

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – GREEN SPACES

For the information of new members, Woodstock Town Council has been working on a (partial) Neighbourhood Plan to seek designated green space status for various green areas within the town.

The NPPF states that Local Green Spaces should only be designated 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.*

It is important to note that whilst designation affords the green space similar policy protection to Green Belt, it does not place any new restrictions or obligations on landowners. Management of the land remains the responsibility of the landowner although, with the agreement of the landowner, there may be opportunities that can be explored which allow the local community to become more involved in the management of the space. Furthermore, designation does not confer any rights of access over what exists at present.

Please note that the sites selected have already been through an initial consultation stage and whilst new members may feel that there are others that could be included it is now too late in the process for new additions.

Having consulted with West Oxon DC planning officers, the Council employed an outside consultancy – Troy Planning - to undertake the work on its behalf. Grant Funding was secured, and this covers all the Troy Planning costs. (It effectively means that WTC does not incur any costs.)

Following the consultation, a draft report has been written (members can access this on the WTC website under agenda papers)

The plan now has to go out to a regulation 14 6-week consultation to local groups and interested parties.

Following that consultation there will be a local referendum. Sites which secure above 50% support will then be subjected to an Inspector Inquiry.

The final result – designation of sites – may be all or any of those submitted.

WTC resolved that the steering group – which I have been leading - remains the same group as at inception and we are **recommending that the Reg. 14 consultation commences on 1st July 2021.**

