

Local Green Space Assessment

Byfleet Neighbourhood Plan

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Prepared for: Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Members of the Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum (“the Forum”) have prepared this document as a means of identifying spaces that are considered important enough to be afforded a level of protection in the Neighbourhood Plan as Local Green Space.
- 1.2. In preparing an assessment like this it is important to remember how this document will be used. In this case it will be used to inform the Byfleet Neighbourhood Plan which will set planning policies to be used in the determination of planning applications. The Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in conformity with national policy, in general conformity with the development plan and meet the aspirations of the community.
- 1.3. The Forum have identified that the Local Green Space designation may seek to protect open spaces within Byfleet from inappropriate development.
- 1.4. Paragraph 106 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that *‘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’*. Once designated, Local Green Space has protection consistent with that of Green Belt, but otherwise there are no new restrictions or obligations on landowners.
- 1.5. The Local Green Space designation is the greatest level of protection that could be afforded to spaces through the Neighbourhood Plan but it should be noted that this designation will only be appropriate for most important green areas or open space within Byfleet.

2. Methodology

- 2.1. This section will set out a methodology for how sites were identified, assessed and validated for the Local Green Space assessment.

Identification of Spaces

- 2.2. Following the results of the Residents' Survey, the community were able to identify spaces that are of particular importance to them, that they would like to see protected through the Local Green Space designation through Community Engagement Drop-in events in March and April 2014, community engagement stalls at the Byfleet Parish Day in July 2014 and 2022 and a community engagement stall at the Byfleet Christmas Market in December 2023.
- 2.3. Other spaces were also identified by the Forum which were of general importance to the community or were important for maintaining the landscape that surrounds Byfleet to the west.
- 2.4. The Forum then collated all of the identified sites and excluded:
- Sites where planning permission has been granted and the development has commenced.
 - Agricultural land so long as it is not adjacent to the built-up areas and there is no public or permissive right of way over it.
 - Areas that entirely or largely consist of woodland (Ancient Woodland is already afforded great protection at the national and local level).
 - Verges and other small pieces of land on or adjacent to the highway.
 - Small pieces or strips of land for which the only public interest is that a public right of way passes over/through it.
- 2.5. As much of Byfleet is situated within the Green Belt, any sites identified that are situated within the Green Belt are excluded from assessment as Local Green Space designation affords the same level of protection as land within the Green Belt.
- 2.6. The remaining sites were then ready for assessment.

Assessment

- 2.7. All identified spaces were assessed against each of the below criteria. The criteria is based on NPPF paragraph 107 which states: *'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'*

- 2.8. If the site was considered to meet a criterion then it is marked as such. For a space to be designated as Local Green Space, they must meet all three criteria.
- 2.9. For the purpose of this assessment, land ownership is not consideration as the legal ownership of spaces being considered would not impact consideration against the criteria.

Guidance for Assessing the Criteria

- 2.10. The following guiding principles were used when assessing the open spaces against the criteria set out in the methodology.

1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves

- 2.11. The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, including why the space is seen as special, but it must be reasonably close. For example, if public access is a key factor, then the site would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served. In assessing against this criteria, 'Reasonably Close' has, in most cases, been taken to mean one mile.

2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular significance

- 2.12. The space is judged on how important it is to the local community, this can be shown through the consultation responses. Local significance can relate to a wide range of things such as its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field) when combined with other factors, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. Other factors that have been considered include:
- Reports from residents that the site is valued;
 - Evidence that people access the site and use it;
 - Evidence that the local community voluntarily look after the sites, or the absence of vandalism, or absence of fly tipping of garden waste and litter.

3. The area is local in character and not an extensive tract of land

- 2.13. This can be open to interpretation but generally it should refer to the scale of the space and whether it reflects the surrounding locality. If an area covers a large area (such as multiple fields for example) it should be considered an extensive tract of land.

Validation

- 2.14. The outcome of the assessments will be list of sites considered suitable for each proposed designation. It will then be necessary to validate these proposed designations to ensure that they conform with the NPPF and associated Planning Practice Guidance.
- 2.15. Each site, once assessed and found to comply with the criteria required of a Local Green Space designation is then validated against the following checklist to ensure:

- That the site does not have planning permission for development
- The Landowner has been contacted and consulted at an early stage.
- The site is not 'Already Protected' under a different form of designation that provides the same or more protection than that of a Local Green Space

2.16. The checklist is elaborated below.

1. Planning Permission

2.17. Designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented. The same exceptions apply to all of the designations being considered.

2. Contacting the landowner

2.18. The designations being considered can be applied regardless of land ownership. However, the Steering Group and Neighbourhood Forum should contact the relevant landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as Local Green Space. Landowners will have opportunities to make representations in respect of proposals that will be included in a draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan which will go out for consultation.

3. Other Protection

2.19. Different types of designations are intended to achieve different purposes. If land is already protected by International, National, Regional or District designation then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space, Formal/Informal Sports Area or Local Community Space. Existing protections could be from planning policy or legislation.

3. Identification of Spaces

3.1. The following spaces were identified for potential designation as Local Green Spaces.

Ref	Name
S1	Byfleet Boat Club
S2	GB12 SANG
S3	Byfleet Primary School Playing Fields
S4	Byfleet Football Club
S5	Byfleet Cricket Club
S6	Land North of Parvis Road
S7	GB4 SANG
S8	Kings Head Lane
S9	Byfleet Recreation Ground
S10	Winern Glebe Allotments
S11	Scout Hut
S12	Byfleet Bowls Club
S13	GB5 SANG
S14	Holly Bush Stables
S15	Sanway Road Playground
S16	3 Acre Field
S17	Plough Green
S18	Eden Grove Road Allotments
S19	St. Mary's Primary School Playing Fields
S20	St. Mary's Churchyard and The Copse
S21	The Weymede Estate
S22	The Grasmere Estate
S23	Summer Close Estate

3.2. In accordance with the methodology, the following sites have been excluded:

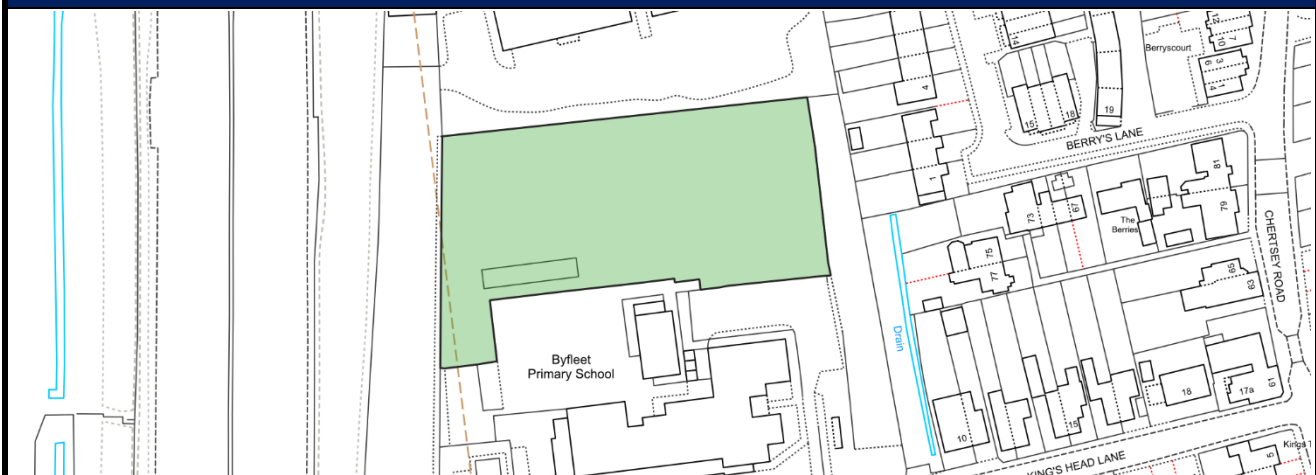
- S1: Byfleet Boat Club
- S2: GB12 SANG
- S4: Byfleet Football Club
- S5: Byfleet Cricket Club

- S6: Land North of Parvis Road
- S7: GB4 SANG
- S8: Kings Head Lane
- S9: Byfleet Recreation Ground
- S10: Winern Glebe Allotments
- S11: Scout Hut
- S12: Byfleet Bowls Club
- S13: GB5 SANG
- S14: Holly Bush Stables
- S15: Sanway Road Playground
- S16: 3 Acre Field
- S20: St Mary's Churchyard and The Copse
- S23: Summer Close Estate

4. Assessment of Spaces

- 4.1. All areas have been assessed in accordance with the above methodology and these assessments are set out in the following pages.

Reference	S3
Name	Byfleet Primary School Playing Fields
Description	A field used by Byfleet Primary School, situated to the northwest of Byfleet. It is served by a car park for the primary school.
Site Map	




Assessment Criteria	Comments	Criteria Met?
1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.	It is situated within a residential area as the school serves much of the community.	✓
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds particular local significance.	It is demonstrably special to the school but there is no evidence that it is used by the wider community.	✗
3. The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	The space is small and so not an extensive tract of land. It is not particularly local in character however as it is a typical primary school playing field.	✗
Summary / Conclusion	The space only meets one criteria and therefore it does not pass through to the validation stage.	

Reference	S17
Name	Plough Green
Description	Open space situated between Royston Avenue, High Road and Oyster Lane. Comprises benches, pathways, tree planting and flowers.

Site Map

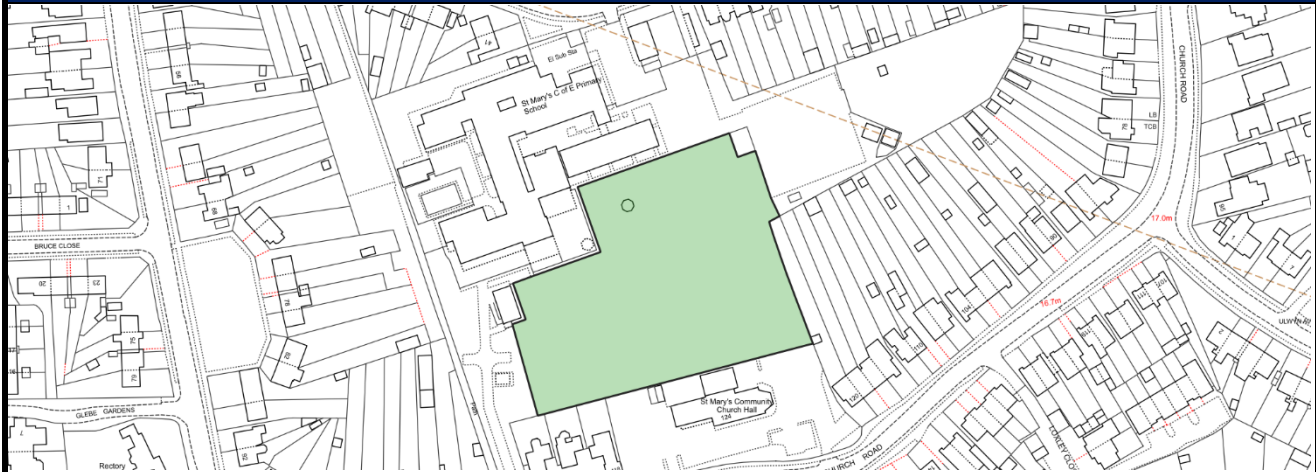


Assessment Criteria	Comments	Criteria Met?
1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.	Situated in the centre of the village to the north and west of several shops and services including Pear Chemist, The Plough and The Co-operative. It is within walking distance for most residents of the village.	✓
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds particular local significance.	The space is used as a meeting point for residents being within the centre of the village. It has historical associations with The Plough which was relocated to High Road in 1840 following several floods. The space is also used for community events including Byfleet Mini Festival and the Byfleet Village Christmas Market.	✓
3. The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	The space measures circa 0.18ha and therefore modest in size. The space acts as a small village green providing attractive green space within a high density part of the village.	✓
Summary / Conclusion	The space meets all three criteria and therefore it passes through to the validation stage.	


Reference	S18	
Name	Eden Grove Allotments	
Description	Large plot of allotments situated towards the centre of Byfleet. Access is to the north onto Eden Grove and there is a track along the northern boundary.	
Site Map		
Assessment Criteria	Comments	Criteria Met?
1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.	The allotments are situated in the centre of Byfleet and are highly accessible for most of the community.	✓
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds particular local significance.	One of two allotments in Byfleet. They have been used by schools for education but are not particularly of any great significance to the local community nor are demonstrably special.	✗
3. The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	The allotments measure a modest 1.25ha but all of this space is utilised so would not be an extensive tract of land.	✓
Summary / Conclusion	The space meets criteria 1 and 3 and therefore does not pass through to the validation stage.	

Reference	S19
Name	St. Mary's Primary School Playing Fields
Description	Playing fields situated at St Mary's Primary School to the south of Hart Road. Consists of grass pitches and space for athletics. It is surrounded by trees on the north, east and southern boundaries.

Site Map



Assessment Criteria	Comments	Criteria Met?
1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.	Situated to the southwest of Byfleet but is in proximity for most of the community. There is access to the north on Hart Road and south on Rectory Lane.	✓
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds particular local significance.	The site is used for recreation by St Mary's Primary School and is demonstrably special to pupils. It is an important space for school clubs and other events.	✓
3. The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	The space measures circa 0.62ha and is therefore not an extensive tract of land. As a school playing field it is also local in character.	✓
Summary / Conclusion	The space meets all three criteria and therefore it passes through to the validation stage.	

Reference	S21	
Name	The Weymede Estate Western Field	
Description	L-shaped parcel of land to the west of the Weymede Estate. Comprises private equestrian paddocks with some associated sheds. Access to the space is to the west on the A318.	
Site Map		
Assessment Criteria	Comments	Criteria Met?
1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.	Situated to the northeast of Byfleet so within proximity of much of the community, but the space is not accessible for the community as it is private.	✗
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds particular local significance.	It is a private field and therefore of no importance for the local community.	✗
3. The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	The space is fairly small and provides some visual and physical separation between the A318 and the Weymede Estate.	✓
Summary / Conclusion	The space meets criterion 3 only and therefore does not pass through to the validation stage.	

Reference	S22
Name	The Waymede Estate Eastern Field
Description	A well-kept and publicly accessible space to the east of the Waymede Estate and adjacent to the River Wey. It comprises a path along the River Wey and some seating.

Site Map



Assessment Criteria	Comments	Criteria Met?
1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.	The space is situated to the very northeast of Byfleet and is accessible mostly for residents of the Waymede Estate. It is not too far from the remainder of Byfleet.	✓
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds particular local significance.	The space is used by dogwalkers and residents to enjoy the riverside views, and is demonstrably special due to its picturesque views along the river.	✓
3. The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	It is a fairly small parcel of land and provides a peaceful space on the edge of an urban area and so is local in character.	✓
Summary / Conclusion	The space meets all three criteria and therefore it passes through to the validation stage.	

5. Validation

5.1. In accordance with the methodology the sites considered appropriate for designation have been put through the validation process.

Reference	Site Name	1. Planning Permission?	2. Contacting the Landowner	3. Other protection?
S17	Plough Green	PLAN/1999/1218 – Erection of rose bower, seat and post	×	Urban Open Space & within a Local Centre
S19	St. Mary’s Primary School Playing Fields	Works to school covered in PLAN/2020/0494, PLAN/2010/0746, PLAN/2009/1021 etc	×	×
S22	The Waymede Estate Eastern Field	Various applications for works to TPO trees but none for development of space	×	Conservation Area

5.2. S17, S19 and S22 therefore can be designated as Local Green Space.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. Following the review of open spaces contained within this document, a number of spaces are considered to meet the criteria for designation as Local Green Space.
- 6.2. Two maps are shown in APPENDIX 1 which display the location of the spaces assessed and the spaces designated Local Green Spaces.
- 6.3. It is considered that the following spaces comply with the criteria set out in paragraph 103 of the NPPF and this report therefore recommends that they can be designated as Local Green Space in the neighbourhood development plan.

Reference	Site Name
S17	Plough Green
S19	St. Mary’s Primary School Playing Fields
S22	The Waymede Estate Eastern Field



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