

Precautionary Method Statement for Reptiles

Ansty Recreation Ground

Drainage and Track Improvements

Prepared for the discharge of the planning condition:

“Prior to commencement: Precautionary Method Statement for Reptiles”

Prepared for: Ansty Community Sports Club

Date: 17th March 2026

Planning Application Reference: DM/25/2195

Document Control

Version	Date	Prepared By	Description
1.0	17 March 2026	John Thorpe	Precautionary Method Statement for Reptiles

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Legislative and Policy Context.....	3
3. Site Description	4
4. Risk Assessment	4
5. Precautionary Working Methodology.....	5
6. Steps if a Reptile is Encountered	6
7. Timing of Works.....	6
8. Site Supervision and Responsibility	6
9. Conclusion.....	6
Appendix A -Site Location and Works Area Plan.....	8

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
PMS	Precautionary Method Statement
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NERC Act	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
WCA 1981	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This Precautionary Method Statement (PMS) has been prepared to support the implementation of proposed drainage and access track improvement works at Ansty Recreation Ground, West Sussex.

The document has been prepared in response to a planning condition requiring the submission and approval of a Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles before the commencement of works.

The purpose of the PMS is to ensure that the proposed works are undertaken in a manner that minimises the risk of harm to reptiles, in accordance with relevant wildlife legislation and best practice guidance.

1.2 Description of Proposed Works

The proposed works comprise:

- installation of a land drainage system around the perimeter of the recreation ground
- mole ploughing across the sports pitches to improve sub-surface drainage
- surface repair and improvement of an existing maintenance track along the western boundary

The works will take place within an established recreation ground consisting primarily of managed sports pitches.

No works are proposed within woodland or dense vegetation and disturbance will be largely confined to areas of regularly maintained grassland.

1.3 Preparation of the Precautionary Method Statement (Non-Consultant Ecologist)

This PMS has been prepared by the Applicant based on publicly available ecological guidance, including Natural England Standing Advice for Protected Species (Reptiles) and recognised good practice for construction works in areas of potential reptile habitat.

The precautionary measures described in this document reflect standard ecological mitigation approaches widely used for development works within managed grassland environments where the potential for reptiles to occur is considered to be low.

2. Legislative and Policy Context

All native reptile species are protected from intentional killing or injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The species most encountered in lowland southern England include:

- Slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*)
- Common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*)
- Grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*)

Local Planning Authorities are also required to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity under:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

- Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

The precautionary measures set out in this Method Statement are designed to ensure that the proposed works are implemented in a manner consistent with these legislative requirements.

The precautionary approach adopted within this Method Statement follows the principles contained within Natural England Standing Advice for protected species – reptiles.

3. Site Description

3.1 Site Overview

Ansty Recreation Ground is a community sports facility comprising cricket and football pitches with associated amenity grassland.

The site is characterised by:

- intensively managed sports pitches
- regularly mown amenity grassland
- boundary hedgerows and tree lines
- limited areas of marginal vegetation along field edges

Most of the site is subject to regular mowing and maintenance, which significantly reduces its suitability as reptile habitat.

3.2 Habitat Suitability for Reptiles

Reptiles typically favour habitats that provide a mosaic of:

- basking areas
- refugia
- structural vegetation

Examples include rough grassland, heathland, scrub and field margins.

Within Ansty Recreation Ground, such habitat is limited in extent and primarily confined to narrow strips of vegetation along site boundaries. The intensive management of the sports pitches means the working areas are considered unsuitable for reptiles. However, reptiles could potentially occur within marginal vegetation or move through the site during dispersal.

Given the predominance of regularly managed grassland, the limited extent of suitable reptile habitat and the small scale and nature of the works, a reptile presence/absence survey is not considered necessary or proportionate. Instead, the precautionary working methods set out within this Method Statement will ensure that any reptiles that may occasionally use the site margins are not harmed during construction.

4. Risk Assessment

The proposed works are considered to present low ecological risk to reptiles for the following reasons:

- Most works occur within frequently mown grassland
- Suitable reptile habitat is limited in extent
- The site experiences regular human activity and maintenance

Nevertheless, because reptiles may occasionally use site margins, the precautionary measures outlined below will be implemented during site preparation and construction.

On this basis the works are considered unlikely to result in significant effects on reptiles provided precautionary working methods are implemented.

5. Precautionary Working Methodology

The precautionary working methods described below will apply to all site preparation and construction activities associated with the development.

5.1 Working Areas and Access

Construction works will be confined to the defined working areas shown on the Site Location and Works Area Plan (**Appendix A**) and will include activities associated with:

- drainage installation
- mole ploughing works
- maintenance track improvements

Unnecessary encroachment into adjacent vegetated margins will be avoided wherever practicable.

5.2 Ecological Toolbox Talk

Prior to the commencement of works, the contractor will receive an 'ecological toolbox talk' covering:

- the potential presence of reptiles on site
- identification of common reptile species
- legal protection of reptiles
- procedures to follow if reptiles are encountered

The toolbox talk will ensure that all site personnel understand the required precautionary measures.

5.3 Vegetation Clearance

Where vegetation clearance is required within or adjacent to the working areas, this will be undertaken using a two-stage cutting approach:

1. Vegetation will initially be strimmed to approximately 150 mm in height.
2. After a minimum period of 24–48 hours, vegetation will be cut to approximately 50 mm.

This staged approach encourages any reptiles present to disperse naturally from the working area.

5.4 Directional Clearance

Vegetation clearance will be undertaken in a directional manner, progressing from the centre of the works area toward retained habitat. This allows reptiles to move away from disturbance into adjacent areas of vegetation.

5.5 Storage of Materials

Construction materials, plant and equipment will be stored on:

- existing hardstanding, or
- areas of short-cut grass

Stockpiles will not be placed in areas of longer vegetation that could provide shelter for reptiles.

6. Steps if a Reptile is Encountered

In the unlikely event that a reptile is encountered during the works:

1. Works in the immediate vicinity will stop immediately.
2. The reptile will be allowed to move away naturally into adjacent vegetation.
3. If the animal does not move away, advice will be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
4. Works will only recommence once the reptile has safely moved away from the working area.

Reptiles will not be intentionally captured or handled by site personnel.

A suitably qualified ecologist may be consulted if reptiles are encountered and further advice is required.

7. Timing of Works

Where practicable, vegetation clearance will take place during the reptile active season (March–October), when reptiles are more likely to disperse from disturbed areas. If works occur outside this period, the precautionary measures outlined in this Method Statement will still be implemented.

8. Site Supervision and Responsibility

The contractor responsible for undertaking the works will ensure that all site personnel are made aware of the requirements of this Precautionary Method Statement.

A nominated Site Supervisor or Site Manager will be responsible for ensuring that:

- the precautionary measures detailed in this Method Statement are implemented throughout site preparation and construction;
- an ecological toolbox talk is provided to site staff prior to the commencement of works;
- vegetation clearance is undertaken in accordance with the staged cutting approach described in this document; and
- the procedure set out in Section 6 is followed should a reptile be encountered during the works.

The Site Supervisor will ensure that all contractors working on site adhere to the precautionary measures contained within this Method Statement for the duration of the construction phase.

9. Conclusion

The proposed works at Ansty Recreation Ground are located within a predominantly managed sports facility where suitable reptile habitat is limited.

By implementing the precautionary working methods set out in this Method Statement, the risk of harm to reptiles during the construction phase will be minimised.

The proposed development can therefore proceed in accordance with the relevant legislative requirements and the biodiversity duties of the Local Planning Authority.

The precautionary working methods set out in this document represent a proportionate approach consistent with recognised ecological good practice for developments within managed grassland environments where the potential for reptiles to occur is considered to be low.

Appendix A -Site Location and Works Area Plan

