

# Local Green Spaces in Harston

Local residents in Harston consider certain green spaces of particular importance for a variety of reasons, from historical to environmental. They could be a village green, recreation ground, an allotment, informal green spaces in housing areas, woodlands or meadows. As there is a spectrum of green spaces the information collated should help to determine whether formal recognition of the areas can be achieved under the protected category (based on the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan) of;

- Local Green Space (LGS – SCDC Local Plan Policy NH/12)
- Protected Village Amenity Area (PVAA – SCDC Local Plan Policy NH/11)

Designation as a **Local Green Space** affords them the same level of protection as green belts. They are for green areas of particular importance to local communities which once designated can prevent new development other than in very special circumstances and can protect land **outside of a development framework**. Half of the Recreation Ground has already been designated as a LGS, the other (football pitches) half is protected as it is in the Greenbelt.

Designation as a **Protected Village Amenity Area** is for sites **within the village framework** to safeguard areas of undeveloped land which are important to retain. The school playing field has already been designated as a PVAA. Not all PVAAs have public access as some undeveloped areas which are important may be private gardens.

They also vary from those which are very open to visual penetration to those which may be enclosed or semi-enclosed. PVAAS often appear to be relatively modern areas of green space, not particularly demonstrably special to village apart from contribution to character & community appreciation

The key characteristics are that the Green Space should be:

- Reasonably close to the community it serves eg within easy walking distance
- Local in character
- Not be an extensive tract of land.
- The space must be **demonstrably special** to the local community/ **hold a particular local significance**

Supporting evidence for designation might include;

- Importance to the local community
- Beauty
- Tranquillity
- Historical or cultural value
- Recreational value
- Wildlife, Ecological significance, Connectivity to other green areas
- Other local significance

Below is a useful fuller consideration of the supporting evidence produced by Corby which we used to assess our Green spaces

## Supporting Evidence Criteria (From Corby guidelines)

**National policy states that to be designated as a Local Green Space the area should be reasonably close to the community they serve.** The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will be dependent on local circumstances including why the green area is seen as special. For example if public access is a key factor, then the site would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served. Sites should feel part of the local area, sites which are entirely isolated from the community will not be considered appropriate. Natural England has set a range of accessibility standards for natural sites and areas within easy reach of people's homes. The 2010 ANGSt guidance recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural green space no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home which is considered to be an appropriate walking distance.

**Is the proposed Local Green Space designation 'local in character'?** Consider the following questions: Does the site feel as though it is part of the local area and can it be explained why? Can you provide robust evidence to demonstrate successfully that it connects physically, visually and socially to the local area?

**The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its beauty.** This would include the visual attractiveness and aesthetic value of the site; and its contribution to townscape, landscape, character and/or setting of the settlement. Features on sites such as woodland and water could also contribute to the overall value of the site. It would be expected that the area contributes significantly to the local identity and character of the area and plays an important role in defining the sense of place of the area.

**The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its historical significance.** The site is viewed to be of local significance because of its historic importance to the community. For example

- There are recognised historic assets on site
- The site links back to a historic person or event
- The site has retained historical features and boundaries

**The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its recreational value.** The site holds a local significance for recreation providing an important asset for the community for a particular activity or for a range of activities. Although most green and open spaces will fall within this category and offer some form of recreational value, the aim is to identify why a particular area offers something unique and could not realistically be accommodated on the sites that would serve the community. National guidance states that there is no need to designate linear corridors as Local Green Space simply to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation.

**The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its tranquillity.** The site submitted is viewed to be of importance to the local community because of the tranquillity it provides, offering a place for quiet reflection and peaceful enjoyment. It would need to demonstrate the following qualities:

- A feeling of remoteness or quiet contemplation
- A general inability to see man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or excessive lighting
- Has a general lack of artificial noise from vehicles or industry

**The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its richness of wildlife.** For a site to be considered suitable for Local Green Space status for its richness of wildlife, it would need to relate to one or more of the following:

- Be designated for its wildlife value (e.g. Local Wildlife Site or Pocket Park)
- Include a combination of important landscape features such as ancient Hedgerows, Ancient Woodland, Veteran trees, pockets of woodland and wildflower meadow
- Support a unique and/or diverse range of wildlife. This would need to be evidenced by records, ecological surveys and/or expert advice.

## Proposed Local Green spaces

### 1. The Green, Royston Road

#### **Description (Name, location, size & ownership)**

**Name:** The Green (once Swan Green)

**Location:** Where Church Street meets with Royston Rd which splits to go either side of the Green

**The area** of the total proposed site is ... acres covering a triangle of land with mown grass area and some trees

**It is currently owned** by Cambridgeshire CC and maintained by Harston Parish Council

**Justification** (why demonstrably special to local community)

#### **Proximity to the Community**

It's position is at the core of village connectivity with Church St leading off to the church, residences & industrial area in Button End, and Royston Rd on main route connecting to High St and shop/services; very much part of the local area. Local people pass the Green regularly, most daily, on foot, bike or by car and there is a bus stop along the eastern side.

### **Local Character & beauty (visual attractiveness)**

The Green is part of a key village scene as it is surrounded by Grade & local listed traditional buildings/heritage assets and provides an attractive green setting for these, contributing to the townscape and rural character of the village. Although some original tall pine trees have been lost others have been planted adding variety to the area and providing a wider habitat for wildlife – areas under and surrounding trees are left unmown. Areas planted with daffodils are left unmown in spring time, adding to the attractiveness of the area. It retains a wellhead where a local artesian spring emerges; the village relied on artesian supplies before mains water arrived.

### **Historical, Cultural, Recreational & Community Significance**

This area was part of the historic core of the village with services such as saddlers, blacksmiths, inns and public houses along the main routes through and across the village. It is still busy with traffic passing on all three sides of the Green, but all buildings apart from the Queen’s Head are now residential but retaining their C18th and C19th architecture. The Green is no longer called Swan Green as that Inn burnt down in 1928. However, the Green was chosen as the site of the Village Sign put up to celebrate the Queen’s Silver Jubilee and the sign itself includes artesian wells, and a millstone base to reflect the importance of the nearby mill as carts would pass regularly past the Green on the way there. There is a listed Milestone on the Green. There were once 5 pine trees planted by the owners of Harston House to represent the 5 sisters who lived there.

Before the road got too busy pageants and fairs were held on the Green in 1920s & 30s and the celebration for the end of WW2 saw people gathering there. Locals can remember swingboats and stalls.

There is a permanent History Display Board on the Green showing the importance of its location within the old historic core.

### **Ecological Significance (richness of wildlife)**

The green is also part of the village ecological network as the group of varied trees on the Green virtually connect at a tree crown level to trees alongside the gardens of Harston house. It can be considered to form part of the ‘green network’ comprising green spaces, gardens and verges that enables wildlife to traverse the built environment.

The small semi-wild area under and around trees provides a habitat for invertebrates and small mammals in the rough mown part and the trees provide further habitats.



## Overall Justification

The Green exists as a well-loved village space that has been a characteristic part of the area for hundreds of years. It provides an insight into the past appearance of the village through the concentration of grade & local listed buildings/heritage assets and represents a shared history of local activities. It is placed at cross roads within the village, spans a main thoroughfare and is easily accessible to all residents. As part of the local 'green network' it contributes to the ecological diversity and mobility within the area and is believed to be making a positive contribution to the environmental health of Harston. It is considered important to ensure that this area is protected for the future and being designated as an LGS would achieve this.

## 2. War Memorial Green

### **Description (Name, location, size & ownership)**

**Name:** War Memorial Green (once Post Office Corner))

**Location:** Where Royston Rd meets High Street along one side and road splits either side of the green triangle to go down Station Rd.

**The area** of the total proposed site is ... acres covering a triangle of land with mown grass area and the war memorial surrounded by flowerbeds.

**Ownership of Memorial Green** has not been registered but Harston Parish Council act as custodians of The Green and maintain it for the village, aided by the Greener Harston volunteer group.

**Justification** (why demonstrably special to local community)

### **Proximity to the Community**

Its position is at the core of village connectivity at a cross roads on a main route in the village, by vehicle and on foot, where High Street, Royston Road and Station road meet. It was significantly chosen as the site for the war memorial, and is close to the village centre and school, making it very much part of the local area.

### **Local Character & beauty (visual attractiveness)**

The green is part of a key village scene as it is surrounded by older traditional C17th & C19th buildings that face on to it, retaining the historic feel of the area. The Memorial Green can be seen from three directions providing iconic views with its backdrop of traditional buildings, protected village frontages and tree-lined roads, emphasising the visual attractiveness and ruralness of the area. It very much contributes to townscape, character and setting of the settlement. The flowerbeds around the Green are well maintained by volunteers and many locals and outsiders comment on the vibrant colours and attractiveness of this well maintained area.

### **Historical, Cultural, Recreational & Community Significance**

The War Memorial Green has always been important to local people, originally as a source of water from a pump, with the Pemberton Arms alongside providing a meeting places for Comrades of the Great War before the memorial was erected. People continue to gather yearly for a Remembrance Day parade, showing it is of personal relevance and symbolic. The Green always looks good as it is maintained by local people who care, showing its significance to the local community.

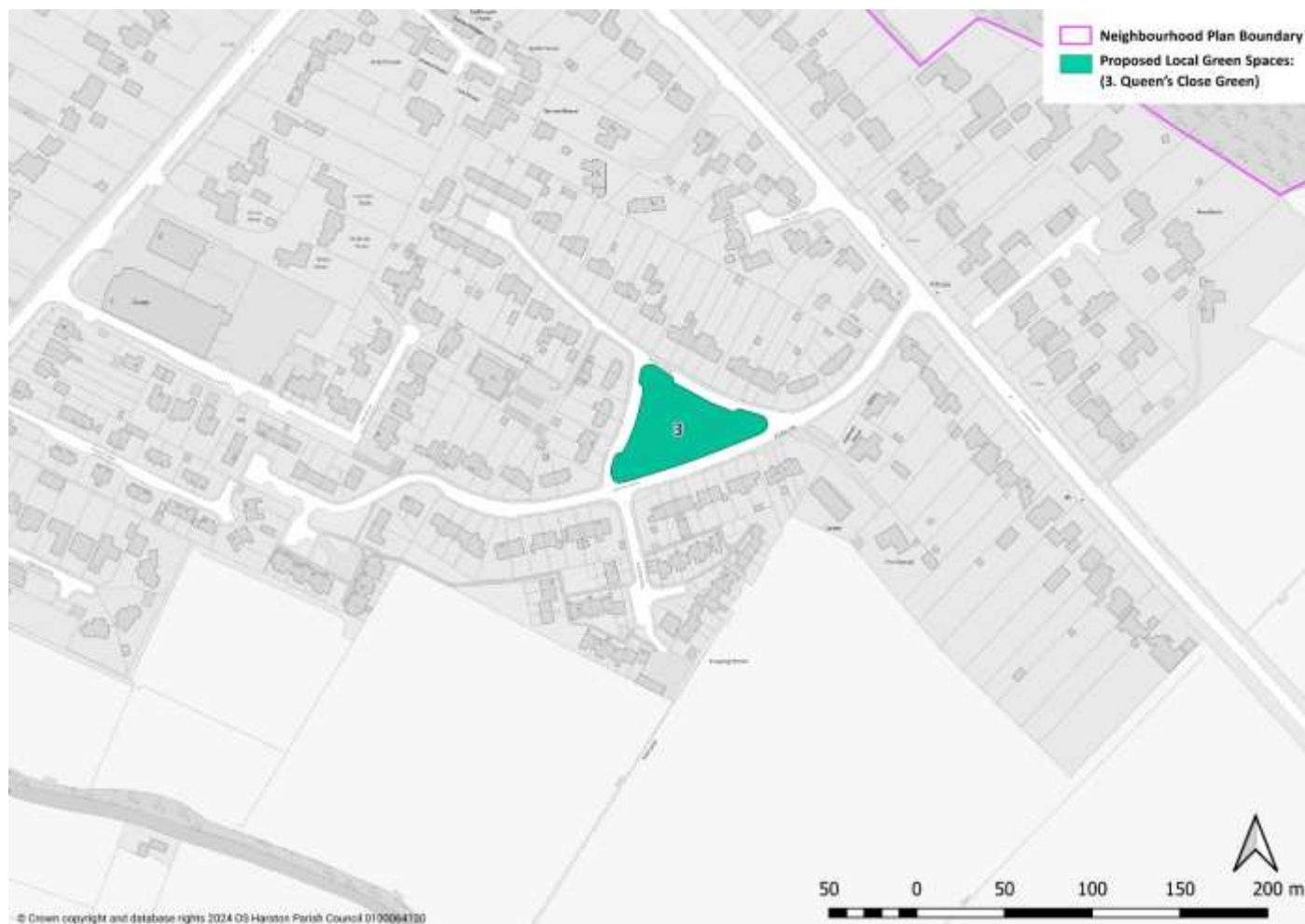
### **Ecological Significance (richness of wildlife)**

The area forms part of the 'green network' in the village that enables wildlife to traverse the built environment. Flowers and the box hedge attract insects but the grass is regularly mown, so providing limited habitats for wildlife. The grass is untreated so there is some flowering of native species of flora such as daisy, white clover and creeping buttercup which are of benefit to invertebrates. Birds can feed on invertebrates within this area.

## Overall Justification

Memorial Green is a significant, attractive and well-loved village space that has changed through time to reflect changes in the village over several hundreds years. It represents a shared history via the war memorial and a site for contemporary community gatherings. It is centrally placed within the village, at a convergence of roads and is easily accessible to all residents. It is important to locals who volunteer to maintain it. It is considered important to ensure that this area is protected for the future and being designated as an LGS would achieve this

### 3. Queen's Close Green



#### **Description (Name, location, size & ownership)**

**Name:** Queen's Close Green

**Location:** Within Queen's Close housing estate, towards northern end of village

**The area** of the total proposed site is ... acres covering a triangle of land with mown grass area and a few, relatively young trees

**It is currently owned** and maintained by South Cambs District Council

#### **Proximity to the Community**

Located within a large housing area in the north part of the village with three narrow lanes located on its sides allowing many people passing on their daily journeys on foot, by bike and car from one part of the village to another.

#### **Local Character & beauty (visual attractiveness)**

Large well-kept green area with a few trees which reflect the rural nature of the village, along with the surrounding front gardens found on its three sides.

### **Historical, Cultural, Recreational & Community Significance /appreciation**

The area is valued by the local community as it provides a visually important, reasonably large open area within an old dense housing area (built early 1950s) that surrounds it on three sides. It is easily accessible to all residents in northern part of the village and is used as a meeting area for occasional community events, eg street parties to celebrate coronations, jubilees. There are no formal recreational facilities associated with the site but consideration should be given to the provision of a small play area for young families and a few seating benches to enable residents and pedestrians passing through to spend time appreciating this attractive small area.

### **Ecological Significance (richness of wildlife)**

Large well-kept grass area with some trees located at different ends providing a limited habitat for wildlife but forming part of the 'green network' within the village linked to surrounding gardens.

### **Overall Justification**

Attractive Green Space within a densely built up housing area that is appreciated locally for its openness and setting.

It is considered important to ensure that this area is protected for the future and being designated as an LGS would achieve this