# As of 29.09.2026 Protected Species Survey

**Padnell Grange, Waterlooville**
Great Crested Newt HSI & eDNA Survey - Summary

*Summary of Hankinson Duckett Associates report, March 2026*

## Purpose and development context

The report assesses the potential for Great Crested Newts (GCN) to be affected by the proposed redevelopment of approximately 2.82 hectares of land at Padnell Grange, off Padnell Road, Cowplain. The planning proposal is for demolition of existing buildings and construction of 90 dwellings, with upgraded access, landscaping and associated works. The survey was commissioned because previous records showed GCN within 2 km of the site, including a low population recorded in 2017-2018 in a pond about 70 m east of the site.

## Survey approach

Hankinson Duckett Associates reviewed waterbodies within 300 m of the site and carried out a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment and environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling. The HSI considers factors such as pond size and permanence, water quality, shading, fish and waterfowl presence, pond density, surrounding terrestrial habitat and aquatic vegetation. eDNA sampling detects traces of GCN DNA in pond water and is used to establish presence or likely absence.

Seven waterbodies were identified within the survey area. Accessible waterbodies were visited in May 2025, with laboratory analysis of samples undertaken by SureScreen Scientifics.

## Key findings

- **Waterbody 1:** approximately 70 m east of the site within Waterlooville Golf Course; HSI score 0.759 ('good' suitability). eDNA was positive for GCN.
- **Waterbody 2:** approximately 300 m south-east of the site; HSI score 0.687 ('average' suitability). eDNA was also positive for GCN.
- **Waterbodies 3 and 4:** dry drains at the time of survey and considered highly unlikely to support GCN.
- **Waterbody 5:** a flowing ditch, which is generally unsuitable for GCN breeding; eDNA was negative.
- **Waterbodies 6 and 7:** on-site features that were dry and considered highly unlikely to support GCN.

The site itself is described as being largely poor terrestrial habitat for GCN because much of it is well-managed grassland and developed land. However, there are smaller areas of potentially suitable terrestrial habitat, including tall ruderal vegetation, scrub and hedgerow or treeline bases. Because GCN are confirmed in nearby ponds - particularly Waterbody 1, only about 70 m away - the report concludes that occasional use of the site by GCN during their terrestrial phase is conceivable.

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## Implications for the development

The proposed development would remove or disturb some of the site's potentially suitable terrestrial habitat. Without mitigation, construction could therefore risk killing, injuring or disturbing GCN or affecting habitats used by them, which could conflict with the legal protection afforded to the species. The report concludes that development works should be covered by an appropriate Natural England licensing route.

Two routes are described: a NatureSpace District Licence, under which impacts are compensated through habitat creation and management across the wider district, or a bespoke European Protected Species (EPS) licence for the site. The report states that the applicant intends to use the District Licensing approach. If a bespoke EPS licence were pursued, a full GCN population estimate survey would first be needed to determine the scale of the population and the proportionate level of capture, exclusion and habitat mitigation required.

## Mitigation and site safeguarding

Under a bespoke EPS licence, the report sets out a precautionary approach that could include exclusion fencing, pitfall traps and artificial refuges; capture and translocation of any GCN found in affected areas to suitable receptor habitat; ecologist-supervised vegetation clearance and, if necessary, destructive searches before works proceed. The detailed effort would depend on the population estimate and agreement with Natural England.

Long-term mitigation should retain and improve terrestrial opportunities for GCN. Recommended measures include creating graded woodland/scrub/rough-grassland edge habitats, retaining or creating hedgerows and other linear habitat links, establishing species-rich meadow and rough or wet grassland, adding native trees and shrubs, and providing log, brash, grass-cutting or purpose-built hibernation/refuge features. These habitats should be secured through long-term management.

No existing waterbody is proposed to be lost, and no new breeding pond is proposed as part of the scheme. The report also recommends highway-design measures to reduce the risk of amphibians becoming trapped, such as dropped kerbs and wildlife-friendly drainage or gully features.

## Overall conclusion

The survey confirms GCN in two off-site ponds and identifies a credible possibility that individuals from those ponds occasionally use suitable parts of the development site. The report considers that, provided the appropriate licensing route and mitigation measures are implemented, the development can remain compliant with nature-conservation legislation and planning policy while maintaining opportunities for GCN and the favourable conservation status of the local population.

*Source: Hankinson Duckett Associates, Padnell Grange, Waterlooville - Great Crested Newt HSI & eDNA Survey Report, HDA ref. 1127.8, March 2026.*