

Ropley Local Green Spaces

Local Green Space Designation

The designation of land as Local Green Space (LGS) within a Neighbourhood Plan is enabled by the NPPF paras. 76 & 77.

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

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

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

To be designated as Local Green Space, an area should meet the criteria set out in para 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework above, however whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion.

The Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

Designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. This means land should not be designated that would prevent development in suitable locations to meet local identified development needs.

The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, including why the green area 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.

Results of the assessment

The following have been identified by the local community, through consultation and by the Steering Group as areas that should be considered for local green space designation. It is recognised that some of the locations identified may be protected under other designations.

Ref	Name / Location
1	The Recreation Ground
2	The field between the Recreation Ground and Ropley House (field C)
3	Land to the west of School Lane/Church Lane (field M)
4	The village Pond
5	The field south of Vicarage Lane and west of Hammonds Lane

Ropley Background and Specifics

Ropley is one of the largest parishes by area in Hampshire and its settlement pattern is unusually disparate. Its approximately 650 homes are scattered widely around the roads and narrow lanes that meander through rolling countryside. The largest settlement, containing a primary school, food shop, and other facilities, is often referred to by local people as the ‘Village’. Other settlements – Soames Lane/Stapley Lane, Monkwood, North Street, etc. – comprise mainly clusters of residential properties.

The East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy states that retaining the separate identity of each settlement has been a long-term goal of planning strategy and this approach is highly valued by local people. It adds that protecting the gaps between settlements has helped guide where new development should be built and has prevented settlements merging into one and losing their identity. The Ropley Neighbourhood Plan is proposing a policy creating 6 Settlement and Coalescence Gaps which will protect these larger and more extensive tracts of countryside.

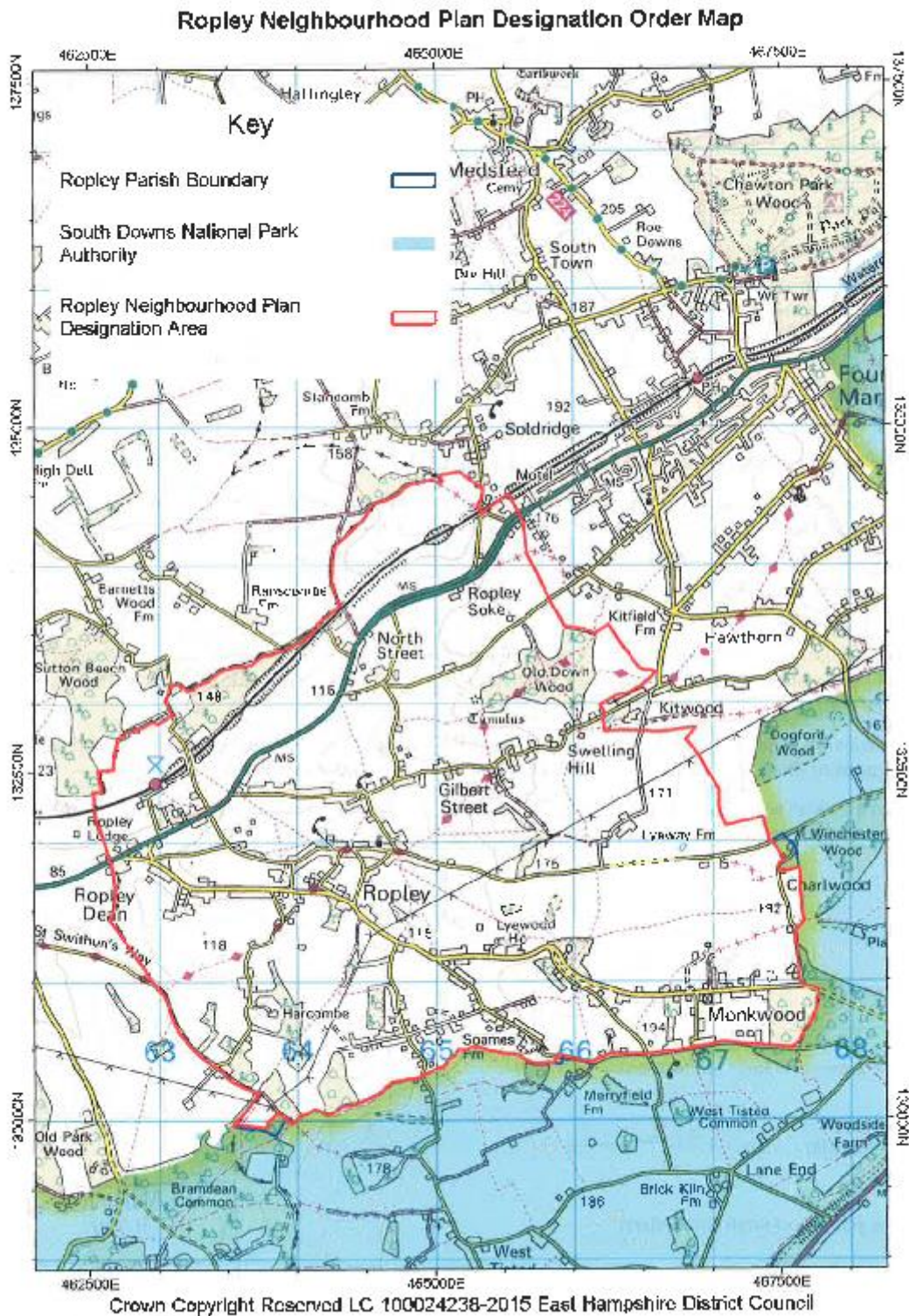
In addition, Ropley’s Neighborhood Plan will propose a small number of Local Green Spaces in carefully selected locations, these will be nominated for the intrinsic value of the land involved. The green spaces in Ropley Parish which merit that designation are areas which are attractive, or of historic significance, or of recreational value, or are important for maintaining the rural nature of the centre of the village or a combination of these. All five are highly visible and appreciated by many residents as well as by visitors to the parish. They all contribute to the character and setting of the village.

Ropley residents were consulted via the bi monthly village magazine and the neighborhood planning contact email list and asked to submit suggestions for areas that could qualify as Local Green Spaces. Additionally, residents in the outlying settlements were consulted via their local Neighbourhood Leads as to whether there are any areas of land in the outlying settlements that may be suitable for designation as Local Green space and confirmed there are not as these settlements are mostly surrounded by open fields and countryside.

All five proposed Ropley Local Green Spaces are in or around the village center. The village centre is set on a saddle of higher ground and is accessed by a network of narrow lanes which pass through a mixed landscape of arable fields, pasture and parkland. Farmland penetrates into the center of the village: the resulting juxtaposition of open land and settlement is an inherent part of the village’s rural character. Some of the five sites also have historic significance or recreational value, and several provide views out of the village to open countryside. Protecting these five areas as Green Spaces is critical to maintaining the character of the village and its historical context as well as avoiding the risk of future settlement cohesion.

Results from the resident’s questionnaire conducted in the summer of 2015 made it clear that open and green spaces are important and significant features of the parish and are valued by Ropley’s community. They are a vital constituent in creating the rural nature of the parish.

Residents were asked – **Are there any landscape / environmental features in Ropley parish that you feel are important and should be protected from development?** Protection of open spaces / views between housing and different settlements (wildlife corridors) and protection of the rural / agricultural identity, nature and feel of the village were the 2 highest scoring responses. (village questionnaire 2015)



Methodology

To be designated as Local Green Space the land proposed must be demonstrably special to the local community.

In order to determine whether the spaces identified by the local community should be designated, a methodology was formulated and used to assess all areas proposed.

All identified areas were assessed against the following criteria, and a response assigned to each criterion (Yes/No):

1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance due to for example;
 - the quality of the landscape character
 - the setting – it's contribution to views and vistas
 - recreational value
 - the value for wildlife and biodiversity
 - historical significance
 - tranquility
 - accessibility to the general public and to be actively and currently used by the community
3. The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Note – there may be other reasons why a piece of land could be considered “special”, but they should be able to be described and documented.

Guidance for assessing the criteria

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

Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves

The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, including why the green area 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.

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

It should be judging how important the space is to the local community, this can be shown through 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), tranquility or richness of its wildlife. The space could act to enhance the wider setting, perhaps through views either into or out of the village. The ability to access and “enjoy” the land is seen as a key factor here. In assessing whether a space is ‘actively’ and ‘currently’ used (whether that use is formal or informal) the frequency of use, who the site is being used by, and whether it is well maintained for that use should be considered. Just because a footpath passes through an area does not necessarily mean the whole space is actively and currently in use.

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

This is 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 (a large field, or multiple fields for example) it should be considered an extensive tract of land.

Assessment of Spaces

All areas have been assessed in accordance with the above methodology and these assessments can be found in Appendix 1.

The table below shows a summary of the assessment findings (✓=Yes & X=No)

Ref	Name / Location	Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	Demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local interest	The area is local in character and not an extensive tract of Land
1	The Recreation Ground	✓	✓	✓
2	The field between the Recreation Ground and Ropley House (field C)	✓	✓	✓
3	Land to the west of School Lane/Church Lane (field M)	✓	✓	✓
4	The village Pond	✓	✓	✓
5	The field south of Vicarage Lane and west of Hammonds Lane	✓	✓	✓

Conclusion

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 and will be put forward within a Local green Space policy in Ropley's Neighbourhood Plan

Two further areas were considered for inclusion as Local Green Spaces, but they do not meet the criteria used to define them as RLGs's. These are Lyeway Lane and the Lime quarry at Soames Lane.

Lyeway Lane has extensive verges, which in former times were used to "lye" sheep overnight on their way to Broad St market in Alresford. Although this is of historic significance the area is not close to the

community of Ropley and has little recreational value, although the area may be important for wildlife. It is also not unique in that several other local lanes have similar extensive verges.

The Lime quarry at Soames Lane is currently in private ownership and there is no public access. It is typical of other such quarries in Hampshire, and since it has been disused (over 20 years) it has started to become an interesting haven for local wildlife. At present it could not meet the criteria for a RLGs, however, should it become available for purchase at some point in the future it could be considered for inclusion in any future Neighbourhood plan as a Local Community Space or a Local Green Space, and it could potentially lend itself to a variety of community uses if and when it became available.

A map showing the location of all spaces being proposed can be found in Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 1

1. The Recreation Ground



Ref: Name/Location:	The Recreation Ground	
Assessment criteria	Comments	Response
1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	Situated in the heart of Ropley village center.	✓
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance.	Extensively used by many sports clubs within the village e.g. the cricket teams, the tennis club and includes a new Multi Use Games Area recently invested in by the Parish Council. The sports pavilion acts as a meeting place for a number of clubs and societies within the village. It is also used for larger village events such as the annual Pram Race and BBQ. Includes a children's play area used by the pre-school nursery.	✓
3. The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	See the map in appendix 2 for context The Recreation Ground is situated in the heart of the village center and is appropriately sized for its use as a recreation ground	✓
4. Actively and currently used by the community.	Regularly used by sports clubs and the wider community, it is of great recreational value to the local community, providing for the physical well-being of residents and contributing to the vibrancy of parish life.	✓
Summary/Conclusion:	The Recreation Ground meets the criteria for designation as Local Green Space.	

2. Field C – Land between the Recreation Ground and Ropley House;



Ref: Name/Location:	2 Land between the Recreation Ground and Ropley House	
Assessment criteria	Comments	Response
1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	This area comprises an arable field, it is crossed by several rights of way which are much used by villagers for recreational walking and by Ropley Dean and Gascoigne Lane residents to reach village facilities and by children walking from the village to the school buses on the A31.	✓
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance.	This arable field bordered by parkland landscape to the west is crossed by several rights of way which are much used by villagers for recreational walking and by residents of Ropley Dean and Gascoigne Lane to reach the facilities in the village centre. It is much valued for the quality of the area and the views out from it to open countryside	✓

3. The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	See map in Appendix 2 for context Set on the saddle of a hill this land has extensive views out to the boundaries of the parish and to the heritage railway line	✓
4 Actively and currently used by the community.	Extensively used by dog walkers and other recreational walkers	✓
Summary/Conclusion:	Valued for its historic and recreational qualities this land meets the criteria for designation as Local Green Space.	

3. Field – The land west of School Lane/Church Lane;



Ref: Name/Location:	3 The land west of School Lane/Church Lane	
Assessment criteria	Comments	Response
1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	Situated between the 2 conservation Areas in the historic heart of the village this area is one of the few fingers of farmland which penetrate right into the center of the old village	✓
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance.	The land slopes away from the village centre providing views to open countryside from the main street (Church Street) and the village school. This visual link out to open countryside is of great importance to the village’s character and setting and makes it special to the local community. In addition, it is important to the setting of the Victorian Buildings of the school. Residents and visitors to Ropley village enjoy and appreciate the car parking access on this site, permitted by the landowner and the loss of such access would be to the detriment of the village community	✓

3.The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	See map in appendix 2 for context the field is situated adjacent to the 2 Conservation Areas in the village	✓
4.Actively and currently used by the community.	Used by villages and visitors when larger village events take place	✓
Summary/Conclusion:	Valued for it historic and visual qualities this land meets the criteria for designation as Local Green Space.	

4. The village Pond



Ref:	4 The Village Pond	
Name/Location:		
Assessment criteria	Comments	Response
1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	The village pond is situated at the east end of Church Street within one of the 2 Conservation Areas in the heart of the old village center.	✓
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance.	The pond is an important visual and historic feature and is an important part of the setting of listed buildings including Archbishops Cottage. Situated on St Swithin's Way the pond would have been a vital watering place for the horses of travellers travelling to and through the village. The historic significance makes it special to the local community.	✓
3. The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	See map in appendix 2 for context Situating in the heart of the old medieval village	✓
4. Actively and currently used by the community.	Although the pond surrounds are currently overgrown, it has in the past and could be again an attractive feature. The Pond Committee have a restoration plan drawn up and ready to be put in place	✓
Summary/Conclusion:	A beautiful location in the heart of the historic village centre that meets the criteria for designation as Local Green Space.	

5 The land south of Vicarage Lane and west of Hammonds Lane



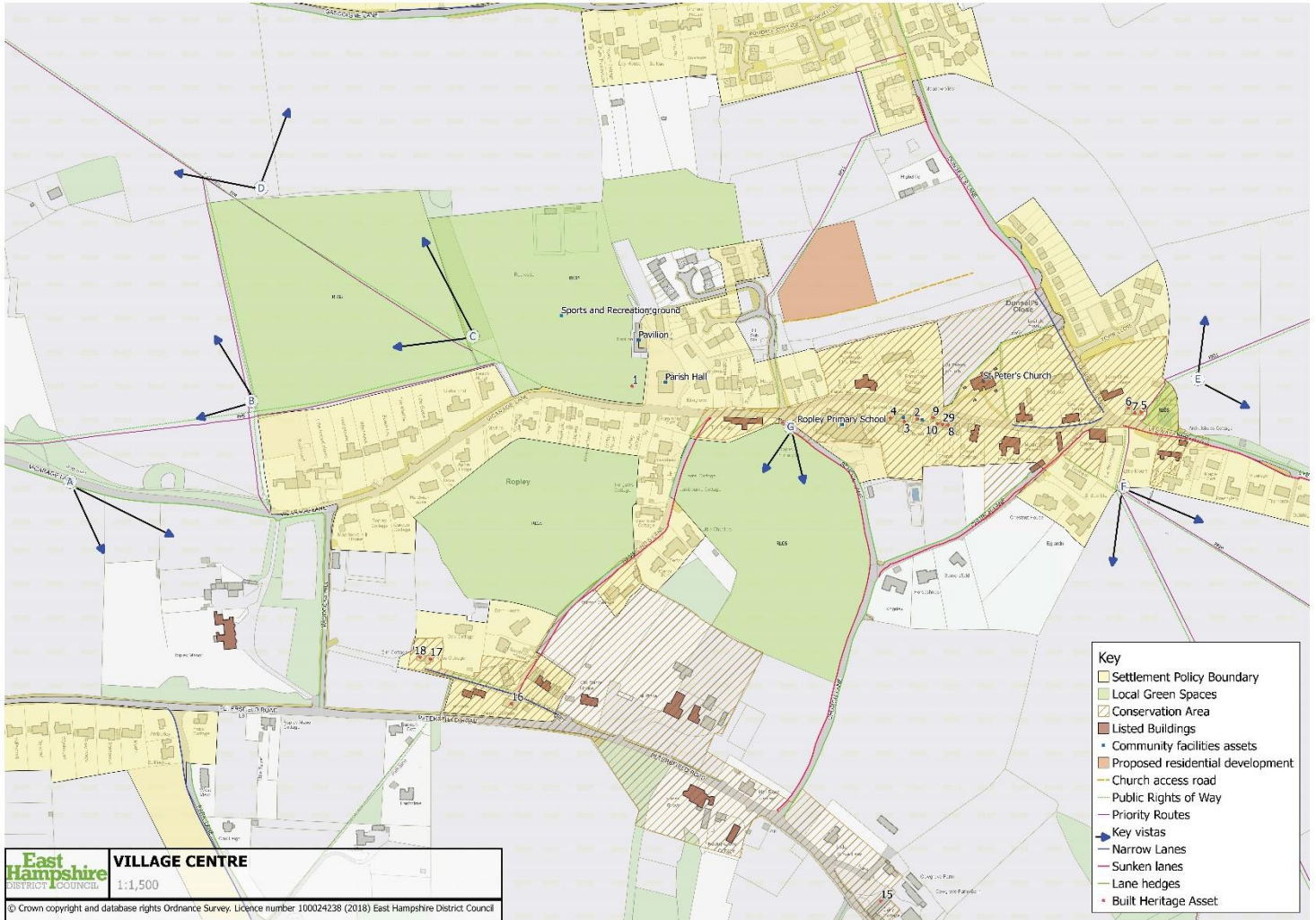


5. The land south of Vicarage Lane and west of Hammonds Lane

Ref: Name/Location:	5 The land south of Vicarage Lane and west of Hammonds Lane	
Assessment criteria	Comments	Response
1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	The field sits alongside, and is therefore of importance to, the setting of the South Street Conservation Area and its residents. It is bounded by sunken narrow lanes and ancient hedgerows and provides separation between the two historical settlement areas of the village centre and South Street	✓
2. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance.	The field is of importance to the setting of a key historical walking route, St Swithun's Way (part of The Pilgrims Way, a Long Distance Path from Winchester to Canterbury), which passes along South Street and Hammonds Lane, so it is important both to local residents and to recreational walkers.	✓
3. The area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	See map in appendix 2 for context Situated in the heart of the south Street Conservation Area and the old medieval village	✓

4. Actively and currently used by the community.	The field is in private ownership so not accessible however it provides a visual amenity to those walkers and also to those living around the field. Part of the intrinsic character of the sunken Hammonds Lane is the view through the hedgerow across the field.	✓
Summary/Conclusion:	<p>A beautiful location in the heart of the historic village centre that meets the criteria for designation as Local Green Space.</p> <p>The field (and the setting it creates) provides a lasting impression of the village and contributes to the historical nature of the long-distance footpath itself. The field plays a significant role in the rural character of Ropley due to its prominence in the landscape viewed from the only classified road in the parish, the C18/Petersfield Road, on the approach to Ropley from the A31, and the fact that it shields the developed areas due to its incline.</p>	

APPENDIX 2



Map of Open Spaces