

# **STURMINSTER MARSHALL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

## **LOCAL GREEN SPACES REPORT**



**JUNE 2021**

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# Local Green Spaces

## Policy background

The designation of Local Green Spaces is governed by guidance in paragraphs 99 & 100 of the 2019 National Planning Framework

99. The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should 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 updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.
100. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
1. a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  2. b) 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
  3. c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Within Sturminster Marshall Parish, a number of sites has been suggested as potentially qualifying for Local Green Space status and designation of these sites is thought to be consistent with the objectives set out in paragraph 99 of the National Planning Framework.

## Selection and Assessment

The sites detailed in this report have been selected based on the results of the initial consultation event and the household survey. Of the sites given high scores by people in the parish one, the Golf Course, was rejected because, although highly rated as a valued area for recreation and potential wildlife value, it does not qualify as it is defined as an extensive tract of land under the criteria set out in paragraph 100c of the National Planning Framework guidance notes.

Assessment was made using the framework set out in the guidance documents and based on a number of criteria.

Local Green Spaces within the parish fall into two main groups

1. Sites used for active recreation. Charborough Green and Churchill Close fall within this category.

2. Sites valued for their cultural value and used for more informal recreation. Maypole Green, Stocks Green, Timber Green and Trafalgar Green fall within this group.
3. Sites of wildlife value which are also used for informal recreation. This group comprises Bartons Ground, The Old Railway Line and Walnut Tree Field, although the last of these also has significant archaeological value, as a listed Ancient Monument.

Where plant species lists are given, these are based on casual observations by the members of the Environment Working Group of the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group rather than systematic sampling of the communities present. Nomenclature in these lists follows **Bowen, H. (2000): *The Flora of Dorset***. Pisces Publications, Newbury.





village and Eton: the living of St Mary's Sturminster Marshall was, for many years, in the gift of the college, meaning that it had control over the appointment of vicars and a number of them were actually former 'beaks' of Eton.

In a household survey carried out in 2020 by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, a significant number of respondents valued Bartons Ground as a valuable open space. Of the areas of semi-natural (as opposed to sown grassland used for more formal recreation) it was second in importance only to the Walnut Tree Field, which is also an area of MG1 grassland adjacent to the River Stour.

### **Meeting the criteria**

Bartons Ground is immediately behind houses in High Street and is connected to the latter by a footpath, so it fulfils the criterion of being reasonably close

The site is special because it provides both an enhanced diversity of wildlife between housing and relatively species-poor agricultural grassland. It is a tranquil location used extensively for quiet recreational activities.

Whilst the site has no great historical value, other than its connection to Eton College, and no dramatic scenery, it is still a location with a quiet beauty with the combination of grassland, trees and shrubs.

As part of what was once more extensive areas of mesotrophic grassland in the Stour Valley, and, especially with the temporary pond and ditches, it represents the character of a village that has been said to be built on natural springs.

The above features qualify Bartons Ground to be a Local Green Space.

### **Characterisation**

National Vegetation Classification Community MG1 *Arrhenatherum elatius* grassland.

*Arrhenatherum elatius* grassland is a widespread community in which coarse-leaved tussock grasses, notably *A. elatius* with usually smaller amounts of *Dactylis glomerata* and *Holcus lanatus*, are always conspicuous and generally dominant. Large umbellifers are frequent throughout and sometimes abundant, and the sequential flowering of first *Anthriscus sylvestris* and later *Heracleum sphondylium* is highly distinctive. Tall-herbs are generally infrequent, though a variety of species may attain dominance locally.

Above all, this is ungrazed grassland. It is characteristic of circum-neutral soils throughout the British lowlands and occurs on road verges, railway embankments, in churchyards and neglected agricultural sites, such as pastures and meadows. Without regular mowing, stands are eventually invaded by scrub.

The temporary pond has a distinctive vegetation, dominated by *Carex hirta* (Hairy Sedge). whilst the woodland areas contain a mixture of tree species in which Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) is the most common. Locally Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) or Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) form patches of limited size but, overall, the site is dominated by

*Arrhenatherum elatius* (False Oat-grass) with *Dactylis glomerata* (Cock's-foot) and *Alopecurus pratensis* (Meadow Foxtail) being the most abundant of the associated species. The most abundant tall herb is *Anthriscus sylvestris* (Cow Parsley), which assumes co-dominance in spring.

Other species in the grassland (whilst this is not a systematic compilation, it is the result of a large number of walks across the area in the spring and summer of 2020)

<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Rye-grass
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Meadow-grass
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
<i>Barbarea vulgaris</i>	Winter-cress
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground Ivy
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Sonchus oleracea</i>	Sow-thistle
<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	Lesser Stitchwort
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved Cranes-bill
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock

#### Temporary pond species

<i>Carex hirta</i> (dominant)	Hairy Sedge
<i>Glyceria fluitans</i>	Floating Sweet-grass
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Cuckoo-flower

Close to the backs of houses in High Street is a patch of suckering Elm (*Ulmus glabra*) trees which fail to reach maturity because of Dutch elm disease, and Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastaneum*).

Close to this is one patch of planted trees in which *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash) is most abundant but with some *Quercus petraea* (Sessile Oak) and *Betula pendula* (Silver Birch) and *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan). The other planted woodland adjacent to the golf course is of *Fraxinus excelsior* with some *Quercus robur* (Pedunculate Oak) and a sparse understorey of *Corylus avellana* (Hazel).

A short stretch of ditch across the central part of the site has *Prunus spinosa* (Blackthorn) and a single bush of *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn)

Individual trees of *Aesculus hippocastaneum* (Horse Chestnut), *Quercus robur* and *Q. petraea*, a Cherry and a single Japanese Maple are also present, whilst the hedgerow separating the site from the golf course is composed of a mixture of

*Fraxinus excelsior*

*Corylus avellana*

*Acer campestre* (Field Maple)

*Populus tremula* (Aspen), which is also suckering into Bartons Ground close to the kissing gate leading to the Gladwish plots.

*Aesculus hippocastaneum*

*Ulmus glabra*

*Sambucus nigra* (Elder)

As well as a range of “garden” birds (Blackbird, Song Thrush, Robin, Dunnock etc) Buzzard and Kestrel have been seen on Bartons Ground, suggesting that small mammals, such as field mice or voles, may also be present. Insects include the Poplar Hawkmoth, associated with the Aspen clump.



<b>Name of Local Green Space</b>	Bartons Ground	
<b>Location / Grid reference</b>	SY950998	
<b>Size (in hectares)</b>		
<b>Settlement to which it relates</b>	Sturminster Marshall village	<input type="checkbox"/> within <input type="checkbox"/> immediately adjoining Y <input type="checkbox"/> outside (specify distance)
<b>Reason site identified for review</b>	Quiet open space with semi-natural vegetation used for casual recreation	
<b>Accessibility</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> public open space <input type="checkbox"/> footpaths / bridleways	<input type="checkbox"/> commonland / permissive <input type="checkbox"/> clear views into site
<b>Current use and general description</b>	Used as open space, primarily by walkers and dog walkers with connections to a wider footpath network.	
<b>Qualities</b>	<b>High / Med / Low</b>	<b>Notes / Explanation</b>
<b>Landscape quality / importance (eg in key view from a public area)</b>	L	
<b>Historic or cultural significance</b>	L	The living of St Mary's Sturminster Marshall was, for many years, in the gift of Eton College: their ownership of this parcel of land is further evidence of the historic link between the College and the Parish
<b>Recreational value (can include places valued for their tranquillity)</b>	M	A quiet area close to the centre of the village providing ease of access and connections to wider footpath network
<b>Wildlife value</b>	M	The combination of grassland, woodland and an ephemeral pond provide a measure of diversity. In combination with the adjacent golf course, it also forms part of a more extensive wildlife corridor extending to Henbury Farm.
<b>Any existing development consents?</b>	Yes / No	No
<b>Landowner details (if known) and any feedback (once contacted)</b>	Owned by Eton College and leased by Sturminster Marshall Parish Council	
<b>Public interest (if evidenced eg local 'friends' group)</b>	The household questionnaire identified this site as one of high value to the community	



Bartons Ground



Temporary pond on Bartons Ground

## LGS2: Charborough Green



Charborough Green is an open area bounded by Railway Drive and Charborough Way within a modern housing development.

The area is used for casual recreation, especially by children (a junior goal is present on the site) and has been used for social fund-raising events. It is used overwhelmingly by those who live close by, rather than the community as a whole. It does, however, serve as a green break between the adjacent housing.

### Meeting the criteria

Charborough Green is within the settlement, being an open space contained by surrounding housing development.

The site has little landscape value and no historical connections.

However, it is a location of significant recreational value, especially in providing a safe space for children to engage in play and informal games. It also provides an amenity for residents in the immediate vicinity.

Although of lesser importance than some of the other suggested areas in the parish, Charborough Green, nevertheless, is a valued open space used extensively by those in surrounding houses.

On recreational ground, Charborough Green meets the requirements for designation as a Local Green Space.

Characterisation

An site is an area of, mainly, *Lolium perenne* (Rye-grass) recreational turf, with scattered trees of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), and Cherry (*Prunus* sp.) with a containing hedge of domesticated species.

<b>Name of Local Green Space</b>	Charborough Green	
<b>Location / Grid reference</b>	SY94589944	
<b>Size (in hectares)</b>	0.39	
<b>Settlement to which it relates</b>	Sturminster Marshall village	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>within Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> immediately adjoining <input type="checkbox"/> outside (specify distance)
<b>Reason site identified for review</b>	Informal recreation area within dense housing development	
<b>Accessibility</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>public open space Y</b> <input type="checkbox"/> footpaths / bridleways	<input type="checkbox"/> commonland / permissive <input type="checkbox"/> clear views into site
<b>Current use and general description</b>	The area is used for casual recreation, especially by children (a junior goal is present on the site) and has been used for social fund-raising events. It consists of an area of mown <i>Lolium perenne</i> (ryegrass) with scattered trees (flowering cherries and field maple) and a containing hedge.	
<b>Qualities</b>	<b>High / Med / Low</b>	<b>Notes / Explanation</b>
<b>Landscape quality / importance (eg in key view from a public area)</b>	L	The site is embedded within a modern housing estate
<b>Historic or cultural significance</b>	L	The site has no inherent features of historic or cultural interest
<b>Recreational value (can include places valued for their tranquillity)</b>	M	The area is used for informal games by people in the immediate vicinity and has been the site of fetes organised by local organisations.

<b>Wildlife value</b>	L	As an area of mown grass with a few scattered trees, the wildlife value of the site is low, though it does provide some variety with the urbanised locality.
<b>Any existing development consents?</b>	No	
<b>Landowner details (if known) and any feedback (once contacted)</b>	Dorset Council	
<b>Public interest</b> (if evidenced eg local 'friends' group)	Household survey identified the area as being of value, especially to local residents.	
<b>Other notes</b> eg links to footpath network, boundary definition etc,	In the context of the extensive modern development, this provides a "green lung" and an area used by neighbouring households.	



Charborough Green

## LGS3: Churchill Close



This open space was designed as an integral part of the original plan for local authority housing in the early 1950s.

Churchill Close is the main formal and informal recreation centre for Sturminster Marshall village. It is currently the location for both adult and junior football. A cricket square was formerly also present. At one side of the site is a children's play area. In the past, the site was used as the focus for major social events such as carnivals and flower shows.

### Meeting the criteria

Churchill Close is in the heart of Sturminster Marshall village and, indeed, the developing Dorset Council Local Plan has suggested that any future retail development should be located in close proximity to it to provide a true village centre.

The open nature of the site and lack of features other than mown grassland means that it has a very low wildlife value and cannot be regarded as scenic in the same way as the surrounding Green Belt. However, when taken in the context of the surrounding local authority-built housing, it does have a distinctive character which defines this part of the village. As such it has considerable historic and cultural significance.

The main value of Churchill Close is its use for organised sport for both adults and children. Without it, there would be no current locations in the village where such activities could take place.

It a household survey carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, Churchill Close was the most valued of all the open spaces in the parish.

On recreational grounds alone, Churchill Close should qualify for Local Green Space designation: the additional cultural and historic context within this is placed adds further weight to its case for inclusion.

<b>Name of Local Green Space</b>	Churchill Close	
<b>Location / Grid reference</b>	SY947998	
<b>Size (in hectares)</b>	2.36	
<b>Settlement to which it relates</b>	Sturminster Marshall village	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>within Y</b> <input type="checkbox"/> immediately adjoining <input type="checkbox"/> outside (specify distance)
<b>Reason site identified for review</b>	A large public open space within the heart of the village	
<b>Accessibility</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>public open space Y</b> <input type="checkbox"/> footpaths / bridleways	<input type="checkbox"/> commonland / permissive <input type="checkbox"/> clear views into site
<b>Current use and general description</b>	Used for both formal and informal recreation by all ages	
<b>Qualities</b>	<b>High / Med / Low</b>	<b>Notes / Explanation</b>
<b>Landscape quality / importance (eg in key view from a public area)</b>	M	This open space was designed as an integral part of the original plan for local authority housing in the early 1950s and, thus, defines the character of this part of Sturminster Marshall
<b>Historic or cultural significance</b>	L	The site holds no features of special historical significance. Its cultural value is associated with the vision of those overseeing the development of the public housing scheme
<b>Recreational value (can include places valued for their tranquillity)</b>	H	This is the main centre for both adult and junior football. A cricket square was formerly also present. At one side of the site is a children's play area. In the past, the site was used as the focus for major social events (eg carnivals and flower shows) and is thus part of the cultural heritage of village life.
<b>Wildlife value</b>	L	
<b>Any existing development consents?</b>	No	
<b>Landowner details (if known) and any feedback (once contacted)</b>	Sturminster Marshall Parish Council	
<b>Public interest</b> (if evidenced eg local 'friends' group)	This was the most valued of green open spaces by respondents to the household questionnaire	





Churchill Close



Churchill Close Children's Play Area

## LGS4: Market Place



This is the collective name we have applied to three connected areas of mown grassland bounded by Kings Street, Front Lane and Back Lane: Timber Green (LGS4A), Stocks Green (LGS4B) and Maypole Green (LGS4C). Trafalgar Green (LGS4D) is a small triangular grassy verge at the junction of Church Street and Back Lane. As part of the Sturminster Marshall Conservation Area these greens are bordered by some of the oldest buildings in the village.

These greens have a number of specimen oak and horse chestnut trees. Among these mature trees are those planted to commemorate the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar (on Trafalgar Green), Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (Maypole Green) and King Edward VII's coronation (Stocks Green). Timber Green, as the name implies was formerly used for storing timber. Close by Stocks Green is Johnnies Ditch, a location where drovers used to take stock to drink from the river: the site has been recognised as of special value within the conservation area by Sturminster Marshall Parish Council.

### Meeting the criteria

The greens are areas of permanent grassland with a number of broadleaf plant species in the heart of the old village and, because they are bounded by roads, are readily accessible.

The setting within the conservation area and the presence of mature trees mean that Maypole Green and Stocks Green/Timber Green have a high visual amenity value. A differential mowing regime, leaving some areas uncut, means that more species are able to flower and a greater range of vegetation heights provides suitable conditions for a greater diversity of invertebrates.

These areas all have obvious historic and cultural values as they relate to historic use and custom. The emblematic maypole on Maypole Green is still used for annual maypole dancing by pupils of the village First School.

The scenic value and the historical connections qualify these sites for inclusion as Local Green Spaces. They are already registered as Common Land.

### **Characterisation**

These greens fall within the MG6 (*Lolium perenne*-*Cynosurus cristatus*) community of the National Vegetation Classification. It is a common community of circum-neutral, damp, fairly fertile soils in lowland England.

Maypole Green, Stocks Green and Timber Green are treated as a single unit in this characterisation.

Indicative list of flowering plants present.

<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Meadow-grass
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow grass
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Soft Brome
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	Red Deadnettle
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Cranes-bill
<i>Geranium pratense</i>	Meadow Crane's-bill
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Cerastium holsteoides</i>	Common Mouse-ear
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	Clustered Dock
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley
<i>Allium vineale</i>	Wild Onion
<i>Viola odorata</i>	Sweet Violet
<i>Hypochoeris radicata</i>	Common Cat's-ear
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Dandelion
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell

In addition, Maypole Green has three pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) trees, Stocks Green has 3 oaks and one Horse-Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) and Timber Green has one Horse Chestnut.

<b>Name of Local Green Space</b>	Market Place, comprising Maypole Green, Stocks Green and Timber Green	
<b>Location / Grid reference</b>	ST9490020 & ST949002	
<b>Size (in hectares)</b>	0.24	
<b>Settlement to which it relates</b>	Sturminster Marshall village	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>within Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> immediately adjoining <input type="checkbox"/> outside (specify distance)
<b>Reason site identified for review</b>	Local recreational and cultural value	
<b>Accessibility</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>public open space Y</b> <input type="checkbox"/> footpaths / bridleways	<input type="checkbox"/> commonland / permissive <input type="checkbox"/> clear views into site
<b>Current use and general description</b>	Informal recreation. Three areas of mown grass with commemorative trees, a maypole (bearing the village emblem of a water rat) and a set of reproduction stocks	
<b>Qualities</b>	<b>High / Med / Low</b>	<b>Notes / Explanation</b>
<b>Landscape quality / importance (eg in key view from a public area)</b>	M	As part of the Sturminster Marshall Conservation Area these greens are bordered by some of the older buildings in the village, whilst the specimen trees provide an air of seclusion
<b>Historic or cultural significance</b>	H	The greens have high cultural significance as they relate to historic use and custom. The emblematic maypole on Maypole Green is still used for annual maypole dancing by pupils of the First School.
<b>Recreational value (can include places valued for their tranquillity)</b>	M	Quiet areas within the Conservation Area
<b>Wildlife value</b>	L	The areas are of mown grass, affording little wildlife value, though the trees do give some structural and biological diversity.

<b>Any existing development consents?</b>	No
<b>Landowner details (if known) and any feedback (once contacted)</b>	Sturminster Marshall Parish Council (Common land)
<b>Public interest</b> (if evidenced eg local 'friends' group)	These greens (together with the very much smaller Trafalgar Green) are within the conservation area and all have memorial trees
<b>Other notes</b> eg links to footpath network, boundary definition etc,	Trees on these greens commemorate the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar (Trafalgar Green), Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (Maypole Green) and King Edward VII's coronation (Stocks Green)



Stocks Green & Timber Green



Maypole Green



Trafalgar Green

## LGS5: The Old Railway Line



This site is part of the old trackbed of the former Somerset & Dorset Railway line and provides a connection between Newton Road and Railway Drive. Currently it is an isolated section of the North Dorset Trailway. It is hoped that in the future connections can be made with sections leading northwards to Spetisbury and south-eastwards to Corfe Mullen. The site consists of a footpath, verge and hedgerows providing habitat for a range of common species.

### Meeting the criteria

The site is within the village envelope and readily accessible from both ends.

From its elevated position it does give views across the fields of Springfield Farm and out towards Newton Peveril.

Its cultural and historic significance lies in the fact that it is part of the former railway system.

It is not of especially high wildlife value, though the combination of trees, shrubs and verge vegetation does make a useful contribution to the overall biodiversity of the parish.

The site is well-used by walkers and dog walkers.

The combination of features above make this location suitable for designation as a Local Green Space.

### Characterisation

A wide, bare earth path on the top of an embankment.

The embankment carries a variety of trees and shrubs, mainly Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) with smaller numbers of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Wytch Elm (*Ulmus glabra*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and Cherry Plum (*Prunus cerasifera*). Also present is a patch of Cypress (*Cupressus* sp.).

Much of the area below the tree cover is relatively bare, with patchy distribution of a number of species which are locally dominant:

<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging Nettle
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Cuckoo-pint
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	Lesser Celandine
<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	Ivy-leaved Speedwell
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens

Other species include:

<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Allium triquetrum</i>	Three-sided Leek
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock
<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>	Wood Dock
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Deadnettle
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Teasel
<i>Iris foetidissima</i>	Stinking Iris
<i>Viola odorata</i>	Sweet Violet
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willow-herb
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Meadow-grass
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False Brome
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>	Alkanet
<i>Veronica agrestis</i>	Green Field Speedwell
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common Vetch
<i>Festuca pratensis</i>	Meadow Fescue
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog
<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	Barren Brome

Some garden escape species are also present such as Spanish bluebell and cultivated varieties of Primula and yellow archangel.



At the northern end of the railway line, where a slope has replaced the former steps, early successional plants are found on the exposed chalk fill of the embankment. These include:

<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye Daisy
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willow-herb
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens
<i>Taraxacum officinalis</i>	Dandelion
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Strawberry
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Cranes-bill
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle
<i>Crepis biennis</i>	Rough Hawk's-beard
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Bird's-foot Trefoil
<i>Vicia hirsuta</i>	Hairy Tare
<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	Clustered Dock
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Knapweed
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Teasel
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
<i>Linaria purpurea</i>	Purple Toadflax (garden escape)

Together with seedlings of *Aesculus pseudoplatanus* (sycamore) and young plants of *Crataegus monogyna* (hawthorn)

<b>Name of Local Green Space</b>	Old Railway Line	
<b>Location / Grid reference</b>	SY945998 to SY947996	
<b>Size (in hectares)</b>	0.62	
<b>Settlement to which it relates</b>	Sturminster Marshall village	<input type="checkbox"/> within <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> immediately adjoining <input type="checkbox"/> outside (specify distance)
<b>Reason site identified for review</b>	Heritage value as part of defunct Somerset & Dorset Railway, recreational value and wildlife	
<b>Accessibility</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> public open space <b>Y</b> <input type="checkbox"/> footpaths / bridleways	<input type="checkbox"/> commonland / permissive <input type="checkbox"/> clear views into site
<b>Current use and general description</b>	Currently used as a footpath connecting two parts of village	
<b>Qualities</b>	<b>High / Med / Low</b>	<b>Notes / Explanation</b>
<b>Landscape quality / importance (eg in key view from a public area)</b>	L	
<b>Historic or cultural significance</b>	M	Historical value as part of old railway system
<b>Recreational value (can include places valued for their tranquillity)</b>	M	A quiet walking area within the main body of the village. It forms part of a link to the more extensive railway to North Dorset
<b>Wildlife value</b>	M	A footpath, verge and hedgerows providing habitat for a range of common species and providing a link to more extensive linear features towards Spetisbury
<b>Any existing development consents?</b>	Yes / No	NO
<b>Landowner details (if known) and any feedback (once contacted)</b>	Owned by Dorset Council and managed by the Dorset Countryside Team	
<b>Public interest</b> (if evidenced eg local 'friends' group)		
<b>Other notes</b> eg links to footpath network, boundary definition etc,	Part of the, currently discontinuous, trailway	



Old Railway Line



Northern End of Old Railway Line

## LGS6: Walnut Tree Field



The site is within the Sturminster Marshall Conservation Area with views across the Stour valley and adjacent to St Mary’s Church and the churchyard. The field is a listed Ancient Monument of archaeological value, containing the buried remains of a medieval village field system.

Walnut Tree Field was, in the past, referred to as “The Orchard,” An old apple tree provides a clue to its former designation whilst the presence of an old walnut tree (*Juglans regia*) is the defining feature of the field and is held to be of significant local value. A number of younger apple trees have been planted in the field in recent years.

This is a location for quiet recreational activity with access to the River Stour. High value to the community as a much-used space for dog walking throughout the year and in the warmer months it is used for bathing in the river and for some water sports. It is also valued for its wildlife and tranquility. The combination of grassland, the river and its marginal vegetation provides a measure of diversity for wildlife and the management objectives of the Dorset Countryside Team are to maximise this value by appropriate mowing regimes.

### Meeting the criteria

The field is adjacent to the older part of the village, designated as a conservation area, and close by the Market Place greens. Thus it is readily accessible.

The scenic value of the site is partly determined by its proximity to St Mary’s Church but mainly a result of its location at the side of the River Stour, with additional views across to

the fields on the further bank and more the distant higher ground towards the Badbury Rings road.

The historic context is recognised by its listing as a Registered Ancient Monument.

The wildlife value of the site is based on the combination of grassland, river and riverside communities. The objectives of management are to enhance this value further by a mowing regime that leaves areas with taller vegetation.

It is an area for quiet recreation, though some river-based activities do also take place on a limited scale. It is also seen as an important area for people to interact with, and learn about, wildlife.

The historic, wildlife and recreational importance of the Walnut Tree Field make it highly suitable for designation as a Local Green Space.

### **Characterisation**

Walnut Tree Field is an area of MG1 (*Arrhenatherum elatius* grassland), using the National Vegetation Classification. Current management consists of mowing well-defined pathways between blocks of taller vegetation, left unmown to encourage a wider diversity of invertebrates which, in turn should encourage a wider diversity of vertebrates.

Within the field the grassland community is locally dominated by different species, giving a mosaic of habitats.

#### Indicative species list

<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow Foxtail
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Rye-grass
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Meadow-grass
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue
<i>Festuca arundinacea</i>	Tall Fescue
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging Nettle
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Geranium pratense</i>	Meadow Crane's-bill
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Dandelion
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	Lesser Celandine
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	Clustered Dock
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover

<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Bramble
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's Purse
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Deadnettle
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Cuckoo-pint
<i>Geranium molle</i>	dove's-foot crane's-bill
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>	Alkanet
<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	Red Deadnettle
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog Rose
<i>Cerastium holostoides</i>	Common Mouse-ear
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Ox-eye Daisy

A number of garden escapes can be found close to the fence separating the field from the gardens of houses in Back Lane.

The vegetation changes beside the river and is dominated by willow and elm trees with a distinctive ground flora

<i>Salix fragilis</i>	Crack Willow
<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	Wytch Elm
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple
<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	Corky-fruited Water-dropwort
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging Nettle
<i>Symphytum officinale</i>	Common Comfrey
<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	Reed Canary-grass
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	Lesser Celandine
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Rye-grass
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Bramble
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's Purse
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass
<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>	Water Forget-me-not
<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	Wavy Bitter-cress
<i>Symphiocarpos albus</i>	Snowberry (possible garden escape)

The riverside setting also contributes to the diversity of birdlife including species such as Heron, Kingfisher and Little Egret, as well as Swallow, Chiffchaff, Blackcap and Sedge Warbler. Waterside insects such as Common Mayfly and Banded Demoiselle may also be seen here.

<b>Name of Local Green Space</b>	Walnut Tree Field	
<b>Location / Grid reference</b>	ST9500004	
<b>Size (in hectares)</b>	1.20	
<b>Settlement to which it relates</b>	Sturminster Marshall village	<input type="checkbox"/> within <input type="checkbox"/> immediately adjoining <input type="checkbox"/> outside (specify distance)
<b>Reason site identified for review</b>	Cultural significance and recreational value, being the only public open space with access to the river	
<b>Accessibility</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> public open space <b>Y</b> <input type="checkbox"/> footpaths / bridleways	<input type="checkbox"/> commonland / permissive <input type="checkbox"/> clear views into site
<b>Current use and general description</b>	Informal recreation. This is an area of lowland mesotrophic grassland bordering the River Stour.	
<b>Qualities</b>	<b>High / Med / Low</b>	<b>Notes / Explanation</b>
<b>Landscape quality / importance (eg in key view from a public area)</b>	M	The site is within the Sturminster Marshall Conservation Area with views across the Stour valley and adjacent to St Mary's Church and the churchyard
<b>Historic or cultural significance</b>	H	The field is a listed Ancient Monument with archaeological value, with buried remains of a medieval village
<b>Recreational value (can include places valued for their tranquillity)</b>	H	A location for quiet recreational activity with access to the River Stour. The old Walnut Tree in the centre of the field is regarded as a feature of note for local people
<b>Wildlife value</b>	M	The combination of grassland, the river and its marginal vegetation provides a measure of diversity for wildlife
<b>Any existing development consents?</b>	Yes / No	No
<b>Landowner details (if known) and any feedback (once contacted)</b>	Owned by Dorset Council and managed by the Dorset Countryside Team	
<b>Public interest (if evidenced eg local 'friends' group)</b>	Noted as a location of significant value in responses to the household questionnaire	



Walnut Tree Field



River Stour at Walnut Tree Field



# Appendix 1. Locations of proposed Local Green Space sites





## Appendix 1. Responses from Household Questionnaire

### Answers to Question 36 Valued green spaces

Churchill Close	133
Walnut Tree Field	99
Charborough Green	70
Maypole Green	51
Barton's Ground	47
Stocks Green/Timber Green	33
Footpaths/bridleways	14
Golf Course and paths round it	12
Fields around village (possibly some double counting with footpaths)	11
Old railway line	10
Riverside	9
Moor Lane	6
Millmoor	3
Arch Ground	2
Mapperton fields	1
Lamplands	1
All green spaces	64
None	4
Nil return to this question	51
Other comments ref value of open spaces with no specifics	5

Of those saying that none were valuable, 2 were from Jubilee Cross and 2 from the main village

Of the nil returns, 3 were from Henbury, 3 from Mapperton/Almer and 8 from Jubilee Cross. The remaining 37 were from the main village.

Of those 70 valuing Charborough Green, and mentioning it specifically, 30 were from post codes in the immediate vicinity. Of the remaining respondents, 11 replied "both of the above." This may have been because these were the only two valued or because the respondents did not realise that these were examples, rather than specific references. The question asked which green spaces, (eg Churchill Close and Charborough Green) were valued.