2	 A photograph of a small, irregularly shaped pond with murky, brownish water. The pond is surrounded by green grass and some reeds. In the background, there is a fence made of wooden posts and wire. A few ducks are visible near the pond's edge.
Photograph 2: Pond 3	 A photograph of a pond with clear water, surrounded by tall green reeds. In the background, there is a brick wall and a parking lot with several cars parked.
Photograph 3: Pond 5	 A photograph of a pond in a wooded area. The water is dark and still, reflecting the surrounding trees. A large fallen log lies across the pond, and the ground is covered with green foliage and fallen leaves.

Photograph 4: Pond 7	 A photograph of Pond 7, showing a calm body of water surrounded by dense green trees and foliage. The water reflects the surrounding greenery and the sky.
Photograph 5: Pond 6	 A photograph of Pond 6, showing a calm body of water surrounded by dense green trees and foliage. The water reflects the surrounding greenery and the sky.

The Ecology Partnership Ltd

Thorncroft Manor

Thorncroft Drive

Leatherhead

KT22 8JB

Tel: 01372 364 133

www.ecologypartnership.com

Approved: Alexia Tamblyn MA (Oxon) MSc CEcol CEnv MCIEEM FRGS

Date: 11/05/2026