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Local Decisions.
Local Future.**



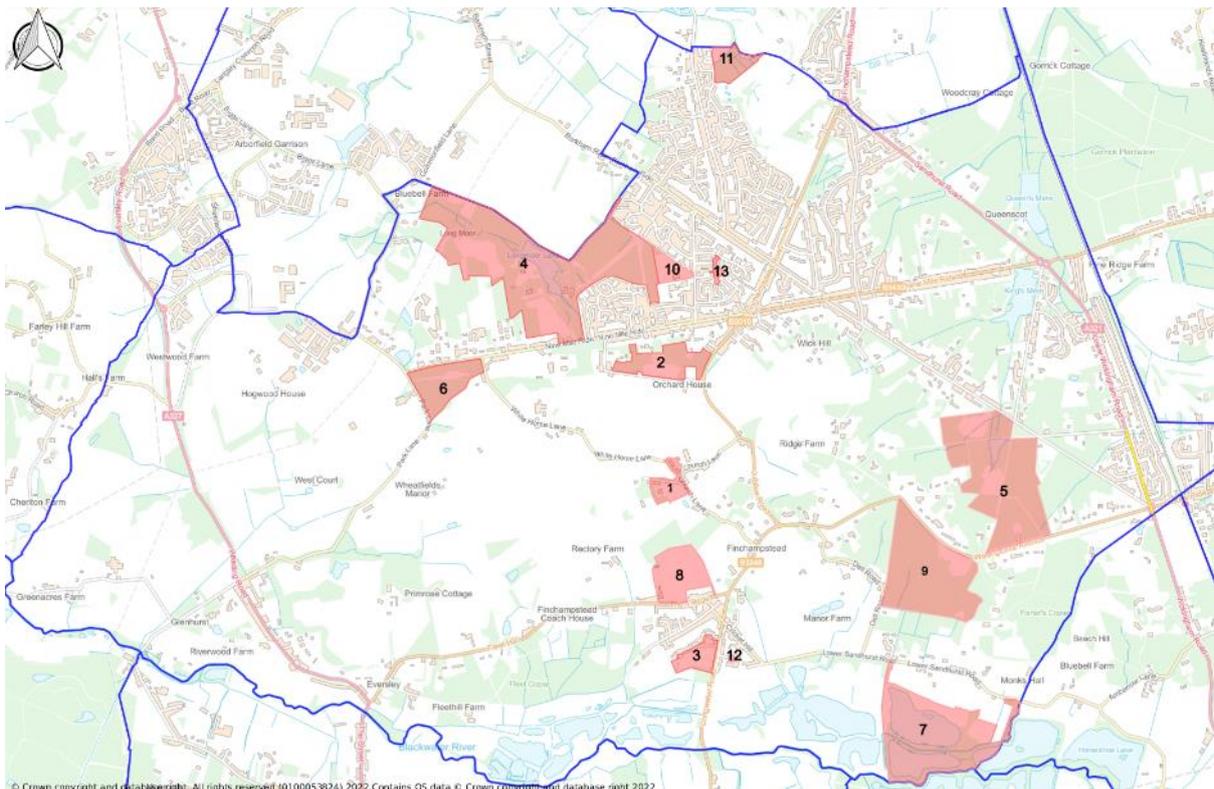
**Finchampstead
Neighbourhood
Development
Plan
2018-2036**

Topic Paper – Local Green Spaces – Edition 3

There have been two previously published topic papers. This 3rd edition has been revised following review of FNDP policy and responses to the public consultations carried out between January – March 2021, October - November and the release of the WBC LPU in November 2021. This 3rd edition of the topic paper forms part of the Finchampstead Future NDP submission and the Parish Council response to the LPU. Previous published versions should be discarded.

Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan

Local Green Spaces -Topic Paper Edition 3



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Introduction

In 2019 Finchampstead Parish Council (FPC) submitted a list of 20 sites (edition 1) in the Parish to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) for prospective designation as local green spaces. That same list was endorsed by the Finchampstead Futures Group (FF) as part of the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP). Following consultation with the residents of the Parish as part of the FNDP process and subsequent discussion with WBC officers the original list of 20 sites was refined down to 14 (edition 2). Publication by WBC of the local plan update (LPU) in November 2021 revealed that only 8 of the sites recommended for designation are included in their consultation draft. Both FPC and FF in their consultation submissions have reinforced the evidence base and arguments to have the remaining sites included with the exception of the allotments off Longwater Road and Sand Martins Golf club which we wish to have redesignated as a green gap, about which there is a separate topic paper on the neighbourhood plan section of the FPC website. This 3rd edition of the Local Green Spaces topic paper combines all the current relevant information to support inclusion of the sites in the WBC local plan. If WBC for whatever reason do not include the sites recommended, they will still be recommended to be approved as designated local Green Spaces as part of our formal submission for approval of the Finchampstead NDP.

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 FNDP. The original topic paper as indicated above in the introduction has been revised following the review of comments made on earlier drafts by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), from the Parish community following the Regulation 14 statutory consultation periods and in the light of the publication of the WBC local plan update in November 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 in the local plan.



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

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))**

Landscape Quality (condition)	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.
Scenic Quality	The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly visual senses).
Rarity	The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character type.

Representativeness	Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.
Conservation Interests	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.
Recreational value	Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
Perceptual Aspects	A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
Associations	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 TVERC wildlife sites map (fig 7): 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 6 and 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 – Aerial photograph from the Ridges looking South-West over the Blackwater Valley

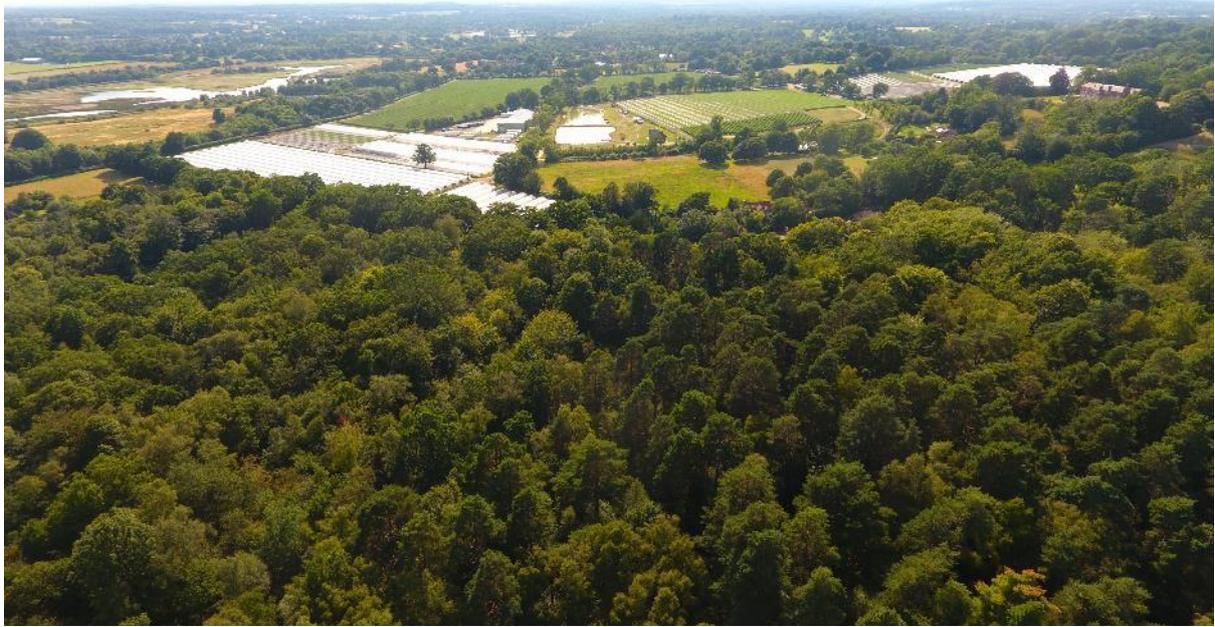
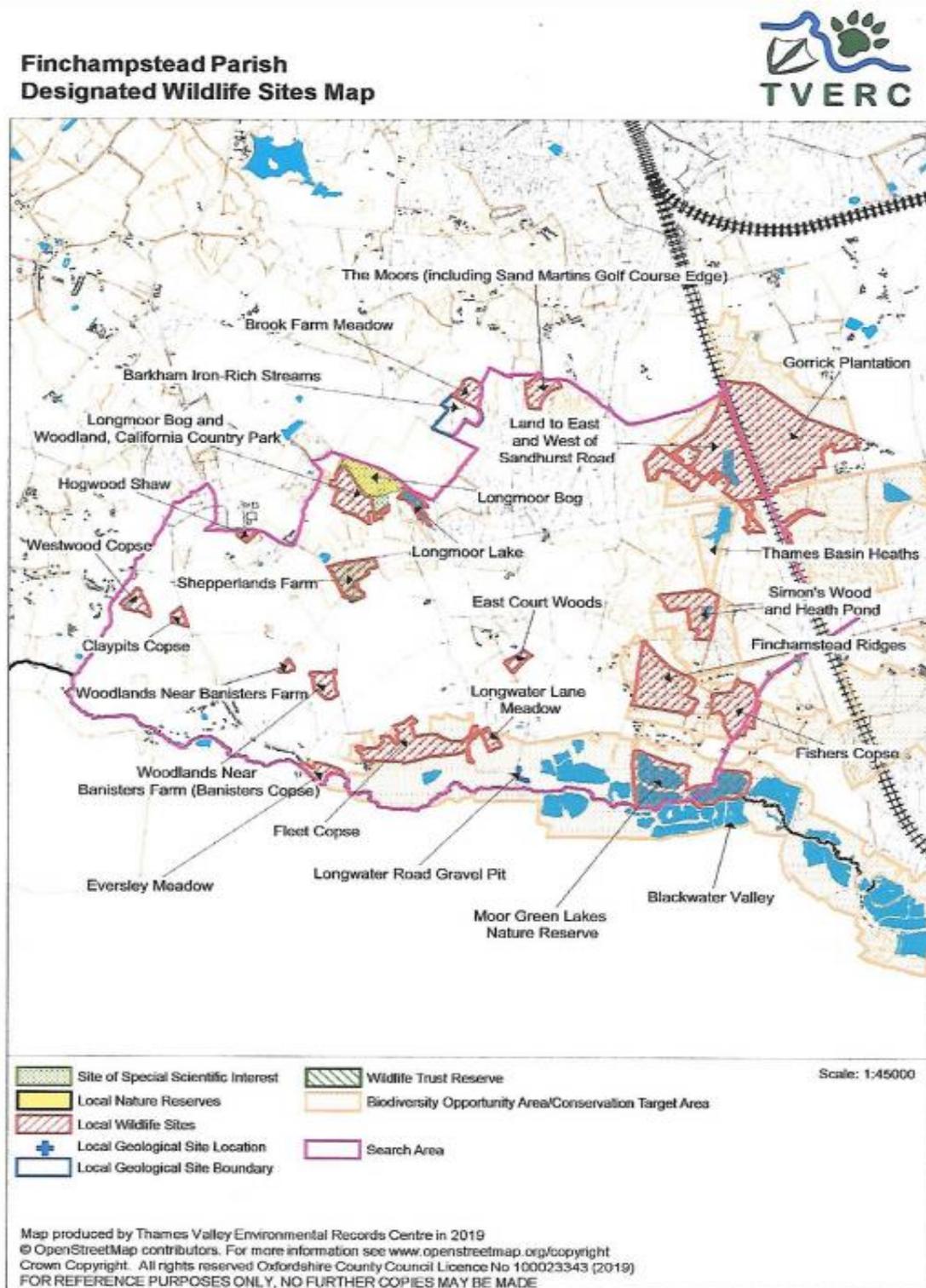


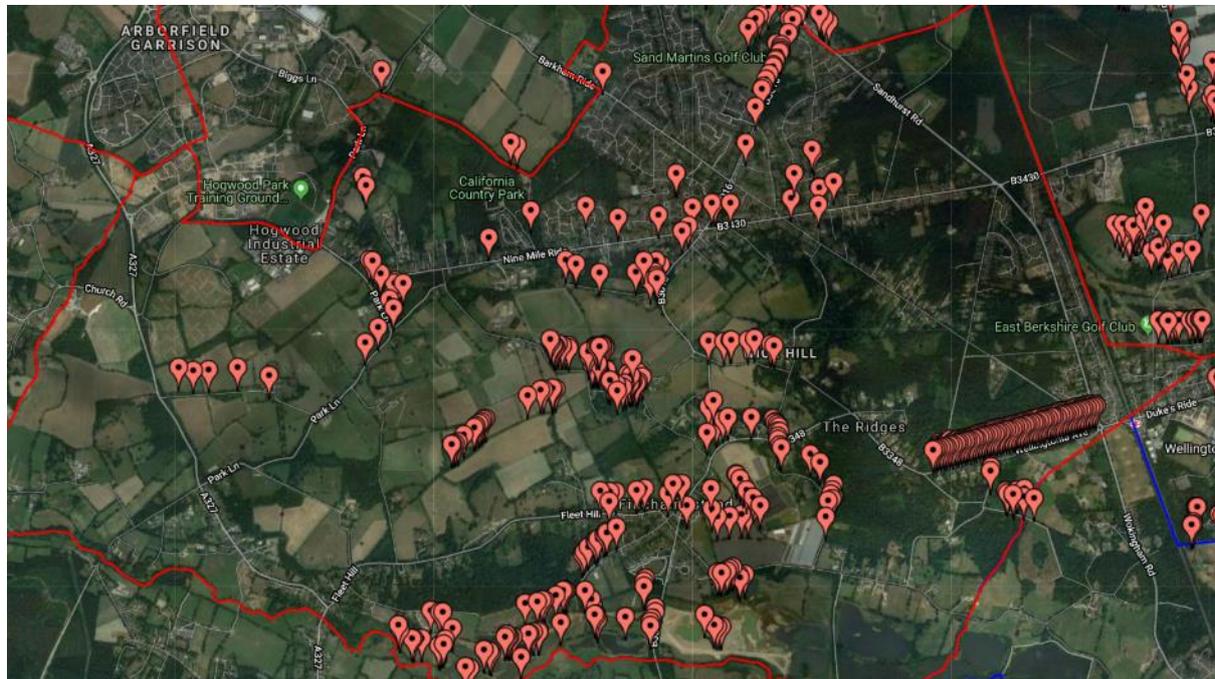
Fig 7 – Designated Wildlife sites map



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 earthen embankment (agger) still visible in some places in the Parish.

Fig 9 The Queens Oak



Fig 10 – St James' Church



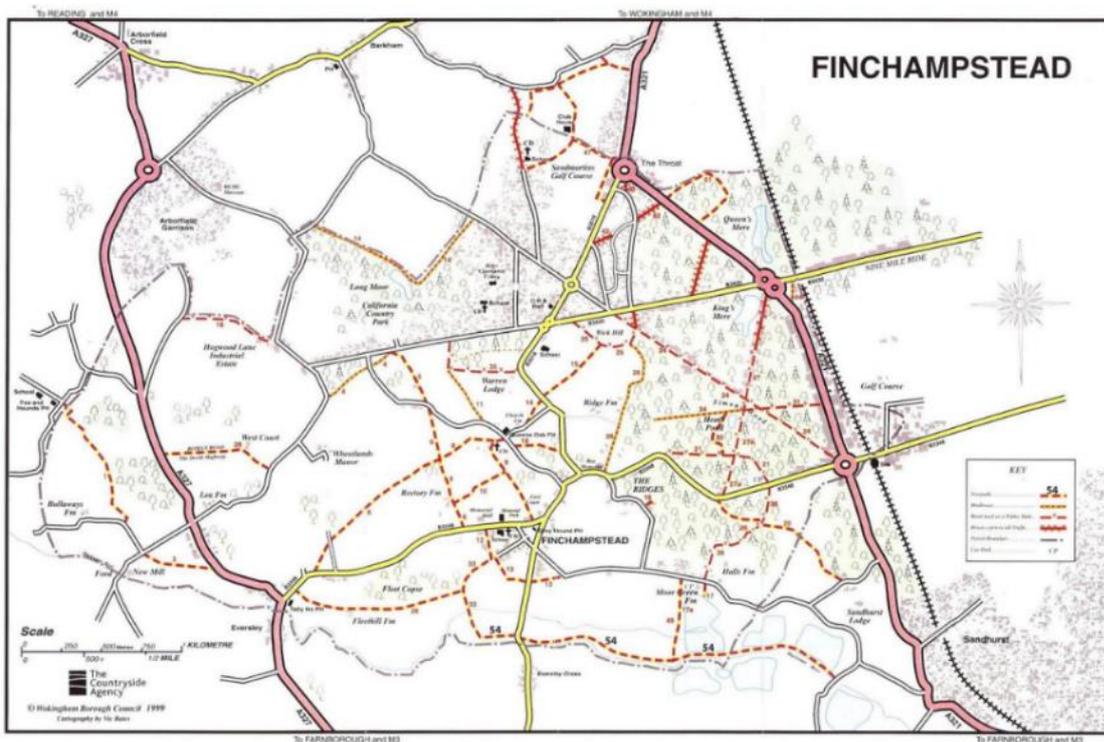
4.11 An example of how modern development and land uses overlay ancient ones can be seen in the archaeological record. The Grade I listed 12th Century Church of St James (Fig 10) at Finchampstead, for example, sits in an elevated position at the centre of the medieval village, surrounded by a Roman or 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 4.14 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 in the Finchampstead NDP and by WBC

6.00 The recommendations

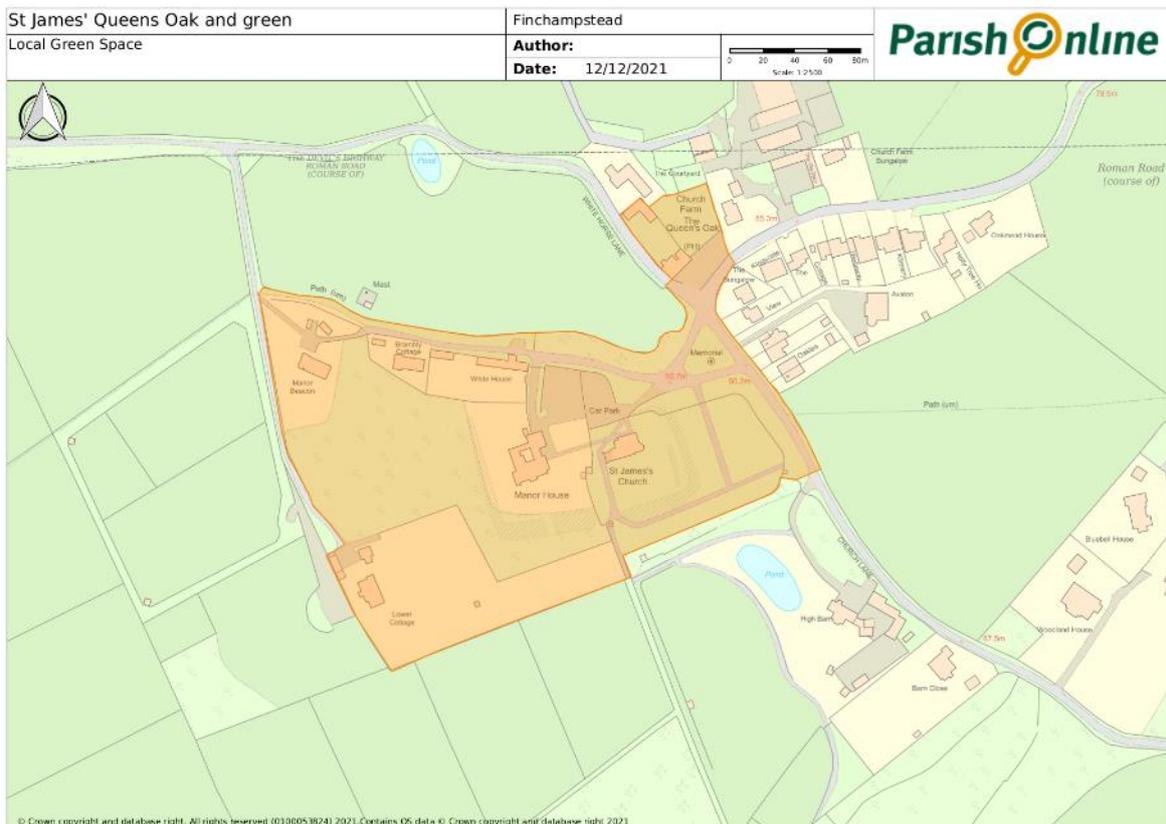
This Section sets out the 13 locations (Table 3) that are proposed as Local Green Spaces within the above Guideline criteria:

Each site numbered from 1 -13 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. (NOTE: 8 locations marked (X) are included in the WBC Local Plan Update for designation. Nov 2021)

Site Ref No	Site Name	Site Ref No	Site Name
1.	St James' Church including part of the Conservation Area	8.	Finchampstead Memorial Park and Leas Field (X)
2.	Warren Wood Country Park (X)	9.	The Ridges
3.	Burnmoor Meadow (X)	10.	Finchampstead Baptist Church and Gorse Ride Playing Fields (X)
4.	California Country Park and Longmoor Bog (X)	11.	The Moors (X)
5.	Simon's Wood	12.	Woodmoor Play area (X)
6.	Shepperlands Farm Nature Reserve (X)	13.	Gorse Ride Woods Play area
7.	A) Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve B) Manor Farm Mineral Extraction site C) Fleet Hill Farm Nature Reserve Note: Only 7A is being recommended as a local green space 7B and 7C are included for reference		<i>Note: While every care has been taken to depict the areas accurately the site reference maps are for illustrative purposes in this topic paper only and should not be relied upon in legally determining boundaries or used for any other purpose.</i>

Site Ref 1 - St James' Church including part of the Conservation Area (WBC has rejected the original site proposals in the LPU – this is a revised plan)



Site ref	1
Name	St James' Church and part Conservation Area
Address	Church Lane, Finchampstead
Size	< 2ha
Description	<p>This area is part of the designated Conservation Area which includes the historic Grade 1 listed St James Church and churchyard (1150 AD) and a small green with commemorative trees and plaques marking community events held celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887 and the Golden and Diamond Jubilees of Queen Elizabeth II in 2002 and 2012. A further tribute marking the commemoration of Her Majesties Platinum Jubilee is being considered for 2022.</p> <p>A further tree in this area marks the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 1977, and a tree planted to mark the centenary of the end of World War I in 2018. A Parish Council noticeboard is situated adjacent to the Green and the area is the junction for 5 Footpaths and rights of way.</p> <p>The Queens Oak Public House, listed as an Asset of Community Value, lies in the area along with 2 other listed buildings.</p>

Proximity to community	The Church, Church Centre and Queens Oak Public House are focal points for the Finchampstead community.
Local in character	A clearly defined and compact part designated Conservation area that has the three Community focal points of Church, Community Centre, and Pub.
Local significance	Historical value. 3 Listed Buildings: St James Church, Old Wall by Church and Queens Oak Public House The “Devil’s Highway” runs through the area which is the Roman Road from London to Silchester. 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. There are Plaques commemorating the events held to celebrate the anniversaries of Queens Victoria and Elizabeth II. The Queens Oak is a focal point for walkers and cyclists using the local and wider networks of paths and roads.
Supporting evidence	Designated part Conservation Area Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A2 S1, S5 Conservation Area and Listed Buildings WBC Biodiversity Report 2012-2024: All churchyards are managed with biodiversity as the aim. WBC IMD 2019/01 SPA Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2018: Research Paper on pollinating populations (Rouquette and Baldock 2015)
Recommendation for designation	The Location meets Criteria 1 – 8 inclusive While it has part of a conservation area within its boundary there is a need for an additional protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.

Additional response to WBC following initial rejection for designation in the Nov 2021 LPU consultation paper.

St James Church Area

The LPU rejects the designation of this location on the basis that: *“the nominated area comprises St James’ Church, the extent of the Finchampstead Church Conservation Area and other residential and commercial uses. Whilst the nominated area does contain some features and buildings which hold historical value, the Development Plan provides a suitable framework for managing development proposals in the Conservation Area and to assess the impact of development on heritage assets and their setting”*.

The purpose of a Conservation Area is to protect and enhance areas of special architectural or historic interest and place additional development control on new works, as well as seeking to minimise the loss of the existing built and natural environment.

If a development site is in a conservation area, you will generally need 'planning permission for relevant demolition in a conservation area' (also commonly known as 'conservation area consent'). Conservation areas are designated by local authorities and their planning departments are responsible for their protection. Normally alterations and improvements can go through due to permitted development rules.

Therefore, a Conservation area can allow development within certain regulations. As St James' Church LGS it is not within a WBC defined Settlement, it does sit within a WBC Countryside category and can be at risk in linking with the "Surgery Fields". The Conservation area includes the green with the Queen's Oak tree in it, memorial trees and historic Jubilee celebratory tree plantings and plaques, the cemetery surrounds, Queen's Oak Public House Garden, footpaths and Devils Highway.

The FNDP team have put forward an amended proposal for a smaller defined area focussing on the more strictly defined green space. Our recommendation is to reduce the area within the Conservation Area: St James Church, Cemetery, Queens Oak green, Queens Oak Public House and garden, part of the Devils Highway. The LGS boundary will exclude the residential areas. The original LGS area will reduce to <2.0 ha. (see revised boundary map above).

In our Regulation 14 consultation Historic England stated: *"We are pleased to support this policy and, in particular, designation of local green spaces with historic significance including the St James's Church and Conservation Area"*.

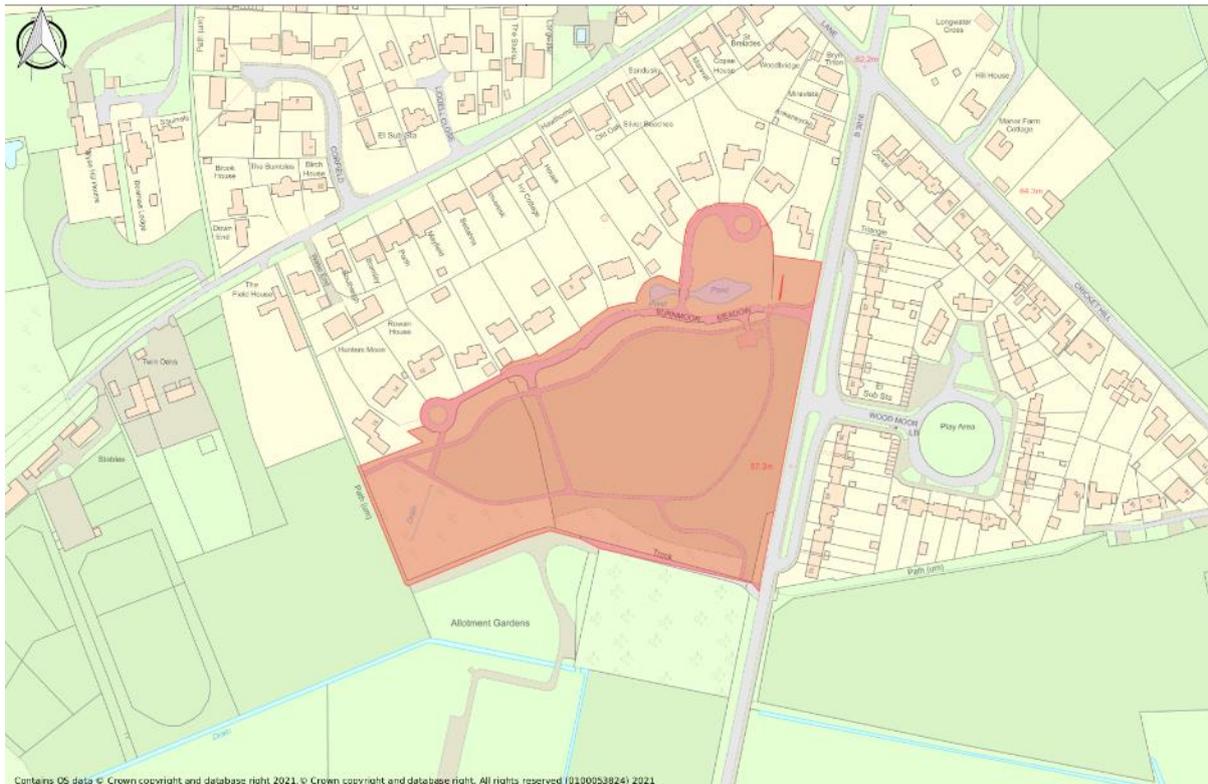
We strongly recommend WBC re-examine this site for designation as a LGS

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



	<p>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.</p> <p>The Round barrows in Warren Wood Country Park are evidence of a Bronze Age settlement.</p> <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>
<p>Supporting evidence</p>	<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>
<p>Recommendation for designation</p>	<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>

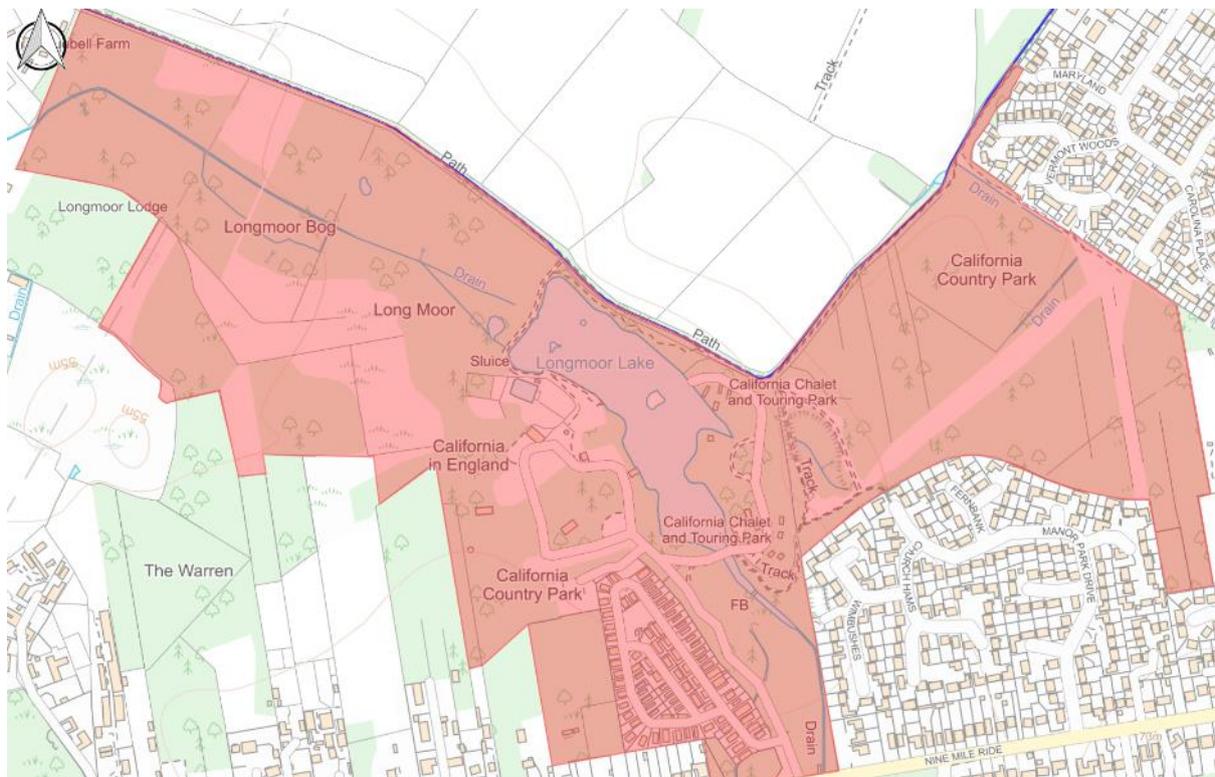
Site Ref 3 Burnmoor Meadow (WBC have included this site in the LPU for designation)



Site ref	3
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

	<p>An avenue of oak trees has been created since 2012 and includes trees planted to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee and the 90th birthday of Queen Elizabeth II.</p> <p>The site is used for informal recreation and dog walking. A small car park is present at the site.</p> <p>Valued as a tranquil open space by residents</p>
Supporting evidence	<p>NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c</p> <p>Research: Impact on mental health (White 2013)</p> <p>WBC IMD 2019/01 SPA Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2018: sits within the 5 km mitigation zone</p> <p>Sits adjacent to the Allotments and new nature reserve zones by the Blackwater Valley</p> <p>Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A1 S7 Local Green Space</p>
Recommendation for designation	Location meets Criteria 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8

Site 4 - California Country Park (WBC have included this site in the LPU for LGS designation)

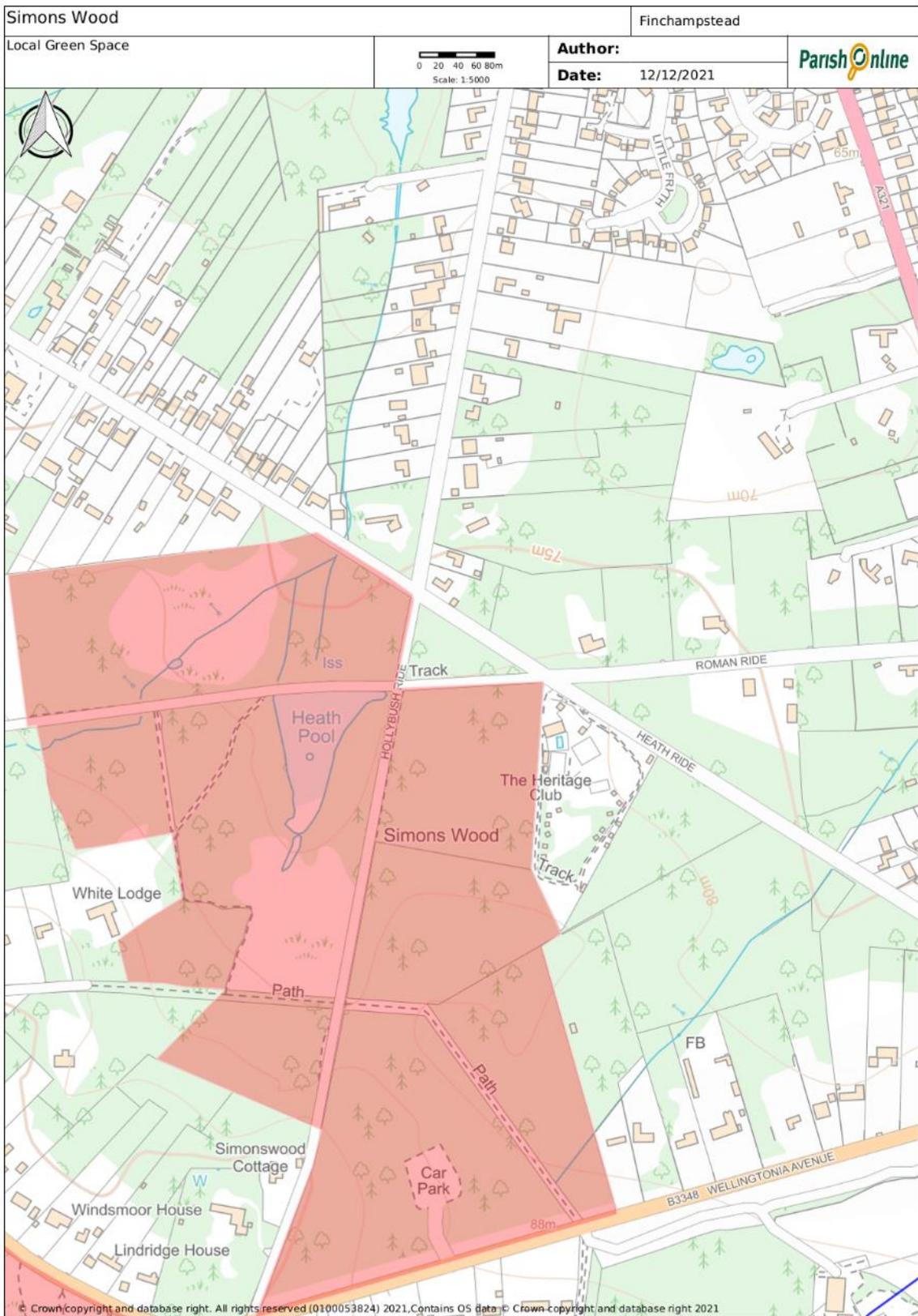


Site ref	4
Name	California Country Park and Longmoor Bog
Address	Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead
Size	Approx. 40ha

Description	<p>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).</p> <p>A small holiday park lies on the site.</p>
Proximity to community	<p>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.</p>
Local in character	<p>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</p>
Local significance	<p>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 Finchampstead Scout Group has its base in the park with a large Scout Hut and uses the Park for activities. Longmoor Bog is a designated SSSI The Greenway connects California with Arborfield and Bohunt School 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 2nd October 2021) 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 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). Longmoor Bog has Lichens and Mosses (HabDir-5) Sits within the Thames Basin Heaths Biodiversity Opportunity Area. 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 NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c 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>
<p>Recommendation for designation</p>	<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, (This is a revised submission. The previous submission included the Ridges which together with Simons Wood WBC has rejected)



Site ref	5
Name	Simon's Wood,
Address	Simon's Wood, Finchampstead
Size	Approx. 30ha
Description	This area of some 30 Ha is 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. Area is sedimentary rock with areas of ironstone.
Proximity to community	The site is easily accessible by the community there is a large car park at Simon's Wood. Many public rights of way run to and through the site as well as a network of informal paths. The site is used for informal recreation, primarily walking although horse riding is permitted in some areas. There are circular walks commencing from the car park accessed at Wellingtonia Avenue.
Local in character	Clearly defined and self-contained area 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. Sits within the Thames Basin Heaths Biodiversity Opportunity Area.
Local significance	Site is Ecologically valued as it comprises wet woodland, ponds and protected Heathlands, 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. Historical significance is through both Wellingtonia Avenue and the Devils Highway Roman Road which runs East - West through Simons Wood. Highly valued by the community for its beauty and tranquillity. 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 The site was donated by well-known local families to the National Trust. 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)
Supporting evidence	TVERC Report Aug 2019 lists the site as Local Wildlife Sites. TVERC Identification of Stag Beetles (HabDir-A2np), Amphibians (Toads NERC-S41), Reptiles (Adders), Dragonflies, Bats (HabDir-A4). 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>WBC Biodiversity Report 2012. 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. NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c NPPF: para 170a on biodiversity FNDP Survey 2019: Highly valued by residents WBC Survey 2007: Visitors to Simons Wood 50,000 pa 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 Intersection of 4 RoW connecting east and south Finchampstead with California Crossroads and west Finchampstead</p>
<p>Recommendation for designation</p>	<p>Location meets Criteria 1 – 6 inclusive It is accepted that combined with the Ridges the earlier location size was unusual for consideration as a Local Green Space. However, both Simons wood and The Ridges should be considered as separate entities and considered for separate designation hence the revision to the proposal. There is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.</p>

Simons Wood - additional information in support of LGS designation

The LPU rejects the designation of this location (single site included with the Ridges) on the basis *“the site is not considered to be local in character and does form an extensive track of land”*. Finchampstead Future believe this to be a misjudgement and would make an amended proposal.

The FNDP team would propose that Finchampstead Ridges (Site Ref 9) and Simons Wood (Site Ref 5) be separately considered as two sites which meet the criteria for designation as LGS. The two locations are not geographically integrated. We believe the evidence available demonstrates that the sites are local in character (see visitor data below).

Each site is < 30 ha and is within accepted tolerances by WBC for other sites. The independent sites have well defined boundaries with other countryside areas and semi-rural urbanisation. Therefore, they do not form extensive tracts of land.

Each nominated area of green space forms part of the wider National Trust portfolio which is one of the most significant and recognisable green spaces that serves the residents of Finchampstead, Barkham, Crowthorne, Eversley, Sandhurst and Yateley as well as attracting visitors across the Borough and further afield.

The site also holds significant ecological value due to their designation as Local Wildlife Sites, which comprises several priority habitats including wet woodlands, TVBSPA Heaths, Ephemeral Ponds and mixed woodland. The site is significantly local in character due to topography, locality and accessibility as illustrated by the figures in the visitor survey carried out by WBC in the table below:

WBC 2007 survey	Simons Wood
Visitors pa	50,000
Arrive by car	73%
Home address <2 km	57%
Walking the Dog	63%
Exercising	35%
Group Size People	1.83
Daily and Weekly Visits	70%
Time on site < 1 hour	70%

We do not agree with the judgment that *“the designation of the land (owned by the National Trust) as Local Green Space would not have any additional benefit.”* The principle of dual designation is not uncommon in planning policy. By including Simons Wood as an LGS it in line with the Local Significance recommendations from Swanwick Guidelines on Valued Landscapes Ref 35.1 Item 3 ‘It would provide additional protective protection to any existing protective policies’. We strongly recommend that WBC review their current position and designate Simon’s Wood as a LGS. The proposal to designate these sites as Local Green Space and Outstanding Views was included in our Regulation 14 Consultation in 2020 and this was supported by Historic England:

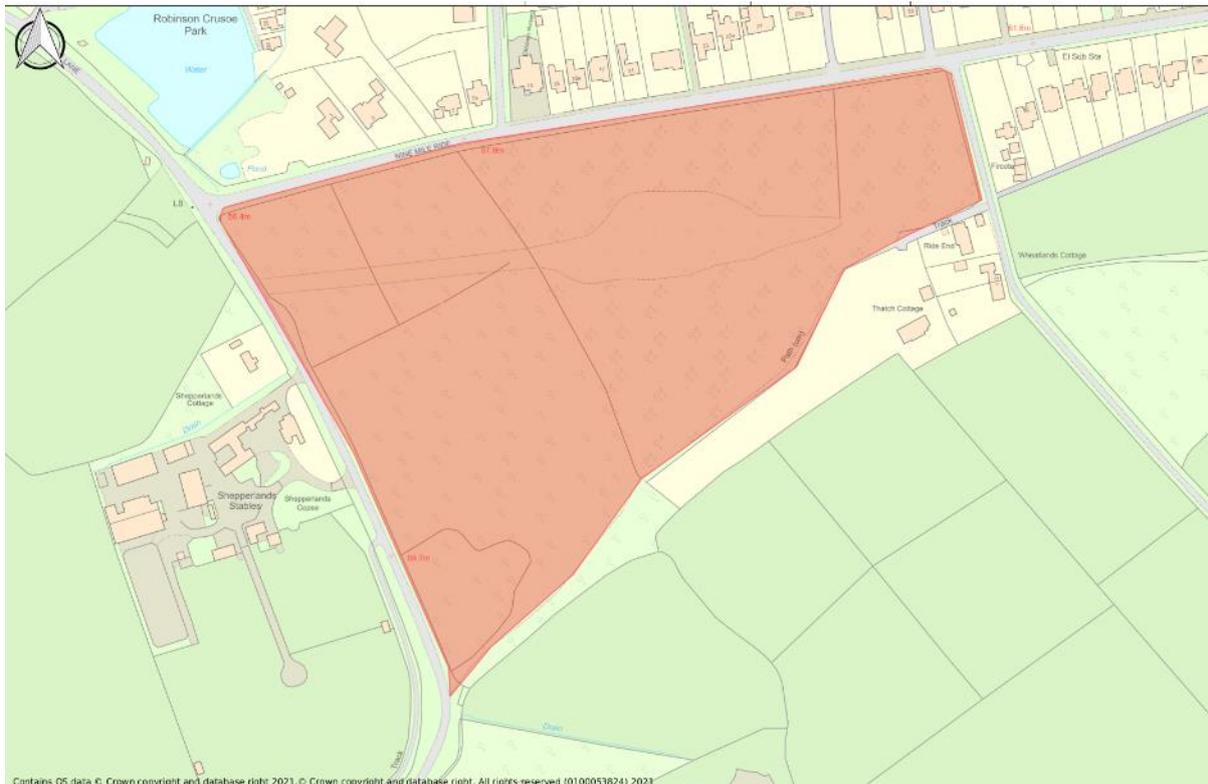
Ref: Response from Historic England: Policy IRS1 Protection and Enhancement of Local Green Spaces.

We are pleased to support this policy and, in particular, designation of local green spaces with historic significance including Simon’s Wood, Brooks Heath, and The Ridges (includes Wellingtonia Avenue and the Devil’s Highway Roman Road).

Site Ref 5 – View looking East down Wellingtonia Avenue – (Simon’s Wood is on the left)



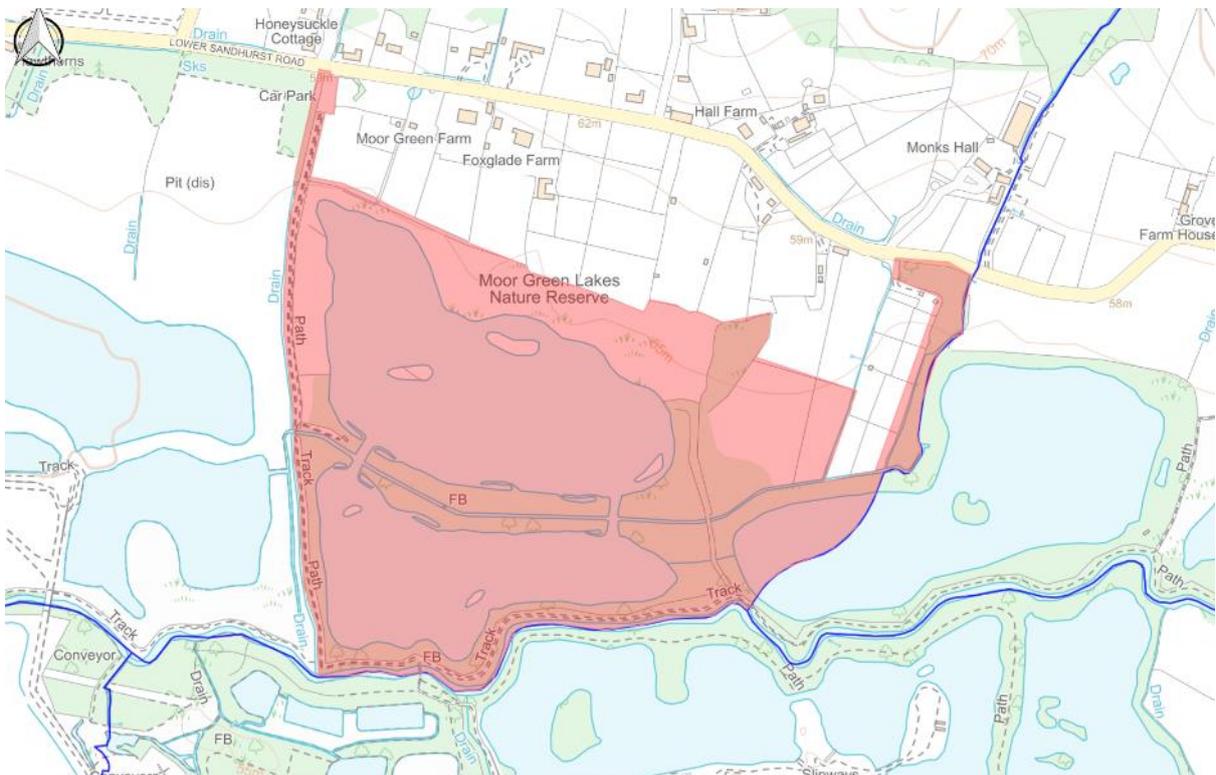
Site 6 – Shepperlands Farm Nature Reserve (WBC have included this site in the LPU for designation)



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

<p>Additional evidence</p>	<p>TVERC Report Aug 2019: Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A1 S5 Nature Reserve and woodlands</p> <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 (WBC have rejected this site for designation in the LPU)



Site ref	7a
Name	7a -Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve,
Address	Lower Sandhurst Road, Finchampstead
Size of the site	<35ha
Description	<p>The site is owned by Cemex UK Ltd. 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 but is separate to 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>
Proximity to community	The reserve (7a) is fully 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 site is within easy reach of Finchampstead residents being less than 5 minutes walk from areas of habitation.
Local in character	The sites is clearly defined, bounded by road, watercourse, and public rights of way. It is highly prized for wildlife diversity, bird watching hides and local recreational value to runners, horse riders, cyclists and walkers.
Local significance	<p>Popular for its ecology, beauty and tranquillity. The reserve includes open water with islands, woodland, and meadow areas around the Moor Green lakes with access all-round the lakes. It is peaceful and remote.</p> <p>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</p>
Supporting evidence	<p>TVERC designated Local Wildlife Sites</p> <p>TVERC Identification of Amphibians (Toads NERC-S41), Reptiles and Dragonflies, Bats (HabDir-A4). Extensive diversity of Birds and small mammals</p> <p>Sit within the Thames Basin Heaths Biodiversity Opportunity Area. Supported by WBC Biodiversity Report 2012.</p> <p>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</p> <p>NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c</p>

	<p>NPPF: para 170a on biodiversity</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>FNDP Survey 2019: Highly valued by residents</p> <p>WBC Survey 2007: visitors 70,000 pa using footpaths and car access</p> <p>Intersection of 3 RoW forming part of circular walks and connection with adjacent Parishes also see table below in additional</p>
Recommendation for designation	<p>The Moor Green Lakes Map 7a 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> <p>In addition, while the Manor farm mineral extraction site Map 7b and the Fleet Hill Farm nature reserve Map 7c 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>

Moor Green Lakes – Additional information to support designation as a WBC LGS

The LPU rejects the designation of this location on the basis that: *“the site is considered an extensive tract of land which offers only moderate recreational and amenity value. Whilst recognised as providing a degree of ecological value due to its Local Wildlife Site designation, there is insufficient justification for the site being demonstrably special to the local community, and therefore does not warrant further consideration as a Local Green Space”*.

The FNDP Team strongly contest the assertion that Moor Green Lakes is not demonstrably special to our local community. We conducted a survey in 2019 (over 1000 respondents) which included a question asking local residents their views about the importance to them of local green spaces, Moor Green Lakes being one of these. Moor Green lakes was assessed as 5 on a scale 1 to 6, similar in importance to California Country Park (5.4), The Ridges (5.2) and Simons Wood (5.2).

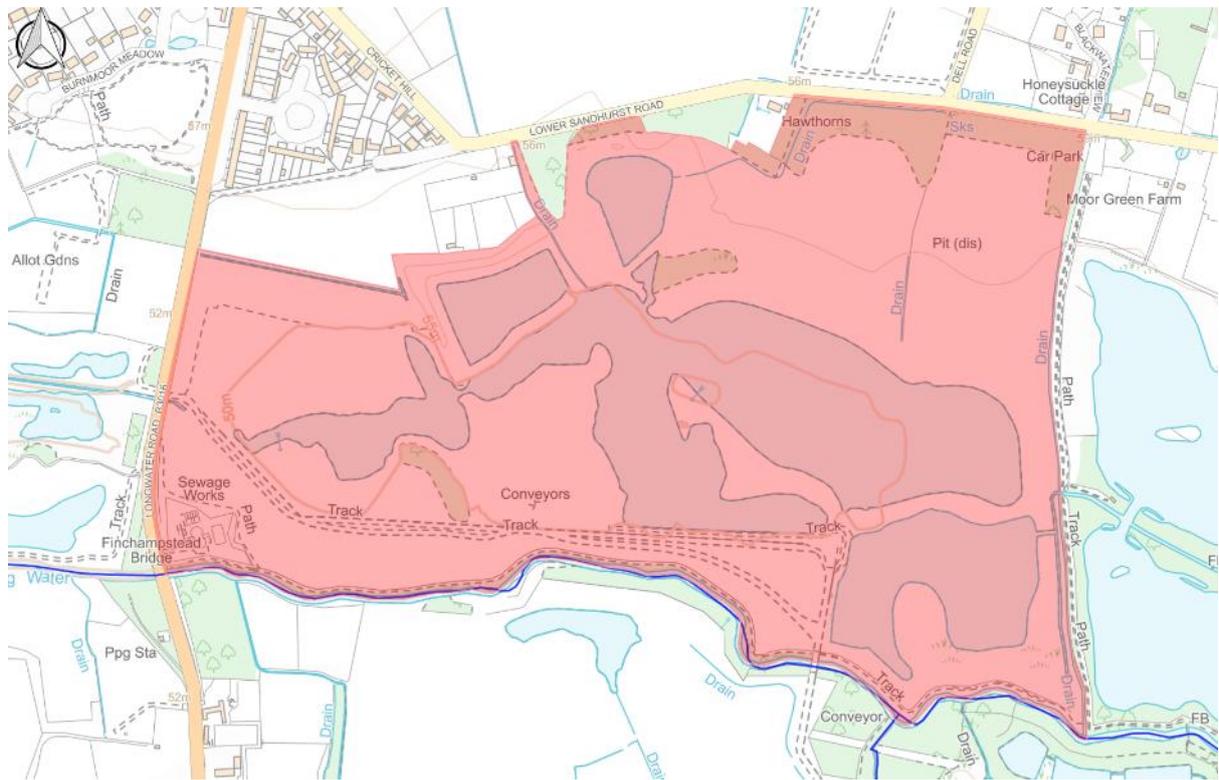
The FNDP would propose that Moor Green Lakes does meet the criteria for designation as a LGS and would ask for this to be reviewed. It is possible that the WBC review team have inadvertently included the Manor Farm site (map 7b) as part of the proposal. The site, as shown above, is not connected to the Manor Farm Site and is less than 35 hectares and is within the tolerances WBC has for LGS [Dinton Pastures 39 Ha, California Country Park 46.3 Ha]. The site is not yet geographically integrated with other potential sites, it has well defined boundaries with other countryside areas and semi-rural urbanisation. It does not form an extensive tract of land.

Moor Green Lakes forms a significant and recognisable green space that serves the residents of Finchampstead, Crowthorne, Eversley, Sandhurst and Yateley as well as

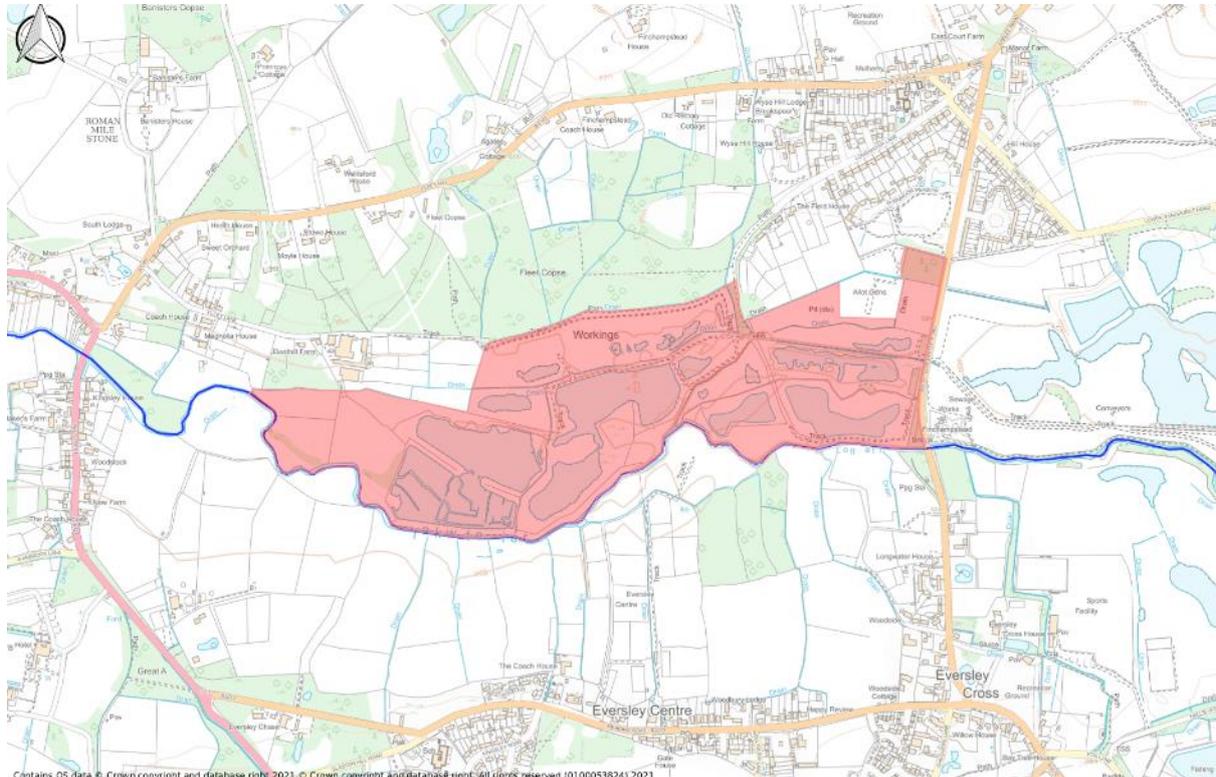
attracting visitors across the Borough and further afield. The site also holds significant ecological value due to its designation as a Local Wildlife Site, which comprises several priority habitats including flora and fauna, water features, within the TVBSPA Heaths area and has mixed woodland on the boundaries. The Moor Green Lakes Group is an organisation of residents in the surrounding area mainly made up of keen bird watchers it was founded in 1993 to “improve the reserve for wildlife, record and monitor that wildlife, enhance the facilities of the reserve for members of the MGLG and other visitors. (for more information about their activities see the 28th Annual Report MGLG.org.uk). The site is significantly local in character because of its topography, locality and accessibility in circular walks. The visitors are walkers and drawn from local parishes. Local Health walks are promoted by WBC and conducted on a weekly basis for those in the Parish and surrounding areas where the health benefits of exercise and communing with nature can be achieved. The visitor numbers in the table below illustrate how demonstrably special to the local community the site is, in addition over 140 residents volunteer each year to help maintain the area.

Visitors pa WBC	Moor Green Lakes
2014	40,000
2019	46,000
2020	87,000 this number is predicted to drop back to nearer pre-Covid levels and taken from footpath counters in 2020/21

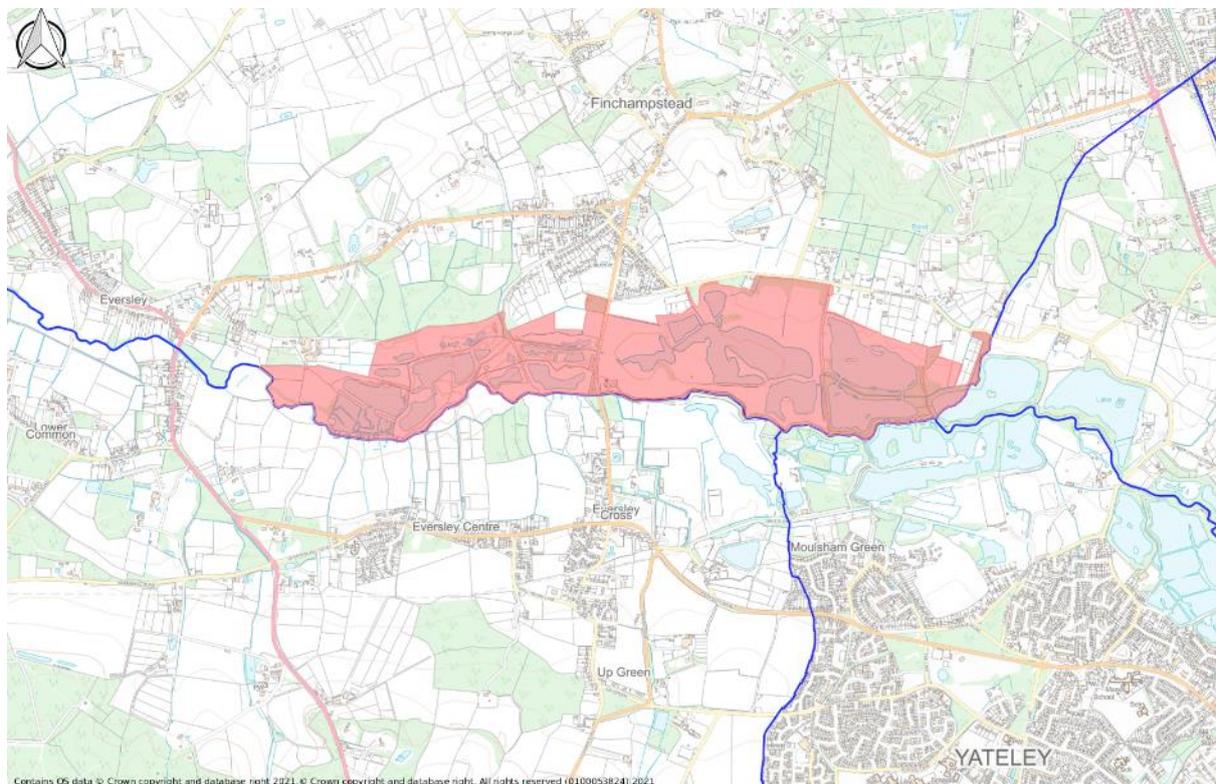
Site Ref 7b – Manor Farm mineral extraction site (This site was not included by FNDP in the earlier recommendations for LGS designation – as it is still undergoing extraction works. It remains in this report for reference and future consideration for planning protection)



Site Ref 7c – Fleet Hill Farm Nature reserve (This site was not included in the earlier recommendations for LGS designation – as it has still not been completed. It remains in this topic paper for reference and future consideration for planning protection)

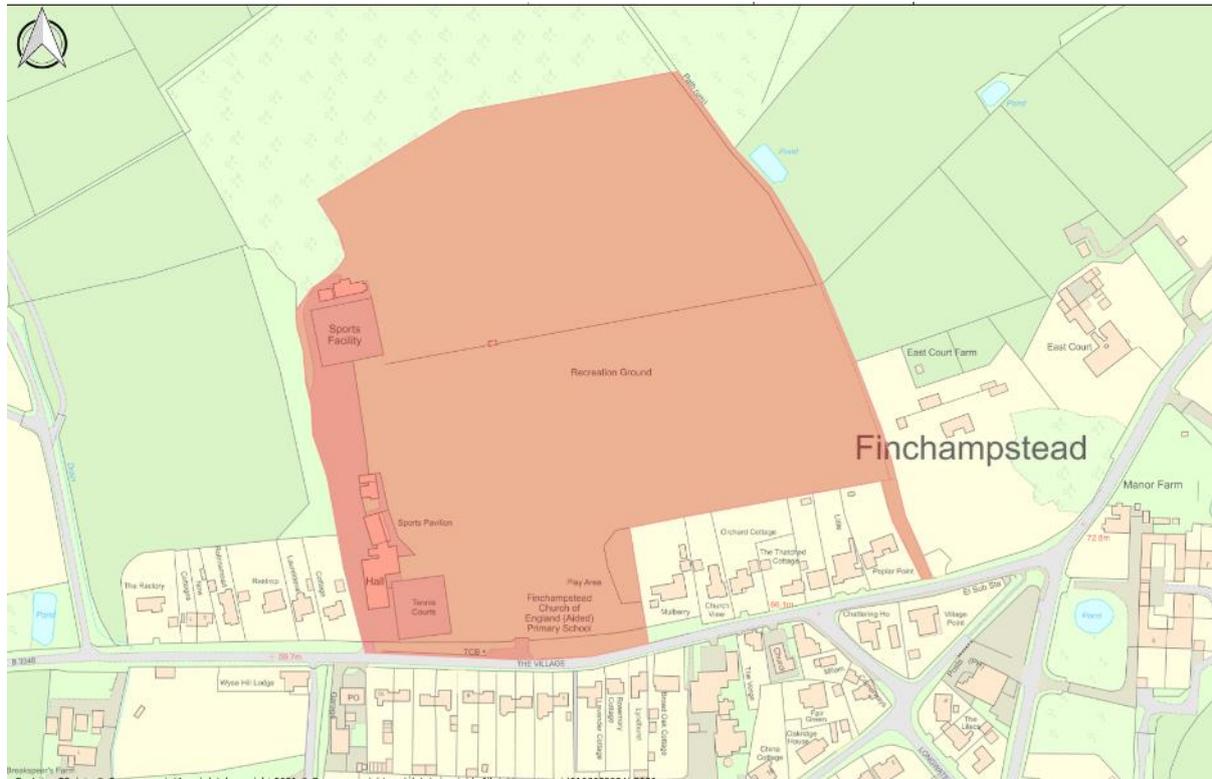


Overview of geographical location for Sites 7a,7b,7c – Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve, Manor Farm Mineral extraction site and Fleet Hill Farm Nature Reserve



(The above map is for illustrative purposes only, to show the extent of the potential nature reserves for the future. It was not included in edition 2 of the topic paper for LGS designation – as it has still not been completed. It remains in this topic paper for reference and future consideration for designation)

Site 8 – Finchampstead Memorial Park and Leas Field (This site has been included in the WBC LPU for LGS designation)



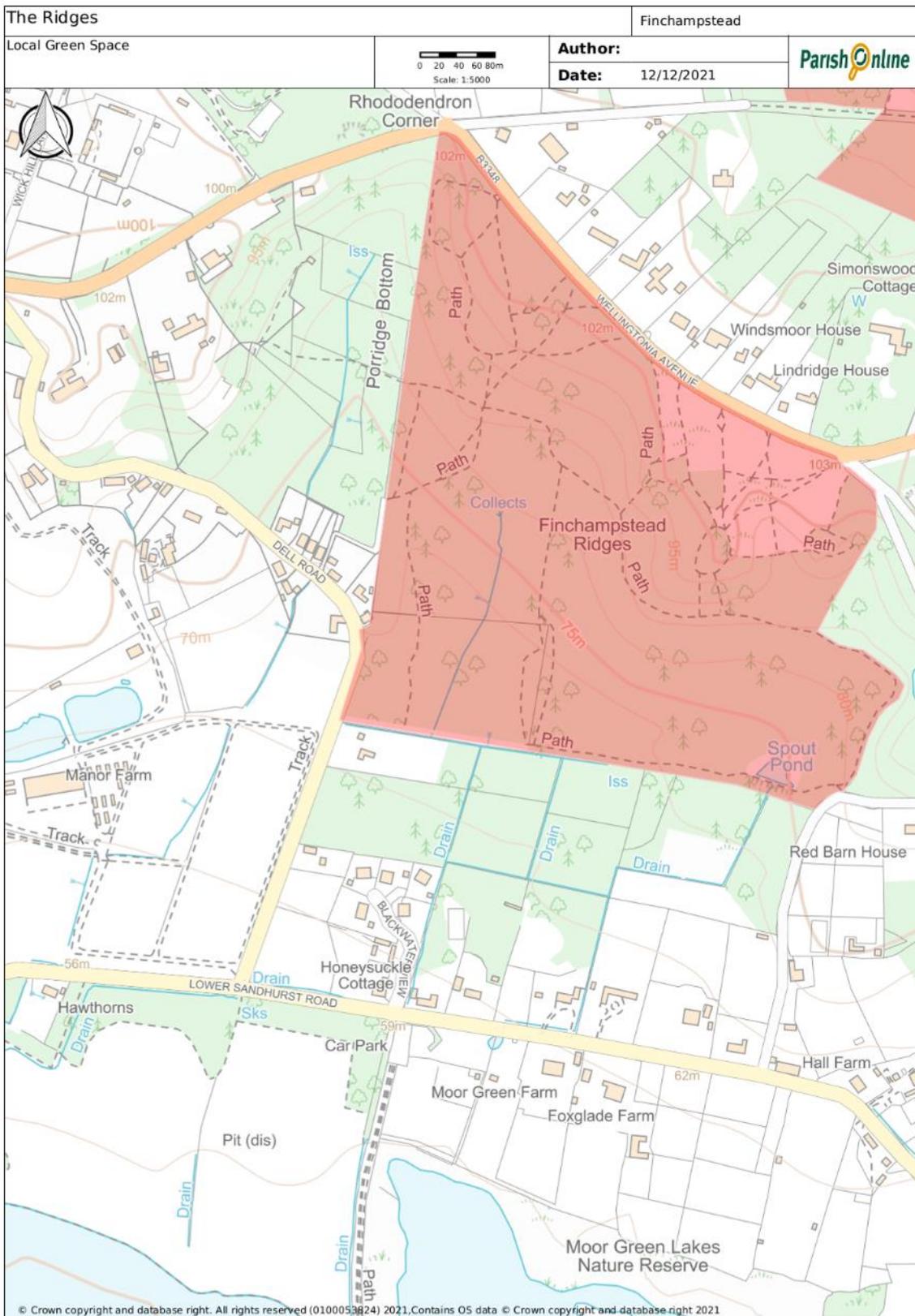
Site ref	8
Name	Finchampstead Memorial Park and Leas Field
Address	The Village, Finchampstead
Size	Approx. <u>5</u> ha
Description	The Memorial Park is owned by Finchampstead Parish Council and managed by a Management Committee including representatives from many local groups and organisations. Leas field is adjacent and to the North of the memorial park owned by the management committee and used for cricket and field recreation.
Proximity to community	The site is close to the community in the south of Finchampstead Parish and is accessible from the north via the B3348 road linking Eversley with Wokingham and Crowthorne and Footpath 9 which links the Village with St James Church and the public rights of way network to Warren Wood, California crossroads and California Country Park.

Local in character	Clearly defined, bounded by The Village to the south, residential properties, woodland and farmland.
Local significance	<p>The Memorial Park was purchased by the people of Finchampstead in 1946 to commemorate those lost in the first and second World Wars.</p> <p>Highly valued by the community, the Park is used for the annual Finchampstead Fete and in 2019 and 2020 the Park was used as the venue for the Remembrance Day parade and service. The Finchampstead War memorial currently situated at the Junction of Jubilee Hill and the Ridges is planned to be relocated to the Memorial Park during 2022.</p> <p>It has a Sports Club and Memorial Community Centre on site with large car park area: well used 7 days each week as identified in the FNDP Survey 2019: 23% of respondents visit weekly/monthly</p> <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.</p> <p>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 The Ridges (This site was rejected by WBC as a LGS as it was submitted as a single entity in conjunction with Simon's Wood (Site Map 5). FF have resubmitted the singular site for designation.



Site ref	9
Name	The Ridges
Address	The Ridges and Wellingtonia Avenue, Finchampstead
Size	Approx. 30 ha
Description	<p>This area of some 30 Ha is owned and managed by the National Trust. The background is one of diverse woodland and heathland surrounding natural water courses into Spout Pond and down to the Blackwater from the Ridges.</p> <p>Area is sedimentary rock with areas of ironstone.</p> <p>The sites are used for informal recreation, primarily walking although horse riding is permitted in some areas. There are circular walks together with a 'Ridges Ramble' for local residents.</p>
Proximity to community	The site is easily accessible by the community with roadside parking at The Ridges. Many public rights of way run to and through the site as well as a network of informal paths.
Local in character	Clearly defined and self-contained area bounded by roads and byways. Highly popular with residents for access to natural countryside
Local significance	Ecological, recreational, and historical significance. Highly valued by the community for the beauty and tranquillity.
Supporting evidence	<p>Site is comprised of wet woodland, ponds and protected Heathlands, escarpments, wet woodland, some rare plant species such as Woodland Orchids.</p> <p>Has 6.0 Ha of Lowland Heath: a scarce resource in Berkshire</p> <p>TVERC Report Aug 2019 lists the sites as Local Wildlife Sites.</p> <p>Sits within the Thames Basin Heaths Biodiversity Opportunity Area.</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 the Ridges 37000 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>

	Aligns with WBC Policy NE2: Thames Basin Heaths SPA Intersection of 4 RoW connecting east and south Finchampstead with California Crossroads and west Finchampstead
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Finchampstead Ridges - recommended for designation as a WBC LGS

The LPU rejects the designation of this location (single site of both the Ridges and Simon’s wood)) on the basis “*the site is not considered to be local in character and does form an extensive track of land*”. Finchampstead Future believe this to be misjudgement and would make an amended proposal.

The FNDP team would propose that Finchampstead Ridges and Simons Wood (see para above at Map 5) be separately considered as two sites which meet the criteria for designation as LGS. The two locations are not geographically integrated. We believe the evidence available demonstrates that the sites are local in character (see visitor data below).

Each site is < 30 ha and is within accepted tolerances by WBC for other sites. The independent sites have well defined boundaries with other countryside areas and semi-rural urbanisation. Therefore, they do not form extensive tracts of land.

Each nominated area of green space forms part of the wider National Trust portfolio which is one of the most significant and recognisable green spaces that serves the residents of Finchampstead, Barkham, Crowthorne, Eversley, Sandhurst and Yateley as well as attracting visitors across the Borough and further afield.

The site also holds significant ecological value due to their designation as Local Wildlife Sites, which comprises several priority habitats including wet woodlands, TVBSPA Heaths, Ephemeral Ponds and mixed woodland. The sites are significantly local in character because of their topography, locality and accessibility as illustrated by the WBC survey 2007 figures in the table below:

WBC Survey 2007	The Ridges
Visitors pa	37,000
Arrive by car	65%
Home address <2 km	40%
Walking the Dog	37%
Exercising	54%
Group Size People	2.16
Daily and Weekly Visits	48%
Time on site < 1 hour	78%

We do not agree with the judgment that “*the designation of the land (owned by the National Trust) as Local Green Space would not have any additional benefit.*” The principle of dual designation is not uncommon in planning policy. By including The Ridges as an LGS it in line with the Local Significance recommendations from Swanwick Guidelines on Valued Landscapes Ref 35.1 Item 3 ‘It would provide additional protective protection to any existing

protective policies’. The proposal to designate these sites as Local Green Space and Outstanding Views was included in our Regulation 14 Consultation in 2020 and this was supported by Historic England:

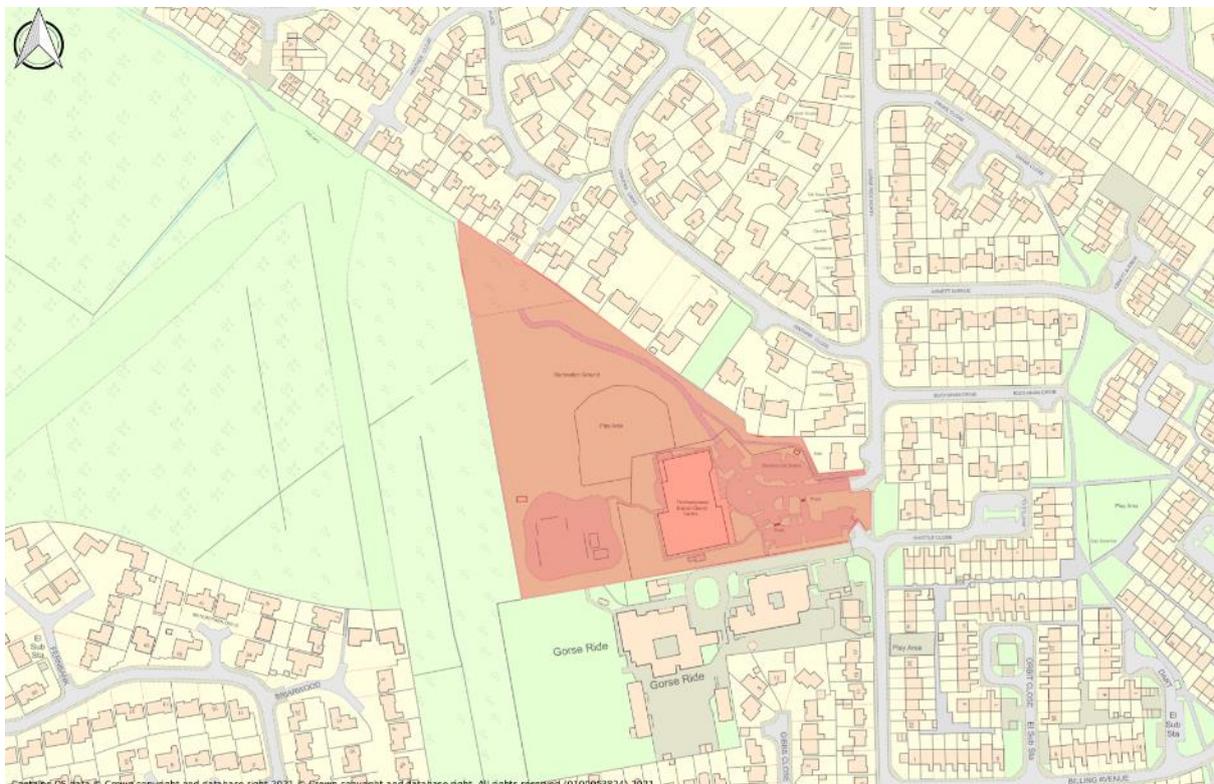
Ref: Response from Historic England: Policy IRS1 Protection and Enhancement of Local Green Spaces.

“We are pleased to support this policy and, in particular, designation of local green spaces with historic significance including Simon’s Wood, Brooks Heath, and The Ridges” (includes Wellingtonia Avenue and the Devil’s Highway Roman Road).

Ref: Response from Historic England: Policy IRS2 Protection of Outstanding Views.

“We support this policy which is accompanied by a thorough list of key views encompassing identified heritage assets. The Ridges has Outstanding Views to the south-west, south, south-east and east down Wellingtonia Avenue”.

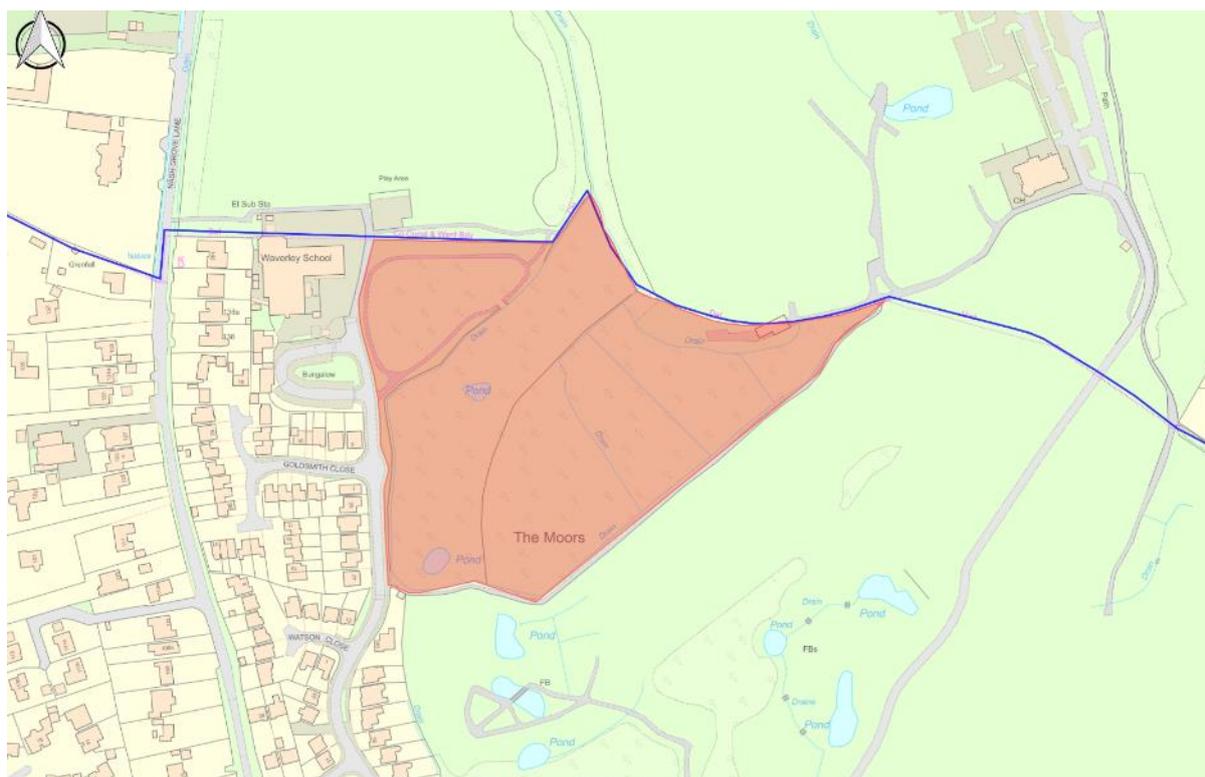
Site 10 – FBC/Gorse Ride playing fields (This site has been included in the WBC LPU for LGS designation)



Site ref	10
Name	FBC / Gorse Ride Playing Fields
Address	Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead
Size	2.2 ha
Description	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

	<p>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.</p> <p>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	<p>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</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Indoor FBC Activities include youth sports: Badminton, Taekwondo, Yoga, Gym Routines, Dance plus a Nursery School</p> <p>FBC offer Church Services on Sundays</p> <p>The California Greenway runs from the Playing Fields to the California Country Park.</p>
Supporting evidence	<p>Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A2 S2 and S7 Local Park and Green Space</p> <p>NPPF para 100: 1a, 1b and 1c.</p> <p>Aligns with WBC Policy HC3 Open space Sports Recreation and Play facilities</p> <p>Research: Impact on mental health (White 2013)</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 11 – The Moors (This site has been included in the WBC LPU as a LGS)



Site ref	11
Name	The Moors
Address	Waverley Way, Finchampstead
Size	5.4 ha
Description	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 and Waverley Way open space.
Proximity to community	In close proximity for those living in the many properties in the Nash Grove Lane/Waverley Way communities.
Local in character	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.
Local significance	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.
Supporting evidence	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.

	<p>Valued Landscape Topics Jan 2020 App1 Attributes Table: assessment A1 S6 Local Wildlife Site, A2 S1 BOA</p> <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>

Site 12 – Woodmore Play Area (this site has been included in the WBC LPU for LGS designation)



Site ref	12
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 (WBC have rejected this site for LGS designation in the LPU)



Site ref	13
Name	Gorse Ride Woods play area
Address	Whittle Close, Finchampstead

Size	< 1ha
Description	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. 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.
Proximity to community	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.
Local in character	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
Local significance	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.
Supporting evidence	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 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 – 7 inclusive There is a need for a protective order of a Local Green Space as set out in Criteria 3.

Gorse Ride Woods Play Area, Whittle Close – additional comment to support the inclusion of this area as a LGS in the LPU.

The LPU rejects the designation of this location on the basis that: *“there is no evidence to suggest that it is demonstrably special to the local community. Further, there are other recognisable areas of green space and amenity greenspace in this area of Finchampstead North which provide a wider range of opportunities for recreation, notably Gorse Ride Community Centre Open Space which is slightly further to the west of the site”*.

The FNDP Team view and that of local residents is that this is a recognisable open green space that serves the residents in this specific part of Finchampstead South ward and should be accepted as a LGS. The open space at Gorse Ride Woods Play Area is a valuable amenity and provides safe play for residents' children. The alternative play area at Gorse Ride FPC is situated to the west, but access to this area of green space is severed by a busy side road to the local Junior School, a FBC car Park and housing areas.

In addition to providing a play facility for local children, the site is a valuable and attractive green space in its own right, with a number of semi mature trees characteristic to this part of Finchampstead and which have both amenity and ecological value. The importance of the space is recognised in the plans for the Gorse Ride regeneration, which retain it as a green space for its amenity value and as a site for informal recreation and children's play.

The contention that the site cannot be demonstrably special to the local community because of the proximity of alternative open green areas is not followed elsewhere in the LPU where for instance Langborough Recreation Ground, Howard Palmer Gardens, Elms Field and Barkham Road Recreation Ground, all within easy walking distance, are designated LGS.

We strongly recommend that WBC includes this area of community amenity as an LGS.

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: (this site while not in Finchampstead Parish is listed in the WBC LPU as a LGS)

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 and meets the assessment criteria and should be designated by WBC as a Local Green Space.

6.9 Sand Martins and Longwater Road Allotments

The two sites above were included in edition 2 of this paper as recommended for designation. The FNDP accepts that Sand Martins is better described as a green gap and will be referred to as part of the FNDP in the green gaps topic paper. Allotments have their own protection in law and we are content to withdraw our recommendation for designation as a LGS for that site.

Conclusion

This 3rd edition of the Topic paper has consolidated previous versions which should be discarded. The information contained within this edition is the result of extensive research, public consultation and consideration of the WBC LPU currently out for consultation. We

strongly recommend that WBC adopt the 5 recommended sites as detailed in this paper for designation as local Green Spaces.

The FNDP will continue to feature these recommended sites as the FNDP Local Green Spaces as it proceeds on its journey to finalisation

Section D

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/cm²sr 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 References 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.