



**Local People.  
Local Decisions.  
Local Future.**



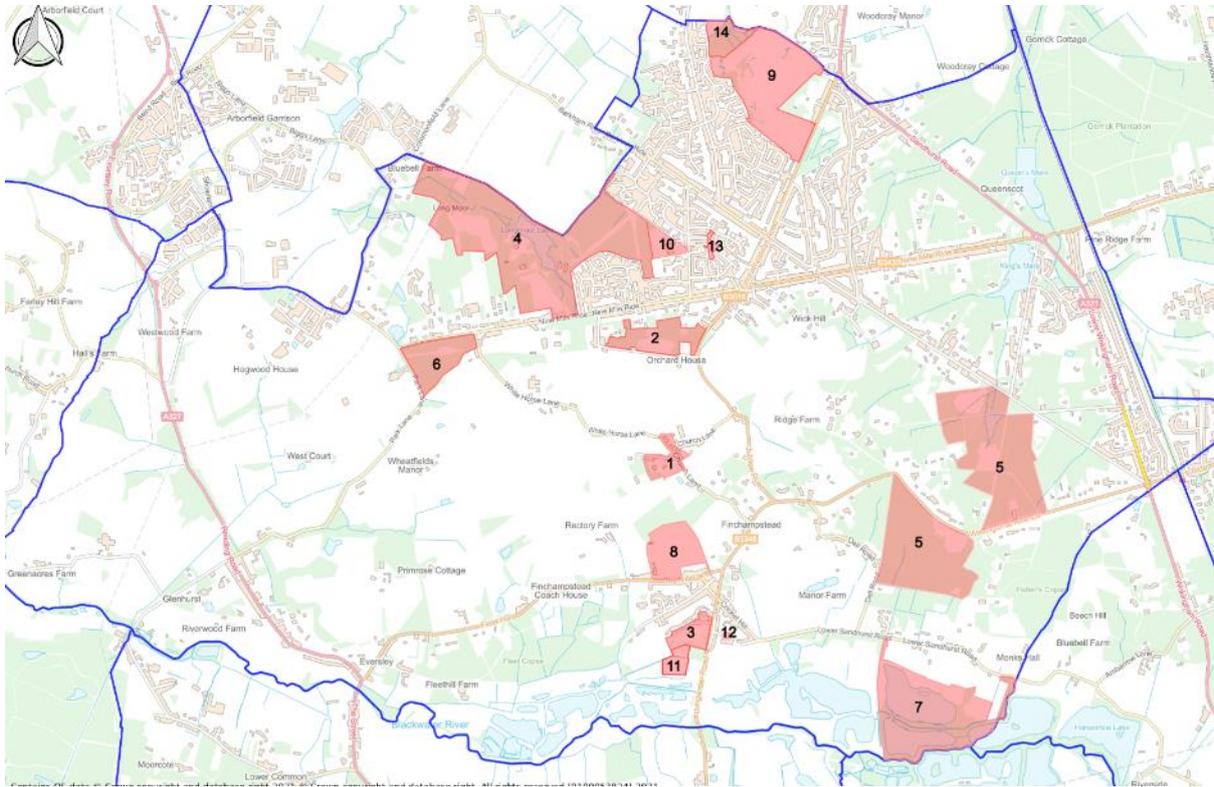
**Finchampstead  
Neighbourhood  
Development  
Plan  
2018-2036**

## **Topic Paper – Local Green Spaces – Edition 2**

The original published topic paper has been revised following a review of FNDP policy and consideration of the responses to the public consultation carried out between January – March 2021. This revised version of the topic paper will form part of the Finchampstead Future NDP submission and previous published versions should be discarded.

# Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan

## Local Green Spaces -Topic Paper



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## A - Valued Landscapes and Local Green Spaces

### 1. Background

1.1 This paper summarises the relevant legislation, policy guidance and methodology used for determining Valued Landscapes focussed on Finchampstead and its immediate surrounds. Valued landscape criteria are an integral part of providing supporting evidence and justification to support the formal designation of “Local Green Spaces” identified within the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP). The original paper has been revised following the review of comments made on earlier drafts by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and from the Parish community as a result of the Regulation 14 statutory consultation period from 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2021 – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021

1.2 This topic paper utilises WBCs latest Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), (2019), as well as the 2004 Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment (WLCA) and offers an objective description of the Finchampstead landscape including its features and attributes. The identified Local Green Spaces in this paper draw on this work, additional reference material and local knowledge to support the inclusion of the areas proposed in the FNDP for formal designation by WBC



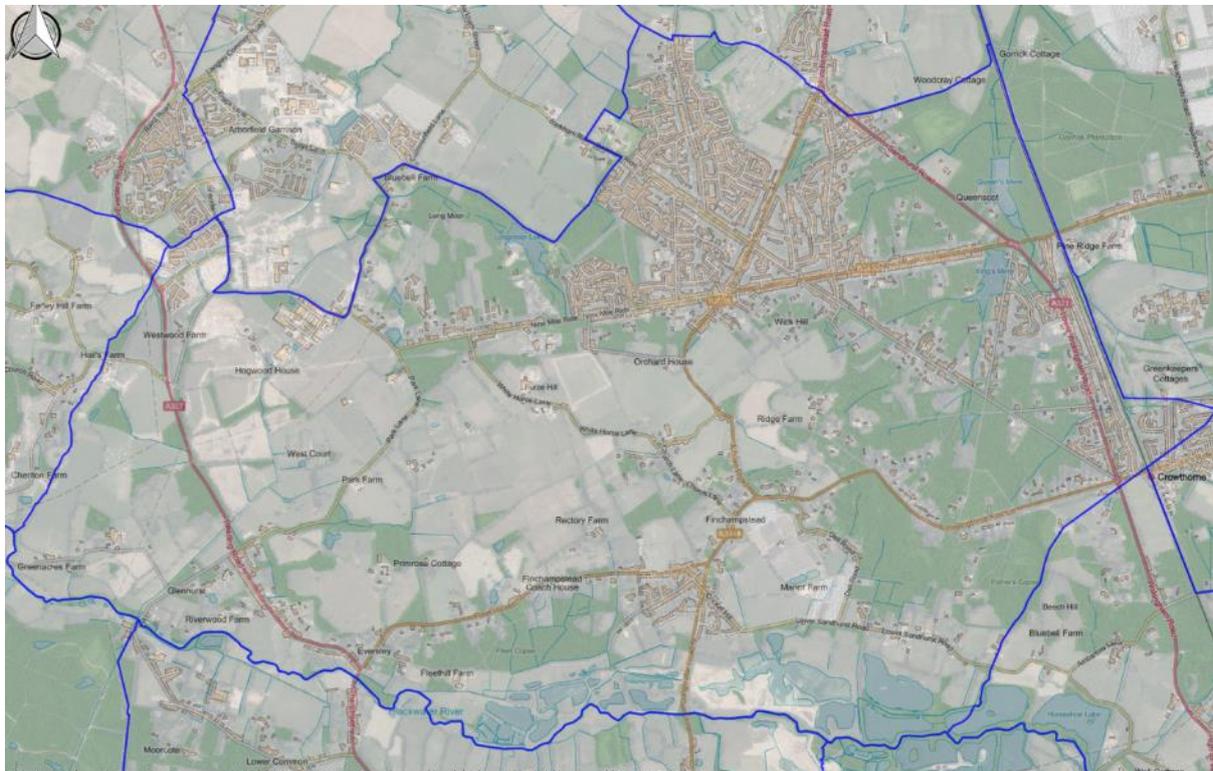
**Fig 1 – Characteristic Landscape – looking West from St James Church towards West Court and beyond including the remains of the Roman Road from London to Silchester which traverses East West cutting the Parish in half**

### 2. What makes a Landscape?

2.1 The Finchampstead landscape (as all landscapes are), is made up of a series of layers, the underlying geology forms a series of plateaus, hills, and valleys: Fig 1 is typical for the western part of the Finchampstead Parish. Initially, local people modified the landscape, creating settlements,

structures, ancient trackways and developing forms of agriculture and farming. Over time, the people occupying the landscape have added further layers through the creation of boundaries, transport networks, buildings, cultural, recreational, and religious sites. More recently people have invested time, expertise, and money in the building of infrastructure, commercial centres, and housing, exerting strong influences over the landscape and its unique local character.

**Fig 2 – Map of Finchampstead Parish showing the topography, greenness, straight “rides” and urban development outline**



2.3 Generally people continue to shape and influence the appearance of the landscape and have an important stake in the continuity of occupation. They bring ownership and knowledge of the landscape and its management, often feeling a strong connection and affiliation to it. The associations and affections people have, all contribute to make up the character of a landscape.

2.4 The Landscape Institute’s Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Revision 3, (2013) quoting guidance on Landscape Character Assessment from 2002 says:

*“Landscape is about the relationship between people and place. It provides the setting for our day-to-day lives. The term does not mean just special or designated landscapes and it does not only apply to the countryside. Landscape can mean a small patch of urban wasteland as much as a mountain range, and an urban park as much as an expanse of lowland plain. It results from the way that different components of our environment – both natural (the influences of geology, soils. Climate, flora and fauna) and cultural (the historical and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) – interact together and are perceived by as” People’s perceptions turn land into the concept of landscape.” (Swanwick and Land Use Consultants, 2002: 2).*

### 3. Planning Policy

3.1 Landscape is an important element of national planning policy, with Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (NPPF) stating:

*“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.”*

Paragraph 8c of the NPPF states that one of three ‘overarching objectives’ is an environmental one:

*“c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*

3.2 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that:

*“Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for: d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.”*

3.3 Paragraph 170 of the NPPF further states:

*“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

*a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).*

*b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland”*

3.4 The overall objective for the natural and local environment being that planning policies and decisions should protect, contribute towards, and enhance valued landscape by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

3.5 The NPPF states at paragraph 171 that:

*“Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value.”*

It continues that plans should:

*“...take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure, and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.”*

3.6 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further detail to the NPPF. The PPG notes:

*“Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.” (Paragraph: 036 Reference ID 8-036-20190721)*

3.7 The following factors are considered important when considering whether a landscape is valued and by whom. Recommendations by the Finchampstead Parish Council and by the group drafting the Neighbourhood Development Plan that a significant number of local green spaces should have formal designation is based on this objective framework (Table 1) and Section B of this paper.

**Table 1 – Valued Landscape criteria  
(Based on Swanwick and Land Use Consultants (2002))**

<b>Landscape Quality (condition)</b>	A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
<b>Scenic Quality</b>	The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly visual senses).
<b>Rarity</b>	The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character type.
<b>Representativeness</b>	Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.
<b>Conservation Interests</b>	The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.
<b>Recreational value</b>	Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
<b>Perceptual Aspects</b>	A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
<b>Associations</b>	Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

## **4. Finchampstead Forest and Rides Valued Landscape:**

### **4.1 Landscape Quality:**

The Forest and Rides Valued Landscape gains much of its identity and cohesiveness from its role in the hunting landscape from the reign of Queen Anne with wide straight rides and deep drainage ditches. The historic straight rides, most often lined with dense woodland or linear development, linked the small hamlets between the town of Wokingham and the local villages of Finchampstead, Crowthorne, and Barkham in East Berkshire and Yateley and Eversley in Hampshire.

This helped define the character and extent of the Valued Landscapes and historic settlements that flow naturally across Parish boundaries as part of a network of green open spaces in East Berkshire today: it has cohesiveness and distinctive shape as borne out by the following extract from a recent appeal decision

*“That part of the M1 ‘Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands’ landscape is ‘valued landscape’ (paragraph 170(a) of the NPPF: 2019) and was confirmed by Inspector Wendy McKay in her Decision Letter. The Inspector said: The Council accepts that there is a hierarchy of landscape and that the appeal sites do not fall within one of the nationally designated landscapes which are specifically referred to in paragraph 115 of the Framework. Nonetheless, given the identification of this landscape as being of high quality, the reference to the LCA in MDD Policy TB21 and the location of the sites within the historic parkland, I consider that this landscape is appropriately categorised as a ‘valued’ landscape for the purposes of paragraph 109 of the Framework.”*

#### **4.2 Landscape condition.**

In the ‘Key Characteristics’ of the LCA it states:

*“The landscape is in overall good condition, with a distinctive pattern of built and natural elements, including woodland, wetland, open pasture, and heathland habitats, with large lakes, continuous interconnected forestry and a cohesive settlement character. Although much of this landscape has a ‘suburban’ character it does have a very strong sense of place; however there has been fragmentation of heathland and wetland habitats.”*



**Fig 4 – Aerial Photograph from above St James Church looking North towards Wokingham and Reading with the conservation area in the foreground**



**Fig 5 – Wellingtonia Avenue looking East**

#### **4.3 Scenic Quality**

The scenic quality of the Finchampstead Valued Landscape encompasses a mixture of short, enclosed views along and from the straight rides, views through the landscape from smaller meandering rural lanes, and long-distance views from high points across surrounding countryside (fig4).

The continuous network of woodland and forestry (fig 2) helps to provide physical and visual separation between settlements in the Parish and to filter and screen views to the settlements within the area, as well as providing an attractive setting to housing (WBLCA 2019)

There are long distance southerly views from the elevated ridge over the Blackwater Valley and beyond into Surrey and Hampshire, as well as framed views associated with designed landscapes, such as the view along the tree lined Wellingtonia Avenue with its impressive 150-year-old giant redwood trees which is an iconic feature of the borough (fig 5). To the west of the Parish is a pattern of pastoral fields interspersed with scattered woods and hedgerow oaks which provide visual diversity (fig1).

#### **4.4 Rarity**

The WBLCA (2019) provides a list of ‘valuable landscape attributes’ in Finchampstead including the elevated plateau and wooded skyline, the distinctive pattern of woodland and forestry and expanses of mixed woodland; sandy heaths, lakes and bogs which provide nationally important Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats, a nationally recognised SSSI; opportunities for recreation; distinctive long straight historic rides; a place of tranquillity to commune with nature, amongst an ever changing and increasing urban background which makes Finchampstead a rarity regarded by residents and visitors as the “jewel in the Crown” of Wokingham Borough.

#### **4.5 Representativeness**

The historic straight rides are rare examples of a large-scale designed hunting landscape in one of Europe’s premier hunting forests. The Valued Landscape is identified on the wildlife sites map (fig 6): in wider views from the ground, the rides sit in a more naturalistic landscape which characterises Finchampstead.

#### 4.6 Conservation Interests

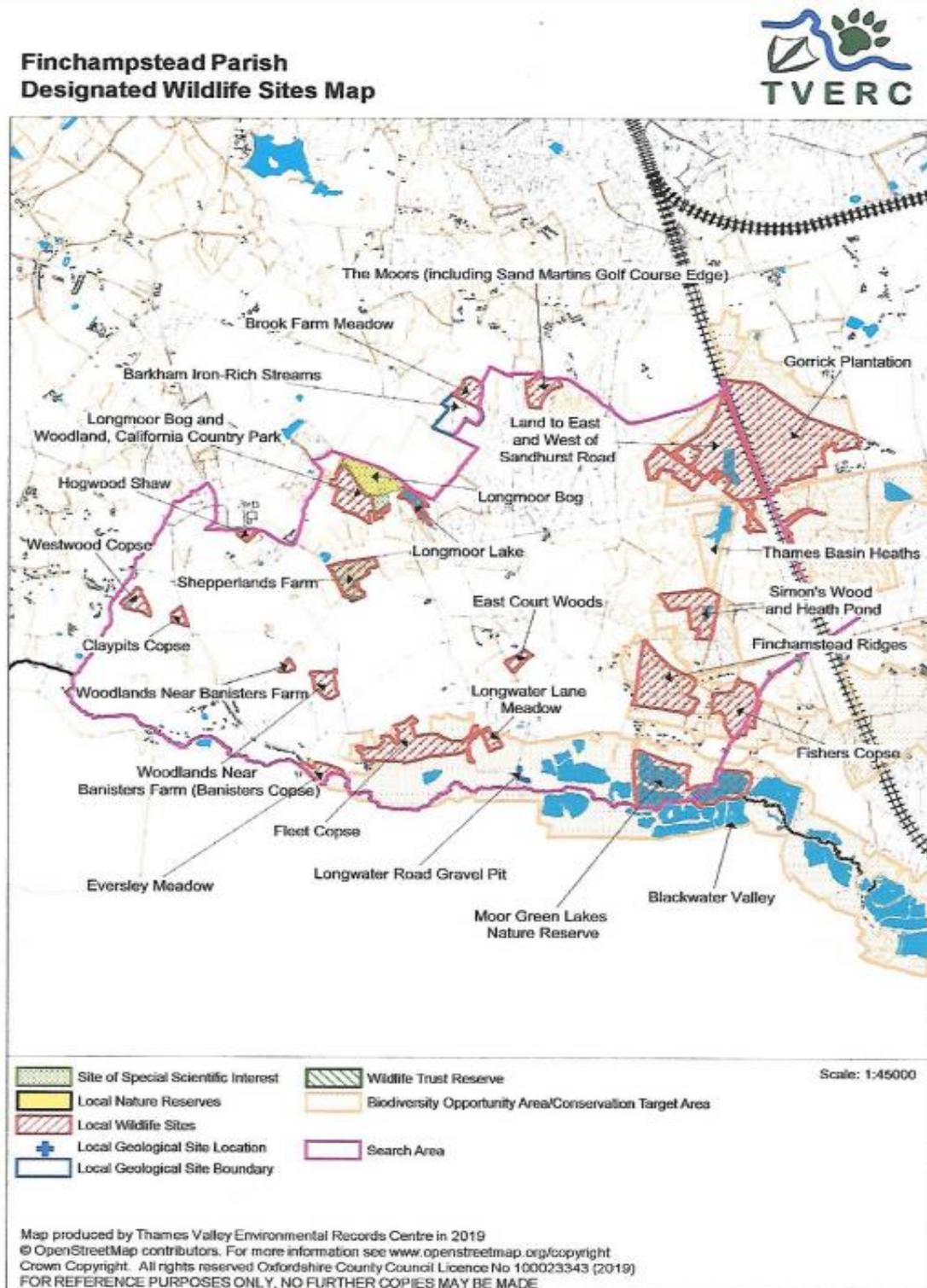
In terms of wildlife and biodiversity the Forest and Rides Valued Landscape provides an important mix of wildlife sites and habitats (Fig 7) of principal importance where:

- Blocks of scattered Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland predominate throughout the Valued Landscape.
- Pockets of Wet Woodland occur in lower lying and waterlogged areas
- Wood Pasture and Parkland, a generally more open habitat is reported at West Court in the western part of the Valued Landscape.
- Open habitats are present to a lesser extent across the Valued Landscape including Rivers, Lowland Heathland, Mesotrophic Lakes, Eutrophic standing waters, Lowland Fens, Lowland Dry Acidic Grassland, and Lowland Meadows. (Fig 6)

**Fig 6 – Aerial photograph from the Ridges looking South-West over the Blackwater Valley**



Fig 7 – Designated Wildlife sites map



4.7 **The Veteran Tree Inventory** shows a wide variety of Veteran Trees with notable aggregations spread across the Parish. The clearest aggregation of veteran trees in the Valued Landscape is the avenue of 150 Wellingtonia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) growing either side of Wellingtonia Avenue (fig 5 & 8).

Finchampstead Parish has a 39% Canopy Tree cover which is the highest within Wokingham Borough and there are 469 Veteran Trees in the Parish: Ref Wokingham Veteran Tree Association 2019

**Fig 8 - Map identifying veteran trees in the Parish – (Note the line of Sequoiadendron giganteum along Wellingtonia Avenue to the East of the Parish forming the entrance archway to Simons Wood and the Ridges – managed by National Trust)**



**4.8 There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the Valued Landscape:** Longmoor Bog is one of a small number of base-poor valley mires in the area. It has a well-developed carr of alder, willow, downy birch, and alder buckthorn as well as an area of wet heathland. Situated in a valley bottom, the layers of peat have accumulated to a depth of over one metre. The south-east corner of the Parish, areas of Simon’s Wood and the Ridges, sits within the Thames Basin SPA

**4.9 Local Wildlife Sites and Nature Reserves:** There are 18 Local Wildlife Sites (Fig 7) spread across the Parish in a range of natural environments: wet woodland, heathland, ponds and upland diverse woodlands. There are surrounding areas that are flat lying with many drainage ditches. Some of these watercourses are orange in colour due to the amount of natural Ironstone that has leached into them from the adjacent bedrock of Eocene Sands.

**4.10 Historical Value:** There are 28 listed buildings, ranging from the grand and ceremonial – like the Grade II listed buildings at Banisters and West Court (a former manor house with a 17th Century core Grade II listed building), The Queens Oak Public House, (Fig 9) an early 17th Century cottage. The roman road, referred to as “The Devil’s Highway”, runs from Silchester to London situated east-west through the Valued Landscape with remains of the earthed embankment (agger) still visible in some places in the Parish.

**Fig 9 The Queens Oak**



**Fig 10 – St James' Church**



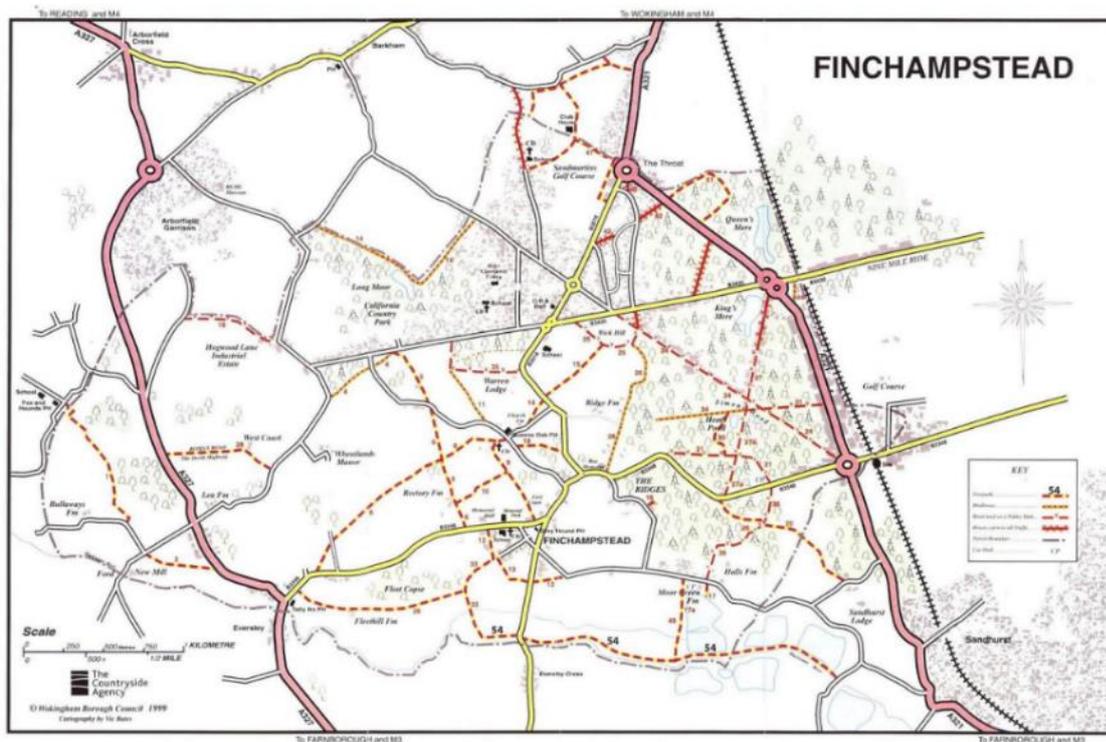
4.11 An example of how modern development and land uses overlay ancient ones can be seen in the archaeological record. The Grade I listed 12th Century Church of St James (Fig 10) at Finchampstead, for example, sits in an elevated position at the centre of the medieval village, surrounded by a Roman or earlier earthwork just 200 yards to the south of the Roman Road. Also situated on the Roman Road, is a large Roman villa complex west of the church.

**These sites contribute to the total visitor numbers to Finchampstead (see 4.12)**

#### 4.12 Recreational Value:

Open access to the woodland and heathland, parts owned by the National Trust (Finchampstead Ridges and Simon’s Wood), California Country Park and Warren Wood Country Park provide an important recreational resource for the residents of Finchampstead and adjacent settlements of Wokingham, Barkham, Crowthorne, Yateley and Eversley. There is a 32.6 Km network of well-maintained public footpaths and bridleways that connect to trails in the Blackwater Valley and Finchampstead Ridges (Fig 11)

**Fig 11 – Footpath and bridleway network through Finchampstead**



#### 4.13 Perceptual Aspects

These are addressed in the WBLCA (2019). There is a secluded, remote character of the landscape enclosed within woodland. Finchampstead is an area with a strong sense of rural tranquillity, with naturalistic perceptual qualities and experience of dark skies due to the lack of settlement. There are woodlands and smaller areas of pasture, mire, and heath, which provide a sense of variety, it is a highly enclosed landscape created by the often-continuous swathes of dense woodland, except for framed views along the rides. These perceptual qualities are important features of the area and increasingly rare in Berkshire.

#### 4.14 Associations:

Finchampstead Parish is an important asset for the community and to the surrounding area of other Parishes providing a centre for the enjoyment of green spaces including protected areas and natural green gaps between settlements. The green spaces are recognised as having notable attributes in ecology, history, local significance and leisure, this is evidenced by the high level of visitors each year:

Table 2 – visitor numbers

California Country Park	170,000 + each year (Surveys > 10yrs ago)
Shepperlands Farm Nature Reserve	5,000
Simon's Wood	80,000 + (recent surveys)
Ridges	40,000+ (recent surveys)
Moor Green Nature reserve	70,000+ (surveys > 10yrs ago)
The Moors	No records kept but promoted by WBC as a recreational area on their website
Longwater Road Nature Reserves	Opening now in part and full opening planned for 2025
Warren Wood Nature Reserve	No records kept
St James Conservation Area	No records kept

An estimated 60% of visitors live within 2 Kms of the sites visited, 85% are walking (with children and/or dog), others jog, cycle and horse ride and stay approximately an hour for each visit (ref – records kept by volunteers maintaining the amenity). The footpath network to these locations are well-maintained by the Parish Council and associate organisations such as the National Trust. Finchampstead Parish has an active relationship with Ramblers and Equestrian Groups. Also, the car parks are heavily used at all locations for those needing enabled access.

#### 4.15 Summary:

The above section sets out a framework of Government and Local Authority approaches to describing and understanding the process in using quantitative and qualitative measures as criteria for identifying a Valued Landscape. We now will set out a proposition to identify the Local Green Spaces in Finchampstead Parish using Valued Landscapes in combination with other National, Local, Research based and Advisory criteria: see Section B

## Section B: Process of Identifying Local Green Spaces

### 5.00 Local Green Spaces

Identifying a Local Green Space utilises Governmental and Local Authority Guidelines combined with a range of local factors such as significance, history, ecology, topography, character, utility and recreation for residents. For the purposes of this Report, the designation of a Local Green Space is drawn initially from the NPPF:

#### 1. NPPF Guidance Criteria on Local Green Spaces:

*Para 100. "The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:*

- (a) in reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves;*
- (b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- (c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land."*

#### 2. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in 2019, states that, 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- (a) Para 170.a: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality)'*
- (b) Para 170.b: recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland'*

### 5.1 Influence of Local Factors on the NPPF Criteria

An element at the forefront in deciding whether a location meets sufficient criteria to be considered as a Local Green Space is that of **Local Significance**. The combination of the factors set out below will contribute to a clear picture as to the power and relevance of a location to the residents of Finchampstead. Local Significance is drawn from the value put in a site by the residents as to its utility, history, accessibility and how integral it is to everyday life in Finchampstead. It should be noted that the green resources and landscape characteristics draw visitors for recreation purposes not just from Finchampstead but from neighbouring areas who regard the recreational use of considerable value (Ref 4.12 Table 2). The NPPF Guidelines have been extended to include a set of additional criteria including the Swanwick Guidance on Valued Landscapes (Ref 3.7 Table 1) that add specific local considerations for the purpose of analysis and accreditation as follows:

1. No current Planning Permission exists for the green space
2. It is not allocated for future or potential development
3. It would provide additional protection to any existing protective Policies
4. It is within close proximity to the community it serves (see NPPF (a) above) and with reference to Natural England guidance (2011)

5. no person:
  - i. should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace
  - ii. there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home
  - iii. there should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km
  - iv. there should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km.
  
6. It is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife (see NPPF (b) above)
  - i. Tranquillity in offering a place of quiet reflection and peaceful enjoyment
  - ii. Demonstrating a feeling of remoteness and quiet contemplation
  - iii. Having the inability to see man-made structures and
  - iv. Free from artificial noise from traffic and industry
  
7. Has special characteristics that have longevity and will be maintained for the period of the NDP
  
8. Local in character but not extensive tracts of land (see NPPF (c) above) however there is:
  - i. no specified upper or lower limits in area
  - ii. rationale in this Report to examine and evaluate each larger site on its merits considering natural topography, enclosure, proximity to other designated Local Green Spaces
  - iii. recognition that urban and rural areas could have significantly different and reasoned approaches to areas to be designated (Ref Hassocks NDP Pre-submission Regulation 14).

## 5.2 Supporting the analysis.

In considering the recommendations for designation of Local Green Spaces, additional research and guidance has been drawn from Government and Wokingham Borough Council sources as follows:

1. WBC Valued Landscape Topic Paper 2020
2. TVERC Report on:
  - a. Legally Protected and Notable Species (including Local Wildlife Sites) August
  - b. 2019 Denoting the principal importance for the conserving of biodiversity
3. WBC Landscape Character Assessment 2019: sections M1 (Settled Sands) M2 (Forest and Settled Sands), N2 (The Leas) plus A3 (Blackwater Valley) and J2 (South Arborfield) pages 298/299, 319/320 and 330/331
4. WBC Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Report 2012 – 2024: Habitat Action Plans (HAP)
5. WBC Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) AECOM 2020 Habitats Directive 1992: Policies
6. WBC Local Plan Update 2019
7. The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area partnership with WBC (Ref: BAP Report 2012-2024): implementation of SAMM (Strategic Access Management and Monitoring) and SANGs.
8. FPC RoW Plan and Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) relevance to SSSIs and conservation of biological diversity

9. Finchampstead NDP Policies and Assessments
10. CPRE Tranquillity and Night Light Valuations 2016 and 2008
11. Historic England Listed Building Register
12. Wokingham Veteran Tree Association Register 2019
13. **Additional Research Papers used:**
  - (a) Informal green spaces provide a positive impact on mental health (White 2013)
  - (b) Positive carbon balance, reduce air pollution (Nowak 2006)
  - (c) Support diversity and pollinating populations (Rouquette and Baldock 2015).
  - (d) Appendix 1 (page 39): Supplementary Sources

## Section C: Local Green Spaces: Recommended for designation by Finchampstead NDP

### 6.00 The recommendations

This Section sets out the 14 locations (Table 3) that are proposed as Local Green Spaces within the above Guideline criteria:

Each site numbered from 1 -14 is referenced in accordance with the numbered criteria in Part B of this paper and identifies the rationale for the designation:

**Table 3 – Local Green Space – Summary table of Site Recommendations for WBC Local Green Space designation**

Site Ref No	Site Name	Site Ref No	Site Name
1.	<b>St James' Church and Conservation Area</b>	8.	<b>Finchampstead Memorial Park and Leas Field</b>
2.	<b>Warren Wood Country Park</b>	9.	<b>Sand Martins Golf Club</b>
3.	<b>Burnmoor Meadow</b>	10.	<b>Finchampstead Baptist Church and Gorse Ride Playing Fields</b>
4.	<b>California Country Park and Longmoor Bog</b>	11.	<b>Finchampstead Allotments</b>
5.	<b>Simon's Wood, Brooks Heath and the Ridges</b>	12.	<b>Woodmoor Play area</b>
6.	<b>Shepperlands Farm Nature Reserve</b>	13.	<b>Gorse Ride Woods Play area</b>
7.	<b>A) Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve</b> <b>B) Manor Farm Mineral Extraction site</b> <b>C) Fleet Hill Farm Nature Reserve</b>  <b>Note: Only 7A is being recommended as a local green space 7B and 7C do not meet the limited size criteria but need a protective planning designation for the future.</b>	14.	<b>The Moors</b>

**Note: The site reference maps are for illustrative purposes in this topic paper only and should not be used for any other purpose.**

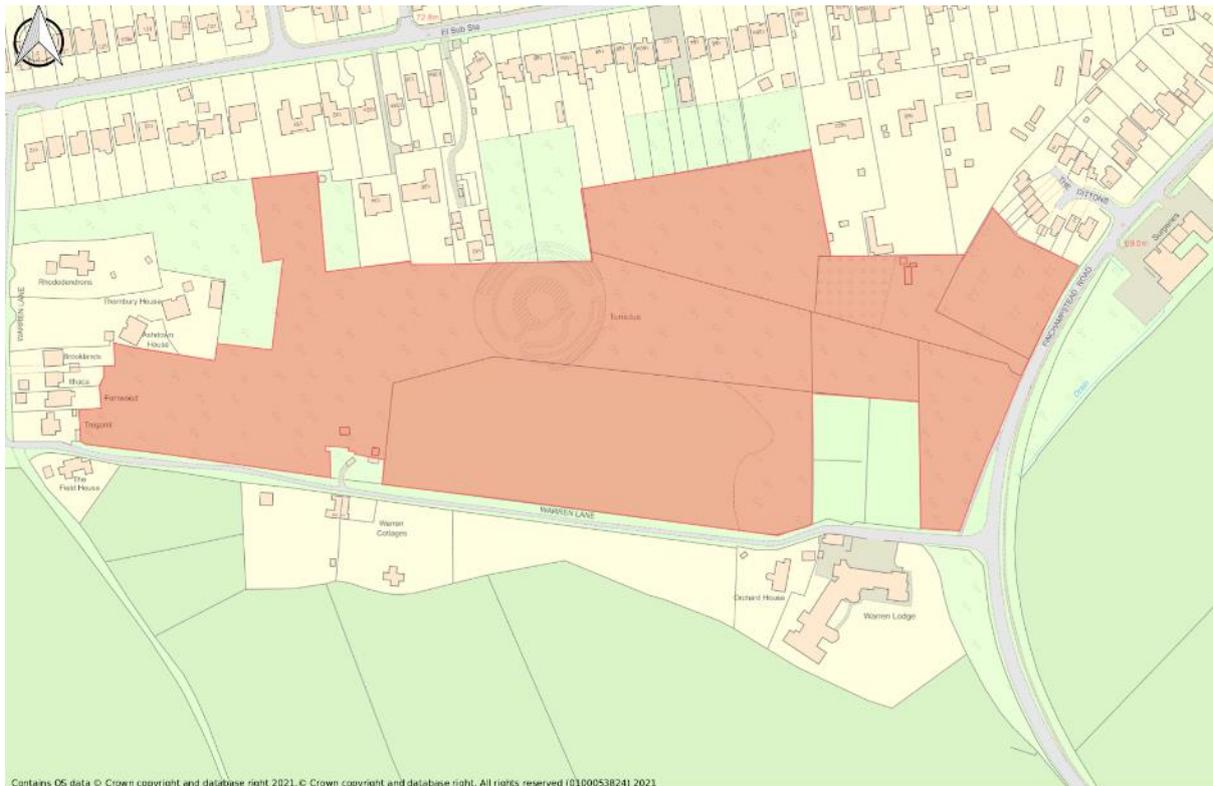


	<p>3 Listed Buildings: St James Church, Old Wall by Church and Queens Oak Public House</p> <p>The “Devil’s Highway” runs through the area which is the Roman Road from London to Silchester.</p> <p>Intersection of 3 Rights of way (RoW) connecting the Village, California Crossroads and west Finchampstead 2 further footpaths connect to California Country Park, Warren Wood and Jubilee Hill.</p> <p>There are Plaques commemorating the events held to celebrate the anniversaries of Queens Victoria and Elizabeth II.</p> <p>The Queens Oak is a focal point for walkers and cyclists using the local and wider networks of paths and roads.</p>
Supporting evidence	<p>Designated Conservation Area</p> <p>Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A2 S1, S5 Conservation Area and Listed Buildings</p> <p>WBC Biodiversity Report 2012-2024: All churchyards are managed with biodiversity as the aim.</p> <p>WBC IMD 2019/01 SPA Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2018:</p> <p>Research Paper on pollinating populations (Rouquette and Baldock 2015)</p>
Recommendation for designation	<p>The Location meets Criteria 1 – 8 inclusive</p> <p>While it is currently a conservation area there is a need for an additional protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.</p>

**Site ref – 1 Aerial Photograph of St James’ Church and Conservation Area**



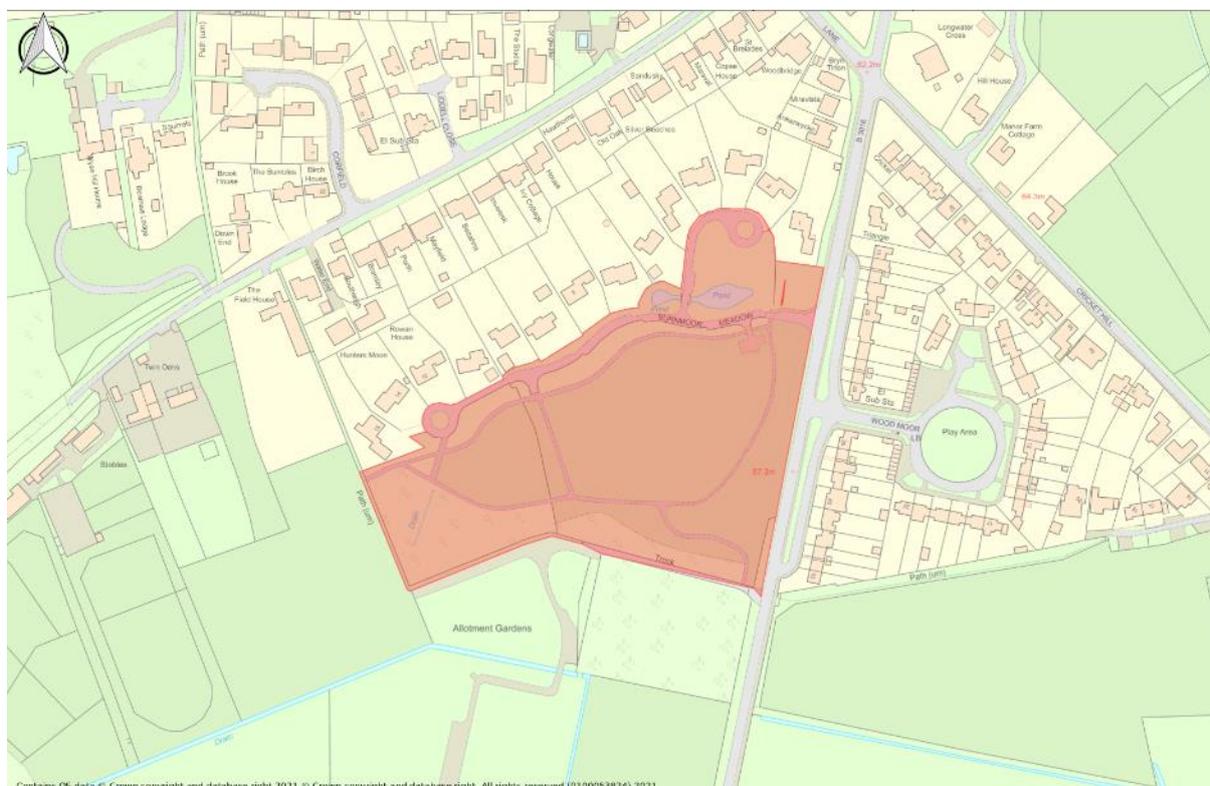
## Site 2 – Warren Wood Country Park



Site ref	<b>2</b>
Name	Warren Wood Country Park
Address	Warren Lane, Finchampstead
Size	8 ha
Description	This is a Country Park owned by Wokingham Borough Council and comprises an undulating open meadow area with two adjacent areas of woodland of pine, oak and birch.
Proximity to community	The country park is located between Warren Lane, Nine Mile Ride and the B3016 Finchampstead Road and is at the heart of and close to most of the Finchampstead community with houses and gardens abutting its boundaries on its North Side. Warren Lane is a public right of way – a bridleway – and other public rights of way link to the park and on to California Crossroads, California Country Park and up to the Village Conservation Area.
Local in character	A clearly defined informal public open space that sits to the south of the Nine Mile Ride ribbon developments. It abuts the countryside that sits between Warren Wood and the St James' Conservation area
Local significance	Historical, recreational and ecological value. There is a scheduled ancient monument: a burial mound which is the largest example of a 'bell barrow' in Berkshire and dates from between 2000 and 1300 BC. The Round barrows in Warren Wood Country Park are evidence of a Bronze Age settlement.

	<p>The site is popular with residents for informal recreation and dog walking using access points from the settlement based around California Crossroads and the Finchampstead Road</p> <p>It is advertised and promoted for recreation by WBC as a Country Park.</p>
Supporting evidence	<p>WBC LCA 2019 Summary - Finchampstead Forested and settled Sands: Para M1.6</p> <p>Contains veteran trees</p> <p>Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A1 S1 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and conservation area</p> <p>WBC IMD 2019/01 SPA Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2018: sits within the 5 km mitigation zone</p> <p>Aligns with WBC policy NE1 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c</p> <p>Aligns with WBC Policy NE2: Thames Basin Heaths SPA</p>
Recommendation for designation	<p>Location meets Criteria 1 – 8 inclusive</p> <p>There is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.</p>

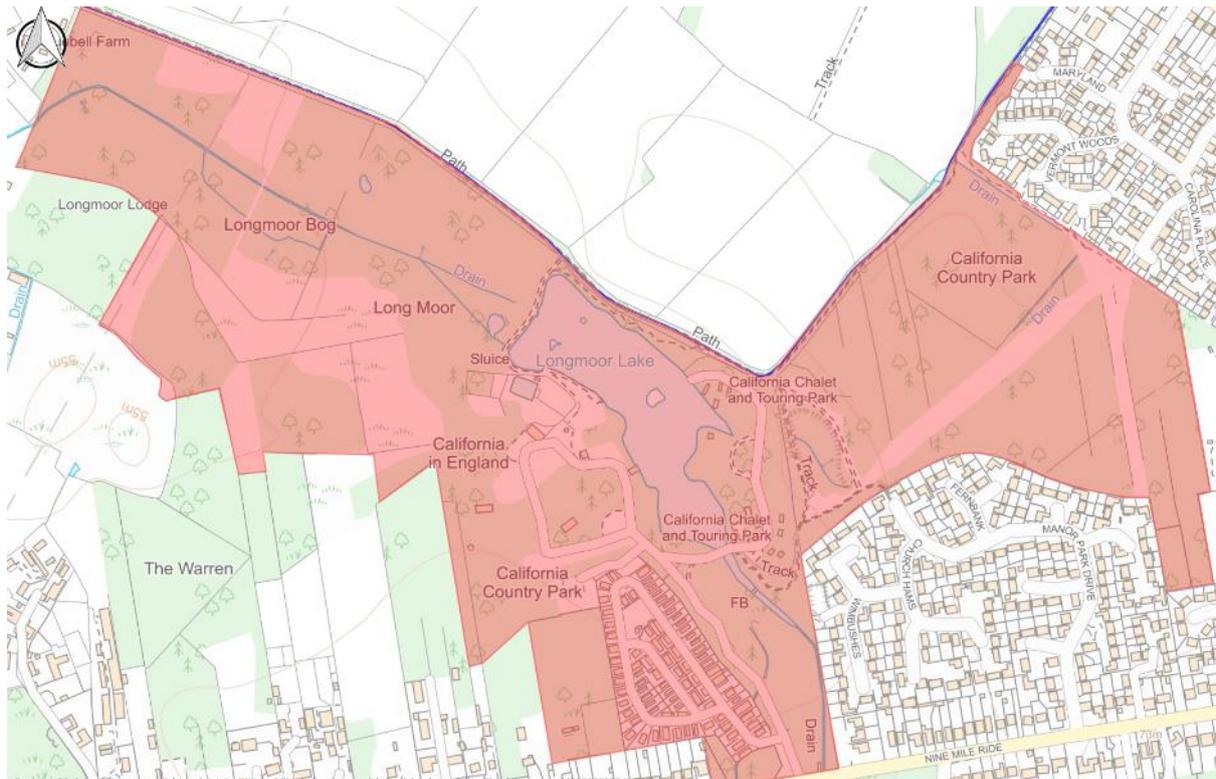
### Site Ref 3 Burnmoor Meadow



Site ref	<b>3</b>
Name	Burnmoor Meadow
Address	Burnmoor Meadow, Longwater Road, Finchampstead
Size	Approx. 3.1 ha
Description	An informal open space owned by Wokingham Borough Council and which may have formed part of the old village green. The site has several semi

	mature trees, areas of scrub on the perimeter, a wildflower meadow, and a small pond.
Proximity to community	The open space is bounded by housing to the north and east of the site and by public rights of way on the southern and western boundary. The Finchampstead Allotments are located to the south-west of the site.
Local in character	A clearly defined and self-contained informal public open space with natural greenspace. Footpaths from east and west Finchampstead along the Blackwater Valley, up to the Village Conservation area and into the Longwater Road Nature Reserves.
Local significance	Recreational, ecological, and historical value. Site of the original Finchampstead Village Green. Location post indicates the place where King Henry VII heard of the arrival of Katherine of Aragon An avenue of oak trees has been created since 2012 and includes trees planted to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee and the 90 <sup>th</sup> birthday of Queen Elizabeth II. The site is used for informal recreation and dog walking. A small car park is present at the site. Valued as a tranquil open space by residents
Supporting evidence	NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c Research: Impact on mental health (White 2013) WBC IMD 2019/01 SPA Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2018: sits within the 5 km mitigation zone Sits adjacent to the Allotments and new nature reserve zones by the Blackwater Valley Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A1 S7 Local Green Space
Recommendation for designation	Location meets Criteria 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8

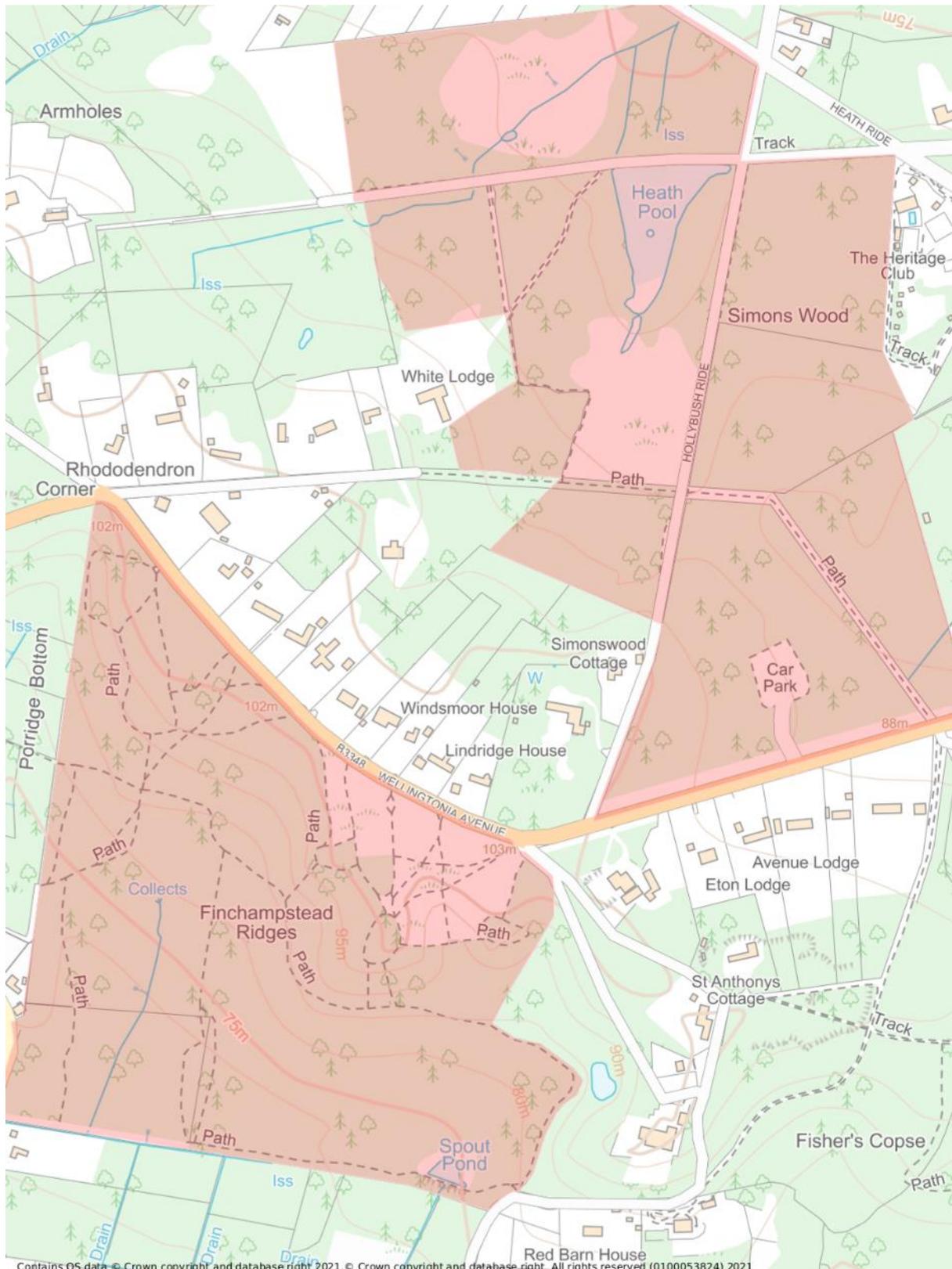
## Site 4 - California Country Park



<b>Site ref</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Name</b>	California Country Park and Longmoor Bog
<b>Address</b>	Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead
<b>Size</b>	Approx. 40ha
<b>Description</b>	This Country Park is owned by Wokingham Borough Council. The Park covers 40 ha and is located within 100ha of ancient bog and lowland heath, part of which is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). A small holiday park lies on the site.
<b>Proximity to community</b>	The Park is in close proximity to Nine Mile Ride and much of the community of the northern part of Finchampstead Parish. The California Country Park Greenway runs to and through the site, public rights of way link from the park to the FBC Community Centre, up to the Village Conservation area and through to the Arborfield settlement and school.
<b>Local in character</b>	A clearly defined public open space. The site has a history of being an entertainment destination with a dance hall in the 1930-1960s and has been a popular place of relaxation for local families for decades
<b>Local significance</b>	Ecological and recreational value, popular for its beauty and tranquillity. Highly valued by the community: FNDP Survey 2019 states that it is Highly Valued by residents: <i>Most important thing is to keep it green. That is why we love it here.... the green spaces and footpaths'</i> WBC Survey 2007: Visitors 170,000 pa There is a lake where fishing is permitted, a play area, café, and a network of surfaced and informal paths. There is a large recently extended car park. The

	<p>Finchampstead Scout Group has its base in the park with a large Scout Hut and uses the Park for activities.</p> <p>Longmoor Bog is a designated SSSI</p> <p>The Greenway connects California with Arborfield and Bohunt School</p> <p>Used as part of the Park Run activity with over 250 participants every Saturday up to the Covid 19 pandemic restrictions in March 2020. It has restarted and participant numbers are increasing (170 on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021)</p> <p>It is advertised and promoted as a place for family recreation by WBC</p>
Supporting evidence	<p>Has 6.3 Ha of Lowland Heath: a scarce resource in Berkshire</p> <p>TVERC Report Aug 2019: Longmoor Bog Woodlands, Longmoor Lake within California Country Park are Designated Wildlife Sites. TVERC Identification of Amphibians (Toads NERC-S41), Reptiles and Dragonflies Bats (HabDir-A4).</p> <p>Longmoor Bog has Lichens and Mosses (HabDir-5)</p> <p>Sits within the Thames Basin Heaths Biodiversity Opportunity Area.</p> <p>Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A1 S6, A2 S2 TPOs, A3 S1 and S4, A2 S1 Nature reserves, and A1 S3 SSSI</p> <p>NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c</p> <p>NPPF: para 170a on biodiversity</p> <p>Aligns with WBC Policy HC3 Open space Sports Recreation and Play facilities</p> <p>WBC IMD 2019/01 SPA Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2018: sits within the 5 km mitigation zone</p> <p>Aligns with WBC policy NE1 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation</p> <p>Aligns with WBC Policy NE2: Thames Basin Heaths SPA Intersection of 1</p>
Recommendation for designation	<p>Location meets Criteria 1 – 6 inclusive</p> <p>It is accepted that this location size is unusual for consideration as a Local Green Space. However, there is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.</p>

**Site 5 – Simons Wood, Brooks Heath and The Ridges**



<b>Site ref</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Name</b>	Simon's Wood, Brooks Heath, and The Ridges
<b>Address</b>	The Ridges and Wellingtonia Avenue, Finchampstead
<b>Size</b>	Approx. 60ha

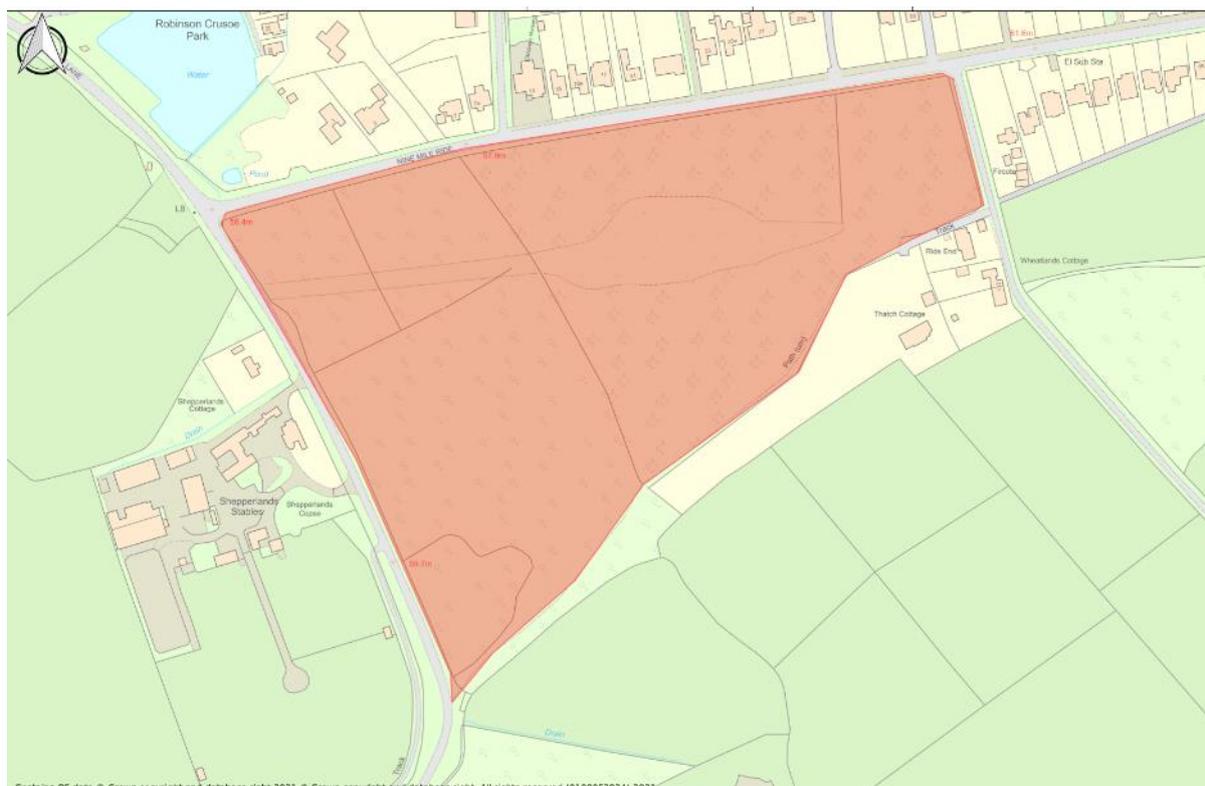
Description	<p>These areas of some 60 Ha are owned and managed by the National Trust. The background is one of diverse woodland and heathland surrounding natural water courses into a large Heath Pond at Simon's Wood and down to the Blackwater from the Ridges.</p> <p>Area is sedimentary rock with areas of ironstone.</p>
Proximity to community	<p>The sites are easily accessible by the community there is a large car park at Simon's Wood and roadside parking at The Ridges. Many public rights of way run to and through the sites as well as a network of informal paths.</p> <p>The sites are used for informal recreation, primarily walking although horse riding is permitted in some areas. There are circular walks from Simons Wood together with a 'Ridges Ramble' at The Ridges.</p>
Local in character	<p>Clearly defined and self-contained areas bounded by roads and byways. Intrinsic part of the broader landscape from the Bigshotte Estates in the east through to the Bramshill open woodlands to the west.</p> <p>Sits within the Thames Basin Heaths Biodiversity Opportunity Area.</p>
Local significance	<p>Site is Ecologically valued as it comprises wet woodland, ponds and protected Heathlands, escarpments, some rare plant species such as Lesser Wintergreen and Helleborine Woodland Orchids. It has 6.0 Ha of Lowland Heath: a scarce resource in Berkshire.</p> <p>Historical significance is through both Wellingtonia Avenue and the Devils Highway Roman Road which runs East - West through Simons Wood.</p> <p>Highly valued by the community for its beauty and tranquillity.</p> <p>Used by the local community for leisure and exercise: families, walkers, dog walkers, joggers and in specific parts Horse Riders and cyclists on the Bridle Paths</p> <p>The sites were donated by well-known local families to the National Trust. The Ridges was donated by the Walter Family in 1913 to the people of Finchampstead and Simon's Wood and then Brooks Heath donated in the 1960s by the Simon and the Brooks families. The locations are held and managed by the National Trust in line with the original bequest. They are important to the local community by location and use (the sites are not Nationally recognised by registers in NT or used as such)</p>
Supporting evidence	<p>TVERC Report Aug 2019 lists the sites as Local Wildlife Sites.</p> <p>TVERC Identification of Stag Beetles (HabDir-A2np), Amphibians (Toads NERC-S41), Reptiles (Adders), Dragonflies, Bats (HabDir-A4). The Ridges has extensive Wet Woodland with Lichens and Mosses (HabDir-5)</p> <p>Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A2 S5 and S6, A3 S1, A2 S1, NT landscape and woodlands, Tranquillity and Dark Skies</p> <p>WBC Biodiversity Report 2012.</p> <p>WBC LCA 2019 M1.12 Area of inter-connected rides from Queen Anne era and Summary M2 Ridges and Forested and Settled Sands area of acid heathlands, lakes and bogs which provide important ecological habitats as well as opportunities for recreation.</p> <p>NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c</p>

	<p>NPPF: para 170a on biodiversity</p> <p>FNDP Survey 2019: Highly valued by residents</p> <p>WBC Survey 2007: Visitors to Ridges and Simons Wood 87,000 pa</p> <p>WBC IMD 2019/01 SPA Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2018: sits within the 5 km mitigation zone</p> <p>Aligns with WBC policy NE1 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation</p> <p>Aligns with WBC Policy NE2: Thames Basin Heaths SPA</p> <p>Intersection of 4 RoW connecting east and south Finchampstead with California Crossroads and west Finchampstead</p>
Recommendation for designation	<p>Location meets Criteria 1 – 6 inclusive</p> <p>It is accepted that this location size is unusual for consideration as a Local Green Space. However, there is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.</p>

**Site Ref 5 – View looking East down Wellingtonia Avenue – Simons Wood is on the left**



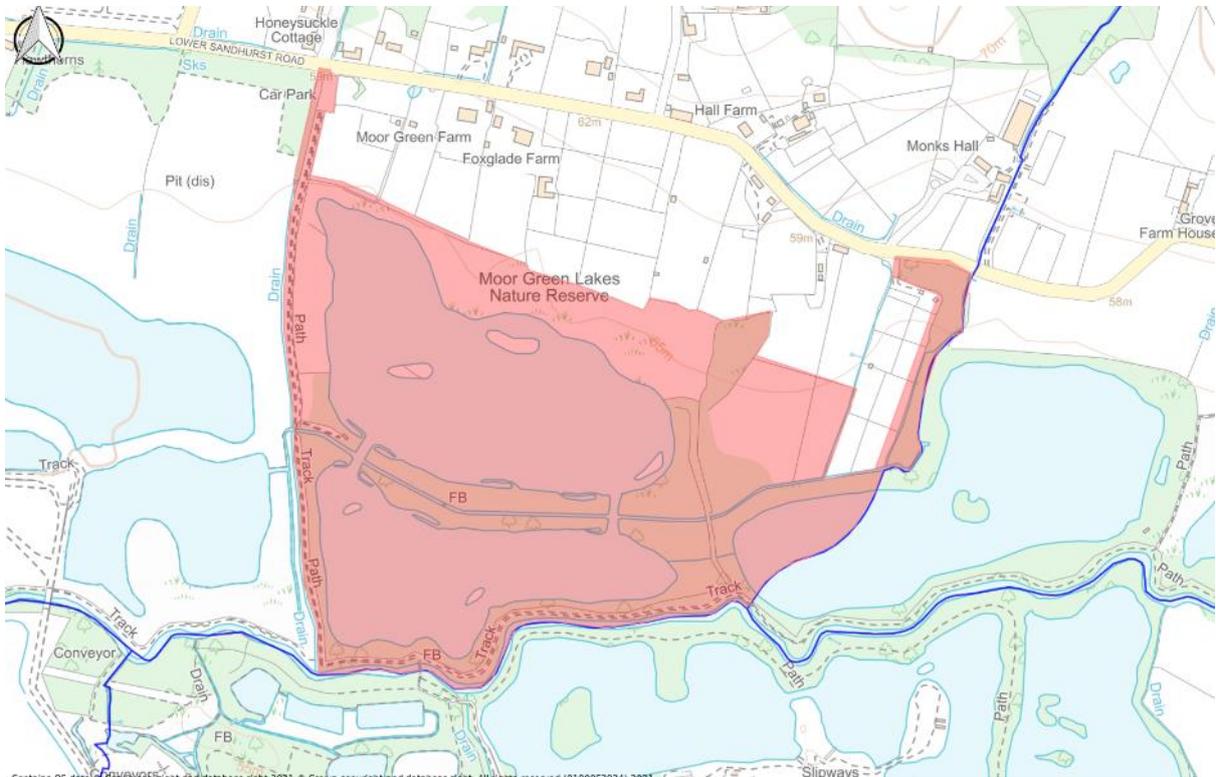
## Site 6 – Shepperlands Farm Nature Reserve



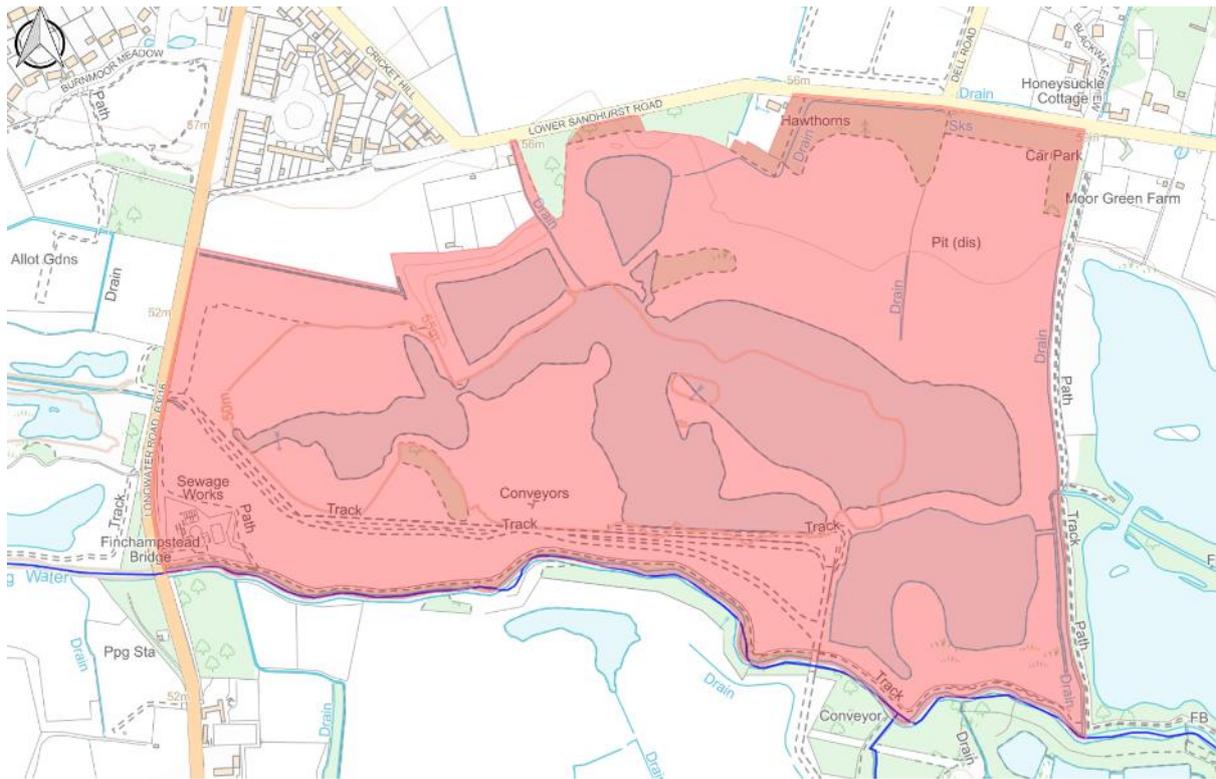
Site ref	6
Name	Shepperlands Farm Nature Reserve
Address	Park Lane, Finchampstead
Size	10ha
Description	A Wildlife Trust Reserve owned and managed by the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT). It includes woodland, an area of rare damp meadow and an area of heathland. It is particularly important for wildflowers, reptiles, and insects. A network of informal paths run through the site and a public right of way runs alongside the site.
Proximity to community	The site is bounded by Park Lane and Nine Mile Ride has access points to walk through and is easily accessible to the community in this area. Its location close to the entrance to California Country Park makes this a desirable and convenient location for visitors and the community to commune with nature in a quiet and secluded setting. Parking is available on Park Lane.
Local in character	The site is clearly defined, bounded by Park Lane, Nine Mile Ride, and a public right of way. Access is freely attained from the perimeter with a Bridle way and pathways.
Local significance	Ecological as a designated Wildlife site with grazing animals. Shepperlands Farm is a Designated Wildlife Site sponsored by BBOWT Has 1.0 ha of Lowland Heath: a scarce resource in Berkshire
Additional evidence	TVERC Report Aug 2019: Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A1 S5 Nature Reserve and woodlands

	<p>NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c  NPPF: para 170a on biodiversity  WBC LCA 2019 M1.12 Area of Settled Sands and of acid heathlands, wet woodland and pastures which provide important ecological habitats as well as opportunities for recreation. J2 refers to areas west over to the Leas  WBC IMD 2019/01 SPA Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2018: sits within the 5 km mitigation zone  Aligns with WBC policy NE1 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation  Aligns with WBC Policy NE2: Thames Basin Heaths SPA  Research: pollinating populations (Rouquette and Baldock 2015).  1 Listed Building: Cottage  NDP Survey 2019: high value by residents  Visitors assessment from BBOWT is 5,000 per annum</p>
<p>Recommendation for designation</p>	<p>Location meets Criteria 1 – 8 inclusive</p>

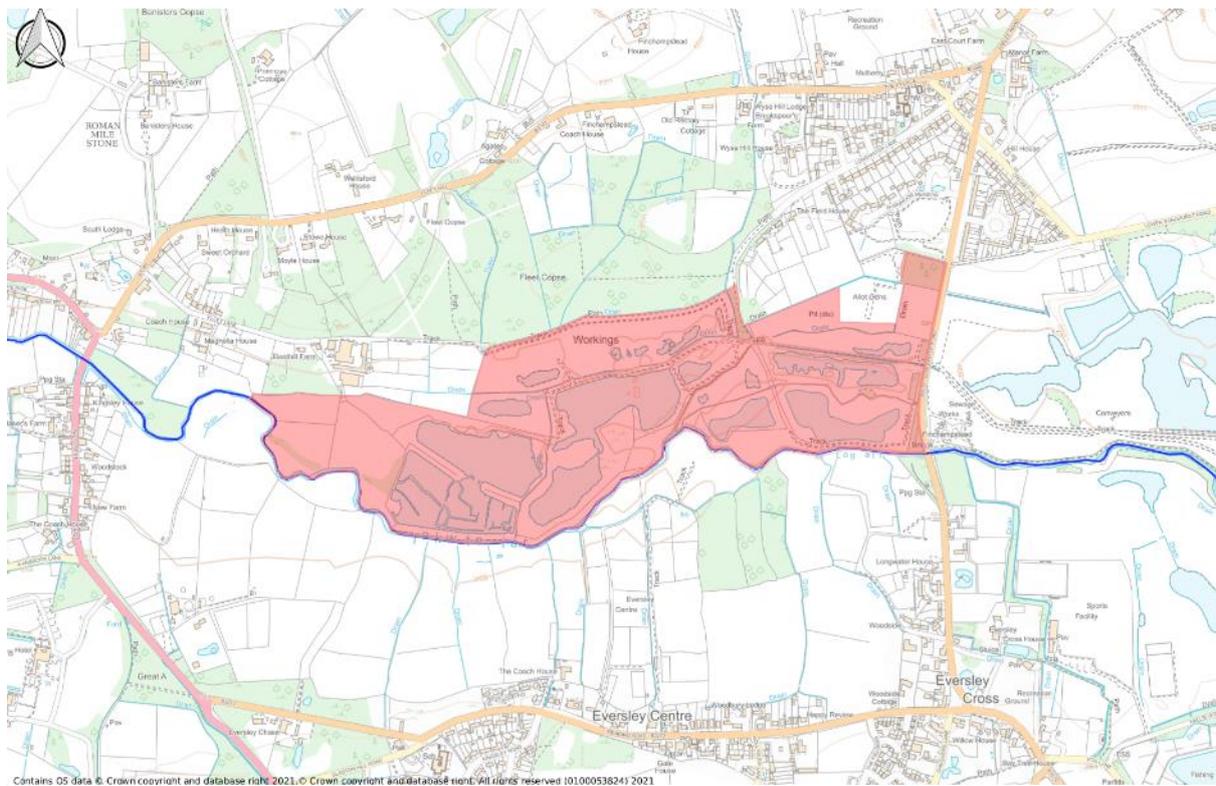
**Site Ref 7a – Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve**



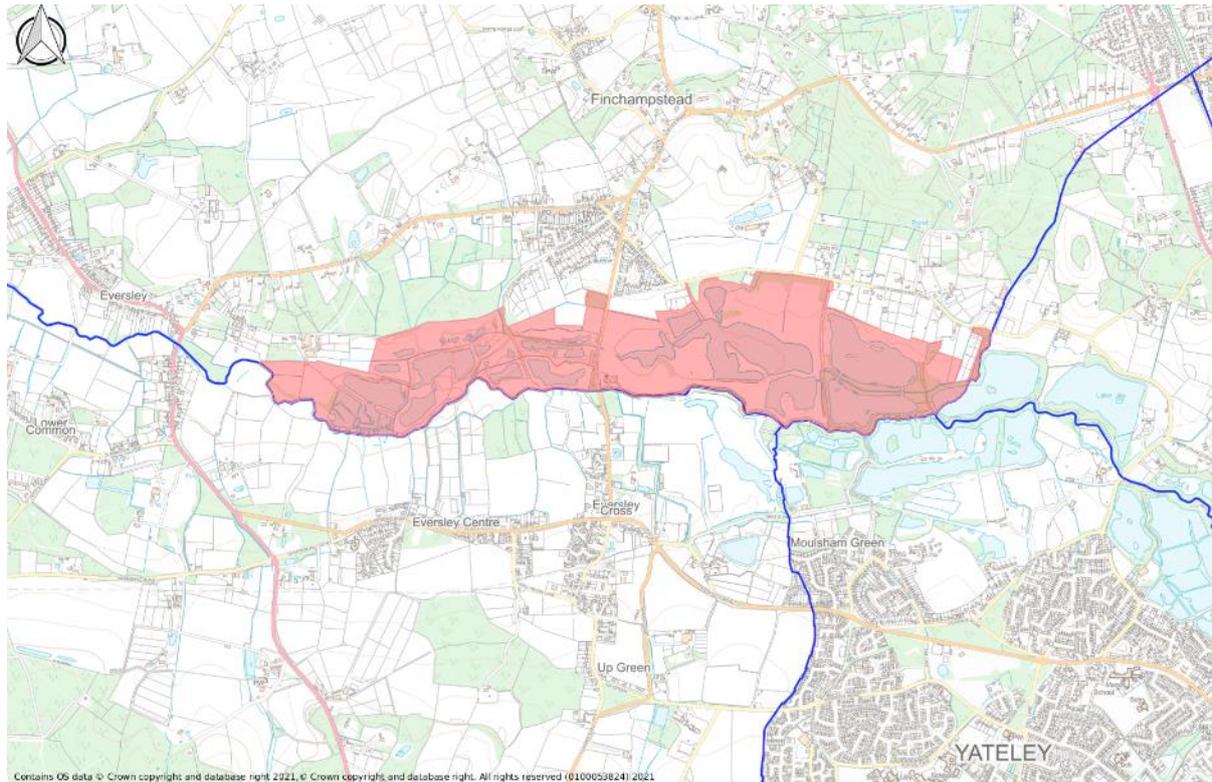
Site Ref 7b – Manor Farm mineral extraction site



Site Ref 7c – Fleet Hill Farm Nature reserve



**Site 7a,7b,7c – Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve, Manor Farm Mineral extraction site and Fleet Hill Farm Nature Reserve**



<b>Site ref</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Name</b>	7a -Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve, 7b -Manor Farm Mineral Extraction site and 7c - Fleet Hill Farm Nature Reserve
<b>Address</b>	Lower Sandhurst Road, and Longwater Road, Finchampstead
<b>Sizes of the 3 sites</b>	25ha, 50 ha, and 50 ha
<b>Description</b>	<p>The three sites are owned by Cemex UK Ltd.</p> <p>Moor Green Lakes is managed by the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership and the Moor Green Lakes volunteer group. It is located adjacent to the Blackwater River with the Blackwater Valley path running to the south,</p> <p>The Moor Green Lakes reserve (7a) abuts the Manor Farm mineral extraction site at Longwater Road (7b) which is planned as a nature reserve to the west once extraction works have been concluded. Moor Green Lakes has a car park and is accessible by public rights of way with informal paths within the reserve.</p>
<b>Proximity to community</b>	<p>The reserve (7a) is accessible to the community using the public rights of way network and from the car park on Lower Sandhurst Road. The paths link to the Blackwater Valley Path and the rights of way network into Yateley and Eversley Parishes, also onto the recreational areas of the Tri-Lakes and Horseshoe Lake that links with a further network of interconnected footpaths beyond the Parish. The Manor Farm Extraction site (7b) is not yet accessible to the Public and while extraction work on the Fleet Hill Farm site (7c) has been concluded the area has been the subject of extensive planting and fenced to encourage waterfowl and wildlife and is yet to be opened up fully through the designation of rights</p>

	of way. All sites are within easy reach of Finchampstead residents being less than 5 minutes walk from areas of habitation.
Local in character	All sites are clearly defined bounded by road, watercourse, and public rights of way. They are highly prized for wildlife diversity, bird watching hides and local recreational value to runners, horse riders, cyclists and walkers.
Local significance	Popular for its ecology, beauty and tranquillity. The reserves include open water with islands, woodland, and meadow areas around the Moor Green lakes with access all-round the lakes. It is peaceful and remote. It is particularly important for wildfowl, migrating birds and small mammals. Bird hides are present on the reserve. Educational tours are offered by volunteers to see the small animals and birds
Supporting evidence	TVERC designated Local Wildlife Sites TVERC Identification of Amphibians (Toads NERC-S41), Reptiles and Dragonflies, Bats (HabDir-A4). Extensive diversity of Birds and small mammals Sit within the Thames Basin Heaths Biodiversity Opportunity Area. Supported by WBC Biodiversity Report 2012. Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A1 S5, S6 and S7 Local Nature Reserve, A2 S1 BOA and A1 A2 S1 Tranquillity and Dark Skies  NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c NPPF: para 170a on biodiversity WBC IMD 2019/01 SPA Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2018: sits within the 5 km mitigation zone Aligns with WBC policy NE1 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Aligns with WBC Policy NE2: Thames Basin Heaths SPA FNDP Survey 2019: Highly valued by residents WBC Survey 2007: visitors 70,000 pa using footpaths and car access Intersection of 3 RoW forming part of circular walks and connection with adjacent Parishes
Recommendation for designation	The Moor Green Lakes Location meets Criteria 1 – 7 inclusive It is accepted that this location size is unusual for consideration as a Local Green Space. However, there is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3. In addition, while the Manor farm mineral extraction site and the Fleet Hill Farm nature reserve have not yet been completed it will be important to consider a protective planning designation in the future to preserve these important sites for nature and the local community

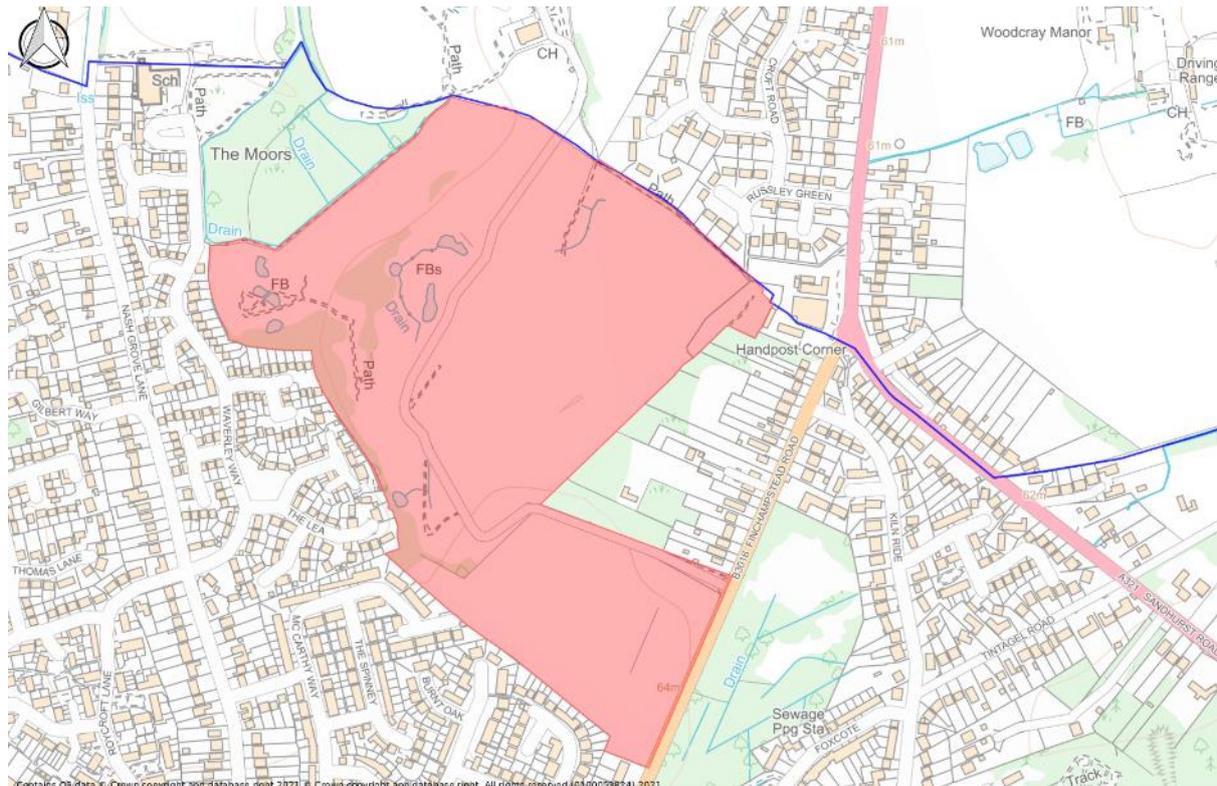


	<p>The Park is open all year and is used for sporting activities: cricket, football and tennis. It is used for the Summer fair for Finchampstead Parish. Finchampstead Primary School is located close to the park and uses it for informal recreation, sports activities and the annual sports day</p> <p>Families and walkers enjoy the open space, playground and connecting footpaths with the Church Conservation area and onto north Finchampstead and California</p> <p>The Memorial Hall hosts meetings of the Finchampstead Parish Council, numerous community sports, play and social groups and hosts theatre and community events.</p>
Supporting evidence	<p>NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c</p> <p>Aligns with WBC Policy HC3 Open space Sports Recreation and Play facilities</p> <p>Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A2 S2 and S7 Local Park and Green Space</p> <p>Research: Impact on mental health (White 2013)</p>
Recommendation for designation	<p>Location meets Criteria 1 – 7 inclusive</p> <p>There is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.</p>

#### Site Ref 8 – Memorial Park and Leas Field looking West



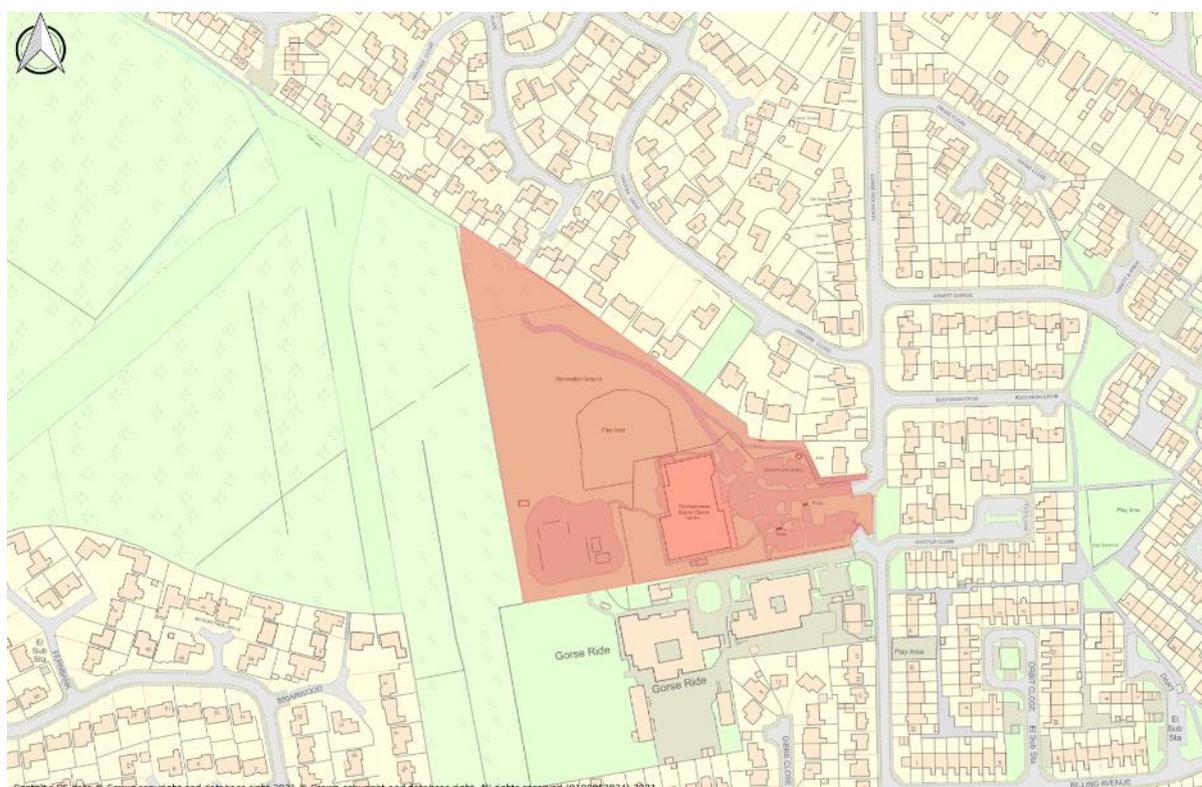
## Site 9 – Sand Martins Golf Club



<b>Site ref</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Name</b>	Sand Martins Golf Club
<b>Address</b>	Finchampstead Road, Finchampstead
<b>Size</b>	Approx. 17.5 ha
	A golf club with two 9-hole courses in a parkland setting with trees and lakes. Open to visitors and with membership categories available for all ages. A clubhouse and car park are present on site.
<b>Proximity to community</b>	The site is in close proximity to the community in the north of Finchampstead Parish. It is easily accessible by road, and public rights of way run through and around the site.
<b>Local in character</b>	Clearly defined, bounded by the Finchampstead Road to the east, and housing to the west and northeast.
<b>Local significance</b>	Recreational value, highly valued by the community as an attractive green space. It forms part of a Green Corridor from the east with the Sandhurst Road Green Gaps, Washington Fields Green gap, Sand Martins Green Gap and to the west The Moors woodlands and Waverley open space. It sits within a continuum of Green Gaps separating Wokingham and Finchampstead. There is a network of footpaths that border the location and cut through leading to Evendons Parish in Wokingham and out to Barkham Parish.
<b>Supporting evidence</b>	NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b Aligns with WBC Policy HC3 Open space Sports Recreation and Play facilities Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A2 S2 and S7 Local Park and Green Space

Recommendation for designation	Location meets Criteria 1 – 8 inclusive It is accepted that this location size is unusual for consideration as a Local Green Space. However, there is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.

### Site 10 – FBC/Gorse Ride playing fields



Site ref	<b>10</b>
Name	FBC / Gorse Ride Playing Fields
Address	Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead
Size	2.2 ha
Description	<p>Owned by Wokingham Borough Council, the Playing Fields lie between the FBC Centre and the California Country Park. The site includes a multi-use games area (MUGA) and play area together with a grassed area for informal recreation and community events such as the annual Community / Emergency Services Fun Day.</p> <p>The FBC Centre is adjacent to the site and is owned and managed by the Finchampstead Baptist Church. It houses the Finchampstead Library, Finchampstead Parish Council Offices, a café and various rooms and facilities used for community and sport activities and has its own car park. Adjacent is Gorse Ride Infant and Junior schools which act as a feeder to the Playing Fields and FBC centre activities and use of resources</p>
Proximity to community	The playing fields are in close proximity to the local community with several access points from areas of housing in Carolina Drive, Gorse Road

	North and Gorse Road South and via the Greenway from the California Country Park to the west.
Local in character	Clearly defined space bounded by the FBC Centre, the California Country Park and housing.
Local significance	Used extensively by the community as a green space and community hub and identified in the WBC PPG17 open space assessment report 2012 as of good quality and highly valued FNDP Survey 2019: 42% of respondents visit weekly/monthly to the playing fields / FBC Centre combined areas, this is equivalent to over 3,000 visits each week. Finchampstead Parish Office is located on site and so is the Wokingham Branch Library. It is used for a very wide range of learning opportunities including First Aid classes. Outdoor recreational value is strong with the MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area) used for some youth activities and for cycling training as well as being available for public use. Indoor FBC Activities include youth sports: Badminton, Taekwondo, Yoga, Gym Routines, Dance plus a Nursery School FBC offer Church Services on Sundays The California Greenway runs from the Playing Fields to the California Country Park.
Supporting evidence	Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A2 S2 and S7 Local Park and Green Space NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c. Aligns with WBC Policy HC3 Open space Sports Recreation and Play facilities Research: Impact on mental health (White 2013)
Recommendation for designation	Location meets Criteria 1 – 8 inclusive There is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.

## Site 11 – Finchampstead Allotments



Site ref	<b>11</b>
Name	Finchampstead Allotments
Address	Longwater Road, Finchampstead.
Size	Approx. 3ha.
Description	<p>The only allotment site in the Parish, the site is on land owned by Cemex UK Ltd and Wokingham Borough Council but is managed by Finchampstead Parish Council under a lease running to 2049.</p> <p>The site has parking and other facilities on site, is accessed from Longwater Road or from public rights of way running from The Village and Longwater Lane to the site.</p>
Proximity to community	The site is in close proximity to the community in the south of Finchampstead Parish just 3 minutes walk from the housing areas of Longwater Lane, the Village and Longwater Road via footpaths and the road network.
Local in character	The site is clearly defined, bounded by woodland and grassland under the ownership of Cemex UK Ltd, and by Burnmoor Meadow to the north.
Local significance	<p>Recreational value, highly valued by the community with a waiting list to receive permit for an allotment.</p> <p>The site was opened in 2012 and now has around 80 plots and 100 tenants with a waiting list of around 15. There is an active Allotments Association.</p> <p>Adjacent to the new Longwater Road Nature Reserves and Blackwater Valley and Burnmoor Meadow. The site is very popular with plans for an</p>

	extension in discussion once the gravel extraction works and associated landscaping are completed by the owners of the land, Cemex.
Supporting evidence	NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A2 S7 Local Green Space  WBC IMD 2019/01 SPA Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2018: sits within the 5 km mitigation zone Research: Impact on mental health (White 2013): Horticulture is a valued activity in support of well-being
Recommendation for designation	Location meets Criteria 1 – 7 inclusive There is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.

### Site 12 – Woodmore Play Area



<b>Site ref</b>	<b>12</b>
Name	Woodmoor play area
Address	Woodmoor, Finchampstead.
Size	< 1ha
Description	Owned by Wokingham Borough Council and set in the centre of Woodmoor. It is surrounded by housing and the grassed area has a children's play area.

Proximity to community	The play area is surrounded by the Woodmoor community and accessible to those living in and around The Village.
Local in character	A clearly defined safe space surrounded by housing.
Local significance	Recreational value and safe green space that is easily accessible and highly valued by the residents and local community.
Supporting evidence	NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c Aligns with WBC Policy HC3 Open space Sports Recreation and Play facilities Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A2 S2 and S7 Local Park and Green Space  WBC IMD 2019/01 SPA Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2018: sits within the 5 km mitigation zone Research: Impact on mental health (White 2013)
Recommendation for designation	Location meets Criteria 1 – 8 inclusive There is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.

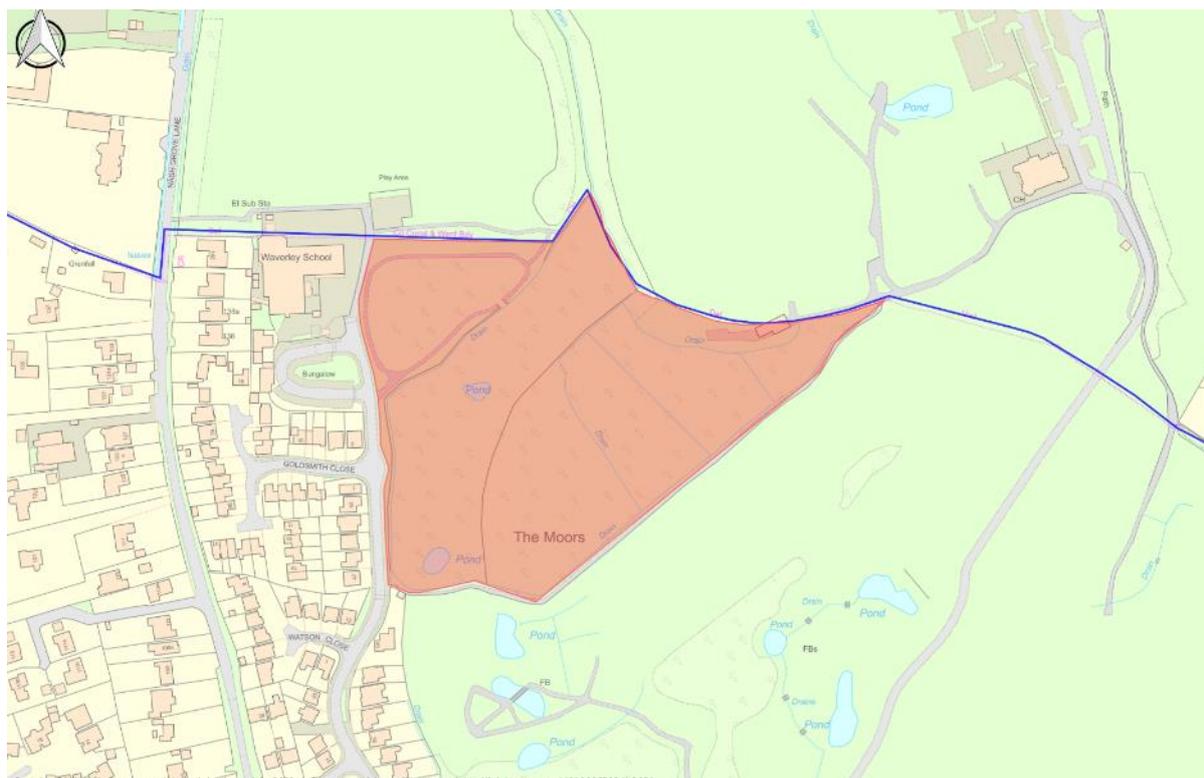
### Site 13 – Gorse Ride Woods Play area



Site ref	<b>13</b>
Name	Gorse Ride Woods play area
Address	Whittle Close, Finchampstead
Size	< 1ha

Description	<p>Owned by Wokingham Borough Council and set within the Gorse Ride estate this grassed space with mature pine trees includes a children’s play area and area for informal recreation.</p> <p>The area is to be retained and upgraded for play and recreational use as part of the regeneration of the Gorse Ride estate. The site ref 13 map depicts the existing green space and if the space is designated a Local Green Space the extent may be modified when future plans for the green space are confirmed.</p>
Proximity to community	<p>In close proximity to those living in the 160 properties in the Gorse Ride community, with the number of properties to increase to around 250 with the planned regeneration.</p>
Local in character	<p>A clearly defined area bounded by the redevelopment placing the green space at the centre of the new housing and accessed through estate footways. Note: a review will be carried out on the completion of the redevelopment of the area due in the next few years</p>
Local significance	<p>Recreational value through being a green space located within the heart of a housing development. Provides a space for relaxation and enjoyment. The redevelopment of the whole area will generate a need to redefine the final location and size of the Local Green Space. However, the rationale remains as set out for the current Local Green Space.</p>
Supporting evidence	<p>NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c  Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A2 S2 and S7 Local Park and Green Space</p> <p>Aligns with WBC Policy HC3 Open space Sports Recreation and Play facilities  Research: Impact on mental health (White 2013)</p>
Recommendation for designation	<p>Location meets Criteria 1 – 7 inclusive  There is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.</p>

## Site 14 – The Moors



<b>Site ref</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Name</b>	The Moors
<b>Address</b>	Waverley Way, Finchampstead
<b>Size</b>	5.4 ha
<b>Description</b>	An area of wet Birch and Holly woodland and a small meadow on the edge of a golf course. It lies between the Sand Martins Golf Club (ref site 9) and Waverley Way open space.
<b>Proximity to community</b>	In close proximity for those living in the many properties in the Nash Grove Lane/Waverley Way communities.
<b>Local in character</b>	A clearly defined area bounded by housing, public open space, and a golf club. A recommended and promoted green space and country park for recreation by WBC.
<b>Local significance</b>	The Moors has ecological value from its flora and fauna and local wildlife. Recreational value is from the local community using the area for walking, and dog walking through the woodland and the network of informal footpaths joining up with Sand Martins Golf Course footpaths and Waverley Way onto Evendons in Wokingham.
<b>Supporting evidence</b>	TVERC designated Local Wildlife Site WBC LCA 2019 M1.12 Area of Settled Sands of wet woodland, small ponds and pastures which provide important ecological habitats as well as opportunities for recreation. Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A1 S6 Local Wildlife Site, A2 S1 BOA

	<p>NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c          Aligns with WBC policy NE1 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation          Aligns with WBC Policy NE2: Thames Basin Heaths SPA          Research: Impact on mental health (White 2013)          No information on visitor numbers</p>
Recommendation for designation	<p>Location meets Criteria 1 – 7 inclusive          There is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.</p>

**6.1 Additional locations that have been considered for inclusion, but while meeting a number of the criteria they are considered not appropriate for inclusion or not located in the Parish.**

6.2 There are 3 locations, Fleet Copse, Longwater Nature Reserves (referred to as 7b and 7c in the table above and Waverley Way Open Space, in this category. Whilst they do not meet all the necessary LGS criteria, they are of importance and integral to the greenness of the whole area. Consideration for additional planning protection should be applied to protect their inherent beauty, remoteness, ecology, community value, importance and future contribution to the well-being of the Parish:

**6.2 Fleet Copse:**

This is an area of privately owned woodland of approx. 20ha sitting on the lower slopes of the Blackwater Valley between Fleet Hill and the planned Fleet Hill Farm Nature Reserve (Site ref 7c).

6.3 The Ecological value is as a designated wildlife site, natural woodland, area of tranquillity, richness in wildlife and acts as a powerful barrier between the Blackwater valley and the open farmlands of west Finchampstead. It is a natural tree boundary providing cover for flora, fauna and wildlife. There is extensive physical evidence of the presence of rabbits, foxes, badgers and deer occupying the site (Fig 7)

6.4 The site is close to the communities in The Village and west Finchampstead and Fleet Hill and easily viewed using the public rights of way (FP29 and FP33) which run alongside the site.

**6.5 Manor Farm mineral extraction site, Longwater Road and Fleet Hill Farm Nature reserve:**

An area of approximately 70ha, planned to be a new nature reserve following mineral extraction from land at Fleet Hill (site reference 7c) and Manor Farm (site reference 7b), bordered by the Blackwater Valley to the south, Moor Green Lakes to the east and Fleet Copse to the west. The Nature Reserves are still pending final completion and may be separated into parcels at a later date. The Reserve at Fleet Hill Farm west of Longwater Road has been restored although some remedial work is outstanding, and the site is now officially open to the public although agreement to the designation of footpaths and bridleways through the site has not yet concluded. Work continues east of Longwater Road and are scheduled to be completed by 2025.

6.6 The reserves will include wet woodland, flood meadow grassland – some for succession to wet woodland, lowland grassland, reedbed and open water with gravel islands. The sites will attract a wide range of wildlife but are being restored to be particularly attractive to wildfowl including protected species such as the Bittern. The location has good ecological and recreational value with tranquillity.

6.7 The new reserves will be easily accessible to the community using the public rights of way network which will link to the new paths through the reserves. The popular Blackwater Valley path

runs along the south of the reserves, and the well-used Moor Green Nature Reserve to the east has a car park. Local British Horse Society Nov 2019 Report supports the introduction of Bridle ways into the area.

#### **6.8 Waverley Way Open Space:**

It is located in the adjoining Wokingham Parish of Evendons on the northern perimeter of Finchampstead. Due to its positioning and access, it is used mainly by residents from the Waverley Way part of North Finchampstead. The location is valued by this community meets the assessment criteria and should be designated by WBC as a Local Green Space.

## Section C

### Local Green Spaces: Supplementary Evidence Sources

1. TVERC 2019 observations (Fig 7) indicates a very diverse array of birds (120 species), insects (11 species), small mammals including Bats (16 species) and flora across the Parish. Some specific surveys pinpoint some species to a specific site however the predominant view is that as the locations are relatively close, the observations are reasonably common to all sites.
2. Finchampstead: Veteran Tree Association 2019 identified 30 species of tree with 469 Veteran Trees (113 Wellingtonias and 247 Oak), The WBC research figure of tree cover at 39% includes canopy, under-canopy trees mainly of Sweet Chestnut, Aspen, Scots Pine, Hazel, Holly and Blackthorn
3. WBC Habitat Action Plan has a priority to increase the populations of: Beech, Yew, wet Woodland and Wood pasture. Increase deciduous woodland.
4. Agricultural land is 45.5% comprising of small fields, paddocks, and enclosures
5. River Blackwater retains significant ecological interest, has a rare species of Loddon Pondweed and Club-Tailed Dragonfly
6. CPRE Tranquillity and Night Light Mapping:
  - a. Finchampstead sits between mid to least tranquil
  - b. Night Light N Finchampstead sits at 4-16 nanowatts/cm<sup>2</sup>sr and S Finchampstead sits at 0.5 -2.0. Bracknell is >16 and Blackwater valley is <0.25
7. **Perceptual Character:** The landscape demonstrates a strong sense of enclosure, rights of way and remoteness with views afforded by often continuous swathes of large woodland except for vistas along historic rides. It remains a landscape highly valued for recreation and tranquillity (Ref: WBC LCA M2). The key characteristics are inter-connected upland woodlands, undulating ridgelines, lowland heaths, pastures, and wet woodlands by the Blackwater valley. Soils are poorly drained with acidic grassland, heaths and a spread of lakes and pools (Ref M1.4 LCA 2019)
8. *"M1 Zone Ridges: The undeveloped character and sense of remoteness removed from the roads due to the lack of built development. The area provides an escape and chance to experience dark skies in close proximity to the urban population".*

### **Valued Landscapes Topic Papers Extracts (note: the paragraph numbers below refer to the original topic paper and note the precis used in the narrative in section A above)**

9. **Para 4.7:** decision Stroud v SoCLG 'Valued landscapes would have to demonstrate physical attributes which would take this site beyond mere countryside': Note with WBC there is a 50-metre buffer zone as an indicator between countryside and the Valued Landscape

10. **para 4.8 p7/8:** 'A Valued Landscape does not have to be designated but it must demonstrate attributes or features that take it above the ordinary. It can be viewed as an integral part of its environment as well as independently': (paraphrased)
11. NPPF para 170 (b) enhancing and preserving the natural environment
12. **P15 7.2** Valued Landscape Impact Assessment with attributes and references: Attribution Table with Refences to Attribute, Source and Score
13. **Para 5.23** It is worth noting that those areas of countryside located adjacent to or outside of the eleven Valued Landscape Areas are still considered to contribute and enhance the natural and local environment as per Paragraph 170(b) of the NPPF (Feb 2019):
14. *'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land and of trees and woodland*
  
15. **para 7.2** The Valued Landscapes identified through this project will be formally designated in the Local Plan Update (Policy NE6). In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, this Policy seeks to protect, contribute to, and enhance the features that contribute to the attributes and quality of valued landscapes and specifically the criteria set out in the Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) Box 5.116:
  - a. Landscape quality (condition)
  - b. Scenic quality
  - c. Rarity
  - d. Representativeness
  - e. Conservation interests
  - f. Recreation value
  - g. Perceptual aspects
  - h. Associations
  
16. **para 7.4** It is noted that no assessment of the value of a landscape can be full and final, and that this process is to an extent an iterative one.