

**BRYNRORIN
ABERMULE, NEWTOWN
POWYS**

**GREAT CRESTED NEWTS
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

FOR

MR & MRS R. JONES

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Brynrorin Farm is located at SO 141 952, approximately three miles north-east of Newtown, Powys.
- 1.2. A planning application has been prepared seeking permission to develop a field at Brynrorin Farm with a free range chicken unit (Plans 1-2). The proposed unit would be located alongside an existing unit that was granted planning permission five years ago. The fields proposed for the free range chickens associated with the new unit are currently utilised by chickens associated with the existing unit. As such there would be no increase in land given over to free range chickens; just an increase in the number of birds.
- 1.3. A number of ponds are located within 500m of the proposed chicken unit (Plan 3). Survey work undertaken in 2009 confirmed that four of these ponds support great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* (see Ecology Services report *Brynrorin, Abermule, Newtown, Powys. Great Crested Newt Survey & Mitigation Strategy for Mr & Mrs R. Jones July 2009*). The closest of these ponds is 160 metres from the proposed development site (Plan 1). A maximum count of eight great crested newts was made at this pond in 2009. The next nearest pond is located 290 metres from the proposed development site and as such is well outside the normal home range of the great crested newts that will be associated with this pond. A consultation response received from NRW has identified the presence of additional ponds in the local area. The location of these ponds is set out in *Ecology Services Great Crested Newt Updated Report dated October 2015* for clarity this additional information is reproduced in this report.
- 1.4. NRW has also requested that should planning permission be granted then a Newt Management Scheme should be produced as part of a planning condition attached to the permission. The Newt Management Scheme will be produced once planning permission has been granted. In any event a Great Crested Newt Mitigation Strategy has already been produced (see Ecology Services report *Brynrorin, Abermule, Newtown, Powys. Habitat Assessment & Great Crested Newt Mitigation Strategy for Mr & Mrs R. Jones. May 2015*).
- 1.5. NRW also noted in their consultation response that mitigation measures associated with the previous application have not been implemented. This is no longer the case and all mitigation measures set out in Ecology Services report dated July 2009 have now been implemented.
- 1.6. Recent correspondence from NRW (05.11.2015) has requested more information regarding pond locations and mitigation proposals. This report sets out this information (most of which has already been submitted in the 'Range Plan' submitted by the applicant).

2. POND LOCATIONS & ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS ON GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

- 2.1. The locations of all ponds located within 500m of the proposed development site/chicken ranging area are shown on Plan 3. Most of these ponds are outside the applicants ownership and access to these ponds has not been granted. In any event all are significantly removed from the proposed development site and chicken roaming area and as such any great crested newts that may be present in these ponds will not be impacted on by the development proposals.
- 2.2. The 'Ranging Plan' and associated information provided on the 06.07.2015 shows the proposed range of the chickens and identifies where extensive habitat enhancements have already been made. The woods and hedgerows within this area have been fenced off to allow natural regeneration and to provide terrestrial cover for great crested newts. All these fenced off areas border/adjoin land that does not form part of the existing or proposed chicken foraging area. There will be no change in the area of land set aside for foraging chickens, the new unit will utilise existing fields that are already used by chickens. See Plan 1
- 2.3. There will be no direct damage to terrestrial habitat that could be used by great crested newts. Extensive areas of woodland and hedgerows have been fenced off from sheep and chickens. As such no direct impact from predation by chickens is anticipated.
- 2.4. There will be no adverse impacts on the local water bodies used by great crested newts. Only clean water runoff from the roof of the chicken unit will be directed towards water courses. In any event the closest great crested newt breeding pond is 160m away and as such there is most unlikely to be any significant water run-off into this area as rain water will be absorbed by the surrounding ground.

3. MITIGATION PROPOSALS

3.1. **Plan 4** - Existing ranging area of the chickens.

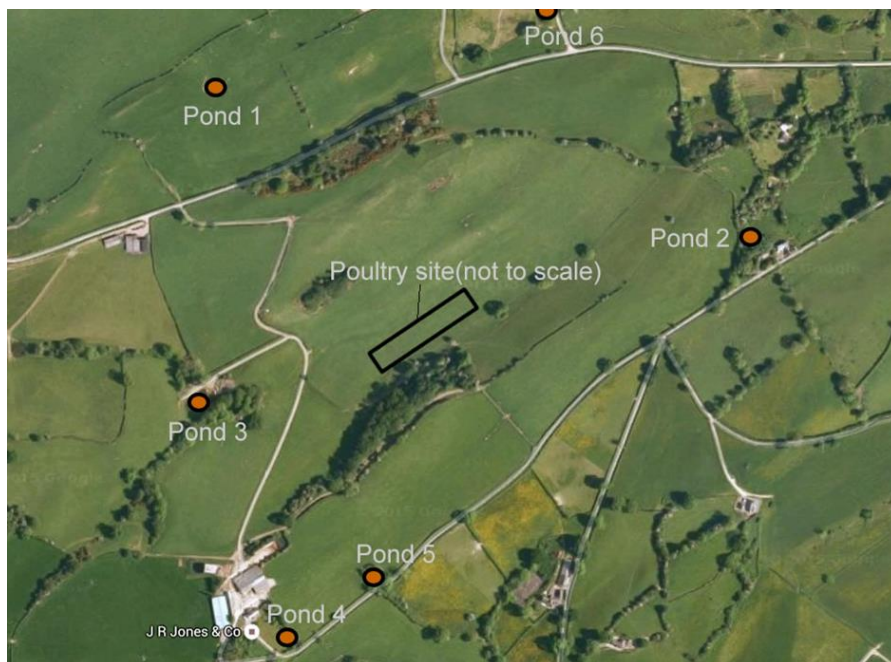


3.2. **Plan 5** - Ranging area for the proposed unit (no actual change in area used by chickens just an increase in the number of chickens). Habitat areas A, B and C are covered in the points below and set out mitigation proposals, some of which have already been undertaken.



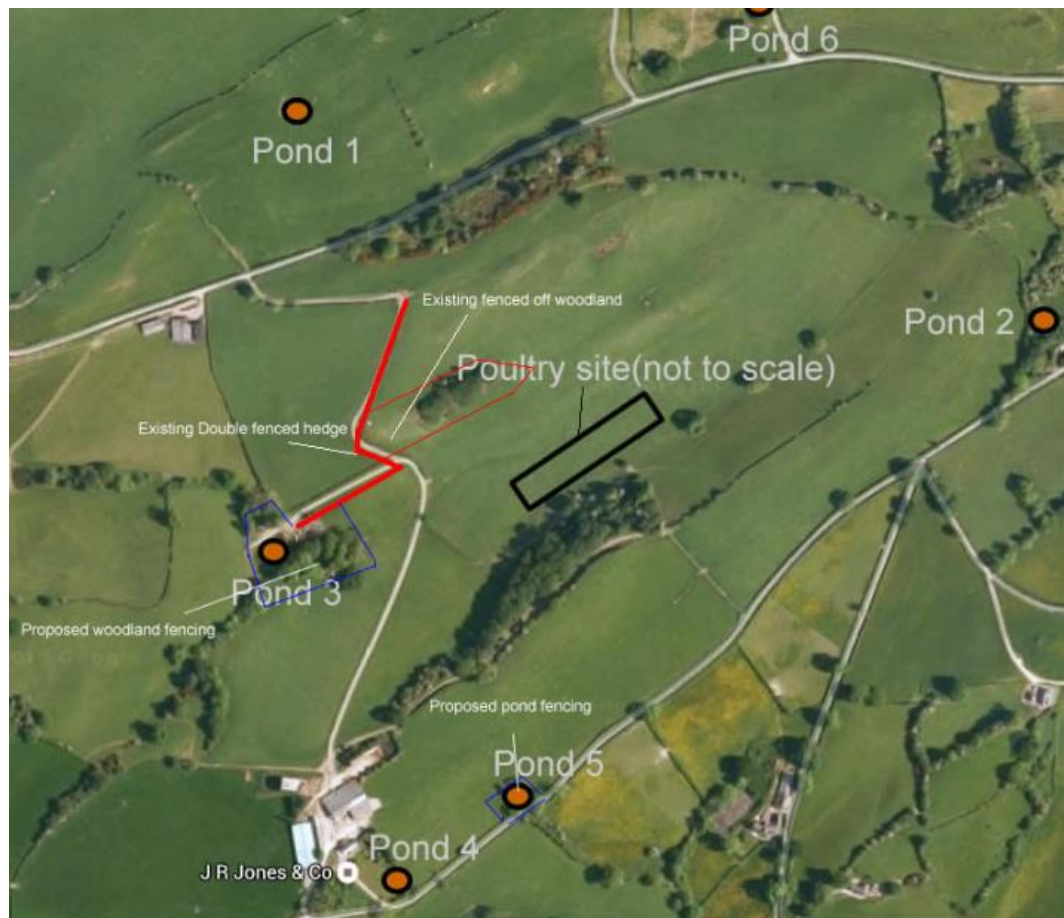
- 3.3. A - Fencing off of pond 5 at a distance of 5m from the pond edge and to connect to the hedgerows along the road on both sides of the pond. This would avoid access for ranging chickens and allow the growth of a vegetation around the pond.
- 3.4. B – This area has been fenced off as a part of mitigation in 2009 and will remain to be fenced off from ranging chickens.
- 3.5. C - Fencing off of the woodland around pond 3 to include the pond and to allow it to be managed as a non-ranging and non-grazing area.

3.6. **Plan 6** – Mitigation for ponds under ownership of the applicant.



- 3.7. Pond 1 – This pond was dug out and restored in 2010 as required by a previous planning condition. Establishment of suitable aquatic vegetation in the pond for use by great crested newts (e.g. *Myosotis scorpioides*) will be carried out by ecological clerk of works in spring 2016 (if vegetation has not already colonised naturally).
- 3.8. Pond 2 – Not owned by the applicant.
- 3.9. Pond 3 – The pond and surrounding woodland will be fenced off. This will create new great crested newt terrestrial habitat.
- 3.10. Pond 4 – This small garden pond has become silted up since 2009. Overgrown vegetation (mainly grass) will be removed by hand in the winter of 2015/2016. The work will be undertaken under the guidance of the appointed ecological clerk of works.
- 3.11. Pond 5 – Pond 5 will be fenced off at a distance of 5m from the pond edge and will connect to the hedgerows along the road on both sides of the pond. This would avoid access for ranging chickens and allow the growth of a vegetation around the pond. Overhanging vegetation that has grown back since the 2009 mitigation shall be removed under guidance of the ecological clerk of works
- 3.12. Pond 6 – not owned by applicant.

- 3.13. **Plan 7** – showing existing hedgerows that have been double fenced, fenced off woodland, and proposed woodland fencing.



4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1. Great crested newts will not be impacted on by the development proposals because the development site comprises poor quality habitat that lacks cover and refuge opportunities. The development proposals will not impact on the nearby great crested newt breeding ponds or terrestrial habitat.
- 4.2. There will be no loss of terrestrial great crested newt habitat. The fields that the chickens will utilise are already used by chickens associated with an existing unit.
- 4.3. Extensive mitigation and enhancement measures have been proposed/already undertaken. This includes the fencing off of woods and hedgerows as well as digging out silted up ponds. This will have benefited great crested newts and a wide range of other wildlife.
- 4.4. Further habitat enhancement measures are not considered necessary. Because of the relative close proximity of a great crested newt breeding pond a precautionary approach will be adopted to ensure newts from this pond are not harmed at the construction stage of the development (as set out in Ecology Services report dated May 2015).
- 4.5. Given that there will be **no direct impacts on great crested newts or their habitat** an **EPS licence is not required**. Reasonable avoidance measures will be undertaken at the construction stage of the development as set out in Ecology Service's previous report. It is worth noting that **the previous application from 2009 was not deemed to require an EPS licence**. There will be **no incidental disturbance to great crested newts or their habitat as a result of the development proposals – just a net gain in terrestrial and breeding habitat**.

Plan 1

Location of closest pond and location of proposed unit alongside existing unit.



Plan 2

Location of land proposed for new free range chicken unit. Chickens associated with the existing unit are currently present in the proposed area.

No change over the current situation except an increase in the number of chickens.
All adjoining woods and hedgerows have been fenced off.



