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Great Crested Newt eDNA Report

**Former Liberty Steel Works, Corporation Road, Newport,
NP19 4XE**

Grid Ref: ST 3367 8473

Operation of Modular AI Factories

Client: Valencia Waste LTD
Issue Date: 2nd June 2026

Surveys Conducted: May 2026

1 Introduction

Environmental Business Solutions (EBS) was commissioned in May 2026 by Valencia UK to conduct eDNA analysis of ponds within 250m of the aforementioned site in view of possible future change of use at The Former Liberty Steel Works, Corporation Road, Newport, NP19 4XE (Grid Ref: ST 3367 8473). In all 5 Ponds were recorded within 250m of the proposed site, all other mapped water bodies were found to be dry.

An eDNA analysis of the 5 ponds was required to establish whether Great Crested Newts (GCN) are present in the surrounding areas and if confirmed, discuss the likelihood of presence onsite in their terrestrial phase.

2 Background Information

HSI surveys were conducted by EBS on all 5 ponds in May 2026 and the report submitted in June 2026. The site is located at National Grid Reference ST 3367 8473 and forms part of the Former Liberty Steel works. The site consists entirely of spoil deposited from the former steel and aluminum workings. The site itself is approximately 0.7ha. The only vegetation is sporadic small patches of young Birch Scrub.

There are 5 water bodies within 250m of the perimeter of the proposed site. A PEA was conducted and reported in March 2026. A desk study was undertaken that included a search of biological data held for the Site. There are no records of GCN within the search area.

This letter aims to detail the methods and results of the eDNA surveys of ponds 1-5, assess any likely impacts of the proposals on GCN in light of results and provide recommendations for mitigation methods if required and where necessary.

3 Great Crested Newt Legislation

2.1 The Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) receives full protection under Section 5 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, and are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is illegal to intentionally kill, injure or capture GCNs or intentionally, deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy their breeding and resting places, or obstruct access to their place of shelter or protection.

- Deliberate disturbance of any protected species as;
 - a) To impair their ability:
 - i. To survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;
 - ii. In the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate³
 - b) To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Deliberate taking or destroying of the eggs of a protected species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place
- Keeping, transporting, selling, exchanging or offering for sale whether live or dead or of any part thereof

4 Methodology for eDNA analysis

The eDNA survey was undertaken by **Mr William Gaudie BSc Hons (Wildlife Conservation) MCIEEM**, Senior ecologist, (Survey License number: **WML CL08 Level 1**) on 5th June 2023. The weather conditions at the time of the survey were intermittent cloud but warm, with good visibility, with an approximate high temperature of 19°C. All survey work has been completed by William Gaudie.

Ponds 1-5 were each sampled using eDNA sampling kits procured from SureScreen Scientifics Ltd. The sampling method followed accepted Natural England approved guidelines: Technical Advice Note WC1067 "Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt". Following the collection of the samples they were stored in a cool, dark place for approx. 12 hours and were dispatched by next day delivery to SureScreen Scientifics Ltd, for laboratory analysis. SureScreen Scientifics Ltd follow Technical Advice Note WC1067 and are listed as a quality provider of this service by Natural England.

5 eDNA Results

Laboratory results show that the Sample Integrity Check (SIC), Degradation Check (DC) and Inhibition Check (IC) all passed. This indicates that the reliability of the test results is not in question. During laboratory analysis, no positive replicates were detected. Therefore, the result of the eDNA survey is negative and GCN are considered likely to absent from the surveyed water bodies. A full breakdown of results is included in Appendix 4.

6 Conclusions

The eDNA results confirms the likely absence of GCN from the site and immediate surrounding areas. The sampling was comprehensive and the results provide a robust conclusion. All results from ponds 1-5 were negative, therefore, further surveys for this species are not required. No constraints to the proposed potential future change of use have been identified regarding GCN now or in the near future. In the very unlikely event of GCN being encountered during development works, then works must cease immediately and a professional ecological consultant must be contacted.

Appendix 1-Report Limitations and Conditions

This report refers, within the limitations stated, to the condition of the Site at the time of the surveys being undertaken. There are no guarantees that there will not be future changes in the condition of the Site.

This report has been prepared for the sole use of the client, for the purposes described. No extended duty of care to any third party is implied or inferred. Any third party utilising information contained within this documents do so at their own risk.

EBS has prepared this report for the stated purposes and it should not be used for any other purposes without reference to EBS. Further reassessment maybe required should another end use arise. It is noted that guidelines, legislation and practices may change and improve in future, and so reassessment may be required at such time as deemed necessary.

The accuracy of any map extracts cannot be guaranteed. It is possible that different conditions existed onsite between various map surveys appended.

This report may express and opinion on the possible presence of features based on visual, verbal or published evidence. However, this is for guidance only and no liability can be expressed for its accuracy.

Appendix 2

Fig 1. Site in wider context



Fig 2. Map of sampled Ponds 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 within 250m of site.



Appendix 3 - Technical data