

Green Space Selection Additional Information

Background

Ashton Hayes and its environs are in washed over Green Belt at this time, providing certain protections to the natural environment. However this may be modified at some later stage necessitating the clear identification of Local Green Spaces, thus avoiding ambiguity. The below also provides a point of reference for local residents.

In the Parish Plan Survey of 2009 parishioners were asked how important various aspects of the Ashton Hayes Parish green environment were to them. The results showed that:-

- Open green spaces were very important for 84% of the respondents
- Footpaths (rather than village pavements) were very important to 82% of respondents
- Woodland areas were very important features for 80%
- Tree preservation areas were very important to 78% of respondents

Once the Initial NP Survey (2012) work was conducted, the NP team was structured in to working groups focussing on specific themes e.g. natural environment. As one part of this, the Environment working Group (EG) was established within the overall NP team, consisting of 5 members. This group commissioned the Ecological Assessment and Management Plan from an outside specialist RSK Ltd. RSK were supported in their field work by the leader of the EG. The resulting report from this work identified a number of sites of local nature conservation value.

The above findings were initially made available to local residents attending the drop in event at the local school on 23/11/13. From this time and until the policy proposals survey of 2014, the EG worked on other internally conducted surveys and on further developing the policies. This included the EG drawing some conclusions about what they jointly considered to be areas of green space worth protecting. These was obtained from a number of sources including the Ecological Assessment, input and comments received from local people at the very start of the process when the first drop in session consultation was held, through to the Initial Survey. Also input was received from informal consultation events such as the annual Picnic in the Park event, together with the responses received from local people following articles being placed in the local quarterly newsletter [Around Ashton]. In addition, the EG engaged with both the rest of the NP team and from time to time the Parish Council members in order to read and provide feedback on their policy proposals. Over the period during which the Neighbourhood Plan was being constructed, there were several planning applications ongoing which served to test out local resident's strength of feeling about the protection and use of greenspace in the parish and this further informed the working group.

The list of candidate local green spaces identified through this combined process and by the EG was presented to the residents as part of the subsequent Policy Proposal Survey (2014). The comments received back with the survey resulted in adjustments being made to the candidate local green spaces list, both adding and removing entries. The overall public response was to support the proposals, specifically:-

- 92% agreed to designate sites of value as open space as Local Green Space
- 96% agreed to designate sites of value for nature conservation as Local Green Space
- 86% agreed to designate sites of recreational value as Local Green Space 86%

Based on the above the NP consultation document for Regulation 14 was produced and distributed to the residents and to those with an interest in the area as well as CWaC. Again based on feedback received, the candidate list of local Green Spaces was further amended.

Proposed Local Green Spaces & Rationale

Site Ref.	Type	Location and justification	CWaC Local Plan policy (and Designation)
	<u>Nationally identified / listed woodland sites</u>	These are identified on the government MAGIC website as woodlands of note. The ecologist who prepared the Ecological Assessment and Management Plan for the NP area identified these as areas worth protecting. They are included in the plan as green spaces to be protected due to their conservation significance, their contribution to wildlife connectivity, their importance to residents and visual amenity to the countryside.	
NC1	Site of nature conservation value	Ash Wood (Local Wildlife Site; Ancient Woodland; National Woodland Inventory - Broadleaved)	CWaC ENV 4 (Local Wildlife Site) Chester ENV29 (ANCV)
NC2	Site of nature conservation value	Lilly Wood (Local Wildlife Site; Ancient Woodland; National Woodland Inventory - Broadleaved)	CWaC ENV 4 (Local Wildlife Site) Chester ENV29 (ANCV)
NC3	Site of nature conservation value	Garden Wood (National Woodland Inventory - Broadleaved and Mixed)	Chester ENV29 (ANCV)
NC4	Site of nature conservation value	Ark Wood (Local Wildlife Site; Ancient Woodland; National Woodland Inventory - Broadleaved)	CWaC ENV 4 (Local Wildlife Site) Chester ENV29 (ANCV and SNCV)
NC5	Site of nature conservation value	Cat Rough (Local Wildlife Site; Ancient Woodland; National Woodland Inventory - Broadleaved)	CWaC ENV 4 (Local Wildlife Site) Chester ENV29 (ANCV and SNCV)
	<u>Publically used sites</u>		

NC6	Site of nature conservation value	Brine's Brow (Local Wildlife Site; National Woodland Inventory - Broadleaved) This site is spread across 3 sides of a road junction and consists of long established natural woodland. It also includes a small car park and picnic area and is traversed in 2 sections by the Baker Way walking trail between Delamere and Chester. It is of ecological significance, local and regional green space recreation significance and importance to the community.	CWaC ENV 4 (Local Wildlife Site) Chester ENV29 (ANCV and SNCV)
NC7	Site of nature conservation value	Andrew's Wood. This is a relatively new woodland created by a local family in memory of a family member and done in partnership with the Woodland Trust. It is increasingly popular with walkers as a local green recreation facility. It is thus of importance to the community.	None
NC8	Not used	-	-
	<u>Sites of nature importance</u>		
NC9	Site of nature conservation value	Gongar Brook. This site is a brook running down the side of the village eventually joining the river Gowy. It is lined with trees on both sides and the Baker Way which runs between Delamere station and Chester is on its northern bank. This route is popular with both long distance walkers and local dog owners who use it as a major access point to the countryside. In addition it has numerous badger sets in the banks and adjacent to the path. It is included as a green space to be protected for its badger sets, its amenity value, its visual impact on the surroundings and its importance to the local and local community.	None
NC10	Site of nature conservation value	Railway embankment. This site is a low escarpment running above the north side of Ashton Brook and near to and below the line of the railway. It is heavily wooded by mature trees, thus It visually contributes to the green perspective of the area being visible from the north / northwest side of the village. In this respect it shields much of the view towards	None

		<p>the Ellesmere port refineries. It also has significant evidence of occupation by badgers and other wildlife. Ashton Brook itself runs down into the river Gowy and the brook is a significant home for water voles which help support the local owl population. Owl boxes are positioned between the brook and the embankment woodland. The site is therefore of significant visual amenity helping shield the village from views of the refineries. It is also of wildlife importance and importance to the community.</p>	
	<u>Village green spaces</u>	<p>The below are small areas of greenspace within the village which form part of the character of the immediate area. They are maintained as green spaces and are required to be preserved/managed as such.</p>	
OS1	Site of open space value	Grass triangle at eastern end of Peel Hall Lane	None
OS2	Site of open space value	Grass triangle at western end of Grange Road	None
OS3	Site of open space value	Greens of Peel Crescent and Brookside	None
	<u>Roadside footpath adjacent to the Millennium footpath</u>	<p>The below 3 sites link together to form a green ribbon from just outside the Ashton Hayes village centre through to the boundary of the parish with Mouldsworth at Ashton Brook. The village green verge is covered under the village conservation area. The rest of the proposed green space comprises mature woodland which at Ashton Brook links to the wildlife corridor provided by the brook and its surrounds. The sites proposed below are bounded by fields on the NE side and by the footpath along the main road. The main part of the footpath was installed as part of the Ashton Hayes millennium celebrations and provides a pleasant and safe green walk from Ashton Hayes to Mouldsworth station. They are included here for their millennium significance and their amenity value. It and its surroundings are of significant importance to the community.</p>	

OS4	Site of open space value	Grass verge and woodland beside the road from the Village Hall to Ashton Brook	Approx. 95 metres at northern end is within Chester ENV29 (ANCV)
OS5	Site of open space value	Woodland between Grange Road and Andrew's Wood, traversed by the footpath to Mouldsworth	Chester ENV29 (ANCV)
OS6	Site of open space value	Grass bank along Church Road opposite school	None
	<u>Roadside woodland</u>		
OS7	Site of open space value	Wooded bank on road from Mouldsworth to Delamere. This relates to a sloping elongated area of land alongside the road from Mouldsworth heading to Delamere. The strip is below the farmland above and is well wooded and with evidence of badgers and other wildlife. It has been included for completeness and its significance for its wildlife and the character of the drive through this area.	Chester ENV29 (ANCV)
	<u>Recreation sites</u>		
R1	Site of recreational value	Playing field behind Village Hall, Church Road. Included for completeness as an important part of the village hall site which is of longstanding and significant importance to the community.	Chester ENV17 (Other Greenspace) Also identified in 2011 Open Space Audit and Assessment of Need as "Provision for Children"
R2	Cricket Pitch	This is located inside the entrance to the grounds of Ashton Hayes. It has been used in the past as a cricket pitch but ceased when the club stopped functioning. However permission has been granted to the new owner of the land by CWaC to move and rebuild the cricket pavilion. As this has been a community facility, albeit on private land it should therefore be protected for the community.	Chester ENV29 (ANCV)