

Neighbourhood Plan
Safeguarding Local Green Spaces

“Local communities should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them.”

Paragraph 76 National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

CRITERIA

Paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework specifies that Local Green Space designation should only be used:

Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves:

Where the green area is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historical significance, recreational value(including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wild life: and

Where the green area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

PROPOSAL

- We identify **(Map 2)** for special protection three green spaces:
- The Woodwick fields. A corridor of land connecting the three village envelopes.
- The Tynning, Freshford
- The King George V Playing Field, Limpley Stoke,

each of which not only emphasise the distinctive character of the two villages but which also in their own unique way help shape and fashion the setting of both villages in a rural landscape. We believe that by affording these areas special protection the Neighbourhood Plan can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy inclusive communities in accordance with Section 8 para 69 (*Promoting Healthy Communities*) of the NPPF.

The Woodwick Fields

For ease of reference the Woodwick green space is called ‘the Woodwick fields’ but in fact embraces a tract of land spanning the A36 trunk route which is managed and maintained by the Highways Agency, and which consists of a number of fields which are still known by their historical names: Church Powells, Parson’s Break, Woodweeks, Lower Woodweeks, Upper Stoke Church Tynning, Lower Stoke Church Tynning, Fern Hills, Galleries, Limpley Ground and Winyates.

These names pre-date by many years the original construction of this turnpike road by the Black Dog Turnpike Trust in the 1830's. The new road bisected the fields of Upper Stoke Church Tynning, Parson's Break, Woodweeks and Pipehouse Field. Its construction changed forever and irrevocably the communities of Freshford and Limpley Stoke in that it divided these historic communities in two. The consequences of that bisection continue to be felt to this day and particularly in relation to matters of planning, traffic movement and road safety.

The settlement of Woodwick dates from Saxon times and was established on the fields called Church Powells and Parson's Break. In the Domesday record of 1086 is recorded that Woodwick comprised an area of two and a half hides (100 – 120 acres of land per hide) with a value of £1. Freshford is recorded as comprising two and one half hides with a value of £3. Today these two areas comprising the single parish of Freshford total some 561 acres – a figure consistent with the land boundaries described over 1000 years ago.

The parish churches of Freshford and Woodwick were amalgamated in 1464 but the Woodwick settlement did not survive and flourish. The Black Death was probably a contributory factor and so possibly was the limited availability of water and a rise in domestic cloth making. Although the name Woodwick lives on in the field names and in the physical evidence of settlements in mounds and undulations there is no precise archaeological evidence of the site of the church, and little other evidence save a track way, four building platform sites and a dove cote.

In Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Assessment (2003), Woodwick is mentioned in this context:

The Scheduled Monument of Hinton Priory represents the remains of a rare Carthusian priory and both Baggeridge and Peipards Farms are associated with deserted medieval settlements, the latter associated with the village of Woodwick.

The Woodwick settlement occupies high land which offers magnificent panoramic long views towards Salisbury Plain, the Westbury White Horse and the Marlborough Downs. In the middle distance can be seen the village of Westwood and each side of it, the river valleys of the rivers Frome and Avon. From this high point the land sweeps down south east to the villages of Limpley Stoke and Freshford with a particularly fine view of St Mary's Church, Limpley Stoke. Vantage points also set out new vistas to the walker and in particular reveal the extent of the Avon Valley north towards Solsbury Hill and beyond.

The Woodwick green space connects together the three proposed village envelopes. The land is farming grassland used predominantly for the grazing of cattle and sheep and for taking silage and hay. Many of the fields are enclosed by traditional dry stone walling. The grasslands attract deer, fox and badger. There are well established nesting trees for buzzard and rooks. In the winter months redwing, fieldfare and seagulls can be seen in large flocks feeding on the ground.

Public footpaths (see Plan, page 25) criss-cross the land and are used by many on a daily basis – for walking, for exercise and for going to the Galleries Shop, the Memorial Hall and the school. Lower Stoke Church Tynning provides the traditional ground for winter tobogganing.

The path ways connect the hamlets of Pipehouse, Park Corner, Upper Stoke, Middle Stoke and the Freshford village centre.

This green space has been drawn to reflect the local historical significance of this land, its value to the community and to serve also (at its point by Limpley Ground and Winyate) as a buffer zone to prevent coalescence of the two villages.

Recommendation

That Woodwick Fields be designated as Local Green Space for the following reasons;

The green space is in close proximity to the community it serves. This is particularly so where the villages of Freshford and Limpley Stoke historically have consisted of not only village centres but also a number of physically distinct and separate hamlets. The public footpaths that traverse the land are a distinctive feature of this landscape and connect the hamlets to the two village centres, the Freshford Memorial Hall, the Queen Elizabeth Playing Field (where the combined village fete is held annually) and to the Galleries Community Shop.

The green space is special to the community and holds particular local significance because of its defining history, its beauty, its recreational value and its richness of wild life.

It is not an extensive tract of land but is of local character. It touches the three proposed village envelopes, it gives emphasis to the distinctive character of the two villages shaped by separate hamlets of settlement, it seeks to underpin the strong sense of community and to help reverse to some degree the regrettable division of the community brought about by the A36 trunk road which slices the two villages in half.

The Tynning, Freshford.

The five acres of land known as the Tynning rest at the heart of the village and is registered as a village green (1970). (See Plan, page 33)

The War Memorial is sited at the boundary of the Tynning close by the cemetery.

This green space is in part in common use and has special value both as a village green and as a connecting green link between the two settlements of the village centre and Sharpstone.

It is embraced by the revised Freshford and Sharpstone Conservation Area (2007). (see Plan, Appendix K)

For many years the land has been in private ownership but only recently (March 2014) Freshford Parish Council has successfully negotiated for and completed the purchase of the land on behalf of the community.

It was the clear wish of a majority of the community that the land be brought into the ownership of the Parish Council and then managed and maintained in a way that is consistent with its village green status.

King George V Play Park, Limpley Stoke and land adjacent thereto.

The play park is in Middle Stoke and can be accessed from Woods Hill. See plan of play park and adjacent land (see Plan, page 21, Image B).

The Park was created in 1936 as a recreation and playing field, to be preserved in perpetuity as a memorial to King George Vth. It is managed by the Limpley Stoke Parish Council whose members act as trustees for the charity. The facilities include play equipment, a boules pitch, and cruck shelter and community barbeque.

A substantial majority of residents approved of the proposal to promote the opportunity of designating the unused land in Middle Stoke adjacent to the telephone exchange as a village green and investigate ownership thereafter. The land can be merged with the King George V Play Park, to be managed and maintained by the whole community. See Drawing as to how it might connect and be laid out.⁵

Recommendation

That the Tynning and King George V Play Park be designated as Local Green Space for the following reasons:

- **Their setting and character. They are distinctive.**
- **They are green lungs in the hearts of both villages.**
- **They are used for play and leisure and as focal points for community get togethers.**
- **They give vitality to village life.**
- **They contribute overall to the green infrastructure and aid biodiversity.**
- **The Tynning in particular is an identifiable green break between the settlement of Sharpstone and the Freshford village centre.**
- **Each place helps underpin Green Belt policy.**
- **They fulfill the criteria for special protection as identified in Paragraph 77 of the NPPF. Both areas of land lie in the centre of their respective villages and have established recreational value.**
- **We acknowledge that the Tynning village green already enjoys layers of special protection given its village green status and conservation area status. Nevertheless we see merit in underpinning this fact through the Neighbourhood Plan and for the purposes of the Plan treating each local green space as of equal merit and deserving of designation.**
- **The specific proposals for both areas of land are set out in Appendix 'A' overleaf.**

Appendix A

Proposals

The Tyning	King George V Play Park and adjacent land
To be bought by the Parish Council and to be managed and maintained in a manner consistent with its Village Green status and its Conservation status.	To promote the opportunity of designating the unused land in Middle Stoke adjacent to the telephone exchange (see photo opposite) as village green with the intention of the land being merged to become part of the play park. (See plan opposite as to how the scheme might look.)
To be open and accessible to all members of the community.	To manage and maintain the land for use by the whole community
The land in front of the War Memorial to be improved and delineated so that it reflects more closely the dignity of the site.⁷	
To explore the possibility of a small area of Tyning land adjacent to Freshford Lane and the School being used as a lay by for the school bus.	
To have footpath(s) to provide a safer walk to and from the school for children and their parents.	

Ends

