

Supporting Evidence O
ESBG NP Green Space Report

Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishop's Green
Neighbourhood Plan



Ecchinswell Pond

Local Green Spaces Evidence Report

Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishop's Green Neighbourhood Plan

Local Green Spaces Evidence Report

1. Introduction
2. Policy and Precedence
 - 2.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - 2.2. Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011 – 2029
 - 2.3. Green Space Standards
3. Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Overview/Constraints
4. Methodology
5. Local Green Space Candidates - Locations
6. Local Green Space Candidates - Assessments /Descriptions
7. Summary & Conclusions (Key Messages)

Original version prepared by Mike Norman – April 2022

Minor updates – July 2022

Addendum recording finally selected spaces for policy ESBG14 – October 2022

1. Introduction

1.1. This report has been prepared to support the submission of the Echchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishop's Green (ES & BG) Neighbourhood Plan. The report identifies local green infrastructure (GI) assets that are of importance to the character of the parish and meet a set of criteria to be considered for designation as Local Green Spaces. It is expected that the list will be reviewed and refined on the basis of discussion by the Parish Council and following consultation with the wider community.

1.2. Having identified suitable Local Green Spaces, it is then possible to evaluate their potential to form the core of a Nature Recovery Plan for ES & BG Parish. It is noted that the contents need not be restricted to this list of sites (provided objectives are realisable) nor dependent on their retention as Local Green Spaces. This will form the basis of another report.

2. Policy and Precedence

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.1.1. Designation of land as Local Green Space (LGS) allows communities to identify and protect areas of particular importance to them and should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other services (Ministry of Housing, 2018).

2.1.2. The NPPF requires the designated sites to meet several criteria (paragraph 100):

- reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- 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
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

2.2. Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011 - 2029

2.2.1. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as an interconnected network of natural areas and green open spaces that directly contribute to the health and quality of life for the local communities. The Vision underpinning this strategy is to provide a planned and managed network of Green Infrastructure across Basingstoke and Deane which not only provides residents with local access to green spaces, but also positively contributes to biodiversity to thrive alongside the built environment. (Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, 2011).

2.2.2 Policy EM1 (Landscape) sets out principles that should apply to new development, allowing it only where it can be demonstrated that the proposals are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area concerned, taking into account scenic quality, important views within and out of settlements and the local character of buildings and settlement, open areas and landscape features such as ancient woodland and hedgerows (Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, 2011).

2.2.3. Policy EM4 (Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation) sets out that development proposals will only be permitted if significant harm to bio- and/or geodiversity can be avoided or at least adequately mitigated. To secure opportunities for biodiversity improvement, development proposals will be required to where possible contribute to a net gain in biodiversity which could be achieved through focus on identified Biodiversity

Opportunity Areas and Biodiversity Priority Areas (Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, 2011).

2.2.4. Policy EM5 (Green Infrastructure) points out the importance of the green infrastructure network and requires important corridors or links not to be severed and highlights its mission to protect and enhance the quality of public open space and public rights of way (Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, 2011).

2.3. Green Space Standards

2.3.1. The BDBC Local Plan adopted Green Space Accessibility standards for the Borough and these were used in the BDBC's Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018) to assess provision of accessible Green Infrastructure. Standards are provided in terms of distance and quantity for 'multi-functional green space', including Amenity Green Space, Natural Green Space, parks, play areas and allotments. For instance, the maximum distance threshold for natural green space is 10 minutes (600m walking or 1500m cycling). For amenity green space the figure is 5 mins (300m walking). In terms of quantity, the standard is 32m² per person for a rural area, the absolute minimum requirement being 20m² per person.

2.3.2. BDBC's Green Infrastructure Strategy assesses GI provision by ward, so includes Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishop's Green (ES & BG) Parish under Highclere, Burghclere and St Mary Bourne, which unhelpfully distorts the picture towards a positive outcome. In fact, although ES & BG is a rural Parish, Appendix F of BDBC's Green Infrastructure Strategy shows only moderate access to Accessible Natural Greenspace, most local natural landscapes being privately owned and not freely accessible. Under the wider definition of Green Infrastructure, however, including amenity green spaces, sports fields and play areas, parks and gardens, and green corridors (& Public Rights of Way), the Parish is much better provisioned (although it is notable that some of these are not fully represented for this Parish on the report's maps!). However, it should be noted that Green Space provision in the Parish for those whose mobility is limited is an area of concern.

2.3.3. BDBC's Green Infrastructure Strategy states that for areas within lower-than-average provision of Accessible Green Space, provision of Green Space that demonstrably meets the declared standards should be a priority within any plans for development.

3. Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishop's Green Overview/Constraints

3.1. As previously noted, the distribution of Green Infrastructure Assets of any significant area within ES & BG parish is not all that favourable. In the main, the majority of access to green space that is available to the residents is obtained via use of public rights of way across private land. Any strategy of defining Local Green Spaces and/or Nature Recovery therefore needs to maximise the potential of those areas that are accessible whilst considering options to make additional green space available as well as developing the linkages between those areas that do already exist. These principles are to be adopted in any selection process.

4. Methodology

4.1. As a general principle, sites under consideration for adoption as Local Green Spaces should be those not already offered protection under national (e.g. SSSI, NNR, AONB) or local (e.g. SINC) legislation and which would therefore benefit from the designation.

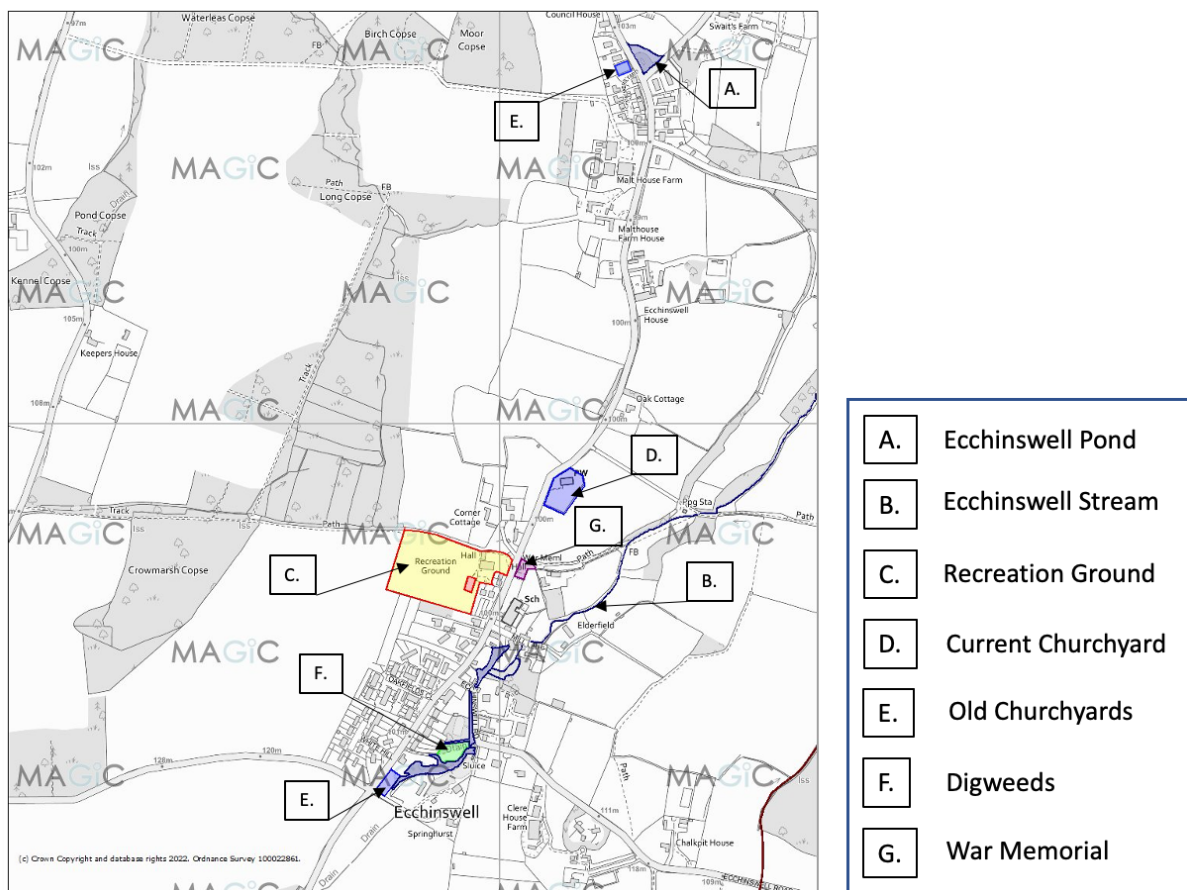
4.2. A number of criteria can be applied in the assessment of any sites in line with those required by the NPPF. These include:

- Test 1: Presence or otherwise of existing planning permission or allocation in the BDBC LP
- Test 2: Distance to the edge of the nearest settlement
- Test 3: Approximate area (Ha)
- Test 4: Demonstration of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)

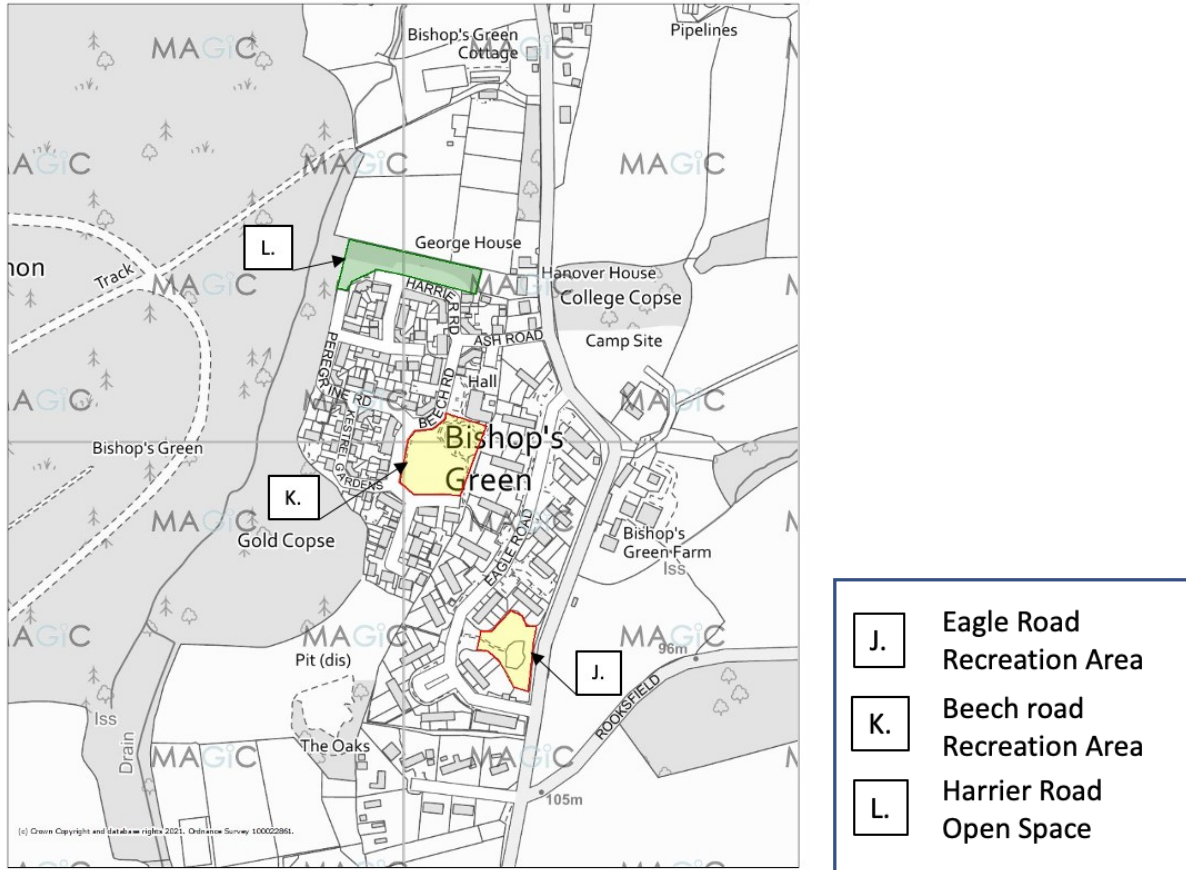
These tests have been applied to a range of possible sites as described below.

5. Local Green Space Candidates – Locations


5.1. The map below shows the locations of Local Green Space Candidates in Ecchinswell



5.2. The map below shows the locations of Local Green Space Candidates in Bishop's Green



6. Local Green Space Candidates – Assessments/Descriptions

Name:	Ecchinswell Pond		
Map Site:	A.		
Location:	Junction of Hyde Lane and Ecchinswell Road (opposite Palmers Yard)		
Designation:	None	Current Use:	Open Space
Test 1: Existing planning permission or BDBC LP allocation?	Test 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	Test 3: approx area (Ha)	
No	Adjacent	0.17	
Test 4: demonstrably of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)	<p>Beauty/Historic significance: The Hyde Lane location is believed to be the historical site of the village pond; however, its current form is believed to date back to the 1960's or 70's, when it was remodelled and the bed resealed with clay. The appearance of the pond is of significant value to the residents, and the parish funds the maintenance of the surrounding area via a regime of mowing and tree pruning. Once a year the vegetation in the pond is managed by a working party of volunteers.</p> <p>Recreation value/tranquillity: The pond is freely accessible from both Ecchinswell Road and Hyde Lane. A mown path is maintained on the eastern side. Although the pond sits alongside the main road through the village, there is not too much disturbance from traffic and a bench is provided on the eastern bank where one can sit and enjoy the wildlife.</p> <p>Richness of wildlife/Biodiversity value: Despite the fact that the pond appears to be refilled only from field and road runoff, it maintains a good diversity of marginal and aquatic plants. The more invasive of these – reedmace and flowering rush, are managed on a yearly basis to stop them becoming dominant. The pond is notable for populations of Great Crested Newt and Smooth Newt (these are taken into account when managing the pond). The pond has a diverse surround of trees, providing a variety of unshaded/shaded habitat. A range of dragonflies have been seen at the pond, including Broad-bodied Chaser, Southern Hawker and Ruddy Darter.</p>		
			

Name:	Ecchinswell Stream		
Map Site:	B.		
Location:	From The old churchyard, north through Ecchinswell centre, then up the eastern boundary of the Parish to the River Enbourne		
Designation:	None	Current Use:	Open Space
Test 1: Existing planning permission or BDBC LP allocation?	Test 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	Test 3: approx area (Ha)	
No	Adjacent for first 2km	Linear - 5km long	
Test 4: demonstrably of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)	<p>Beauty/Historic significance: The stream has played a key role in the history of Ecchinswell, having played host to a mill, which dictates the current form (wide and shallow) of the stream in the village centre. The millstream runs behind the Royal Oak pub and other historic buildings and is a core feature of the character of Ecchinswell. Further north, the stream reverts to a more natural form, being much narrower, with steep banks. Much of this course is shaded by trees.</p> <p>Recreation value/tranquillity: The stream is accessible in the area around the pub. To the north, it is backed onto by gardens but, further on, a public footpath runs along the bank as far as the pumping station. In the more northerly part of the Parish, a number of footpaths run down to the stream, but without offering the intimate access seen further south.</p> <p>Richness of wildlife/Biodiversity value: Knowledge of the wildlife along the stream is rather limited. A number of birds, including Grey Wagtail, Kingfisher and Little Egret regularly use the shallow open areas of the millstream and a variety of dragonflies and damselflies have also been seen. Daubenton's Bat is also a possibility. The shading of the stream further north probably limits the potential biodiversity by reducing the aquatic vegetation. The northern part of the stream course falls within Biodiversity Opportunity Area 07.</p>		




Name:	Ecchinswell Recreation Ground		
Map Site:	C.		
Location:	Behind Ecchinswell Village Hall, which is opposite the War Memorial and the school.		
Designation:	None	Current Use:	Recreation Ground
Test 1: Existing planning permission or BDBC LP allocation?	Test 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	Test 3: approx area (Ha)	
No	Adjacent	2.2	
Test 4: demonstrably of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)	<p>Beauty/Historic significance: The history of the recreation ground is not known. Its open area is laid out for sports and is surrounded on three sides by mature trees and hedgerows, forming a pleasing natural backdrop. There is also a children's play area adjacent to the village hall.</p> <p>Recreation value/tranquillity: The recreation ground is a popular open space within the village when not being used for sports events. The proximity of the village hall and the children's play area in the same place provides a focus for outdoor socialising and play. The recreation ground car park also acts as the start point for many walks in the Ecchinswell area.</p> <p>Richness of wildlife/Biodiversity value: The wildlife of the recreation area has not been assessed, however, the presence of mature tree/woodland margins on three sides suggests significant potential for birds, mammals and invertebrates to be using the area. There is scope to investigate further and provide enhancements in the future.</p>		



Name:	St Lawrence's Churchyard		
Map Site:	D.		
Location:	Approximately 0.5 mile north of the village centre on the east side of the main road.		
Designation:	None	Current Use:	Graveyard
Test 1: Existing planning permission or BDBC LP allocation?	Test 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	Test 3: approx area (Ha)	
No	50 - 100m	0.5	
Test 4: demonstrably of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)	<p>Beauty/Historic significance: Echinswell church was rebuilt in this location in 1856, the original site in the village centre being prone to damp and flooding. The churchyard is surrounded by a screen of mature trees and is divided by a gravel path from the gate to the church door. The area in recent use generally lies to the south of the path and is kept in good order, while the area to the north is managed with some sympathy for wildlife.</p> <p>Recreation value/tranquillity: The surrounding backdrop of trees coupled with the rural atmosphere provide a peaceful setting. A noticeboard in the gatehouse tells the story of the old and new churches.</p> <p>Richness of wildlife/Biodiversity value: Despite only having been converted to a churchyard 170 years ago, there is a remarkable display of spring flowers, notably featuring large quantities of Meadow Saxifrage. The wild daffodils may well have been planted, but the overall show with buttercups, clovers, primroses, wood anemones and many more represents a valuable environmental resource.</p>		



Name:	Old Churchyard		
Map Site:	E.		
Location:	Approximately 150m south of the Royal Oak Pub on Ecchinswell Rd		
Designation:	None	Current Use:	Historic Graveyard/ Open space
Test 1: Existing planning permission or BDBC LP allocation?	Test 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	Test 3: approx area (Ha)	
No	Adjacent	0.2	
Test 4: demonstrably of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)	<p>Beauty/Historic significance: This is next to the original location of Ecchinswell Church and has a history going back at least to the 15th Century, probably to Domesday and beyond. It is largely laid out to grass with old gravestones dotted about and surrounded by a brick wall. There are several mature trees, including a few Yew trees. There is also an area shrubs/undergrowth on the side away from the road. A small gate provides access. The site appears relatively lightly maintained (by the Parish?).</p> <p>Recreation value/tranquillity: The churchyard in its current condition maintains a good balance between history and nature, being not too heavily managed, and certainly exhibits an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity.</p> <p>Richness of wildlife/Biodiversity value: The wildlife of the churchyard has not been assessed, however, it possesses many attributes that suggest excellent potential as a site for nature, as with many disused churchyards. The grass appears to have a reasonably diverse flora, and is not cut too short, providing habitat for small mammals and invertebrates. The shrubbery and mature trees are beneficial for birds – in the winter of 2019, Hawfinches were observed feeding on the Yew berries. The gravestones and brick walls have potential for lichens.</p>		
			

Name:	Old United Reformed ("Methodist") Churchyard		
Map Site:	E.		
Location:	Opposite Ecchinswell Pond and next to Palmers Yard		
Designation:	None	Current Use:	Historic Graveyard/ Open space
Test 1: Existing planning permission or BDBC LP allocation?	Test 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	Test 3: approx area (Ha)	
No	Adjacent	0.05	
Test 4: demonstrably of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)	<p>Beauty/Historic significance: This is next to the former United Reformed Church, now a private residence. It is largely laid out to grass with old gravestones dotted about and surrounded by a brick wall, iron railings and wooden fence. There are several mature trees and a number of shrubs. A small gate provides access. The site appears relatively lightly maintained (by the Trustees?).</p> <p>Recreation value/tranquillity: The churchyard in its current condition maintains a good balance between history and nature, being not too heavily managed, and certainly exhibits an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity.</p> <p>Richness of wildlife/Biodiversity value: The wildlife of the churchyard has not been assessed, however, it probably has potential as a site for nature, as with many disused churchyards. The grass currently appears to be cut quite short, so not ideal. The shrubbery and mature trees are beneficial for birds. The gravestones and brick walls have potential for lichens.</p>		



Name:	Digweeds		
Map Site:	F.		
Location:	To the rear of houses along Ecchinswell Road, approximately 100m south of the Royal Oak Pub		
Designation:	None	Current Use:	Open space/garden
Test 1: Existing planning permission or BDBC LP allocation?	Test 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	Test 3: approx area (Ha)	
No	Adjacent	0.1	
Test 4: demonstrably of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)	<p>Beauty/Historic significance: This open space is near to the Old Churchyard and is closely connected with the original church. The name derives from John Digweed, former churchwarden, who was buried in the church and whose grave marker is still present. The site is managed by the Parish as an open space amenity both as an informal garden and with a view to encouraging wildlife interest. The Ecchinswell Stream runs through the site and some of its springs may arise here.</p> <p>Recreation value/tranquillity: The site is specifically maintained for use as a natural space by the village and is appreciated by many. It is set back from the roads and so has a pleasing sense of seclusion and tranquillity.</p> <p>Richness of wildlife/Biodiversity value: The wildlife of this site has not been formally assessed, however, those that visit note the varied birdlife, including Kingfisher and many woodland species. Also seen are slow worms and a White Admiral Butterfly. There is a good mix of mature trees and shrubs resulting in a diverse habitat that is likely to support many other species. The potential for wildlife enhancement is high.</p>		



Name:	Ecchinswell War memorial		
Map Site:	G.		
Location:	On Ecchinswell Road, opposite the Village Hall and recreation ground		
Designation:	None	Current Use:	Memorial & garden
Test 1: Existing planning permission or BDBC LP allocation?	Test 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	Test 3: approx area (Ha)	
No	Adjacent	0.04	
Test 4: demonstrably of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)	<p>Beauty/Historic significance: The site for the War Memorial was donated to the Parish in 1921 by the Earl of Carnarvon. There is a monument honouring the men of the parish who lost their lives in the two World Wars. The immediate surrounds are maintained as an informal garden, grading into a more natural wooded background.</p> <p>Recreation value/tranquillity: Being located right on the main road and next to the school, the site is not particularly secluded. However, it is set out so as to form a respectful tribute to those commemorated, and is a focus for the village on Remembrance Sunday every year.</p> <p>Richness of wildlife/Biodiversity value: The wildlife of this site has not been formally assessed, however, although the site is small, the gradation from the monument itself into the surrounding natural environment provides an opportunity both for existing wildlife and for further enhancement.</p>		



Name:	Bishop's Green Eagle Road Recreation Area		
Map Site:	J.		
Location:	Between Echinswell Road and Eagle Road, Bishop's Green, accessed via two footpaths.		
Designation:	None	Current Use:	Recreation/Play Area
Test 1: Existing planning permission or BDBC LP allocation?	Test 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	Test 3: approx area (Ha)	
No	Adjacent	0.2	
Test 4: demonstrably of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)	<p>Beauty/Historic significance: The area was provided as part of the housing development and is owned and maintained by BDBC. The play equipment sits in a small grassed area bordered by trees and bushes along the main road</p> <p>Recreation value/tranquillity: Intended for recreational use by children, but there is also grassed space to sit and meet.</p> <p>Richness of wildlife/Biodiversity value: Wildlife value has not been formally assessed, though the surrounding trees and bushes would be of value to birds.</p>		



Name:	Bishop's Green Beech Road Recreation Area		
Map Site:	K.		
Location:	In the centre of Bishop's Green, next to the village hall on Beech Road.		
Designation:	None	Current Use:	Recreation/Play Area
Test 1: Existing planning permission or BDBC LP allocation?	Test 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	Test 3: approx area (Ha)	
No	Adjacent	0.4	

Test 4: demonstrably of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)

Beauty/Historic significance: The area was provided as part of the housing development and is owned and maintained by BDBC. The play equipment sits next to the village hall and alongside an amenity green space that is used for informal team sports of different types (with some equipment to support this).

Recreation value/tranquillity: Of significant value both for young children in the play area and for older children on the green space. Space is also available to sit and meet. The space is surrounded on three sides by homes or other buildings so not really designed for tranquillity.

Richness of wildlife/Biodiversity value: Probably of limited wildlife value, though some small trees have been planted and one side is partly bordered by a hedge.



Name:	Bishop's Green Harrier Road Open Space		
Map Site:	L.		
Location:	Bounding Harrier Road, Bishop's Green, where it runs east-west on the northern edge of the estate		
Designation:	None	Current Use:	Open Space
Test 1: Existing planning permission or BDBC LP allocation?	Test 2: distance to edge of nearest settlement	Test 3: approx area (Ha)	
No	Adjacent	0.25	
Test 4: demonstrably of special local significance/value (e.g. beauty, historic significance, wildlife richness, recreational value, tranquillity etc)	<p>Beauty/Historic significance: The area was provided as part of the housing development; ownership is not clear. It forms a green outlook for houses along Harrier way. At the west end, abuts onto the area of woodland called Gold Copse.</p> <p>Recreation value/tranquillity: Has an intrinsic value as a green open space and being on the edge of the development lends an air of tranquillity.</p> <p>Richness of wildlife/Biodiversity value: The wildlife value of this site has not been assessed, but appears to have potential, being backed by a substantial hedge with a number of mature trees, backing onto open fields. A significant asset to the estate.</p>		



7. Summary & Conclusions (Key Messages)

7.1. The following comprise the key outcomes of the evidence gathering exercise conducted with regard to potential Local Green Spaces within Echchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishop's Green Parish.

- **Section 2.1. – National Planning Policy Framework:** - Designation of Local Green Spaces is a means of protecting areas that are important to the community as open spaces and connections to the Environment. To be designated, candidate Open Spaces must meet criteria specified in the NPPF.
- **Section 2.3. – Green Space Standards:** - Although a rural parish ES & BG only has moderate access to Accessible Natural Green Space (per BDBC criteria). Although considering sports grounds and play areas improves this, opportunities for attaining additional Accessible Natural Green Space should be sought. In addition, any new developments must be required to meet the Green Space Accessibility standards in the current BDBC Local Plan. Designation of Local Green Spaces can protect existing assets and provide a means.
- **Section 3. – ES & BG Overview/Constraints:** - The strategy for defining Local Green Spaces needs to maximise the potential of those areas that are accessible whilst considering options to make additional green space available as well as developing the linkages between those areas that do already exist.
- **Section 5. – Local Green Space Candidates:** - Eleven candidates for Local Green Spaces within ES & BG have been identified and preliminary assessment against the criteria conducted. These need to be reviewed in a wider forum with the aim of developing a short-list for adoption.

8. Addendum – Post-consultation selection of proposed Local Green Spaces

8.1. After the May 2022 public consultation period, the ES&BG Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group reviewed the 11 sites proposed and agreed that 10 of these should be used to create Policy ESBG 14.

8.2. Site B, Ecchinswell Stream, was excluded from the list because it cannot be clearly delineated in the same way as the other spaces. The stream is an extended linear feature where public access is via footpaths running along it or crossing it in places. These locations are separated by sections of private land without public entry. It is noted that non-designation as a local green space would not preclude, with suitable agreements, the inclusion of parts of the stream in nature recovery activities where this would be advantageous (e.g. alongside Local Green Spaces that have been adopted).

8.3. The 10 adopted green spaces are:

8.3.1. Bishops Green

- J. Eagle Road Recreation Area
- K. Beech Road Recreation area
- L. Harrier Road open space

8.3.2. Ecchinswell

- A. Ecchinswell Pond
- C. Village Hall Play Park & Recreation Ground
- D. St Lawrence's Church Yard
- E. Methodist Church Yard
- E. Old Church Yard
- F. Digweeds
- G War Memorial area