

Stage 1: Nominations

Space 1 LSA footpath
Space 2 Crop marks SAM
Space 3 Fishing lake
Space 4 Field south of Mary Warner Estate
Space 5 Reservoir land
Space 6 Churn Wood
Space 7 Manor House Meadow
Spaces 8 & 12 (combine) Woodlands attached to Birch Wood
Space 9 Green Island Gardens
Space 10 Wall's Wood
Space 11 Footpath over A12
Space 13 Hart's Lane orchard
Space 14 Malting Farm Lane footpath
Space 15 (?)
Space 16 POS for new reservoir
Space 17 The Street verge
Space 18 Lodge Lane verges
Space 19 A12 buffers
Space 20 Bullock Wood
Space 21 footpath new reservoir
Space 22 car park land
Space 23 Glebe Corner land
Space 24 Harwich Rd allotments
Space 25 School field

Stage 2: Desktop Assessments

Brief discussion of all the sites discounted following the desktop assessment exercise.

Public open space associated with new reservoir (Space 16) TM025295

Overview: a new area of public open space is under construction following planning consent ESS/57/04/TEN for an extension of the Ardleigh Reservoir.



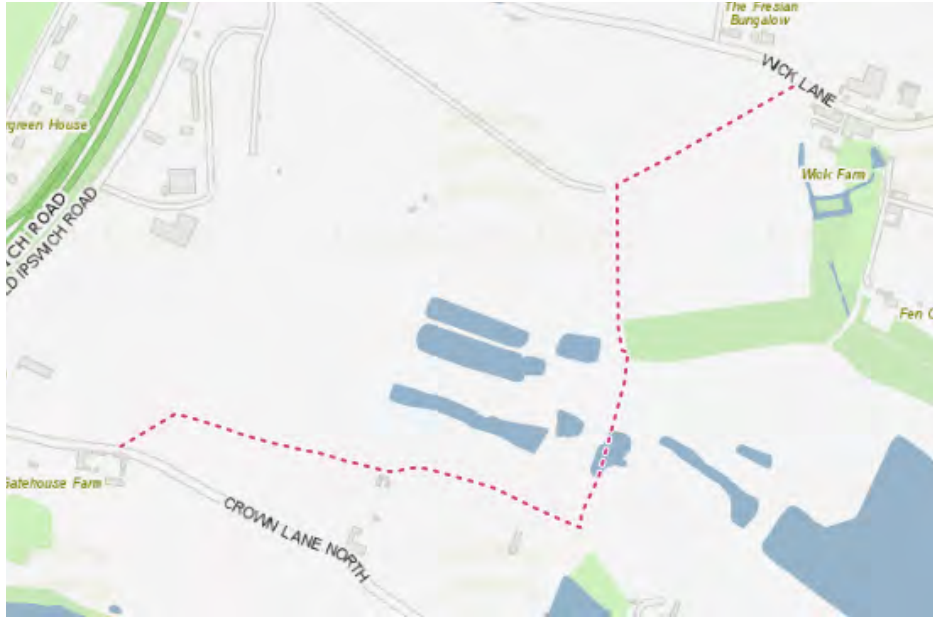
Assessment: This space is anticipated to have substantial community value. It will support recreation and provide habitats for a wide variety of wildlife. It is understood that disabled access to the new reservoir will also be facilitated.

As the space is not yet constructed or available to the public, it is not considered suitable for designation at this time. However, this should be revisited once the space is complete.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD.

Footpath near new reservoir (Space 21) TM032297, PROW 158 19

Overview: public footpath connecting Crown Lane North to Wick Lane, passing by the site of the new reservoir.



Assessment: The potential to designate part of this footpath (or land adjacent) has been considered. The area is anticipated to provide special public views of the new reservoir and was put forward on this basis.

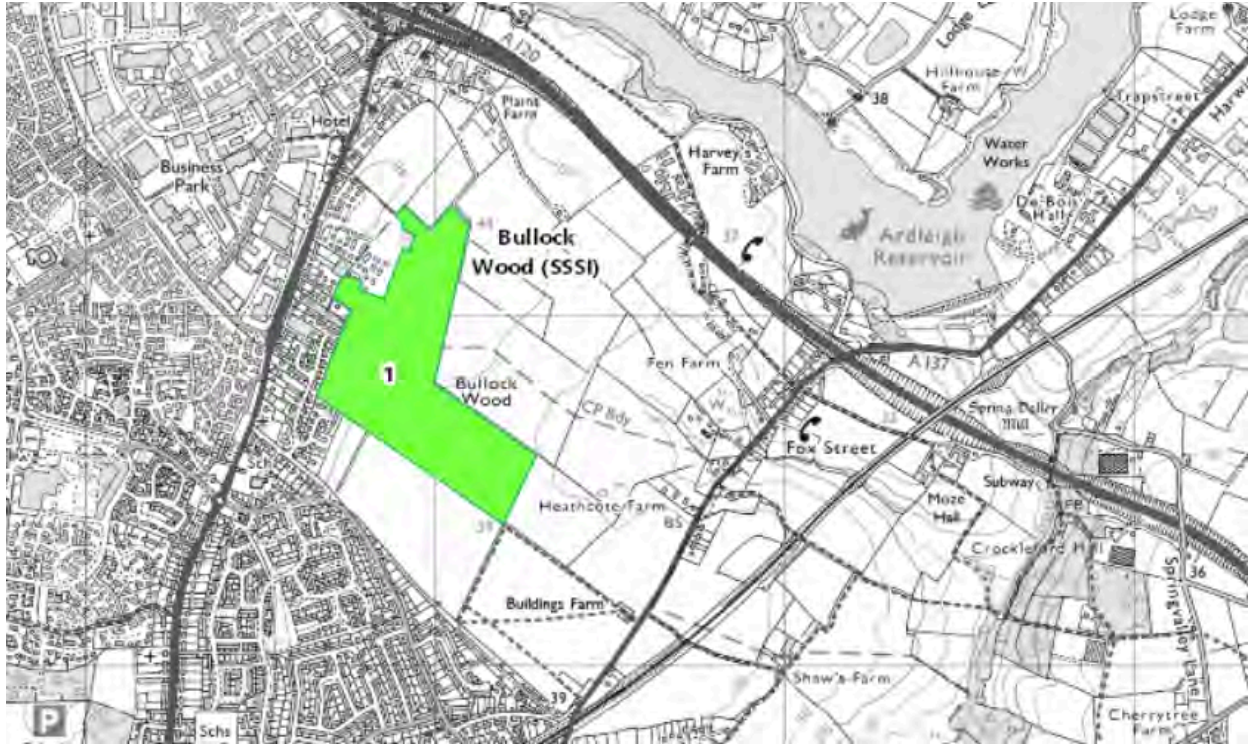
As the new reservoir is still under construction, it would be premature to pursue designation on this basis at this time.

Furthermore, whilst the nearby reservoir is under construction, the amenity value of the footpath and surrounding land is materially reduced. Consequently, it has not been necessary to investigate its special value any further. This should be revisited once the new reservoir is complete.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD.

Bullock Wood (Space 20) TM020285

Overview: Ancient woodland of c. 23 ha containing a rare mix of trees. Approximately 2/5 of the woodland lies in Ardleigh parish, with the remainder in Colchester. It provides a mature and natural setting to the modern housing estate on Old Ipswich Road (Plains Farm) and a vital buffer between the rural parish of Ardleigh and the urban edge of Colchester. No public access is permitted.



Assessment: This woodland has substantial heritage, wildlife and landscape value. It provides vital separation between the rural parish of Ardleigh and the urban edge of Colchester, preventing their physical coalescence. It provides an invaluable visual and acoustic buffer that prevents this part of Ardleigh from feeling overborne by Colchester.

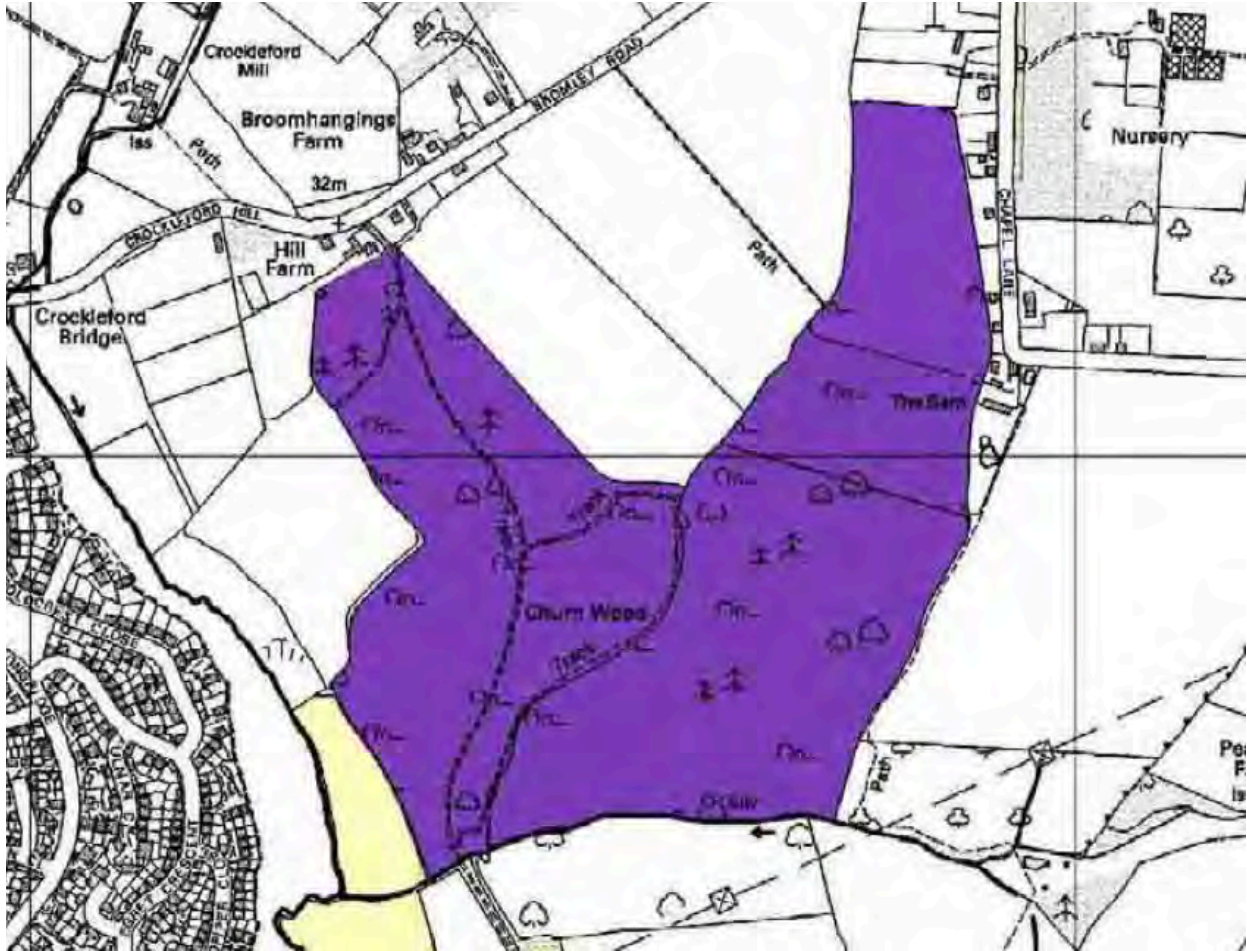
The whole of Bullock Wood is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), meaning it already benefits from a very high level of national protection.

The value of this space to the local community is very significant. However, it is already adequately protected as an SSSI and its designation here is unlikely to provide any additional level of control or protection.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD.

Churn Wood (Space 6) TM043269, FOOTPATH PROW 158 37 etc.

Overview: Ancient woodland of c. 26 ha located on the southern parish boundary, maintaining separation from Colchester. Public access via footpaths.



This large ancient woodland site is of mixed structure (broadleaved and coniferous) consisting partly of Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards and partly coniferous plantation of Spruce (*Picea sp.*) and Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). Other tree/shrub species include Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and elm (*Ulmus sp.*). The ground flora contains Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*).

Assessment: This large ancient woodland has substantial heritage, wildlife and landscape value. It provides vital separation between the rural parish of Ardleigh and the urban edge of Colchester, preventing their physical coalescence. It provides an invaluable visual and acoustic buffer that prevents this part of Ardleigh from feeling overborne by Colchester.

The whole of Churn Wood is designated a Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) in the Local Plan, meaning it already benefits from a high level of local protection.

Policy PPL4 of the Local Plan protects LoWS from development likely to have an adverse impact on the site or any of its special features. All new development affecting

LoWS must be supported by an appropriate ecological assessment. Harmful new development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where the benefits demonstrably outweigh the harm caused and where adequate mitigation or - as a last resort - compensation measures are included.

The value of this space to the local community is very significant. However, it is already adequately protected as a LoWS and its designation here is unlikely to provide any additional level of control or protection.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD.

Wall's Wood circular route (Space 10) TM030277, FOOTPATHS PROW 158 16, PROW 158 17, PROW 158 40,

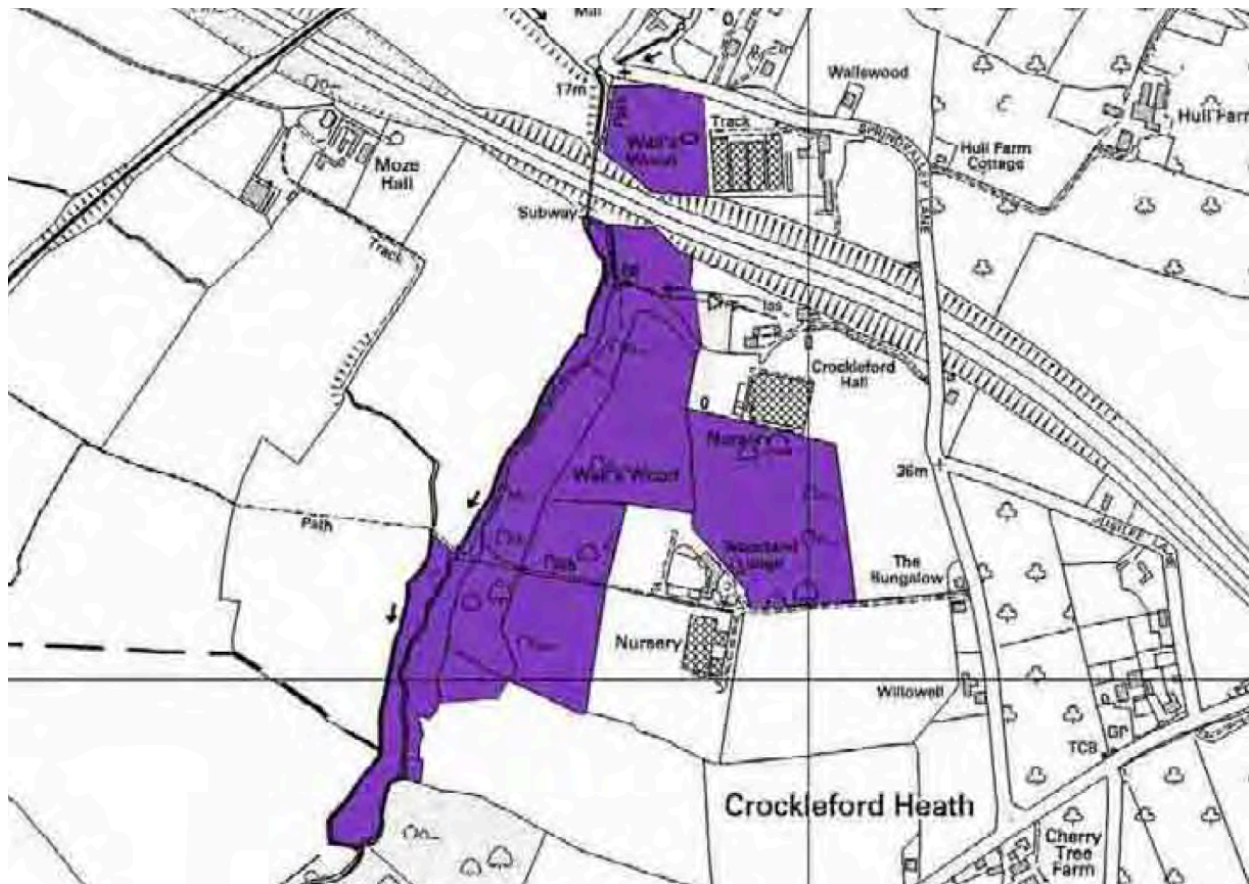
Overview: A c. 11.5 ha section of the ancient Wall's Wood offering a circular walk along public footpaths. Salary Brook passes by. Part of the ancient valley system.



Existing designations: The whole site is designated Local Wildlife Site Te6 - Wall's Wood

Te6 Wall's Wood (14.3 ha) TM 037271

Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards with coppiced Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) form majority of this old coppice with standards wood. The canopy also includes Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*). Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Willow (*Salix spp.*) dominates near the stream. The majority of ground cover comprises Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) and Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) with Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*). The streamline flora is formed by Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) with Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*) and Soft-rush (*Juncus effusus*).



Policy PPL4 of the Local Plan protects LoWS from development likely to have an adverse impact on the site or any of its special features. All new development affecting LoWS must be supported by an appropriate ecological assessment. Harmful new development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where the benefits demonstrably outweigh the harm caused and where adequate mitigation or - as a last resort - compensation measures are included.

Assessment: The woodlands are picturesque and tranquil and contain a rich variety of mature, high value trees. They are teeming with wildlife and Salary Brook passes in

close proximity of one of the footpaths.

A 17.1 ha section of the brook - located in Colchester Borough - is designated a Local Nature Reserve in recognition of the variety of habitats it contains, supporting bats, water voles, lizards, nightingales, reed warblers and a wide range of plants.

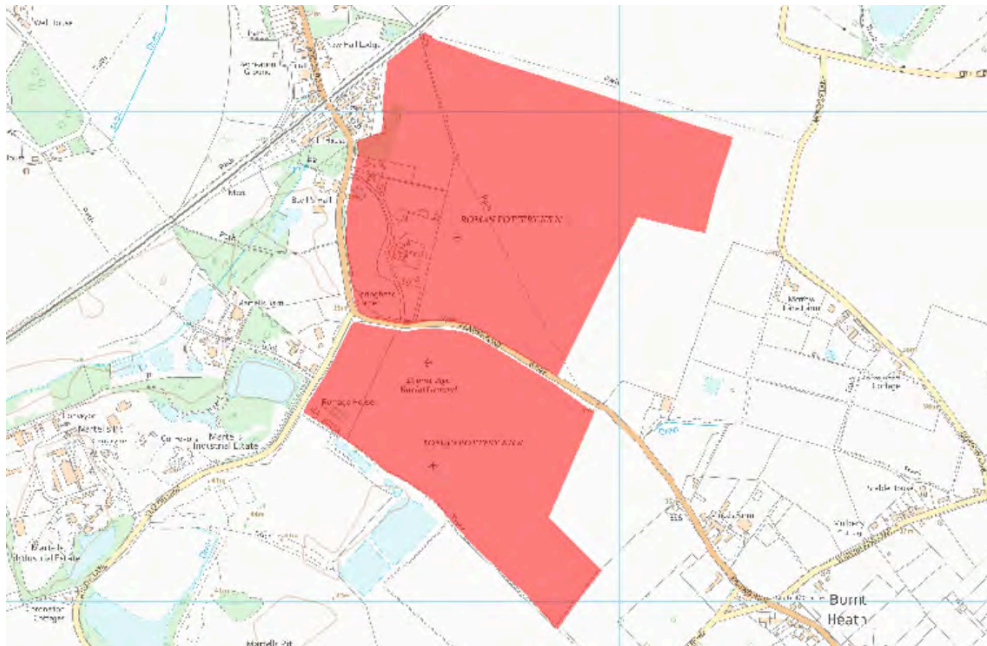
The various public footpaths provide a pleasant circular walk around this part of the woods, enhancing its recreational value to the community. They also support access to the woods from various parts of the parish, including from across the train tracks and the A120.

The value of this site to the local community is evident. However, at over 11 ha in total area, it is considered to be an extensive tract of land. As a result, it is not suitable for designation here. As the whole space is designated a Local Wildlife Site, it benefits from an adequate level of protection in any case.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD.

Crop mark site south of Ardleigh (Space 2) TM63289, FOOTPATH PROW 158 28, HERITAGE LIST ENTRY NO. 1002146

Overview: Scheduled Ancient Monument (crop mark site) with public footpath adjacent.



Assessment: A public footpath runs along the northernmost boundary of the site. From here, there is a notable vista across arable fields towards the village church.

The Scheduled Ancient Monument contains Bronze Age burial crop circles and Roman kilns which supplied tiles for the building of Roman Colchester.

Consequently, its heritage value is considerable.

Due to its close proximity to Ardleigh village, it is also well used by local residents for exercise and recreation.

As a Scheduled Ancient Monument, this space is a heritage asset of the highest significance (paragraph 200, NPPF). Accordingly, it is subject to a very high degree of protection, including legal protection¹.

It is considered highly unlikely that its designation here would provide any additional protection over and above what already exists.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD.

¹ It is a criminal offence to carry out any works or activities that physically affect a scheduled monument in the absence of scheduled monument consent

Stage 3: Field Assessments

Manor House Meadow (Space 7) TM052288, TM051286, FOOTPATHS PROW158 7, PROW 158 8

Overview: amenity land enclosed by public footpaths and containing ancient woodlands.



Size: approx. 3.5 ha

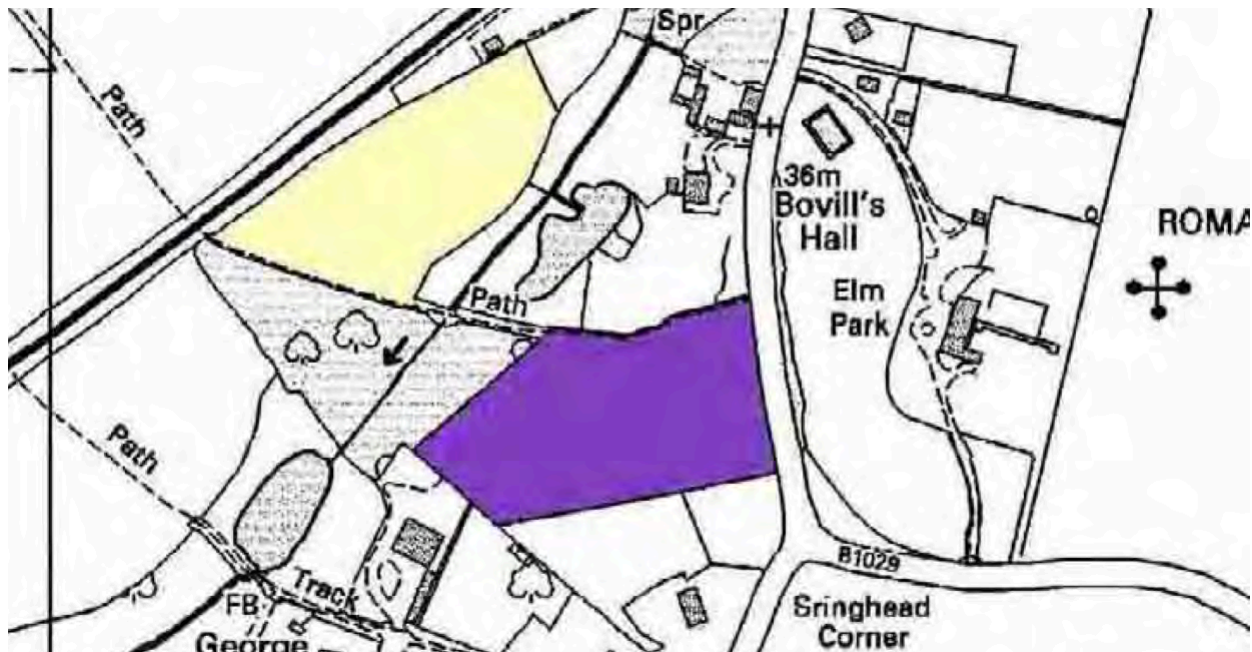
Proximity: Accessible from Ardleigh village via continuous footpaths within approx. 5 minutes.

Ownership: It is believed that the land is in private ownership. However, its recreational use by the public is long-established. The public footpaths provide a means of public access in the event that the private owner ever closed the central area off to the community.

Use: This space is used daily by villagers for exercise, leisure and dog walking.

Existing designations: Part of the site (closest Station Road) is Local Wildlife Site Te10

Springhead Corner Meadow House:



Te10 Springhead Corner Meadow (2.0 ha) TM 053286

This is remnant tussocky acid grassland, in which rabbit grazing is helping to maintain a short sward. The main species recorded include Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*) and Squirrel-tail Fescue (*Vulpia bromoides*). Hybrid or Common Lime (*Tilia cordata* x *T. platyphyllos*) and Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) tree are planted near southern boundary. This site has also large colony of Minotaur beetles, a scarce insect in north-east Essex.

Local Wildlife Site Te9 Manor House Meadow is also located in close proximity.

Policy PPL4 of the Local Plan protects LoWS from development likely to have an adverse impact on the site or any of its special features. All new development affecting LoWS must be supported by an appropriate ecological assessment. Harmful new development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where the benefits demonstrably outweigh the harm caused and where adequate mitigation or - as a last resort - compensation measures are included.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: This is a picturesque and tranquil plot of pleasantly undulating land almost fully enclosed by mature, high value trees. It has evident value to the local community. It

is prominent in views from the B1029 on the approach to Ardleigh. The woodlands are teeming with wildlife, with birds of prey heard and seen above the treetops.

Salary Brook passes through the woodlands. A 17.1 ha section of the brook - located in Colchester Borough - is designated a Local Nature Reserve in recognition of the variety of habitats it contains, supporting bats, water voles, lizards, nightingales, reed warblers and a wide range of plants.

The surrounding land is in working agricultural use, with tractors a common feature. The smells and sounds of agriculture (e.g. field spraying) can be prominent here.

Noise from the nearby quarry can be intrusive, although dampened by the woods. Fortunately, the quarry cannot be seen.

The site is part of a wider and well-used circular walking route that takes you across the train tracks (another distinctive feature of Ardleigh) and over the open fields just south of the village, terminating close to the village recreation grounds.

Photos 02/11/2021:

	
Site entrance from the B1029	Close-boarded fence between site & grade II listed Bovill's Hall - a soft barrier would be preferred



Views looking west (close to the B1029)



Salary Brook



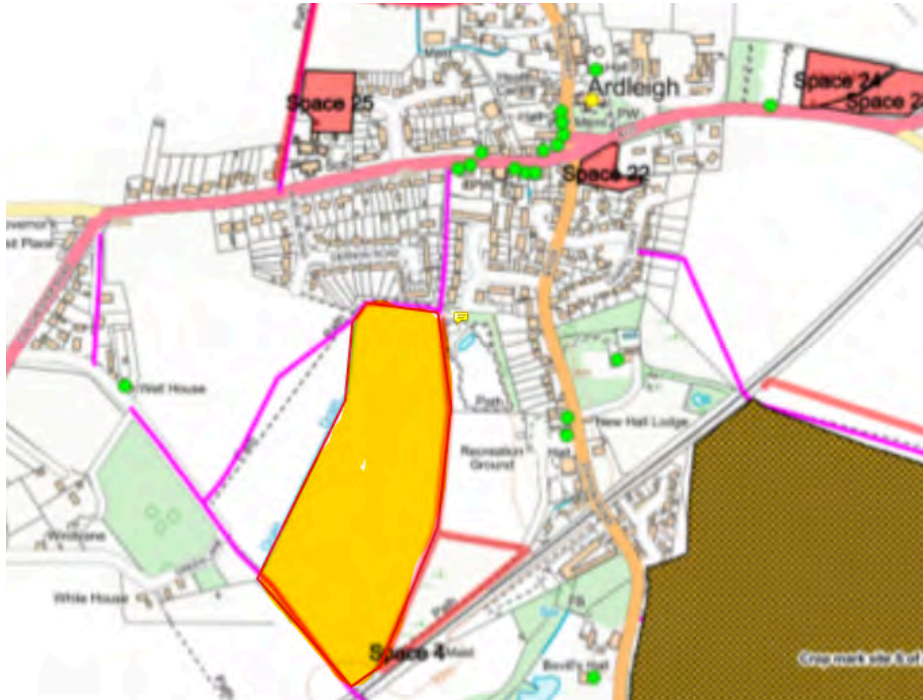
Views looking east (close to the train tracks)

Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is significant. It is very easily accessible via sustainable means to a large proportion of parish residents. It provides invaluable and irreplaceable natural features, including ancient woodlands and supports a rich diversity of wildlife. It is prominent in public views, providing a very pleasant approach to Ardleigh from the south. Only part of the site is already protected via its designation as a Local Wildlife Site.

CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Field south of Mary Warner Estate (Space 4) TM053292, FOOTPATH PROW158 5

Overview: agricultural field on the southern edge of the village, bordered by official and unofficial walking routes.



Size: approx. 7.7 ha

Proximity: The site lies in exceptionally convenient proximity of the village centre, with connecting footpaths available. It is also accessible from the recreation ground/ children's play area.

Ownership: It is believed that the working agricultural field is in private ownership. An unofficial footpath runs along its eastern boundary and is well-trodden. Its daily use by the public appears to have been kindly permitted by the landowner over multiple decades. A public right of way extends along its northern and southern boundaries, skirting off to the west.

Use: The field provides an idyllic rural backdrop to one of the village's main built-up residential areas (Mary Warner Estate) as well as some of its important community facilities (Millennium Green and children's play area/playing fields). Its unofficial walking track is very well-used by villagers, mainly walkers and local children.

It also forms part of a pleasant and well-used circular walking route that takes you across the train tracks and through ancient woodlands before returning to the village.

Existing designations: None known.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: This field provides a very pleasant rural backdrop to some important village amenities and (relatively) densely occupied parts of the village. It enables far-reaching views both from and towards open countryside. From the south of the area, the built form of the village appears as a pleasant and incidental feature peering out of a lush landscape. There was evidence of children playing in this area (geocaching and similar games).

The presence of high quality, mature trees along the site's eastern perimeter adds considerably to the character and amenity of the village recreation grounds.

Despite the nondescript, hard-edged suburban nature of the Mary Warner Estate, the presence of this open tract of land ensures the overall retention of the rural character and setting of this part of the village.

Photos 02/11/2021:



View from the south - built edge of Ardleigh just visible on the horizon

	
<p>View from site through perimeter trees towards recreation ground</p>	<p>View from children's play area through to site</p>
	
<p>Trees alongside children's play area</p>	<p>Assisting to soften and situate the Mary Warner Estate</p>

Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is significant. It is located in exceptionally close proximity of the main built-up part of the village. It provides an invaluable rural outlook from the southern edge of the village and from two of its most valuable and well-used community facilities. It enables picturesque views to be had of Ardleigh from as far south as the train tracks. It is used on a daily basis by a wide variety of villagers for a number of recreational purposes.

CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Fishing lake and footpaths north of Colchester Road (Space 3) TM050297, FOOTPATH PROW 158 22 & PROW 158 4

Overview: Footpaths over agricultural fields leading to fishing lake.



Size: approx. 2.1 ha

Proximity: The site lies in very convenient proximity of the village centre, adjacent to the village primary school.

Ownership: The site comprises public footpaths and a private fishing lake. There is a track around the lake that the public are permitted to use, with benches available.

Use: This site is very well-used by residents of the village, especially dog walkers throughout the day. The fishing lake provides an ideal, tranquil location to pause and take stock. It is understood that a local club has fishing rights to the lake. Sunsets over the lake are well worth the view and many locals visit at this time to take photographs.

Existing designations: None known.

Allocations or planning consents: Multiple applications to provide a major housing scheme on part of this site plus the adjacent field have been refused by the council (and one dismissed at appeal) in recent years.

The most recent application for 50 houses (20/00592/OUT) is currently at appeal, with a public hearing anticipated to be held towards the end of 2021.



Site area of the 50 houses (20/00592/OUT) currently at appeal

If the appeal succeeds, the tranquility of the lake and adjacent footpaths would be spoilt and its value to the local community would be significantly diminished. It is not clear at this stage whether the public footpath would be retained or given over to vehicular traffic.

Assessment: The fishing lake is replete with natural features and wildlife, including reed beds, pond lilies and fish. It is densely enclosed by mature trees and vegetation which add considerably to its sense of tranquility. It is a special location where you have a real sense of being far away from people and settlement.

The footpath off Wick Lane is very pleasant, bordered on both sides by trees and vegetation. A dog waste bin is conveniently located at the entrance, supporting community use and helping to keep the space clean. The treed footpath provides a welcome break in the built-up frontage of the road. It enables views of the open

countryside beyond the settlement to be glimpsed from Colchester Road.

Colchester Road has a built-up, suburban character and is one of the more heavily trafficked roads in Ardleigh. This space provides some welcome relief and a pleasant reminder of Ardleigh's rural character and setting. Here, the sense of transition from suburbia to idyllic, open countryside is abrupt - the enviable ability of local residents to "escape" to the country within only metres of this main road should be acknowledged and preserved.

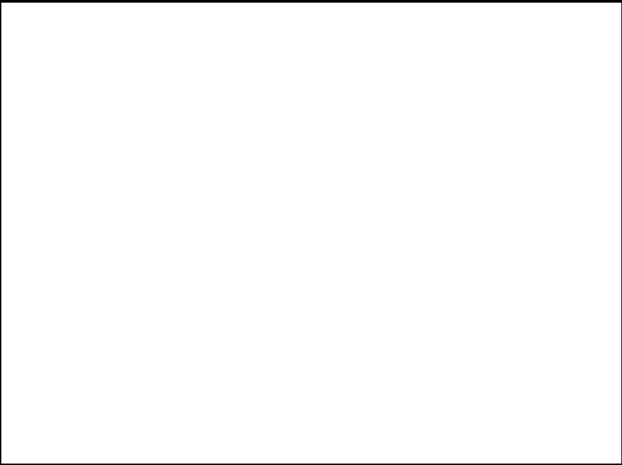
Moving towards the fishing lake, the footpaths afford pleasant views across the open field towards the built edge of Ardleigh. The generously landscaped rear gardens of the houses located here provide a very attractive edge to the village and strongly reinforce its rural character. This is probably the best (public) view of Ardleigh village available from the surrounding landscape.

The industrial site (P Tuckwell Ltd) located to the east is not currently intrusive. However, regard should be had to the potential for this to change.

Photos 02/11/2021:



Entrance to footpath off Colchester Road



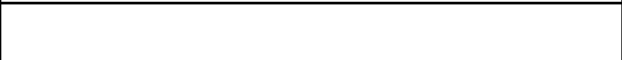
Pleasant pedestrian approach onto Colchester Road



Beautiful rural landscape opening up within only metres of Colchester Road

View back across the field towards the softly landscaped village edge

ADD LAKE PHOTOS



Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is significant. It is located in very close proximity of the village centre and primary school. It contains facilities to support dog walking, angling, bird watching etc. It also provides a very welcome break in the built-up frontage of Colchester Road, contributing the only glimpse of open countryside available from this main road. It contains a tranquil and well looked after fishing lake that supports a variety of local wildlife and provides opportunities for the public to sit and take stock. It is used frequently throughout the day by villagers.

AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE CURRENT PLANNING APPEAL. IF DISMISSED, CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Historic green verge, The Street/Rookery Chase (Space 17) TM054305, FOOTPATH PROW 158 2 & PROW 158 3

Overview: Green verge located in one of the most historically significant parts of the settlement. Inter-visible with the village church. Contains impressive mature trees, affords wide views of the open countryside and provides access onto both a public footpath and public bridleway.



Size: approx. 0.08 ha

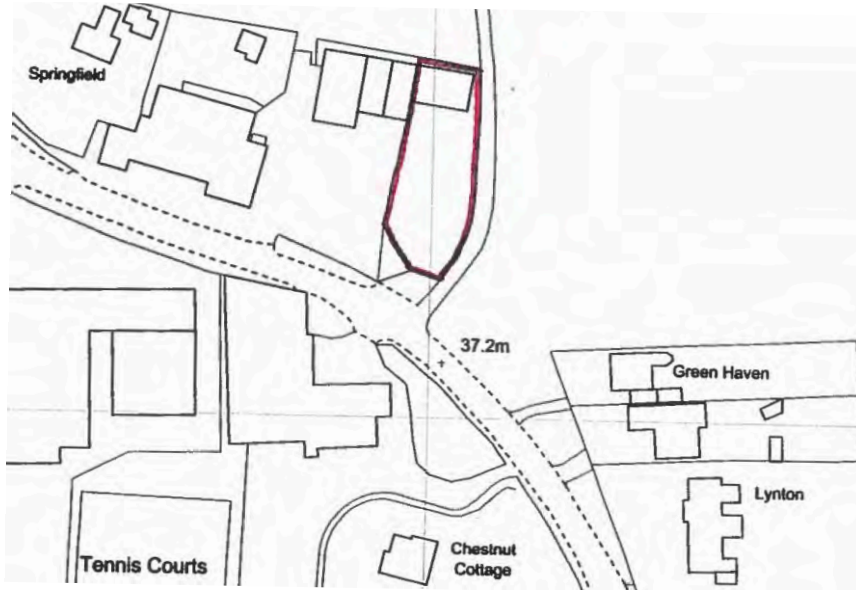
Proximity: The site lies close to the village centre, approximately 60m from the village post office and 100m from the church.

Ownership: The site is public amenity land.

Use: This site is a historic grass verge. It contains impressive mature trees, planters, street signage and a dog waste facility and supports access to the surrounding countryside via two public rights of way. It also contains a number of detracting features, including substation and utility poles.

Existing designations: Located just inside the Conservation Area, marking its northern boundary.

Allocations or planning consents: The immediate vicinity has been subject to a fair amount of modern development, including new housing. Most recently, two dwellings were approved and are currently under construction on the plot located just on the opposite side of Rookery Chase (19/00787/FUL).



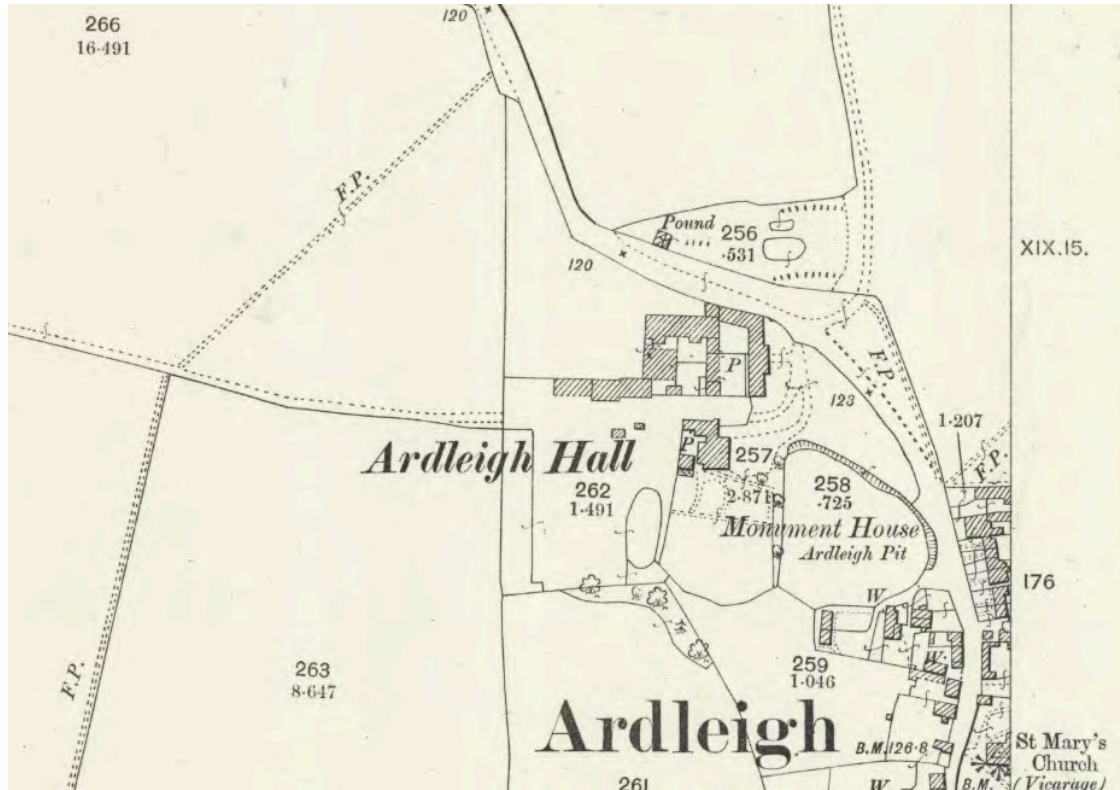
Site of the 2 dwellings under construction (19/00787/FUL)

Prior to this, consent had been granted for a new cycle cafe on the same site (18/00764/FUL). The approved cycle cafe would have provided a valuable community asset that would have improved public access to and appreciation of the adjacent green space and adjoining countryside. Unfortunately, this permission was never implemented. A similar proposal would be welcomed, provided it did not intrude into the space itself.

No planning consents have been sought to develop the space itself.

Assessment: This historic verge is located in one of the oldest parts of the settlement, in proximity of one of its former original manor houses, Ardleigh Hall (now sadly demolished and replaced with a modern housing estate) that had appeared in records as far back as the Domesday Book.

The verge provides one of the last remaining remnants of the lane's historic form and character - see verge appearing in its current form on the below 1897 OS Map:



The verge greatly assists to soften the appearance of adjacent industrial sites and provide welcome maturity to the modern housing estate located immediately across the road.

It contributes materially to the rural feel of the lane, which is significant as it provides an historic approach to the Grade II* listed village church. There is intervisibility between the space and the church.

The largely open and undeveloped nature of the verge enables wide views to be had of the working fields beyond it, providing a picturesque rural outlook at this settlement edge that is mostly unchanged since historic times.

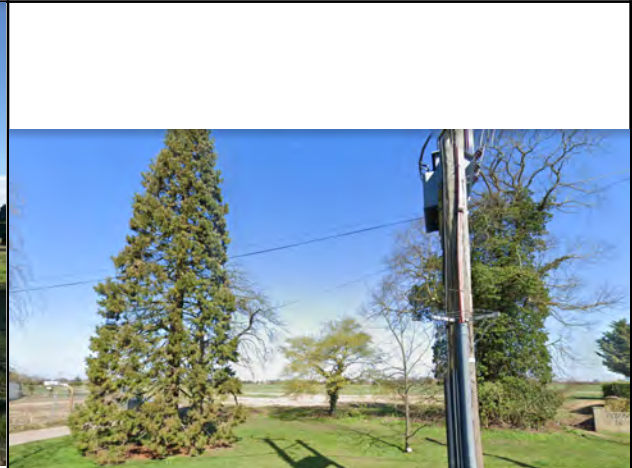
The verge provides a very pleasant approach onto the public footpath and bridleway located here and the presence of a dog waste bin encourages their community use and upkeep.

The siting of modern utility poles and substations on the land is unfortunate and detracting. Care should be taken not to exacerbate their impact and, wherever possible, opportunities to lessen their visual impact should be encouraged.

Photos 02/11/2021:



View of open countryside from the space



View of open countryside through the space



Signs and bin, with open countryside beyond



The substation and evidence of a tree removal



The church and vicarage visible from the space	View of the space from across the road
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Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is significant. It is located in very close proximity of the village church, with intervisibility between the two. It contains facilities to support the community's use of the adjacent rights of way. It enables wide views to be had of the surrounding open countryside from The Street. It is of heritage significance and contributes considerably to the rural and spacious character of the streetscene.

CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Harwich Road Allotments (Space 24) TM058295

Overview: private allotments used by local residents to grow vegetables, flowers and keep poultry. Some produce grown here is sold to the local community.



Size: approx. 0.6 ha

Proximity: Accessible from the heart of Ardleigh village via continuous footpaths within approx. 3 minutes.

Ownership: The land is in private ownership. It is open to paid membership by the public (?)

Use: This land is used as allotments. It is believed that these are the only allotments currently available in the parish? It is bordered by the village cemetery on one side and historic glebe land on the other.

Existing designations: Located just outside of but adjacent to the Conservation Area.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: This is a functional parcel of land that provides a valuable facility to local

residents, enabling them to grow their own food/plants and keep animals.

The allotments are small in size and are believed to be at capacity. The lack of any other allotments in the parish renders the community value of this space all the more significant. They are important to retain, especially given modern concerns over food security and supply issues.

The allotments have an agricultural character and assist to preserve the rural qualities of this important approach to the village (located just before the village sign).

The individual allotments themselves are tidy and well cared for. However, communal parts of the site appear to be used as dumping grounds which is unfortunate and should be remediated. The site's boundary hedgerows do provide an effective screen of its less attractive parts.

The impressive mature trees of the neighbouring cemetery tower over the site, greatly enhancing the character and enjoyment of the space. The fields and historic glebe land located to the immediate north and east similarly assist to root the allotments firmly in their countryside context, in spite of the proximity of Harwich Road.

The boundary hedgerows make a material positive contribution towards the character and qualities of this section of Harwich Road, as well as providing a visual and acoustic buffer. This is especially true in the summer months.

It is also commonplace in the summer months for produce to be placed at the site entrance for sale.

Photos 02/11/2021:



The allotments



Produce for sale on the pavement



Trees in the neighbouring cemetery



Parts of the site could be better maintained

Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is moderate. It is not open to all members of the public which diminishes its value. However, it contains the only allotments in the parish and this makes its retention all the more important. It is also prominently located on the approach to Ardleigh along Harwich Road. Its community-focused, land-based, low-impact use is highly appropriate to the locality and makes it an ideal neighbour to the village cemetery.

CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Glebe Corner Land on Harwich Road (Space 23) TM058295

Overview: former glebe land (attached to the village church) now in the ownership of Essex County Council



Size: approx. 0.9 ha

Proximity: Accessible from the heart of Ardleigh village via continuous footpaths within approx. 3 minutes.

Ownership: The land is in the ownership of Essex County Council.

Use: This land has been left uncultivated for many years. It appears as rough grassland and is bordered by dense and mature hedgerows of some quality.

Existing designations: None known.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: Although the site is not open to the public, it provides an important landscape function, marking the unofficial “entrance” to Ardleigh from the east.

Its boundary hedgerows provide a material positive contribution towards the rural character and qualities of this section of Harwich Road. This is especially true in the summer months.

The open and undeveloped qualities of the space assist to preserve the tranquility and countryside character of the adjacent allotments and cemetery.

As the site has been left to grow wild, it appears to support an abundance of butterflies and bees.

If the County Council has no use for the land, it would provide an ideal location for new allotments.

Photos 02/11/2021:



Conclusion: The site is of overall modest community value. Although it performs a relatively important landscape function, it contains no special landscape features or notable wildlife habitats and there is no public right of access.

Furthermore, opportunities for community appreciation of the land are limited as it is only really visible from the private allotments or by motorists travelling along the fast-moving Harwich Road.

Designation of the green space located immediately adjacent (Harwich Road allotments) should provide sufficient protection to this disused parcel of land.

If the County Council were to support reuse of the land as public allotments, its designation would be reconsidered.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Land adjacent village car park (Space 22) TM054296

Overview: gently undulating grassed space in the Conservation Area containing mature trees and providing a buffer between the village car park and the modern housing estate to its rear. Cut through by a well-used pedestrian pathway.



Size: approx. 0.12 ha

Proximity: Right at the heart of the village.

Ownership: Public amenity land.

Use: This land is located adjacent the village's public car park, itself located across from the historic village church. It contains a well-used pedestrian pathway that connects Station Road to the Church View housing estate. Children are frequently seen playing here.

Existing designations: Located at the heart of the Conservation Area.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: This land contains a number of impressive, mature trees and makes a material positive contribution towards the sylvan character of this most significant part of the Conservation Area. It assists to soften the appearance of the prominently located public car park.

It also provides a valued informal recreational space to residents of the local area. It appeared to be well-used.

Photos 02/11/2021:

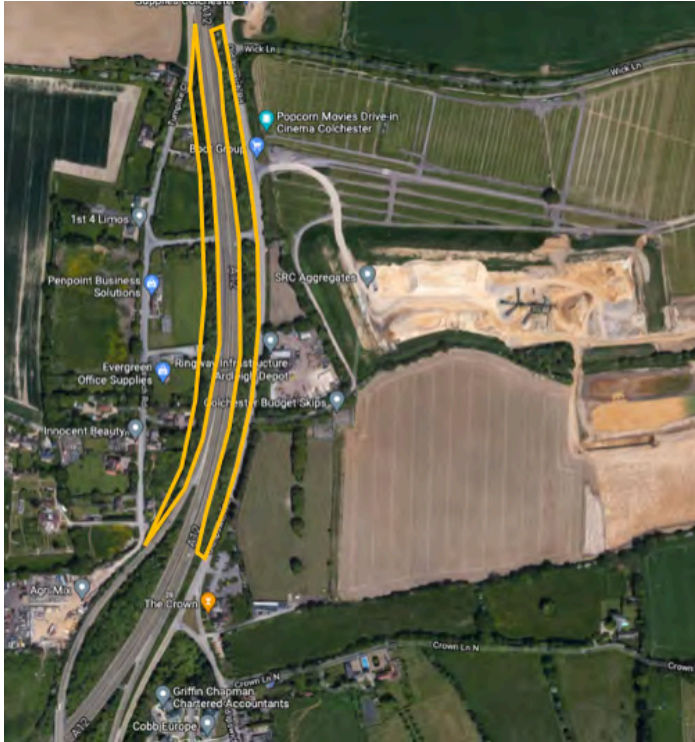


Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is significant. It supports movement, recreation and wildlife. It contributes materially towards the positive sylvan qualities of this most important part of the Conservation Area.

CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

A12 buffers (Space 19) TM024295

Overview: vegetation buffers either side of the A12 where it passes through Ardleigh parish.



Size: approx. 2.2 ha

Proximity: At the very edge of the parish boundary, running alongside the A12.

Ownership: It is believed that the land is in the ownership of Essex County Council as the Highways Authority.

Use: This land contains a mixture of semi mature native trees (including hawthorn, Scots pine, oak, holly), shrubs (including gorse, wild rose, brambles) and flowers (including lady's bedstraw, wild parsnip, ragwort). It provides a vital acoustic and visual barrier to the major road.

Existing designations: None known.

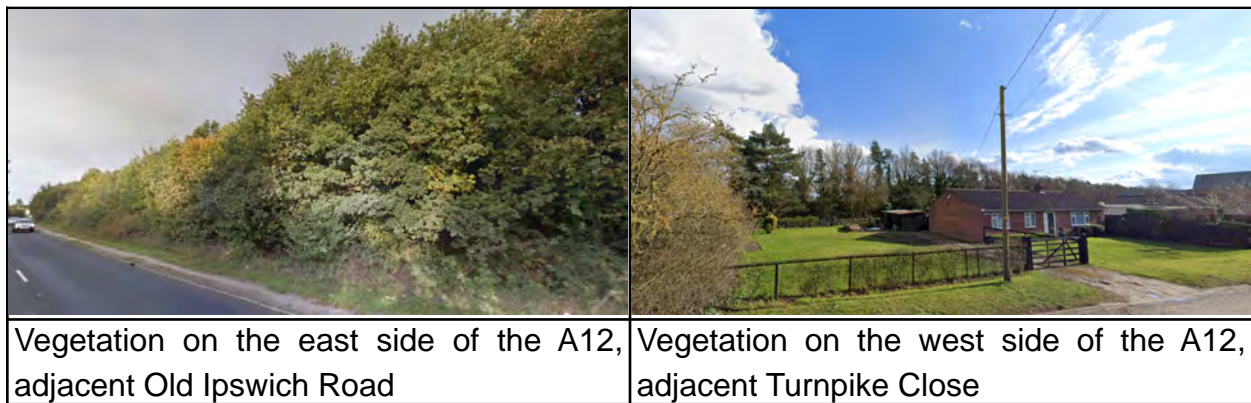
Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: The section of the A12 that passes through Ardleigh has the historic Old Ipswich Road on its eastern side and an area of housing located in close proximity on its western side. Consequently, its generously and densely vegetated buffers perform an invaluable function, significantly reducing the perceived intrusion of the major road.

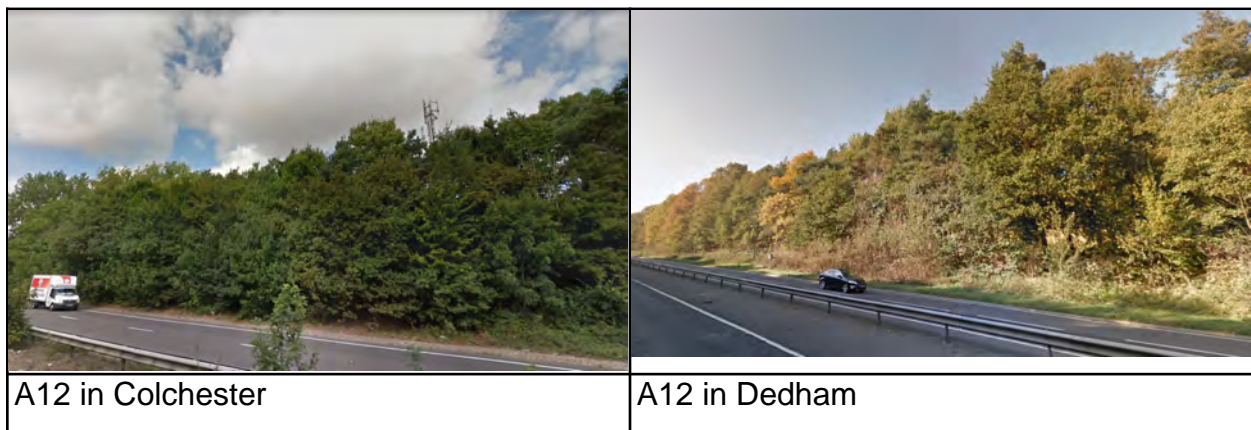
That being said, vegetated buffers of this nature are a common feature of most parts of the A12 in Essex.

Considering the very important functions these buffers provide (containing the noise, pollution and visual impact of the trunk road) and their very close proximity to the A12, it is highly unlikely that there would ever be pressure to remove the vegetation or develop the land for other purposes.

Photos (Google Streetview):



For comparative purposes, the below similar sections of the A12 pass through Colchester Borough and Dedham Parish:



Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is limited. Although the buffers provide valuable containment of the A12, they fall short of being “demonstrably special” as local green spaces. They are not unique to Ardleigh and their beauty, tranquility and value to wildlife is diminished by their proximity to the trunk road. They do not provide opportunities for public access or recreation. Their long-term retention would be expected, in any case, given the important function they provide and the lack of alternative uses.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Woodlands attached to Birch Wood (Spaces 8 & 12) TM032304, TM033304

Overview: two small plots of woodland physically attached to the ancient Birch Wood, providing a significant contribution to the special rural character of the lane and supporting a rich variety of wildlife.



Size: approx. 2 ha (together).

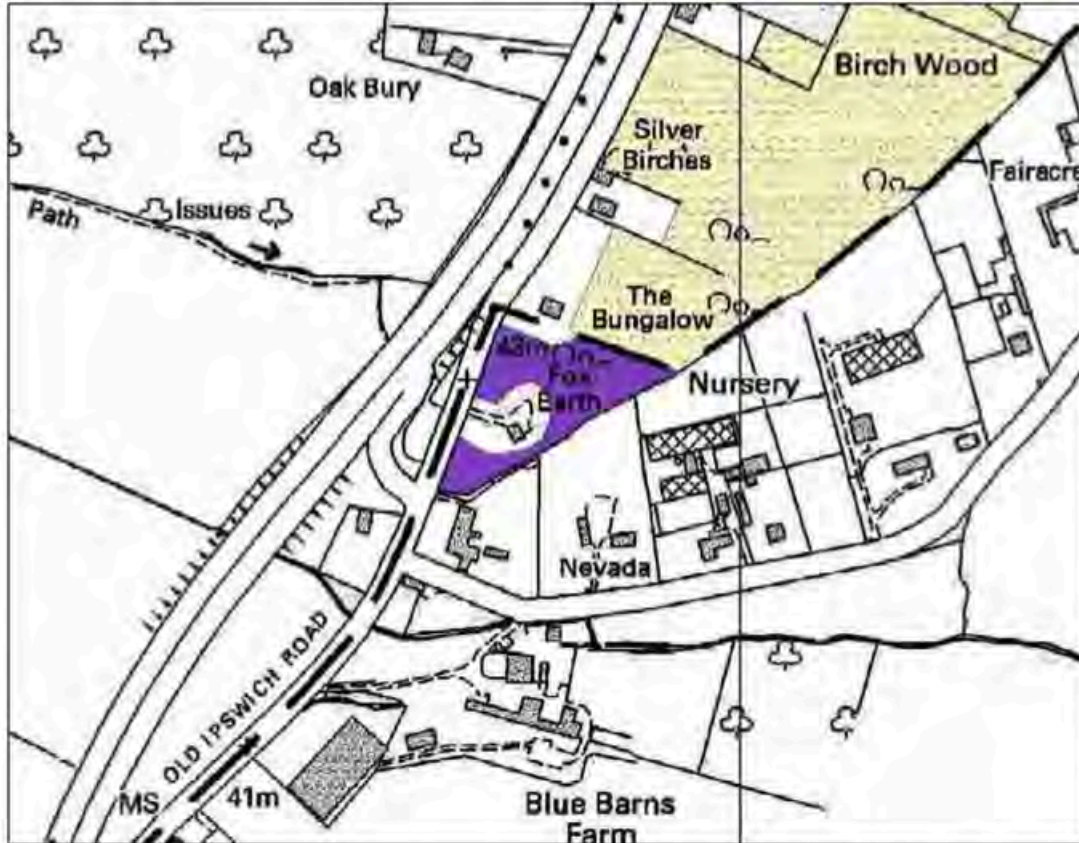
Proximity: Located in the north of the parish along Hart's Lane, a historic lane with a special rural character. It supports a mix of agricultural, residential and retail/community uses.

The woodlands directly abut the northernmost boundary of the parish. Only a small part of Birch Wood is within the parish, with the remainder located in Colchester Borough.

Ownership: Private.

Use: Two dense plots of woodland, appearing as natural extensions of Birch Wood. It is unclear whether the land is currently managed, however its trees appear to be of some maturity and good quality.

Existing designations: The land itself is undesignated. However, the adjacent Birch Wood is a Local Wildlife Site:



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Te2 Birch Wood (0.7 ha) TM 028303

Only a small triangular section of this ancient wood lies within Tendring District, the majority being in Colchester Borough (Site Co151). The canopy is dominated by Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), with some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and coppiced Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). The understorey is typified by Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and locally frequent Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) over a ground cover of mainly Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) with Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*) and Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) round the edges.

In common with the rest of Birch Wood, this site is suffering from long-term piecemeal conversion into garden space for the adjacent properties, with deleterious effects on the integrity of the wood as a whole.

Selection criteria: HCr1(a)

BAP Priority Habitats: Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (UK); Ancient Woodland (Essex)

Date of selection: 1991

Date of last revision: December 2008

Policy PPL4 of the Local Plan protects LoWS from development likely to have an adverse impact on the site or any of its special features. All new development affecting LoWS must be supported by an appropriate ecological assessment. Harmful new development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where the benefits demonstrably outweigh the harm caused and where adequate mitigation or - as a last

resort - compensation measures are included.

Allocations or planning consents: None. However, it is noted in the Local Wildlife Site Assessment (above) that Birch Wood as a whole is suffering from long-term, piecemeal conversion into garden space for surrounding dwellings.

Assessment: Hart's Lane has a special rural character. It is a historic, tree-lined lane, with the canopies of trees reaching up and over the road in places. It has been subject to only very limited modern development. Built development is typically unobtrusive and, where it is prominent in views, tends to possess a high-quality, traditional local character. On the whole, this is a historic route where the local landscape character truly dominates.

This is especially true of the section of Hart's Lane where the woodlands are located. Here, the lane has an exceptionally timeless and beautiful character to which the woodlands contribute significantly. The woodlands provide the immediate setting to Clarkes Farmhouse (Grade II listed) and its traditional outbuildings which have considerable presence in the streetscene (see below images).

In the spring and summer months, the woods feature an abundance of wildflowers which are prominent in views from the road.

In common with the wider Birch Wood, these sites provide substantial support for local wildlife, including deer, bats, owls, badgers, birds of prey and foxes. These creatures are regularly witnessed by local residents.

Photos (Google Streetview):



Woodlands (right) provide a substantial positive contribution to streetscene composition & setting of listed building



Woodlands add materially to the timeless, verdant character of the lane

Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is significant. It contributes substantially to the special verdant and timeless character of this section of the historic Hart's Lane. It also provides an invaluable habitat for local wildlife which is regularly witnessed by residents of the local area.

CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Land Settlement Association footpath (Space 1) TM071303, FOOTPATH PROW158_26

Overview: footpath passing through former Land Settlement Association plots, still used for horticultural purposes today.



Size: approx. 0.3 ha

Proximity: The site lies on the eastern edge of the parish. It is accessible to the few residents of Hungerdown Lane. Although the footpath continues north to meet Harwich Road, the remainder lies in the neighbouring Lawford parish.

Ownership: Public footpath.

Use: Public footpath passing through the former Foxash Land Settlement Association plots.

The Land Settlement Association plots are of historic significance. LSAs were a national scheme of co-operative smallholdings set up in the 1930s to combat widespread

unemployment. Approximately 20 LSAs were delivered across England, with former miners and shipbuilders travelling from the north to begin lives as market gardeners.

The Foxash LSA contained approximately 90 smallholdings, each providing a house, piggery, glasshouse and 4 acres of land. The scheme was wound up in the 1980s, however some of the smallholders remained to form their own co-operative - Foxash Growers Ltd - which continues to produce today.

Existing designations: None known.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: The footpath enables some public views to be had of the area's ongoing commercial horticultural practices, including its modern, large-scale polytunnels.

However, it does not afford any special insight into the historic use or working of the land as an LSA. It is likely that the section of the footpath closer to Harwich Road may have more significance in this respect, but this lies outside of the parish boundary.

Aside from its modest heritage value, the footpath possesses few features of merit. It also passes in very close proximity of a private residence and views of the wider landscape are curtailed by trees and large-scale horticultural development.

Photos 02/11/2021:

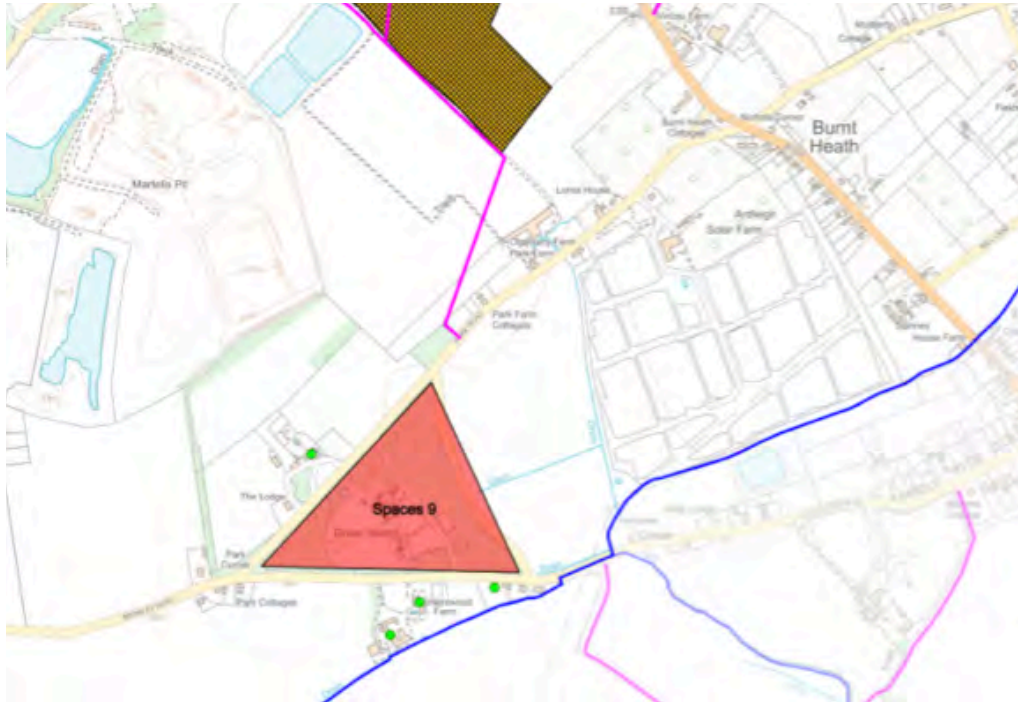
Need to add if possible - some shots of the polytunnels would be good

Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is limited. Although the footpath lies in an area with clear historic significance, it is not reasonably considered to provide much insight into this. It does not possess any other features or characteristics of special significance and it is only conveniently accessible to a small portion of the parish.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Green Island Gardens (Space 9) TM56273

Overview: Former plantation now private landscaped gardens, open to the public for a fee.



Size: approx. 8 ha

Proximity: The site lies in very close proximity of the parish's southernmost boundary. It is connected to the heart of Ardleigh village via a continuous network of footpaths, although the journey is likely to take around 30 minutes on foot. This natural site's relative distance from the parish's main point of settlement has no doubt contributed towards its long-term preservation.

Ownership: Private. Public access is possible for a fee.

Use: Private landscaped gardens open to visitors. Also containing a plant nursery, cafe and other facilities. Special events venue. Disabled access is provided.

Existing designations: None known, however there are four separate listed buildings in close proximity.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: Historically, the site was Ardleigh Park Plantation. It was likely owned and managed in connection with the nearby manor, named Ardleigh Park, which is now a Grade II listed building.

There are further listed buildings to the immediate south and the site provides a very positive contribution towards their setting.

It is believed that the site was first planted as woodland around the turn of the 20th Century. Unfortunately, the great storm of 1987 destroyed most of its oak trees.

Nonetheless, it is likely to retain some old trees and its overall form and character does not appear to have changed significantly since its appearance on the below 1898 OS map:



Consequently, the site is considered to be of evident heritage significance.

It also contains an exceptional variety of plant and animal life, contributing to a unique microclimate. It additionally supports a range of recreational and educational activities,

albeit for a fee.

The current owner is a horticultural specialist and so the site is something of a hub for plant knowledge - locals go here for identification of plant species and advice on their care.

Photos 02/11/2021:

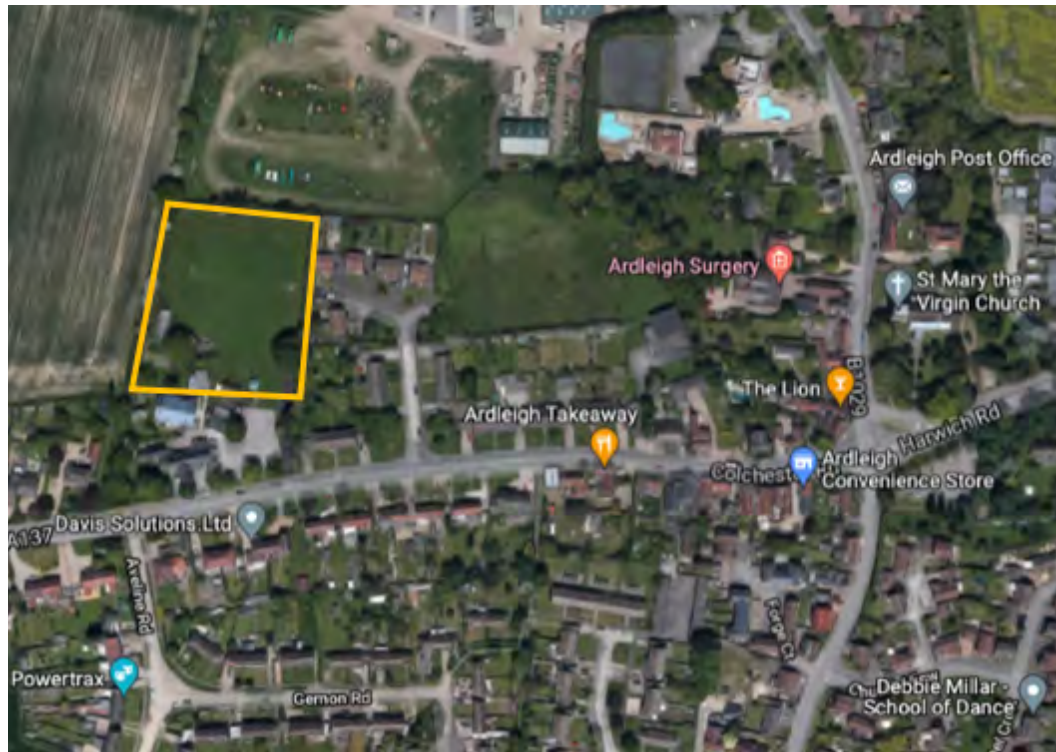
None as payment required - be good to add

Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is significant. Although public access requires payment of a fee, the site would be considered special even if access were more limited. It is of considerable heritage, landscape and wildlife value.

CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

School playing field (Space 25) TM051295

Overview: Grassed playing field attached to the village primary school.



Size: approx. 0.03 ha

Proximity: At the heart of Ardleigh village.

Ownership: State school.

Use: Attached and used in conjunction with the primary school.

Existing designations: None known.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: This space is just visible from the road, appearing as a typical school playing field to the rear of a large courtyard. It makes no particular contribution to the character or appearance of the streetscene.

As a grass pitch, it offers little in the way of wildlife or landscape value.

In terms of recreational value, this is mainly limited to its use by students of the school. It is understood that the site is also used to host occasional fetes and other events.

The primary value of the land lies in what it contributes towards meeting the needs of the primary school and its students. It should be capable of rapid and varied adaptation should these needs change - this would weigh against its suitability as a local green space.

Photos 02/11/2021:



Grass playing field at rear

Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community as a whole is limited. Designation is unlikely to serve a useful purpose.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Hart's Lane apple orchard (Space 13) TM041305, FOOTPATH PROW158_23

Overview: apple orchard with short public footpath through.



Size: approx. 2 ha

Proximity: The site lies in the north of the parish at the junction between Hart's Lane and Malting Farm Lane. There is a smattering of residential properties in the vicinity, however the footpath can only be reached by road, with no separate pedestrian access.

Ownership: The orchard is in private ownership. A public footpath passes along its boundary.

Use: The site is in working agricultural use as an apple orchard.

Existing designations: None known.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

However, in 2017 permission was granted for the change of use of c. 0.75 ha of the

once larger orchard to residential garden land (17/00741/FUL). As a result of this application, the public footpath no longer passes through the orchard. It now has the orchard on its south side and residential garden land on its north.

The orchard formerly located on the south side of Hart's Lane was permitted to change its use to an equestrian gallop in 2018 (17/02090/FUL).



Hart's Lane's orchards, c 2010



Hart's Lane's last remaining orchard, c. 2018

Assessment: This space comprises the last remaining veteran fruit orchard on Hart's Lane. It is understood that fruit orchards have been a feature of this locality for multiple generations ?

Around 10 years ago, there was some c. 8 ha of apple orchards located on both the south and north sides of the lane. The vast majority of this land has now been lost to residential and equestrian uses. This c. 2 ha space is all that presently remains of this historic, beautiful and wildlife-friendly local land use.

The Woodland Trust identifies fruit orchards of this scale and nature to be "biodiverse hotspots". Their widespread destruction over the last 70 years (due to changing farming practices) has caused a substantial loss of suitable habitats for local wildlife. The Woodland Trust is working alongside its partners and local communities to plant new orchards.

The land is of evident historic, wildlife and landscape value. Its densely vegetated boundaries also make a material positive contribution to the special rural character of Hart's Lane. The presence of a well-trodden public footpath also indicates that it has recreational value to residents of the locality.

The unfortunate loss of all of Hart's Lane's other veteran orchards in modern times renders the retention of this last remaining apple orchard all the more important. If lost, it is unlikely to be replaced.

Photos 02/11/2021:



Be good to add some of the orchard itself.

Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is significant. It provides the last remaining clue as to the predominant historic land use of this area. It has evident beauty and value to wildlife and the local landscape character. The presence of a public footpath supports its appreciation by the local community - here, there is a sense that time has stood still.

CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Malting Farm Lane footpath (Space 14) TM042308, PROW 158_43

Overview: Footpath leading up to the northernmost boundary of the parish.



Size: approx. 0.01 ha

Proximity: The site lies at the northernmost parish boundary, in proximity of a smattering of dwellings.

Ownership: Public footpath.

Use: Public footpath used by local residents for recreation and access on to Dedham (Lamb Corner).

Existing designations: None known.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: This is a short section of footpath leading to the parish's northern boundary. It connects to another footpath in the neighbouring parish of Dedham which

terminates at Birchwood Road.

The footpath proceeds along the full length of the curtilage of Devon House, at which point impressive views of the agricultural landscape beyond Ardleigh open up.

The tree-lined footpath is pleasant, although the domestic character of the adjacent site is apparent with, for example, sections of close-boarded fencing lining the route in places.

The landscape views afforded by the footpath are what makes this space special. The footpath's vegetation frames the view towards Dedham, providing a natural "doorway" between the two places. Travelling from Dedham, this provides an almost fantastical sense of transition from a large-scale open landscape to an intimate woodland alcove. It is certainly a special entrance to the parish.

However, it is noted that the special landscape views on offer here are of land in Dedham parish rather than Ardleigh. It is unlikely, therefore, that designation of any part of the footpath located in Ardleigh would assist to preserve or enhance these special views.

Photos 02/11/2021:





Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is moderate. It is not subject to significant use by parish residents but it does offer special landscape views and provides a very pleasant sense of transition between the historic parishes of Ardleigh and Dedham.

However, the special views concern land that is outside of Ardleigh's ownership, located instead in the neighbouring parish of Dedham. Consequently, designation of this space is unlikely to serve any useful or practical purpose.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Lodge Lane verges (Space 18) TM04093

Overview: grass verges either side of Lodge Lane, near Ardleigh Reservoir.



Size: approx. 0.2 ha (together).

Proximity: Located next to Ardleigh Reservoir, approximately 700m west of Ardleigh village's boundary.

Ownership: It is believed that the land is in the ownership of Essex County Council as the Highways Authority.

Use: Two generous highway verges featuring grass and boundary vegetation. Reported to be used by locals for fishing and birdwatching. Evidence of use for car parking.

Existing designations: None known.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: The generous grass verges certainly contribute towards the pleasant rural

character of the lane. However, they are far from exceptional in the rural context of Ardleigh. Verges of similar or greater quality are a frequent feature of the parish (see, for example, verges along Frating Road, Dedham Road, Bromley Road, Chapel Lane etc.).

It is also noted that public access to the reservoir from the verge is prohibited. Some views of the reservoir from the space are possible but interrupted by the intervening vegetation.

It is considered that far clearer views of the reservoir are available nearby from the Wick Lane bridge, whilst more tranquil views can be had from space 5 (see assessment below).

Due to its positioning adjacent two roads, the space is unlikely to provide much sanctuary for wildlife or many opportunities to witness it.

Overall, the space is considered to fall short of being “demonstrably special” to the local community.

Photos 02/11/2021 (and Google Streetview):



The two verges, viewed from Wick Lane



Turnstile onto the reservoir - signs prohibit public access



Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is modest. Its value for recreation and wildlife is reduced as a result of its roadside positioning. It provides no access to the reservoir and there are clearer and more tranquil views of this feature available in close proximity. Although it appears to provide a convenient parking facility to locals, this is likely to further diminish its value as a green space.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Land adjacent Ardleigh Reservoir (Space 5) TM042292, PROW 158_20

Overview: Land crossed by a public footpath, affording special scenic views of the reservoir and adjacent, enclosed rural landscape.



Size: approx. 2.5 ha.

Proximity: Located next to Ardleigh Reservoir, approximately 500m west of Ardleigh village's boundary.

Ownership: Private. Public access via the public footpath.

Use: The land is in two parts. Firstly, the wooded buffer to Ardleigh Reservoir. Secondly, an agricultural field adjacent Prettyfields Vineyard. Access across the two is provided by the public footpath.

The space is subject to frequent use by the local community for recreational purposes, including walking and birdwatching. Metal detectorists were witnessed on the site visit.

Existing designations: None known.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: This space is special because it showcases a variety of the parish's most significant and positive features within a compact area. This includes the reservoir, woodlands and vineyard, which - viewed together - paint a very vibrant picture of modern life in Ardleigh.

The reservoir is probably the most significant and recognisable feature in the Ardleigh landscape. Unfortunately, opportunities for public access to it are very limited. This space provides the closest public access to the water in all of Ardleigh (away from roads) and so is cherished by the local community. Close to the water's edge, the enclosure provided by trees creates a sense of tranquility and remoteness, in spite of the proximity to the road.

The adjacent vineyard is a bustling and well-reputed local employer and local attraction, offering refreshments, tours, workshops and events etc. The site is frequently decorated for the season (see below, 2021 Halloween installation), to the delight of local children.

Views within the space are curtailed by mature, densely planted boundary trees which provide a sense of enclosure and intimacy.

This variety of high-quality habitats means that the space has considerable value to local wildlife. Deer are frequently witnessed in the woods and there is an abundance of birdlife.

Photos 02/11/2021:





Views of the water from the edge of the footpath



View of the vineyard's 2021 Halloween installation



Treed enclosure

Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is very significant. It provides the best available public access to the reservoir and showcases a variety of Ardleigh's special landscape features.

CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Footpath connecting Fox Street to Old Ipswich Road (Space 11) TM0030277, FOOTPATH PROW 158 14

Overview: Public footpath of c. 1.5km in length, crossing the A120 just south of Ardleigh Reservoir.



Size: approx. 0.3 ha

Proximity: Located towards the south-western edge of the parish. The footpath connects Fox Street to Old Ipswich Road, passing over the A120 and running parallel to the reservoir.

Ownership: Public footpath.

Use: The footpath provides a functional pedestrian route between these two parts of the parish. It is well-used by commuters. The footpath is also used by vehicles accessing certain agricultural and industrial sites.

Existing designations: None known.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: The footpath comprises a hard-surfaced track with an agricultural character. It passes by a number of agricultural/industrial sites and over the busy A120.

The bridge above the A120 affords some pleasant, elevated views of the Ardleigh landscape but the experience of these is greatly dampened by the noise and urban intrusion caused by the road below. Beyond the A120, exceptional views of the reservoir can be had.

Due to its hard-surfaced nature and general lack of natural features, the footpath is not reasonably considered to comprise a green space.

Photos 02/11/2021:



View of footpath from Harwich Road (Fox Street)



View of footpath from Old Ipswich Road



View of footpath from A120



Landscape view from the bridge above the A120

Conclusion: The footpath provides a valuable function to the local community, however it is not reasonably understood to comprise a green space.

DO NOT CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Stage 3: Outcomes & Next Steps

<u>Site</u>	<u>Stage 1 (Desktop)</u>	<u>Stage 2 (Field)</u>
Space 1 LSA footpath	PASS	FAIL
Space 2 Crop marks SAM	FAIL (already protected)	N/A
Space 3 Fishing lake	PASS	CARRY FORWARD
Space 4 Field south of Mary Warner Estate	PASS	CARRY FORWARD
Space 5 Reservoir land	PASS	CARRY FORWARD
Space 6 Churn Wood	FAIL (already protected)	
Space 7 Manor House Meadow	PASS	CARRY FORWARD
Spaces 8 & 12 (combine) Woodlands attached to Birch Wood	PASS	CARRY FORWARD
Space 9 Green Island Gardens	PASS	CARRY FORWARD
Space 10 Wall's Wood	FAIL	N/A
Space 11 Footpath over A12	PASS	FAIL
Space 13 Hart's Lane orchard	PASS	CARRY FORWARD
Space 14 Malting Farm Lane footpath	PASS	FAIL
Space 15 (?)	-	-
Space 16 POS for new reservoir	FAIL (space not constructed)	N/A
Space 17 The Street verge	PASS	CARRY FORWARD
Space 18 Lodge Lane verges	PASS	FAIL
Space 19 A12 buffers	PASS	FAIL
Space 20 Bullock Wood	FAIL (already protected)	N/A
Space 21 footpath new reservoir	FAIL (reservoir not constructed)	N/A
Space 22 car park land	PASS	CARRY FORWARD

Space 23 Glebe Corner land	PASS	FAIL
Space 24 Harwich Rd allotments	PASS	CARRY FORWARD
Space 25 School field	PASS	FAIL