



Unit 4, Langham Stables, Langham Lane, Lodsworth, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 9BU.

Tel: 01798 861 800 - E-Mail: info@ecologyco-op.co.uk - Website: www.ecologyco-op.co.uk

15th September 2026

Ref: Soles Coppice, Great Crested Newts (Case Ref. DM/26/1886).

To whom it may concern,

The Ecology Co-op undertook a bat scoping assessment and bat emergence survey¹ at Soles Coppice, Brantridge Lane, Balcombe, Haywards Heath RH17 6JR in July 2026, associated with planning application ref DM/26/1886. Further to the submission of the planning application the NatureSpace District Licensing Officer responded on 10/09/2026. This letter will address the following comment:

“The site is within the red impact risk zone indicating that there is suitable habitat for great crested newts. The applicant has submitted photographs within the “Site and Context” document [Russel Jones Limited 2026], which show suitable habitat surrounding the site, including vegetation, woodland and log piles. The proposed development site has a fenced boundary, but this is open and not considered a barrier to movement. There is a pond, within a wooded area located within 50m of the proposed development boundary. As the applicant has not provided any ecological information for the site [except a Bat Emergence Survey Report, The Ecology Co-op, July 2026], then further information should be provided to confirm if there will be any impacts to great crested newts as a result of the development proposal, and if the impacts can be mitigated for.”

Great Crested Newts

Within the original preliminary ecological appraisal², a comprehensive desk study was undertaken, which included an online mapping search for any ponds and/or waterbodies within 250m of the site boundary. As stated within The Ecology Co-op’s report, *“There is at least one pond within 250m of the proposed development site, which lies approximately 240m to the north-west”*.

In July 2024, The Ecology Co-op responded³ to a previous NatureSpace holding objection on this application where the habitat was described as being “frequently mown short amenity grassland” that offers no resting places for great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*. A photograph of the grassland in 2024 is shown below.

1 The Ecology Co-op (2026). P11762 Soles Coppice Bat Emergence Survey.

2 The Ecology Co-op (2023). P5625 Soles Coppice Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

3 The Ecology Co-op (2024). P5625 Soles Coppice NatureSpace Response.



Photograph 1. A 2024 photograph of the garden area surrounding Soles Coppice showing the close mown amenity grassland habitat not likely to provide any resting places for great crested newts.

In July 2026, The Ecology Co-op undertook an updated bat emergence survey and repeat scoping assessment of Soles Coppice. While great crested newts were not the focus of this assessment, the condition of the grassland habitat and impacted area was noted to be the same as it was in 2024.



Photograph 2. Mown garden at Soles Coppice in 2026.



Photograph 3. Mown garden at Soles Coppice in 2026.

While there is some potential that the grassland may be used by foraging and commuting newts, although very unlikely given the lack of hibernacula, a reasonable avoidance approach is recommended during garden clearance prior to construction.

1 The Ecology Co-op (2026). P11762 Soles Coppice Bat Emergence Survey.
 2 The Ecology Co-op (2023). P5625 Soles Coppice Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
 3 The Ecology Co-op (2024). P5625 Soles Coppice NatureSpace Response.

Recommendations for Mitigation:

- Any piles of materials on site which may be utilised as hibernacula must be dismantled carefully by hand. If any great crested newts are discovered during this process, the materials should be replaced immediately, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for advice. Alternative mitigation measures may be required.
- Any trenches left overnight should be covered or ramps provided to prevent great crested newts from becoming trapped.
- Any building materials such as bricks, stones etc. should be stored on raised pallets outside of the active construction zone to discourage great crested newts from using them as shelter.
- Any demolition materials should be stored in skips or similar containers rather than in piles on the ground.

If at any point during construction works any great crested newts are identified, the following instructions should be strictly adhered to:

- Immediately stop all works, then gently make good the feature, taking care not to crush amphibians, and immediately leave the area.
- Inform an ecologist immediately who will provide further guidance and instruction.
- Do not try to handle or rescue a great crested newt.
- Do not resume construction works until advised it is safe to do so by an ecologist.

If a great crested newt is found at any point during the proposed works, a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) or District Licence (DL) may be required to permit works that would potentially cause disturbance and otherwise commit an offence under relevant legislation.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Kind regards,

Emily Davies, BSc (Hons).

Email: emily@ecologyco-op.co.uk

Phone: 07428 401006.

For further information about The Ecology Co-op, please visit www.ecologyco-op.co.uk