

Designating Local Green Spaces in Mortimer

Background

The criteria for designating Local Green Space are set out in the National Planning Framework in paragraphs 75 to 78. These are shown below:-

75

Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

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Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

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The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. 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 (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.

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Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.

The sites

The suggestions for Local Green Spaces are listed below with comments as to their suitability for designation. The sites that seem to have a claim to being designated are in green. The sites were suggested either by respondents to the questionnaire or have emerged as part of the general consideration of the NDP.

- The Fairground – This clearly meets all the criteria as it is part of the essence of Mortimer.
- The Alfred Palmer Memorial Field – Again this clearly meets the criteria as it is a major green space within the village, used as a playing field, and is held in trust for the benefit of the village.
- Hammonds Heath woods – This does not seem to meet the criteria as it is not sufficiently special being composed of unmanaged trees and scrub.
- Along Foudry brook south of The Street – While this is some way from the main village it is not an extensive tract of land and is considered of particular local significance. It also seems to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 75 of the National Planning Framework.
- School playing field / Cenotaph – The school playing field might mean St Mary's school field. If so, it does not meet the criteria being too far from the main village and not readily accessible to the public. The cenotaph presumably means the war memorial. This, in conjunction with the Fairground, does seem to meet the criteria.
- The small copse in the Summerlug area – This does seem to meet the criteria as it is actually a common.*
- The woodland in Stephens Firs – This does not seem to meet the criteria as it is not sufficiently special.
- College Piece and Longmoor, which are used by many for walking, dog-walking, chestnutting, teaching children about woodland and wildlife through play. - College Piece, if it means the area within the estate, does not seem to be particularly special. The Longmoor Lane area does seem to have a special ambience but is considered too large to designate as a Green space.
- Windmill common, - this is a common and as such has a protected status.*
- Brewery common - this is a common and as such has a protected status.*
- The strip of land between The Avenue and the cultivated field site 7 because of wildlife and habitat next to the footpath – This does not seem to meet the criteria as it is not sufficiently special. However, the design brief for The Site, of which this forms a part, does designate this area as a landscaped strip.
- Bluebell wood, Kiln Lane area [Admiral's Copse] – This does not seem to meet the criteria as it is not sufficiently special and is not close to the village.
- Pickling Yards – This is outside the parish.
- Loves Wood, end of, save last bit from development- - It is believed planning permission for development has already been given on this site.
- Pickins Yard – This is outside the parish.
- Bronze age barrows and surrounding land – Seems, almost by definition, to meet all the criteria.

- Strawberry Fields - large green at entrance Strawberry Fields – This does not seem to meet the criteria as it is not sufficiently special. It is Public Open Space.
- Woodlands between Mortimer and Burghfield Common. Woodland and farmland off Drury Lane and Turks Lane. – the areas described seem to be too large to meet the criteria.
- Land to the south of The Site – At the moment this is farmland but it is designated in the NDP as a major area of recreational space. As such it will, in future meet the criteria as being close to the village and of major recreational value.

*The status of these areas may be disputable but it is believed they will be designated as commons if they are not already.