

Local Green Space designations in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan - Little Abington

Email received 27 October 2016

Dear Parish Council

We would like to ask your Parish Council for assistance as the District Council prepares its statement for the upcoming South Cambridgeshire Local Plan examination hearing regarding Local Green Space(LGS).

During the preparation of the Local Plan all Parish Councils within the district were given the opportunity to submit sites within their area for consideration as 'Local Green Space'. This was a new designation which allows local communities to identify important green areas and rule out new development other than in very special circumstances, rather like the Green Belt.

Your Parish Council was one which submitted sites which were assessed by the Council and as a result some LGS was designated within your village. I have attached a map of your village showing the proposed sites.

As you will be aware, the planning Inspectors examining our draft Local Plan published a new programme on 21 October that includes a timetable for hearings for the next blocks of South Cambridgeshire specific matters. These blocks of hearings will start in January 2017. These include Matter SC4: Natural and Historic Environment to be held from 17-20 January 2017 which will consider proposed LGS designations.

The latest Hearings Programme and the Matters and Issues document are available at the following link - www.scambs.gov.uk/local-plan-examination

As part of the examination the Inspectors have asked a number of questions relating to representations that have been made about some particular LGS designations in the Local Plan. Some respondents have objected to a site being proposed as a LGS and others have suggested amendments to the boundary of a proposed site. THE LIST OF SITES AND THE INSPECTORS QUESTIONS IS ATTACHED TO THIS EMAIL. The questions relating to the LGS in your village are on page 5/6 of the Matters document - SC4C xxxiii-xxxiv

 Little Abington.pdf	 SCDC Matter SC4.pdf
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xxxiii. Should the area of the LGS designation at the Scout Camp Site, Church Lane, Little Abington be constrained to the part of the site which is within the conservation area? Should any weight be given to the lapsed planning permission (S/0893/11) which relates to part of the LGS designation in this regard? (NH/12-102)

xxxiv. Would the land at Meadows, Bancroft Farm, Little Abington meet the designation criteria for LGS as it represents a significant area of open land/paddock in private ownership with little historical significance or recreational value and is surrounded by

residential development with access limited to a public right of way which crosses the site? (NH/12-104)

Only the Council and those who objected to the LGS designations and have asked to appear at the examination will now have an opportunity to submit further information to the Inspectors in the form of a Written Statement. As you are not an objector we would like to offer you the opportunity to assist us with our Written Statement, by providing information on the LGS within your village in particular:

- Could you confirm if you still support the designation of the LGS sites within your village?
- If so, could you provide reasons as to why the areas of green space proposed in your village should be identified for special protection?

The District Council's Written Statement including this issue has to be submitted to the planning Inspectors by 18 November 2016. The Inspectors will be considering whether the proposed LGS should be retained within the Local Plan including consideration of whether they are all locally special.

We would be happy to receive the Parish Council's views so they can be included in our response and help to support the proposed designation of LGS in your village. Please could you send us your comments by 18 November 2016. I recognise that this is a tight deadline. If you would like to respond but this timescale causes you any difficulty please let me know.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Alison

Alison Talkington | Senior Planning Policy Officer

Parish Council response sent 16 November 2016

Thank you for asking Little Abington Parish Council to contribute to SCDC's response. [The follow response](#) has been agreed by the Parish Council

1. Item xxxiii. Former Scout Camp Site Church Lane Little Abington

Little Abington Parish Council (LAPC) is still in support of the designation of this site as a Local Green Space.

Points of note

- With the exception of the small strip of land that was subject of the expired planning permission, which was within the village envelope, the former Scout Campsite is within the conservation area.
- LAPC does not agree that any weight should be given to the planning permission that was granted in 2011. The Parish Council objected to the planning application on several grounds. The District Councillor Tony Orgee supported the objections and LAPC was represented at the planning committee where the application was

considered. You will, no doubt, have records of the application and the decision-making process.

- Although there was no local support for the application we believe that SCDC was sympathetic to it on the grounds that it would provide funds for the local Scouts Association, who owned the land at the time having been gifted it in 1932, to invest in improving the Scout Camp. This was an argument that was included in the planning application. In fact, the Scout Association closed the site and put the land up for sale soon afterwards and, with very strong support from senior officers and the Leader of the District Council, the parish council had the site listed as an Asset of Community Value . Again, you will have records of this process
- It is unlikely that LAPC would support any developments on the site including the strip of land that previously had planning approval save perhaps for a development that enabled the continued use and enjoyment of the site for the benefit and the health and well-being of local communities, in particular younger people.
- Part of the site is now being used as an educational facility. Holme Court School is a small, independent, co-educational, day specialist school for pupils with dyslexia and associated difficulties. This is housed in the largest of the old scout buildings, which have been extensively refurbished and it is unlikely that the current owner would consider demolishing them in the near future.
- It should be noted that the remaining Scout Hut on the site is an anomaly built outside the village envelope. It has recently been renovated and much improved. It is unlikely that the parish council would support any further development of the site.
- If anything now that the land has been sold to a Community Interest Company called Abington Woods it is providing more benefit to local communities than it did when it was owned by the Scouts Association. The Abington Woods has been improved and once again it is being used by local scouts and other local community groups for camping and other outdoor activities; it is the site for regular outdoor activities for young children in the Abingtons as well as from other neighbourhood communities. The local community has contributed to working groups for clearing and maintaining the site and supported events such as World Rivers Day there.
- The site continues to be valued by the local community. LAPC supports the view that the site contributes to the health and well-being of younger members of the local community and their families and offers great potential as a source of enjoyment and benefit for the community as a whole .
- Biodiversity. The site backs onto the river which has had some involvement from the Local Ecology Officer. The river is also a source of education and development for the those who use the Abington Woods site whether this is nature lessons for young children or as part of teambuilding exercises for adults and teenagers.

2. Item xxxiv. The Meadows, Bancroft Farm, Church Lane, Little Abington,

The parish council is still in support of the designation of this site as a Local Green Space.

- Local residents have enjoyed and benefited from unlimited access, without interruption, to the westerly section of the meadow at Bancroft Farm for many years. Although the land was used for grazing in the past it remained open.
- There is a Public Right of Way across the meadow and until recently the westerly section was completely open. It is only in the last two years that a fence on either side of the footpath that restricts access and limits the enjoyment and benefit of the site for local residents, has been erected. The meadow is now used for occasional grazing by The Shetland Pony Welfare Trust.

- The easterly section of the meadow has been fenced off but accessible via a field access for many years. It has been used for grazing and there are stables in a small part of the field at the eastern end. The previous landowner offered part of it as a potential site for allotments some years ago.
- Biodiversity: Local residents have commented on the biodiversity of the meadow area in particular the variety of wildflowers. Some years ago the parish council planted trees there to replace dead trees that had TPOs. It has proved impossible to get the District Council to allocate TPOs to the replacement trees.
- The Parish Council is aware that several householders of the surrounding properties would object to the de-designation of the Meadow which is currently a PVAA.
- The parish council would not support the concept of any new developments encroaching on existing designated open/green spaces.
- There is a history of previous landowners making applications to develop the site. These were all refused.

3. SC4 item iv old farmyard with farm buildings Bancroft Farm, Church Lane, Little Abington.

- This is currently part of the designated PVAA.
- However, the parish council and the local community would support any proposal to develop the site of the old farmyard, i.e. the enclosed area that contains farm buildings which is a brownfield site.
- The Parish Council is party to discussions about development proposals for the farmyard site. A small development of about six small to medium size houses retaining features such as a flint wall would meet recognised housing needs in Little Abington
- Therefore, the site is not expected to meet the criteria of policy NH/11.
- There is no local support for any development out with the boundaries of the old farmyard that encroach onto the Meadow (see above) which should be designated as a LGS.
- In general the parish council supports limited developments in the village where there is a demonstrable need but only when confined to existing sites, not at the expense of a reduction in the amount of green space available to the village.

Kind Regards

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Little Abington Parish Council

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<http://www.theabingtons.org.uk/parish-councils/little-abington-parish-council/>

Please note I do not access the Parish Council's e-mail during office hours. If you need to contact me urgently please leave a voicemail or a text message on my mobile number