



TECHNICAL NOTE:

• ECOLOGY WALKOVER

SITE NAME & ADDRESS	Land to the east of 11 Glen Avenue, Knowle Green, PR3 2ZQ
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL	Proposed horse track
PLANNING REFERENCE	3/2026/0627
DATE	26 August 2026

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Knight Sky Ecology Ltd was commissioned to provide ecological consultancy services to support the proposed development of a horse exercise track within land to the east of 11 Glen Avenue.

The commission comprised an ecology walker (including desk study and site-based assessment). The primary aim of the ecology walkover and this document is to:

- provide an ecological baseline for the site;
- identify any potential ecological constraints associated with the proposed work; and
- outline the mitigation measures required to avoid potential impacts to relevant ecological features.

Many UK wildlife species and habitats are protected by law and these important ecological features form a key consideration for defining the scope of this assessment. In addition, biodiversity protection and enhancement is underpinned by national and local planning policies.

2. METHODS

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) mapping tool (Available from: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) was used to search for ecological information contained within the following datasets:

- Statutory designated sites for nature conservation (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) including SSSI Impact Risk Zones - to assess for likely impacts on SSSI.
- Priority habitats (as listed within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) within a 250m radius.

Geospatial datasets for Biological Heritage Sites and other relevant ecological features were view via:

- [LERN Environment Information Map](#).

Basic initial information about the site and surrounding area was also obtained from Google Earth and Ordnance Survey maps in order to provide further contextualised information to the site survey findings.



SITE SURVEY

General Walkover and Habitat Survey

A site walkover was undertaken on 14 August 2026 by Ryan Knight MCIEEM (Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management).

The aim of the site visit was to gather sufficient baseline information of the habitats within the site and to identify any habitats or features of potential ecological significance.

In addition, the site visit included a search for incidental evidence of protected / notable species and an assessment of the sites potential to support protected / notable species.

3. RESULTS

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Nationally / Internationally Designated Sites

There are no SSSI within 2km and the Impact Risk Zones for SSSI (SSSI) indicate that the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on any terrestrial SSSI in the wider area.

Locally Designated Sites

The nearest Biological Heritage Site (BHS) comprises Hoardsell Meadow 450m north. This site is designated for its important grassland habitat.

Priority & Irreplaceable Habitats

There are no priority or irreplaceable habitats within the site. Excluding hedgerows, the nearest priority habitat comprises deciduous woodland located 90m west. This woodland is also listed within the Ancient Woodland Directory.

Lancashire Ecological Network

The application site is not within the ecological network.

Waterbodies

One pond was identified to be 15-20 m from the site and a second pond was identified 170 m south.

Habitats

Photos which provide a general overview of the site and supporting data for the assessment are provided in Appendix A.

The entire area to the east of the cottages along Glen Avenue comprises a series of land parcels that have been sub-divided by temporary and permanent fencing for equestrian purposes. The land supports two horse exercise arenas, grazing land, areas of hardstanding, small shelters, muck middens and feeding areas. The proposed track is located within a small field that was heavily used by horses at the time of survey. An existing fenced-off exercise track runs around the field and comprised bare ground due to intensive use. Further inward, beyond the bare ground margins, the grassland formed a heavily grazed, rye-grass-dominated sward with very few forbs. Occasional creeping buttercup, broad-leaved plantain and white clover were noted.

The field is bound by fencing and a native hedgerow with trees along the south-west boundary, and by two mature trees on the south-east side. The surrounding landscape is largely agricultural, characterised by a network of pasture fields bounded by hedgerows and tree lines. Cowley Brook is located approximately 95 m west of the site.



Great Crested Newts

A pond is located approximately 15–20 m north-east of the proposed track. Despite the very dry, hot summer, the pond retained water at the time of survey. The margins supported spiked rush, reed canary grass and yellow flag iris, with three alder trees present along the edges. The shallow water (<40 cm) was choked with an unidentified aquatic plant. The pond is surrounded by a managed, improved grassland. There are no major barriers to movement between the pond and the application site.

In terms of its suitability to support breeding great crested newt populations, the pond is categorised as having 'Good' suitability when assessed against relevant Habitat Suitability Index criteria.

Table 1.1. Pond suitability score

Sl ₁	Location	Zone A
		1
Sl ₂	Pond Area	500-700m ²
		1
Sl ₃	Pond Drying	Never Dries
		0.9
Sl ₄	Water Quality	Moderate
		0.67
Sl ₅	Shade	0-60%
		1
Sl ₆	Fowl	Minor
		0.67
Sl ₇	Fish	Possible
		0.67
Sl ₈	Ponds	5
		0.75
Sl ₉	Terrestrial Habitat	Poor
		0.33
Sl ₁₀	Macrophytes	96-100%
		0.8
Product		0.053596
HSI		0.7463
Suitability		Good

It can be confirmed that no Granted European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences or survey licence returns for great crested newts were present within a 2 km radius. The pond could also support priority species such as common toad.

Other Protected and Notable Species

- There were no structures or trees with suitability to support roosting bats immediately within or adjacent to the site.
- The proposed works do not require removal of the existing hedgerow or mature trees, which provide potential nesting bird habitat.
- The site presents unsuitable terrain for badger setts and no evidence of badger was observed.
- The site conditions were unsuitable to support reptiles.
- The site is unlikely to provide refuge habitat for hedgehog.
- There were no watercourses with suitability to support otter or water vole within 50 m.

Based on the data obtained, no other ecological constraints are likely to be encountered. This is due to the likely absence of certain species from the site, or because it has been assessed that the proposed works will not significantly affect the distribution or abundance of any such species, nor result in actions that may be in breach of the relevant legislation.



4. EVALUATION AND SUMMARY

Designated Sites

No direct impacts on designated sites are anticipated, and no ecological pathway has been identified by which the proposed works would result in significant effects on any identified designated sites.

Priority Habitats & Irreplaceable Habitats

No priority or irreplaceable habitats will be affected by the proposal.

Watercourses

There does not appear to be any functional connectivity between the proposed development site and Cowley Brook. No further consultation or mitigation is advised.

Habitats

The habitats to be affected are limited to modified grassland which is in a poor ecological condition. The loss of grassland does not present a significant constraint to the proposal.

Great Crested Newt (GCN)

Great crested newts (GCN) are afforded strict protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site (pond) or resting place (suitable terrestrial habitat) of GCN.

It cannot be confirmed whether GCN are present or absent within the pond, as the eDNA testing window (15 April–30 June) had passed at the time of survey.

Although the adjacent pond provides potentially suitable breeding habitat, the application area itself is dominated by heavily grazed and intensively managed grassland, bare ground and existing equestrian infrastructure. There is no cover, refuge habitat or undisturbed terrestrial habitat within the development footprint. Consequently, the suitability of the application area as a terrestrial resting habitat is considered very low.

Overall, it is considered highly unlikely that GCN would be present within the application site, and the development proposal therefore presents a very low risk of impacting GCN. It is advised that the proposal would not constitute 'damage to a resting site', and that good-practice mitigation measures can be implemented to address the very low residual risk, as outlined in Section 5.

This assessment and the mitigation measures in Section 5 are considered proportionate to the risk posed by the development plans detailed within the planning application.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

GCN – PRECAUTIONARY WORKING MEASURES

- Before works commence, a suitably qualified ecologist should provide a toolbox talk to the contractors in order to explain the potential presence of GCN, their legal protection, roles and responsibilities, the proposed method of working, basic identification of GCN and procedures should GCN be found.



- A suitably qualified ecologist will undertake a precautionary hand search of areas of suitable refuge habitat immediately prior to works. If GCN are encountered, works will cease and the ecologist will advise on the appropriate course of action.
- Stored materials (that might act as temporary resting places) should be raised off the ground, e.g. on pallets.
- If GCN are encountered, the construction operative must stop work and contact a suitably experienced ecologist who will travel to site and advise on the required steps to comply with the legislation.
- If other amphibians are encountered, works should cease locally and the appointed ecologist should be contacted for advice.



APPENDIX A: PHOTOS

Photos 1a – 1c
Various views of
site.





Photo 2.
Pond to north-
east.





APPENDIX B: RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Legislation relating to European Protected Species (e.g. bats, otter, great crested newt)

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to sale, possession and control of wild animals listed in Schedule 5.

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal listed as a European Protected Species;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species in such a way as to be likely:
 - to impair their ability:
 - i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or;
 - ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate, or;
 - to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
 - Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal; or,
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to possession, control sale and exchange of an EPS. Great crested newt, otter and several species of bat are listed as a priority species under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.