

WOODCOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2013 - 2035

Local Green Space Assessment

April 2021

Contents

Section One – Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 Purpose
- 1.2 Local Green Spaces
- 1.3 Designation

Section Two – Process

- 2.1 Process
- 2.2 Criteria Interpretation
- 2.3 Assessment

Section Three: Proposed Local Green Space Sites

- 3.1 Proposed Local Green Spaces

Section Four: Proposed Site Assessment & Evidence Summary

- 4.1 Green Space Assessment Tables
- 4.2 Green Space Assessment Conclusions

Appendix

- A. National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space Policies (96-100)

Tables

Table 3.1 List of Candidate Local Green Spaces

Table 4.1 The Village Green

Table 4.2 The Allotments

Table 4.3 Folly Field

Table 4.4 Space bounded by Wittenham Close, Croft Way, Grimmer Way and Hagbourne Close

Table 4.5 Space bounded by Wood Green and the Goring Road.

Table 4.6 Space bounded by Folly Green and Goring Road.

Table 4.7 Space in Wayside Green

Table 4.8 Greenmoor Ponds

Table 4.9 Snowdrop Wood

Figures

Figure 3.1: Candidate Local Green Spaces

Section One: Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Purpose

One of the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans is the achievement of sustainable development. The social, community, economic and environmental benefits of green spaces make local places sustainable¹. Thus the provision of local green space can contribute to development being sustainable and planning for green spaces should be an integral part of a Neighbourhood Plan.

This report presents the process, evidence and conclusions of the assessment of Local Green Spaces conducted during the formulation of, and forming part of the evidence base supporting, the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan 2013-2035.

1.2 Local Green Spaces

The Local Green Space (LGS) designation was introduced into national planning policy, as part of the Government's commitment to promoting healthy communities². Communities can identify green areas of particular importance to them, designate them, and protect them with appropriate policies in Neighbourhood Development Plans noting that good planning requires that green infrastructure be considered in terms of value to the local community, local environment and local economy.

Once a site is designated as a Local Green Space, it is protected against new development except in 'very special circumstances'. The designation:

- i. should live beyond the lifetime of the plan;
- ii. must be complementary to the objectives of sustainable development, and to sufficient investment in homes, jobs and other essential services; and
- iii. must be consistent with national policy.

1.3 Designation

National Planning Practice Guidance states that 'Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities'.

Demonstrating the particular importance requires satisfying criteria contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Specifically for a Local Green Space to be eligible for designation, it must:

- i. be in reasonable proximity to the community which it serves;
- ii. be demonstrably special to a local community and 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; and/or
- iii. not be an extensive tract of land; and
- iv. be local in character.

National policy further states that blanket designation of all green space is not appropriate.

¹ Neighbourhood Planning, Local Green Spaces. Locality Toolkit

² Open Spaces and Recreation, NPPF paragraphs 98-102

Section Two: Process

2.1 Process

Woodcote is a highly nucleated settlement surrounded and washed over by the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Within the built-up area are recreational spaces that are important to the health and wellbeing of residents but also make a vital contribution to inclusion, social and, in some cases, ecological, sustainability of the village.

Potential areas for designation as Local Green Spaces were identified using:

- i. views expressed by residents at various consultations;
- ii. spaces which, *prima facie*, would satisfy the NPPF criteria for inclusion; and
- iii. spaces already designated as green space for which formal identification may be desirable.

Spaces identified in national planning policy and guidance³ for which designation as a Local Green Space is not appropriate (education sites, highway land and verges, land adjoining highways, and sites with planning permission) were specifically excluded.

2.2 Criteria Interpretation

2.2.1 Proximity

The NPPF requires that designated local green spaces are in **reasonably close proximity** to the community they serve.

The NPPF does not provide a precise definition of 'reasonably close proximity'. In this assessment Woodcote Parish Council require a candidate for local green space designation to be:

- i. adjacent to, or within, the built-up area; and
- ii. within easy walking distance (less than 400m).

2.2.2 Demonstrably Special

The NPPF requires that designated local green spaces are '**demonstrably special to a local community** and hold a particular local significance' because, for example of the beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife. In this assessment Woodcote Parish Council require a candidate for local green space designation to demonstrate one, or more, of the following:

- i. beauty – having significant visual attractiveness which contributes to the landscape and setting of the developed area of the parish;
- ii. historic significance - having archaeological or historical value or contributing to the setting or allowing views to listed or other locally valued historical elements;
- iii. recreational value – supporting both formal (structured) recreation and/or safe informal recreation such as dog walking, jogging, or children's games and play;
- iv. tranquillity – providing a calm space for quiet reflection;
- v. richness of Wildlife – being an ecological valuable habitat.

2.2.3 Local in Character and not an Extensive Tract of Land.

Woodcote Parish Council require candidates for local green space designation to have a close connection to the immediate locality, to be typical of the parish, and to be of an appropriate scale for their location.

2.3 Assessment

Each candidate space was then assessed against the four NPPF criteria listed in section 2.1 above, and spaces only designated as Local Green Spaces if, as required by the NPPF, the space meets all the criteria identified in NPPF⁴.

³ Section 8 of the NPPF, and paragraphs 005- 022 of National Planning Practice Guidance "Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space."

⁴ NPPF paragraph 102

Section Three: Proposed Local Green Space Sites

3.1 Proposed Local Green Spaces

Table 3.1 lists the sites assessed for designation as Local Green Spaces together with the initial reason(s) for their consideration.

Figure 3.1 shows the location of these spaces in the parish. All are either within the developed area or abut the developed area.

Section Four: Proposed Site Assessment & Evidence Summary

4.1 Green Space Assessment Tables

Tables 4.1 to 4.9 present an assessment of each site. In this, each space can be located on the map in Figure 3.1 using the Site Identification Number. A more detailed map of the proposed green space and the immediate locality is provided in each assessment.

4.2 Green Space Assessment Conclusion

All green spaces identified in Table 3.1 and in Figure 3.1 meet the NPPF requirements and are, therefore, proposed as designated Local Green Spaces.

Site Id ⁿ .	Location	Beauty	Historic Value	Recreational Value	Tranquillity	Wildlife	Other
1	The Village Green			☒			
2	The Allotments			☒	☒	☒	
3	Folly Field			☒			
4	The green space bounded by Wittenham Close, Croft Way, Grimmer Way and Hagbourne Close.			☒			☒
5	The green space bounded by Wood Green and the Goring Road.			☒			☒
6	The green space bounded by Folly Green and Goring Road.			☒			☒
7	The green space in Wayside Green			☒			☒
8	Greenmoor Ponds	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
9	Snowdrop Wood, south of the Long Toll development	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
10	Around the Greenmoor ponds	☒		☒	☒	☒	

Table 3.1: List of Candidate Local Green Spaces

Figure 3.1: Candidate Local Green Spaces

Key:

Nº		Grid Reference SU	
1	The Village Green	64547	82005
2	The Allotments	64507	81908
3	Folly Field	64291	81902
4	Space bounded by Wittenham Close, Croft Way, Grimmer Way and Hagbourne Close	64615	81631
5	Space bounded by Wood Green and the Goring Road.	64406	81956
6	Space bounded by Folly Green and Goring Road.	64199	81837
7	Space in Wayside Green	64119	82032
8	Greenmoor Ponds	64621	81259
9	Snowdrop Wood	64698	81088
10	Around Greenmoor Ponds	64648	81263

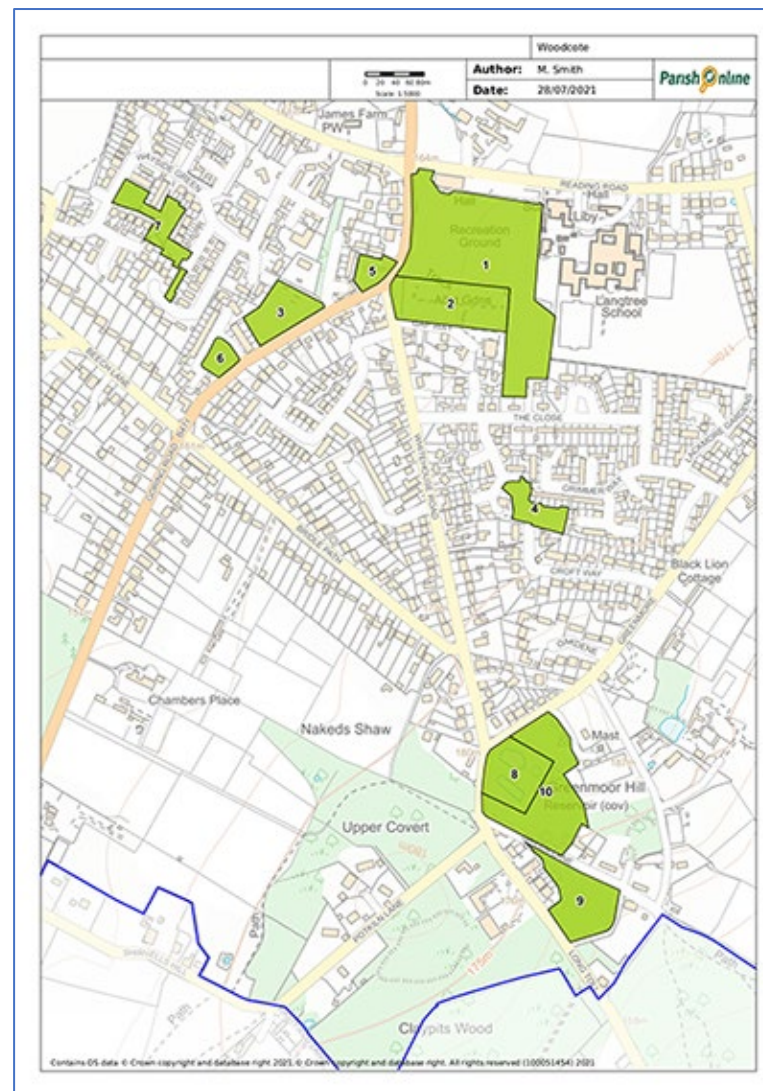


Table 4.1: Woodcote Village Green

Site Name	The Village Green	Site Identification	1
Site Location	Bounded by the Reading Road, the Goring Road, Woodcote Primary School and Langtree Academy.	Area Designation	Area of Outstanding Beauty
Site Description	This is a well-maintained space, increasingly surrounded by newly planted trees, with cricket and football pitches, a football practice area used by the community for general recreation and play.	Site owner	Woodcote Parish Council
		Owner consent	Yes
Assessment Criterion			
i. Proximity to the community it serves	The village green is centrally located in the developed area of the parish		
ii. Local in character	Yes – this space is the remains of the ancient Woodcote common in the centre of the village.		
iii. Extensive tract of land	No – this is a clearly bounded area of some 3 Ha		
iv. Demonstrably special to the community	Yes- this space contains the village cricket and football pitches, is used by all sections of the community for recreation, is the site of the village fete and other social gatherings.		

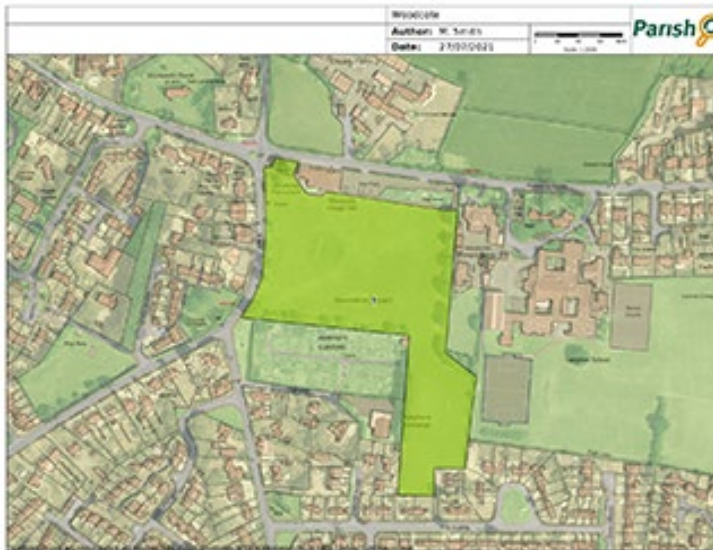
Map		Picture	
-----	---	---------	--

Table 4.2 Woodcote Allotments

Site Name	The Allotments.	Site Identification	2
Site Location	Bounded by Gap Way, the Village Green and the Goring Road	Area Designation	Area of Outstanding Beauty
Site Description	This space, surrounded by high hedges, provides allotments for some 20 members of the community. It is well cultivated producing both flowers and vegetables and provides food for bats and birds.	Site owner	Woodcote Parish Council
		Owner consent	Yes
Assessment Criterion			
v. Proximity to the community it serves	The site is located in the centre of the developed area of the parish		
vi. Local in character	Yes – this space provides the only allotment space in the village and is fully used		
vii. Extensive tract of land	No – this space, bounded by the village green and housing is an area of 0.9Ha		
viii. Demonstrably special to the community	Yes – this space provides the only allotment pitches in the parish.		



Table 4.3: Folly Field

Site Name	Folly Field.	Site Identification	3
Site Location	Bounded by the Goring Road, and the homes on Wood Green, Folly Green and Medill Close	Area Designation	Area of Outstanding Beauty
Site Description	Used for recreational purposes this is a grassed space incorporating a basketball pitch, an all-weather table tennis table and other play equipment providing both recreational and amenity space.	Site owner	Woodcote Parish Council
		Owner consent	Yes
Assessment Criterion			
ix. Proximity to the community it serves	The site is located in the centre of the developed area of the parish		
x. Local in character	Yes – this is a well-maintained space within the developed area of the village that provides safe recreational and play facilities to nearby residents and a pedestrian route to the Woodcote Surgery.		
xi. Extensive tract of land	No – this space, bounded by the village green and housing, is an area of 0.48Ha		
xii. Demonstrably special to the community	Yes, the facilities are well used especially by residents of Wayside Green and Folly Orchard who can access play facilities and recreational opportunities without having to cross the busy Goring Road		

Map		Picture	
-------------------	---	-----------------------	--

Table 4.4: Wittenham Close, Croft Way, Grimmer Way, Hagbourne Close Space

Site Name	The green space bounded by Wittenham Close, Croft Way, Grimmer Way and Hagbourne Close.	Site Identification	4
Site Location	Within Wittenham Close, Croft Way, Grimmer Way and Hagbourne Close, Woodcote	Area Designation	Area of Outstanding Beauty
Site Description	A well-maintained open grassed space with specimens of mature trees, bounded by housing on all sides that provides local safe recreational and amenity space	Site owner	Designated as green space when permission for the housing development was granted. Owned by SODC and maintained by Woodcote PC.
		Owner consent	Not required
Assessment Criterion			
i. Proximity to the community it serves	The site is located in the centre of the developed area of the parish		
ii. Local in character	Yes – this space is an integral part of the neighbourhood comprising the streets named above		
iii. Extensive tract of land	No – this is a small space of some 0.3Ha		
iv. Demonstrably special to the community	Yes – this space provides both a common social space and a safe open play and recreational space for young children in a densely built-up area.		

Map		Picture	
------------	---	----------------	--

Table 4.5: Wood Green

Site Name	Wood Green	Site Identification	5
Site Location	Between the Goring Road and Wood Green	Area Designation	Area of Outstanding Beauty
Site Description	A well-maintained triangular grassed space separated from the busy Goring Road by hedges with housing on the remaining two sides providing recreational and amenity space.	Site owner	Designated as green space when permission for the housing development was granted. Owned and managed by the group of residents of properties in Wood Green.
		Owner consent	Not required
Assessment Criterion			
i. Proximity to the community it serves	The site is located in the centre of the developed area of the parish		
ii. Local in character	Yes – this space is surrounded by housing and is typical of the small, enclosed developments in the village.		
iii. Extensive tract of land	No – this is a self-contained space of some 0.18Ha		
iv. Demonstrably special to the community	Yes – this space provides a safe open space for young children away from, and without needing to cross, the busy Goring Road.		



Table 4.6: Folly Green

Site Name	Folly Green	Site Identification	6
Site Location	The green space bounded by Folly Green and Goring Rd.	Area Designation	Area of Outstanding Beauty
Site Description	A well-maintained grassed spaced separated from the busy Goring Road by hedges and mature trees on two sides and housing on the others that provides both recreational and amenity space.	Site owner	Designated as green space when permission for the housing development was granted. Designation as a local green space will ensure that this space will continue as such.
		Owner consent	Not required
Assessment Criterion			
i. Proximity to the community it serves	The site is located within the developed area of the parish.		
ii. Local in character	Yes – this space is surrounded by housing and the enclosed green space is typical on the small, enclosed developments in this part of the parish.		
iii. Extensive tract of land	No – this space is some 0.16Ha		
iv. Demonstrably special to the community	Yes – this space provides a safe open space for young children in a densely built-up area.		

Map		Picture	
-----	---	---------	--

Table 4.7: Wayside Green

Site Name	Wayside Green	Site Identification	7
Site Location	Wayside Green	Area Designation	Area of Outstanding Beauty
Site Description	This site is central to the Wayside Green housing development. It is a well-maintained grassed area containing a stand of mature trees and is extensively used by residents, especially children, for recreation and social purposes.	Site owner	Woodcote Parish Council In addition, designation will continue to protect access to the strategic pipeline providing fuel to the Royal Air Force station at Benson.
		Owner consent	Yes
Assessment Criterion			
i. Proximity to the community it serves	The site is located in the centre of the Wayside Green development in the village.		
ii. Local in character	Yes – this space provides the Wayside Green development with the central green space typical of development in the parish.		
iii. Extensive tract of land	No – this space is some 0.5Ha		
iv. Demonstrably special to the community	Yes – this space provides a safe open space for young children in a densely built-up area who do not have to cross the busy Goring Road to reach the open space of the Village Green		

Map	 An aerial map from Parish Online showing the layout of Wayside Green. A central rectangular area is highlighted in bright green, indicating the site. Surrounding areas show residential buildings, roads, and other green spaces. Labels on the map include 'Wayside Green', 'Parish Online', 'Goring Road', and 'Village Green'.	Picture	 A ground-level photograph of Wayside Green. It shows a large, open grassy area with several mature trees in the background. A paved path or road is visible on the right side of the frame. The sky is overcast.
------------	--	----------------	---

Table 4.8: Greenmore Ponds

Site Name	Greenmoor Ponds and surrounding green space	Site Identification	8
Site Location	Adjacent to the junction of Greenmore and Long Toll	Area Designation	Area of Outstanding Beauty
Site Description	This is a wooded area containing the Greenmore ponds. These ponds, the historic water supply for the village, are now noted for their wildlife contribution and provide valued amenity and recreational space.	Site owner	Woodcote Parish Council
		Owner consent	Yes
Assessment Criterion			
i. Proximity to the community it serves	The green space is located adjacent to the housing on Greenmore and the Old Reservoir Site development area.		
ii. Local in character	Yes – this space has long, historic connections to the village.		
iii. Extensive tract of land	No – this space is less than 0.64Ha		
iv. Demonstrably special to the community	Yes – this is valued by the community for its ecological qualities and is managed by the Woodcote Conservation Group who have invested considerable time and effort into the care of the site and uncovering its past contribution to the village.		

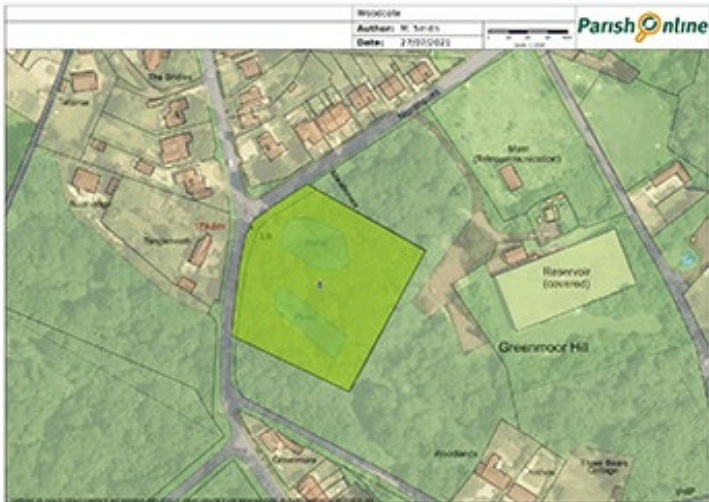
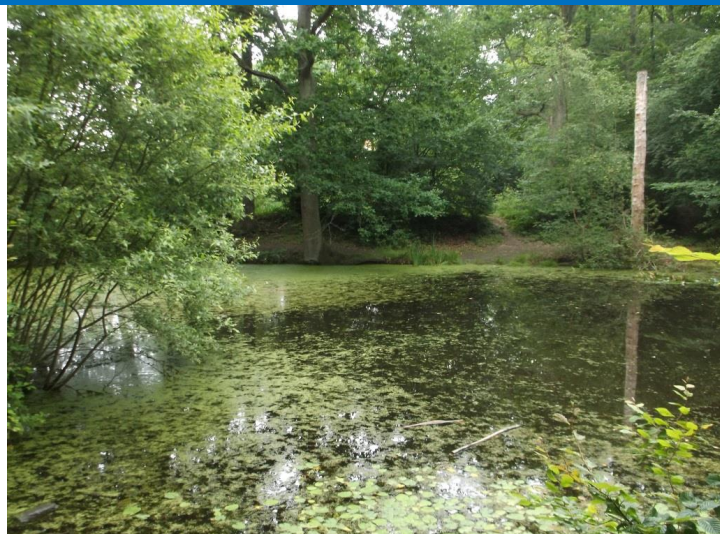
Map		Picture	
------------	---	----------------	--

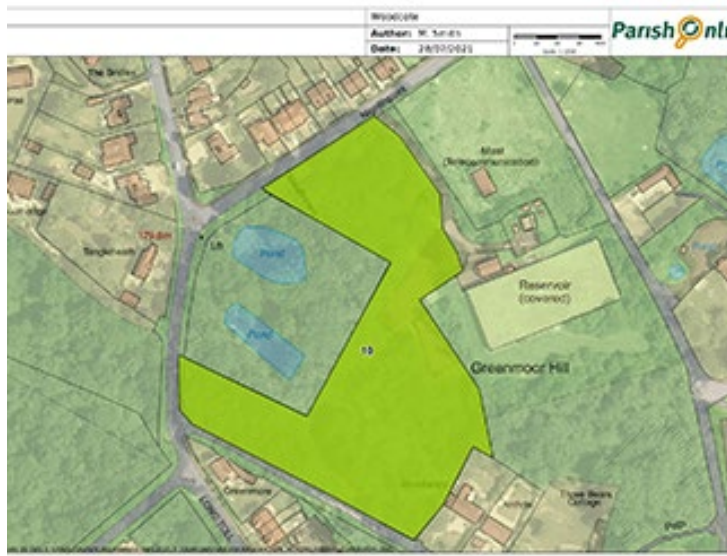
Table 4.9: Snowdrop Wood

Site Name	Snowdrop Wood	Site Identification	9
Site Location	Between Long Toll, and Green Lane, south of the Long Toll development (WNP1 allocation WNP-01, the former bus depot).	Area Designation	Area of Outstanding Beauty
Site Description	Woodland with extensive wild snowdrop cover providing both a locally valued ecological site and amenity and recreational space and with evidence of historical flint mining.	Site owner	Woodcote Parish Council
		Site Owner Agreement	Yes
Assessment Criterion			
i. Proximity to the community it serves	Yes – this site is adjacent to the new homes at Long Toll		
ii. Local in character	Yes – this space has both strong historic and landscape connections to the village.		
iii. Extensive tract of land	No – this space is some 0.7Ha		
iv. Demonstrably special to the community	This site came into the ownership of the Parish Council following the construction of the new homes at Long Toll and will be used for educational and recreational purposes with the assistance of the Woodcote Conservation Group.		

Map		Picture	
-----	---	---------	--

Table 4.10: Around Greenmoor Ponds

Site Name	Around Greenmoor Ponds	Site Identification	10
Site Location	Between Greenmore and Green Lane	Area Designation	Area of Outstanding Beauty
Site Description	Woodland providing both a locally valued ecological site and amenity and recreational space and with evidence of historical flint mining.	Site owner	Thames Water, leased to Woodcote Parish Council
		Site Owner Agreement	Yes
Assessment Criterion			
v. Proximity to the community it serves	The green space is located adjacent to the housing on Greenmore and the Old Reservoir Site development area.		
vi. Local in character	Yes – this space has both strong historic and landscape connections to the village.		
vii. Extensive tract of land	No – this space is some 1.2HA		
viii. Demonstrably special to the community	This site is owned by Thames Water and has been leased to Woodcote Parish Council for the Conservation Group to manage as recreational space.		

Map		Picture	
------------	---	----------------	--

Appendix

A. National Planning Policy Framework: Local Green Space Policies

The five paragraphs below are reproduced from the National Planning Policy Framework and provide details of their requirements concerning Local Green Spaces and their designation.

Open space and recreation

96. Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.
97. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
98. Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails. 41 This includes transport hubs, night-time economy venues, cinemas and theatres, sports stadia and arenas, shopping centres, health and education establishments, places of worship, hotels and restaurants, visitor attractions and commercial centres.
99. 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.
100. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
 - a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - b) 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
 - c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.