Natural Basingstoke

Registered Charity No. 1211649

CUFAUDE LANE - NATURE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT PROPOSAL

Author: Gillian Smallman (MSc), Natural Basingstoke

Barn Owls are resident in the area and would be beneficiaries of the Cufaude Lane Nature Protection and Enhancement Proposal. Photo ©Paul Sterry.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 This document provides a high-level conceptual summary of proposals to establish a green corridor, for the benefit of local wildlife, on land adjacent to Cufaude Lane, Bramley. Despite past insensitive land use and recent developments, this area currently remains rich in open countryside wildlife. It is especially noted for its locally- and nationally-significant populations of Common Toads and other amphibians, whilst also supporting populations of other key species such as Hazel Dormice.

1.2 Two housing developments are currently proposed on land immediately adjacent to Cufaude Lane (on the northern outskirts of Basingstoke in the parish of Bramley), which will negatively impact roughly 42 hectares (103 acres) of open countryside. The housing estate to be built by Croudace Homes (300+ homes), on what was formerly Upper Cufaude Farm, is in the process of being developed with a further phase having recently received planning approval. An additional housing estate (265 homes), on adjacent land, has been proposed for development by Taylor Wimpey.

1.3 The land bordering Cufaude Lane hosts an array of open countryside species, some of which have statutory protection while many others are Priority Species of Principal

Importance (section 41, NERC Act). All will be adversely affected by the development: no amount of on-site mitigation will allow their survival, and many will be driven to local extinction. Put simply, most open countryside birds, mammals, invertebrates, and plants will not survive the development phase and cannot recolonise or persist in housing estates. Further information on impacted species can be found in the Appendices 1 and 3.

1.4 Both developers recognise their obligations to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain and have given *some* consideration as to how this might be achieved. Their proposals are not assessed in detail within this paper, which focuses on our alternative proposal. However, a detailed critique is available. At high level:

- Croudace Homes' development is subject to a planning condition requiring them to provide mitigation for migrating Common Toads (in the form of a toad-tunnel) – there are limited options available for this and the majority of potential locations will exacerbate (rather than mitigate against) amphibian fatalities.
- Both developers have incorporated a Countryside Park in their design – this is a multi-user space (for people, pets, and local wildlife) and is therefore likely to act as a focal point for predation of sensitive species, as well as mortality due to pollution of amphibian ponds (e.g.: with tick medication).

1.5 We have concluded that, if the combined developments are undertaken in their current form, they have the potential to drive a whole host of open countryside species to extinction (including one of the last remaining significant populations of Common Toads in the borough).

2. HIGH-LEVEL PROPOSAL

2.1 Spearheaded by Natural Basingstoke, the proposed solution is to provide secure local off-site compensation, as well as (within the layout of the housing estates) separating land designated for housing and human activity from land dedicated purely for nature conservation.

Above: *Hazel Dormice are present in hedgerows and woodlands in the area. Photo ©Paul Sterry.*

2.2 The maps below show the locations of ongoing and proposed developments adjacent to Cufaude Lane (Figure A); and the Cufaude Lane Nature Protection and Enhancement Proposal (Figure B).

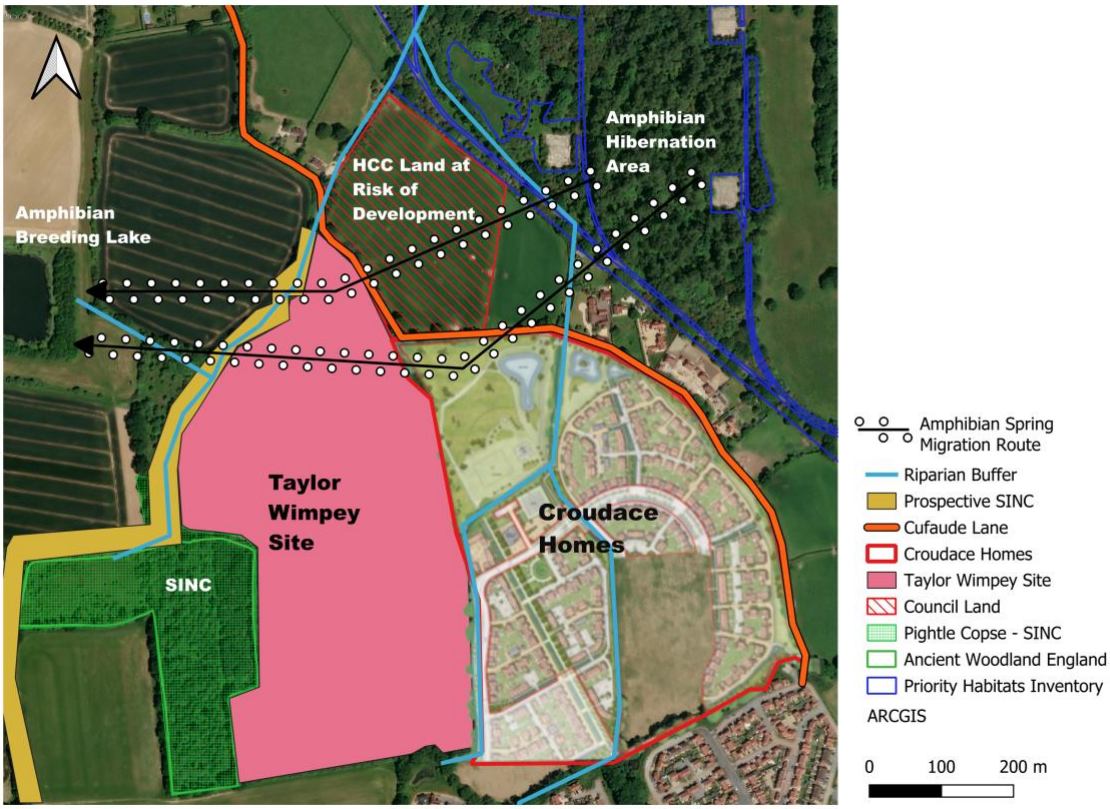

Figure A: Location of the proposed developments

2.3 Figure A

2.3.1The footprint of the Croudace Homes development reflects the design that forms part of an approved planning application. The north-western portion is designated as a multi-user green space[1]. The footprint of the Taylor Wimpey development is based on the outline contained in the 'Request for screening proposal' submitted by the developer, it is understood that Taylor Wimpey also proposes to incorporate a multi-user green space mirroring that of the adjacent development.

2.3.2 The land marked as 'HCC land at Risk of Development' is owned by Hampshire County Council, this has been proposed for development in response to the call for sites supporting update of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan. However, the Local Planning Authority does not support this as a suitable location for housing due to access issues.

[1] The multi-user green spaces are shared by wildlife and residents (including their pets) and incorporate leisure facilities as well as wildlife habitat. This approach will not provide adequate mitigation to support resident species, which will be at high risk of disturbance and predation due to the dual function of the space.

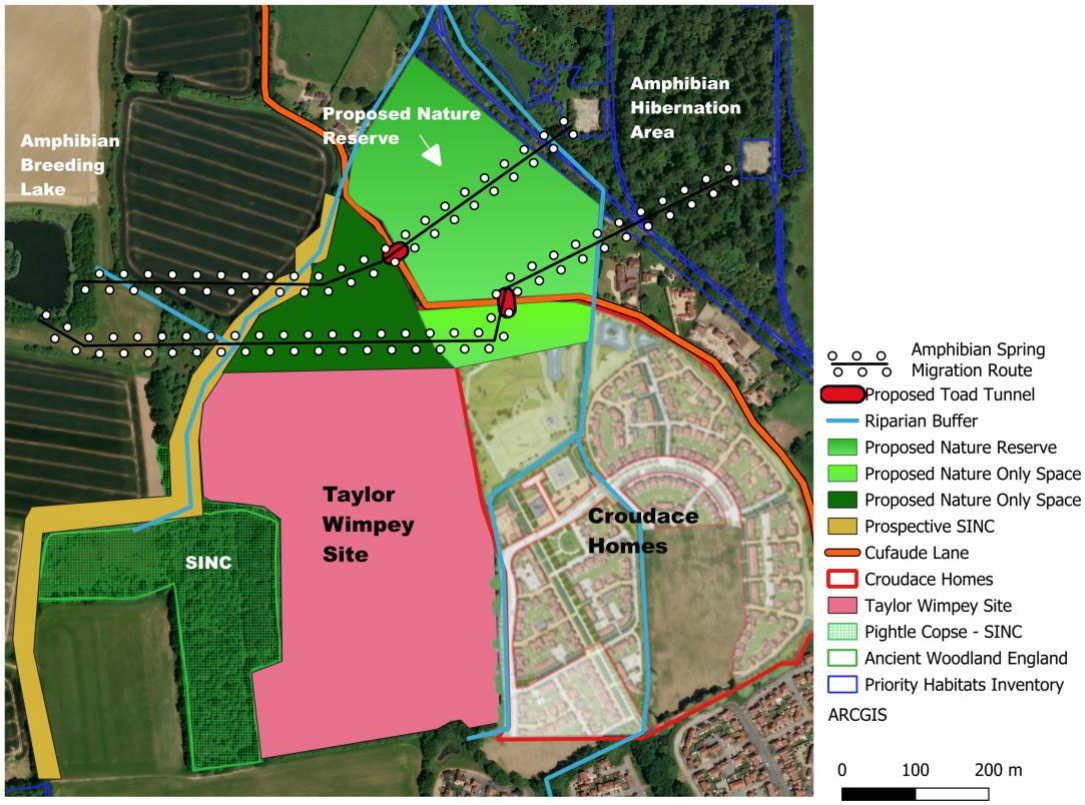

Figure B: Cufaude Lane Nature Protection and Enhancement Proposal

2.4 Figure B

2.4.1 The 'Proposed Nature Reserve' is on the land owned by Hampshire County Council and rejected as a site for development. Under our proposal, this field would be designated as a nature reserve, providing offsite compensation relating to loss of habitat for open countryside species caused by the developments. The aim would be to encourage a mosaic of locally-relevant habitats, including seasonally-cut meadows framed by native species hedgerows and scrub. The creation of amphibian breeding ponds in the low-lying northern corner of the field would, over time, lead to the establishment of new breeding colonies of amphibians that are less reliant on crossing Cufaude Lane at migration times. In the short and medium term, the land would safeguard existing amphibian migration routes and provide them with terrestrial habitat.

2.4.2 The two areas marked as 'Proposed Nature Only Space'[2] are land that we propose is separated from the reminder of the multi-user green spaces, within the two developments, to become part of a dedicated wildlife corridor. This would enhance biodiversity by mirroring the habitat provision in the Proposed Nature Reserve and provide additional safeguarding for amphibian migration. The 'Amphibian Spring Migration Route' indicates the general direction of migration route for Common Toads and other amphibians; migration occurs in the reverse direction in autumn. Amphibians would access the wildlife corridor via toad tunnels from the

[2] The areas marked in Figure B are indicative only and the precise dimensions and angles would need be subject to survey to optimise the utility of the corridor and address the locations for SuDS.

new nature reserve to the east. The sequestration of this land for nature would also provide compensatory benefits for other impacted open-countryside species such as hazel dormice, ground-nesting birds, and bats.

2.4.3 Other relevant features in the landscape include:

- Cufaude Green Lane[3], bordering the northwest side of the Taylor Wimpey site, which is currently in the process of being assessed for designation as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (see Appendix 2).
- Pightle Copse, an existing SINC to the west of the Taylor Wimpey site.

2.4.4 Taken together, the various landscape elements set out above would result in creation of a corridor connecting land owned by MOD (Bramley Camp), an established amphibian hibernation area, with the current 'Amphibian Breeding Lake', via a combination of toad tunnels and spaces dedicated to nature. In addition to supporting amphibians this corridor would also provide a refuge for displaced open countryside species, linking up existing natural green spaces.

2.5 At this stage, our current proposal is a high-level concept only and further detailed development would be required for it to proceed. It is envisaged that this could form part of a wider green corridor in north Basingstoke linking up important tracts of land owned by sympathetic land-owners such as the Forestry Commission, National Trust, and MOD (see Appendix 4).

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Cufaude Lane Nature Protection and Enhancement Proposal offers an informed and enlightened approach that allows delivery of housing while providing meaningful safeguards and environmental enhancement for existing open countryside wildlife and the local environment. In addition, however, it also offers potential benefits for both the developers and the Local Planning Authority (Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council): there is potential for housing numbers to be increased marginally, but more significantly it provides a route for speeding up the planning process, smoothing the way towards a rapid resolution of environmental issues.

3.2 If the Proposal were to be accepted, it would provide huge potential public relations benefits for both the developers and the LPA. In addition, it would allow the latter to honour, unchallenged, its obligations under the Environment Act 2019 that require it to not only protect but also enhance biodiversity, specifically when it comes to provisions made for Species of Principal Importance and those with statutory protection. Furthermore, the new Nature Reserve would provide a genuinely local opportunity for off-site NB investment by developers pursuing critical development, where onsite mitigation was not possible.

[3] Marked on the map as 'Prospective SINC"

3.3 **In order to proceed, the proposal requires the involvement of the Local Planning Authority, the developers (Croudace Homes and Taylor Wimpey) and landowner Hampshire County Council.** Specifically:

- HCC agreement would be required to lease or sell their land as a site for BNG investment.
- Developers would need to slightly redesign their two developments, to accommodate the sequestration of part of the proposed multi-user green space in each development as a space for nature. This would not impact on the housing footprint for Croudace Homes development. Taylor Wimpey's development is at a sufficiently early stage to facilitate such a change.
- LPA – Agreement would be needed from the LPA to the overall proposal, supported by appropriate planning conditions[4].

[4] The Section 106 Agreement associated with the approved development by Croudace Homes (Upper Cufaude Farm Phase 2), included an obligation to provide toad tunnels as well as reference to the option for off-site compensation.

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Appendix 1: Biodiversity Overview of Cufaude Lane

Author: Dr Paul Sterry

1. Introduction

1.1 Step back five decades and contemporary local naturalists knew Cufaude Lane as a wildlife haven, albeit one of many in the borough of Basingstoke at the time. Majestic elms lined the byway and adjacent hedgerows, and Tree Sparrows were abundant thanks to low-intensity farming methods and ramshackle farms, barns, and outbuildings. Adding to this bucolic image, it was the sort of lane that had grass growing down the middle of the road. Were you to walk along Cufaude Lane's three-mile length, which at the time extended from Bramley to the Reading Road in Basingstoke, you would encounter half a dozen vehicles at most. If you ventured out on mild, wet evenings in spring the byway would be hopping and crawling with amphibians.

1.2 Today, Cufaude Lane's elms are gone thanks to the ravages of Dutch Elm Disease and indeed many of the hedgerows that defined the area's small fields have been grubbed out. Tree Sparrows are extinct because of tidy-minded gentrification that has been imposed on buildings in the area along with intensive farming methods and other wildlife-unsympathetic land uses. To add to its woes, Cufaude Lane has now become a commuter rat-run, connecting Basingstoke in the south with town-in-the-making Bramley in the north.

1.3 Despite the onslaught of the 20th and 21st centuries, Cufaude Lane's wildlife community has demonstrated a resilience that other previously-comparable wildlife areas have failed to match. Almost alone, it remains a last vestige of wildlife-rich landscape-scale open countryside that was once the norm in the borough of Basingstoke. Thankfully, many of Britain's classic

farmland birds and mammals still call Cufaude Lane home. In addition, its amphibians now represent one of the last remaining populations of significance left in northern Hampshire, one that is of national as well as local importance.

1.4 That Cufaude Lane's wildlife has survived this long is thanks in part to the landscape-scale environmental buffering afforded to the area by Bramley Army Camp on the east and the National Trust Vyne Estate to the west. Now is the time to formally recognise the significance of the area in wildlife and landscape terms and devise a strategic plan that protects and enhances its wildlife and countryside heritage for posterity.

Skylarks are still resident in fields bordering Cufaude Lane, nesting in grass and cereal crops and associating with mixed-species flocks of birds in winter that feed in open countryside. The Skylark is a Species of Principal Importance.
Photo ©Paul Sterry.

2. Setting the scene

2.1 Cufaude Lane is at the heart of a landscape that has a rich heritage and ancestry, one that is reflected in the abundance and diversity of wildlife. Despite profound negative human intervention in recent years, it remains an area that is significant for wildlife. An opportunity now presents itself to save some of that landscape and restore and enhance what remains. In that regard, it is useful to turn back to the clock to the area's wildlife heyday and a useful reference point is mapping.

1840 Tithe Map for the parish of Sherborne St John (in which Cufaude Lane was located at the time (left); and the 1871-72 Ordnance Survey map for the area. The current route of Cufaude Lane is marked in green.

2.2 Hedgerows

2.2.1 Each field boundary marked on the Tithe Map for 1840 would have been defined by a hedgerow, some planted at that time as part of the Award process but with many relying on existing hedgerows for land-ownership definition and recognition.

2.2.2 Hedgerows are widely acknowledged as important wildlife habitats in their own right. Their ecological role has parallels with woodland margins, and they provide opportunities for species that are reliant on the cover and food provided by the intentionally-dense vegetation. They are also extremely important in terms of environmental connectivity, providing a link between other wildlife-rich sites and habitats in the wider landscape, and thwarting ecological isolation.

2.2.3 Comparing the historical mapping and Tithe Award records with the situation today, the combined land area occupied by the Croudace Homes development and proposed Taylor Wimpey housing estate has lost more than **3 kilometres** of hedgerows that, by dint of ancestry, were ancient. Part of the plan for enhancement and restoration of the Cufaude Lane landscape is the reinstatement of lost hedgerows that marked earlier field boundaries. Roughly **0.2 hectares** of woodland have also been lost.

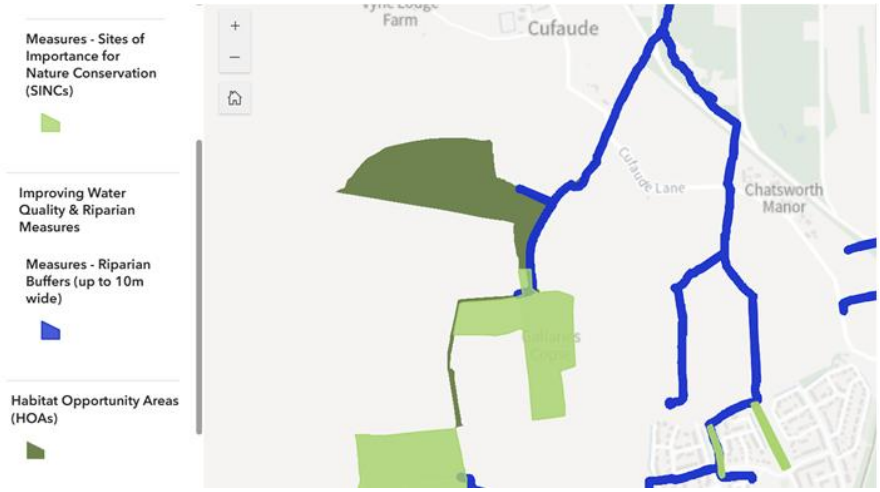
2.2.4 Further evidence on the ground of the ancestry and environmental significance of Cufaude Lane's hedgerows comes from surveying those that line the road itself. Along the hedgerows that border the Croudace Homes and proposed Taylor Wimpey housing estate developments, an outstanding number of woody species are recorded. Woody tree and shrub species numbers increase over time and the presence of ten species is remarkable and significant. Species recorded include Pedunculate Oak, Field Maple, Ash, Norway Maple, Hazel, Blackthorn, Common Hawthorn, Dogwood, Elder and Small-leaved Elm.

3. An opportunity not to be missed

3.1 Over the last few years, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (working on behalf of HCC) has produced a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), something it was obliged to do by government policy. The LNRS is currently at the draft stage but nevertheless there is an obligation on local authorities to take the document even in draft form into consideration. In addition, it represents an opportunity to demonstrate strategic environmental thinking and to go beyond compliance when it comes to promoting nature restoration and enhancement.

3.2 Interestingly, the LNRS map for the Cufaude Lane area highlights land adjacent to the proposed Nature Protection and Enhancement site as a Habitat Opportunity Area. This land embraces the main breeding lake for Common Toads and amphibians in this section of Cufaude Lane, and terrestrial habitat that is strategically important for migration.

3.3 In addition, it identifies watercourses where Riparian Buffers of 10m are a proposed requirement. One of these lies at the heart of Cufaude Green Lane (see below) and runs along the northwest boundary of the proposed Taylor Wimpey development.



4. Cufaude Green Lane SINC designation.

4.1 Cufaude Green Lane, which is adjacent to the north-western boundary of the proposed Taylor Wimpey housing development has been submitted for designation as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). It has been surveyed by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC). That information (see Appendix 2), in combination with data submitted by the Nature Restoration Project itself, is being used to inform the decision-making process. Discussions will take place in autumn 2025 and it is anticipated that a decision regarding SINC designation will be made by March 2026.

5. Open Countryside wildlife

5.1 To demonstrate that the land framing Cufaude Lane is important for open countryside species, here is a brief selection of the Priority Species of Principal Importance (section 41, NERC Act) recorded in the area over the last decade: Skylark, Linnet, Cuckoo, Yellowhammer, Reed Bunting, Spotted Flycatcher, House Sparrow, Grey Partridge, Marsh Tit, Bullfinch, Dunnock, Song Thrush, Starling, Lapwing, Barn Owl, Hedgehog, Brown Hare, Harvest Mouse, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared Bat, Common Toad, Slow-worm, Grass Snake and Common Lizard. In addition, species with protection under schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, and recorded in the area, include Hazel Dormouse and Great Crested Newt along with a minimum of six species of bats.

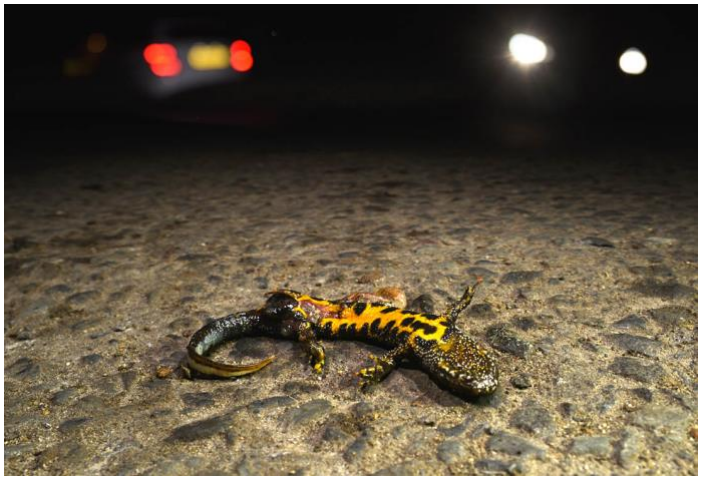
Yellowhammers (a Species of Principal Importance) are resident in the farmland that fringes Cufaude Lane and breed in the hedgerows bordering the byway and the proposed development site. They feed their broods on invertebrates in spring and summer, and forage in fields for seed and grain in winter. Yellowhammers are birds of farmland not housing estates and even on the margins they are supremely vulnerable to predation by domestic cats and dogs, and disturbance by people.
Photo ©Paul Sterry.

6. Common Toads

6.1 From among the array of Species of Principal Importance present in the Cufaude Lane area, it is worth singling out the Common Toad. To provide context, despite the implication of the name, Common Toad populations in the UK have declined by nearly 70% in the past 30 years and many formerly-thriving populations in north Hampshire are now extinct. Little surprise then that, in legal terms, Common Toads are among many animals and plants that are defined by government as a Species of Principal Importance. This means that material consideration has to be given to them as part of the planning process, along with species that have elevated protection in law.

6.2 As further background, Common Toads and other amphibians breed in freshwater but spend the rest of their lives on land. A significant proportion of the populations in the Cufaude Lane area migrate from terrestrial habitats on the east side of the road to breeding ponds on the west. This means they have to run the gauntlet of being squashed by cars as they cross the road. Over the past few decades, rampant development in the area has meant a huge increase in traffic with catastrophic consequences for the animals.

Above: Migrating Common Toad pair crossing Cufaude Lane.
Photo ©Paul Sterry.



Above: A dead Great Crested Newt, killed by a car while trying to migrate across Cufaude Lane.
Photo ©Paul Sterry.

6.3 The Cufaude Lane Amphibian Rescue Group CLARG has been operating for a decade or more and rescues as many Common Toads, Common Frogs, Smooth Newts and Great Crested Newts as possible from being flattened by traffic during the 6-week spring migration. Thousands of amphibians have been saved over this period but, despite the best efforts of volunteers, around 30% of all animals that attempt the crossing are killed.

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Appendix 2 - Ecological report on Cufaude Green Lane by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre

See attached file, reference: “Footpath Between Basing Forest and Cufaude Lane (SU64955680) [65-0437] – 16042024”

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Appendix 3 - Cufaude Lane Amphibian Rescue Group 2025 Report

Author: Andrew Cleave (MBE), Cufaude Lane Amphibian and Reptile Group

1. Patrol Summary

Patrol period: 28 January 2025 to 27 March 2025 (52 days, see section 5).
Weather conditions were checked every day and at least one "drive-by" patrol was carried out on cold nights.
Number of days when formal patrols were needed: 16 days.
Total number of volunteers: 14.
Average number of volunteers on a patrol night: 6.
Average toad patrol period on patrol nights: 2 hours.
Total volunteer hours: 192.

2. Aims of the toad patrol

The Cufaude Lane toad patrol is primarily focussed on animal welfare. Specifically, volunteers attempt to reduce and minimise the numbers of Common Toads and other amphibians killed by cars during the annual spring migration from terrestrial wintering habitats on the east of Cufaude Lane to breeding sites on the west.

Migration happens from dusk onwards and most of the carnage is caused by traffic heading home at the end of the working day. Consequently, toad patrols operate for roughly a two-hour period: 17.30-19.30 at the start of the migration season (in early February) and 18.30-20.30 by the end of the season (in late March).

Although the Cufaude Lane toad patrol acts primarily in an animal welfare capacity, numbers of animals saved and killed by cars are recorded as best we can, given the challenging circumstances. These numbers are inevitably snapshot underestimates of true population numbers and deaths because animal rescue rather than quantitative surveying is the purpose of the endeavour and migration continues throughout the hours of darkness.

3. Traffic numbers

Car numbers increase year-on-year as a result of rampant house building at either end of Cufaude Lane: in Bramley to the north and the expanding outskirts of Basingstoke to the south. Ten years ago, there were on average 30-40 cars per hour during the peak end-of-the-working-day hours. In 2025, toad patrollers recorded 200-300 cars per hour for the same times of day.

4. Driver behaviour

The majority of drivers are to varying degrees considerate towards toad patrollers, and some make a concerted effort to slow down. However, there are still a few that act aggressively towards those walking on the road. There have been a couple of instances where the driver

has slowed and driven alongside patrollers, hurling abuse at them. Plus, several examples where drivers have driven at speed and 'buzzed' patrollers in an attempt to intimidate them.

5. Putting the 2025 patrol season in perspective

Neither 2025 nor 2024 can be seen as representative of typical patrol years. Several significant factors affected both the pattern of amphibian migration and the ability of volunteers to undertake their rescue work. Some of these factors remain significant for local amphibians. Annex 1 provides information for the 2023 season as a backdrop to subsequent years.

In 2024, amphibian migration began in earnest in mid-January. This coincided with a road closure between Bramley and Sherfield-on-Loddon that resulted in already-high traffic numbers more than doubling at the critical time for amphibian migration – the two hours after dusk. The near-constant stream of traffic meant that light-averse migrating amphibians remained stuck on the verges until the occasional gap in the traffic. Volunteers were unable to do their jobs properly because of the danger caused by the sheer volume of traffic, exacerbated by the fact that many drivers were unfamiliar with the byway, its narrow pinch points, and its numerous catastrophic verge potholes.

Later in the season, between 19-21 February 2024, habitat destruction and hedgerow removal took place along the central section of the amphibian crossing zone at peak migration time. Unsurprisingly, this had a major impact on migrating amphibians, and the subsequently-installed close-panel fencing remains to this day an impenetrable barrier for migrating amphibians.

In 2025, the toad patrol was suspended for a week during a critical period of amphibian migration.

6. Migration numbers in 2025

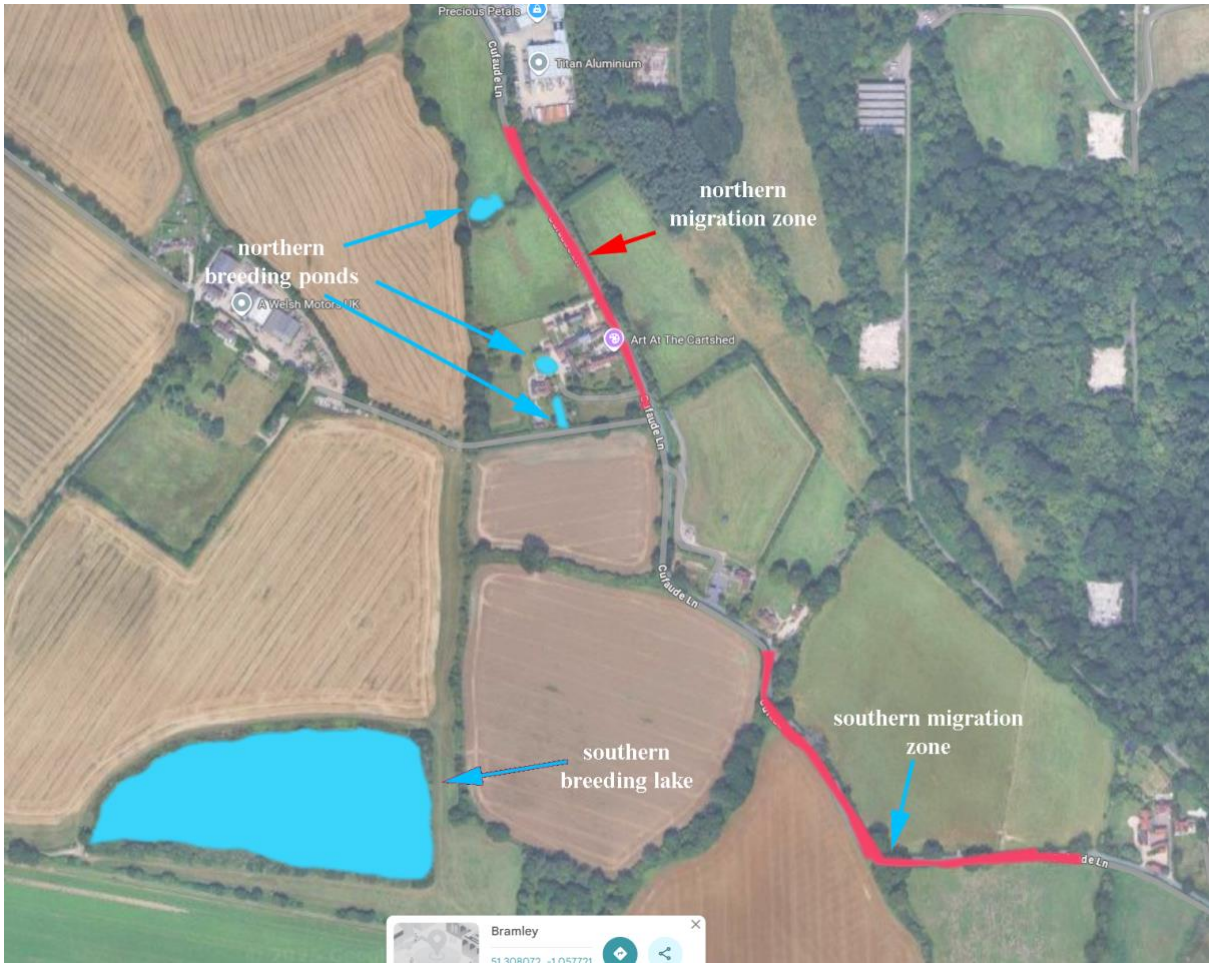
Numbers of amphibians recorded crossing Cufaude Lane by patrollers:

	Rescued	Killed by cars
Common Toad	533	116
Common Frog	66	6
Smooth Newt	42	9
Great Crested Newt		

7. Migration patterns in 2025

Common Toads and other amphibians are creatures of habit and the main wintering grounds for populations in the Cufaude Lane area remain the woodlands located within Bramley Army Camp on the east side of the byway. In late winter and early spring, amphibians migrate west to breeding ponds on the west side of Cufaude Lane.

Until 2023, migration occurred across a broad front roughly defined by the location of the two highway toad signs. Today, however, migration can be divided into two zones, north and south, separated by the section of Cufaude Lane that is bordered by the impenetrable fence.



Above: a map showing the amphibian landscape of Cufaude Lane, based on Google Maps.

The proportion of migrating amphibians using the northern and southern zones is roughly 60:40.

Regarding the northern population of amphibians, it is the opinion of CLARG that the large breeding lake to the southwest of Cufaude Lane is no longer their primary destination. In 2025, contact was made with the new owners of Cufaude Manor. They appear sympathetic towards amphibians and have reinstated the historic moat adjacent to the property, which had been drained by the previous owners. The moat was an ancestral breeding ground for amphibians and from anecdotal evidence appears to be resuming its importance. In addition, two further potential breeding ponds have been identified on the west side of Cufaude Lane, in the northern section.

Regarding the southern population of amphibians, the large lake to the southwest of Cufaude Lane is still presumed to be the breeding destination in spring and it still harbours sizeable and significant populations (see Annex 1). However, in terms of crossing Cufaude Lane, the migration zone now extends much further south of the southern Toad Patrol Road Sign on Cufaude Lane. This change in migration pattern is presumably a consequence of former migration routes becoming unavailable and disorientated animals seeking alternative routes.

Once established, these migration routes will become increasingly important as the years go by.

Annex 1: **CUFAUDE LANE AMPHIBIAN RESCUE GROUP – 2023 REPORT**

1. Numbers of amphibians recorded crossing Cufaude Lane by patrollers:

	Rescued	Killed by cars
Common Toad	623	127
Common Frog	113	35
Smooth Newt	34	19
Great Crested Newt	1	1

2. Total population numbers crossing Cufaude Lane

Amphibian migration occurs throughout the hours of darkness, with sudden flurries of activity stimulated by bouts of heavy rain. Because toad patrollers operate for the first 2 hours of darkness (when traffic numbers are high), it is reasonable to extrapolate for the whole night - an additional 10 hours at this time of year. Because traffic is light, or non-existent, throughout most of the night, it is assumed that mortality rates are low and therefore the extrapolated figures below relate to successful crossings. Regular late-night car patrols confirm that migration does indeed continue throughout the night.

It should be noted that additional amphibians are likely to make a successful crossing of Cufaude Lane during the patrol period without being observed by volunteers. Hence the figures cited are likely to underestimate true numbers. Given this proviso, extrapolated numbers are as follows:

Common Toad	4,373
Common Frog	853
Smooth Newt	299
Great Crested Newt	24

3. Historical numbers of amphibians recorded by Cufaude Lane toad patrollers

The cumulative numbers of animals both rescued and dead during the period 2017-2023 (bearing in mind that patrols did not take place during Covid lockdown) is as follows:

	Rescued	Killed by cars
Common Toad	7,845	892
Common Frog	903	104
Smooth Newt	282	67
Great Crested Newt	7	3

4. Common Toad breeding population

An important breeding water body for Cufaude Lane's Common Toads and other amphibians is located on private land. Permission was granted by the landowner (now deceased) for Andrew Cleave to visit to the pond, to release amphibians from the previous night if numbers

were particularly large. On 19 March 2023, the lake was visited after dark, and a rudimentary survey was undertaken.

Four 5-metre stretches of bank were surveyed by torchlight, the field of vision extending roughly 2 metres into the water. This produced toad counts of 40, 10, 167 and 75. That is an average of 73 toads per surveyed 5 metre stretch of bank, or 14.6 toads per metre of bank. If the survey stretch is treated as an area of 5 x 2 metres, then that equates to 7.3 toads per square metre.

The marginal circumference of the lake is roughly 800m. Extrapolating, that means a minimum breeding population of 14,400 toads if breeding animals were confined to the 2 metre margins of the lake.

An alternative way of estimating numbers is to look at water surface area. The open water and marginal area of the lake is roughly 30,000 square metres. If a quarter of this area were used by toads (rather than just the marginal 2m) then, extrapolating from the above numbers, the population of Common Toads would be 54,750.

This population estimate is undoubtedly a huge *underestimate*. It is based on toads that were observed by torchlight within 2 metres of the bank on a single night, towards the end of the breeding season. Not all animals would have been visible and hence counted, and marginal and submerged vegetation and debris hampered observation. In addition, stating the obvious many animals would have already spawned earlier in the season and left the water.

In addition to the lake, there several lengthy stretches of water-filled ditches in the vicinity that also contained spawning Common Toads. The meta-population of Common Toads and amphibians in the general area is clearly huge and of local and national significance.

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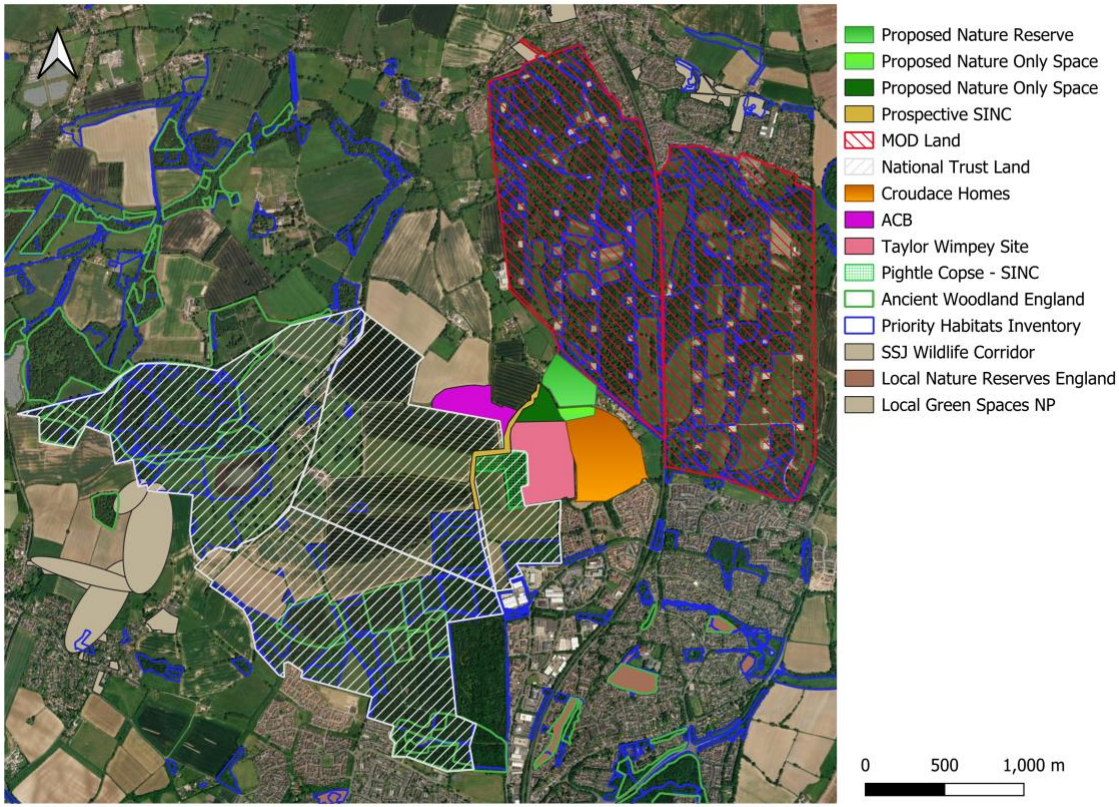
Appendix 4 – North Basingstoke Green Corridor



North Basingstoke Corridor Concept

- The Cufaude Lane Nature Enhancement (CLNE) Proposal forms the central portion of a wider potential green corridor.
- Northeast of the site, MOD Bramley camp incorporates Priority Habitat and an established Amphibian Hibernation Area.
- This inks, via the CLNE and land designated as an ACB (Area that Could become important for Biodiversity), within the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, to a large tract of National Trust Land.
- To the south this links to Forestry Commission land at Basing wood.
- To the east this links to the SSJ Wildlife Corridor, identified in the Sherbourne St John Neighbourhood Plan.
- The area is associated with a patchwork of Priority Habitats, Ancient Woodland, and Riparian Buffers