

EVIDENCE BASE L: LOCAL GREEN SPACE - Parish Council Questionnaire findings

- L.1 **Introduction.** This Evidence Base describes the process used by Backwell Parish Council to gather evidence to identify Local Green Space (LGS) for *BACKWELL FUTURE*. The evidence should be read in conjunction with that submitted by Backwell Residents Association which is at **EVIDENCE BASE K**.
- L.2 *BACKWELL FUTURE* builds on the 2010 Backwell Community Plan (BCPlan) [at **EVIDENCE BASE A**] which showed, through a multi-subject questionnaire, that residents attached the greatest importance to:
- ‘Farleigh Fields especially the field below St Andrew’s Church; Fields in the Moor Lane/Backwell Vale/West Leigh area.’*



Walkers in Field 1 ‘Church Field’ below St Andrew’s Church

- L.3 The Parish Council decided that more specific evidence was needed to meet the requirements of the NPPF and therefore a LGS questionnaire was developed in March 2011. It identified 24 sub-areas comprising individual fields, or combinations of

small fields, and invited residents to nominate any areas that were special and evidence their reasons.



Footpath crossing area 18 Moor Lane

- L.4 The design of the Questionnaire took account of advice received from the Campaign to Protect Rural England and North Somerset Council, about interpretation of the NPPF. The 24 field based sub-areas were considered appropriate to provide a flexible database of information in the situation where it was unknown what size of area might be deemed ‘*an extensive tract of land*’.
- L.5 The Questionnaire provided space for residents to nominate two sub-areas and advised ‘*Should you wish to nominate more than two areas please attach the details to this form*’. The process allowed for the designation of larger areas of land, by aggregation of sub-areas, if evidence showed that adjacent sub-areas were special to the community.
- L.6 In April 2012, the Parish Council distributed the LGS household Questionnaires. The Questionnaire is shown at L.7.

L.7 The Parish Council's March/April 2012 Questionnaire



BACKWELL FUTURE

Your Neighbourhood Plan

Local Green Space questionnaire March 2012



SHOULD THERE BE 'SPACE' IN BACKWELL FUTURE?

In our neighbourhood plan, 'Backwell Future', we have the opportunity to identify areas of important green space that we want to safeguard. Such areas would be formally designated as Local Green Space.

Fields near Sarns Court, the Recycling Centre, Chapel Hill, Backwell Common and Backwell Lake are safeguarded by the Green Belt and cannot be designated. Similarly, Backwell Playing Fields are closely related to the community and will be protected in our Plan. The administration is therefore about other areas in the village.

The green space issue was addressed in the Backwell Community Plan when residents identified that the most popular green spaces enjoyed by the community were:

- o Fothergill Fields and in particular the field north of the church
- (i) some of the water in the AWL Lake area.

The attached map shows 24 areas in Fothergill Fields and near Moor Lane, that might be considered for Local Green Space status. You might think the action would be to nominate them all. However, the Local Neighbourhood Planning Policy imposes constraints on what we can do. For example, we can't designate a green space just to stop it being developed. We can't propose an 'openable' type of land. Nor can we designate a green space just because there's a nice view from our window.

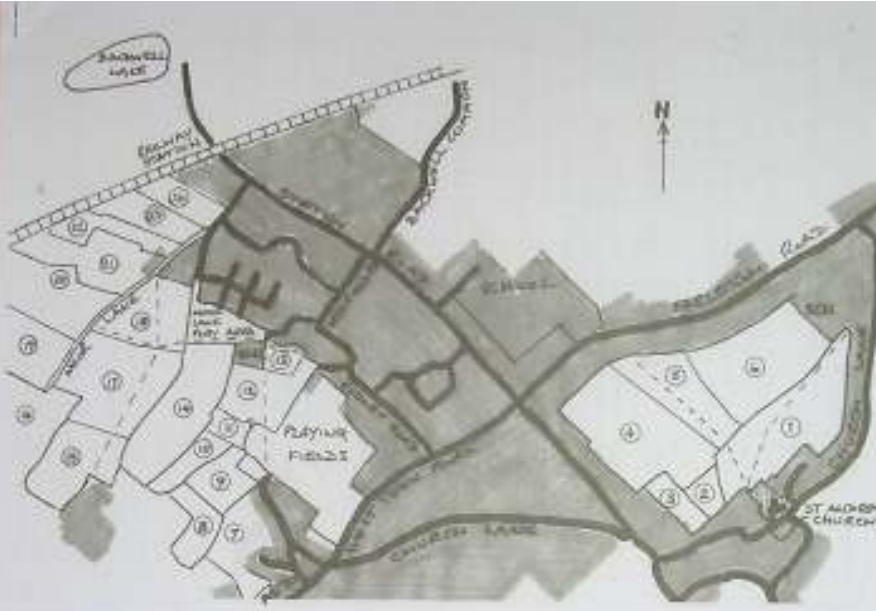
To achieve Local Green Space designation for any land we must be able to justify it objectively supported by evidence of past and current importance. This is where you come in. Please look at the map carefully, and if you think an area should be nominated as Local Green Space, write the number on the reply form and explain why.

Please send your feedback to the Parish Office, 43 Rodney Road, Backwell, Bodd. 31HR by 30 April 2012. We may wish to speak to you about any contributions to please tick down a contact number.

No doubt some of the areas on the map will not achieve Local Green Space designation. This does not imply they will be necessarily diminished for anything else.

Thank you very much for your help
Yours sincerely

Julie Stone Clerk to Backwell Parish Council



It is clear that an area can be considered for designation as Local Green Space if it needs to be done that the area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance that distinguishes it from other green areas. Possible reasons could be because of its beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife.

If any of these reasons apply please be specific. Examples of what may be acceptable evidence are: 'my family and friends have regularly played cricket on this field for over 3 years' or 'this field is the habitat for bats for several Special Plans, etc.' or 'this field is essential to the local landscape because...'

Please refer to the attached map showing areas 1 to 24 at Fothergill Fields, and areas 7 to 24 near Moor Lane. Some is marked here for an LWS area to be nominated. Should you wish to nominate more than two areas please attach the details to this form.

Area number is demonstrably special to my household because:

Why is this area more special than nearby areas?

How do you access this area?

Area number is demonstrably special to my household because:

Why is this area more special than nearby areas?

How do you access this area?

Please enter your: Name.....
Address.....
Tel number.....

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L.8 Procedure for processing the Questionnaire information.

- Completed Questionnaires were date stamped on receipt at the Parish Office, and placed in special files;
- Questionnaires were marked with an identifying number;
- Evidence from the Questionnaires was transposed to a database containing the 24 areas. The reasons for the nominations were categorised, to reflect the NPPF criteria, thus:
 - BEAUTY: of the land itself, or its uniqueness;
 - BEAUTY: the land was essential to the local landscape;
 - BEAUTY: the land provided a vantage for distant views;
 - HISTORIC IMPORTANCE: site of antiquity or historic event;
 - HISTORIC IMPORTANCE: history of community use;
 - RECREATIONAL VALUE: for exercise, walking and running;
 - RECREATIONAL VALUE: for games, playing and hobbies;
 - TRANQUILITY: a quiet area e.g. away from road and rail;
 - TRANQUILITY: safe environment e.g. for women & children;
 - RICHNESS OF WILDLIFE: Flora;
 - RICHNESS OF WILDLIFE: Fauna;
 - ACCESS: whether there is a public right of way to access the land;
 - Other significant evidence.

L.9 For each field area the reasons given in the Questionnaire were entered into the database; e.g. many residents mentioned species of flora or fauna which they had observed, and were interested in, and this was recorded in the relevant categories. The number of reasons was totalled for each field area to produce a 'reason score' (explained at L.13).

L.10 The total number of completed Questionnaires totalled 185 at the Draft Plan stage. Together with other responses received this rose to 291 at the end of the Consultation Period in January 2013. The following Table shows the results.

Location	Field number	Number of nominations	Reason score	Is there a public right of access to the land?
Farleigh Fields	1	199	793	Yes
	2	109	315	No
	3	106	307	No
	4	116	329	No
	5	181	674	Yes
	6	120	350	No
Moor Lane and West Leigh area	7	16	52	No
	8	13	31	No
	9	68	183	No
	10	65	177	No
	11	73	193	No
	12	123	396	Yes
	13	108	351	Yes
	14	83	225	No
	15	78	276	Yes
	16	23	95	No
	17	86	315	Yes
	18	120	405	Yes
	19	66	241	No
	20	66	243	No
	21	60	219	No
	22	12	53	No
	23	15	59	No
	24	18	32	No

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L.11 The following shows the ranking of the 24 fields by the number of nominations.

Key:

Farleigh Fields
Moor Lane Fields

Field number	Number of nominations	Reason score	Does the public have a right of access to the land?
1	199	793	Yes Two Public Footpaths
5	181	674	Yes Public Footpath
12	123	396	Yes Public Footpath
6	120	350	No
18	120	405	Yes Two Public Footpaths
4	116	329	No
2	109	315	No
13	108	351	Yes Public Footpath
3	106	307	No
17	86	315	Yes Public Footpath
14	83	225	No
15	78	276	Yes Public Footpath
11	73	193	No
9	68	183	No
19	66	241	Moor Lane is adjacent
20	66	243	Moor Lane is adjacent
10	65	177	No
21	60	219	Moor Lane is adjacent
16	23	95	Moor Lane is adjacent
24	18	32	Moor Lane is adjacent
7	16	52	No
23	15	59	Moor Lane is adjacent
8	13	31	No
22	12	53	Moor Lane is adjacent

Moor Lane is a Restricted Byeway

L.12 The following conclusions are drawn:

- a) The six Farleigh Fields are special to a greater number of residents than are the Moor Lane Fields;
- b) Many of the Moor Lane Fields are nevertheless special to a significant number of the local community;
- c) Fields 16, 24, 7, 23, 8 and 22 are special to relatively few of the community.

L.13 The 'reason score' helps to indicate the strength of the evidence. It was used to check whether any area with a modest number of nominations had many reasons why the land is special. In the event it may be observed that the reason scores correlate fairly closely with the number of nominations.

L.14 **Evidence provided by the Questionnaires.** 272 completed Questionnaires are contained in 3 lever-arch files in the Parish Office. In addition, LGS information was supplied on 19 Response Forms completed at the consultation Open Days, making a total of 291 submissions. [Note: the evidence from a survey of members of Backwell Residents Association and Backwell Environment Trust is separately reported at *EVIDENCE BASE K Local Green Space: Submission by Backwell Residents Association*].

L.15 The 291 submissions contain differing quantities and quality of evidence:

- a small minority of respondents simply indicate the areas that are special to them; but do not evidence any reason;
- the overwhelming majority of respondents describe the particular reasons why areas of land are special. Usually multiple reasons are described and, typically, respondents describe their walks on the land, their views of the landscape, the fauna and flora that they observe, the tranquillity of the land and suitability for walking with children and dogs, etc.;
- many respondents provided detailed evidence either freehand or in typed format extending to a separate A4 sheet (or more) attached to their completed Questionnaire;
- numerous respondents preferred to express their views of the importance of particular field combinations in letters to the Parish Council. This formalised their evidence and was accepted in lieu of completed Questionnaires;

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- several respondents stressed that Farleigh Fields comprised the best and most versatile agricultural land. One submission included a multi-page detailed record of historic planning applications and copies of the Appeal decisions rejecting development on these fields, and the related high quality agricultural land issue;
- One respondent included a 2011 survey showing that residents used the field behind St Andrews Church (Field number 1) for 27 different sports and recreational activities and had done so for more than 20 years. Copies of the declarations from 40 households and a sample of 50 of 500 available photographs are lodged with the LGS Questionnaires;
- Numerous respondents stressed the special nature of all 6 Farleigh Fields and a group of 12 fields at Moor Lane.

L.16 Backwell Parish Council concluded that due to modest support, as indicated by the Questionnaires, areas 7, 8, 16, 22, 23 and 24 were unlikely to meet the NPPF requirements for LGS status. The following areas were however considered to meet the NPPF requirements for designation as Local Green Space:

- a) Farleigh Fields numbered 1 to 6;
- b) Moor Lane Fields numbered 9 to 15 and 17 to 21.

L.17 The following map shows these two areas.

L.18 A different methodology was developed by Backwell Residents Association and Backwell Environment Trust as explained in ***EVIDENCE BASE K Local Green Space: Submission by Backwell Residents Association***. That document contains comprehensive photographs of the relevant fields.

L.19 Backwell Parish Council's consideration of the evidence and decision about the areas for designation is at **Section 12** of ***BACKWELL FUTURE*** and at **EVIDENCE BASE J**.



L.20 The two areas of Local Green Space are shown in yellow on the following map. The field numbers are those used on the Parish Council Questionnaire.

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