

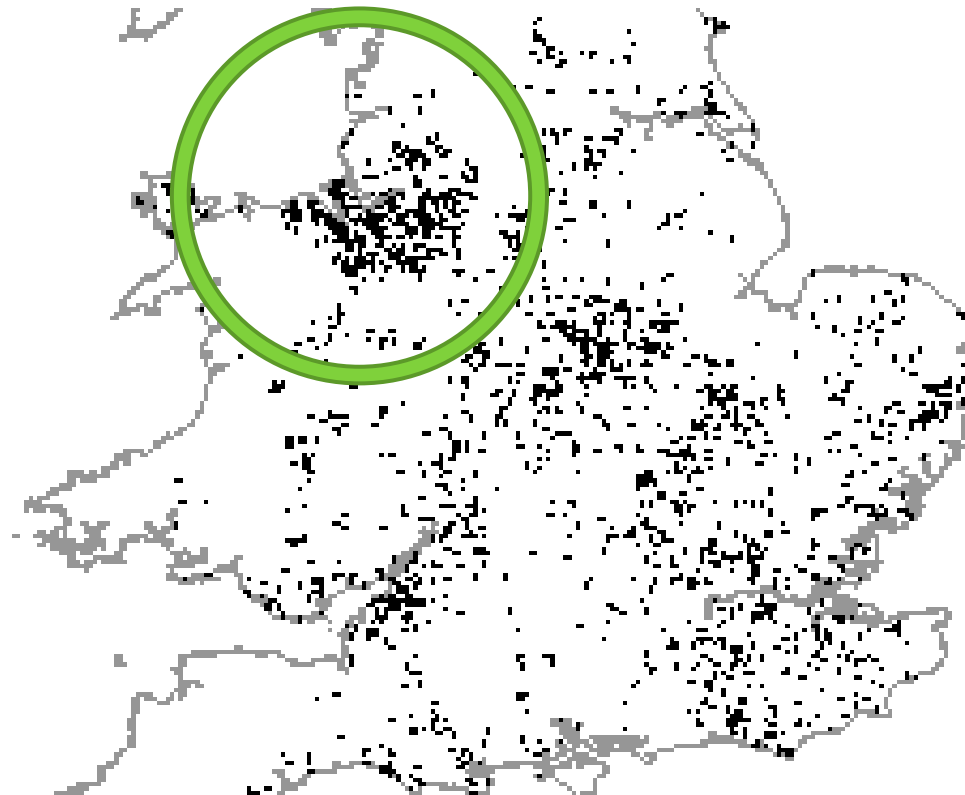
# IN FOR THE LONG HAUL: MANAGEMENT IN PERPETUITY FOR THE GREAT CRESTED NEWT

Kylie Jones, NEWWildlife

# North East Wales – development then and now

- E.g. While population growth has slowed in many areas, Flintshire's population density has risen in the last 25 years
- A growing economy in last quarter of a century – housing and industrial development, also increasing waste requiring increased landfill capacity
- Post-industrial legacy: quarrying, marl pits, lead mining, brick works, collieries, gas works, clay holes, inert landfill sites ... Sites for modern developments, and perfect for the Great Crested Newt!

# North East Wales – heartland of the GCN (image from NBN Gateway)



# Controversial ...



## GCN as means of halting unbridled development plans

- Development threat to rare/ protected species/ habitats and green spaces
- Development felt detrimental to area: newts often brought into debate

## GCN as a block to much needed economic development

- De-allocation of land for wildlife in the UDP/ equivalent
- Refusal of planning permissions/ reduction of % of developable land on plot
- Cost of surveys, mitigation and compensation may dent profit margins (70 grand a newt!!!!???)

# So you've got newts ...

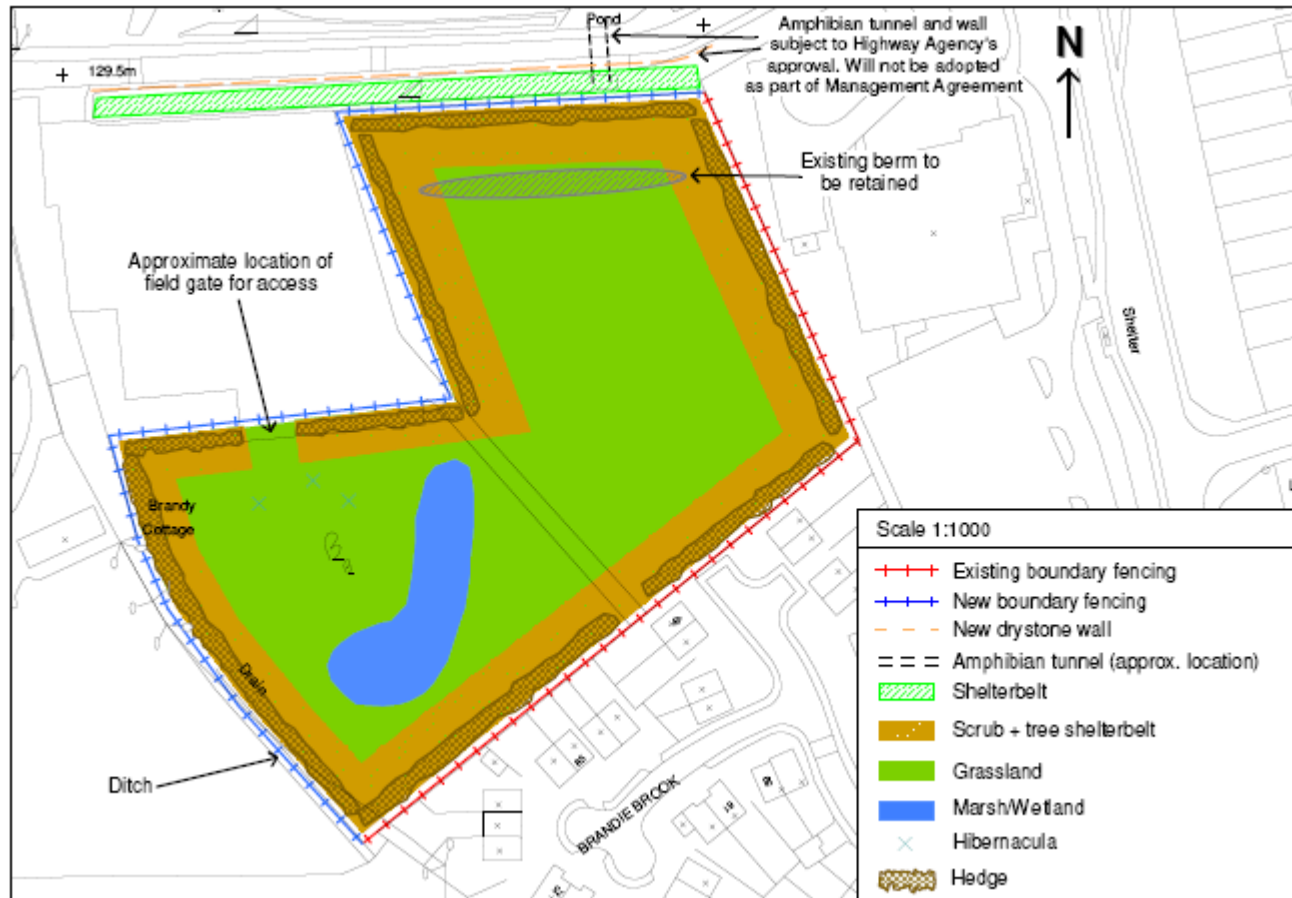
## Mitigation

- ❑ Measures to prevent harm to GCN during development
- ❑ Newt fencing
- ❑ Trapping
- ❑ Translocation
- ❑ Seasonal scheduling of works


## Compensation

- ❑ Provision of equivalent or better habitat than that lost to the development (either within the site or by purchasing an adjacent area)
- ❑ Securing the favourable conservation status of the translocated/ affected population in the long term

# Compensation



# But how did we get here?

- 
- The system in North East Wales didn't come fully formed/ on a plate.
  - It evolved through the pioneering work of local wildlife campaigners, local enforcement agencies, planners, developers ...
  - And relies on the presence of a body/ bodies with expertise in long term site management

# From tiny acorns

- ▶ NEWWildlife began life as a group of concerned residents in Connah's Quay who organised themselves to form the 'Deeside Urban Wildlife Group'.
- ▶ Rapid development threatened to wipe out green space in the Llwyni area of the town. Original plans left no room for wildlife among a mass of houses, and would have put a major road through Wepre Park.
- ▶ The campaigning of local residents such as Pip and Tony Perry led to the recognition of the area as important habitat for badgers and the protected Great Crested Newt. Part of the area was also special for its semi-natural ancient woodland.



# Deeside Urban Wildlife Group founded 1986



- ▶ Tactics: protests
- ▶ Lobbying councillors
- ▶ Obtaining press coverage
- ▶ Identifying special wildlife features through research programme 1992
- ▶ Funding from Nature Conservancy Council

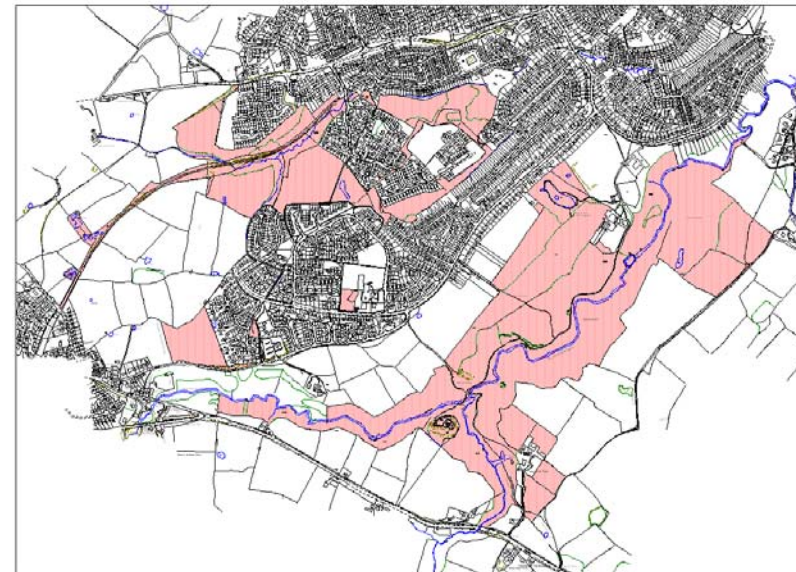
# Result of community pressure

- Following a Public Inquiry in 1994, land scheduled for residential development was de-allocated to support wildlife, especially great crested newts and badgers.
- This was to provide:
  - fields for foraging,
  - buffer zones along woodland edges,
  - safe corridors for the movement of wildlife and
  - measures for protecting wildlife during development

# Major achievements



*A Partnership for  
People and Wildlife*





# Consultation and Involvement



# Community Events and School Activities





# Volunteers for Conservation



# Branching out



- ▶ This experience gave the Deeside Urban Wildlife Group a reputation for experience in the conservation of herptile species – that's reptiles and amphibians to you and me!
- ▶ Developments such as the Brookhill Landfill set a major precedent for local planners: Great Crested Newt conservation – and mitigation – had to be taken seriously. And DUWG were well placed to take over management of newt sites and advise developers on how to cater for their newts!





## Brookhill Clay Hole

A haven for amphibians, including GCN





## Brookhill Landfill Site

Work begins in 1996: over 8000 GCN translocated away from planned tip



## Brookhill Mitigation Site

20 ponds purpose built for Great Crested Newts!





## Glascoed Nature Reserve

2002: GCN discovered on St Asaph Business Park under development by WAG





## Integrated mitigation and compensation

Translocation of GCN to reserve; mitigation measures on development plots  
Population now hovering at about 100 GCN!

# A viable population?





# Wildlife in your backyard



# Time to develop



# But all this costs money ...

- To ensure Favourable Conservation Status, CCW take the line that the eventual translocation/compensation site should be managed to benefit the GCN in perpetuity
- This in legal terms is usually interpreted as ...

**21 years**



# Typical annual/ rotational management activities can include ...

- Survey/ monitoring of population – share data
- Clearance of ponds to maintain open water/ limit shading
- Cutting/ grazing grassland areas
- Woodland management tasks
- Creation of hibernacular structures
- Management of hedgerows
- Wardening/ litter/ vandalism/ Health and Safety obligations
- Maintaining site infrastructure/ fencing etc
- Public involvement and PR

# The real cost of FCS

- Management of a GCN reserve will cost hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds per annum
- E.g. Reserve X estimated annual management cost = £4200
- This is fairly typical for a small mitigation site and takes into account that conservation charities often value their time lower than many environmental contractors, and also supplement their efforts with those of volunteers!

# Extended licence to occupy/ leasehold and annual invoicing

## Pro

- Developer retains control and demands evidence that money is being spent appropriately

## Con

- Offers no long-term security
- Problems when developers go bust/ change hands/ personnel changes
- Bureaucratic/ time spent on admin

# House rents (plus freehold transfer)

## Pro

- ❑ Legally binding on property owners through TP1
- ❑ Payers demand VFM
- ❑ Long-term funding
- ❑ As owners, charity can access other grant funding

## Con

- ❑ Time consuming to collect and hard to pursue prosecutions for non-payments
- ❑ Creates resentment/resistance among certain neighbours
- ❑ Not index-linked?

# 21 year endowment transferred with freehold on land

## Pro

- Provides long-term financial security and security of tenure
- Minimal administration costs
- Developer discharges planning conditions simply and quickly

## Con

- Don't forget to factor in interest and inflation
- Potentially leaves the charity with a financial liability after 21 year funding exhausted?
- Ensure rights and responsibilities clearly laid out at outset

# Funding from CCW – Section 15/39

## Pro

- Funds routine works
- SAC sites prioritised
- Responsive to changing needs e.g. Additional pond creation

## Con

- Focus is purely on GCN, does not fund wardening or estate works, or non-statutory features
- Not available for smaller GCN populations/ limited for SSSI only sites

# Project funding

## Pro

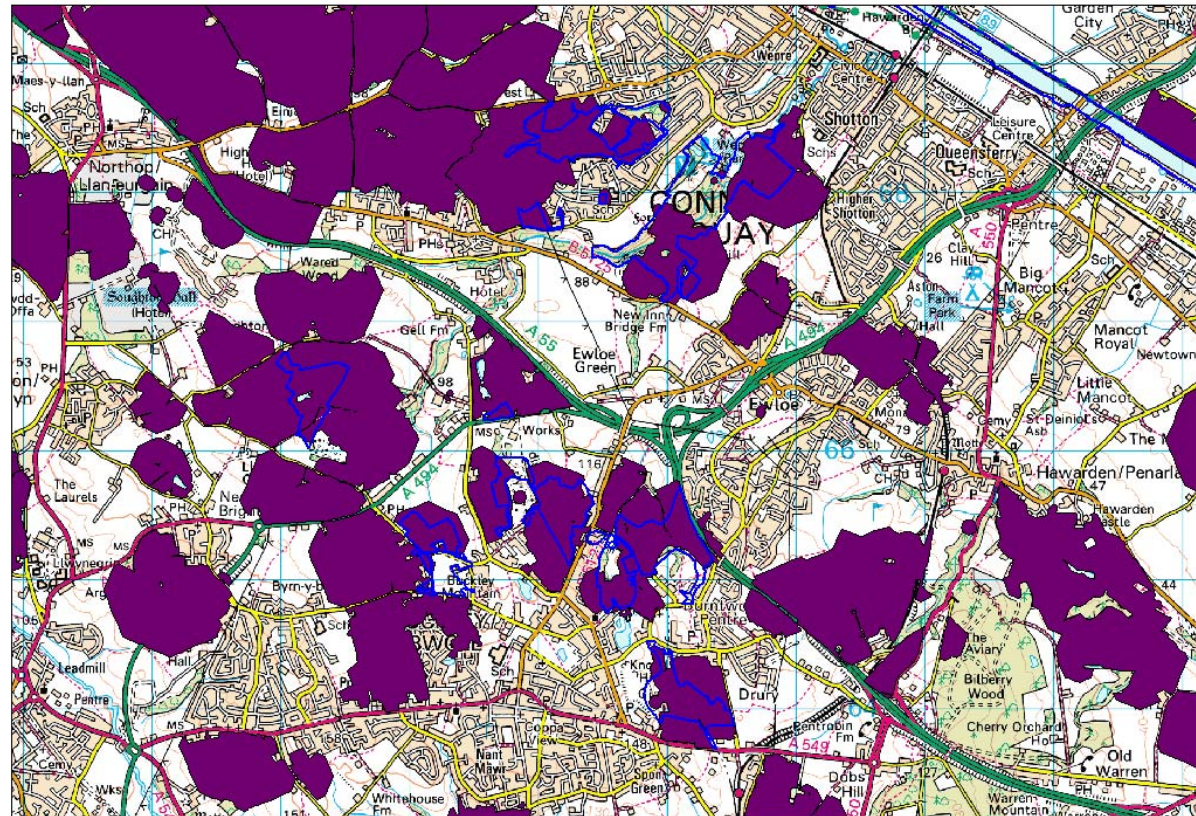
- Can also cover publicity, promotion and community engagement, which tackle FCS indirectly
- Can fund innovative capital projects or work for other species

## Con

- No substitute for long term FCS funding
- Short term and need effort to pump-prime
- Won't fund routine works/ just GCN
- Only big pots deliver organisational sustainability

# Looking forward to 2030?

Network of reserves/  
corridors and  
ponds  
providing  
quality  
habitat  
benefiting a  
suite of  
species, close  
to centres of  
population,  
who benefit  
from access  
to green



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