

Whittlesey Town Council

Local Green Spaces Assessment

September 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document has been prepared to provide the methodology and rationale for the selection of sites for Local Green Space (LGS) designation in the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan.

What are Local Green Spaces?

- 1.2. 'Local Green Space' (LGS) is a new national designation that has been introduced by the Government through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF¹). Local communities have the opportunity through the development of Neighbourhood Plans to identify green areas for special protection that are particularly important to them.
- 1.3. LGS designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. Principally, they must be locally special and unique in the benefits that they provide to local communities.

2. Methodology

National policy context

- 2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was initially published in March 2012, revised in July 2018 and updated in February 2019. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), introduced in 2014 offers 'live' government guidance.
- 2.2. The NPPF introduced the new LGS designation. NPPF (Para. 100) indicates that, through local and neighbourhood plans, local communities can identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection. By designating land as LGS a Neighbourhood Plan can rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.
- 2.3. The NPPF (Para. 101) requires local policy for managing development within a LGS to be consistent with Policy for Green Belts.
- 2.4. Due to the important status LGS designation holds, LGS designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open spaces. The designation should only be used:
 - Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife; and
 - Where the green area concerned is local in character and not an extensive tract of land.
- 2.5. Further national guidance on LGS is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance².

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#Local-Green-Space-designation>

How sites were identified

2.6. The green areas for assessment were identified by:

- Requesting all Town Councillors to review their Wards and identify potentially suitable areas. Maps are shown in Appendix 1.

Site Assessment

2.7. The NPPF sets out criteria which sites must satisfy in order to be considered suitable for LGS designation, and forms the basis of the assessment. Open spaces were assessed against the LGS criteria set out in Table 1.

2.8. The sites were assessed by carrying out sites visits by the Neighbourhood Plan Group. Photos were taken of all sites identified.

Table 1. Explanation of Criteria for assessing Local Green Spaces

Local Green Space Criteria	Explanation
1. Are in close proximity to the community they serve	<p>The NPPF does not define ‘close proximity’.</p> <p>We consider that a Local Green Space should be in easy walking distance (up to 400m or a 5 minute walk) from the local community it serves and must not be isolated or distant from communities.</p>
2. Are local in character and not an extensive tract of land	<p>The NPPF doesn’t define what is considered to be ‘an extensive tract of land’.</p> <p>We have not set a specific size limit for Local Green Spaces. However, blanket designations of swathes of open countryside adjacent to settlements or long distance linear routes would not be appropriate.</p>
<p>3. Demonstrably special to the local community because of its:</p> <p>a) Beauty b) Historic significance c) Recreational value d) Tranquillity e) Richness of its wildlife</p>	<p>For an open space to be designated as a Local Green Space it must meet at least one of the demonstrably special criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty: enhances local character, adds to the setting of a building or groups of buildings; • Historic significance: listed building near or on area/open space, provide the setting of and/or views of listed building or historic assets such as a war memorial whose setting needs protecting. Also historic landscape features, such as ancient trees or old hedgerows; • Recreational value: play area, allotments, informal spaces in housing estates, sports and playing fields; • Tranquillity: spaces that are calm and allow for quiet enjoyment and reflection; • Richness of its wildlife: provides for biodiversity, geodiversity, known protected species, and/or priority habitats;

Application of “demonstrably special” criteria (Criterion 3)

2.9. In relation to the five ‘demonstrably special’ criteria set out in criterion 3 (of Table 1), the Whittlesey Town Council has considered the following:

Beauty

2.10. Whether an open space is beautiful can be open to interpretation. Assessment against this criterion will take into account:

- The visual attractiveness of the site as a whole;
- The contribution the site makes to landscape or townscape character and local distinctiveness;
- The contribution the site makes to the physical form and layout of a settlement or neighbourhood.
- Whether the site offers long views through or beyond a settlement or neighbourhood or views of locally valued landmarks.

Historic Significance

2.11. The assessment of historic significance will be informed by consideration of:

- Whether the site provides a setting for heritage assets or other locally valued landmarks;
- Whether the site contains any historical features, such as ancient trees;
- Whether the site is associated with a historical figure or event;
- Whether there are any regular, historical events such as a village fete that are regularly held on the site.

Recreational Value

2.12. Many open spaces will likely meet this criterion. In general, sites should offer a variety of recreational opportunities, formal or informal, and of a good quality.

Tranquillity

2.13. Sites need to demonstrate a feeling of remoteness and suitability for quiet contemplation for the majority of the site and a general lack of artificial noise such as road traffic or nearby industry.

Richness of Wildlife

2.14. Many open spaces offer some benefit to wildlife. For a site to meet this criterion there must be evidence that it is rich in wildlife, such as records, ecological evidence or expert advice.

Selecting sites for LGS designation

- 2.15. All Green Space sites recommended for designation are in close proximity to the settlements of Whittlesey, Coates, Eastrea, Turves, or Pondersbridge and therefore all satisfy criteria 1,
- 2.16. Table 2 sets out Whittlesey Town Council's assessment of open spaces against the LGS designation criteria and makes recommendations as to those open spaces which should be designated through the Neighbourhood Plan.

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Table 2: Summary of LGS Recommendations and Performance against NPPF criteria

Ref	Name of site	Site is NOT an extensive tract of land	Demonstrably Special:					Reasoning	Recommendation: Designate site as LGS? (Y/N)
			Beauty	Historic significance	Recreational value	Tranquility	Richness of wildlife		
Bass 1	Teal Road	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Existing play area for the 'Birds Estate'	YES
Bass 2	Pinewood Avenue	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Surrounded by family dwellings away from busy roads, a small play area has already been established accesses from Bassenhally Road and Cemetery Road	YES
Bass 3	Feldale Field	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Home of Whittlesey Athletic Football Club, developing facilities, 4 teams in pdfl leagues + under 18s team.	YES
Bass 4	Viking Way	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Only safe play area away from busy Bassenhally Road	YES
Bass 5	AJS/SHSCC Fields	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Already protected by educational trust legislation	NO
Bass 6	Feldale Place	No	No	No	No	No	No	Waste Land, overgrown, Open for development	NO
Bass 7	Crescent Close	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Recreation Area with Play equipment for juniors.	YES
Bass 8	Eastrea Road / Guildenburgh Crescent	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Grassed area. Natural break between houses and A605, providing safe route to schools.	YES
Bass 9	Redshank Close / Lapwing Drive	No	No	No	No	No	No	Small grassed area	NO

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Bass 10	Larkfleet (Sorrel Avenue)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Open green space with play area equipment	YES
Bass 11	Hemmerley Drive	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Open green space	YES
Bass 12	Otago Road / Close	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Small grassed area. Development should be prohibited	YES
Bass 13	Roman Close	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Open green space with play area equipment	YES
Bass 14	Whittlesey Town Bowls Club High Causeway	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Whittlesey Town Bowls Club	YES
Coates 1	North Green	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Village green, Manorial Land and play area	YES
Coates 2	South Green	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Village green, Manorial Land and play area	YES
Coates 3	School Fields	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Already protected by educational trust legislation	NO
Coates 4	Barnfield Gardens	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Existing Play area	YES
Coates 5	Grounds Way / Nobles Close	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Open green space	YES
Coates 6	Nobles Close North	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Open green space	YES
Eastrea 1	Springfields	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Existing Play area	YES
Eastrea 2	Thornham Way	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Existing play area and recreational land	YES

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			Beauty	Historic significance	Recreational value	Tranquillity	Richness of wildlife		
Latt 1	Burdett Grove	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Existing Play area	YES
Latt 2	Sycamore Road	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Open green space (Play equipment removed)	YES
Latt 3	New Road Lattersey Nature Reserve	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Nature Reserve	YES
Latt 4	Station Road	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Recreational area with play area equipment	YES
Latt 5	New Road Allotments	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Town Allotments	YES
Latt 6	New Road School Fields	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Already protected by educational trust legislation	NO
Latt 7	The Grove	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Small grassed open space.	YES
StA 1	Churchfield Way /Priors Road	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Quiet recreational area adjacent to Churchfield Way and Priors Road	YES
StA 2	Park Lane School Fields	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Already protected by educational trust legislation	NO
StA 3	Church Street	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Land to North of St Andrews Church, and south of 62 Church Street, Open space area close to Church and Churchyard, which offers tranquillity and supports wildlife.	YES

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StM 1	Manor Playing Fields	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Site of Football pitches, Tennis Courts, Bowls Green, Children's play area	YES
StM 2	Bower River	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Site of local fishermen swims, countryside river walk used by horse and dog owners.	YES
StM 3	St Marys Churchyard	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Closed Churchyard. Now open space for public use and used for events.	YES
StM 4	The Pound Aliwal Road	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Community Garden, maintained by local volunteers.	YES
StM 5	Garden of Rest Station Road	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Community used area which adds value to Town Centre.	YES
Ston 1	Snowley Park	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Quiet Recreational area adjacent to Snowley Park development,	YES
Ston 2	Water Tower	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Recreational area with play equipment serving local residents	YES
Ston 3	Bowker Way	No	No	No	No	No	No	Area of land on the estate with no specific recreational value	NO
Ston 4	Field of Dreams	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Large expanse of land that serves local junior football. Has many football pitches.	YES
Ston 5	Yarwells Headlands	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Quiet recreational area adjacent to Yarwells Headlands, 2 Green Spaces.	YES

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Ston 6	Kings Dyke Nature Reserve	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Nature Reserve	YES
Turves 1	Red Barn	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Existing Play area	YES

3. Next Steps

- 3.1. Sites considered suitable for designation as LGS, as identified in Table 2 will be proposed for designation in the draft Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.2. Members of the public, landowners, stakeholders, etc. will be invited to comment on the proposed Local Green Spaces, during the Regulation 14 consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Appendix 1 – Maps of Green Spaces



