



Kent Sussex Ecology Ltd
3 Sussex View
Ramslye Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN4 8LR

26.02.2024 (updated 05.06.2024)

Condition discharge document for Gravesham Borough Council application 20231115

INTRODUCTION

As part of approved Gravesham Borough Council application 20231115 (Mid Kent Golf Club), condition three stipulates the following:

No development shall take place (including any ground works or vegetation clearance) until a precautionary method statement for protected species (e.g., reptiles and nesting birds) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The content of the method statement shall be produced by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and through liaison with the construction.

The sections below detail the method statement for protected species during the construction phase of the development. The author is a qualified (BSc) and CIEEM-accredited ecologist with over 15 years of experience in the field of ecology. It is considered that the agreed approach for both reptiles and breeding birds is sufficient to allow the discharge of condition three.

REPTILE PRECAUTIONARY MITIGATION MEASURES

All species of reptile are afforded protection against killing and injury under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are listed as priority species under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. As such, the following precautionary mitigation approach will be enacted to ensure reptiles are not killed or injured during construction:

- Any required clearance of tall grassland (>150mm high) with potential to support reptiles will be undertaken in two stages, with a first cut to 150mm;
- 48 hours later, following a fingertip search by an ecologist, the arisings will be carefully removed using hand tools, looking for the presence of any reptiles within the vegetation as it is removed. Any reptiles found will be caught by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist, and moved to suitable habitat;
- Once the arisings have been removed from the cut area, the vegetation can be cut to ground level. This will happen shortly after the removal of arisings to prevent the grass regrowing and again becoming suitable for reptiles;
- Vegetation clearance will only be carried out during the period March to October in suitable weather conditions for reptiles to be active (temperatures above 9°C, dry conditions and low wind);
- Vegetation clearance will be carried out using handheld equipment;



- Vegetation will be cut so as not to leave insular patches of vegetation where reptiles can get trapped, and in a way that allows reptiles to move into adjacent areas of long vegetation without having to break cover;
- Where ground works are required, any holes or fissures discovered following grass clearance, or the removal of any scrub/tree roots, will be undertaken carefully under Ecological Clerk of Works supervision using an excavator with a toothed bucket or a handheld spade (depending on the area of habitat requiring a destructive search). Firstly, the top few centimetres of the ground should be removed, to expose reptiles sheltering in crevices just below the surface. Following this, larger and deeper excavations can be made, concentrating on areas which afford shelter to reptiles, such as tree stumps and buried rubble. Particular care needs to be taken when emptying the bucket in case any reptiles are dug up in the spoil. Any reptiles found will be caught by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist, and moved to suitable habitat;
- Once vegetation has been cut to ground level, it will be kept short (<100mm) for the duration of construction to prevent reptiles returning to the area;
- A suitably qualified and experienced ecologist will be contacted for advice if any reptiles are discovered during works;
- Construction materials will be kept on raised pallets for the duration of construction to avoid reptiles using them for basking/sheltering, and;
- During the construction phase, any trenches and excavations will be covered overnight and/or escape routes provided to prevent reptiles from being harmed or becoming trapped. Excavations will be checked each morning to ensure reptiles (or other terrestrial wildlife) have not become trapped.

BREEDING BIRDS PRECAUTIONARY MITIGATION MEASURES

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) makes it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird and to take damage or destroy the nest, while being built or in use.

Any work to vegetation that is suitable nesting habitat for birds, i.e., the scrub and small trees, should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to August, inclusive). If vegetation needs to be removed during the breeding bird season, it is recommended that an experienced ecologist inspect the vegetation prior to works. If nesting birds are found to be present, works cannot take place until after the young are fully fledged.

Luke Wallace (Director/Principal Ecologist) BSc ACIEEM
Kent Sussex Ecology Ltd