

[REDACTED]

From: Laura Downs <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 24 August 2026 14:29
To: Bethan.Tinning
Subject: Re: DC/25/0115 - The Hermitage Consultation

Good afternoon Bethan,

Thank you for consulting us on the above application. The applicant has provided an ecological report in the form of - *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Land at the Hermitage, RH13 0JS, EHM, 2025*, which states:

- *"There are 6 records of GCN in the local area in the provided SxBRC data."*
- *"There are no waterbodies within or adjacent to the site. From aerial imagery, there are five waterbodies potentially suitable for GCN (ponds). The status of these waterbodies is not known, although, main roads do separate these ponds from the site."*
- *"The site contains little suitable terrestrial habitat for the species, this being within the scrub on site. The potential for GCN being present is considered low."*
- Some limited precautionary measures are then laid out within the report

As highlighted by the above report, there are a number of ponds within 500m of the development site for which no further assessment has been undertaken, including a pond located 130m north of the site. Although the submitted ecological report states that there are major roads separating the ponds from the site, this is not the case, as Parthings Lane for example is a very narrow lane and would not be considered a major barrier to dispersal. The development is small scale and recently the pond located 130m away did return a negative eDNA result, however proposals will require the removal of suitable GCN habitat. Therefore whilst it may not be proportional to request further survey work, we are of the opinion that the avoidance measures included within the applicant's PEA are not robust enough to provide adequate protection to the species. We would recommend that a Precautionary Working Methods statement (PWMS) is produced by a suitably qualified ecologist and either submitted to the LPA prior to determination or secured via a compliance condition.

Best wishes,

Laura Downs (*she/her*)
District Licensing Officer (Great Crested Newts) – West Sussex

NatureSpace Partnership

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