



Green Space Designations in the village of
Whitchurch :



Introduction and Process :

Whitchurch is a historic and beautiful village and in public consultation it was clear that maintaining and protecting the rural village feel of the village was an important consideration for the Neighbourhood Plan. That strong sense of being in a rural location is in large part formed by green areas within and surrounding the village. To give extra protection to valued green areas it was considered important to include Green Space designations within the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan. The process started by considering multiple spaces within the village and then evaluating them against the national planning policy framework (NPPF), paragraph 102 criteria for Green Spaces as follows :

Paragraph 102 of the NPPF states that a local Green Space designation should only be used where the Green Space is :

- a) In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.
- b) Be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historical significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife.
- c) Be local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

This process created a shortlist of sites and these were evaluated to ensure that they were not already protected by other designations such as Ancient Monument Heritage listing, and nor could they be seen as a way to protect against development “by the back door”, or where existing planning permission has been granted. The owners and stakeholders of these spaces were then contacted and their opinions on the topic were sought. This raised valid points which in some cases meant that it was inappropriate to pursue the site as Green Space, but in other cases and after some initial concerns, we were able to engage with the owners, make changes as appropriate and secure their support and for this the steering group are grateful for their support. Where no response was received we have proceeded to designate as a Green Space.

At the end of the process the following eleven sites are proposed as designated Green Spaces within Whitchurch as shown in the Draft Submission Plan Policy Maps section. Images and details of each site are shown in the following pages. The evaluation against the three key criteria is shown.

Test		3/ special and local significance to the community						
		1/ Close Proximity	2/ Local in character & not extensive	Beauty	Historic Value	Recreation Value	Tranquility	Wildlife
Site	Location							
i	Duck End Pond							
ii	Mount Pleasant Mound							
iii	Grass Bank Kempson House							
iv	Grass Bank & Verges Market Hill							
v	Wildflower Bank Oving Road							
vi	Green Circle Ashgrove Gdns							
vii	The Meadows Recreation Area							
viii	The Meadows Orchard Area							
ix	Jubilee Tree Triangle							
x	Whittle Hole Spring & Stream							
xi	Allotment Land Ashgrove Gdns							

Green Space Images and further narrative :

Site i : Duck End Pond :



Duck-end Pond is reputedly the site of a traditional witches ducking pond, more latterly known by the less contentious name of Duck End pond. Although on private land it is visible from the footpath running behind the White Swan public house and Mary Monks House. The path is regularly walked by dog walkers and other village residents. The site supports an abundance of wildlife, although some of the willow trees will be thinned-out to absorb less groundwater as the pond did dry out after the hot summer of 2022. Owner : Willis Family, Duck End House, Whitchurch.

Site ii : Mount Pleasant Land :



Tract of land lying between old road (disused) and the newer A413. This area contributes to the highly attractive streetscape as one enters or leaves the village to the north and importantly provides an area where local children can enjoy unstructured play in a densely wooded site. There is a bench at the southern end and also the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Memorial tree and an abundance of wildlife. Owner : Buckinghamshire County Council

Site iii : Grass Bank Kempson House & Old House :



Provides a beautiful entrance to the village and is a key part of the streetscene. Contributes to the setting of the Grade II listed 'Old House' and is a key feature of the entrance to the village having been extensively planted with spring bulbs and wildflowers. The northern part includes a bench which is used for contemplation by residents. Owner : Buckinghamshire County Council

Site iv : Grass Bank and Verges Market Hill :



Market Hill is one of the oldest areas of the village and within the conservation area containing a number of historic buildings, many of which were built using stone from the historic Bolebec Castle. The grass verges frame the ancient setting in the area. Whitchurch was granted a weekly market in 1245 with a fair on St. Johns Day and Market Hill became the site of the market and in more recent years it was the site for the annual May Feast. This also provides a safe and pleasant route to walk from the High Street to Oving Road. Owner : Buckinghamshire County Council

Site v : Wildflower Bank, Oving Road :



This area has been created in the past three years as a village wildlife team initiative with an extensive collection of wild flowers and fauna. It blossoms beautifully throughout the spring and summer providing an attractive area for the residents of the village. This area also contains a bench and is on the route to school for many of the village children and contributes to their appreciation and understanding of the natural world. Owner : Buckinghamshire County Council

Site vi : Green Circle, Ashgrove Gardens :



This is a large circle of grass where residents can sit on the bench and children can play as an informal gathering and play area. There are wooden bollards to prevent cars parking on it which ensures it is a scenic area which makes the road end an attractive green area. Owner :
Buckinghamshire County Council

Site vii : The Meadows (Whitchurch) Recreation Area :



Recreation area and sports field with trim trail, exercise equipment and children's play area, football pitch and nets, together with an unmown area incorporating commemorative trees and bench.
Owner : Whitchurch Parish Council

Site viii : The Meadows Orchard :



In the heart of one of the more densely populated areas of the village, the area has been planted with various fruit trees for the community to harvest as they wish. It is surrounded by native hedging and established trees making it a haven for a wide variety of wildlife. It is used by many for walking and is an area of peace & tranquillity. Owner Whitchurch Parish Council

Site ix : Jubilee Tree Triangle :



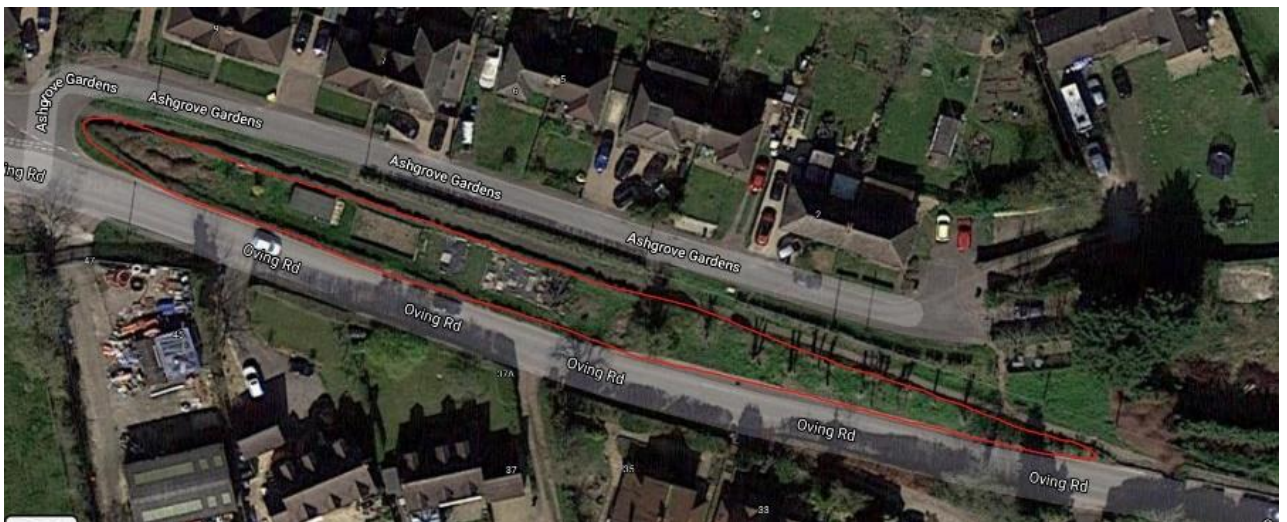
This is a small area of grass which has the Queen Victoria Jubilee Tree growing on it. A plaque commemorates the event. There is also an anniversary commemorative bench courtesy of the WI which is used frequently by many villagers. Owner : Buckinghamshire County Council

Site x : Whittle Hole Spring and Stream :



One of four springs which historically provided Whitchurch with water; the spring surfaces into a purpose built pond by Spring Cottage, disappears and then reappears by a picket gate, flowing down a steep sided cutting to a plank bridge below. It has reputedly never frozen over in the winter or dried up in the summer. It flows down into Mill Head and Whittle Brook, whereupon it becomes a tributary of the River Thames. The Green Space starts from below the picket gate down to the plank bridge, alongside the existing public right of way WHI21/4. Owner : Bignall family, Tudor House, Whitchurch.

Site xi : Allotment Land Ashgrove Gardens :



The allotment is an attractive and functional Green Space which adds to the street scape as one drives or walks down Oving Road towards the Conservation Area. This area has been recently been left wild and provides a sanctuary for wildlife between two areas of housing, strongly reinforcing the sense of rural location. Owner : It has not been possible to identify the owner