INCE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GREEN SPACES DOCUMENT MAY 2022

Introduction

Ince is a historic village in the Merseyside Green Belt with the Mersey estuary to the north. During the twentieth century, extensive industrial development has encroached very close to the village boundaries on both the western and southern sides. The recent permission granted for the Protos development on Ince Marshesto the east means that the village is now entirely surrounded by industrial development and the estuary. This makes designating land as Local Green Space particularly important for the local community, even where it is already Green Beltland and/or within the Conservation area.

Ince Neighbourhood Plan was originally conceived out of a shared concern amongst local residents for the future of Ince's green spaces. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) allows communities to identify and protect green spaces of particular importance to them; Planning Policy Guidance states in sections 010 and 011 of the Local Green Space section that land already covered by designations including Green Belt, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Monuments can also be designated as LGS if there is additional local benefit in so doing. At Ince, the unique context of the village as described above means that LGS designation carries the significant additional benefit of strengthening and reasserting the village's historic character as a free-standing rural settlement set within and defined by an attractive riverside landscape of open fields, other green spaces and scattered woodland.'

It is also noted that as none of the candidate LGS sites have outstanding planning permissions this means that designation would be consistent with PPG Paragraph008 and would also meet the NPPF paragraph 101 requirement that Local Green Space designations be capable of enduring beyond the end of the neighbourhoodplan period.

The task facing the Green Spaces Working Group has been to identify the many green spaces across the parish, and to assess their suitability for designation as a Local Green Space as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Our initial survey identified over 25 possible green sites across the parish ranging from grass roadside verges to open fields. Our next job was to draw up a set of criteria which would comply with the NPPF and against which each space on the long list would be assessed.

The selection criteria have been designed to provide clarity and consistency to the site assessment process. Sites which are already allocated for development in the Local Plan cannot be included. Whilst this excluded many of the green spaces looked at, there are many which can still be protected in the future.

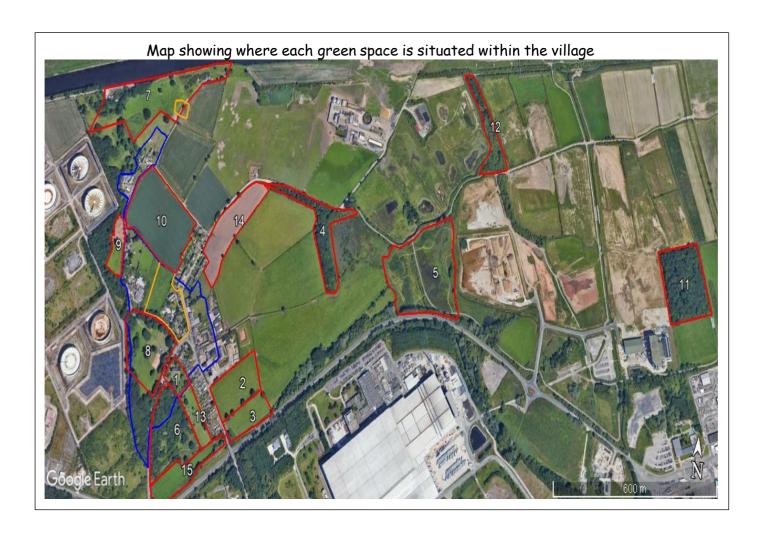
After the selection criteria were applied to the long list, we were left with 15 potential Local Green Spaces. We then carried out a detailed assessment of each site, looking in particular at how they scored in terms of close proximity to the village, beauty,

historical significance, recreational value, richness of wildlife, tranquility and supporting the local economy. The assessments were based on evidence gathered from a combination of fieldwork and documentary research.

On completion of the assessments, the 15 sites were found to fulfil the majority of conditions laid out in our selection criteria. This list [see section below] was then sent out to all residents of the village as part of a survey to ascertain their thoughts and opinions. There was a 60% return of the surveys with no green space receiving less than 95% vote in favour of protection. This result indicates that the sites on our shortlist are much valued by local residents reflecting the beauty, history and ecological diversity of our village

No.	Site name and address	Extensive tract of land	In close proximity to the community it serves	Beauty	Historical significance	Recreational value	Richness of wildlife	Tranquility
1	Churchyard	No	J	J	J	J	I	J
2	Cricket Field, Station Road	No	J	J	J	J	J	J
3	King's Croft, Station Road	No	J	J	J		J	J
4	Fens Wood	No	J	J	J	J	J	J
5	Goldfinch Meadows	No	J	J	J	J	J	J
6	Ince Reservoir	No	J	J	J	J	J	J
7	The North Hills	No	I	J	J	J	J	J
8	Park Field Pool Lane	No	J	J	J	J	J	J
9	Park Meadows, Kinsey's Lane	No	J	J	J	J	I	J
10	Wood Farm Field	No	J	J	J		J	J
11	Big Wood	No	J	J	J	J	J	J

12	Decoy Wood	No	J	\(\)	J		J	ſ
13	The Parish Field	No	J	J	J	J	1	Ţ
14	Lower Marsh Lane Field	No	J	J	\(\)		l	I
15	Pool Lane Pasture	No	J	J	J		J	J





Map taken from Google Maps

St James The Great Churchyard

Name of Site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	Green Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/ tenant details/ notified
St James Church yard	SJ45000 76339	Church yard	0.5 hectares	Yes	Yes	Church of England

Landowner address:

Church House, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3AZ

Map key 1



Site description

The churchyard is bordered by Pool Lane, the Village Hall, Ince Reservoir, the Parish Field and some of the residences of Pool Lane and The Square. The main access to the site is through the pedestrian gates from Pool Lane.

Reasonable proximity

The churchyard is in the heart of the village of Ince, sitting at the highest point of the village and accessible to both local residents, those walking from Elton and surrounding villages, and also visitors to the village.

Beauty

The churchyard is a place of beauty, informal in its layout, with areas of wildflowers and the gravestones being accessed by mainly grass paths.





Historic significance

The presence on the site of the Church of St James the Great dates back to the 15th century. It is thought that a church building has stood on this land since 1036 and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. The churchyard is the primary and most critical historic element of the Grade II listed church's setting, and houses a great number of gravestones dating back hundreds of years which are of highly significant value to the history of the village and the parish and are a link both for current residents of the village, and for people wishing to trace their family history. The churchyard houses ancient trees, including two yew trees, which form a crucial element of the wooded part of the village as referenced in the Conservation Area Assessment (https://inceparishcouncil.uk).

There is a memorial gravestone which records the tragic loss of life of workers who were involved in building the Manchester Ship Canal, just a mile or so away from the church. There is also the gravestone of a Royal Navy sailor who served in World War II.





Recreational Value

The churchyard is permanently open and available for people to walk through or come to sit in. Many dog walkers walk through the churchyard to access both the Parish Field, which lies behind the churchyard boundary, or to walk through to the Reservoir nature area. There are footpaths through the churchyard which lead through to the Parish Field, the Village Hall and also onto Ince Reservoir.



Tranquillity

The management of the maintenance of the churchyard is now to leave areas to grow more naturally to encourage the local wildlife including the birds, insects and butterflies. The area provides a quiet tranquil haven away from the hustle; there are also benches provided for visitors to sit, rest and reflect.

Richness of wildlife

There are a great number of wildflowers growing within the churchyard to be enjoyed, including the delicately pretty Cuckoo Flower or Lady's Smock, with the mix of flowers changing with the seasons. As well as being a native wildflower area, the churchyard is also an important area for lots of our native insect and birdlife which can be seen and heard there; with the churchyard being so close to the Reservoir it offers nesting sites and food sources for the wildlife. It is known that churchyards tend to be particularly rich in wildlife, particularly if wooded, as is the case here.



The historic significance of St James' churchyard as part of the Conservation Area of the village is of extreme importance to the community. It is place of beauty and tranquillity where quiet time can be spent enjoying the local wildlife and is highly valued by the local residents. These features are considered collectively to form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status as Green Belt land and being within the Conservation Area.

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https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/biodiversity

The Cricket Field

Name of Site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	Green Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/ tenant details/notified
The Cricket Field	SJ4520 0 76360	Grazing land	0.97 hectares	Yes	yes	Peel Holdings -owner Edward Crank-tenant -both notified of intent

Landowner address:

Venus Building, Old Park Lane, Trafford City, Manchester, M41 7HA

Tenant's address:

Lower Green Farm, Station Road, Ince, CH2 4NJ

Map key 2

Site description

The Cricket Field is 0.97 hectares in size and is historically part of the agricultural land in the parish of Ince. It is currently used as grazing land for the cattle on Lower Green Farm. It lies adjacent to the King's Croft field and borders Station Road, forming part of the vistas for the residents there.

Reasonable proximity

The Cricket Field is on the edge of the village of Ince and is within easy walking distance of the furthest property in the village which is approximately 1/3 mile away. It is also accessible to local residents and visitors to admire from the footpath on Station Road or from the access path leading onto Grinsome Road. There are no public access points and it can only be viewed from the road.



A village cricket match taken in 1936. One of many matches played over the following years.

Beauty

Ince is a semi-rural, agricultural village and as you enter the village from the direction of Elton, to see cows grazing in the Cricket Field as part of the vista down to the Mersey Estuary and beyond sets the feel of a village farming community. There are also mature trees, all of which are maintained with TPOs on them. It is an area whose views change with the seasons. Whilst this area forms part of the view from Station Road, the site can also be observed from the other side from the PROW that runs from Grinsome road up through Lower Green Farm. The boundary fields below the Cricket Field to the north continue down to the side of Fens Wood and onto the ecological mitigation area.

Historic significance

The Cricket field derives its name from the fact that it was the home and ground for the local cricket team from Ince during the 1930s and 1940s.

The Cricket Field forms an element of the setting of the Conservation Area² and the Grade II listed shippon at Lower Green Farm, whose gable is visible from the field. As it comprises farming land it also contributes to understanding the significance of the shippon as an agricultural building. In this way, the field itself has some historic significance. Finally, a further element of historic significance is that the site, alongside Site 3, functions as a buffer between Ince as a freestanding, historic rural settlement and local industrial development (in this case, the vast Encirc factory to the

south-east). Were it to be lost as green space, this visual separation would be lost, and local character and heritage eroded.



Recreational value

As mentioned previously, this field used to be the home of the village cricket team but then moved to full agricultural use. However, although it is under agricultural tenancy, more recently the tenants opened up the field and held a village donkey derby as a fundraising event for the North -West Air Ambulance Charity. It may be that if future village events are planned, it can be offered for use in a similar way.



Tranquillity

The village is surrounded by industry which can be both seen and heard from several places around the village. The Cricket Field, however, provides a tranquil place to look across, down towards the estuary. The Cricket Field is grazed by milking cattle throughout the spring, summer and some of the autumn months, and acts as a nursery ground for expectant cows giving birth to their calves. It is a place to connect with nature, to observe animal life, both agricultural and wild, and a place to bring a sense of wellbeing in an area surrounded by industry and noise.

Richness of wildlife

The Cricket Field is adjacent to the King's Croft, an area which attracts a breadth of wildlife and is known for its birdlife. There are barn owls and buzzards soaring above

and huge flocks of pigeons and crows resting on the ground and in the trees. Raptors use this area as part of their home range for hunting prey and are able to thrive because of the varied wild habitat which the Cricket Field is a part of.



The Cricket field is valued by the local community not only for its historical links but also for its current agricultural role, for the beauty of the vistas down to the estuary and the rich habitat it provides for local wildlife. We feel that these features are considered collectively to form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status as Green Belt land.

The King's Croft

Name of site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	Green Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/ tenant details /notified
King's Croft	SJ 45250 76260	Grazing land	0.983 hectares	Yes	yes	Peel Holdings - owner Edward Crank- tenant -both notified of intent

Landowner address: Venus Building, Old Park Lane, Trafford City,

Manchester, M41 7HA

Tenant's address: Lower Green Farm, Station Road, Ince, CH2 4NJ

Map key 3

Site description

The King's Croft is just shy of one hectare in size. It is of similar size to other pieces of agricultural land in that vicinity of the parish. It is local in character and has always felt a part of the rural setting of the village. Two of the other boundaries are made upof newly planted hedges and the acoustic fence on Grinsome Road. To the south and east is a footpath which, although not an official public right of way, is open to workers of the Protos development and locals accessing the wider landscape.





Reasonable proximity

The King's Croft is on the edge of the village and is within easy walking distance of the furthest property in the village which is approximately 1/3 mile away. It is also accessible to local residents and those from the neighbouring village of Elton who walk along Station Road.

Beauty

This area opens up the views from Station Road and from the pathway descending alongthe southern edge. The site can be observed from the other side from the public right of way which runs from Grinsome Road up through Lower Green Farm. Many residents along Station Road have commented on the lovely rural views of the landscape across the King's Croft and some have suggested that this was the reason they moved to Ince. Walkers can be observed stopping at this point to take in the breathtaking views and even capture the moment on their cameras with the sun setting or during late summer days as the cows graze. This parcel of land keys into those to the side and beyond. Themature oak trees are of particular beauty throughout the year and show off their autumn colours in spectacular fashion. All of these oak and sycamore standalone trees on the field edge boundary have TPOs.











Historic Significance

The historic significance of the King's Croft relates to the fact that, alongside Site 2 (The Cricket Field), it functions as a buffer between Ince as a freestanding, historic rural settlement and local industrial development (in this case, the vast Encirc factory to the south-east). Were it to be lost as green space, this visual separation would be lost and local character and heritage eroded.

Tranquillity

The village is surrounded by industry which can be both seen and heard from several places around the village. The King's Croft, however, provides a tranquil place to look across in order to get away from the noise and visual reminders of industrial neighbours and daily traffic on Station Road. It is also grazed by milking cattle throughout the spring, summer and some of the autumn months and acts as a nursery ground for expectant cows giving birth to their calves. Standing to the side of this field you can look out over the southern end of the village, and all that can be heard is the sound of the cows, the wind in the trees and the birds flying overhead. The feeling of peace and tranquillity serve to calm and settle the spirit.

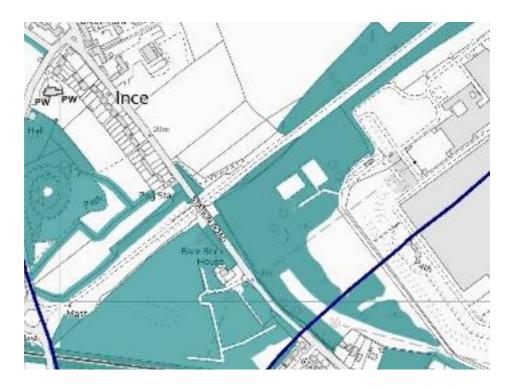
Richness of wildlife

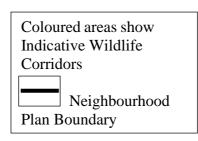
The King's Croft is an area which is known for its birdlife. Barn owls and buzzards can both be seen, at different times of the day, flying over the field hunting for prey. The prolific newly planted gorse bushes along the acoustic barriers provide food and shelter for other wildlife: linnets and long-tailed tits have been seen flitting along and roosting in these bushes.

Map 1



<u>Map 2</u>
Maps taken from Cheshire Wildlife Trust report (April 2021).





Fens Wood

Name of Site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	Green Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/tenant details /notified
Fens Wood	SJ45508 76744	Woodland	1.97 hectares	No	No	Peel Holdings - owner

Landowner address: Venus Building, Old Park Lane, Trafford City, Manchester, M41 7HA

Map key 4

Site description

Fens Wood is an L-shaped wood consisting of traditional English woodland varieties such as oak, ash, beech, sycamore, silver birch and willow. It is bordered by hawthorn and elder. It lies at the bottom of Marsh Lane and runs north along the lane until it reaches Holme Farm drive where it bears right and heads towards Grinsome Road.

Reasonable proximity

Fens Wood is on the north-east of the village and is within easy walking distance down Marsh Lane. It is accessible in a few places which have historically been the main access points. These are from Marsh Lane and from a field at the far side of the wood.

Beauty

A walk through Fens Wood is something special. The undergrowth is covered with a variety of colourful wildflowers throughout the year. The wide variety of trees provide a colourful, seasonal backdrop; the whole wood is covered by a group Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), testament to its high visual amenity value. In winter, when it snows, the wood becomes a magical place to be; a blanket of white with the sound being of crunching snow beneath your feet.

Historic significance

Fens Wood is a few hundred years old. Whilst there are many new trees evident there are still many of the old trees still remaining. This site forms an important element of the setting for the nearby Grade II listed Holme Farm. The wood is directly visible at a distance of a few hundred feet from the front door of the listed building.









View from Holme Farm



Recreational value

Although there is no public footpath connecting Fens Wood to Grinsome Road, locals have used it as a shortcut for generations to enjoy walking through the wood. Local children have used the wood as a play area for generations and can play safely in the wood, making dens and riding their bikes. The undulating footpaths are particularly good for the more adventurous mountain-bikers. Dog walkers frequently exercise their dogs in the wood as it is a safe place to allow them off the lead. Local horse riders also use the wood to ride through on their way to the marshes.

Tranquillity

Fens Wood is at one of the lowest points of the village and for this reason it acts as a buffer zone for the noise of industry which surrounds Ince. Walking through the wood, the only sounds you can hear are the birdsong, the wind in the trees and the sound of cattle grazing in the adjacent field.





Richness of wildlife

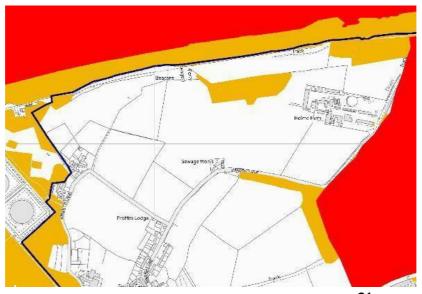
Fens Wood is a haven for wildlife. It has been classed as being of medium level habitat distinctiveness (Map 2). Many species of birds nest there including woodpeckers, blackbirds, blue-tits, wrens and warblers, as well as the more common crows and wood pigeons.

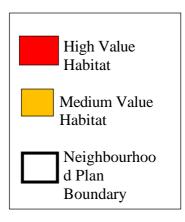
Foxes and badgers have made their homes in the wood. It is also a safe wildlife corridor for animals moving from the marshes to the higher parts of the village (Map 3).

In the spring, the wood floor is covered with bluebells and snowdrops which provide the first signs that winter is losing its grip. In summer, the thick brambles provide food and shelter for a variety of species.

Fens Wood is highly valued by people from the local area, not only for its historic links to Holme Farm and the generations of children who have played there, but also to all those who enjoy walking through the woods, enjoying the trees and flowers through the changing seasons and the bird activity in the area. These features are considered collectively to form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status as Green Belt land.

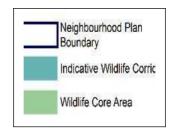
<u>Map 3</u>





<u>Map 4</u>





Maps taken from Cheshire Wildlife Trust report (April 2021)

Goldfinch Meadows

Name of Site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	<i>G</i> reen Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/tenant details /notified
Goldfinch Meadows	SJ 459 41 76765	Ecological Site	7.36 hectares	No	No	Peel Holdings - owner

Landowner address: Venus Building, Old Park Lane, Trafford City, Manchester, M41 7HA

Map key 5

Site description

Goldfinch Meadows is 7.36 Hectares. The Meadows lie within the marshes which were once farmed locally. Although it is an area of land that has been relandscaped/rewilded, it is local in character. The marshes are crucial to the rural, riverbank setting of the parish. The boundaries are the existing hedges that belonged to the grazing land.

Reasonable proximity

Goldfinch Meadows is on the far side of the village but within easy walking distance of the furthest property which is approximately 1 mile away.

There are two main access points: one from Marsh Lane and the other from Grinsome Road via the bridleway. There is space to park a car if anyone wishes to drive to the Meadows which many do. This takes people to within 200m of the Meadows at either access point. The Grinsome Road access would be suitable for disabled access but the Marsh Lane one would not.

Beauty

The area is a beautiful part of the Marshes. The water has bullrushes and reeds growing in profusion. There are small bridges to cross over, adding to its interest. A wide variety of trees have been planted which will add to its beauty as they grow and mature . As part of the recent industrial development on the marshes, by rewilding/relandscaping this site in recent years, the landowner has significantly increased the site's performance on this criterion, thus significantly strengthening the case for LGS designation.

Historic significance

Goldfinch Meadows is part of Ince Marshes which can be traced back hundreds of years. The Marshes are also the site of a Viking settlement and evidence of this has been found in the form of jewellery. The site has been grazed for many years by localfarmers until such time that it was sold to Peel and turned into an ecology area.

Recreational value

The Meadows have always been known as grazing land which could be walked through when enjoying the Marshes. The land was relandscaped / rewilded as part of the industrial development to provide an area to encourage wildlife and is now accessible for the enjoyment of walkers, cyclists and horse riders, which is significant for the villagers as they have lost a lot of recreational land. The Meadows is part of National Cycle Route 5, giving cyclists access to Helsby and Frodsham via a dirt track beyond the Meadows. It is also used by walkers, with and without dogs, who enjoy the small pathways which run either side of the bridleway. Local horse riders use the bridleway on a regular basis as this also gives them access to Helsby and Frodsham from Ince. Birdwatchers frequent the Meadows as do photographers. It is acknowledged that by relandscaping the site in recent years, the landowner has significantly increased the site's performance on this criterion, thus strengthening the case for LGS designation.





Tranquillity

Although the Meadows run parallel with Grinsome Road, it is still a tranquil place to be. The wind can be heard in the young trees and bullrushes giving the area a sense of timelessness and tranquillity.

Richness of wildlife

Post re-wilding, The Meadows has become an area of extremely high wildlife value, supporting many species of wildflowers, shrubs and trees and attracting a wide variety of birds, insects and small animals. There are interpretative signboards around the site detailing species for visitors to look out for. The

small egret is a regular visitor and can be seen close by hunting for food; they have nested in trees on the edge of the Meadows.

Goldfinch Meadows is in an area of High Value distinctiveness (Map 2) and is a part of the Wildlife Core area (Map 3) It has recently become a crucial area to help support wildlife as quite a lot of marshland has been taken for industrial development. In creating this area, the landowner has significantly increased the site's performance on this criterion, thus strengthening the case for LGS designation and the site is shown as a dedicated Nature Area on the Protos website.

<u>Map 5</u>



<u>Map 6</u>



Goldfinch Meadows is highly valued by the community, being within easy walking distance of the village. The area is a beautiful part of the Marshes and is now accessible for the enjoyment of walkers, cyclists, horse riders and bird watchers, to enjoy the wildlife, which is significant for the villagers as they have lost a lot of recreational land. These features are considered collectively to form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status as Green Belt land.

Ince Reservoir

Name of	Grid	Туре	Area of	Green	Conservation	Landowner/tenant
Site	reference		site	Belt	area	details /notified
Ince reservoir	SJ 44972 76220	Local nature park	2.63 hectares	Yes	No	Cheshire West and Chester Council

Landowner address: 58 Nicholas Street, Chester, CH1 2NP

Map key 6

Site description

A Mersey Forest recognised site³ that was created from a reclaimed subterraneous underground water storage tank for what was Ince Power Station. Access to the site is visible from Pool Lane and via the Parish Council managed play area and field. The site as it stands is about 40 years old and has a mixed species of broadleaf and coniferous young woodland stands. The ash have received some thinning over the years and have now come to an age whereby some considerable thinning is required to regain the health and form of the tree stock.



³The Mersey Forest is a growing network of woodlands and green spaces across Cheshire and Merseyside, which has been creating 'woodlands on your doorstep' for over 25 years.



Reasonable proximity

Ince Reservoir is at the heart of the village and is accessible to both local residents and those walking from Elton. Some utilise the Village Hall car park to park up and walk either through the village hall woodland and onto the Reservoir, or via the Parish Field.





Beauty

There is an intrinsic beauty to the site, generated by accessible woodland which can be enjoyed along a number of meandering pathways, with changes in level adding interest and opening up new vistas around each corner for walkers. At the top of the reservoir, although the views have somewhat closed in with the stands of trees and shrubs that have matured over the last 10 years, glimpses of the parish boundary can still be seen from a number of vantage points. The beauty of landscape across to Dunham-on-the-Hill and over to Alvanley, the Mersey estuary and associated marshland is lovely on a clear day.

Historic Significance

The site has some historic significance as a legacy of 20th century industrial development. When Ince B Power Station was commissioned and opened in 1984 the underground reservoir on the site was used to provide part of the water storage. Ince power station⁴ was decommissioned in 1997 and demolished a few years later leaving the reservoir redundant. Part of the site is situated in the Ince Conservation Area.

Recreational value

Ince Reservoir has huge value for informal recreation with several seating and picnic benches to the side and at the top which are used regularly by both local residents and visitors to the area. The most popular use is for dog walking, and people come from neighbouring villages to exercise their dogs in a safe environment.

⁴Further proof that the site has historic significance comes from the fact that Ince Power Station is listed on Grace's Guide to British Industrial History, a leading source of historical information on industry and manufacturing in Britain, at https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Ince_Power_Station















Tranquillity

The village is surrounded by industry which can be both seen and heard from several places around the village. Ince Reservoir, however, provides a tranquil place to go to in order to get away from the noise and visual reminders of industrial neighbours. When walking around the concentric pathways from top to bottom or vice versa, all that can be heard is the sound of nature; the wind in the trees and the birds flying overhead. The feeling of peace and tranquillity serve to calm and settle the spirit.

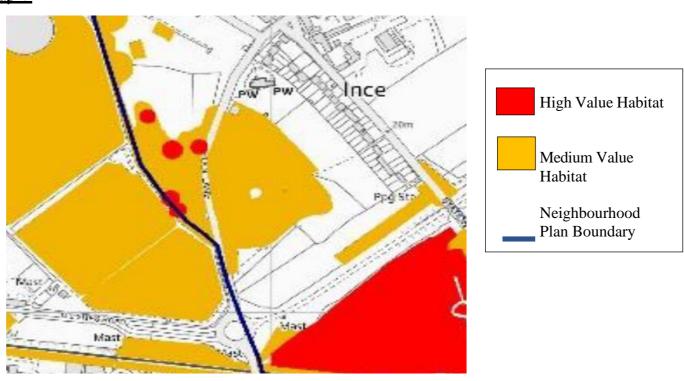
Richness of wildlife

This is an important refuge for lots of our native birdlife which can be seen flitting around and using the bramble for cover and the hedges to nest in. It is also an important wildlife corridor for many animals. There are plenty of rabbit warrens to the south boundary and opportunities for small mammals to feed on the hazel nuts.

This site has been earmarked for a community wood conservation project which is likely to unfold in the near future with a local friends' group in collaboration with the Mersey Forest team based at Risley Moss, Warrington.

Ince Reservoir is a highly valued and well used area within the village, and for all the reasons stated above we feel that these features are considered collectively to form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status as Green Belt land and partially within the Conservation Area.

Map 7



<u>Map 8</u>



Maps taken from Cheshire Wildlife Trust report (April 2021)

Coloured area shows Indicative Wildlife Corridors

Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

The North Hills

Name of Site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	Green Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/tena nt details /notified
North Hills	SJ448307 7142	Grazin g land	3.96 hectares	Yes	No	Peel Holdings- owner Dave Willis tenant-both notified of intent

Landowner address: Venus Building, Old Park Lane, Trafford City,

Manchester, M41 7HA

Tenant's address: Holme Farm, Marsh Lane, Ince, CH2 4NR

Map key 7

Site description

The North Hills is 3.96. hectares in size. It is of similar size to other pieces of land in the parish. It is local in character and has always been an important part of the rural, riverbank setting of the parish. It lies on the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal which is one of its boundaries. Two of the other boundaries are made up of hedge and a post and rail fence which border arable land. The fourth boundary runs alongside paddocks owned by neighbouring properties. Access to the site, from Kinsey's Lane North, is clearly visible from the road.

(Map 1 - The North Hills Site)

Reasonable proximity

The North Hills is on the edge of the village and is within easy walking distance of the furthest property in the village which is approximately a mile away.

There are two main access points: one via a track from Kinsey's Lane North, accessible with consent, for cars, cycles, horses and pedestrians. The second access point is from a public footpath across a field on lower Marsh Lane. There is a designated area for parking which is flat and suitable for disabled access.

Beauty

At the end of the short track to the North Hills the site becomes clearly visible and the views over the land are exceptional. The site is on the edge of the village conservation area and within the green belt area. The site commands a wide view of the estuary of the Mersey, being on a promontory overlooking the former channel of the

river which used to flow beneath the cliffs. The views across the estuary are breathtaking and add to the natural beauty of the site. The views over Ince Marshes show the fullness of the parish boundary and the wide variety of landscape. The views to the northwest show the skyline of Liverpool and its cathedrals and to the east, the Runcorn Railway Bridge, which are all beautiful and provide a sense of place and local character.





Historic significance

The North Hills is the site of a Roman Fortlet (see map). The Fortlet, a Scheduled Monument, is visible as a crop mark in aerial photographs and excavation has shown that it is well preserved beneath the topsoil. The map includes a 10m boundary around the archaeological features, considered to be essential for the monuments support and preservation.

The Roman Fortlet has a setting for the purposes of heritage planning policy, and the North Hills is a crucial element of this setting. The significance of the Fortlet lies in its commanding position on high, open land overlooking the estuary, which would have allowed for both surveillance and defence. This is a very strong case for keeping this land open and undeveloped, as otherwise it would not be possible to understand this significance. This may have played an important part in the historic development of the village.

The lower part of the North Hill was the site of Ince lighthouse which was used up until the building of the Manchester Ship Canal in the late 19th century. The site gives a superb view over the Canal and enables visitors to understand its purpose, significance and to see it still in operation 128 years after it opened.

Building a canal from Manchester to the sea required an Act of Parliament, which took 3 attempts and 3 years to be passed. The Manchester Ship Canal is an approximately 36-mile waterway, linking docks in Manchester with the sea via the Mersey Estuary and at the time of its building was among the largest and deepest canals in the world. Building started in 1887 and by November 1893, the canal was completely navigable from Manchester to Eastham and on the 7 December 1893, the directors of the canal company made the full passage, setting the seal on the construction of miles

of docks and quays, five sets of massive locks, seven swing bridges, the famous swing aqueduct at Barton and five high-level railway viaducts.

On 1 January 1894, the entire length of the canal was opened to commercial traffic, and then on 21 May 1894, the canal was formally opened by Queen Victoria from the Royal Yacht The Enchantress. The building of the canal was not without tragedy There is a memorial gravestone in St James The Great's churchyard, just a mile away in the village, which records the tragic loss of life of workers who were involved in building the Manchester Ship Canal.

On the banks of the canal, within the site, is an Allan-Williams Gun Turret (photos below), built locally in 1939-40. This served as a ground defence or anti-aircraft device during WW2 when defending the Mersey estuary and the Manchester Ship Canal. Relatively few of these remain and one similar one, in Hertfordshire, has a grade 2 listing. Listing of this is being investigated.





As mentioned above, the skyline of Liverpool can be viewed from this site. Liverpool Metropolitan (Roman Catholic) Cathedral is Grade II* listed and the Anglican Cathedral Grade I listed. The site forms an element of their setting, though distant. More generally, it enables understanding of the historic function of Liverpool as a global riverside port. The Runcorn Railway Bridge over the Mersey is also clearly visible and is itself Grade II* listed.

A further important historic landscape feature is the solitary oak tree which is over 200 years old.



Recreational value

The North Hills is used on a regular basis by the North Hills Clay Pigeon Shooting Club. This club has been using the site for their meetings for over 40 years. The meetings are held every three weeks (and sometimes more frequently for special occasions). Each meeting is over two days: one day for setting up (5 hrs) and one day for an actual shoot (4 hrs. The site provides a safe place to shoot with challenge added due to the lie of the land. Due to the slope of the land the noise is carried away from the village.





North Hills Clay Pigeon Shooting Club

Apart from the shooting club, walkers and birdwatchers frequent the site due to its proximity to the water and the marshes. The local community has traditionally used thesteep slope of the North Hills to enjoy sledging in the winter months when there is snow. In the summer months, the flatter parts of the site are used for picnics. The site has also been used for holding a wedding.

Tranquillity

The village is surrounded by industry which can be both seen and heard from several places around the village. The North Hills, however, provides a tranquil place to go to in order to get away from the noise and visual reminders of industrial neighbours. Standing on the North Hills, looking out over the estuary, all that can be heard is the sound of nature; the wind in the trees and the birds flying overhead. The North Hills is used to graze sheep in the winter months. The views are such that you could imagine you have travelled back hundreds of years. The feeling of peace and tranquility serve to calm and settle the spirit.

Richness of wildlife

The North Hills is an area which is known for its birdlife. Some 20 years ago, two barn owl boxes were erected on poles, one at the top of the site and the other at the bottom close to the Manchester Ship Canal. The owls have used both and have raised many broods over this time. Likewise, the buzzard has nested in a small spinney adjacent to the North Hills. Both these species use this area as part of their home range for hunting prey.

During the winter months, the River Mersey attracts large numbers of wading birds: oystercatchers, curlew, whimbrel, redshank, lapwing and black-tailed godwits. With either very high tides or high winds, many waders come inland off the river for shelter. The North Hills is ideal as it gives safe roosting and protection from winds from the south-east round to the west. Considering curlew numbers are in decline nationally and internationally, the sight of this bird in numbers is a pleasure to behold as well as proving the site to be important. A bird count, normally held on the marshes once a month, is considering the North Hills for their new site (dependent on permission).

The prolific gorse bushes provide food and shelter for other wildlife: linnets and long-tailed tits have been recorded nesting in these bushes.

The recent Cheshire Wildlife Trust report (arranged by the Neighbourhood Plan group, sent out in February 2021) shows an area of medium level habitat distinctiveness which is in the more secluded part of the site. (map 2 CWT report) The boundary of the site, which runs along the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal, has been designated a wildlife corridor (map 3 CWT report).

Map 9



<u>Map 10</u>



The North Hills as described above is highly valued by the local community for recreational use and this, together with its highly important historic significance, are features that are considered collectively to form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS inaddition to its existing status as Green Belt land.

Park Field

Name of Site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	Green Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/tenant details /notified
Park Field	SJ4488 176404	Grazing land	2.02 hectares	Yes	Yes	Owner: Essar Oil refinery Tenant: Jan Freeman

Landowner address: Stanlow Refinery, Ellesmere Port, CH65 4HB

Tenant address: Pool Lane, Ince, CH2 4NX

Map key 8

Site description

Park Field is five acres (2.02 hectares) in size. It forms a pleasant green strip of land between the village scene, which includes the church of St James and the churchyard, and Essar refinery. The field boundaries include Pool Lane and Kinsey's Lane, access to the area being obtained via Kinsey's Lane, but not normally accessible to the public as privately tenanted. These boundaries have been maintained as the original red sandstone walls typical of the village. The other boundaries are maintained by the refinery and are of post and wire with large areas of trees, some being very mature, used to screen the refinery works. The paddock currently provides grazing land for horses. (Map1 - Park Field Site)

Reasonable proximity

Park Field is within the boundary of the village and can be seen opposite Ince Reservoir as one enters the village along Pool Lane. It offers a very rural feel to the area and is enjoyed by residents of Ince and the many visitors as they walk down Kinsey's Lane.

Beauty

The parkland appearance of Park Field gives an aesthetically pleasing approach to the village, the view of which is enjoyed by walkers, cyclists and horse riders alike. It forms part of the boundary of a circular route around the village which is used by villagers and visitors from nearby settlements on a frequent basis. The landscape of this location provides a vista of a green open space between the village and the industrial complex of the refinery; it not only gives the village a rural feel, even though it is surrounded by heavy industry, but it gives locals and visitors a sense of times gone by. It clearly illustrates how the parkland surrounding Ince Hall would have looked by the abundance of mature trees within its boundaries, all of which are covered by a group TPO, a

testament to its high level of visual amenity, and the fact that the land continues to be used as grazing land as it would have been in the heyday of the hall.





Historic significance

Originally this area was used by the Monastic Grange and in later times it became part of the Ince Hall Estate. It was part of the parkland flanking an entrance to the hall which was accessed from Pool Lane, the remnants of which remain to be seen. There are also remnants of other brick structures on the western boundary of Park Field, accessed from Kinsey's Lane, which have fallen into dereliction. Here was the entrance to the carriage drive for the hall and as such these remains hold significant historical value. The field has been used for charity fetes in the past.

The trees on the site form a crucial element of the wooded part of the village as referenced in the Conservation Area Assessment (https://www.inceparishcouncil.uk)A further element of historic significance is that the site functions as a buffer between Ince as a freestanding, historic rural settlement and local industrial development (in this case, the vast area of oil tanks to the west). Were it to be lost asgreen space, this visual separation would also be lost and local character and heritage eroded.



Ince Hall in Winter



Remains of the bridge which was part of the driveway to Ince hall



Existing iron railings which marked the entrance to the driveway to Ince Hall

Recreational value

Park field provides recreation for the tenant who exercises and grazes her horses on the land. Grazing land for horses has become much harder to find since the Marshes grazing land was taken for development.

Tranquillity

The very setting of the paddock makes it feel like a very tranquil place to be. From the road, passers-by see a range of beautiful trees which give the image of a tranquil country setting. The trees also serve to lessen the noise from the nearby industry.

Richness of wildlife

Around the perimeter of Park Field, bordering the refinery, are extensive woodland areas which form a sanctuary for wildlife; there are also many mature trees across the parkland, all of which are covered by a group TPO. These areas are occupied by a large variety of animals, such as foxes, badgers, squirrels and rabbits to name but a few. Birdlife, including jays, woodpeckers and owls benefit too from this densely wooded area, and it also creates habitats for many smaller mammals, insects and reptiles.

Although direct access to Park Field is only available to the private tenant, the beauty of the landscape, the trees, the horses grazing and its setting within the village are enjoyed and highly valued by the village community and the visitors to the area. These features are therefore considered collectively to form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status as Green Belt land and within the Conservation Area.

Park Meadows on Kinsey's Lane

Name of Site	Grid	Туре	Area of	Green	Conservation	Landowner/tenant
	reference		site	Belt	area	details /notified
Park Meadows	SJ 446 99 76647	Grazing land	0.94 hectares	Yes	No	Essar -owner Chris Jackson - tenant -both notified of intent

Landowner address: Stanlow Refinery, Ellesmere Port, CH65 4HB

Tenant's address: Smithy House Farm, Marsh Lane, Ince CH2 4NR

Map key 9

Site description

The two paddocks are 0.94. hectares in total. Paddock 1 (lower one on map) being 0.55h and paddock 2 being 0.39h. They are both smaller in size compared to other pieces of grazing land in the parish. They are local in character and though formerly brownfield, the sites have been returned to greenfield so that they again form an important part of the rural setting of the parish. Both paddocks have two boundary walls made up of local sandstone. The road boundary walls (sandstone) are in excellent condition. The other two sandstone boundary walls have broken down in parts due to tree roots lifting the stone, but they are mainly intact. Each paddock has two further boundary walls which are made up of security fencing erected by Essar.

Reasonable proximity

The paddocks are half a mile from the village centre.

Beauty

Both paddocks are clearly visible from the road and to passers-by who enjoy looking out across well maintained pastureland surrounded by beautiful trees. Walkers comment on the beauty of the area with the horses grazing against the backdrop of mature trees, a verdant green in summer and russet gold in the autumn. Although not accessible to anyone other than the tenant, the tenant's friends and the owner, residents and those who choose to walk along Kinsey's Lane, comment on how they enjoy stopping to watch the horses grazing. There is also a TPO on the site.





Historic significance

The land, now used as paddocks once belonged to the Ince Hall Estate which was owned by the Park-Yates family during the 19^{th} and 20^{th} century. In the mid- 20^{th} century, the estate was sold to Shell UK for development as an oil refinery.



The trees which surround and frame the site of the paddocks form a crucial element of the wooded part of the village as referenced in the Conservation Area Assessment. Although the site is not within the Conservation Area, it directly adjoins it, thus forming part of its setting and providing views out of and into it.

A further element of historic significance is that the site functions as a buffer between Ince as a freestanding, historic rural settlement and local industrial development (in this case, the vast area of oil tanks of the refinery to the west). Were it to be lost as green space, this visual separation would be lost and local character and heritage eroded.





Garden House in 1949 (paddock 2) Recreational value

Old sycamore tree with TPO (paddock 2)

The paddocks are used for grazing horses which are ridden by long-standing Ince residents as a hobby. Grazing land for horses is not readily available in the village and these two paddocks are much valued. The land, being flat, is used for riding and schooling the horses. As the roads can be quite busy during the week, due to farm traffic, riders need somewhere safe to exercise their horses and this land is perfect for this.

Apart from the riding recreational value, walkers have the opportunity to pause and watch the horses grazing. Several walkers have commented on this, particularly now the village has been discovered as a great place to walk during Covid lockdown. They say that being able to access green spaces, even if just to walk by and observe, is both interesting and calming. Being able to watch horses grazing is not something people are generally able to see.





Tranquillity

Although quite close to Essar, the paddocks have a wide bank of trees on three sides which give one a feeling of peace and tranquillity. At the height of summer, the trees block the industry behind them, and one can imagine it is not there. Both paddocks, lying

lower in the village, also block the wind and can be a little haven on a blustery day. The large number of birds in the trees can be heard singing at various points during the day.

Richness of wildlife

Both paddocks offer a wide variety of wildlife a place to eat and live. The trees which border the paddocks have nesting buzzards, owls and woodpeckers. The buzzards are often seen perched on fence posts in the paddocks finding plenty of rabbits to prey on. The paddocks also provide a green corridor for the badgers and foxes which live on the far side of the boundary fence.

The little owl has been seen perched nearby and is known to use the paddocks as part of its home range for hunting prey. The paddocks are not sprayed with pesticide so provide an abundance of invertebrates for them to feed on.

The Meadow's on Kinsey Lane, although not accessible by the general public, are valued by the community for their place as an important part of the rural setting of the parish. As previously stated, walkers enjoy the beauty of the area with the horses grazing against the backdrop of mature trees and the sitings of the varied bird life. It is felt that these features considered collectively form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status as Green Belt land.

Wood Farm Field

Name of Site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	Green Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/tenant details /notified
Wood Farm Field	SJ4485 4 76768	Farmland	4.56 hectares	Yes	No	Owner: Peel Holdings Tenant: John Willis

Landowner address: Venus Building, Old Park Lane, Trafford City, Manchester, M41 7HA

Tenant's Address: Holme Farm, Marsh Lane, Ince, CH2 4NR

Map key 10

Site description

The area known as Wood Farm Field is 4.56 hectares in size and falls within the boundary of Kinsey's Lane and the village. It adjoins other farmland and private property boundaries. The boundaries to Kinsey's Lane consist of the original red sandstone walls and hedgerows. Private access is provided from Kinsey's Lane via steel field gates. Other boundaries are a mixture of timber, where the field adjoins village properties, and hedgerows. The field is currently used for a variety of farming activities including cereal crop production, potato crops and, from time to time, the grazing of sheep. At this present time this area does not fall into the Conservation Area. See Map 1.

Reasonable proximity

Wood Farm Field adjoins the village on its eastern boundary along Kinseys's Lane, which forms part of a circular walk around the village that is easily accessed and well used by villagers from Ince and visitors to the area.

Beauty

The village benefits from this green space of Wood Farm Field which is on the edge of the Conservation Area and which enhances the rural nature of the village. It is a well-farmed piece of land which adds beauty to the area The views across Wood Farm Field, looking north and south, are very picturesque.









Historic significance

Historically this formed part of the Monastic Grange which extended down to the River Mersey. It was utilised as large orchards producing a variety of fruits. In later years it became farmland within the Ince Hall Estate and was let to tenant farmers. It was often used by the villagers for May Day celebrations and other gatherings.

The most historically significant fact about Wood Farm Field is that it forms a significant element of the setting for six listed buildings and for views into and out of Ince Conservation Area, within which all of these listed buildings are located. One of the listed buildings (Manor House of Abbey of St. Werburgh, Chester, including Old Hall and Monastery Cottages)⁵ is Grade I listed, and forms a significant visual element of the site's surroundings. The other five listed buildings (all Grade 2)⁶ all line the site along Kinsey's lane to the north-west.





May Day celebrations on Wood Farm Field

The Conservation Area appraisal notes of the Great Hall of the Grade I listed Manor that '[the] large Tudor windows of the hall dominate the route into the village from Marsh Lane (the former route to the shore).' The same domination of the view is apparent when looking across Wood Farm Field from its northern edge towards the south-west.

As well as forming the visual setting for these six listed buildings, the field is still farmed from Wood Farm (hence its name), as it has been for centuries. As such, it has a functional link to three of the listed buildings to its north (as well as Wood Farm Farmhouse, also its barn and shippon⁶) which enables understanding of the significance of these heritage assets as working rural buildings.

If the proposed extensions to the Conservation Area are adopted, Wood Farm Field would fall within the Conservation Area and thus its historic significance would increase further.

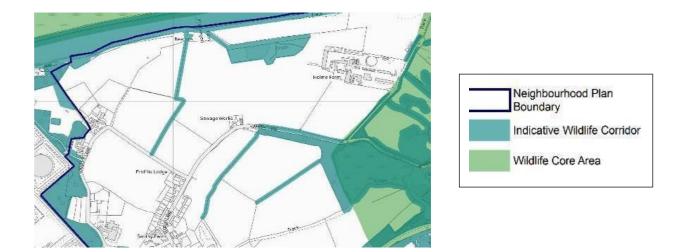
Tranquillity

Although Wood Farm Field lies just beyond the edge of the Essar boundary, which at this point is a wooded area, the field is still a place of tranquillity. The field is quite high, and therefore the views across it are far-reaching. A beautiful view gives one a sense of tranquillity.

Richness of wildlife

Wood Farm Field is frequently visited by marine birds from the Mersey Estuary, especially when ploughing has taken place, as a rich source of food can be found. Its hedgerows also provide a rich hunting ground for buzzards, hawks and owls as they are a natural habitat for a wide variety of small birds and mammals. As a result, this field attracts many bird-watchers. On the border of Wood Farm Field with the fields at Badger Cottage, within the hedgerow, badger setts can be seen along with many rabbit burrows. Foxes are also seen hunting around this area. Wood Farm Field borders a wildlife corridor which allows wildlife to move from the Manchester Ship Canal banks to the neighbouring fields.

<u>Map 11</u>



Maps taken from Cheshire Wildlife Trust report (April)

Wood Farm Field is an integral part of the rural community of Ince. As stated previously it is highly valued by the residents for it contribution to the farming community, its support for local wildlife and the views it gives to the historic buildings of the village and it is felt that these features are considered collectively to form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status asGreen Belt land.

Big Wood

Name of Site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	Green Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/tenan t details /notified
Big Wood	SJ 4692176813	Woodland	3.09 hectares	No	No	Owner: Peel Holdings

Landowner address: Venus Building, Old Park Lane, Trafford City, Manchester, M41 7HA

Map key 11

Site description

Big Wood is near the far boundary of the parish and is opposite CF Fertilisers. On three sides are fields which are currently used for farming, and on the fourth side is industrial development. The whole of the wood is surrounded by a shallow ditch.

Reasonable proximity

Although Big Wood is on the farthest side of the parish, it is easily accessible as it sits very close to Lordship Lane which is a rough track used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders; it is 1.5 miles by foot, an easy country walk, from the village centre. Cycling, riding and driving are all also possible for those wanting to use alternative transport. The site is located on Ince Marshes, which as its name suggests is an intrinsic element of the parish alongside Ince village itself. This site is demonstrably special to the local community as it acts as a reminder that Ince is not completely surrounded by industrial development on three sides.

Beauty



Big Wood is a dense wood made up of a wide variety of native trees. The changes in colour over the year make it a place of beauty. The marshes around Big Wood are increasingly heavily developed so Big Wood provides an area of natural beauty which helps alleviate the industry around it, providing much-needed screening. Big Wood also helps to retain the sense of the rural setting of the village.

Historic significance

Big Wood is believed to be around 300 years old but could be older. It is also thought that it was used by the Park-Yates family when pursuing their interest in fox hunting in the 1800s.

Recreational value

Big Wood has always been a place where villagers would love to explore. It is surrounded by a ditch with few access points, which has never deterred the most adventurous! It is quite dense underfoot but is still accessible for ramblers and bird watchers alike.

Tranquillity

When walking in the wood you are away from the sights and sounds of nearby industry and could almost imagine you have been transported back in time. The denseness of the wood makes it an extremely quiet place to be with only the sound of the wind in the branches and the birdsong to break the silence.

Richness of wildlife

The presence of any woodland areas is rare in this part of the parish, not just because of the new development but also because most of the rest of the marshes are so open. As such, it is a particularly important haven for wildlife. Big Wood is home for barn owls and short-eared owls. Woodpeckers can be both seen and heard within the depths of the wood. It is also home to a wide variety of woodland birds which take advantage of the denseness of the wood and the protection it offers. Pheasants nest around the edges of the wood and herons feed from the ditches which surround the wood. Foxes, bats and badgers make their home in there.

Big Wood is also set within an area of High-Level habitat distinctiveness as can be seen on the maps below. The site is zoned as a Nature Area by its owner.⁷ Thus, the aims of the community to designate it as LGS are aligned with the aspirations of Peel for the site and there is no policy conflict here.

The history of this site, the rarity of woodland in this area and the high value of its importance in supporting local wildlife are considered collectively to form evidence of why the site should be designated as a Local Green Belt; being outside the Green Belt and not covered by a group TPO. It therefore has less policy protection from development than other sites in the parish.

<u>Map 12</u>



<u>Map 13</u>



Decoy Wood

Name of Site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	Gree n Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/tenan t details /notified
Decoy Wood	SJ 4613377197	Woodland	1.89 hectares	No	No	Owner: Peel Holdings

Landowner address: Peel Holdings Venus Building, Old Park Lane, Trafford City,

Manchester, M41 7HA

Map key 12

Site description

Decoy Wood is in the centre of the parish and close to the Manchester Ship Canal. It is on the edge of Middle Lane. It is 1.89 hectares in size. It is a long, narrow stretch of woodland which runs from a footpath towards the banks of the canal.

Reasonable proximity

The wood is within the centre of the parish land and is close to the restricted byway which many walkers, cyclists and horse riders use on a regular basis. Access to the wood is from private land, which is also part of a lost footpath, access to which is being followed up by the Parish Council and the Public Rights of Way team.

Beauty

Decoy Wood is part of Ince Marshes which have a wild beauty of their own. Land which, although farmed for generations, has never lost its special natural beauty. Although just beyond Decoy Wood to the south-east is being built on for the Protos development, the wood itself provides a natural screen from this and one could still imagine the land as it was hundreds of years ago. The changing colours of the trees over the year give an added beauty.

Historic significance

The wood was once the site of a duck decoy - an ancient method of attracting and catching ducks for food. Originally consisting of 3 shallow pools, with tunnels made of willow hoops which radiated out from the pools. Surrounded by trees, ducks were 'encouraged' to enter the tunnel using the instinct of wildfowl to react to potential

predators (a dog slipping in and out of sight). Birds would be drawn down the tunnel until they were flushed forward by the decoyman into the narrow end of the tunnel



andinto the catching net or cage. Decoy Wood is believed to have been used by the monks from Ince Manorial Grange who would have used the site to hunt and catch their food.

This is an example of what the duck decoy might have looked like. This duck decoy in Hale is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and also a scheduled monument.

Recreational Value

The wood is situated on private land and is currently inaccessible to the general public due to the locked gate on Marsh Lane. However, the wood is valued by the local residents and the Parish Council is in the process of seeking to reinstate a footpath which runs by the wood. Decoy Wood could offer those interested in wildlife and history an excellent opportunity to follow their interests.

Tranquillity

The Wood is a very quiet place to be near as well as within. It is situated next to an area of land which has been designated for wildlife and so is extremely quiet.

Richness of wildlife

Decoy Wood is the home of nesting barn owls, and short-eared owls have been spotted there too. Wood warblers, chiffchaffs, chaffinches, and a wide variety of other woodland birds have been seen within the wood. The wood borders the land which has been designated for wildlife and many marsh birds, such as the curlew, frequent this area taking advantage of the protection the wood offers.

Decoy Wood is also within an area of High-Level Habitat Distinctiveness as can be seen on the maps below.

Decoy Wood is valued by the local residents for its history, its beauty and as a woodland area providing essential habitat for the local wildlife in an area of increasing industrialisation; these features are considered collectively to form evidence of the

'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status as Green Belt land.

<u>Map 14</u>



The Parish Field

Name of Site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	Green Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/tenant details /notified
Ince Parish Field	SJ4507 876257	Community land	0.76 hectares	Yes	Yes	Owners: Ince Parish Council

Landowner address: Ince Parish Council

Map key 13

Site description

The Parish Field lies at the heart of the village and is easily accessed by residents at four different places. It backs onto St James the Great's churchyard and is adjacent to Ince Reservoir. Two of its boundaries are hawthorn hedge, one is the churchyard's sandstone wall and one is a row of houses on Station Road whose gardens back onto the field.

Beauty

Standing at the bottom of the field looking north is a view of the village church and churchyard. This is a beautiful view throughout the year with the wide variety of trees providing a change of colour throughout the seasons. Looking south from the top of the field, hedges and trees provide a beautiful surrounding for the field.

Historic significance

The Parish Field was once part of the church's land which included the village vicarage. It is believed to have been handed over to the parish around the turn of the 19th century. It has been the site of many church events in the past.

Of greater historical significance is the fact that the site is a key component of the setting of the Grade II* listed St James's Church, an important heritage asset. It contributes strongly to being able to perceive and understand the church's historic significance as the centre of a rural community.

Additionally, the site is not within the Conservation Area but forms part of its setting, with attractive views both into and outside this heritage asset. If the currently proposed extensions to the Conservation Area are implemented, the site would fall entirely within it.



St James The Great Church from Parish Field



The old village vicarage on the edge of the Parish Field (demolished in the 1960s)

Recreational value









As the Parish Field belongs to the parish it is of great significance. It is enjoyed and well used by residents and visitors from the local community; most recently it was used to hold a Village Fete to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

The lower part of the field has a football pitch which is used by local children and adults alike. The centre part of the field has a play area for children aged 3-12. The play area contains of several well-maintained pieces of play equipment which are regularly checked and maintained by the Parish Council. The field is also well used for exercising dogs

Tranquillity

The field is an extremely tranquil place. Being away from the roads means that traffic noise cannot be heard. The rise of the reservoir on one side and the church on another softens the sound of local industry making it a tranquil place to be.

Richness of wildlife

The many trees and hedges provide plenty of nesting sites for a variety of birds. Buzzards can be seen circling overhead looking for prey which is in abundance in the form of rabbits and field mice. The field is also a green corridor for wildlife moving around the village.

The Parish Field is highly valued by the village residents and the local community; as well as it being an area which supports local wildlife, it also offers a place of quiet and recreation within walking distance of home. These features are considered collectively to form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status as Green Belt land.

Lower Marsh Lane Field

Name of Site	Grid reference	Туре	Area of site	Green Belt	Conservation area	Landowner/tenant details /notified
Lower Marsh Lane Field	SJ4518 76820	Farmland	1.8 hectares	No	No	Owners: Peel Holdings and Anthony Griffiths Tennant:Edward Crank

Landowner address: Peel Holdings Venus Building, Old Park Lane, Trafford City, Manchester, M41 7HA

Anthony Griffiths, Trefnant, Plasnewydd, Denbigh, North Wales

Tenant's address: Village Green Farm, Ince, CH2 4NN

Map key 14

Site description

Lower Marsh Lane Field is 1.8 hectares in size. It is local in character and has been farmed as a part of the village for over 150 years. The boundaries are all hedges. The access point is from Fens Wood on Marsh Lane.

Reasonable proximity

Lower Marsh Lane Field is on the north-east side of the village and is easily accessible by village residents. It is on a popular walking route which leads to the restricted byway at Goldfinch Meadows.

Beauty

The field displays its beauty in different ways over the year. In summer, if sown with corn, it is a beautiful blanket of gold shown at its best due to the fall of the land. In spring, the cows will be grazing here, a reminder that Ince once had several dairy farms, this being the only remaining one. Standing at the top of the field you get a wonderful view of the Marshes and the estuary.

Historic significance

Lower Marsh Lane field forms part of the setting of the Grade II listed Holme Farm (it is clearly visible to the south-west from the front of the property), and to the Grade II* listed church, allowing appreciation and understanding of their rural settings. It also forms part of the setting of the conservation area, as it is visible from inside its boundary.





Tranquillity

As the field lies on the edge of the village and drops down towards the wood, any sound from nearby Essar and Encirc drops away. The proximity to Fens Wood also softens the sound of industry on the marshes making it a tranquil place to be.

Richness of wildlife

The field is used by badgers and foxes moving from the marshes to the village lanes. Both can be regularly seen moving along the hedges from Fens Wood to the rear of Village Green Farm and Smithy House Farm. Buzzards and sparrowhawks can be seen hunting for prey over the field. The hedges on either side of the field provide nesting sites for a wide variety of birds including goldfinch, thrush and blackbird.

The changing nature of the field throughout the seasons is a visual reflection of the rural setting of the village and, together with the historic significance of this piece of farming land, it is felt that these features are considered collectively to form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status as Green Belt land.

Pool Lane Pasture

Name	Grid	Туре	Area of	Green	Conservation	Landowner/tenant
of Site	reference		site	Belt	area	details /notified
Pool lane pasture	SJ 45059 76094	Grazing land	1.19 hectares	Yes	No	Peel Holdings - owner Edward Crank- tenant -both notified of intent

Landowner address: Venus Building, Old Park Lane, Trafford City, Manchester,

M41 7HA

Tenant's address: Lower Green Farm, Station Road, Ince, CH2 4NJ

Map key 15





Site description

Pool Lane Pasture is 1.19 hectares in size and forms part of the open green space and views to the southern part of the village. At the northern edge, the field narrows where there is an exit point rising out onto Station Road through a number of field gates. There is also a small parcel of land that forms part of the curtilage of the road bridge embankment with a United Utilities small brick-built pumping station.

A mature hawthorn and elderberry hedge, with some underplanting, forms part of the boundary. To the south-west end of the field it widens on both sides ending at Pool Lane roundabout. This is the only access point at the south-west edge. There are two main agricultural access points: one via Pool Lane to the south and one from Station Road to the north.

Reasonable proximity

Pool Lane Pasture is on the edge of the village of Ince and is within easy walking distance of the furthest property in the village which is approximately 1/3 of a mile away.

There is currently no formal access permitted to this field but it is used for walking dogs to create a circular loop.

Beauty

















The above photos show the beauty of the field over the seasons. The changing colours of the trees and the hedges create a lovely rural picture. As the land is the first piece of greenery you see as you enter Ince, it sets the scene for the rural farming village it has always been. A majestic small-leaved lime sits perfectly in one corner. Walking over this land you get to see how important Ince Reservoir has become and the way the land starts to fall away towards the estuary and marshes. The Mersey estuary can be glimpsed towards the northern boundary through the softening of the mature hedges.

Historic significance

The most important element of historic significance is that the site functions as an important buffer between Ince as a freestanding, historic rural settlement and local industrial development (in this case, the semi-derelict industrial land outside the GreenBelt south/south-east of the site and what is becoming a noisy and busy road to the Protos development and the industrial surroundings). This area softens the entrance to the village, and, were it to be lost as green space, this visual separation would be lost and local character and heritage eroded.

Tranquillity

Although industry and road traffic noise is never far away, this area of land does offer

a visual and noise relief from busy roads and, to an extent, industrial noises. The southern side of Pool Lane Pasture has acoustic barriers positioned along the three quarters of the boundary constructed to deflect the increase in traffic noise away from the village.

Richness of wildlife

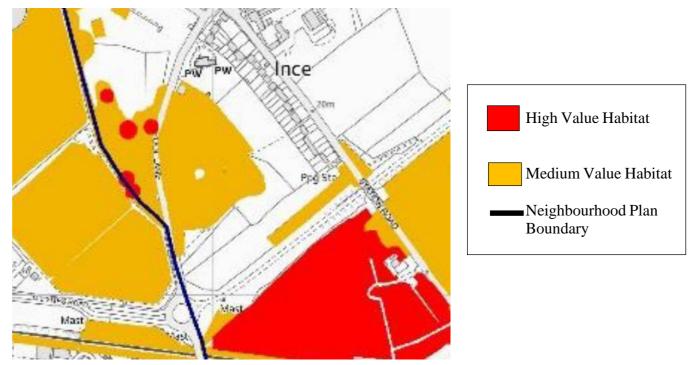
The area is rich in wildlife with badgers, squirrels and foxes using it to cross from the wider landscape. The thrushes and other songbirds are constantly present as is the sound of drumming woodpeckers in the nearby trees.

A mature hawthorn and elderberry hedge forms part of this field boundary with a cluster of ash and white poplar straddling the barriers on the embankment of Grinsome Road.

On the opposite side of the field, as part of the mitigation to the Protos development, 7 half-standard trees and about 50 whips of native mixed species have been planted and all seem to have established well. Also, between the edge of the south-west boundary which forms the top of the access road, is a stand of mature whitebeam trees.

Pool Lane Pasture is of significance to the residents of Ince as it is an important part of the rural farming community and it is felt that all these features are considered collectively to form evidence of the 'additional local benefit' in PPG terms that would be gained by designating the site as LGS in addition to its existing status as Green Belt land.

<u>Map 15</u>



<u>Map 16</u>

