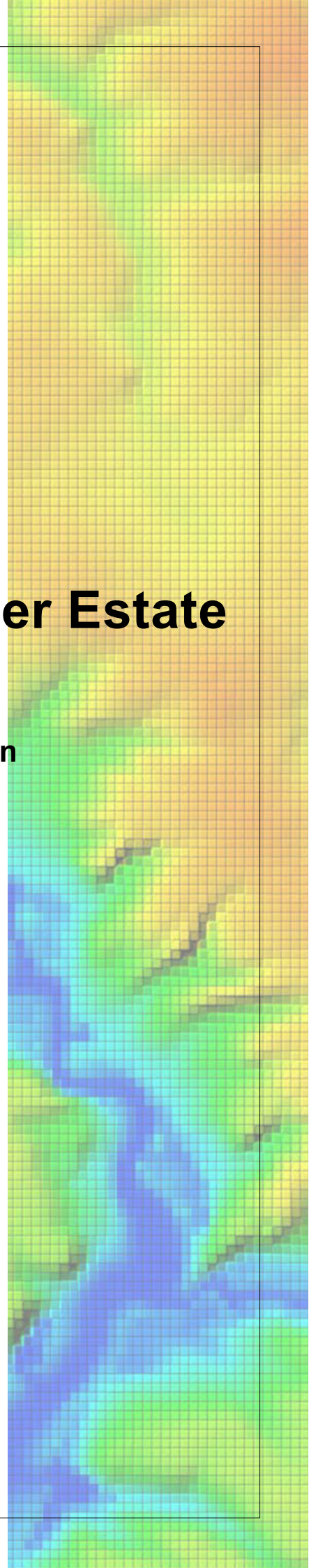


REVIEW OF PROPOSED LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATION

Field South of Mary Warner Estate

Ardleigh

Ardleigh Parish Council proposed Local Green
Space 4



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DOCUMENT PACK & CONTENTS

Main text

	page
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Local Green Space policy.....	1
3. Description of the land & context.....	2
4. Appraisal against Local Green Space criteria.....	3
5. Conclusions.....	5

Appendices

Appendix A	Ardleigh Parish Council notification letter to Mr & Mrs Harris
Appendix B	Ardleigh Parish Council Green Spaces Assessments (Space 4)

Appendices have colour coded footers.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Ardleigh Parish Council has notified the landowner that a parcel of their farmland has been shortlisted for designation as 'Local Green Space' within the drafting of the Ardleigh Neighbourhood Plan (see copy of notification letter provided as Appendix A). The Parish Council has provided explanation and justification for this proposal within its Green Spaces Assessments and Consultation Document (relevant extract provided as Appendix B). The basis for the use of the Local Green Space designation, within Local and Neighbourhood Plans, is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) at paragraphs 101, 102 & 103. In particular, NPPF paragraph 102 sets out criteria for the characteristics and qualities of land for which such a designation may be appropriate.
- 1.2 This report provides a review of the merits of this land for Local Green Space designation, with reference to the Parish Council's justification and in light of the NPPF criteria. It has been informed by:
- Review of local landscape character publications and any attributed value/quality for the local landscape setting;
 - Review of local planning policy context checking for statutory and local planning designations regarding protection of the landscape;
 - Review of nearby heritage assets such as Parks & Gardens, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments; and
 - Site visit to confirm form and features of site and relationship to its context.

2. Local Green Space policy

2.1 Relevant NPPF 2021 paragraphs are duplicated below.

2.2 Paragraph 101

'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.'

2.3 Paragraph 102

'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.*

2.4 Paragraph 103

'Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.'

3. Description of the land & context

- 3.1 The Ardleigh Parish Council Green Spaces Assessments identifies this land as the field south of Mary Warner Estate (Space 4). It is part of a largely self-contained and readily identifiable area of open land adjacent to the south-western edges of the village. This wider area measures approximately 16 Ha and is largely featureless and flat. The majority of it is in arable farming use, divided into two fields, with a separate portion to the south that has been left fallow for a number of years. The northern edge of this land has an open border with Colchester Road, as it enters the western edge of the village. The opposite side of the road is developed with a line of houses fronting the road. The north-eastern edges border onto houses on Colchester Road, Aveline Road and Gernon Road. Aveline and Gernon Roads are a post war, council type, housing estate backing onto the land. Aveline Road terminates with an open farm access into the northern field. The eastern edge is bordered by two public open spaces. These are enclosed by strongly hedged and tree lined boundaries. One is the Ardleigh Millennium Green and the other is Ardleigh Recreation Ground. They are set behind properties along north-south alignment of Station Road. The south-east edge has quite an open, but fenced boundary with the Great Eastern Mainline railway. Woodland and tree cover beyond the railway line also provide enclosure to this aspect. The south-western edge borders a vegetated corridor along Green Lane and Ardleigh Footpath 7. The north-western edge is enclosed by vegetation in the edges of a small cluster of properties at the start of Green Lane, separate to the main village area.
- 3.2 This land is crossed by Ardleigh Footpath 5, which emerges from the village in the north-east corner, near to the entrance to the Millennium Green off Mary Warner Road. It links back to Colchester Road, around 175m to the north, near to the centre of the village. After emerging in the countryside edge, it then traces west along the back garden edges of the first houses on Gernon Road, before diagonally crossing the open field in a south-westerly direction to join Ardleigh Footpath 7 on Green Lane. In addition to this formal public right of way, casual walking routes with trodden paths circle around the edges of all parts of this area.
- 3.3 This area lies within the Tendring Plain / Bromley Heaths local landscape character area. This is a relatively flat, plateau farmland landscape. It has varied enclosure levels, with some large-scale prairie field patterns, but elsewhere frequent woodland and tighter enclosure with tall hedges. The settlement pattern is quite varied, including industrial clusters and there are extensive areas of glass houses. There is also some quarrying activity.
- 3.4 The village Conservation Area is away from this area, in the centre of the village and extending south along Station Road. There is an isolated Grade II Listed Building (Tudor House and Well House) on Green Lane, nearby to the west. There are two other Grade II Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area along Station Road, next to the recreation ground. These are Phoenix Steam Mill and Engine House and the adjacent Mill House. These Listed Buildings are sometimes visible from within this area of open land, as is the tower of the Grade II* Listed St Marys Church, in the village centre to the north-west.
- 3.5 The shortlisted Local Green Space 4 is the eastern portion of the above described wider area. It is the arable field directly alongside the Millennium Green and Recreation Ground, and the bordering area of

fallow land to the south of this. It is separated from the remaining arable field, to the west, by a rough margin containing a ditch. To the north it adjoins the edges of Gernon Road, where Footpath 5 skirts the edge of the land along the back of rear gardens. The diagonal route of the footpath, crossing the area, is away to the west of Space 4, but the southern edge of Space 4 does border with Footpath 7, before it crosses the railway line. A smaller triangular area of fallow land, to the south of the recreation ground, is not included within Space 4.

4. Appraisal against Local Green Space criteria

- 4.1 The NPPF sets out criteria for the appropriate selection of land for the Local Green Space designation (NPPF paragraph 102). The following headings and sub-headings reflect those criteria and analysis is provided under each heading.

REASONABLY CLOSE PROXIMITY

- 4.2 Space 4 is within easy walking distance of the local community within the Ardleigh village. Space 4 readily complies with this requirement.

SPECIAL AND OF PARTICULAR LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

- 4.3 The NPPF requires the Local Green Space designation to be used only for land which is '*demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance*'. It provides some examples to help understand how this might apply: '*beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife*'. These examples follow the principles applied by Landscape Architects in determining the relative value of a local landscape area for the purposes of Landscape and Visual Appraisal or Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The Landscape Institute has recently published guidelines to assist practitioners in this aspect of their work. This is Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside of national designations' (LI TGN 02/21). It provides a more comprehensive range of indicative factors. These have also been reviewed and are included below, where relevant.

Richness of wildlife / natural heritage interests:

- 4.4 No evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest has been found for Space 4. In ordinary terms Space 4 has no natural heritage, or ecological/wildlife interests above and beyond ordinary arable farmland. As such this space is not special or of particular local significance for its richness of wildlife. The Ardleigh Parish Council Green Spaces Assessment for Space 4 also does not suggest that this area is valued for its natural heritage.

Historic significance / cultural heritage interests:

- 4.5 There is no evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest for Space 4. There is also no known connection with notable people, events or the arts for this location. The Ardleigh Parish Council Green Spaces Assessment for Space 4 also does not suggest that this area is valued for its historic significance.

Recreational value:

- 4.6 Recreational use of the land is limited to public footpath routes along two edges and unofficial walking routes (unsanctioned by the

landowner) around other edges of Space 4. These routes are well used, and the Ardleigh Parish Council Green Spaces Assessment talks of evidence of children playing in the area (geocaching and similar games). This nature and level of activity is typical of farmland on the edges of settlements. It is not sufficient for the area to meet the criteria that it is 'demonstrably special to the local community' and of 'particular local significance' in terms of recreational value.

Beauty or scenic appeal

- 4.7 The wider area, as described in Section 3 above, has basic scenic appeal as open farmland adjacent to a settlement. When walking through it there is the ordinary appeal of open countryside and the area benefits from trees and woodland around the outlying edges. However, the interior of the area is rather featureless and flat, and there is no particular vista or outlook into any wider countryside. Views back to the village are not unpleasant, but also are without particular merit. The church tower can be picked out above the rooftops of the village from locations towards the western edges of the area, particularly around the junction of Footpaths 5 & 7. From the west of the area, the Listed Mill and Mill House can be seen through the trees in the Millennium Green and Recreation Ground. These are of some interest, but are not on their own determinative of any special scenic value. They are also not particular characteristics of Space 4, where the angle of view and proximity to the tree lined edges of the adjacent Millennium Green and Recreation Ground generally block these views. In more general views back to the village edge, the view is to the rear of post war housing, with typically mixed enclosure including close boarded fences and some unkempt boundaries. There is no notable interaction or outlook from any civic spaces within the settlement, suggestive that this area has any valued relationship with the settlement. The settlement largely turns its back onto this area. The presentation of the Millennium Green and Recreation Ground is also such that they do not engage with this space; they are enclosed by hedging and largely inward looking. The characteristics of Space 4 are of insufficient scenic appeal for it to meet the criteria of being 'special' or of 'particular local significance'.
- 4.8 In contrast, the Ardleigh Parish Council Green Spaces Assessment talks about the attractiveness of the views back to the village, and its role in providing an important rural backdrop to the Millennium Green and Recreation Ground. It uses phrases such as *'from the south of the area, the built form of the village appears as a pleasant and incidental feature peering out of a lush landscape'* and *'it enables picturesque views to be had of Ardleigh from as far south as the train tracks'*. Yet it also notes *'the nondescript, hard-edged suburban nature'* of the adjacent housing estate areas. It also suggests that *'it provides an invaluable rural outlook from the southern edge of the village and from two of its most valuable and well-used community facilities'* (The Millennium Green and Recreation Ground). However, as illustration of this it offers photos looking towards the hedge and tree lined enclosure to these spaces, with only glimpsed views out via incidental gaps, and no notable views out to Space 4. Space 4 does not feature as any positive attribute in these views.

Wildness and/or tranquillity:

- 4.9 This location offers little perception of wildness and no notable degrees of tranquillity. The productive farmed landscape is clearly not of a wild nature. The fallow areas have some degree of wild character, but this is peripheral and of no great influence on the overall character of the area. The constant presence of the estate housing to the north and the trainline to the south also interfere with any feelings of isolation or tranquillity. The Ardleigh Parish Council Green Spaces Assessment for

Space 4 also does not suggest that this area is valued for its wildness or tranquillity.

LOCAL IN CHARACTER AND NOT AN EXTENSIVE TRACT OF LAND

- 4.10 The wider area between Colchester Road, Green Lane, the railway line and the edges of Ardleigh village would clearly be classed as an extensive tract of land. The portion of this that is Space 4 is smaller than this, but it is not readily distinguishable and separate to the wider area in any material way. This whole area would ordinarily be characterised simply as open countryside on the edge of the settlement. It is not a piece of land that is performing any properly recognisable green space function above and beyond that. As such, it is not clear how this area is the sort of local open space facility that the Local Green Space designation is intended to capture. The Ardleigh Parish Council Green Spaces Assessment for Space 4 is not clear about how this space satisfies this criteria, except that it is the land bordering the Millennium Green and Recreation Ground. These two public open spaces function properly irrespective of the nature of the bordering area and presence of Space 4. Therefore this justification is not well founded.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The NPPF lists three criteria for the appropriate use of the Local Green Space designation (NPPF paragraph 102). All three of these criteria should be met, in one form or another. The Ardleigh Parish Council shortlisted Space 4 fails to meet two of these criteria. It is in *'reasonable close proximity to the community'*, but it is not *'demonstrably special'* and *'of particular local significance'*. It is also unclear how it is *'local in character'* and is not more related to *'an extensive tract of land'*. Ardleigh Parish Council shortlisted Space 4 is not an appropriate piece of land for the Local Green Space designation.

APPENDIX A

**Ardleigh Parish Council notification
letter to [REDACTED]**



Ardleigh Parish Council
PO Box 12865
COLCHESTER
CO7 7EZ

Tel: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Website: www.ardleigh.website

ARDLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr & Mrs [REDACTED]

IMPORTANT: This letter concerns land we believe is in your ownership

I am writing to you on behalf of Ardleigh Parish Council, as on-going preparation of Ardleigh's Neighbourhood Plan may affect land in your ownership or in which you have an interest.

It is intended that Ardleigh's Neighbourhood Plan will designate a number of Local Green Spaces and provide policies for their protection and enhancement.

These policies will not prevent any new development on a site but they will require that new development does not compromise its special value. Developments that would enhance a Space's special value will be encouraged.

Some Background, Local Green Spaces are designated because of their special value to the local community. They must be in reasonably close proximity to the community they serve and they cannot be an extensive tract of land.

Sites may have special value to the community because of their: beauty; historic significance; recreational value; tranquility; wildlife and/or landscape value.

Sites do not necessarily have to be accessible by the local community to be considered of special value. However, public access is one relevant factor.

Ardleigh Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has already invited Local Green Spaces nominations from the community and has subsequently conducted a thorough desktop and field assessment of all sites nominated.

Following these investigations, 11 sites throughout the Parish of Ardleigh have been shortlisted due to their special community value. A comprehensive description, rationale and list of all shortlisted sites can be found on the Ardleigh Parish Council website <https://bit.ly/ArdleighGreenSpaces>

We believe that you may have an interest in the shortlisted site described below:

- Field south of Mary Warner Estate, west of Millennium Green. Land on south side of Dedham Road, Ardleigh. (Space 4) TM053292, FOOTPATH PROW158_5 Overview: agricultural field on the southern edge of the village, bordered by official and unofficial walking routes.

If you are the landowner of this space or have any other interest in the land, we would welcome your written response by no later than **1st January 2022**.

Please respond to the following:

- What is your interest in the land (e.g., owner/leaseholder)?
- Do you understand the proposal to designate your land as a Local Green Space?
- Do you support or object to the proposal to designate your land as a Local Green Space?
- Is the land the subject of an on-going planning application?
- Is the land the subject of any existing or emerging allocations in the Local Plan?

When considering Local Green Spaces these factors were considered. You may wish to comment on:

- Is the land local in character?
- Is the land within close proximity of the local community?
- Is there any public access to the land (formally or otherwise)?
- The land's beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife value, landscape value.

Your response will be taken into careful consideration by Ardleigh Parish Council's Working Group and will be used to inform the final list of Local Green Spaces to be designated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Your response can be emailed or posted to Ardleigh Parish Council at the following:

ardleighpc@gmail.com

Ardleigh Parish Council, PO Box 12865, Colchester CO7 7EZ.

Do not hesitate to contact the Ardleigh Parish Council if you require further clarification or assistance.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Tim Barrott

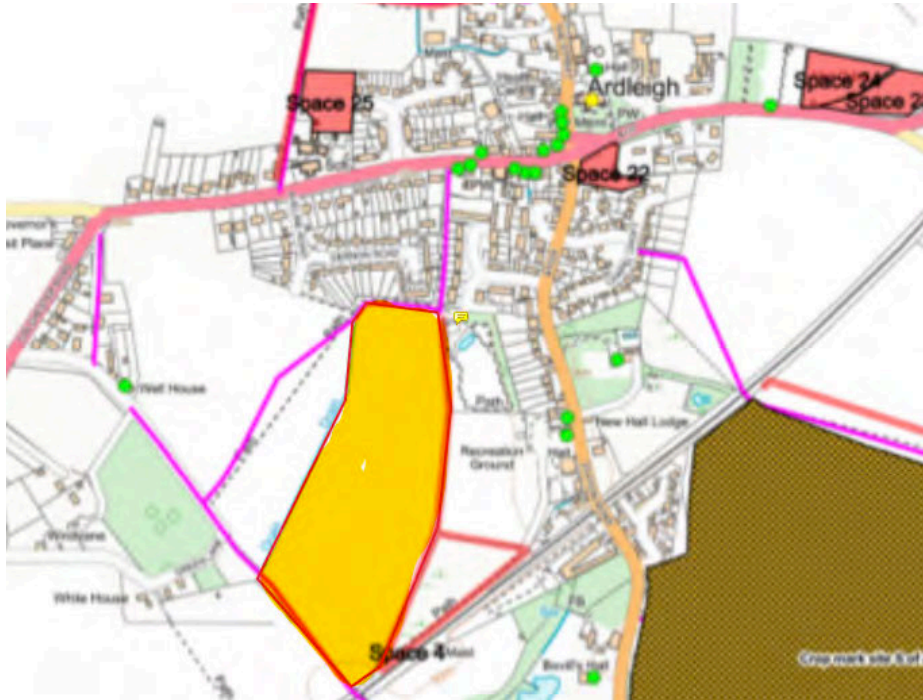
Chair of Ardleigh Parish Council

APPENDIX B

**Ardleigh Parish Council Green Spaces
Assessments (Space 4)**

Field south of Mary Warner Estate (Space 4) TM053292, FOOTPATH PROW158 5

Overview: agricultural field on the southern edge of the village, bordered by official and unofficial walking routes.



Size: approx. 7.7 ha

Proximity: The site lies in exceptionally convenient proximity of the village centre, with connecting footpaths available. It is also accessible from the recreation ground/ children's play area.

Ownership: It is believed that the working agricultural field is in private ownership. An unofficial footpath runs along its eastern boundary and is well-trodden. Its daily use by the public appears to have been kindly permitted by the landowner over multiple decades. A public right of way extends along its northern and southern boundaries, skirting off to the west.

Use: The field provides an idyllic rural backdrop to one of the village's main built-up residential areas (Mary Warner Estate) as well as some of its important community facilities (Millennium Green and children's play area/playing fields). Its unofficial walking track is very well-used by villagers, mainly walkers and local children.

It also forms part of a pleasant and well-used circular walking route that takes you across the train tracks and through ancient woodlands before returning to the village.

Existing designations: None known.

Allocations or planning consents: None.

Assessment: This field provides a very pleasant rural backdrop to some important village amenities and (relatively) densely occupied parts of the village. It enables far-reaching views both from and towards open countryside. From the south of the area, the built form of the village appears as a pleasant and incidental feature peering out of a lush landscape. There was evidence of children playing in this area (geocaching and similar games).

The presence of high quality, mature trees along the site's eastern perimeter adds considerably to the character and amenity of the village recreation grounds.

Despite the nondescript, hard-edged suburban nature of the Mary Warner Estate, the presence of this open tract of land ensures the overall retention of the rural character and setting of this part of the village.

Photos 02/11/2021:



View from the south - built edge of Ardleigh just visible on the horizon

	
<p>View from site through perimeter trees towards recreation ground</p>	<p>View from children's play area through to site</p>
	
<p>Trees alongside children's play area</p>	<p>Assisting to soften and situate the Mary Warner Estate</p>

Conclusion: The value of this site to the local community is significant. It is located in exceptionally close proximity of the main built-up part of the village. It provides an invaluable rural outlook from the southern edge of the village and from two of its most valuable and well-used community facilities. It enables picturesque views to be had of Ardleigh from as far south as the train tracks. It is used on a daily basis by a wide variety of villagers for a number of recreational purposes.

CARRY FORWARD AS A LOCAL GREEN SPACE.