

ONG-EF800

Ongar Local Green Space Assessment and Proposals 2020

Green Spaces in Ongar

The analysis that is contained in EFDC Open Space Strategy Final Report Nov 2017 (EB703) concludes that for the town of Chipping Ongar that there is an overall deficit of Open Space requirement for the period of the EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033. This is broken down as:

- Amenity Greenspace deficit 1.8ha
- Public Parks & Gardens 6.4 ha
- Facilities for children and Young People (LAPS, LEAPS AND NEAPS) of 1.9ha
- Natural and seminatural Greenspace 3.81ha
- Allotments 0.13ha

There is a proposed further loss of informal open space used by the community to make way for new development in EFDC Local Plan on Bowes Field (ONG-R2), this being part of West Ongar Concept Plan, despite being also identified by EFDC as Woodland and Semi-Natural Open Space with Public Access (SO2) but incorrectly located on map PPG17¹.

This Proposal supports the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan submission version August 2021 section 5.2 Rationale: Local Green Space and Policy ONG-CT1 Local Green Space identifying four as designated Local Green Spaces

- LGS1 Land Adjacent to Ongar Castle
- LGS2 Jubilee Natures Reserve (otherwise known as Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve
- LGS3 Land East of Cripsey between Bansons Lane and Victoria Road
- LGS4 Land between Longfields, Coopers Hill and farmland

These locations are shown on the map in the appendix and the designated status would protect them as valued amenity spaces

For status of designated Local Greenspace 3 areas used and valued by the community are identified:

- one as a Public Park status (LGS1),
- two as Woodland and Semi-Natural Green/Open Space with Public Access (LGS2 and LGS3) (and
- another as Amenity Greenspace or Managed Open Space with Public Access (LGS4)

This Proposal provides additional protection to LGS2 and LGS4 already identified within 4 Global's Report of 2017.

¹ See PPG17 map in appendix

Local Green Space LGS1 (also known as Hoppitt Field). Grid Reference TL554032

1.	<p>General Information: This is a parcel of land adjacent to Ongar Castle which is named Hoppitt Field on the 1838 Tithe Award Map for Ongar. This is an unenclosed grassy field and is linked by a narrow footpath to the Pleasance Gardens adjacent to Ongar High Street.</p> <p>On its north side it shares a boundary with the 6.78 hectares of the Love Lane Jubilee Park which provides a range of sports facilities to the community.</p> <p>This field is owned by the Buxton Family who reside at Ongar Castle.</p>
2	<p>Planning History. This site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt.</p>
3	<p>Size scale and ‘local nature’ of Proposed Local Green Space</p> <p>This is level grassy area covering 1.94 ha which has been cut annually in the past for hay. It is bordered with mature trees along western and southern boundaries. There is an interrupted hedge with mature trees separating it from the sports field to the north. Its eastern boundary provides far reaching panoramic views over the wooded valley of the River Roding. A well-used footpath runs alongside the moat of Ongar Castle linking the western edge of the field to the town centre and eastwards towards the ancient settlement of High Ongar on the other side of the Roding Valley.</p> <p>The local landmark of the Brentwood Telecommunications Mast is visible to the southeast.</p> <p>The network of footpaths through this area link into the Essex Way, St Peter’s Way and the Three Forests’ Way, all very popular long-distance footpaths well used by ramblers wishing to explore the county.</p> <p>A fine mature horse chestnut tree near the Scout Hut is one of the 50 Favourite Trees of the Epping Forest District. It is a popular recreational area, well used by dog walkers and others taking exercise.</p> <p>Permission is obtained from the landowner to use this field for occasional events or as an occasional car park for the Ongar Town Festival</p>
4	<p>Need for Local Green Space</p> <p>Since there is a deficit of 1.9 ha of Amenity Greenspace within the Civil Parish of Chipping Ongar, the continued availability of this site for general informal recreation helps to overcome this shortfall.</p>
5	<p>Evidence to show that the green area is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</p> <p>This site is 300 m from the High Street which is the centre of the community and 750 m from the crossing point on the Four Wantz roundabout to the north of the town for residents in Shelley. It is a short walk for residents in other parts of the town. It is very popular with residents of all ages and especially those who are dog walkers. Visitors who come by bus or on the Heritage Railway can easily access this location.</p>
6	<p>Evidence to show that the green area is ‘demonstrably special to a local community’</p> <p>That this location is well used on a daily basis is an indication that local residents appreciate as somewhere special to go for a walk, take photographs, or undertake more energetic activities such as jogging.</p>

7	<p>Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty’</p> <p>With its open aspect and commanding views across this section of the Roding Valley it is a very popular location for anyone walking through this area. There is mounting scientific evidence that being outside in the fresh air brings considerable health benefits to all. The ability to see distant views of a wooded landscape under a wide-open sky with tranquillity and minimal intrusive traffic noise only adds to such health benefits.</p> <p>The varied habitats of open grassland and surrounding screen of trees and hedgerow planting provide opportunities for the observation of assorted wildlife, especially larger insects such as butterflies and birds, another aspect which enhances human wellbeing. Rabbits are present in this locality as are foxes and badgers. Various species of bat have been recorded here too.</p>
8	<p>Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its historical significance’ if applicable</p> <p>This location is adjacent to the historic Ongar Motte and Bailey Castle which is an Ancient Monument and nearby information boards provide some information about this. The field is adjacent to the moat, ramparts and motte which are clearly visible and is within its historic setting</p>
9	<p>Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its recreational value (including as a playing field)’ if applicable</p> <p>This tranche of open land is very popular with residents and visitors to the area as it provides not just the extensive views and the opportunity to appreciate the fresh air of this location, but it is linked to the adjacent Love Lane recreation facilities which include a playground, zip wire, café and playing fields. As stated above, residents use the field for dog walking and jogging in particular.</p>

Local Green Space LGS2 Jubilee Nature Reserve High Street, Ongar, CM5 9HD (also identified by EFDC as SO5) **Grid Ref TL 551 027**

1.	<p>General information: Formerly called the Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve, it was renamed Jubilee Nature Reserve in 2015. It covers 1.12 ha and is now owned and managed by Ongar Town Council.</p> <p>It is located to the south-west of Chipping Ongar Town Centre and occupies a thin strip of land between the Cripsey Brook and a post war residential development. It is in the flood plain of the Cripsey Brook and is regularly flooded during periods of heavy rainfall.</p> <p>It has two sections which reflect its previous land use history. The northern section of 0.49 ha was used for grazing donkeys and ponies as a number of the local residents held garden licences issued by Essex County Council. Although this form of grazing ceased in 2007, this area still has short grass with some wildflowers.</p> <p>The southern area consisted of 0.63 ha a former open field which had been unmanaged since the early 1980s so was covered with scrub.</p>
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	<p>In October 2007, teams from Epping Forest CountryCare, working in partnership with the Town Council, began to transform the redundant land into a nature reserve and public open space. Initial funding for the restoration project was secured from two sources, Essex County Council (£10,000) and the BBC Breathing Spaces (£6,500). and this has enabled a whole range of projects to be undertaken to improve the site.</p> <p>Improvements included improved access with an upgrade of the existing footpath and a new ramp from the High Street. Local primary schools took part in tree planting in October 2010 and several fetes have been held on the site.</p> <p>There is pedestrian access to the site is via a public footpath (Ongar 14) which runs through the southern site from the High Street to Rodney Road. In dry conditions its hardened surface is suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs.</p>
2	Planning History: Since October 2012 this site has protection as Queen Elizabeth II Fields in Trust. It is owned and maintained by Ongar Town Council.
3	Size scale and ‘local nature’ of Proposed Local Green Space 1.1ha site was designated as Local Nature Reserve in 2007. To the north there is 240m of a green corridor along the banks of the Cripsey Brook to the crossing at Banson’s Lane, which is in private ownership. This adds value to this site, linking it to the rest of the 14 km upstream course. The green corridor extends south eastwards beneath Ongar Bridge for approximately a further 2 km downstream to its confluence with the River Roding at Hallsford Bridge. There is an automatic monitoring station on the Brook at Banson’s Lane to record water levels.
4	Need for Local Green Space There is already a Natural and seminatural Greenspace deficit of 3.81ha. Further protection against a variety of types of development and encroachment would be beneficial.
5	Evidence to show that the green area is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves It lies immediately behind the High Street (and bus stop) and a housing estate. Footpath Ongar 14 runs through the Reserve connecting the High Street to Rodney Road and the bridge across a small stream is maintained by Ongar Council.
6	Evidence to show that the green area is ‘demonstrably special to a local community’ As an indication of its standing within the local community this open space has been used to host various celebrations have been held on the site including Arts Festivals and the installation of a plaque in 2012, marking its change of name for the Queen’s Jubilee. The most recent event was the Ongar Town Show in May 2019 which included very popular donkey rides.
7	Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty’ Local residents use this area for regular dog walking and as access to and from the High Street to the houses in Greensted and to Chipping Ongar Primary School some 500 m away.
8	Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its historical significance’ if applicable

	As a tranquil riverside walk this area provides the local residents with the opportunity to walk through a wildlife corridor away from the traffic on the High Street. hear the flowing waters of the Cripsey Brook or sit on a bench in the sunshine to meditate.
9	<p>Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its recreational value (including as a playing field)’ if applicable</p> <p>It is a cherished and much used Local Nature Reserve. The site has huge potential for both public amenity as well as for its biodiversity.</p> <p>It is located on the fringe of the town, surrounded by houses population but with easy level access. Its varied mixture of trees, scrub and grassland bordering the Cripsey Brook provide opportunities to observe a range of species including a possible flash of blue as a kingfisher flies along the water course! Mammals noted here include moles, bats, foxes, water voles and badgers. Grass snakes have been seen here too.</p>

Local Green Space LGS3: Land Adjacent to Cripsey Brook **Grid Ref: TL550033**

1	<p>General information:</p> <p>This is a strip of land on the eastern bank of the Cripsey Brook between Bansons Lane and Victoria Rd. It lies within the Flood Plain of the Cripsey Brook.</p> <p>Within this open area between the Cripsey Brook and Chipping Ongar High Street was a well-used network of footpaths, but with the new developments off Chipping Ongar High Street access to this site has become reduced. It offers a natural buffer to the open countryside and is free of vehicle traffic.</p> <p>Originally called Long Meadow in the Chipping Ongar Tithe Award of 1838, this green open space is just over 0.8 ha of former meadow originally used for grazing.</p> <p>As it is no longer grazed, this area is covered with developing hawthorn scrub with rank grasses, nettles and large amounts of hemlock. White willows grow alongside the Cripsey Brook.</p> <p>Some management would be required to prepare a useable footpath/shared cycle route to bypass a section of the High Road and provide a link which could become part of a green corridor round the urban part Chipping Ongar (see ONP Projects and Actions and Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Submission Version August 2021 Section 8.6 Rationale: Footpaths and Cycle Routes and Policy ONG-CT5).</p>
2	Planning History notes that it lies within the flood plain of the Cripsey Brook.
3	<p>Size scale and ‘local nature’ of Proposed Local Green Space</p> <p>This 0.8 ha strip of land appears to be in multiple ownership as adjacent properties have extended their garden boundaries.</p>
4	<p>Need for Local Green Space</p> <p>EFDC acknowledged a deficit of 3.81ha of Natural and seminatural Greenspace Amenity Greenspace within the Civil Parish of Chipping Ongar, thus the designation of this site for Woodland and Semi-Natural Green/Open Space with Public Access helps to address this shortfall. It could also be useful for Recreational Use and the identified Amenity Greenspace deficit is 1.8ha</p>

5	<p>Evidence to show that the green area is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</p> <p>A number of new properties border this land. It can be accessed on foot at the northern end from Victoria Road and at the southern end from Bansons Lane.</p>
6	<p>Evidence to show that the green area is ‘demonstrably special to a local community’</p> <p>Local residents appreciate the views from the properties. westwards over the valley of the Cripsey Brook and seeing trees from within dwellings is known to improve human wellbeing and historic aerial maps show the well-worn informal footpaths over the land, which until blocked off to most residents due to recent development, was also used for dog walking. It also forms a short cut for residents in the southwest of the civil parish to the station and the north of the parish, avoiding the High Street (with its heavy traffic and narrow pavements).</p>
7	<p>Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty’</p> <p>The attractive vista across the valley rising towards the west and Greensted Hall is visible from the local properties and at points from the High Street. The swathe of green vegetation helps to soak up carbon and cool the atmosphere. It provides a green corridor for humans and assorted forms of wildlife.</p>
8	<p>Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its historical significance’ if applicable</p> <p>Although there is no official footpath through this site, residents used informal routes on the eastern bank of the Cripsey Brook for many years and a reopening of such a route would be beneficial in providing a safe and pleasant footpath/cycle route for local residents to access the town centre from the north or school children from the south of the parish to avoid the unpleasant traffic in the High Street to walk or cycle to the Academy .</p>
9	<p>Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its recreational value (including as a playing field)’ if applicable</p> <p>This green corridor of open land provides the residents of adjacent properties attractive views westwards towards open undulating farmland, and the opportunity to see some spectacular sunsets.</p> <p>It is made up of small patches of open grassland, with a screen of mature willows along the edge of the water course with developing scrub of hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble. There are opportunities for the observation of assorted wildlife, especially larger insects such as butterflies and birds, mammals including bats, rabbits, foxes, badgers and slow worms too. The opportunity to appreciate such biodiverse areas enhances human wellbeing.</p> <p>It also has a value as a walk, particularly if linked up with other ‘green corridors’ round the outskirts of Chipping Ongar (see ONP Projects and Actions)</p>

Local Green Space LGS4 Land between Longfields, Coopers Hill and farmland (also known as MO3) **Grid Reference TL551025**

1	General information: This is a portion of green space off Coopers Hill which lies between Longfields and the bank of the Cripsey Brook. It is overlooked by the houses to east, south and west. Its northern boundary is the well vegetated green corridor of the Cripsey Brook beyond which there is farmland.
2	Planning History. This is one of many green verges within the town, which is widened and includes adjacent land towards the brook. The grass is cut on a regular basis and the trees and bulbs have been planted over the years with assistance from teams at EFDC.
3	Size scale and ‘local nature’ of Proposed Local Green Space This site covers 0.39 ha adjacent to Coopers Hill and from the southern entrances to the town of Chipping Ongar. In spring bright yellow daffodil bulbs provide a blaze of colour beneath the planted trees and provide a welcome entrance to the town. There is a fringe of taller vegetation along the bank of Cripsey Brook, but the main area is short mown grass with a variety of planted trees, including a large hybrid poplar, sliver birches, sycamores and field maples. Its location and size help to emphasise that Chipping Ongar is a rural settlement, with wide grass verges. It provides a welcome gap in the residential street with views over the fields. Footpaths provide a link across the Brook into these fields and an alternative traffic free route into the town centre.
4	Need for Local Green Space EFDC identified that Ongar has an Amenity Greenspace deficit of 1.8ha and Natural and seminatural Greenspace of 3.81ha. Although only a small site, its 0.39ha should be protected against future development or infill.
5	Evidence to show that the green area is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves This area is immediately adjacent to the houses which are located on the roads on either side of Coopers Hill and in Longfields. The pedestrian crossing over the busy main road near the end of Longfields ensures a safe crossing point.
6	Evidence to show that the green area is ‘demonstrably special to a local community’ The residents opposite this open area can enjoy their views of trees and the glimpse of farmland on the opposite bank of the Cripsey Brook. Historically any undergrowth was managed permitting local children to play on the green space. It also is used as a link through to the centre avoiding the busy High Street
7	Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty’ Local residents do use this area for regular dog walking and as access to and from the centre of Ongar avoiding the busy High Street. It is also enjoyed for the spring bulbs in particular.
8	Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its historical significance’ if applicable

	As a tranquil riverside area provides the local residents with the opportunity to walk through a wildlife corridor away from the traffic on the High Street. hear the flowing waters of the Cripsey Brook. And children to have informal play.
9	<p>Evidence to show that the green area ‘holds a particular local significance, for example because of its recreational value (including as a playing field)’ if applicable</p> <p>Although small, site has potential as a public amenity as well as for its biodiversity as the planted trees add variety to the canopy and an aesthetic quality of the site. It is located on the fringe of the town and will help to shelter the adjacent houses from the heat of increasingly warmer summers.</p>