

Great Crested Newt Survey

**of
Fairfield Road, Havant**

**On behalf of
Bloor Homes (Southern)**

May 2011

© James Blake Associates 2011

Job Number: JBA 11/04		Title: Great Crested Newt Survey, Fairfield Road, Havant			
Revision	Purpose	Originated	Checked	Authorised	Date
		SP	OR	OR	May 2011

CONTENTS

0	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1	INTRODUCTION.....	2
	Background to the study.....	2
	Aims and objectives	3
2	METHODS	3
3	RESULTS	4
4	EVALUATION.....	6
5	CONCLUSIONS.....	6
6	REFERENCES.....	8
7	APPENDIX: GCN SURVEY DATA.....	9

0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 0.1 James Blake Associates were commissioned by Bloor Homes to survey one pond at Fairfield Road, Havant to determine the presence/likely absence of great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*.
- 0.2 The pond had previously been surveyed by Ecological Planning and Research in 2006 when a high population of smooth newts, but no great crested newts were found.
- 0.3 Four surveys were conducted by newt-licensed ecologists between 28th March and 8th May 2011, following Natural England guidelines.
- 0.4 No great crested newts or eggs were found in the water bodies.
- 0.5 It was considered that the proposed development would not impact on great crested newts, and no further survey or mitigation is necessary.

1 INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

- 1.1 James Blake Associates were commissioned by Bloor Homes to undertake great crested newt surveys on land at Fairfield Road, Havant. Grid reference: SU 722 065 (taken from the centre of the site). The survey and report were required for a planning application for a residential housing development.
- 1.2 Great crested newts are a European protected species and as such are a material consideration for individual planning decisions under PPS9 (Planning Policy Statement 9) (ODPM, 1994).

Site description

- 1.3 The site 9ha in extent was located on the south-eastern side of Havant in Hampshire, and divided into two distinct areas: Warblington School playing fields to the east and Fairfield Infant School Outdoor Education Area to the west, which comprised an immature woodland with coarse grassland understory, and a pond. The site location is shown in Figure 1.
- 1.4 The surveyed pond was within the outdoor education area.

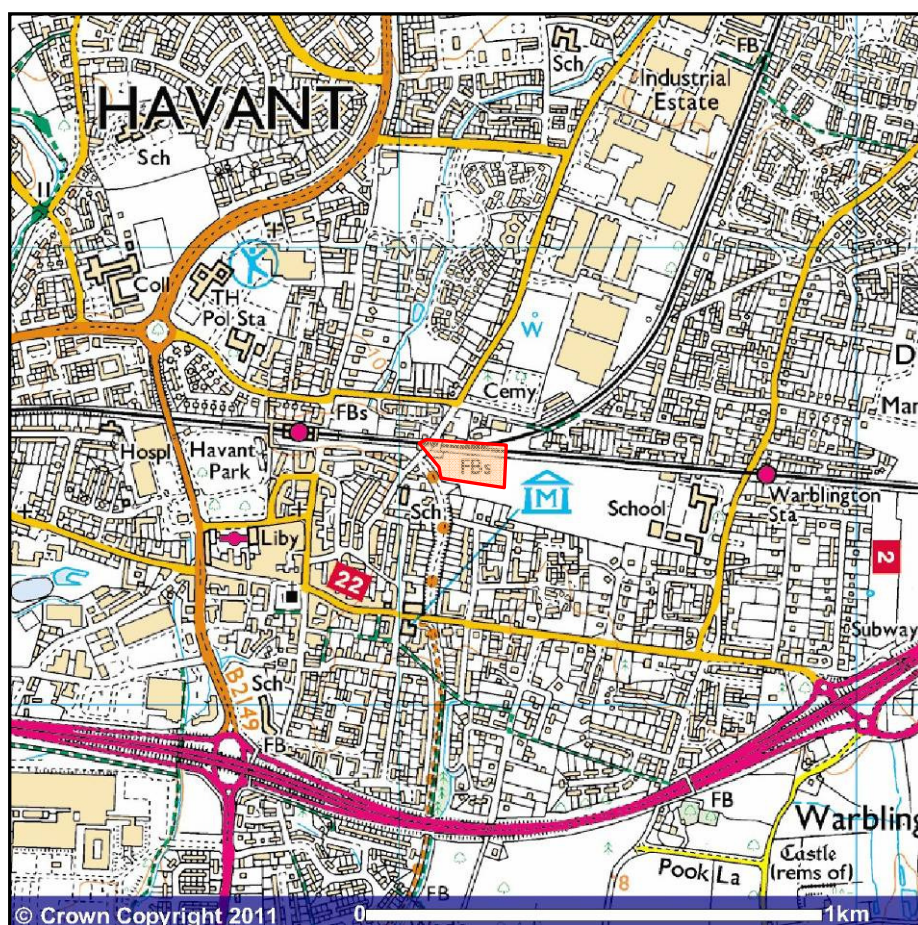


Figure 1: Ordnance Survey map of site location.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map data by permission of Ordnance Survey

© Crown Copyright.

Aims and objectives

The aims of the survey were;

- 1.5 To update a great crested newt survey undertaken by Ecological Planning and Research in 2006 (EPR 2006). To determine presence/likely absence, and if necessary a population estimate of great crested newts and to record all other amphibian species present in the water bodies (to do so, a minimum of four survey visits for presence/likely absence and a further two for population estimate are required).

- 1.6 To provide sufficient data to inform steps required for precautionary measures, compensation of habitats or mitigation, if necessary.

2 METHODS

- 2.1 Survey methodology adhered to standard techniques and designs recommended by Natural England and Froglife. A total of four surveys were undertaken on the pond on the 28th March, and the 12th, 27th of April and 8th of May 2011.

- 2.2 The following survey techniques are recommended by Natural England and Froglife (2001).

- *Torchlight surveys* using one million candle-power torches were undertaken for approximately 20 minutes per water body on each occasion. Torchlight surveying was undertaken on all four visits.
- *Pond netting* was undertaken for approximately 20 minutes per pond on each occasion. Netting was undertaken on all four visits.
- *Egg searching* for Great Crested Newt eggs was conducted for approximately 20 minutes per water body whereby submerged vegetation was checked for folded leaves. Egg searches were undertaken on all four visits.
- *Bottle trapping* whereby traps were placed around the pond edges in the evenings and checked the following mornings for great crested newts, was not undertaken due to the high risk of disturbance by the public.

- 2.3 Torchlight survey, pond netting and egg searching were conducted during each survey visit.

- 2.4 The surveys were undertaken during suitable weather conditions (mild, no or little rain and little wind) and within the optimal survey period (end of March to the end of April) following Natural England guidelines (English Nature 2001)

- 2.5 Surveys were undertaken by ecologist Odette Robson BSc (Hons) PhD MIEEM (Natural England GCN licence no. 20102804).

3 RESULTS

HSI (Habitat Suitability Index)

- 3.1 An HSI value of 0.56 was calculated for the pond, indicating that the ponds provided 'below average' quality habitat for great crested newts.

Pond description

- 3.2 The pond was approximately 21m² in size with excellent water quality. Thirty five percent of the pond was shaded by surrounding trees and vegetation. The pond also contained aquatic vegetation covering 75% of its surface, mainly yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudocorus*). The woodland surrounding the pond provides suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians, including great crested newts.



- 3.3 **Figure 2:** Great Crested Newt Survey. Approximate location of pond

Existing records

- 3.4 A data search was carried out for the Phase 1 survey (Baker Shepherd Gillespie, 2010). Records from the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre did not identify any records of great crested newts within 2km of the survey site. The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) was also accessed (May 2011) and showed records for great crested newts within the same 10km square as the site, but these were not site-specific.

Summary of survey results

- 3.5 The following is a summary of all the records from the four survey visits.

Date of Visit	Great Crested Newts	Great Crested Newt Eggs	Smooth/Palmate Newts		Other
			Torching	Netting	
28/03/2011	0	0	60+	14	0
12/04/2011	0	0	70+	20	0
27/04/2011	0	0	150+	15	0
08/05/2011	0	0	100+	23	0

- 3.6 The previous survey carried out by Ecological Research and Planning (2006) found a medium to large population of smooth newts and common frogs in the pond.

Legislation

- 3.7 Great crested newts are UK protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Great crested newts are also European protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

4 EVALUATION

- 4.1 The surveys were conducted during the optimal survey season in suitable weather conditions. No great crested newts or their eggs were found during the four survey visits.
- 4.2 Three search methods were used to assess the presence of great crested newts in the pond. Bottle trapping was not used due to the possibility of disturbance by the public. Netting, egg searching and torch surveying showed no evidence that great crested newts were using the site.
- 4.3 The site provided suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts with areas of woodland and grassland. However, lack of evidence of great crested newts in the water bodies within migrating distance of the site suggests it is highly unlikely that this species uses the site at any stage of the life-cycle.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Survey results suggest that great crested newts are not currently using the site.
- 5.2 No further survey is recommended.
- 5.3 Although the pond is scheduled for removal, a new pond will be created as part of the new development. Priming the newly created pond with water, flora and fauna from the existing pond will enhance the new pond and ensure ecological continuity between sites.
- 5.4 The new pond should be designed and managed in a way that is sensitive to wildlife:

- Selective planting or translocation with appropriate native and wildlife friendly planting is recommended.
- Gradually sloping pond edges and a variety of depths (ranging from 10cm to 100cm) will be beneficial to amphibians.
- No fish should be introduced, to maximise the benefit to native wildlife.

6 REFERENCES

Baker, Sheppherd and Gillespie (2010) *Warblington School, Havant, Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey*

Ecological Planning and Research (2006) *Warblington School, Havant – Great Crested Newt Survey*

English Nature (2001) Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

Froglife (2001) Surveying for Great Crested Newt Conservation. Advice Sheet 11.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), (1994). *Planning Policy Statement 9*. The Stationary Office (TSO), London.

7 APPENDIX: GREAT CRESTED NEWT SURVEY DATA

Table 1: GCN Survey 28/03/2011

Air temp: 4.8°C / Water temp: 8.4 °C / Turbidity: clear

Habitat	Methods	Great Crested Newts	Smooth Newts	Other
Pond 1	Torch Search	0	60+	none
	Net Search	0	14	
	Egg Search	0	0	

Water quality very good, clear, visibility to bottom. High leaf litter content on bottom of pond.

Table 2: GCN Survey 12/04/2011

Air temp: 10°C, light breeze / Turbidity: clear

Habitat	Methods	Great Crested Newts	Smooth Newts	Other
Pond 1	Torch Search	0	70+	none
	Net Search	0	20	
	Egg Search	0	Smooth newt	

Good water quality: excellent visibility. High leaf litter content and rubbish in pond.

Table 3: GCN Survey 27/04/2011

Air temp: 6°C, light wind, clear sky / Water temp: 11.2 °C / Turbidity: clear

Habitat	Methods	Great Crested Newts	Smooth Newts	Other
Pond 1	Torch Search	0	150+	none
	Net Search	0	15+	
	Egg Search	0	0	

Water quality very good, clear, visibility to the bottom. High leaf litter content on bottom of pond. Iris covers much of pond, bogbean present.

Table 4: GCN Survey 08/05/2011

Air temp: 14°C / Water temp: n/a / Turbidity: clear

Habitat	Methods	Great Crested Newts	Smooth Newts	Other
Pond 1	Torch Search	0	100+	none
	Net Search	0	23	
	Egg Search	0	0	

Yellow flag iris covers 75% of pond. Bogbean present and flowering in abundance. Water quality very good, visibility to bottom of the pond