

# Habitat creation scheme for great crested newts

## FACT SHEET FOR LANDOWNERS



September 2019

### District Licensing for newts – how does it work?

From February 2018, developers in the South Midlands (see map overleaf) are able to speed up the planning application process and save money by choosing to pay into a great crested newt compensation fund, rather than going through the normal lengthy processes of newt surveys and mitigation. This is part of a new Government-approved approach to the conservation of great crested newts called District Licensing.

The **Newt Conservation Partnership** uses the funds from developers to create and manage high quality habitat for great crested newts, including both ponds and terrestrial habitat. Landowners receive an **annual payment** to maintain the ponds and the terrestrial habitat (the 'compensation sites') in the long-term. For further information about the whole scheme, visit NatureSpace here:

[www.naturespaceuk.com](http://www.naturespaceuk.com).

**The Newt Partnership are now looking for newt compensation sites across the South Midlands (see map of area overleaf).**



*Clean water pond created by the Newt Partnership in 2018 (© Dr Pascale Nicolet)*



*Great crested newt (© Pete Case)*

### What kind of compensation sites?

Sites which already have newts nearby (up to 1km) are best, but good sites without newts could be used to receive animals moved from development areas. New ponds should have an unpolluted water source, be fish free, and generally 400-800 m<sup>2</sup> in surface area. We can also restore 'lost' ponds, or manage existing ponds to make them better for newts, for example by managing trees, removing fish or re-profiling margins.

The habitat around the ponds needs to be suitable for newts because they spend most of their adult life on land, only returning to ponds to breed. Good newt habitat includes woodland, scrub or rough grassland. A good hedge network is also important to allow newts to move about the landscape. **Good locations for compensation sites include wet areas on heavy clay land - often poor for farming.**

### Who pays for habitat creation and site management in the longer term?

All the costs of habitat creation and management are fully funded by the Newt Partnership. Participating landowners sign a 5-year rolling

management agreement, which can be renewed for at least a 25-year period. The agreement sets out **annual payments to compensate for any income lost and to cover management costs.** The rate of annual payments to landowners is decided on a site by site basis. Newt Partnership staff will visit the site once a year for monitoring, and to assess the need for management.



*Pond creation in progress (© Dr Pascale Nicolet)*

### What if you don't want the ponds anymore after they are created?

The agreement between landowners and the Newt Partnership is **reviewed every 5 years**, at which time landowners can opt out of the scheme completely.

### What if you want to sell the land where ponds have been created or managed?

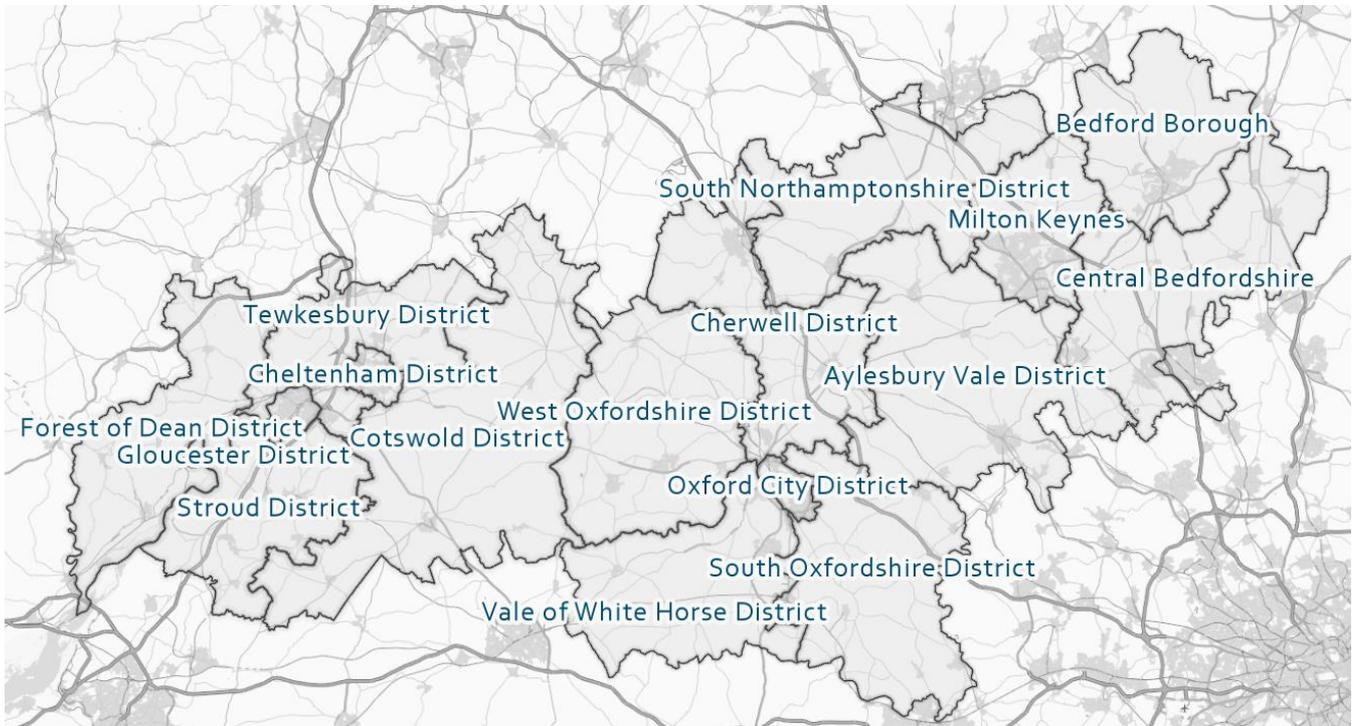
There are **no restrictions** on selling land which contain newt compensation sites, as long as the buyer takes on the scheme for the remaining period

of the agreement. If this is not the case, then the annual fee paid so far under the 5-year agreement may need reimbursing.

### Will the presence of great crested newts affect farming or other activities on your landholding as a whole?

**No.** The purpose of this new approach is to ensure that newts are thriving across the South Midlands as a whole, and unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions are reduced. A thriving population of great crested newts will be viewed as a positive sign of successful land management.

### Where do we work?



#### CONTACT US



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