

Great Crested Newt EPS licence for small housing development



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Background

This development involved the construction of four affordable homes for a housing association by developers DCH Construction. Rough grassland and scrub bound by broadleaved trees, hedgerows and ditches were suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts (GCN). A pond in the chosen receptor site, adjacent to the boundary of the development site, was suitable for GCN to breed.

Solution

Following initial GCN surveys, MKA Ecology obtained a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) to translocate GCN prior to the development. To comply with the licence and compensate for the loss of terrestrial habitat, MKA Ecology enhanced the receptor site prior to translocation. This involved planting native aquatic and marginal plant species, removal of trees shading the receptor pond and the installation of three artificial refugia.

Amphibian-proof fencing enabled trapping, which was successful – more than 90 GCN were moved to the receptor site. A destructive search involved the clearance of all log and rubble piles by hand, and the phased removal of vegetation under the supervision of an ecological clerk of works, to ensure no individuals were overlooked.

Outcome

Efficient and effective delivery of our services meant that the client could factor the ecological requirements on site into the project master plans, minimising delay and cost and enabling sustainable development. Opportunities to engage with the community were taken, involving local primary school children in habitat enhancement for the GCN.



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