

**North Luffenham Parish Council**

# **Local Green Space Assessment Report**



**Public Consultation Version**

**November 2021**

# North Luffenham: Local Green Space Designation

## What are the benefits of designating Local Green Spaces?

Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas that are of particular importance to local communities. Designated local green spaces are afforded the same level of protection as green belts, ruling out development in all but very exceptional circumstances. Any type of green space could be suitable for designation and may include land where sports pavilions are located, allotments or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis.

## Why are our local green spaces important?

Protecting our green spaces is important because they provide: -

- places for relaxation, social interaction as well as venues for events and large gatherings
- green connections between multiple spaces across the parish and away from the highway
- habitats for wildlife and green corridors that contribute to local biodiversity
- places for local residents to grow their own food
- space for the provision of sports and recreational facilities from cricket pitches to children's playgrounds
- pleasant outlooks for neighbouring properties and enhancement of the visual amenity of the village including settings for historic buildings and landmarks
- spaces for carbon capture by trees and plants which has beneficial impact on climate change
- flood mitigation in some circumstances.

In short, local green spaces contribute to the quality and visual impact of our Parish in the same way as buildings and infrastructure and help make it an attractive place to live, work and play. They add real value to the Parish and have a positive impact on the quality of life of local residents.

## Sustainable Development

Neighbourhood Plans must contribute to sustainable development in the area they cover. In the case of green spaces, this means ensuring that the social, economic and environmental benefits of green spaces outlined above have a positive impact on sustainable development. As a consequence, the impact of new developments on existing green spaces and the provision of new green spaces as part of any development form an important factor in determining whether development is sustainable.

## The Assessment Approach

Having identified the local green spaces that are of high value to the local community and environment in the main Neighbourhood Plan, this supplementary document provides more detail on those sites in order that they can be protected under Local Green Space designation. Our approach to the assessments is in accordance with the guidance and criteria contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 (Paragraphs 101, 102 and 103) to ensure that each site is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- 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)
  - tranquility
  - richness of wildlife
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Although the NPPF does not define what qualifies as ‘close proximity’ or an ‘extensive tract of land’, Natural England’s Accessible Greenspace Standards provides a helpful guide. It suggests that ‘close proximity’ should be defined as being within 2km (1.25 miles) of the local community and that an ‘extensive tract of land’ be defined as being over 20 hectares (50 acres). We have taken these guidelines into account when assessing sites for North Luffenham.

For ease of identification, the reference numbers used on the Definitive Map for Rutland have been incorporated into the description and assessments. This map is a legal document which must be produced and kept up to date by every county council or unitary authority in England and Wales. The Rutland County Council definitive map shows every Right of Way (RoW) in the area and the accompanying Statement defines the nature of the rights over the paths i.e., whether there is a right of way on foot, on horseback or in a vehicle. For the North Luffenham Parish the following RoWs are included on the Definitive Map: -

Ref No.	Status	Location
E275	Footpath	From the Morcott Road, south of North Luffenham, at railway, north east to the Village and the Edith Weston Road, then to the Edith Weston to South Luffenham Road.
E276	Footpath	From Church Lane, North Luffenham, south west to the Morcott Road at the River Chater.
E277	Footpath	From the Edith Weston Road, North Luffenham, across the recreation ground to the Edith Weston - South Luffenham Road.
E278	Footpath	From the village street at entrance to North Luffenham Hall, south to Moor Lane.
E279	Bridleway	From the South Luffenham Road, east of Pilton, to South Luffenham at railway.
E281	Footpath	From Digby Drive, south east to Station Road.

These rights of way appear on the Definitive Map held at the offices of Rutland County Council. The descriptions set out above are reproduced from that document but a few anomalies are worth pointing out: -

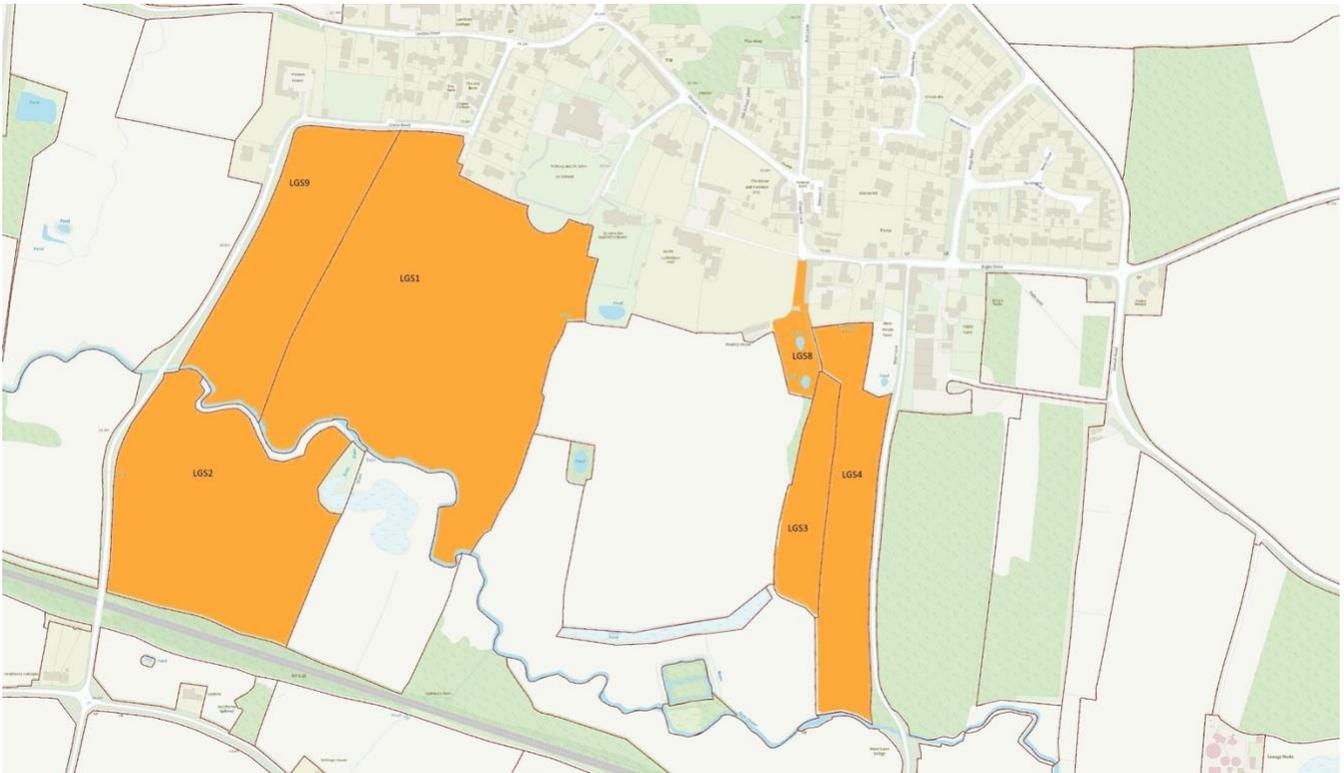
- In relation to E275 & E276 reference is made to Morcott Road and Church Lane. These are now known locally as Glebe Road.
- E277 describes one of the Rights of Way which traverses the Oval from Edith Weston Road down to Morcott Road.
- E278 - “the village street” refers to Chapel Lane/Digby Drive.

## Local Consultation

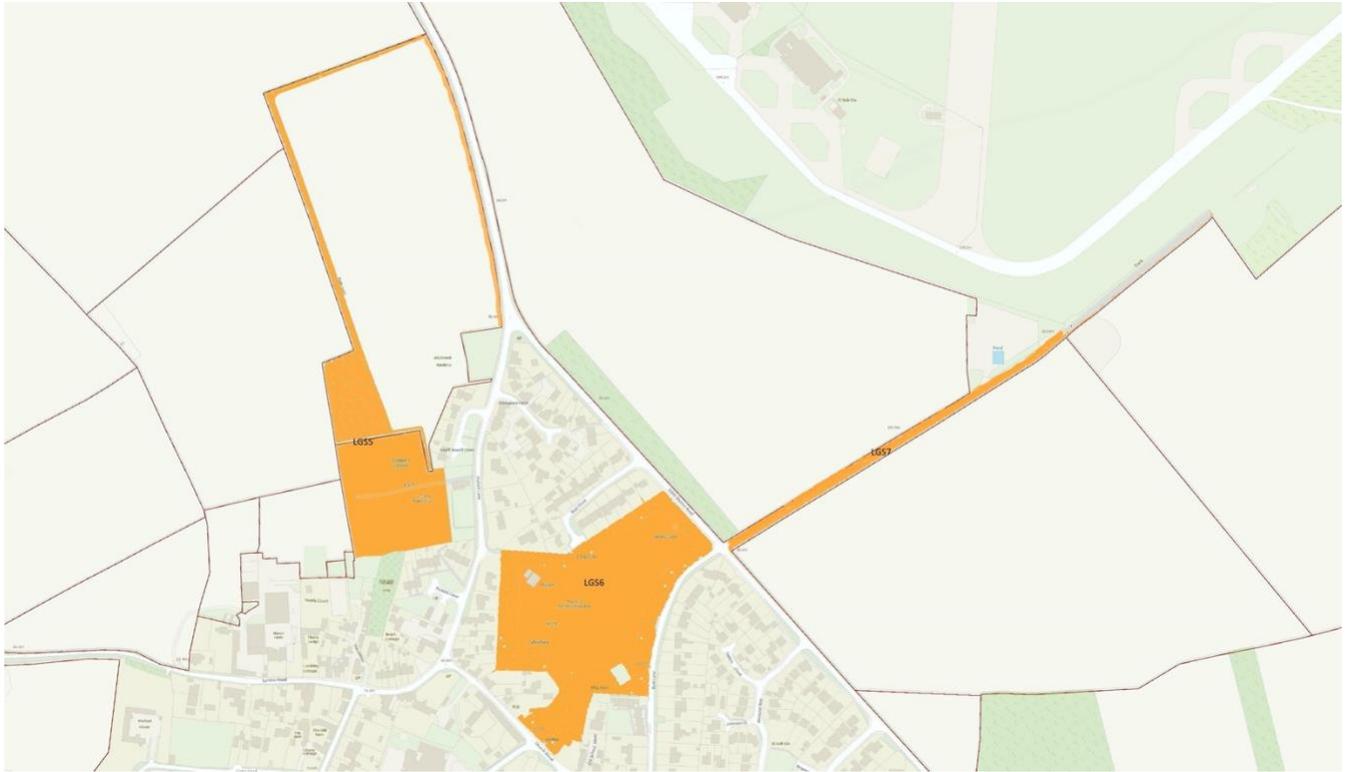
*(Note: This section will be completed once following the consultation process.)*

## Local Green Spaces in North Luffenham

9 sites have been identified as being highly valued by the residents of North Luffenham and are illustrated on the maps below. The reference numbers relate to a specific designations each of which is described in the paragraphs which follow.



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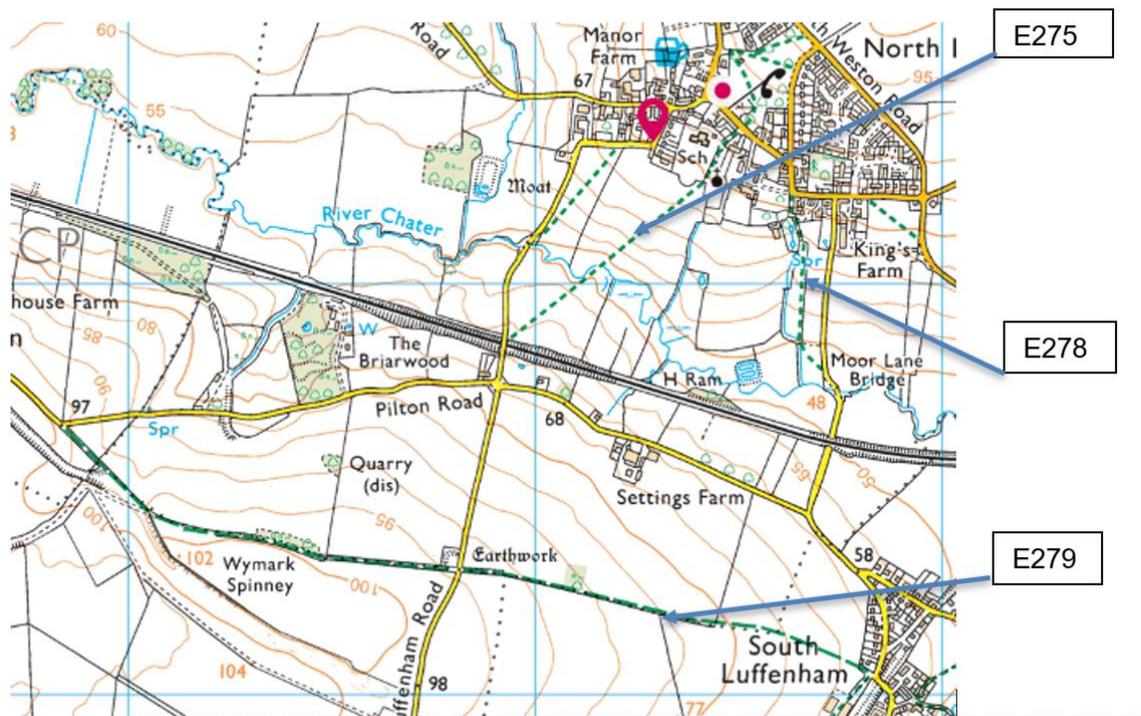
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## **1) The North Luffenham Circular Walk Fields.**

This is a 6.6 km. loop trail which is primarily used for walking, trail running, and nature trips. It offers a wide variety of wild flowers and beautiful views. Locals have enjoyed this peaceful route and open space for over 40 years. It has no formal name as it utilises a number of protected footpaths and local roads but for the purposes of this document shall be referred to as the North Luffenham Circular Walk.

The trail, shown by the green dashed lines on the map below (RoWs E275, E279 & E278), lies predominantly in the parish of North Luffenham. Starting at the church, it follows footpath E275 across two fields, including a crossing of the River Chater, to the railways line. It then joins Glebe Road up to the crossroads with Pilton Road and follows that lane west to point 97 (Ground Survey Height) indicated on the map below.

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The green, dashed line highlights the section of the bridleway (the only such bridleway in the parish), designated as E279. This leads from the closest point to the village of Pilton, along the southern boundary of North Luffenham parish and across to South Luffenham. From South Luffenham the trail follows Moor Lane, back over the River Chater. Just after the picturesque bridge, public footpath E278 leads from Moor Lane over two fields and through wooded areas back to the village which it enters on the corner of Digby Drive adjacent to North Luffenham Hall.

The picture below shows the view from the top section of the walk taken from the bridleway looking over Settings Farm back to the village with the Church in the centre and North Luffenham Hall to the right.

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## **2) The Designation of Fields traversed by the Walk.**

The walk traverses two significant fields at the Glebe Road section of the walk within the village. One ('Field 1') contains the public footpath E275 leading from the churchyard down to the River Chater, whilst the second ('Field 2') contains the same public footpath as it continues along the other side of the river up to Glebe Road and the railway line.

### **LGS1: Field 1.**



The first photograph below shows the view of the walk taken from the churchyard and looks across fields 1 (foreground) and 2 described later in this section. The second photograph, taken from Field 1, shows the bridge over the River Chater connecting Fields 1 and 2.



**LGS1: Field 1: where the public footpath E275 traverses from the churchyard style to the River Chater.**

NPPF Criteria	Assessment
Proximity to the community	Within the village. It is looked onto by the church and the school and a number of residential properties.
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 play and sports field), tranquility and the richness of its wildlife	<p>Highly valued by the parish community - adjacent to the churchyard and the school grounds, adding to the vistas, tranquility and beauty of these locations.</p> <p>The public footpath across the field contributes to the longest and arguably most relaxing, health promoting and beautiful walk within the parish in terms of natural beauty, vistas, tranquility and its traditional rural aspects.</p> <p>It enables one of the only means of public access to the River Chater and its associated wildlife and natural beauty.</p> <p>The views in all directions when crossing the field are panoramic, varied and rich in rural charm.</p> <p>Historic in its existence as a public right of way.</p>
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	By its very nature this is one of the best routes from which to enjoy the local character of the parish. It is not extensive in terms of land mass.

**LGS2: Field 2**

The picture on the left below looks down Field 1 and across to Field 2 whilst the photograph on the right looks back towards the village from the top of Field 2.



<b><u>LGS2: Field 2: where the public footpath E275 traverses from the River Chater, uphill, towards the railway line and Glebe Road.</u></b>	
<b>NPPF Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Proximity to the community	It can be viewed from the church, the school and a number of houses on the western edge of the village.
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), tranquility and the richness of its wildlife	<p>There are insufficient wildflower meadows in the area and nationally. This is a significant contributor to the richness of wildlife habitats and food sources particularly in respect of endangered insects, birds and hedgehogs. It also enhances the balance of nature and the national effort to reverse the damage caused to the natural environment.</p> <p>The public footpath across the field contributes to the longest and arguably most relaxing, health promoting and beautiful walk within the parish in terms of natural beauty, vistas, tranquility and its traditional rural aspects.</p> <p>The views in all directions when crossing the field are panoramic, peaceful, varied and rich in rural charm.</p> <p>Historic in its existence as a public right of way.</p>
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	By its very nature this is one of the best routes from which to enjoy the local character of the parish. It is not extensive in terms of land mass.

### **LGS3: Field 3 and LGS4: Field 4**

The top-left photograph below looks down Field 4 from the village end. The entrance to Field 3 is within the small wooded area at the bottom of the field and is shown in the photograph on the right.



The circular walk re-enters the village through a small field connected to Digby Drive by the gate shown on the map and in the below. (© Crown copyright and database rights 2020 - OS 100057736)



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<b><u>LGS3: Field 3 and LGS4: Field 4, leading onto Digby Drive where the public footpath E278 traverses from Moor Lane, near the River Chater, uphill, towards the village, including the entrance gate onto Digby Drive.</u></b>	
<b>NPPF Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Proximity to the community	Located within the village.
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), tranquility and the richness of its wildlife	<p>Grazing land, historically.</p> <p>Contains habitats and food sources for wildlife, particularly in respect of endangered insects, birds and hedgehogs and thus contributes to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.</p> <p>The public footpath across both fields supports the longest and arguably most relaxing, health promoting and beautiful walk within the parish in terms of natural beauty, vistas, tranquility and its traditional rural aspects.</p> <p>There are views down towards the River Chater when crossing the field.</p> <p>Peaceful, varied and rich in rural charm.</p> <p>Historic in its existence for containing a public right of way. Locals have used this walk over many years.</p>
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	By its very nature this is one of the best routes from which to enjoy the local character of the parish. It is not extensive in terms of land mass.

### **3) The Field Garden Woodland, Woodland Walk and Allotments**

The short Woodland Walk has two points of pedestrian access: one via Pinfold Lane (indicated by the green dot on the map below) and the other via a gate leading off Edith Weston Road. The dotted line on the map indicates the walk from one point of access to the other. The walk is circular and follows the boundary of the field (owned by North Luffenham Parish Trust), with the path at the Edith Weston Road access point taking a route parallel to the road, just inside the field. It is protected from the main road by low-level fencing.

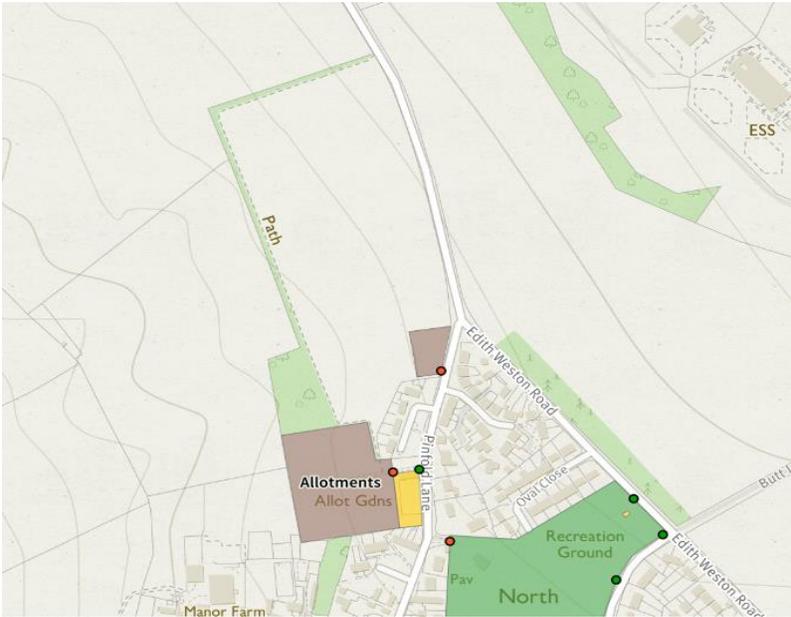
The woodland (also owned by North Luffenham Parish Trust) is situated adjacent to the allotments, providing habitat for wildlife and a peaceful place to walk, sit and enjoy the views of the village and wider parish down towards the medieval moat (described in the section on Historic Environment). It should be noted that the Field Gardens Walk is a permissive footpath created by the Parish Council and used by the public in order to enjoy the benefits of the Field Garden and adjoining Village Trust land.

The allotments are owned and managed by the Parish Council and are officially known as the Field Garden Allotments. They comprise two distinct areas of land, both accessed from Pinfold Lane. At the time of writing, the allotments are currently fully utilised and with national trends moving towards growing your own fruit and vegetables the demand for such plots is likely to increase in the future. It is considered essential that the area, whilst designated as an allotment, is protected from development to secure its for future generations.

The land itself was transferred to the Church Wardens of the Parish by the Enclosure Act 1881 (formerly known as the Inclosure Act) with responsibility passing to the Parish Council on its creation in the late 1890s. It was

transferred for the purpose of “an allotment for field gardens” which remain the predominant activities for the allotments and the walk and woodland to this day. It is worth noting that the majority of allotments in the UK were designated after the First World War however those located in the parish are unusual as their use for this purpose stretches back over 140 years.

The Field Garden Walk, Woodland and allotments are shown on the map below with latter shaded in brown.



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**The Allotments:**



**The Field Garden Woodland Walk and Woodland:**



<b>LGS5: The Field Gardens Woodland Walk, Woodland and Allotments</b>	
<b>NPPF Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Proximity to the community	In the heart of the village.
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), tranquility and the richness of its wildlife	<p>Easily reached on foot by local residents.</p> <p>Newly established woodland in a rural parish that has relatively few woods. It is considered excellent for dog walking - many use it for this purpose, daily.</p> <p>Wildlife habitats have been created in the Fields Garden Woodland for the declining bird population including nest boxes for owls and other birds. It provides feeding grounds for birds and other wildlife in the adjacent grasses and trees.</p> <p>The allotments have valued views sloping down towards the south and west side of the parish, and the medieval moat.</p>
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	Appropriate in its size, given its purpose, as demonstrated in the map.

#### **4) The Oval**

This is the central focal point for walkers and local residents to enjoy sporting and leisure activities and to hold general social gatherings. The open space is crisscrossed by local footpaths inameley designated Rights of Way E275, E277 and E278. Facilities include a cricket pavilion (owned by the Parish Council and leased to the local cricket club with opportunities for hiring out) and multi-use, extensive open space, a cricket pitch and practice nets as well as basketball and football areas. There is a designated children’s’ play area with climbing frames, activity structures and zip wire alongside.

Community events and gatherings, including fireworks displays and village fetes, are held subject to prior approval.

More planting of indigenous, native trees has been requested by residents of the parish as well as natural habitat improvements and sources of food for wildlife. To further aid this objective there are areas of rewilding and wildflower areas.

The Oval also provides good opportunities to provide facilities for those with disabilities and this is specifically discussed in the paper covering mobility in the Neighbourhood Plan.

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<b>LGS6: The Oval</b>	
<b>NPPF Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Proximity to the community	In the heart of the village.
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), tranquility and the richness of its wildlife	<p>Easily reached by everyone in the village.</p> <p>Historically this area has been provided for the people of the parish to enjoy.</p> <p>Traversed by Rights of Way E277 and E275.</p> <p>Excellent for dog walking, sport, children's' play, general recreation, walking and socialising. Significant numbers of residents use it for these purposes every day.</p> <p>Habitats have been created in the form of a wildflower area and rewilded sections under the avenues of trees to contribute to reversing the declining bird and insect populations. Nesting boxes have been provided in many of the trees to further support this aim.</p>
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	Appropriate in its size given its purpose, as illustrated on the above map.

## 5) Butt Lane (North East of Edith Weston Road)

Butt Lane, from the junction of Edith Weston Road, joining with the section of land designated as a nature corridor that leads up to the parish boundary to meet with the section of land to be protected by the neighbouring parish, Edith Weston. Whilst not currently included on the definitive map the status of the bridleway is not currently known but it has been accessed by local residents, without let or hindrance, over many decades.

This area of North Luffenham, accessed via Butt Lane on the east side of Edith Weston Road, is currently used by residents, fulfilling a need for more general walking, rambling and dog walking. This former public footpath was in use prior to the existence of SGB as a military base but was closed during World War II. The map below shows the boundary of the section *not* belonging to St. George's Barracks (MoD), but adjoining it, and has been a valued place to walk and appreciate the tranquility, natural aspects and local vistas for many years. With much of the disused airfield having been used by local residents over the last decade, it is important that the green spaces within the disused airfield should connect with existing green spaces around Butt Lane.

Strong opinions have been expressed, particularly by dog walkers, that without this facility there would be a large gap in the opportunity for residents to walk and allow their dogs off their leads without having to drive to more distant locations. All other fields close to the village are either farmed or used for other purposes. The Oval, as the only other alternative, is a multi-use facility. In addition, such local routes are relied upon by residents who do not have access to a vehicle. The Parish Council is also committed to reducing the need to travel wherever possible in order to reduce the parish's Carbon footprint.

It is of great importance to the community for the section of the south eastern edge of St. George's land within North Luffenham parish to be protected for walking and as a significant area of natural beauty with panoramic views. The photograph is taken from Edith Weston Road looking towards the disused airfield.



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<b><u>LGS7: Butt Lane, from the junction of Edith Weston Road, and the section of land, up to the parish boundary.</u></b>	
<b>NPPF Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Proximity to the community	Close to the village residential area and the Oval.
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), tranquility and the richness of its wildlife	<p>Highly valued by the village community. Connects the village to the local countryside adding to the vistas, tranquility and beauty of these locations.</p> <p>The public footpath along Butt Lane opens into green space that offers one of the highest and far-reaching panoramic views in the parish.</p> <p>An area of significant natural beauty and tranquility, with traditional rural aspects. It also has significant heritage value through its association with the Thor Missile Site.</p> <p>A valued walk from the village where very few alternatives are reachable on foot. It provides opportunities for residents to allow their dogs to run free.</p> <p>Historic in its existence as a public right of way preceding the use of the land for military purposes.</p>
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	By its very nature, this is one of the best routes from which to enjoy the local character of the parish. It is not extensive in terms of land mass.

## **6) The Water Gardens**

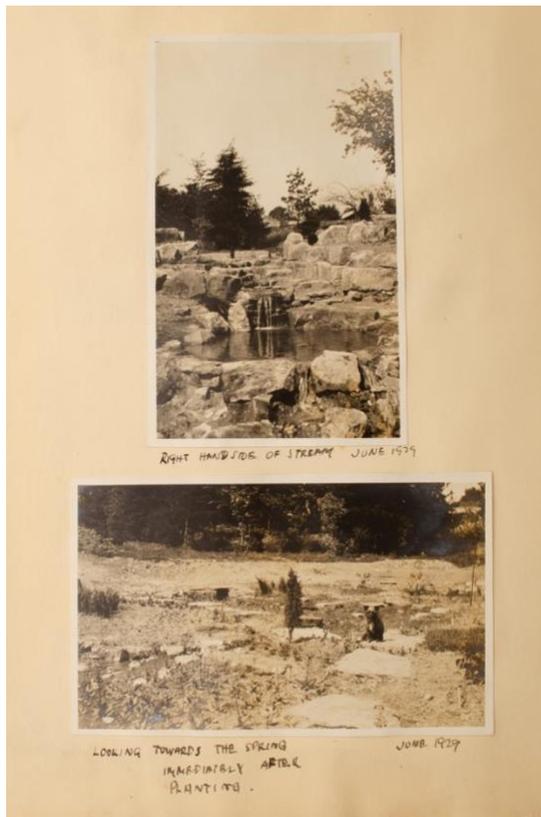
The Water Garden was designed by Russell Page for Guy Fenwick at North Luffenham Hall between March and May 1929. As his first and one of his highly acclaimed pieces of work, he described it at length in “The Education of a Gardener” as follows: *“One of my earliest jobs was to make a rock garden in a Rutland field where the limestone of the Oolite Belt is near the surface and has provided the material for lovely villages where manor, church, farmhouses” - “In a field beyond the orchard its owners had recently discovered the ruined walls of an old fishpond and a spring. Through the hard frost of the spring of 1929 which continued, if I remember, till mid-April, I toiled away with a stable-boy to help me, harnessing the spring to make a streamlet running between and over stones out into the field below.”* [Page, Russell. The Education of a Gardener. Harvill, 1994.]

The photograph below shows a page from the bound notebook kept by Russel Page showing Two black-and-white photographs of the rock garden at North Luffenham Hall dated June 1929 and labelled, ‘right hand side of stream’ and ‘looking towards the spring immediately after planting’.

more information on which can be found on the Garden Museum website.

[\(https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/archive/russell-page-design-diary/\)](https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/archive/russell-page-design-diary/)

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Whilst of significant local interest and being of historic significance, there is currently no public access to the site although it is visible from the footpath adjacent to the reference to springs ("Spr") on the top left of the map.

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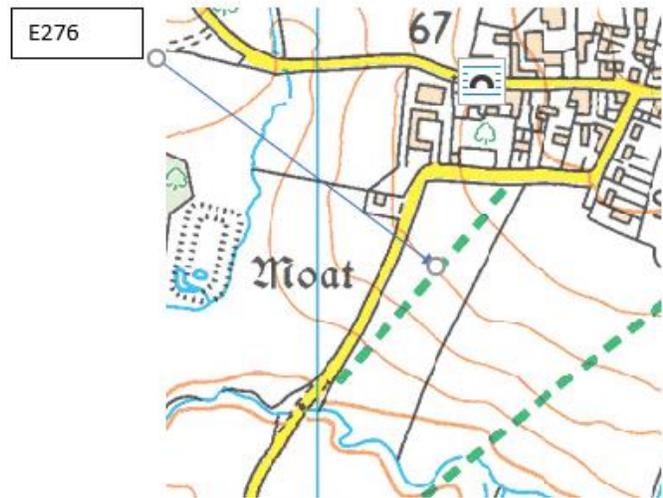
<b>LGS8: Water Gardens.</b>	
<b>NPPF Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Proximity to the community	Within the village residential area. It was part of the Old North Luffenham Hall (now demolished) gardens.
Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility and the richness of its wildlife	Of historic importance and beauty, with the design dating back to 1929.  Despite the lack of public access, the site is valued by residents and those who appreciate garden landscaping.  A habitat for local wildlife.  The public footpath from Moor Lane leading to Digby Drive passes by.  An area of significant local natural beauty and tranquility.
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	Where the natural limestone of the Oolite Belt meets the land surface. It is not extensive in terms of land mass.

## **7) Field Traversed by RoW E276**

This field is traversed by the short RoW referred to as E276 on the Definitive Map. The footpath runs diagonally from Glebe Road opposite residential properties and runs diagonally across the field before rejoining Glebe Road close to the River Chater.

The photograph below shows the field adjacent to Glebe Road on the left. The River Chater is located in the tree line in the foreground.

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<b>LGS9: Field Traversed by RoW E276</b>	
<b>NPPF Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Proximity to the community	Close to the village residential area and easily accessible by local residents.
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), tranquility and the richness of its wildlife	<p>Highly valued by the village community. Connects the village to the local countryside and avoids the need to walk along Glebe Road. It adds to the vistas, tranquility and beauty of these locations.</p> <p>An area of significant natural beauty and tranquility, with traditional rural aspects including views of the site of the Moat which is of archeological and heritage importance.</p> <p>A valued walk from the village where very few alternatives are reachable on foot.</p>
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	By its very nature, this is one of the best routes from which to enjoy the local character of the parish. It is not extensive in terms of land mass.

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