

Discussion Paper on Local Green Spaces

What did we say in our Plan?

National policy makes provision for local communities to identify green areas of importance to those communities, where development will not be permitted except in very special circumstances.

Although Local Green Space does not need to be in public ownership, not all landowners have been contacted about proposals to designate part of their land as Local Green Space. For this reason, the following sites are regarded as candidate Local Green Spaces and this draft Neighbourhood Plan provides landowners with an opportunity to make representations in respect of potential designation. The list of Local Green Spaces will be confirmed following this consultation.

What was our Policy? (SG17)

Local Green Spaces Development that would harm the openness or special character of Local Green Spaces or their significance and value to the local community will not be permitted unless there are very special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Local Green Space. The following are candidate Local Green Spaces.

What are our candidate sites?

- A. Zion Baptist Church Allotments
- B. St Margaret of Antioch Churchyard
- C. Wykin Lane Amenity Green Space
- D. Hinckley Road Cemetery
- E. Wykin Lane Cemetery
- F. Stoke Golding Recreation Ground
- G. St Martin's Catholic Voluntary Academy Playing Fields
- H. Convent Drive Green Space
- I. St Martins Allotments
- J. Laburnum Gardens
- K. St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, Playing Fields

These are shown on the map in annex 1.

What were our Objectives?

- Important green spaces are protected
- The unique character and heritage of Stoke Golding is conserved.

What has been said in the responses from the Village?

No comments about the candidate Local Green Spaces have been received so far from landowners.

What have HBBC said in their Response?

“The 11 candidates closely match most of the open spaces defined and protected by Policy DM8 of HBBC’s Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP). Differences are:

- i) SGNP site H (Convent Drive) has a larger footprint than SADMP STG12PP including part of STG13 (St Martins Allotments) and some undesignated amenity land to the south
- ii) SGNP Site I (St Martins Allotments) is narrower than SADMP STG13 having included land in site H instead
- iii) SGNP Site J (Laburnam Gardens) appears to be a much smaller part of SADMP STG05 (High Street Allotments)
- iv) SGNP Site K (St Margarets CoE Primary School Playing Fields) is larger than SADMP STG07, incorporating additional open space that forms part of STG 19 (St Margarets School Community Facility)

Local Green Space (LGS) designations have a higher protection status consistent with Green Belt policy, so require a higher level of justification than open spaces of a local plan. The NPPF sets out criteria (paragraph 100):

‘The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land’.

Paragraph 7.2 explains that the NP consultation is designed to elicit views of landowners before a decision is taken on which sites to propose as LGSs in the submission NP. However, evidence will also need to be provided to illustrate how proposed LGSs meet the NPPF criteria for designation.”

What are our issues?

We have a list of local spaces of value to the community. The list is largely drawn from the existing Local Plan and we call the list “candidate Local Green Spaces”.

We need to decide what to do about these candidates. Our Plan says “the list of Local Green Spaces will be confirmed following this consultation.”

We were (somewhat optimistically) hoping for some response from the owners of the sites. Our Plan says “this draft Neighbourhood Plan provides landowners with an opportunity to make representations in respect of potential designation.” No such representations have been received so far.

Confirmation of Local Green Spaces is closely linked to preparation of local plans. We should get Colin to explain this to us. If we miss this opportunity, it may be some years before we are again able to propose Local Green Spaces for our village and we note the special protection afforded by this designation.

On the other hand, preparing the case for designation requires some reasonable level of effort. An earlier example from Colin for a site in Sheepy Magna is attached to remind us of the work required for a successful Local Green Space application.

This is not meant as an exhaustive list but some of the options and points for us to consider are:

- We could opt to pursue none of the candidates at this time
 - This could mean removing the section from the Neighbourhood Plan
 - Alternatively, we could retain the section to note the green spaces we value in the village but which we are not designating as formal 'Local Green Spaces' – if we do this, we might reasonably expect to be robustly challenged why we are retaining the section.
- We could pursue all of the candidate sites
 - We need to be clear about the nature of our engagement with the owners of the sites
 - There will be a significant level of effort required to complete the templates to support the LGS applications
- We could opt to pursue a sub-set of the candidate sites
 - Which candidates would we select to address now
 - What would we do about liaison with the owners
 - This route would still require some additional time commitment
- Any candidates selected for inclusion as 'Local Green Spaces' will need to be rigorously assessed against the criteria for designation to ensure the proposal is sound. This would logically be done at the outset to avoid unnecessary work subsequently.
- The question of risk should also be considered in the qualification of sites. If it is considered a site is highly unlikely to be given any approval for development then the effort to get such a site designated as a Local Green Space would be wasteful. An example of this could be a cemetery or school playing field.
- Any sites we select as candidates will need to be clarified geographically, noting the HBBC comments about discrepancies between our map and the existing plots noted in the current Local Plan.
- A further alternative approach could be to try to endorse the selection of some, or all, as 'Local Green Spaces' now but defer the work to justify these designations such that it is spread over the time between now and the Examination. Colin would need to explain what would be required for the Regulation 15 and 16 Consultation with HBBC and what could be deferred to the subsequent Examination phase. This would not reduce any of the effort required – just spread it over a longer period.

Annex 1

Map to show candidate sites

