

Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan

Safeguarding Local Green Spaces

“Local communities should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them.”

Paragraph 76 National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

CRITERIA

Paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework specifies that Local Green Space designation should only be used:

Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves:

Where the green area is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historical significance, recreational value(including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wild life: and

Where the green area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

PROPOSAL

Identified for special protection are three significant areas of green space:

- The Woodwick fields. A corridor of land connecting the three village envelopes.
- The Tynning, Freshford
- The King George V Playing Field, Limpley Stoke,

each of which not only emphasise the distinctive character of the two villages but which also in their own unique way help shape and fashion the setting of both villages in a rural landscape. By affording these areas special protection the Neighbourhood Plan can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy inclusive communities in accordance with Section 8 para 69 (*Promoting Healthy Communities*) of the NPPF.

These three areas are shown on the attached Map coloured Green (see Appendix One). The Map identifies the ownership of land within the designated area proposed as Local Green Space. In Appendix Two are set out details of the consultation process with the respective land owners and in Appendix Three is a copy of the letter sent to each of them.

The Woodwick Fields

For ease of reference the Woodwick green space is called 'the Woodwick fields' and embraces a tract of land spanning the A36 trunk route which is managed and maintained by the Highways Agency, and which consists of a number of fields which are still known by their historical names: Church Powells, Parson's Break, Woodweeks, Lower Woodweeks, Upper Stoke Church Tynning, Lower Stoke Church Tynning, Fern Hills, Galleries, Limpley Ground and Winyates.

These names pre-date by many years the original construction of this turnpike road by the Black Dog Turnpike Trust in the 1830's. The new road bisected the fields of Upper Stoke Church Tynning, Parson's Break, Woodweeks and Pipehouse Field. Its construction changed forever and irrevocably the communities of Freshford and Limpley Stoke in that it divided these historic communities in two. The consequences of that bisection continue to be felt to this day and particularly in relation to matters of planning, traffic movement and road safety.

The settlement of Woodwick dates from Saxon times and was established on the fields called Church Powells and Parson's Break. In the Domesday record of 1086 is recorded that Woodwick comprised an area of two and a half hides (100 – 120 acres of land per hide) with a value of £1. Freshford is recorded as comprising two and one half hides with a value of £3. Today these two areas comprising the single parish of Freshford total some 561 acres – a figure consistent with the land boundaries described over 1000 years ago.

The parish churches of Freshford and Woodwick were amalgamated in 1464 but the Woodwick settlement did not survive and flourish. The Black Death was probably a contributory factor and so possibly was the limited availability of water and a rise in domestic cloth making. Although the name Woodwick lives on in the field names and in the physical evidence of settlements in mounds and undulations there is no precise archaeological evidence of the site of the church, and little other evidence save a track way, four building platform sites and a dove cote.

In Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Assessment (2003), Woodwick is mentioned in this context:

The Scheduled Monument of Hinton Priory represents the remains of a rare Carthusian priory and both Baggeridge and Peipards Farms are associated with deserted medieval settlements, the latter associated with the village of Woodwick.

The Woodwick settlement occupies high land which offers magnificent panoramic long views towards Salisbury Plain, the Westbury White Horse and the Marlborough Downs. In the middle distance can be seen the village of Westwood and each side of it, the river valleys of the rivers Frome and Avon. From this high point the land sweeps down south east to the villages of Limpley Stoke and Freshford with a particularly fine view of St Mary's Church, Limpley Stoke. Vantage points also set out new vistas to the walker and in particular reveal the extent of the Avon Valley north towards Solsbury Hill and beyond. All the land put forward for designation lies within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and in *The Landscape of the Cotswolds* published by the Cotswold Conservation Board is described in these broad terms:

“This landscape type is found on the southern fringes of the Cotswolds to the south, east and north of Bath. The valleys form part of a wider system of rivers and streams that feed into the River Avon.

Physically enclosed, these moderately broad, steep-sided river valleys support sparse settlements. However, as there is room for transport routes along some of the valley floors, they are busier and more developed in character. The steep valley sides and woodland create a sense of seclusion and generally inhibit views along the valley. The upper slopes can be quite open, however, allowing views across the valley. Farming is both arable and pastoral but there are wide areas of rough pasture and scrub.”

The Woodwick green space connects together the three proposed village settlement areas. The land is predominantly farming grassland used for the grazing of cattle and sheep and for taking silage and hay. Many of the fields are enclosed by traditional dry stone walling. The grasslands attract deer, fox and badger. There are well established nesting trees for buzzard and rooks. In the winter months redwing, fieldfare and seagulls can be seen in large flocks feeding on the ground.

Public footpaths criss-cross the land and are used by many on a daily basis – for walking, for exercise and for going to the Galleries Shop, the Memorial Hall and the school. Lower Stoke Church Tynning provides the traditional ground for winter tobogganing.

The path ways connect the hamlets of Pipehouse, Park Corner, Upper Stoke, Middle Stoke and the Freshford village centre.

This green space has been drawn to reflect the local historical significance of this land, its natural beauty, its value to the community and to serve also at its point by Limpley Ground and down east towards the valley floor first as a buffer zone to prevent coalescence of the two villages and second as a visual break between the built areas when viewed from Winsley Hill on the other side of the valley.

Submission:

That the land identified as the Woodwick Fields be designated as Local Green Space for the following reasons;

The green space is in close proximity to the community it serves. This is particularly so where the villages of Freshford and Limpley Stoke historically have consisted of not only village centres but also a number of physically distinct and separate hamlets. The public footpaths that traverse the land are a distinctive feature of this landscape and connect the hamlets to the two village centres, the Freshford Memorial Hall, the Queen Elizabeth Playing Field (where the combined village fete is held annually) and to the Galleries Community Shop.

The green space is special to the community and holds particular local significance because of its defining history, its beauty, its recreational value and its richness of wild life.

It is not an extensive tract of land but is of local character. It touches the three proposed village envelopes, it gives emphasis to the distinctive character of the two villages shaped by separate hamlets of settlement, it seeks to underpin the strong sense of community and to help reverse to some degree the regrettable division of the community brought about by the A36 trunk road which slices the two villages in half.

The Tying, Freshford.

The five acres of land known as the Tying rest at the heart of the village and is registered as a village green (1970).

The War Memorial is sited at the boundary of the Tying close by the cemetery.

This green space is in part in common use and has special value both as a village green and as a connecting green link between the two settlements of the village centre and Sharpstone.

It is embraced by the revised Freshford and Sharpstone Conservation Area (2007).

For many years the land has been in private ownership but only recently (March 2014) Freshford Parish Council successfully negotiated for and completed the purchase of the land on behalf of the community.

King George V Play Park, Limpley Stoke The play park is in Middle Stoke and can be accessed from Woods Hill.

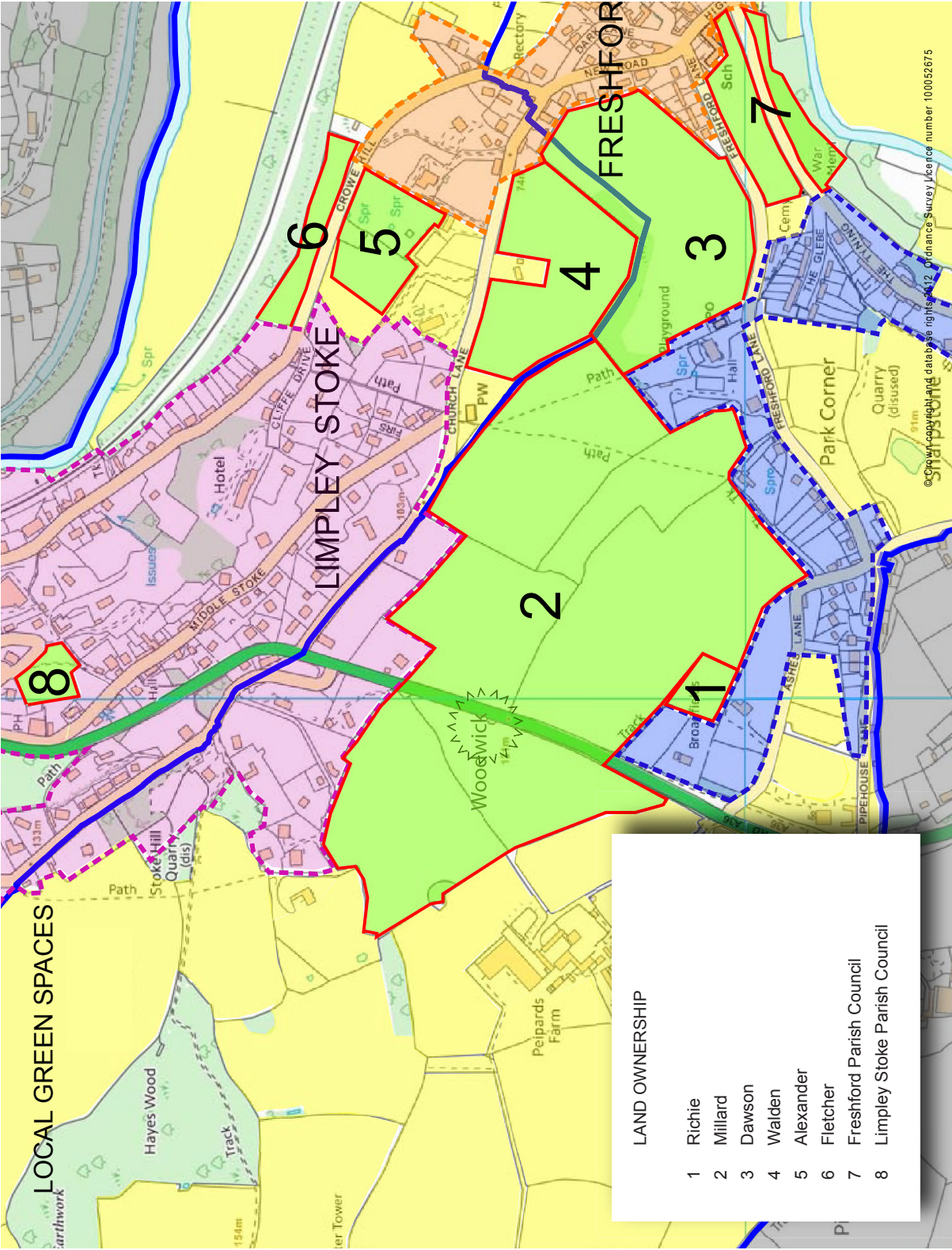
The Park was created in 1936 as a recreation and playing field, to be preserved in perpetuity as a memorial to King George Vth. It is managed by the Limpley Stoke Parish Council whose members act as trustees for the charity. The facilities include play equipment, a boules pitch, and cruck shelter and community barbeque.

Submission:

That the Tying and King George V Play Park be designated as Local Green Space for the following reasons:

- **Their setting and character. They are distinctive.**
- **They are green lungs in the hearts of both villages.**
- **They are used for play and leisure and as focal points for community get togethers.**
- **They give vitality to village life.**
- **They contribute overall to the green infrastructure and aid biodiversity.**
- **The Tying in particular is an identifiable green break between the settlement of Sharpstone and the Freshford village centre.**
- **Each place helps underpin Green Belt policy.**
- **They fulfill the criteria for special protection as identified in Paragraph 77 of the NPPF. Both areas of land lie in the centre of their respective villages and have established recreational value.**
- **The Tying village green already enjoys layers of special protection given its village green status and conservation area status. Nevertheless there is merit in underpinning this fact through the Neighbourhood Plan and for the purposes of the Plan treating both areas as of equal status and deserving of designation.**

Appendix One



Appendix Two

Schedule of Ownership of land proposed to be designated as Local Green Space

Number	Land	Owner	Formal Notification to owner	Owner's response
1	Paddock, Woodweeks.	Mr. & Mrs. G. Ritchie.	4 th July 2014	Support for designation. (4/7/14)
2	Woodweeks Church Powells Parson's Break Upper Stoke Lower Stoke Church Tynning Fern's Hill	Mrs. M. Millard.	20 th June 2014	Unable to agree to proposal but consultation continues. (17/7/14)
3	Galleries Field	Mr. and Mrs. S.Dawson.	20 th June 2014	Support for designation(15/7/14)
4	Limpley Ground	Mrs. J. Walden.	22 nd June 2014	No response.
5	Aroona	Mr. and Mrs. C. Alexander	20 th June 2014	Not in agreement with designation and reserves 'the right to engage with the consultation process.'
6	Field	Mr. and Mrs. J Fletcher.	17 th June 2014	Support for designation. (19/6/14)
7	The Tynning	Freshford Parish Council	20 th June 2014	Support for designation. (17/7/14)
8	King George V Play Park	Limpley Stoke Parish Council	20 th June 2014	Support for designation. (6/7/14)
(9)	Land adjacent to King George V Play Park	Mr. C. Foulkes.	20 th June 2014	Objects to designation. DECISION BY MG on 15/7/14: Land does not fulfill LGS criteria and is withdrawn from proposed designation.

Appendix Three

Letter to land owners

Dear

As part of the Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan, we are seeking to introduce a Local Green Spaces Policy which proposes that the local green spaces as shown on Map 2, page 11 (see link below) be designated in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

We are writing to inform you that part of your land is proposed to be designated as a local green space. As you will be aware, this land is already protected from development by existing Green Belt legislation but this designation will provide a further safeguard.

The detailed proposal can be found on pages 20-22 of the following document:
https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/59046711/NP_FINAL_REDUCED.pdf

For ease of reference in the attached Appendices below we have reproduced Paragraphs 76 and 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework (see below)together with the reasons submitted for seeking the designation and the Plan showing the extent of the land subject to this proposal.

If you support this proposal or have any other comments to make about this proposal, please contact Simon Coombe (simonhjcoombe@hotmail.com), Tel 01225 723306 or Nick Stevens (njsfreshford@googlemail.com), Tel 01225 722264, by 30th June 2014.

We would be grateful if you would in any case acknowledge safe receipt.

Yours sincerely

Nick Stevens
Chairman
Freshford Parish Council

Simon Coombe
Chairman
Limpley Stoke Parish Council

Paras 76 and 77 NPPF

76. Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in

very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore 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 reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

77. The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is 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 or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Ends