

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Rusper Parish Council has set out to identify important areas of Local Green Space across the parish. These are areas that hold a particular importance to the community, which if designated in the Neighbourhood Plan, would be protected from inappropriate development.
- 1.2. Originally introduced by the Government in 2012, the designation of a green space focuses on protecting areas that hold a particular significance to the local community. Planning Practice Guidance makes it clear that this designation should be consistent with the strategic aims of the HDC, and should not be a means of preventing the wider development needs of the district.
- 1.3. The Parish Council, together with the Rusper Parish Neighbourhood Plan Group, has prepared this assessment to create a consistent and transparent methodology for evaluating potential Local Green Space. It forms part of an evidence base, which has informed the production of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.4. This assessment establishes four tests which potential sites must pass in order to qualify as Local Green Space. It also demonstrates how each of the sites identified in the Pre-Submission Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan satisfies these tests.

## 2. Policy Background

### National Planning Policy

- 2.1. In March 2012 the Government, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), introduced a new Local Green Space designation. Local Green Space designation was reinforced in the latest NPPF published in February 2019. NPPF §99 allows local communities, through the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan process, to identify areas of Local Green Space which are important to them and which should be provided special protection.
- 2.2. NPPF §100 makes it clear that the designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space and should only be used:
  - where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community which it serves;
  - where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and
  - where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 2.3. NPPF §101 states that Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.
- 2.4. Additional guidance on Local Green Space designation is provided in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) ID: 37 -007-20140306 Paragraphs 005-022. Of particular relevance to the Rusper Parish Neighbourhood Plan are the following paragraphs.

- §007 – Designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. In particular, plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs, and the Local Green Space designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making [Reference ID: 37-007-20140306].
- §011 – If land is already protected by designation (e.g. AONB, conservation area), then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space [Reference ID: 37-011-20140306].
- §013 – Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion. For example, green areas could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis [Reference ID: 37-013-20140306].
- §015 – Blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. In particular, designation should not be proposed as a ‘back door’ way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of Green Belt by another name [Reference ID: 37-015-20140306].
- §020 – Designating a green area as Local Green Space would give it protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt, but otherwise there are no new restrictions or obligations on landowners [Reference ID: 37-020-20140306].

#### Local Planning Policy

- 2.5. Horsham District Planning Framework (“HDPF”) was published in November 2015. This is the ‘Local Plan’ which is used to determine planning applications. It sets out the basic rules which new development must follow, as well as allocating certain areas of land for new housing or employment. HDPF makes particular note of the rural areas covered by the Framework stating that “the district has retained its remote but not isolated, rural identity and villages their separate, distinctive and varied characters which have been able to accommodate appropriate development for local people and to support the community”.
- 2.6. Policy 3 and Policy 4 of the HDPF sets out the principles that should apply to new development in Horsham District; it also establishes a Settlement Hierarchy, which steers future windfall development away from the open countryside and towards larger more sustainable settlements. Within the hierarchy, Rusper is classified as a small village with Ifield and Lambs Green designated as unclassified.
- 2.7. Under the provisions of PPG ID: 37-011-20140306 Paragraph: 007, Local Green Space designation must be consistent with the above policies.

### 3. Criteria for assessing Local Green Space

- 3.1. The Conservation Area in Rusper has been excluded as a potential area of Local Green Space as this area is protected under specific HDC policies. Private gardens would also normally be excluded, except where a particular case can be made for their inclusion (such as where an area of Local Green Space would have a more coherent shape due to the inclusion of a small area of garden).

- 3.2. Wherever feasible, physical boundaries have been used to define Local Green Space. However, where no suitable boundary exists, other features have been used to demarcate the area, such as the line created by a neighbouring boundary.
- 3.3. Based on the principles established in the NPPF and PPG, four tests have been devised for identifying Local Green Space across the parish.

Test 1. Does the site already have planning permission, or has it been allocated for development?

- The first stage in the assessment will be to review the planning history of each site to ensure that it is not subject to an extant planning permission and that it has not been allocated for development.
- The Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land already has planning permission for development, or where it has been allocated for development.
- An exception to this may be where it can be demonstrated that the Local Green Space designation would be compatible with the planning permission/ HDC allocation, or where the planning permission / HDC allocation is no longer capable of being implemented.

Test 2. Is the site reasonably close to the community it serves?

- The NPPF states that to be designated as a Local Green Space an area should be in reasonably close proximity to the community that it serves. Sites, which are entirely isolated from the community, will not be considered.
- PPG requires that if public access is a key factor, then the Local Green Space should normally be within easy walking distance of the community served. As a guide, the Parish Council has defined 'easy walking distance' as being within 5 minutes' walking time of the nearest settlement boundary.
- It is recognised that some discretion may be needed depending on the topography of the area, the mobility and size of the community, and the size and function of the Local Green Space itself.

Test 3. Is the site local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

- The NPPF makes clear that the area to be designated should be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.
- PPG states that blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements is not appropriate.
- Whilst there is no size threshold proposed for an area of Local Green Space, the Parish Council considers that any site of more than 10 hectares might reasonably be interpreted as 'extensive' or 'blanket'.

Test 4. Is the site demonstrably special to the local community?

- The designation of Local Green Space must be based on evidence that demonstrates why the area is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance. To pass this test, an area must be demonstrably special and locally significant in one of the following categories.

- Beauty – This relates to the visual attractiveness and aesthetic value of the site, and its contribution to the streetscape, landscape, character or setting of a settlement. To qualify, the site should contribute significantly to local character, for example by defining a sense of place, or by helping to define the physical form of a settlement.
- Historic significance – This relates to the historic importance a site holds for the local community. This could be because it contributes to the setting of a heritage asset or some other locally valued landmark. It might be because the site holds cultural associations, which are of particular significance to the local community. Where the site is already protected by a designation (eg AONB), consideration should be given as to whether any additional benefit would result from designation as Local Green Space.
- Recreational value – Sites would need to hold local significance for recreation and be important to the community for a particular recreation activity or range of activities. These could be formal or informal activities.
- Tranquillity – In order to qualify, the site would need to be viewed by local people as important for the tranquillity it provided, offering a place for reflection and peaceful enjoyment.
- Richness of wildlife – A site would need to be locally significant for wildlife in a way that could be demonstrated. It might, for example, home to species or habitats of principal importance, veteran trees, or locally characteristic plants and animals such as mistletoe. Where the site is already protected by a designation (eg SSSI), consideration should be given as to whether any additional benefit would result from designation as Local Green Space.
- Other reason – Sites might be special and locally significant for reasons other than those identified above. For example, a site might make a particular contribution to defining the individual character of a settlement, or it might be an asset of community value.

#### 4. Consultation

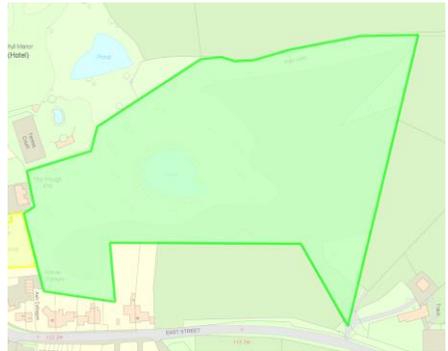
- 4.1. This assessment will be published on the Parish Council's website as part of the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base, where it can be viewed and commented on by all those taking part in the consultation on the Pre-Submission Draft.
- 4.2. The Parish Council will invite all known landowners to make representations about proposals to designate any part of their land as Local Green Space. Wherever land has been registered, landowners will be written to at the address held by the Land Registry at least six weeks before the finalised Neighbourhood Plan proposal is submitted to the local planning authority under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

#### 5. Areas identified as potential Local Green Space

- 5.1. The table below provides information about each of the sites proposed as Local Green Space in the Pre-Submission Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan. These have been assessed against each of the four tests set out above.

## Rusher Parish Neighbourhood Plan – Assessment of local Green Space

Map ref	Location	Designation	Current use	Test 1 Existing planning permission	Test 2 Distance to edge of settlement	Test 3 Extent of area	Test 4 Demonstrably special and holds a particular local significance (beauty, historic, recreation value, tranquillity, richness of wildlife, other)	Map
1	High Street	Recreational ground	Recreational space	No	Adjacent	0.84 hectares	<p>Recreational value: the site is used to host events and provides recreational space for people of Rusper, including May Day celebrations. Facilities include: pavilion, tennis courts.</p> <p>The site has excellent public access.</p>	
2	Glebe Field	Agricultural Owned by Diocese	Recreational open space	No	Adjacent	0.40 hectares	<p>Tranquillity and Recreational value: Area of land behind the church. Accessed via footpaths adjacent to, and through the church.</p>	

3	Church Field	Agricultural Owned by Diocese	Recreational open space	No	Adjacent	0.33 hectares	Tranquillity and Recreational value: Area of land behind the church. Used for informal activities. Accessed via footpaths adjacent to, and through the church.	
4	Ghyll Manor Field	Agricultural	Recreational open space	No	Adjacent	3.39 hectares	Recreation: Field and pond. Tree Preservation Orders. Sussex Border Path to the north. Informal agreement currently in place with Ghyll Manor for the parish to use this field in exchange for cutting the field.	
5	Cooks Mead Green	Public Open Space	Open space	No	Adjacent	0.11 hectares	Recreational: the site provides recreational space for the users of Cooks Mead. The area is surrounded by the properties that make up Cooks Mead.	

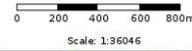
6	Land adjacent to Pucks Croft cottage	Agricultural	Recreational open space	No	Adjacent	3.28 hectares	Recreation/richness of wildlife: Land adjacent to and including part of Baldhorns copse. Public footpath through the area.	
7	Gardeners Green	Public Open Space	Open Space	No	Adjacent	0.3 hectares	Recreational: the site provides recreational space for the users of Gardeners Green. The area is surrounded by the properties that make up Gardeners Green.	

8	Behind Star Inn, Rusper Road	Private horticultural allotments	Owned by brewery	No	Adjacent	0.03 hectares	Recreational/other: allotments are particularly valued for their recreational value, their social opportunities, and for the health and environmental benefits they provide. Easy public access.	
9	Kilnwood Copse	Semi-natural woodland and pond	Private ownership	No		8.8 hectares	Beauty/recreational/richness of wildlife: this woodland has a variety of native trees including oak, hornbeam and lime. There are also two small ponds which are currently overgrown.	
10	Friday Street (by Friday Street Bridge)	Notable road kerb	Public open space	No	Adjacent	0.03 hectares	Beauty/Richness of wildlife: Because of its location on the approach to the village, it is experienced daily by many residents. The area next to Friday Street Bridge has been designated as a Notable Road Verge.	

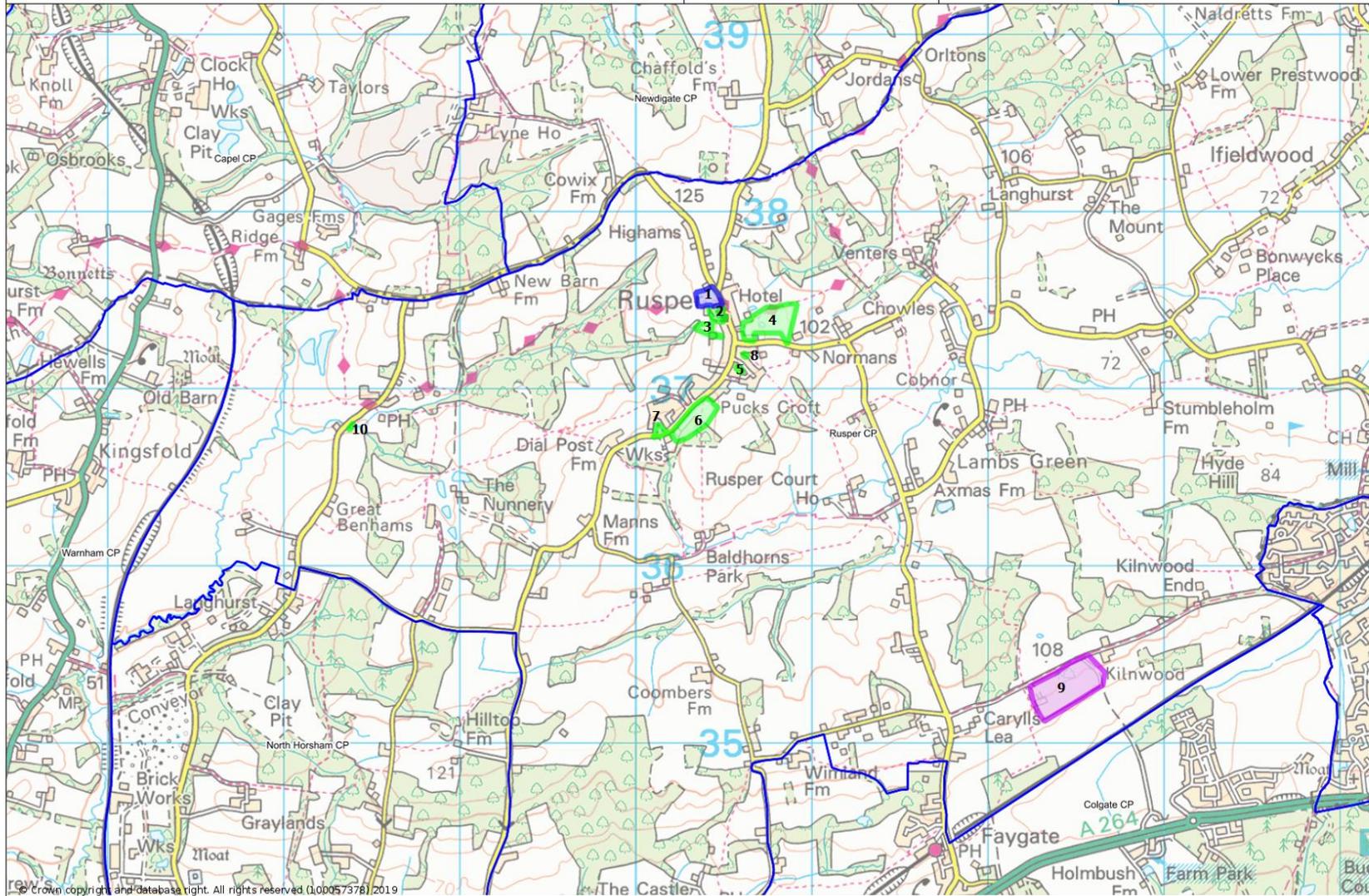
Rusper CP

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