

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent: 19 August 2026 16:07
To: Planning
Subject: DC/25/2114
Attachments: GREAT CRESTED NEWTS MAPS.pdf; Blank 151.pdf
Categories: Comments Received

DC/25/2114

Dear Mr Holmes

I write in response to Mr Whitby's letter of 18 August 2026 concerning the two pond locations and Great Crested Newts.

I attach two short explanatory files which I would ask you to consider carefully.

Whilst the issue of Great Crested Newts is clearly important in its own right, that is not the principal reason for sending these documents.

The wider issue is the reliability of the ecological information and conclusions being presented to you by the Ecology Co-op.

Mr Whitby's latest letter makes firm statements about the location, character and connectivity of these features and concludes that "***there are no ponds identified within close proximity to this site.***" The attached evidence demonstrates why I believe that conclusion cannot simply be accepted at face value.

This is not an isolated concern. It is yet another example in a growing series of discrepancies and questionable conclusions that we have identified within the ecological material submitted in support of this application.

My concern is therefore a very simple one:

Can the Council safely rely upon the ecological information and conclusions being provided by the Ecology Co-op when determining this application?

I appreciate that you must deal with a considerable volume of technical documentation. My purpose in continuing to bring these matters to your attention is to ensure that you are aware of the discrepancies we are identifying and, importantly, of the wider pattern they now appear to demonstrate.

I believe that pattern is now sufficiently serious that the reliability of the ecological evidence as a whole must be considered when determining what weight can reasonably be placed upon it.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

Oxcroft

Church Farm Walk

Attached two files below

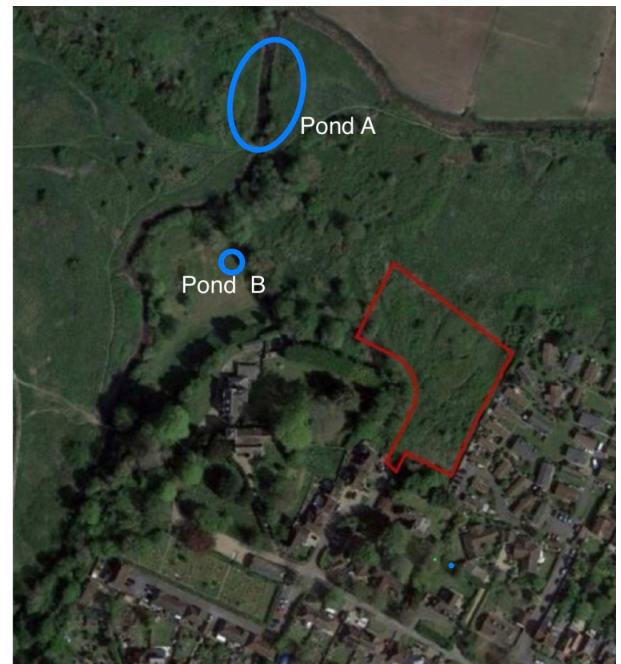
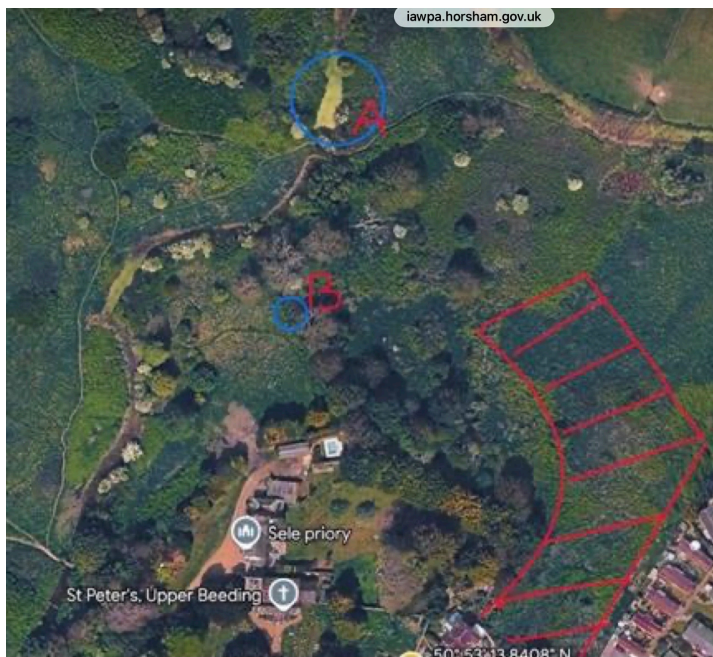
Sent from my iPad

In his correspondence dated **18 August**, Mr Whitby states:

*“Please note the indicated red hatching **does not at all** represent the extent of the proposed development site as indicated in this correspondence.”*

I therefore ask you to compare **my annotated map with the actual Fairfax site layout plan** submitted with the application.

When the true extent of the proposed development is considered, it is clear that **both ponds lie in close proximity to the site**, broadly within the range of approximately **100–200 metres**. The suggestion that the location or extent of the development somehow materially distances these ponds from it therefore requires very careful scrutiny.



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Photo 1. Pond Aa photo taken by myself which bears no resemblance to that taken of what the surveyor took of Pond A.

Photo 2. It appears that the surveyor concerned may have photographed the wrong waterbody when identifying Pond A.....she refers to herself not being able to locate a pond in the approx location of Pond Bthat is because **this is on private land of Sele Priory** and is not visible from the field.

11:42 Wed 19 Aug

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2 of 3

bordering common reed *Phragmites australis*. The size of this part of the ditch holding water has undoubtedly reached its smallest size following the prolonged drought observed this summer.

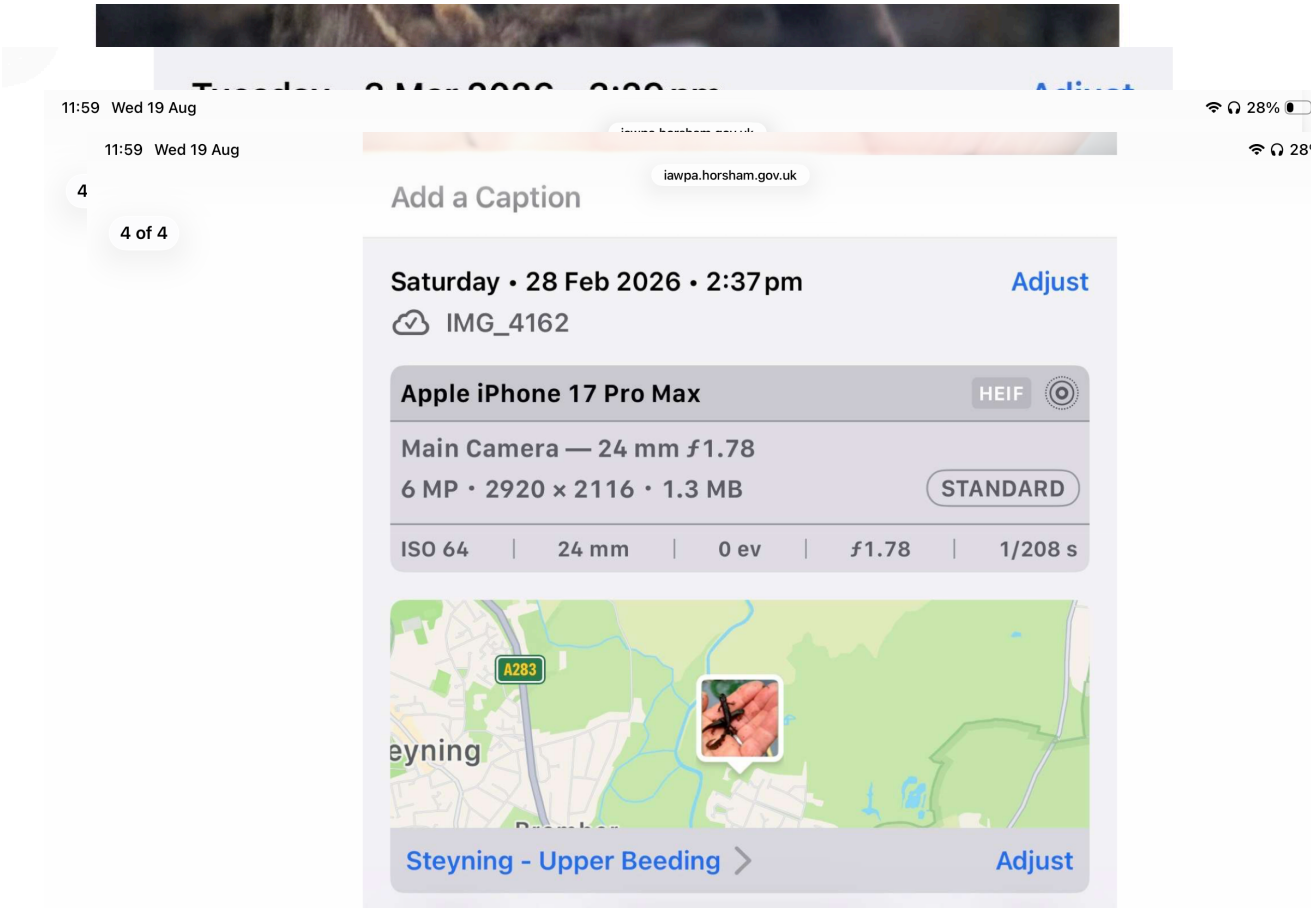


Photographs 1&2. Pond A as marked in Figure 1, with tall fringing common reed.

The location of Pond B was explored extensively, despite challenging scrub growth. Figure 2 below identified the location explored with respect to the illustrated location of Pond B. A search of this area failed to identify any waterbodies, or any natural topography that might lead to the formation of a pond (ground depressions or slopes etc.). Photographs 3-6 illustrate the landscape in this location.



Below are photographs taken in the spring of this year of smooth newts recorded very close to the entrance to the proposed development site, demonstrating that newts are present in the immediate locality despite the suggested concern regarding fish predation..



MAP 1. This is a map taken from an Eco Co Op Document marking ponds 1 and 2..

I ask.....why has a small isolated pond within the grounds of the Sele Priory been completely discounted.....is this because it is clearly on private land

MAP 2. A closer view of this Pond within the grounds of Sele Priory and disconnected from the surrounding watercourses. There therefore appears to be **no evidential basis for presuming that the pond contains fish.**

This is directly relevant to Mr Whitby's assertion that:

'its connection to the Adur makes it a highly unlikely breeding location due to fish predation.'

The mapped evidence appears to show **no such connection to the Adur**. If that is correct, the stated reason for discounting this pond as a potential breeding location — namely presumed fish predation

Church Farm, Upper Beeding – ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

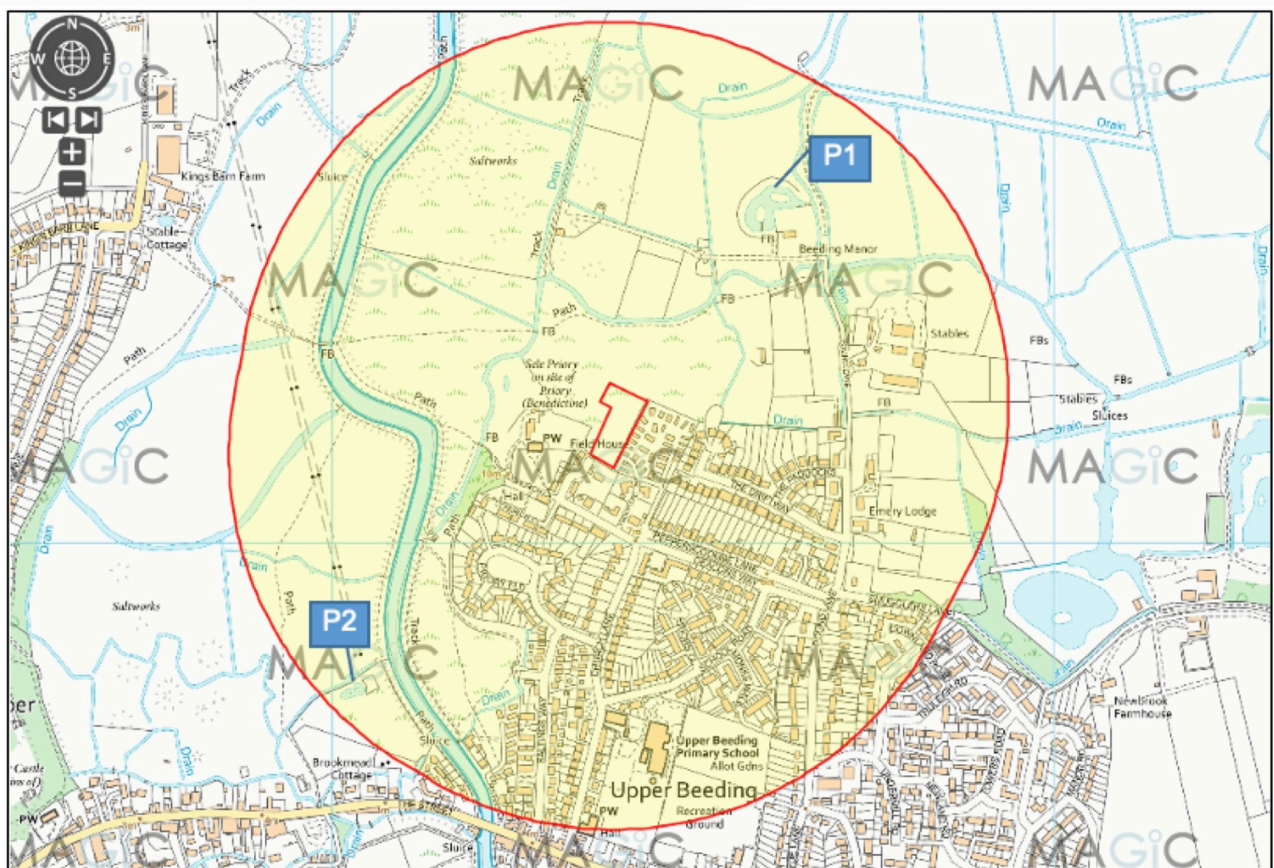


Figure 7. Ponds within 500m of the site. Image produced courtesy of Magic maps (<http://www.magic.gov.uk/>), contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0).

arising from its connection to the river — **does not stand.**



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