

Planning Department
Dorset Council
County Hall
Colliton Park
Dorchester
DT1 1XJ

26 August 2026

Our Ref: MM/3167/0826

RE: Proposed Local Green Space

Dear Sir / Madam

Acorus Rural Property Services Ltd (Acorus) has been instructed by the legal owners of the land to the south of The Grange, Church Road, Bradford Abbas, Sherborne, DT9 6RF (herein referred to as 'the Site'), to prepare a letter of objection in relation to the proposed designation of the Site as a Local Green Space within the draft Bradford Abbas and Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan (draft Neighbourhood Plan).

We are informed that, unfortunately, the landowners of the Site have received limited contact regarding the proposed designation of their land as a Local Green Space (LGS). Due to the lack of contact from the Parish Council, the landowners missed the first opportunity to provide comments on the proposed LGS designation within the draft Neighbourhood Plan consultation in April 2026. Objections were issued later to the Parish Council, however, the landowners received no acknowledgement to their comments.

Paragraph 2.7.4 of the draft Neighbourhood Plan suggests that each landowner of proposed LGS sites were contacted ahead of proposing a LGS. The landowners has however had an experience contrary to this statement. This letter has therefore been prepared on behalf of the landowners, setting out their objections to the proposed designation.

It is noted that the draft Neighbourhood Plan refers to the site as 'Gollops Ground' however, the site is referred to by the landowners as 'land to the south of The Grange' and this letter has been drafted on that basis. This is possibly another reason as to why the landowners were only aware of the proposed designation at a late stage as the name is inconsistent with that recognised by the landowners deeds.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised on the 17th August 2026. Annex A of the new NPPF states that neighbourhood plans submitted to the local planning authority on or before the date of publication of the revised framework should continue to be prepared in accordance with the December 2024 version of the NPPF. As the draft Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Dorset Council on the 26th May 2026, it is anticipated that the draft Neighbourhood Plan will be examined against the 2024 NPPF. This letter has therefore been drafted on the basis of the above.

Paragraph 106 of the NPPF (2024) states that:

106. 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.

In particular reference to the above, Paragraph 106 requires a LGS designation to be 'consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services'. In this instance, the use of the site being agricultural is forgotten and offered less significance than the site being designated as a LGS. Without the agricultural operation of the site, the land would be unkept and in a poor condition.

Paragraph 107 of the NPPF (2024) sets out the criteria to be met in designating a Local Green Space:

107. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- 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*
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

Paragraph 108 of the NPPF (2024) goes on to state:

108. Policies and decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts set out in chapter 13 of this Framework.

In considering the above, there are three arms of Paragraph 107 which must be met.

Part a) requires a LGS to be 'in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves'. The land to the south of The Grange is located to the south of the village of Bradford Abbas and has a footpath (N6/3 and N6/9) around the field boundary. Whilst being located on the village outskirts, the site is considered to be within reasonably close proximity to the community it serves. Part a) is therefore considered as met.

Part b) requires a LGS to be 'demonstrably special' and hold a 'particular local significance'. In reviewing the draft Neighbourhood Plan, the site is considered to be special and hold significance as 'the community previously had wider use of the field to access the river Yeo, and whilst this has been changed as a result of the change in ownership, the route along the river has now been added to the definitive map. The field contributes considerably to the character of the village. Views down to the river and up to the parish church are important, and the river banks support wildlife.'

The landowners wish to refer specifically to reference made regarding the former '*wider use of the field to access the river Yeo*' and particularly, paragraph 4.1.4 of the draft Neighbourhood Plan which states that the former fencing of the public right of way (PROW) was a great loss, citing that '*residents...had enjoyed uninterrupted access to the riverbanks for generations*'. It is noted that this former access was unofficial, albeit a PROW has now been established.

The landowners challenge that the site holds any more significance than that of any other agricultural land surrounding the village and seen elsewhere in the rural countryside. The site is not considered to hold any historic value, is deemed as ordinary, and whilst reference is made to the riverbanks supporting wildlife, no supporting evidence from ecologists has been provided to support the site as offering above and beyond that of ordinary wildlife and species of the countryside.

It is noted that the landowners offer the subject site for grazing to local farmers and therefore, the grassland and any surrounding potential habitat is considered to be of relatively low value. It is also to be noted that users of the footpath must keep to the routes as shown on the definitive maps and must not trespass onto the landowners field for personal gain. The reasons offered within the draft Neighbourhood Plan in favour of part b) are therefore unfounded.

With regard to part c), the site must be considered local in character and not an extensive tract of land. As above, the site is located to the south of the village and is a parcel of agricultural land, operated for an agricultural purpose (grazing/cropping of hay) and should not be mistaken for a public open space which is available elsewhere in the village.

In reviewing the above and adherence towards Paragraph 107 (a-c), the proposed LGS has not met the required tests of the NPPF in full and that the site holds no demonstrably special value or significance to place the Site above that of any other agricultural parcel of land surrounding the village.

The landowners kindly ask Dorset Council to remove the subject site from the proposed LGS designation as currently set out in the draft Bradford Abbas and Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan for the reasons set out above.

Yours faithfully



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Associate

Acorus Rural Property Services Ltd.