

Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan: Local Green Space designation justification

The draft Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan identifies five areas of land as locally valued green space to be designated as Local Green Space:

“Policy ENV3: Local Green Space

Our locally valued green spaces (green infrastructure) are identified on map X and are designated as Local Green Space. These Local Green Spaces (and the reason(s) for their designation) are:

- a) Severn Road Park Estate Green (used for recreation and community events)**
- b) Midland Road Park Estate Green (used for recreation and community events)**
- c) Boakes Drive Green (used for recreation and community events and noted for important wildlife)**
- d) Verney Fields (part of) (local significance due to beauty, historic landscape features, tranquillity, wildlife; a rural, recreational amenity close to town centre)**
- e) Court View Ponds (important wildlife)**

These areas will be protected for the reasons and uses set out. Development proposals on or likely to impact on the sites will only be supported where they:

- i) maintain or enhance the existing use and amenity value of the site;**
- ii) enhance the access to and use of the site where used for recreational purposes; and,**
- iii) have no adverse impact on the landscape, habitats or biodiversity of the site or (where unavoidable) satisfactorily mitigate such impact.”**

The government’s Planning Practice Guidance outlines the purpose of the designation:

“Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.”ⁱ

The purpose and criteria for designation are given in paragraphs 76 and 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework:

“76. Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.”ⁱⁱ

77. The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The 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 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**
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.”ⁱⁱⁱ**

Boakes Drive Green

Justification for designation as Local Green Space

Boakes Drive Green is an attractive area within the Boakes Drive and Barlow Close Estate built in the early 1990's and easily accessed from Stonehouse by footpath MS10 alongside Berryfields. It is an area of grass and trees flanked by the Stroudwater Navigation Canal. It is of interest for its wildlife. Stroud District Council currently own Boakes Drive Green. The area is well used for recreation by local residents offering beautiful views of the canal and Selsley hills and Penn Wood and rural tranquillity close to the centre of a busy town. Further details regarding the proposal to designate Boakes Drive Green are given in the *Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space Checklist Boakes Drive Green May 2016* and accompanying documents.

- **Proximity and location:** Boakes Drive Green is less than a kilometre away from Stonehouse town. It is both close to town and close to a local landmark, Stroudwater Navigation Canal, St Cyr's Church and Selsley Church which contains paintings by William Morris, and Stonehouse Court Hotel, mentioned in the Domesday Book.
- **Special to the local community, beauty, recreational value, value as a space for community events:** It is valued by local people for its views, beauty and rural character, for its recreational value as somewhere to walk, exercise and play and as an area where community events can be held, for example on New Year's Eve. Local support for keeping access to Boakes Drive Green has been demonstrated by a survey of local residents in May 2016 and letters of support from residents as well as Neighbourhood Plan consultation results.
- **Landscape character and beauty, tranquility:** The character of the landscape is recognised by local residents and their families as well as people from further afield who use the area. Wildlife are also frequent users of the green. It is also recognised within the Stonehouse Town Character Assessment (2016).
- **Wildlife:** The area is rich in wildlife, particularly birds.
- **Historic significance:** The area has historic significance for its connection to part of Stonehouse's canal and industrial heritage being close to the Stroudwater Navigation Canal. It is within the Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area.

Evidence

Evidence is summarised in *Stonehouse NP Local Green Space Checklist Boakes Drive Green May 2016* and the following supporting documents:

1. Map of Boakes Drive Green for Local Green Space proposal Stonehouse NP
- 2a-2k. Eleven photographs of Boakes Drive Green showing use by people and wildlife.
3. Boakes Drive Survey May 2016
4. Extract from Stonehouse Town Council Regeneration and Environment Committee Minutes 4 April 2016
5. E-mails from residents of Boakes Drive regarding use of Green.
6. Map of Stonehouse NP_conservation_areas

ⁱ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>

ⁱⁱ http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/8-promoting-healthy-communities/#paragraph_76

ⁱⁱⁱ http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/8-promoting-healthy-communities/#paragraph_77