

# Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan

## Local Green Spaces



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## **Introduction**

This report has been prepared in support of the proposed allocations of Local Green Spaces (LGS) in the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan (LBNP).

It provides the background to sites proposed, an assessment of candidate sites and sets out a recommendation to allocate LGS in the LBNP.

This report forms part of the evidence base of the LBNP and seeks to justify and support Policy 15: Protection of Local Green Spaces of the LBNP.

All documents have been prepared by Leslie Bamford (BA, MA) as a co-opted member of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG); presented to and agreed by the NPWG; and subsequently ratified by the Parish Council.

This paper should be read in association with the following documents which formed part of the evidence base to the LBNP:

- Lower Beeding Landscape Character Assessment

## **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

Paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms the designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.

Furthermore, it confirms designating land as LGS should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services.

It confirms LGS should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

Local Green Spaces can be designated as part of the Neighbourhood Plan provided they meet criteria described in Paragraph 100 of the revised NPPF, which are set out below:

- '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 (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.'

Paragraph 101 states policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.

## **National Planning Policy Guidance**

With respect to LGS designation, the NPPG advises this is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

It states that designating any LGS will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. In particular, Plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs, and the LGS designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of Plan-making.

The guidance notes that LGS's may be designated where those spaces are demonstrably special to the local community, whether in a village or in a neighbourhood in a town or city.

It notes that if land is already protected by designations such as the National Park, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as LGS.

The guidance notes that with respect to the type of area that can be identified as LGS, it will need to meet the criteria in paragraph 100 of the NPPF. It notes that designation is matter for local discretion, but can for example include sports pavilions, boating lakes, or structures such as war memorials, allotments or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis.

The NPPG sets out that determining how close an LGS needs to be to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances including why the green area is seen as special. However, it must be reasonably close. It notes that for example, if public access is a key factor, then the site would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served.

The NPPG advises there are no hard and fast rules about how big an LGS can be. This is on the basis that places are different and a degree of judgment will inevitably be needed. However, it notes that paragraph 100 of the NPPF is clear that LGS designation should only be used where the green area concerned is not an extensive tract of land. Consequently, blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. It notes that in particular, designation should not be proposed as a 'back door' way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of Green Belt by another name.

It notes that provided the land can meet the criteria at paragraph 100 of the NPPF, there is no lower size limit for a LGS.

The guidance notes that some areas that may be considered for designation as LGS may already have largely unrestricted public access, though even in places like parks, there may be some restrictions. However, other land could be considered for designation even if there is no public access (e.g. green areas which are valued because of their wildlife, historic significance and/or beauty).

It notes that designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over what exists at present; and any additional access would be a matter for separate negotiation with land-owners whose legal rights must be respected.

In considering LGS and Public Rights of Way (PRoW), the guidance notes that areas that may be considered for designation as LGS may be crossed by PRoW. In this instance, the guidance states that there is no need to designate linear corridors as LGS simply to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation.

Whilst an LGS does not need to be in public ownership, the NPPG states that the qualifying body should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as LGS. It notes that landowners will have the opportunity to make representations in respect of proposals in a Draft Plan.

The guidance notes that designating a green area as LGS would give it protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt, but otherwise, there are no new restrictions or obligations on landowners.

It continues that management of land designated as LGS will remain the responsibility of its owner. If the features that make a green area special and locally significant are to be conserved, how it will be managed in the future is likely to be an important consideration. Local communities can consider how, with the landowner's agreement, they might be able to get involved, perhaps in partnership with interested organisations that can provide advice or resources.

## **Background to LGS Site Selection**

The Parish Council held a public exhibition in October 2017. As part of this event attendees were asked to submit sites for consideration as LGS within the LBNP.

A subcommittee of the working party combined the suggested sites from the exhibition with sites already know to the working group to produce the following list of possible LGS:

1. Comptons Tennis Club
2. Holy Trinity CoE Primary School
3. The LB Village Hall
4. Village Playing Field and Playground
5. Church Lane Gully
6. Sewage Works, Leechpond Hill
7. Brick Kiln Pond
8. Footpath, A281 Cisswood to Newells Lane
9. Footpath Stable House Bungalows to Village Hall
10. Verges: A281 and B2110 intersection
11. Verges\): B2115 and B2110 intersection
12. Holy Trinity Church
13. Saxon Weald Allotments

Each site was assessed against the NPPF criteria. Consideration was also given to whether the land was otherwise protected by designations and in turn whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as LGS. This exercise resulted in 11 areas being excluded from further consideration. The specifics are outlined below.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

1. Comptons Tennis Club: Not considered further given the site comprises sports and recreational buildings and land.
2. Holy Trinity CoE Primary School: Not considered further given the site is not considered a green space.
3. The LB Village Hall: Not considered further given the site is not considered a green space.
4. Village Playing Field and Playground: Not considered further given the site comprises sports and recreational buildings and land.
5. Church Lane Gully: Not considered further given the site is not considered demonstrably special to the local community.
6. Sewage Works, Leechpond Hill: Not considered further given the site is not considered demonstrably special to the local community.
7. Brick Kiln Pond: Site proposed for allocation, see further details below.
8. Footpath, A281 Cisswood to Newells Lane: Not considered further due to its status as a public right of way.
9. Footpath Stable House Bungalows to Village Hall Not considered further due to its status as a public right of way.
10. Verges: A281 and B2110 intersection; Not considered further given the site is not considered demonstrably special to the local community.
11. Verges\: B2115 and B2110 intersection: Not considered further given the site is not considered demonstrably special to the local community.
12. Holy Trinity Church: Not considered further given the Church is a listed building.
13. Saxon Weald Allotments Site proposed for allocation, see further details below.

Site 7 and Site 13 were known to members of the working party, and were suggested at, and received positive feedback from the October 2017 exhibition. Local Green Space 1 (LGS 1) is the land area at the entrance to Church Close, opposite The Plough Public House (fig 1 page 7), and Local Green Space 2 (LGS 2) is Brick Kiln Pond (fig 2 page 7)

#### Individual Site Descriptions and Local Significance

##### **LGS1: Land area at the entrance to Church Close opposite The Plough Public House**

###### Site and Location

This open area comprised of grassy spaces, hedges, shrubbery, community allotments and mature trees lies along the inside of the curve of the B2110 at the entrance to the Church Close estate, and opposite The Plough Public House. Parish residents put forward a request for LGS designation in the October 2017 public exhibition.

###### Public Access

A public footpath crosses the area from east to west. This footpath is immediately opposite the pedestrian refuge island for crossing the B2110, and is used daily, morning and afternoon,



for parents and children on the way to and from Holy Trinity Lower Beeding Primary School. Additionally, parish residents who live in Church Close use the footpath to access the crossing to reach The Plough Public House and the footpath on the opposite side of the road which leads to village bus stops, recreational facilities, and the village hall. It is recognised that apart from the public right of way across the area the current open access is at the discretion of the landowner.

### **Criteria for designation as LGS**

#### Reasonable Proximity to a local Community

The land lies in the most central area of the Lower Beeding Parish and adjoins an area of housing to the east. A public footpath links the space to the village pedestrian refuge island in the B2110. It is, therefore, considered to be in reasonable proximity to the local community.

#### An Extensive Tract of Land

The site is approximately 0.25 ha in size. It is, therefore, not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

#### Landscape character and views

There are views across the area from the B2110, the listed Holy Trinity Church, The Plough Public House, the public footpath and from the adjacent houses. The area provides rural character of mature trees, large hedges and open grassy spaces amidst the more developed central part of the parish.

#### Heritage significance

The mature trees and hedgerows in this area suggest this is a historic landscape.

#### Wildlife significance

The ancient hedges and mature trees are a potential habitat for a diverse range of species.

#### Recreational value

The area is used by local people for informal recreation and is highly valued for its rural character. The space consists partly of community allotments and is used by residents year-round for growing fruits, vegetables and flowers. The public footpath links opposite sides of the B2110 and connects parish residents to the access to the playground and playing fields located adjacent to the primary school.

### **LGS2: Brick Kiln Pond**

This pond lies to the south of the B2110 (Handcross Road) and forms part of the Brink Kiln Close Estate. Parish residents put forward a request for LGS designation in the October 2017 public exhibition.

#### Public Access

The pond is connected by a public footpath and is used for informal access by local people. This right of way gives access to the wooded areas around the pond. It is recognised that apart from the public right of way across the area the current open access is at the discretion of the landowner.

### **Criteria for designation as LGS**

#### Reasonable Proximity to a local Community

The pond area lies in a central part of the parish, to the south of the B2110, to the east of Brick Kiln Close Estate, and is bordered also by a public bridleway. It is, therefore, considered to be in reasonable proximity to the local community.

#### An Extensive Tract of Land

The site comprises a single small pond and wooded area and is approximately .20 ha in size. The site is enclosed by the residential development of Brick Kiln Close, the B2110 and a public bridleway. The site benefits from a relatively enclosed character and it is, therefore, not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

#### Landscape character and views

There are views across the area from the bridleway, the public footpath, and from the adjacent houses in Brick Kiln Close. The area has a tranquil pond, wooded spaces, and a bench for peaceful relaxation.

#### Heritage significance

The area has strong ties to the historical significance of the parish. The pond was likely formed around the 16<sup>th</sup> century as part of the brickmaking industry in the area. Bricks were made in the parish from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and the pond represents a modern link to a rich industrial heritage.

#### Wildlife significance

There is wildlife value in both the pond and the surrounding wooded areas.

#### Recreational value

The area is used by local people for informal recreation and is highly valued for its rural character and tranquil setting.