

TECHNICAL NOTE

REPORT: Application to Construct Phase 0 Ponds for Great Crested Newts under a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Development Licence

CLIENT: Revantage

SITE: Coed Darcy

DATE: June 2026

REFERENCE: JN00657/TN01

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Appendices

Appendix 1 JN00657 D01 Overarching Great Crested Newt Mitigation Strategy

Appendix 2 4020-A-SK298 -P0 Overarching Newt Strategy- Pond Layout-A1 L Des

Appendix 3 JN00657 D08 Protected Species and Constraints Survey

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 SK Environmental Solutions Limited (SKES) was commissioned by Revantage to prepare a supporting document for a planning application relating to the construction of seven great crested newt ponds at Coed Darcy in line with the Overarching Great Crested Newt Mitigation Strategy (OGCNMS) agreed with Natural Resource Wales (NRW) and Neath Port Talbot (NPT) Local Authority ecologists, which can be viewed in Appendix 1. A Protected Species and Constraints Summary survey report has also been produced to support this application and can be viewed in Appendix 3 of this document.
- 1.2 As such, this document has been prepared in support of a planning application for the creation of a network of seven ponds at Coed Darcy (see 4020-A-SK298 -P0 Overarching Newt Strategy-Pond Layout-A1 L Des Appendix 2) to increase connectivity, breeding and foraging opportunities for GCN at Coed Darcy. These seven ponds, referred to hereafter as Phase 0 will form part of a wider network of ponds to be created in subsequent phases (Phases 1, 2 & 3) in line with OGCNMS (Appendix 1).
- 1.3 A subsequent application will be made for the construction of the six Phase 1 great crested newt ponds, as this requirement has been triggered by the granting of the planning application for the decommissioning of the North Site Reservoir (NSR).
- 1.4 Following liaison and discussion with NRW's Senior Species Officer, Matt Ellis, it was deemed that a development license would be most appropriate route under which to create the ponds, despite the fact that no actual development will occur under the license other than the creation of the Phase 0 and Phase 1 ponds and the formation of the first stages of the connective corridor in line with agreed OGCNMS (Appendix 1).
- 1.5 Therefore, the European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) development licence application that is currently being prepared will cover both Phase 0 and Phase 1 ponds. Amendments to the licence, if the ongoing planning applications for the residential site and the tip are granted, will be made, and the EPSM licence will eventually cover the whole site as per the OGCNMS.
- 1.6 However, this planning application relates solely to the construction of the Phase 0 ponds.
- 1.7 To date, (November 2024) over 20 derogation licenses have been issued at Coed Darcy for GCN (See Appendix 3). However, despite the number of licences issued, the conservation status of GCN at Coed Darcy remains unfavourable.
- 1.8 As such it is considered that urgent restorative action is required in the form of the creation of a suitable pond network to increase connectivity, and available breeding and foraging habitat for GCN, moving towards GCN achieving favourable conservation status at Coed Darcy.
- 1.9 The timeframe of October 2026 through to March 2027 presents an ideal opportunity to undertake this important restorative action. Undertaking the vegetation clearance works at the end of August / beginning September 2026 and the pond creation works by the end of March 2027.

Aims and Objectives

1.10 The aims and objectives of this report is to:

- Identify and illustrate the need for the creation of these ponds;
- Identify the location and size of the ponds to be created under this planning application; and
- Highlight the need for the implementation of the remaining two phases of pond and connective habitat corridor creation and past of the overarching great crested newt mitigation strategy previously agreed with Natural Resource Wales (NRW) and Neath Port Talbot Local Authority (NPT).

Definition of Terms

1.11 For the purposes of this report, the terms 'north site' and 'southern site' are used to describe the areas shown by the red line boundaries in Figure 1, below.



Figure 1 – Location of the ponds in Phase 0

2. STATUS AND LEGISLATION

2.1 Great crested newts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), being listed in Schedule 5 of the act.

2.2 In summary, it is an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, take or injure a great crested newt;
- Deliberately capture, injure or kill great crested newts;
- Damage, destroy or obstruct a place a great crested newt uses for breeding, resting, shelter or protection or to disturb a great crested newt in such a place;
- Possess or control a great crested newt alive or dead, or any part of them, or anything derived from them
- Sell, offer for sale, advertise for sale or offer to buy a great crested newt, or a part of them or anything derived from them; and
- Deliberately disturb or deliberately take or destroy the eggs of a great crested newt.

3. POND DESIGN

Dimensions and Cross Sections

- 3.1 All seven ponds will be constructed under a GCN EPSM development licence, under the supervision of an experienced Ecological Clerk of Works, either Carola Hoskins (SK Environmental Solutions Limited Principal Ecologist – Licence No. S094217/1) and Peter Hill (License No; S094545/1) who is employed by Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC), the leading UK-based NGO specialising in the conservation of amphibian and reptile species, and for the past 12 years has been supervising the creation and restoration of pond networks for GCN across South Wales comprising well over 400 ponds.
- 3.2 The Phase 0 pond locations have been ground-truthed, to ensure that they are located in areas where the construction and future management of the ponds can be achieved. All ponds will be constructed using a 360⁰ excavator under the supervision of an experienced Ecological Clerk of Works. Pond surface area will be circa 250m² and will be profiled in line with the plan shown below which is taken directly from Freshwater Habitats Trust's Pond Creation Toolkit ensuring that both extensive shallow draw-down zones and open water areas for lekking space are created.

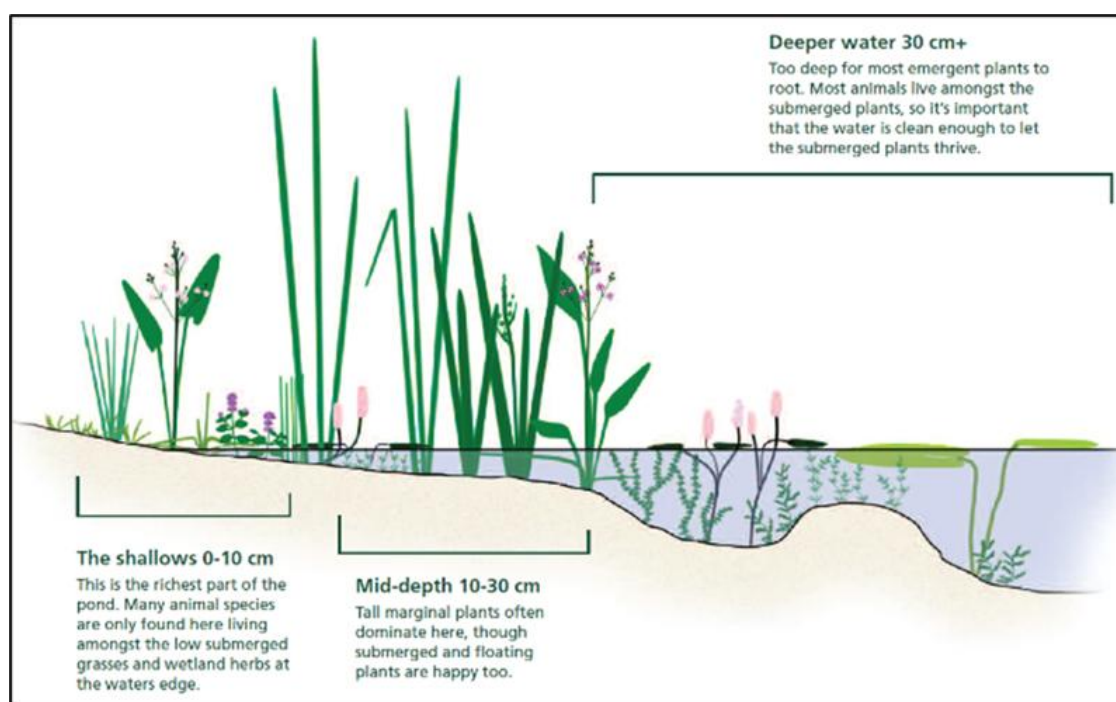


Figure 1 Indicative pond design

Pond Locations

- 3.4 Table 1 below shows the National Grid Coordinates of the centre point of each of the seven pond locations. As stated above each pond will be at 250m² surface area, have a maximum depth of 1.5m, have scalloped edges to make access and egress easy for amphibians, be in line with the design shown above taken from Freshwater Habitats Trust's Pond Creation Toolkit and the construction process will be overseen by experienced ecologists Carola Hoskins and Peter Hill.

Table 1 – Pond Location Coordinates	
Pond Reference	Grid Reference
Southern Site	
SP1	SS 70285 95350
SP2	SS 70213 95321
SP3	SS 70164 95287
SP4	SS 70129 95067
SP5	SS 70128 95013
SP6	SS 70131 94980
SP7	SS 70082 94898

Terrestrial Habitat

- 3.5 As well as the construction of seven ponds it is the aim of the EPSM licence to create a connective habitat network by means of the use of refugia and hibernacula and managed corridor away from proposed development areas which can be managed, through funding, by ARC in perpetuity. The construction of numerous refugia and hibernacula would be undertaken in line with the advice provided in Froglife – The Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook, which has been reproduced below.

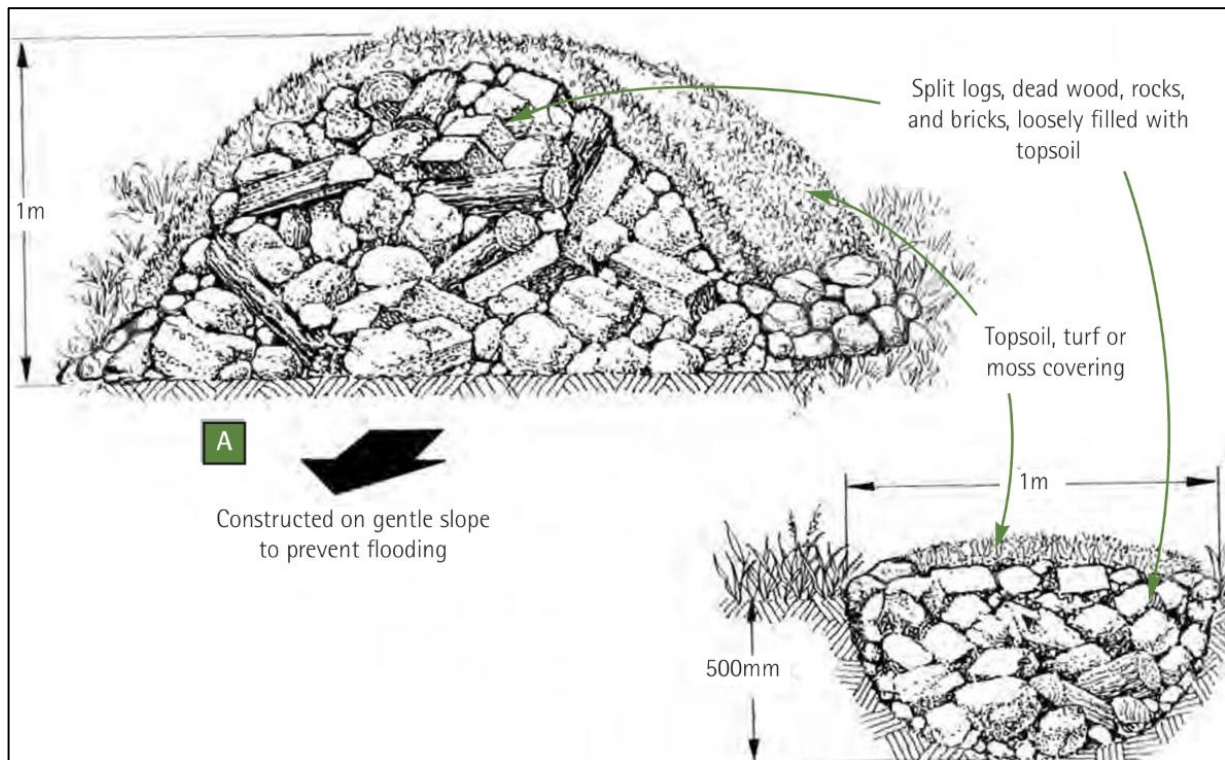


Figure 2 – Terrestrial refugia / hibernacula design

4. REFERENCES

Griffiths, R. A. (2004). Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) in Europe. *Species conservation and management*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 281-291.

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

Oldham, R. S., Keeble, J., Swan, M. J. S., & Jeffcote, M. (2000). Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*). *Herpetological Journal*, 10(4), 143-155.