



22nd November 2019

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: Proposed development at Stewartfield Heritage Loch

Froglife are writing to object to the proposed development at Stewartfield Way, East Kilbride, Glasgow G74 5LB.

Stewartfield Heritage Loch is a registered toad patrol site (id. 736) with Froglife and the Department for Transport. The lake supports large populations of common toads which have been observed migrating across the path surrounding the lake in large numbers. Adult toads have also been recorded migrating directly across Stewartfield Way during spring migration (March/April). Records from local volunteers show that 359 toads were recorded attempting to reach Stewartfield Heritage Loch in 2018 and 363 in 2019. Many of these toads would have been killed on Stewartfield Way, had it not been for volunteers picking them up and taking them to safety. Since volunteers are not able to survey the whole road on all of every night during spring migration, the actual number of toads attempting to cross Stewartfield Way is likely to be much higher. The habitats surrounding the lake are crucial for common toads, as they provide refuge, foraging areas and hibernation sites for the majority of the year. Since a lot of land surrounding James Hamilton Heritage Park consists of roads and housing, many of the toads in this population will be relying on the habitats within the park for their survival.

The proposed development of Stewartfield Way into a dual carriageway is likely to have significant negative impacts on the common toad population. It is difficult for toads to cross a busy single carriageway, but the widening of the road will make it almost impossible for toads to move across the road to surrounding habitats. Although many toads do use habitats within the park, a significant proportion of the population do migrate to wider habitats (as observed by toads on roads volunteers), including gardens on the opposite side of the road. In addition, the widening of the road will result in removal of large amounts of shrubs, bushes and trees which the common toads rely on for refuge, foraging and hibernating. The satellite image on page 3 of this document shows the main terrestrial habitats which will be impacted by the development.

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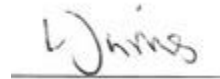
Charity Patrons: Mike Dilger & Jules Howard



Significant removal of these habitats will greatly impact on toad populations, reducing valuable terrestrial habitat. In the UK common toads have declined by, on average, 68% over the past 30 years¹, mainly due to habitat loss and fragmentation. This proposed development will result in further declines of the common toad due to habitat loss and fragmentation of habitats.

Froglife are therefore strongly opposed to this development and suggest that the plan should not commence, but if it does, to incorporate mitigation for common toads such as installation of a wildlife tunnel and providing replacement terrestrial habitats. Research by Froglife² has shown that installation of wildlife tunnels, along with effective drift fences, can be highly successful in allowing amphibians to cross busy roads. We recommend installing such a tunnel in least at one location along the proposed dual carriageway to allow the toads to access wider habitats. In addition, mitigation should provide replacement of suitable terrestrial habitats which contain natural shrubs, trees and long grass. This will provide terrestrial habitats for toads to forage and take refuge. If needed, Froglife can provide advice on such measures.

Yours sincerely,



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Satellite image showing Stewartfield Heritage Loch. The circles in red show terrestrial habitat which will be impacted by the proposed development. These provide important resting, foraging and hibernating places for common toads.



¹ Petrovan, S.P. & Schmidt, B.R. (2016) Volunteer conservation action data reveals large-scale and long-term negative population trends of a widespread amphibian, the common toad (*Bufo bufo*). *PLoS ONE* 11(10): e0161943. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0161943.

² Jarvis, L.E., Hartup, M. & Petrovan, S. O. (2019) Road mitigation using tunnels and fences promotes site connectivity and population expansion for a protected amphibian. *European Journal of Wildlife Research*, **65**:27-38. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10344-019-1263-9>.

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