

LENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EVIDENCE BASE

SUPPORTING BACKGROUND REPORT

LOCAL GREEN SPACE

PRE-REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION DRAFT

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Second Draft
19.8.17

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) (NPPF) at Paragraphs 76 and 77 (page 18) introduces the designation of Local Green Space. As part of the production of the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan (LNP) Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Group (LNPG) has undertaken a review of sites with potential for designation as Local Green Space (LGS) within the Plan.
- 1.2 The Framework makes it clear that LGS designation should only be used when certain specific circumstances apply. The Report sets out the policy background to LGS designation. The Report goes on to review the sites within Lenham which are considered suitable for the application of LGS designation.
- 1.3 Having identified potential LGS sites the Report goes on to consider and describe a policy to be included in LNP in order to identify and regulate future use of LGS sites.

2.0 POLICY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Paragraphs 76 and 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) read as follows:

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

77. The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- **where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;**
- **where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and**
- **where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”.**

- 2.2 To qualify for LGS designation an area of land has to meet certain criteria therefore as follows:
- (i) the potential LGS site should be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.
 - (ii) the potential LGS site should be demonstrably special to the local community.
 - (iii) the potential LGS site should be local in character and not an extensive tract of land and be capable of enduring with that designation beyond the end of the plan period.

3.0 POTENTIAL LOCAL GREEN SPACE SITES

- 3.1 As part of the work in preparing Lenham Neighbourhood Plan LNPG has reviewed potential LGS sites within the Parish. Certain sites were ruled out, for example because they were remote from any settlement or because they were regarded as extensive tracts of land not meeting the strict LGS criteria established within the Framework.
- 3.2 The sites listed below are considered suitable for inclusion within LNP as LGS designation.

4.0 THE CRICKET GROUND

- 4.1 The Ground forms visually and socially a link between old Lenham (the conservation area) and the more modern parts of the village which lie to the west. As such the Ground forms an important axis within the built-up frame and is the 'green lung' of Lenham.
- Proximity
- 4.2 The Cricket Ground is surrounded by houses and therefore clearly meets the criteria of proximity.
- Local Significance.
- 4.3 Cricket has been played on the Ground for many decades. The Ground has local significance because of its long history of use as a recreational facility for various age groups and because of the site's exceptional natural beauty at the heart of the built confines of the village. During the cricket season this is a place where people of all walks of life and different generations meet to enjoy a game of cricket and all the social interaction which goes with it.
- Extent and Durability
- 4.4 The Ground is relatively contained and is believed to be in private ownership. There is no reason why LGS designation on this site should not endure well beyond the Plan period.

5.0 THE ALLOTMENTS

5.1 The allotments sit behind the frontages to Ham Lane, Honeywood Road and Robins Avenue. The allotments are well used and form an important recreational facility which is clearly visible from the many houses which front the surrounding roads. The importance of the allotments to village life is emphasised by the proliferation of crops and flowers grown by enthusiastic Lenham gardeners.

Proximity.

5.2 As the allotments are surrounded by houses the site clearly meets the criteria of proximity.

Local Significance.

5.3 The allotments have been used by Lenham residents for many decades. The allotments have local significance because of their recreational value to the community and because this is an important open area within the built confines of the village.

Extent and Durability.

5.4 The allotments site is relatively contained within the surrounding street frontages. The allotments are believed to be in private ownership and there is no reason why LGS designation on this site should not endure well beyond the plan period.

6.0 THE VILLAGE POND AND ASSOCIATED OPEN LAND

6.1 The Glebe pond lies to the south of Old Ashford Road to the south of the junction with Groom Way. The pond is prominent and in the view from Old Ashford Road as one approaches the Conservation Area and The Square. The pond, and its surrounding open land, form an attractive green feature within the village which is an integral part of the unique village character.

Proximity.

6.2 The pond and associated open land falls within the village confines and is surrounded by dwellings at Groom Way, Glebe Gardens and Old Ashford Road itself. The site clearly meets the criteria of proximity.

Local Significance.

6.3 The pond contains the first headwaters of the River Stour before it meanders eastwards towards Ashford. The pond and the natural spring which feeds it is part of a spring line which runs along the foot of the North Downs. The springs issue where the pervious chalk overlies the impermeable gault clay below to produce characteristic chalk streams. The pond also marks the Kentish watershed. Any water sources further to the west flow towards the Len, the Medway and then on into the Thames River basin. Water sources within the Glebe pond and further to the east flow towards the Stour and then the southeast Kent river basin.

- 6.4 The pond has local significance for the following reasons:
- beauty; a very attractive open space within the village.
 - history; a feature enjoyed by village residents for many decades;
 - recreation value; the pond and associated open land forms part of enjoyable country walk within the village;
 - ecology; the pond and associated open land supports a wide variety of wildlife both aquatic and terrestrial.

- 6.5 **Extent and Durability.**
The pond and associated open land is relatively contained within the built form of the village and is believed to be in private ownership. There is no reason why LGS designation on this site should not endure well beyond the plan period.

7.0 THE BOWLING GREEN

- 7.1 The bowling green lies to the south of Maidstone Road and forms an important part of a group of open spaces in the vicinity.

Proximity.

- 7.2 The bowling green falls within the village confines being surrounded by houses on both sides of the Maidstone Road. The site clearly meets the criteria of proximity.

Local Significance.

- 7.3 The bowling green has been used for recreational purposes within the village for many decades and has been enjoyed by generations of village residents. The green has local significance for the following reasons:

- beauty; and important green space within the built form
- history; enjoyed for decades by generations of village residents
- recreational value; the bowling green provides a unique playing surface to support the sporting enjoyment of residents of all ages.

- 7.4 **Extent and Durability.**
The bowling green is relatively contained and is certainly not an extensive front of land. There is no reason why a LGS designation on this site should not endure well beyond the plan period.

8.0 PILGRIMS WAY FOOTPATH AND ASSOCIATED ENCLOSED LAND FROM MARLEY LANE TO HUBBARDS HILL.

8.1 The Pilgrims Way forms part of the North Downs Way and is a long-distance footpath of considerable historic significance. The section which runs between Marley Road and Hubbards Hill has particular local significance because it includes an area planted with indigenous native tree species by local volunteers as part of the millennium celebrations. The chalk down lands alongside the Pilgrims Way contains a flora which is associated with calciferous grassland such as thyme, vetches and orchids.

Proximity.

8.2 The Pilgrims Way footpath lies some 500 metres to the north of the village and is easily accessible by a variety of tracks and footpaths. The site therefore meets the criteria of proximity.

Local Significance.

8.3 As a footpath, the Pilgrims Way has been enjoyed by parishioners and others for centuries. The path has local significance for the following reasons:

- beauty; the path falls within the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and enjoys spectacular views across the village to the Weald beyond
- history; enjoyed by parishioners for centuries. Part of the historic route described in “the Canterbury Tales”.
- recreational value part of a long-distance footpath linking to other more local public footpaths which forms part of a very well used recreational network.
- ecology; the millennium tree planting scheme has now matured and provides a haven for wildlife, particularly birds.

Extent and Durability.

8.4 This site forms a linear Local Area Space but is not excessively long. It is believed to be in private ownership and there is no reason why an LGS designation or this site should not endure well beyond the plan period.

9.0 OPEN LAND AT GROOM WAY

9.1 The land at Groom Way is open land which forms part of the complex which comprises Lenham Medical Centre and the Lenham Community Centre. Although of relatively recent construction, this site is very well used by local residents and visitors. The surrounding open land forms an important part of the setting for the public buildings. The land contains quieter pedestrian routes lying between the busy Old Ashford Road and the A20 to the north.

Proximity.

9.2 The site is surrounded by house in Groom Way, Old Ashford Road and Grove lands and forms an integral part of the village.

Local Significance.

- 9.3 The open land at Groom Way is important because it provides the setting for the two public buildings in the vicinity contributing to the open aspect of this public space and is considerably enhancing its attractiveness as an open green space within the built confines.

Extent and Durability.

- 9.4 The open land is relatively constrained but nevertheless important in the context of its surroundings. There is no reason why a LGS designation of this land should not endure well beyond the plan period.

10.0 WOODSIDE GREEN

- 10.1 The open land at Woodside Green is the only registered 'common land' within the parish. The area is 0.10 hectares and the common is registered under TVG Reg 84.

Proximity

- 10.2 The land is in very close proximity to existing houses which form the hamlet of Woodside Green.

- 10.3 Local Significance

This area of common land is important because it provides a natural communal area for local residents who live outside the core area of the village.

Extent and Durability

- 10.4 Although registered as common land, the land is in private ownership. There is no reason why LGS designation on this land should not endure well beyond the Plan period.

11.0 LENHAM CROSS, PILGRIMS WAY

- 11.1 Lenham Cross is a chalk cross first carved into the scarp slope of North Downs in 1922 to remember those who fell in the Great War (1914-1918). The Cross was fully restored in 1994 and now commemorates the dead of both world wars. Adjacent to the Cross is a small memorial garden with a wooden seat which invites people to sit and contemplate whilst enjoying the far-reaching views over the Greensand Ridge and the High Weald to the south.

Proximity.

- 11.2 The Cross lies approximately 500 metres to the north of the village and therefore meets the proximity criteria.

Local Significance.

- 11.3 The Cross forms a highly visible feature within the landscape and is a unique feature of considerable historic importance. The site lies within the AONB and contributes to the beauty of the setting of the village as well as providing

recreational opportunities by virtue of its locations adjacent to the Pilgrims Way to reaffirm the connection to a nationally important historic footpath.

Extent and Durability.

- 11.4 The site is limited in extent and is believed to be in private ownership. There is no reason why LGS designation of the Cross should not extend well beyond the plan period.

12.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICY

- 12.1 It is important that a LGS policy in the Neighbourhood Plan should list and identify each LGS by reference to the policies map. The policy should also stipulate that within the LGS designation the key planning objective will be the preservation of openness over other planning considerations.

- 12.2 The following policy is recommended for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy: Local Green Space, Policy LGS1

The following areas, as shown on the policies map, are identified as Local Green Space:

- (i) **the Cricket Ground;**
- (ii) **the allotments;**
- (iii) **the village pond and associated open land;**
- (iv) **the Bowling Green;**
- (v) **Pilgrims Way Footpath and Associated Enclosed Land from Marley Lane to Hubbards Hill.**
- (vi) **land at Groom Way;**
- (vii) **Woodside Green;**
- (viii) **Cross Area, Pilgrims Way.**

Areas defined as Local Green Space will be given long term protection and priority will be given to preserving their openness over other planning considerations.

- 12.3 This Report has reviewed the origin of Local Green Space designation within the NPPF and identified the criteria associated with its use. Each potential LGS site within Lenham has been reviewed to identify how each site complies with the criteria. This Report then describes a LGS policy for inclusion within Lenham Neighbourhood Plan. This Report will form part of the evidence base supporting the Neighbourhood Plan.