

Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan



(Credit: Jane Gilbey)

Local Green Spaces Designation Report

March 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been produced to accompany the Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan and provides the evidence related to the policy to designate Local Green Spaces (LGS). These designations are in Policy 5.7: Local Green Spaces.
- 1.2 It is based on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019) criteria related to the designation of Local Green Spaces in Neighbourhood Plans.
- 1.3 Paragraph 99 of the NPPF sets out the parameters as: '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. Designating land as Local Green Space should 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 updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period'.
- 1.4 Paragraph 100 of the NPPF states that LGS designation should only be used where the green space is:
 1. in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 2. 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
 3. local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

2. Methodology and community consultation

- 2.1 This report considers the appropriateness of specific spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan Area for designation as LGS when assessed against paragraphs 99 and 100 of the NPPF. The Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has reviewed each site and has considered whether the designation would meet the basic conditions required of Neighbourhood Plans.
- 2.2 During 2016-21, Great and Little Chesterford Parish Councils, in tandem with the two communities, developed the Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan. A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was set up with the remit to undertake a programme of consultations with village residents.
- 2.3 Consultation with residents in both villages (Great Chesterford Village Plan 2015 and Little Chesterford Survey 2016) showed that community open spaces were highly valued.
- 2.4 An Historic Environment Assessment for the whole of the Plan area was completed by Essex County Council in 2016, which included the identification of a number of open spaces worthy of protection.
- 2.5 A Landscape Character Assessment for the whole of the Plan area was commissioned by Great Chesterford Parish Council in 2018 from an independent landscape architect. This identified open spaces worthy of protection.
- 2.6 In addition, UDC's Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) highlighted the benefits that open spaces bring to the historic core of Great Chesterford.

- 2.7 A village-wide consultation in July 2019 included focused questions on protecting valued community open spaces. There was overwhelming support for this objective, with only 1.37% of respondents disagreeing.
- 2.8 Each of the proposed sites has been mapped against the NPPF criteria. The Steering Group has analysed each site against the NPPF criteria and its recommendations are included in Section 3.

3. Designations

3.1 The Steering Group agreed that the following sites should be included in the Regulation 14 Draft of the Plan as Local Green Space. Each site is shown on Figure 1.

Site Ref	Site name
LGS-1	Recreation Ground - Great Chesterford
LGS-2	Allotments, orchard, nursery field - Great Chesterford
LGS-3	Jubilee Gardens - Great Chesterford
LGS-4	Horse field parallel to Carmen Street and on Jacksons Lane - Great Chesterford
LGS-5	Academy playing field - Great Chesterford
LGS-6	Coronation Green - Great Chesterford
LGS-7	Horse River Green - Great Chesterford
LGS-8	Congregational chapel garden - Great Chesterford
LGS-9	Pilgrims Close open space - Great Chesterford
LGS-10	Rookery Close open space - Great Chesterford
LGS-11	Stanley Road play area - Great Chesterford
LGS-12	Thorpe Lea open space - Great Chesterford
LGS-13	Land east of Manor Farm - Great Chesterford
LGS-14	Ash Green open space - Great Chesterford
LGS-15	Green by Manor cottages - Little Chesterford
LGS-16	Meadow behind Little Chesterford Village Hall - Little Chesterford
LGS-17	Grassed area adjacent to B184 - Little Chesterford

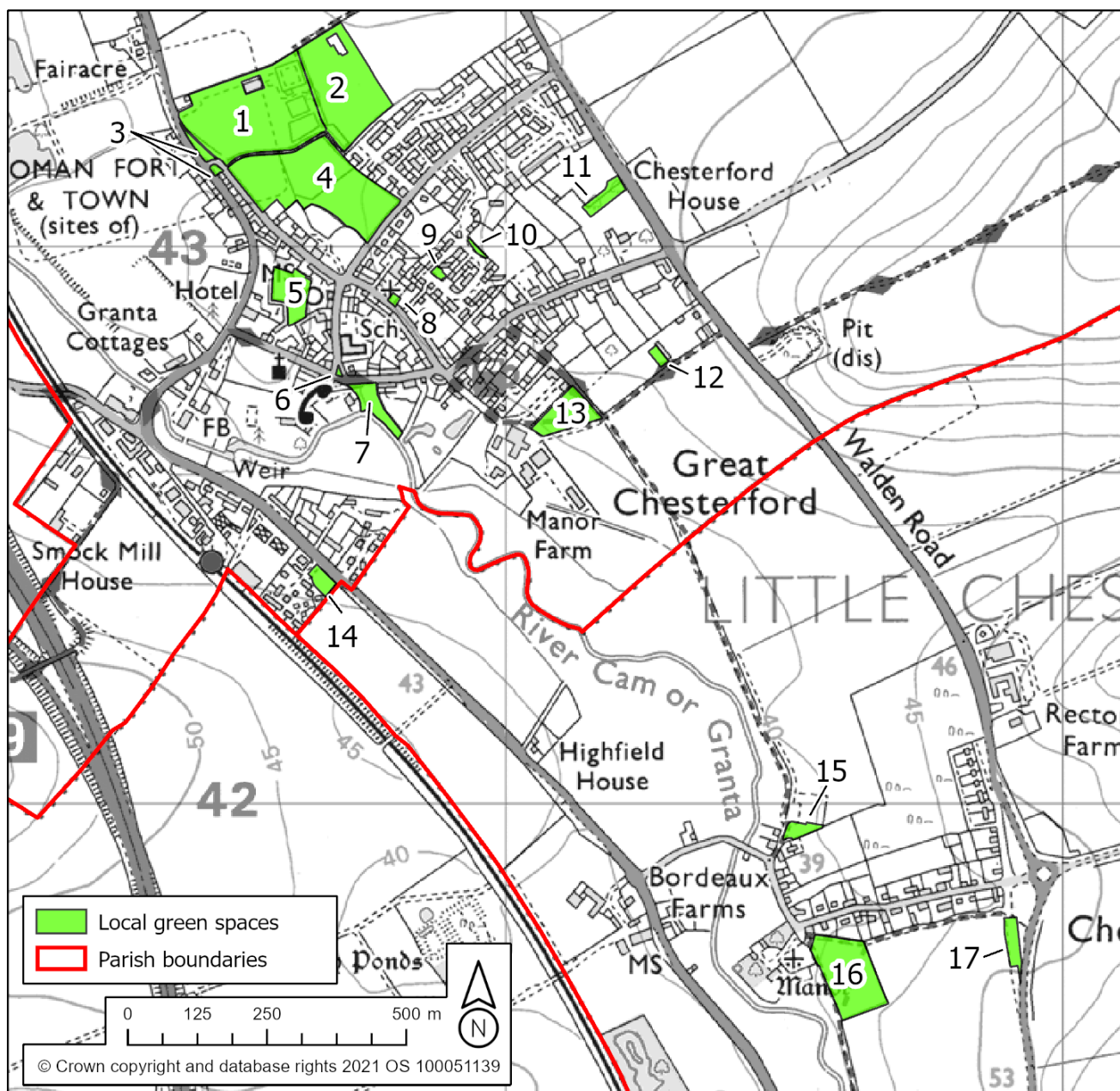
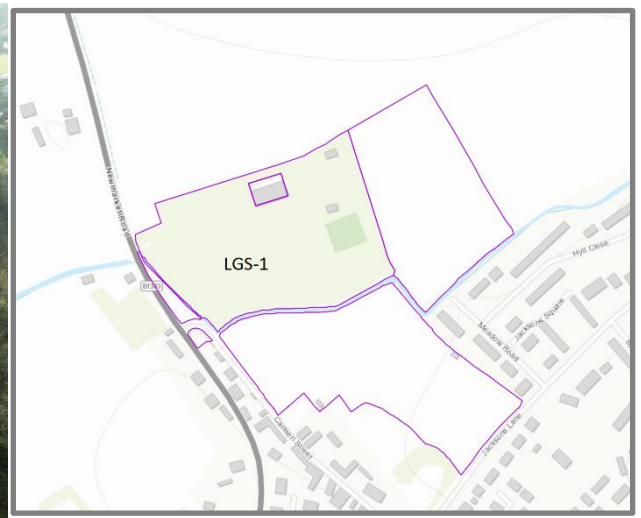


Figure 1 - Local Green Spaces

LGS-1

Recreation Ground - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Sports pitches, children's play area, skate ramp, outdoor gym, multi-sports courts, bowls club; Public Open Space.

Size:

3.1 hectares

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

Within walking distance of the historic centre of the village.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

It was identified as a formal recreation area in the Landscape Character Assessment 2017, which also highlighted that, *"The [recreation] centre is set in one of the few Public Open Spaces within Great Chesterford, which comprises the only sports facilities within the village. Therefore it is unlikely to be suitable for development."*

It is valued by the community for providing the only sporting facilities within the village; it is regularly used for bowls, football, tennis, fitness, cricket and walking, as well as the well-used and much-loved children's play park and skate ramp.

In the Great Chesterford Primary Academy Survey 2019, the recreation ground (and skate park) was rated #1 in the list of aspects of the villages that the children valued the most. In the Great Chesterford Village Plan 2015, the Recreation Ground playground was identified as being heavily used by villagers.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at both ends.

Allotments, orchard, nursery field - Great Chesterford



Village allotments, community orchard and outdoor space surrounding proposed nursery; Public Open Space.

2.1 hectares

Within walking distance of the historic centre of the village.

It is valued by the community for recreational opportunities, and a thriving community group supports the development of the site of the allotments and recently-planted orchard.

The Great Chesterford Village Plan 2015, which predates the development of the allotments, indicated that there was strong support for an allotment area. Many people also supported the planting of community fruit trees .

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at both ends.

LGS-3

Jubilee Gardens - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Informal grass area; Public Open Space.

Size:

0.1 hectare

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

Within walking distance of the historic centre of the village.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

It was identified as a formal recreation area in the Landscape Character Assessment 2017.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at both ends.

LGS-4

Horse field parallel to Carmen Street and on Jacksons Lane - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Paddocks

Size:

2.7 hectares

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

At the heart of the historic centre of the village.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

It was identified as an Important Open Space by the UDC Great Chesterford Conservation Area Appraisal 2007 and described as providing, *"a very important buffer between the conservation area and the extensive area of modern development at Meadow Road. The groups of mature Lime trees impart a traditional park like quality and once again introduce a strong vertical emphasis to this important green lung"*, with the northwest section identified as *"one of the most striking areas of open land that also acts as a buffer between the conservation area and modern development."* The Appraisal also identified two important views across this land from Jacksons Lane and the bottom of Carmen Street.

It was described in the Historic Environment Assessment 2016 as a *'significant'* open area where development should be avoided and the site of two significant views - #17 and #18.

It was described in the Landscape Character Assessment 2017 as a private open space *"warranting protection from development"*. It highlighted that *"there are three grazing fields to the north of Carmen Street and Jacksons Lane. These fields bring a rural influence to the village core and make an important contribution to its landscape character, thus potential development on these fields should be resisted."*

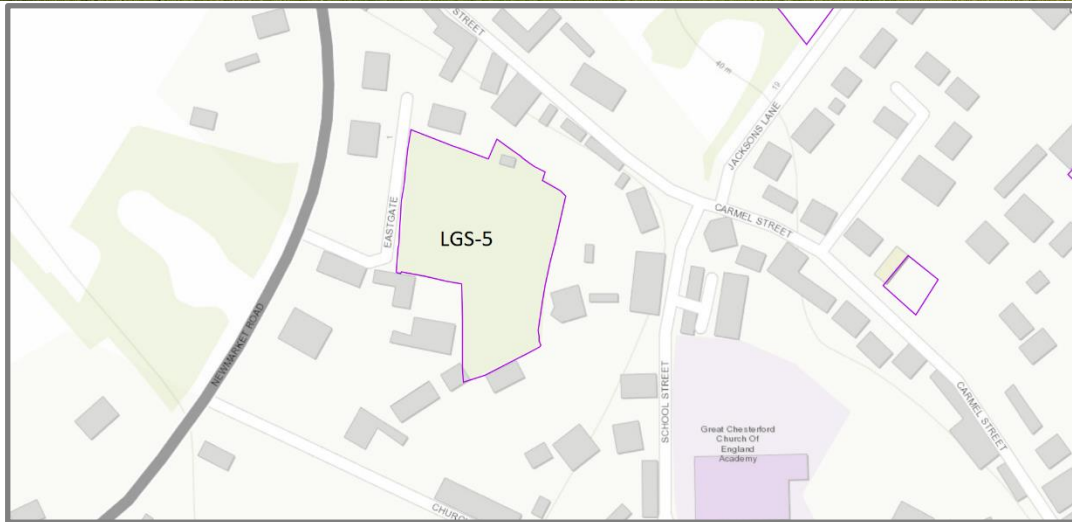
It is valued as both a backdrop and buffer to the Conservation Area and for its beauty & tranquillity; it is highly visible from Carmen Street and Jacksons Lane and is very important to the visual amenity of the village.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at both ends.

LGS-5

Academy playing field - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Playing fields for Great Chesterford Primary Academy (it also has two structures which are used ancillary to the general field use)

Size:

0.5 hectare

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

At the heart of the historic centre of the village.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

Identified as an Important Open Space by the UDC Great Chesterford Conservation Area Appraisal 2007, which described it, in addition to its vital role in providing playing fields, as acting as a “*green lung separating the modern development off Newmarket Road from the more historic areas of Carmen Street and School Street*”.

It was described in the Historic Environment Assessment as a '*significant*' open area where development should be avoided, and the site of a significant view (#23) across which All Saints Church is viewed from Carmen Street.

It was identified as an educational recreation area in the Landscape Character Assessment 2017.

It is valued by Academy children for delivery of PE curriculum and Sports Day; and by community groups such as Beavers/Cubs/Scouts.

It is a Protected Open Space in UDC's Local Plan 2005.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at both ends.

LGS-6

Coronation Green - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Informal grass area; Public Open Space

Size:

0.01 hectare

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

At the heart of the historic centre of the village.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

It was identified as an important Open Space by the UDC Great Chesterford Conservation Area Appraisal 2007 and identified as a semi natural green space in the Landscape Character Assessment 2017.

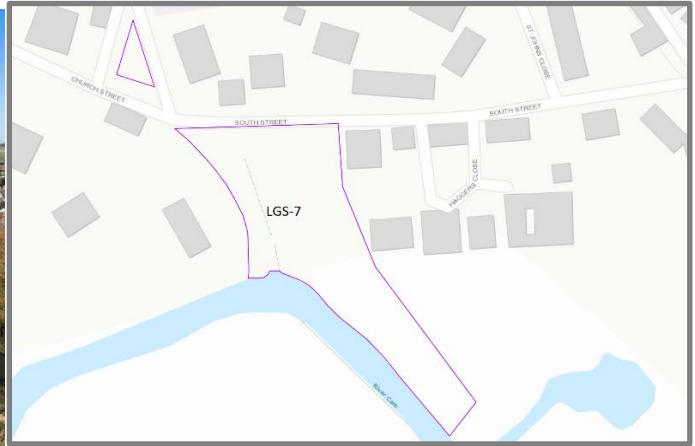
It is highly valued by the community, and it is often a focal point of village events, such as Remembrance Day parades.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at both ends.

LGS-7

Horse River Green - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Informal grass area; Public Open Space

Size:

0.3 hectare

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

At the heart of the historic centre of the village.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

It was identified as an important Open Space by the UDC Great Chesterford Conservation Area Appraisal 2007, which described it as "*delightful*".

It was described in the Historic Environment Assessment as a "*significant*" open area where development should be avoided; and also the site of two significant views which link "*the historic settlement to the wider countryside and to the river. They make major positive contribution to the ability to experience and appreciate the topographical position and the rural agricultural character of the Conservation Area's wider countryside setting.*"

It was identified as a semi natural green space in the Landscape Character Assessment 2017.

It is valued for its beauty and tranquillity, with seating overlooking the River Cam and fields; valued also as the location of village events such as 'Great Get Together'. In the Great Chesterford Primary Academy Survey 2019, the river, trees and wildlife (particularly what the children can see at Horse River Green) was rated #4 in the list of aspects of the villages that the children valued the most. In addition, the Great Chesterford Village Plan 2015 showed that Horse River Green was heavily used by villagers .

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at one end.

LGS-8

Congregational chapel garden - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Informal garden area

Size:

0.03 hectare

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

At the heart of the historic centre of the village.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

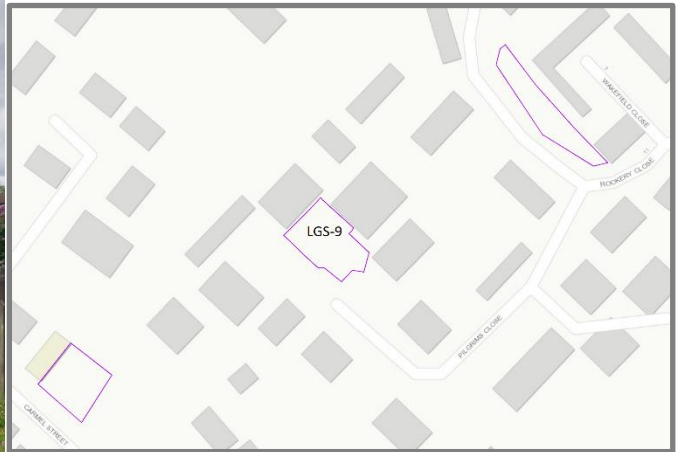
It is valued for its beauty and tranquillity; the seating areas amongst trees and beds are highly valued by residents as a recreational space. In the Great Chesterford Primary Academy Survey 2019, the river, trees and wildlife, particularly in the Congregational Chapel Garden, was rated #4 in the list of aspects of the villages that the children valued the most.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and a defined entrance at one end.

LGS-9

Pilgrims Close open space - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Informal grass area; Public Open Space

Size:

0.04 hectare

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

At the heart of the Pilgrim Close development.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

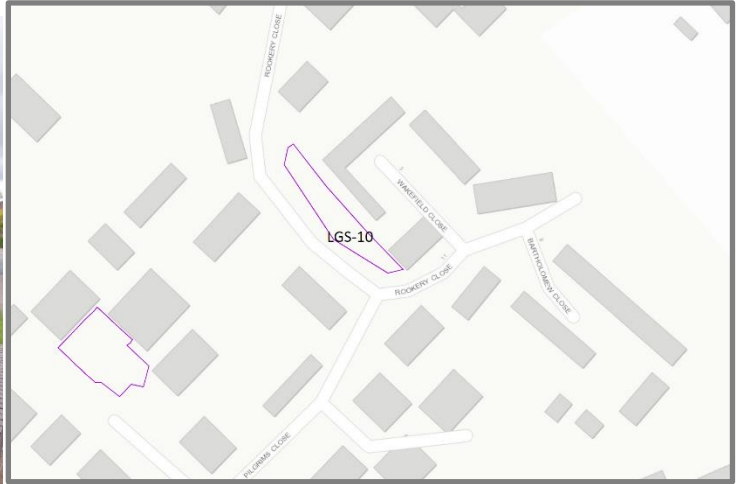
It was identified as a formal recreation area in the Landscape Character Assessment 2017; it is highly valued by Pilgrim Close residents as a play space.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and a defined entrance at one end.

LGS-10

Rookery Close open space - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Informal grass area; Public Open Space

Size:

0.03 hectare

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

At the heart of the Rookery Close development.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

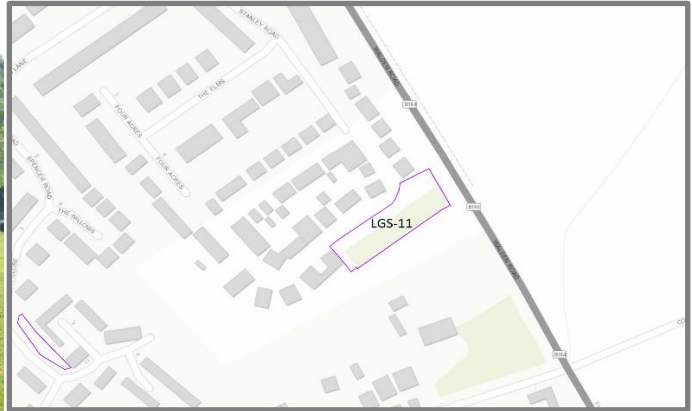
There is very little green space in Rookery Close. This is, in essence, the only piece of land which does not form part of individual residential gardens.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at both ends.

LGS-11

Stanley Road play area - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Informal grass area and woodland; Public Open Space

Size:

0.21 hectare

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

At the heart of the Stanley Road development.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

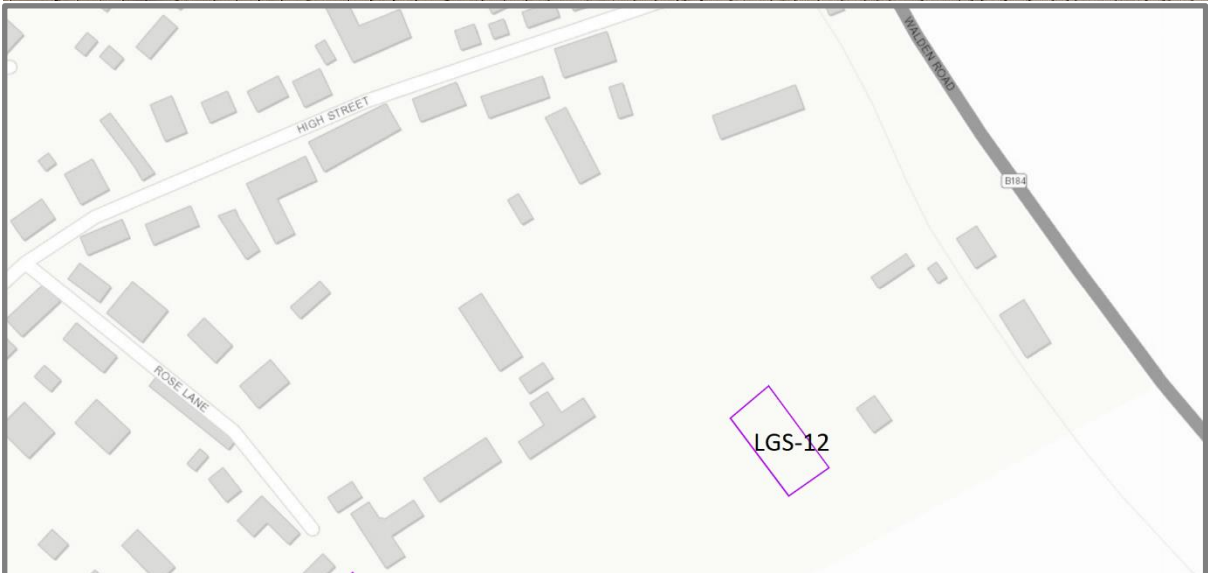
There is very little green space in Stanley Road. This is, in essence, the only piece of land which does not form part of individual residential gardens. Used by Stanley Road residents as a play area for children; it is valued for its natural features and as a safe space for local play.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and a defined entrance at one end.

LGS-12

Thorpe Lea open space - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Informal grass area; Public Open Space

Size:

0.07 hectare

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

At the heart of the Thorpe Lea development.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

There is very little green space in Thorpe Lea. This is in essence the only piece of land which does not form part of individual residential gardens. Used by Thorpe Lea residents as a play area for children; valued for its natural features and as a safe space for local play.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at both ends.

LGS-13

Land east of Manor Farm - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Agricultural land, crossed by a public footpath.

Size:

0.54 hectare

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

Within walking distance of the historic centre of the village.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

It is valued for its rural setting, forming the first part of the rural landscape as one exits the built form of the village via one of the two footpaths which run alongside it. It is a tranquil and important part of the village and where a good proportion of the village of Great Chesterford start their walk along the footpath to Little Chesterford, through the separation zone. There is a public footpath that runs through it.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at both ends.

LGS-14

Ash Green open space - Great Chesterford



Description of site:

Informal grass area; Public Open Space

Size:

0.14 hectare

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

Within walking distance of the historic centre of the village.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

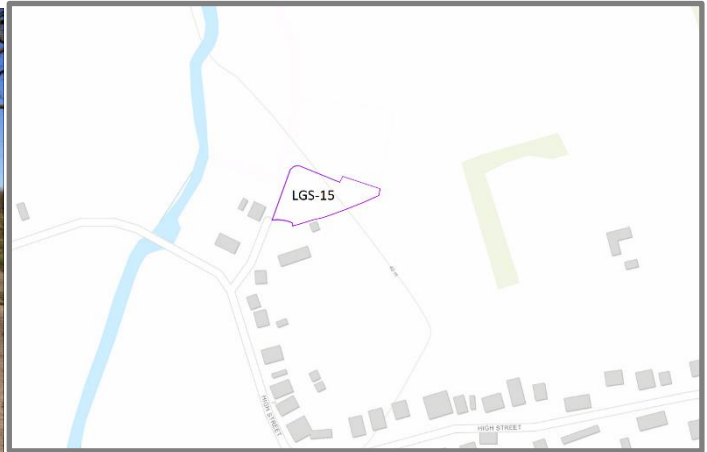
There is very little green space in Ash Green. This is the only piece of land which does not form part of individual residential gardens. Valued for its natural features and acts as a natural buffer to the B1383 in the south-eastern area of the development.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and a defined entrance at one end.

LGS-15

Green by Manor cottages - Little Chesterford



Description of site:

Informal grass area

Size:

0.14 hectares

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

At the settlement edge of Little Chesterford village, close to the historic village centre.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

This open space adjacent to Manor Cottages, Little Chesterford is bounded on one side by the public footpath that joins the two villages of Great and Little Chesterford. It is an important open green area that transitions from the built village environment to the cultivated fields that run along the Cam river valley, and opens up the views to the surrounding chalk uplands. It was identified as a valued green space through the Village Walks held by the community in 2016.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with defined entrances.

LGS-16 Meadow behind Little Chesterford Village Hall - Little Chesterford



Description of site:

Permanent pasture

Size:

1.28 hectares

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

At the heart of the historic centre of Little Chesterford village.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

It was identified as a formal recreation area in the Landscape Character Assessment 2017.

This open meadow to the rear of the village hall is crossed by public footpaths. It is at the heart of the historic and community centre of Little Chesterford, adjoining the Village Hall, the Church and the Grade I listed Manor House. With the kind permission of the landowner, the Meadow has always played an important role in recreational and community events, which currently include the annual fete and bonfire night, and was historically the site of the village cricket pitch.

In the Little Chesterford Village Survey 2016, the meadow (and the space between the hall and the church) was rated #2 in the assets that the villagers wished to see protected.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at both ends.

LGS-17

Grassed area adjacent to B184 - Little Chesterford



Description of site:

Informal grass area

Size:

0.21 hectares

Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

Within walking distance of the historic centre of Little Chesterford village.

Is it demonstrably special to a local community and does it hold 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?

This area of land at the south-eastern edge of the village is at the junction of the Walden Road and the Back Lane footpath and is an important wildlife habitat. It has been designated as a Special Roadside Verge, (otherwise known as a Roadside Nature Reserve) and provides an invaluable habitat for wildflowers and associated species that are under threat. An extensive range of species is present in this area, including the bee orchid and liquorice moth.

Is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Yes. Discrete area of land with clear boundaries and defined entrances at both ends.