

SUGGESTED LOCAL GREEN SPACES

NOVEMBER 2024

BACKGROUND & CRITERIA

NPPF explains that 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.

Planning Practice Guidance states that Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

Criteria for Local Green Spaces from the National Planning Policy Framework

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.*

Proximity Planning Practice Guidance states “The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, including why the green area is seen as special, but it must be reasonably close. For example, if public access is a key factor, then the site would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served.”

| Score | Required attributes |
|--------|---|
| Low | Outside the main residential community, with limited public access. |
| Medium | Either limited public access, or outside the main residential community. |
| High | Directly adjacent to the main residential community, with good public access. |

Significance: National Planning Practice Guidance states “For example, green areas could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis.”

“Different types of designations are intended to achieve different purposes. If land is already protected by designation, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space.”

| Score | Required attributes |
|--------|---|
| Low | No formal structures or qualities not covered by an existing designation. |
| Medium | Limited formal structures or tranquil spaces. |
| High | Formal structures, or tranquil spaces in an urban environment, particularly those not covered by an existing designation. |

Beauty: Assessing the significance of a site’s beauty is subjective. Considerations included the general description of the site, and its visual attractiveness, ecological features, landscape features and character, including settings, and any particular views into or out of the land.

An overall judgement has been made.

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Historic Significance: Each site is subject to a brief historical background, followed by an assessment against a set of 8 criteria to establish whether it holds historic significance. Each site is then either screened in for having potential historic significance, or screened out (green), with some sites highlighted as having the highest levels of historic significance. A score of 3/5 or higher has been considered to be of historic significance.

| No. | Criteria |
|-----|---|
| 1 | Are there any historic buildings, features or archaeological remains? |
| 2 | Does the site contribute to the setting of any designated heritage assets? |
| 3 | Does the site contain any historic landscape features? |
| 4 | Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the settlement nearby? |
| 5 | Did any important historic events take place on the site? |
| 6 | Are there any important people connected with the site? |
| 7 | Is there a longstanding event that takes place on the site? |
| 8 | Is the site publicly accessible and/or are there longstanding PRoW? |

| Score | Required attributes |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| 0 | Meets none of the criteria |
| 1 | Meets one of the criteria |
| 2 | Meets two of the criteria |
| 3 | Meets three of the criteria |
| 4 | Meets four of the criteria |
| 5 | Meets five or more of the criteria |

Recreational value

Consideration was given to the role and purpose of the land. The recreational value should be of local significance. Most green spaces provide some recreational value, however NPPF is intending to identify why the land is of particular local significance above other spaces that could provide recreation.

It was noted whether the site is designated as open space and whether it includes a recreational route and / or formal and/ or informal footpaths.

However of more importance was whether a site has other more formal recreation uses that were important locally such as a cricket pitch or playing pitches. Consideration was given to whether there were other facilities of the same kind within the local community or whether the site provided a unique combination of facilities and/or uses that would be difficult to duplicate elsewhere.

| Score | Required attributes |
|--------|--|
| Low | Informal/irregular public use |
| Medium | Formal, regular use |
| High | Regular formal use, with additional facilities, particularly where there is no alternative provision |

Tranquillity

Assessing whether a site is of local significance due to tranquillity is subjective. National Planning guidance refers to “urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis”. It was therefore considered that the land should provide a tranquil green space where the community can escape the urban area and feel remoteness.

Consideration was given to surrounding infrastructure such

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as whether the land is generally free of infrastructure such as powerlines, lighting and roads.

Consideration was also given to the peacefulness that the site provided and whether the site provided an escape from surrounding noises or whether they were still very much present.

| Score | Required attributes |
|--------|---|
| Low | No separation from surroundings, visually or audibly; visible infrastructure, |
| Medium | Limited infrastructure, with some separation from surroundings |
| High | Good degree of separation, both visual and auditory, with very limited visible infrastructure |

Wildlife

All locations were assessed against DEFRA's Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside to identify any priority habitats or species.

For context, the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) define 'rich in wildlife' as including:

- Presence of SBIs
- Presence of Priority Habitats (dataset from Natural England)
- Likely presence of important populations of protected species (dataset from GMEU)

| Score | Required attributes |
|--------|--|
| Low | No defined priority habitats or species; no high-quality, non-statutory habitats for native species. |
| Medium | Medium or high-quality non-statutory habitats for native species |

| | |
|------|--|
| High | Defined priority habitats or species; or high quality non-statutory habitats for native species. |
|------|--|

Demonstrably special to a local community

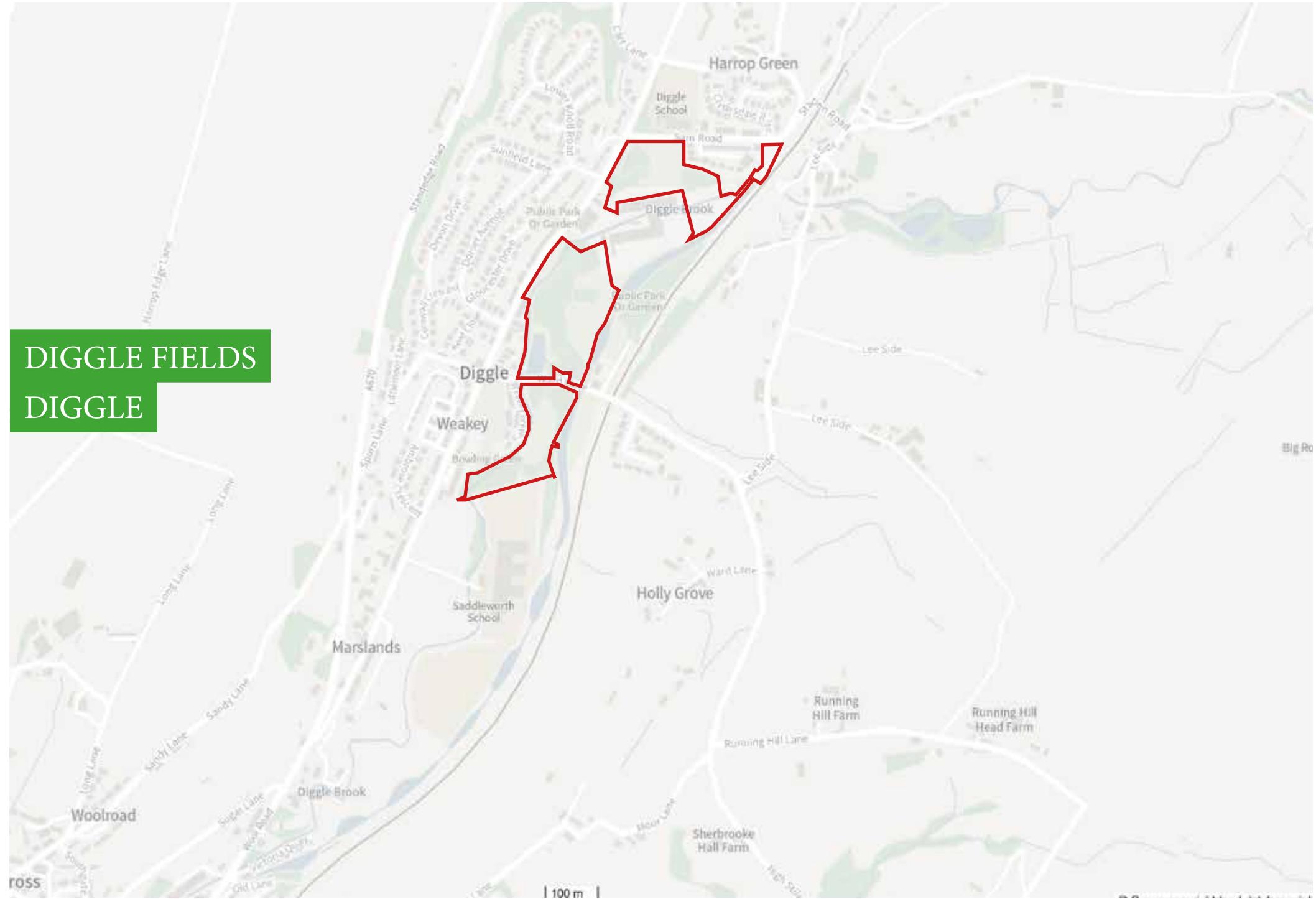
The majority of the sites which have been brought forward for consideration for Local Green Space status were specifically raised as such during the consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan – specifically Diggle Fields, Dawson's Field and Church Fields. Additional sites considered have been brought forward during strategic planning meetings with Community Associations as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

| Score | Required attributes |
|--------|--|
| Low | No public recommendations to protect the space. |
| Medium | Some public recommendations to protect the space, and some examples of continued site-specific events. |
| High | Strong public support for protecting the space, with regular and long-standing site-specific events. |

Current assessments

None of the sites proposed are currently listed as Other Protected Open Land (OPOL) – a local protection designation – and were therefore not been considered as a Local Green Space as part of the Local Plan process for assessing whether those sites should be included.

DIGGLE FIELDS DIGGLE



DIGGLE FIELDS DIGGLE

Current status: partial Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland (England).

The Canal and River Trust owned land which Diggle Fields surrounds is Priority Habitat Inventory – lowland fens (England).

The land is not within the Green Belt and is unallocated from development but the two southerly parcels are within the Oldham Local Plan Green Corridors and Links designation. The parcels are also identified as Open Space in the latest Oldham Council Open Space audit and are managed as countryside sites.

Description of area: The designated area is made up of three linked green spaces north of Saddleworth School which are owned by Oldham Council, locally known as Diggle Fields. It is bounded to the east by residential property, and to the West by the Canal. It includes wooded areas, a pond, and open fields.

Ownership: All the proposed inclusion is owned by Oldham Council, who have registered no issue with the proposal.

Proximity: High The proposed site runs parallel to the village of Diggle, and follows the route of the rights of way running parallel to the rail line, canal and main road.

Beauty: High The location falls within the identified area in the Neighbourhood Plan for land proving the setting for the Peak District National Park.

The visual impact of the site itself is heavily influenced by it being the setting of the canal which is not part of the designated site for the Local Green Space. However, while that section is not included, the site suggested has strong value as the setting of the historically significant canal.

The site is adjacent to the Green Belt and landscape Character types Open Moorlands and Enclosed Upland Fringes Dark Peak) and Incised Urban Fringe Valleys.

Historic significance: 4/5 (2, 3, 4, 8).

The site contributes to the setting of a number of designated heritage assets, specifically Huddersfield Narrow Canal Lock adjacent to Ward Road Bridge (LISBREF/1253530); 1 Ward Lane (LISBREF/1164775); No 66 Bridge (LISBREF/1067433; Huddersfield Narrow Canal Subway under canal after Lock 30 W (LISBREF/1261755); No 69 Bridge (LISBREF/1309242).

It is the setting for the canal and train line (which go through the valley and into the Standedge tunnels. The canal tunnel is the longest, highest, and deepest canal tunnel in the United Kingdom, and the canal itself is a significant historic feature. While the proposed site itself does not include the tunnel or the railway, they do frame the setting of both.

The canal and the railway form part of the industrial heritage of the village, with the school (which is surrounded by the proposed local green space) being built on the site of the former pallet works, the remaining building of which is another listed building. The northerly end of the space also provides the setting to the

There are longstanding public rights of way across the site (see below), as well as extensive favour trails running throughout the site.

Recreational value: High The areas north and south of Ward Lane are heavily used for outdoor recreation. Features included a children's play area – which is also the central location for a Wildlife Adventure Club (see wildlife), an exercise trail, public arts activities linked to the history of the canal, and duck pond, waterside walks by the Diggle Brook



DIGGLE FIELDS DIGGLE

and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, walks in woodlands and open meadow areas, picnic areas, and informal sports areas. Scarecrow trails organised by the Diggle PTA are run across the site each year.

It is the main outdoor meeting area for the village, where community activities take place, or start and finish. A café on the east bank of the canal adds to the area's appeal.

There are two routes crossing the site from east to west: one from opposite Ambrose Crescent (PROW 893), which is then followed by a separate right of way (872) giving access to Ravenstones Drive in the east; and one from opposite Lower Moordale (PROW873). Two routes also run from north to south – PROW 862 and 863.

The northernmost parcel of the designation is the home of the Diggle Band Contest. The Band Contest is of particular importance for the recreational value, as detailed under "demonstrably special". It is also used for walking and dog walking.

Tranquillity: Medium The green space is located parallel to the main road through the settlement; creating a specific contrast to the main urban section of the village.

Only one road, Ward Lane, runs through the proposed green space, which is not visible for the majority of the site. This is also the only section of the site where there is lighting, although the sports pitches for the adjacent Saddleworth School do have lighting.

DIGGLE FIELDS DIGGLE

There are also no powerlines running through the site.

Wildlife: Medium The site is home to a Wildlife Adventure Club, which gives young children the opportunity to get close to nature, including a wildflower meadow.

Part of the site is categorised as Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland (England); and it frames the canal which is categorised as Priority Habitat Inventory – lowland fens (England).

The Canal and River Trust site which runs adjacent to the proposed Local Green Space is a designated Site of Biological Importance (GMEU).

Demonstrably special: High The site was specifically identified by five different correspondents in the first survey in response to question 16 “Are you aware of any open or public spaces in your village which you would like to see protected? If so, please give details.” This is in addition to the many more generalised comments in support of protecting green space throughout the Parish.

The northernmost parcel of land is the home of the Diggle Band Contest. The band contests in Saddleworth started in Uppermill in 1884, then later in Greenfield in 1898, always connected with the walks of the schools in the morning of Whit Friday, when the competing bands had played for the walks. It is often called “The Greatest Free Show on Earth” – with bands competing from all over the world – most recently entrants have come from Switzerland, Germany and Australia. Each village has a traditional site for the contests, which provide a critical home for the centrepiece of cultural heritage in each of the area’s villages. As such, the site is extremely valuable as a site of special cultural heritage.

Recommendation: Designate Local Green Space status.



The site scores highly on the criteria of proximity, beauty, recreational value and historic importance, all in ways which are sufficiently distinct as to warrant the assignment of the status, particularly given that the site falls outside the current Green Belt.



DAWSON'S FIELD SCOUTHEAD



DAWSON'S FIELD SCOUTHEAD

Current status: Green Belt.

Description of area: Dawson's Field is bounded to the east by Higher Turf Lane, and to the south by Huddersfield Road. To the west there is housing, and to the north, there is farmland.

Ownership: All the proposed inclusion is owned by Oldham Council, who have registered no issue with the proposal. It is operated by Saddleworth Parish Council on a long-term lease from Oldham Council, with support from the Scouthead and Austerlands Community Association.

Proximity: **High** The proposed site is in the heart of Scouthead, next to the main road and the residential ribbon of housing.

Beauty: **Low.** While Dawson's Field is set in an idyllic location, the field itself is of moderate value from a beauty point of view, with no real distinguishing features. It does

however fall within the Pennine Foothills (West/South Pennines Landscape Character type).

Historic significance: 2/5 (7 and 8). Dawson's Field is the setting for the Scouthead and Austerlands Band Contest, which has been running since 1978.

There is a long-established public right of way running to the north east side of the field (see recreational value).

Recreational value: **High** It is used extensively for community events, such as the Band Contest, summer fairs, dog shows and family fun days. There has also been a planting scheme, with 100 trees being planted around the perimeter as part of the City of Trees initiative.

The Band Contest is of particular importance for the recreational value, as detailed under "demonstrably special".

DAWSON'S FIELD SCOUTHEAD

While the field is already part of the green belt, we believe that it should also be designated as a Local Green Space to indicate the particular social value that has been developed through these regular events. As such, the importance of the site is not just related to the prevention of urban sprawl, but holds additional significance.

Scouthead village does not have a play area or community hall, and as such, Dawson's Field provides the only such community facility for recreation. Outside of the formal events which are run throughout the year, the site is well-used on a daily basis by the public, including for children playing football, dog walking, community growing, and there has been engagement with one of the local schools for planting programmes.

Tranquillity: Low. While the rural setting is relatively tranquil, the site sits next to the main road running through the village (the A62 Huddersfield Road), which has both street lighting and telegraph wires in close proximity.

Wildlife: Low. The site is designated as neutral grassland on the Living England Habitat Map. There are no distinguishing features to the area which would indicate the presence of wildlife beyond what is standard for the area.

Demonstrably special: High. The site was specifically identified by seven different correspondents in the first survey in response to question 16 “Are you aware of any open or public spaces in your village which you would like to see protected? If so, please give details.” This is in addition to the many more generalised comments in support of protecting green space throughout the Parish.

Dawson's Field is the traditional home for the Scouthead and Austerlands band contest. The band contests in Saddleworth started in Uppermill in 1884, then later in Greenfield in

The Public Right of Way running across the North East edge of the site



1898, always connected with the walks of the schools in the morning of Whit Friday, when the competing bands had played for the walks. It is often called “The Greatest Free Show on Earth” – with bands competing from all over the world – most recently entrants have come from Switzerland, Germany and Australia. Each village has a traditional site for the contests, which provide a critical home for the centrepiece of cultural heritage in each of the area’s villages. With no other current equivalent site in Scouthead, the importance of this location to the recreational and cultural heritage of the area cannot be understated.

Recommendation: Designate Local Green Space status.

The site scores highly on the criteria of proximity, recreational value and demonstrably special, all in ways which are sufficiently distinct as to warrant the assignment of the status in addition to its Green Belt status.



PLAYING FIELD AT ASHFIELD SPRINGHEAD

PLAYING FIELD AT ASHFIELD SPRINGHEAD

Current status:

The site is undesignated in the Oldham Local Plan. The south of the site is adjacent to a Green Corridor and recreational route. The northernmost point of the outlined area abuts the Hey Conservation Area.

Description of area: The playing field at Ashfield Crescent is bounded to the north by Springhead Football Club, to the east by Ashfield Crescent, and to the south and east by housing. At the South East corner, it connects through to the Linear Park.

Ownership: The land is owned by Oldham Council.

Proximity: High The proposed site is in the centre of a residential area, forming a connecting route between the Springhead Football Club and the Linear Park. It is directly adjacent to residential housing both in the Parish, and in the adjoining village of Lees.

Beauty: Medium. The Ashfield playing field is a distinct break from the surrounding urban area. It adjoins the Linear Park, made from the former railway route, but is distinctly different in nature, being the only large open space in the village in a densely built up urban area.

Historic significance: 1/5 (8). The site is publicly accessible from Ashfield Crescent, linking through to the Linear Park, and also from the Springhead Football Club.

Recreational value: High. The site is identified as open space in latest open space audit (2022). Only large open space in a highly developed part of the village area. The usage is almost entirely informal, with it being used extensively for dog walking, recreational football, and sledging in the winter months. The football pitches are on a long-term lease



to Springhead AFC, which run multiple football teams, including youth teams.

There are no formal play parks in the village of Springhead, and only one other open area, which is on the extreme edge of the settlement, and relatively inaccessible to the majority of the residents. As such, the area provides a resource for which there is no alternative in the area.

Tranquillity: Medium The only roads adjoining the designated site are low traffic, proving access only to the residential properties adjoining the site.

As the only distinct open space of its kind in a largely built up suburban village, it rates more highly for tranquillity due to the context.

Wildlife: Low The site is designated as neutral grassland on the Living England Habitat Map. There are no distinguishing features to the area which would indicate the presence of wildlife beyond what is standard for the area.

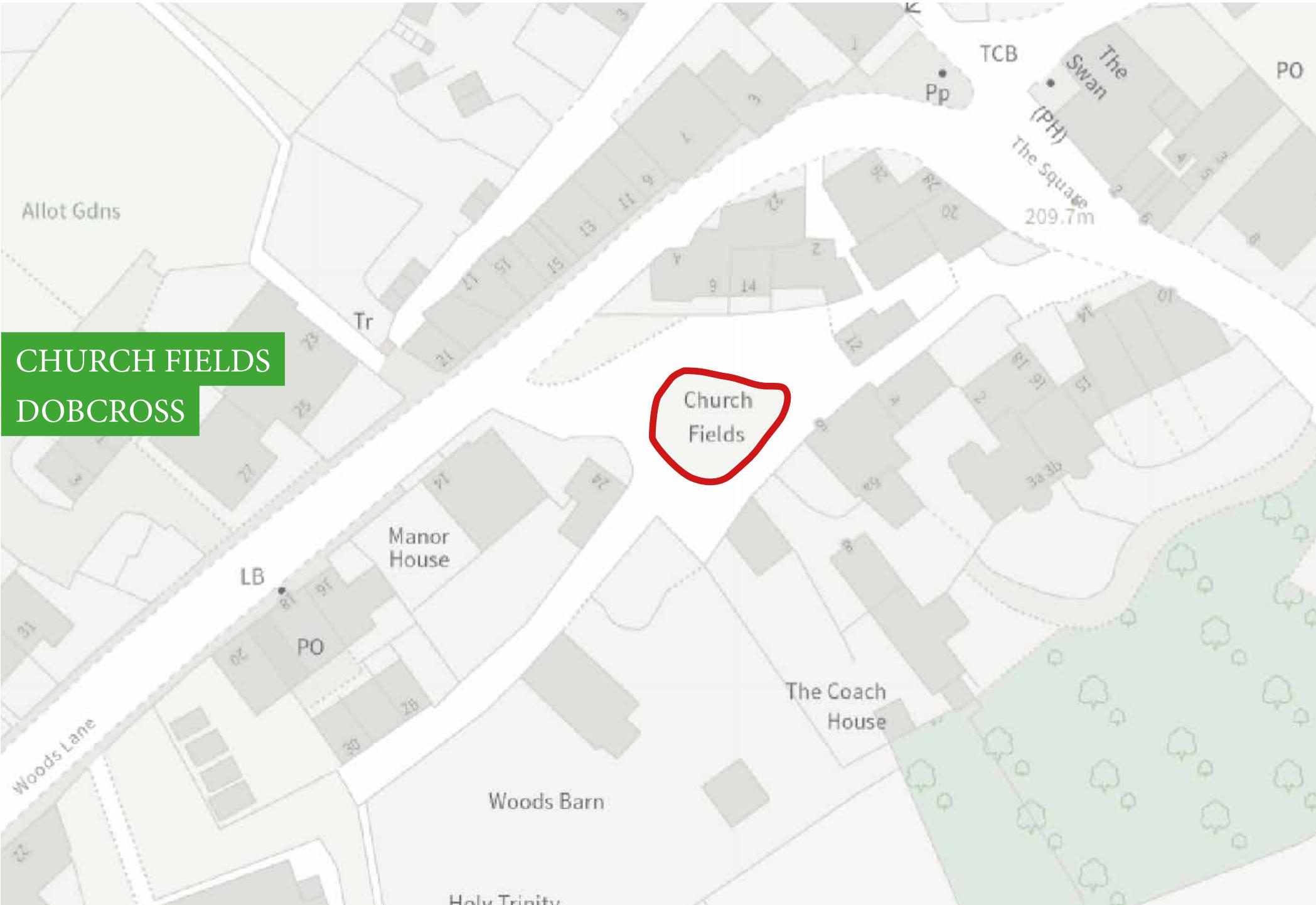
Demonstrably special: Medium The key aspect for its special nature is the lack of any other similar open space in the area.

Recommendation: Designate Local Green Space status.

The critical aspect for the recommendation is the proximity of the land to the built up suburban areas, and the lack of any other site of similar characteristic within the village area, making its recreational value particularly valued.

Given that the site currently sits outside the Green Belt, and therefore lacks current protections, other than open space, this is deemed sufficient to warrant the Local Green Space designation.

PLAYING FIELD AT ASHFIELD SPRINGHEAD



CHURCH FIELDS DOBCROSS



CHURCH FIELDS DOBCROSS

Current status: The site is undesignated but is within Dobcross conservation area.

Description of area: Church Fields is a small green, with two well-established trees. It is surrounded by a small circular residential road which services the many listed buildings adjoining the site, set back from the main road through the village.

Ownership: The proposed inclusion is owned by Oldham Council.

Proximity: The proposed site is in the centre of Dobcross, surrounded by residential buildings, and is regularly used as a focal point for community activities.

Beauty: Medium. The idyllic setting of the green space in the centre of so many historic buildings is a unique site even in Saddleworth. Its beautiful quality is particularly evidenced by the response of international bands who value it as a key location when they visit for the band contest.

Historic significance: 3/5 (2, 4, 7, 8)

Church Fields is framed by multiple Listed Buildings: Nos. 1, 14 & 16 Church Fields; No 12 Church Fields; No 4 Church Fields; No. 6 & Cottage, Church Fields; and Manor House Church Fields. It also lies within the Dobcross Conservation Area.

The field is a key part of one of the longest established village centres in Saddleworth. The village had one of the earliest woollen “fulling” mills in Saddleworth. With its set back location at the heart of a distinct range of listed buildings, this has been a key feature of a unique village heart for centuries.

The Band Contest is of particular importance for the recreational value, as detailed under “demonstrably special”. It has been at its current location since 1967.

The site is extremely accessible, just off the main road through the village, and completely open to the public. It is extremely small, and therefore does not have any public rights of way on it, but is completely open and extremely well used.

Recreational value: High Church Fields, bordering Woods Lane, is a small but very important plot of land which has been used for religious, cultural and recreational purposes for more than a hundred years.

CHURCH FIELDS DOBCROSS

It is particularly used for musical events, not least being home to the Dobcross Band Contest (see Demonstrably Special). During the Summer, our own Dobcross Silver Band plays a “Brass on the Grass” concert on Church Fields as a communal, event to which the entire village and surrounds are invited.

At Christmas, the Dobcross Junior Band processes, along with village residents, to Church Fields to play a “Torchlit Carol Concert”, again for the benefit of the whole village and which is a beautiful and moving spectacle which is blessed by the current incumbent of Holy Trinity Church.

In addition to the religious, cultural and recreational activities which take place there, Church Fields is planted yearly by residents, at their own expense, with bulbs for a lovely springtime show of daffodils and tulips.

Tranquillity: Medium. There are no heavily trafficked roads through the village, but the site is adjoining the largest road. However, it is well set back, surrounded by heritage properties, which give it a uniquely restful location. There is street lighting and telephone cables,

Wildlife: Low. This is a small package of green space in a mainly residential environment, with no specific wildlife.

Demonstrably special: High. It is a small plot supporting two mature trees under which Brass bands play during the annual, and world famous, Whit Friday Brass Band competition which is competed for by the best brass bands from the United Kingdom and overseas. It is often said that the overseas bands in particular, are thrilled to compete on Church Fields.

The band contests in Saddleworth started in Uppermill in 1884, then later in Greenfield in 1898, always connected

with the walks of the schools in the morning of Whit Friday, when the competing bands had played for the walks. It is often called “The Greatest Free Show on Earth” – with bands competing from all over the world – most recently entrants have come from Switzerland, Germany and Australia.

Each village has a traditional site for the contests, and this unique plot in the centre of the village, surrounded by beautiful homes of historic significance, particularly elevate it as a site for cultural heritage.

The site was specifically identified twice by correspondents in the first survey in response to question 16 “Are you aware of any open or public spaces in your village which you would like to see protected? If so, please give details.” This is in addition to the many more generalised comments in support of protecting green space throughout the Parish.

Recommendation: Designate Local Green Space status.

The site scores highly on the criteria of proximity, historical significance, recreational value, historic importance and demonstrably special.

PONY FIELD FRIEZLAND



PONY FIELD FRIEZLAND



Current status and classification: Green belt; Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England); North West Region Theme Area; Groundwater Vulnerability Map (England) Medium-High; Woodland Improvement – High Spatial Priority; Site of Biological Importance with a Recreational Route running around the site boundary.

Description of area: Pony Field is bounded to the east by residential property (Low Grove Lane), to the north by the Transpennine rail route, and to the south and west by open land in the Green Belt.

Ownership: private.

Proximity: Medium The site is on the fringe of the Friezland community, with residential property to the east of the site, and open space to the other three sides.

Beauty: High The site is a small wooded area, with the

residential area to the east of the site clearly separated from the designation. The reservoir to the centre is surrounded by woods and a ribbon path to the edge.

Historic significance: 1/5 (8) While there are nearby designated heritage assets, none are directly part of the designation.

Around the edge of the site runs a public right of way (see recreational value), which connects the site to the nearest heritage asset, Railway overbridge MVL3/23, Wrights.

Recreational value: Medium The site allows fishing by licence, and the public right of way (222 SADD) is well-used by local residents.

Tranquillity: High The site is isolated from the residential property to the east, and there is no lighting, power cables or telephone cables across the site, and it is accessible from a

PONY FIELD FRIEZLAND

solitary track with no through route.

To the north of the site is the Transpennine rail line, which is the only challenge to the Tranquillity, but the route is not heavily trafficked.

Wildlife: High The site has a small reservoir to the centre, and a wooded area to the side, which are rich in wildlife, as evidenced by the numerous identified categories listed: Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England); North West Region Theme Area; Woodland Improvement – High Spatial Priority; Site of Biological Importance.

Demonstrably special: Low While the site is of importance to the local community, and sees consistent informal use, there are no regular events or use that distinguish it from the neighbouring open space land.

Recommendation: Keep under review

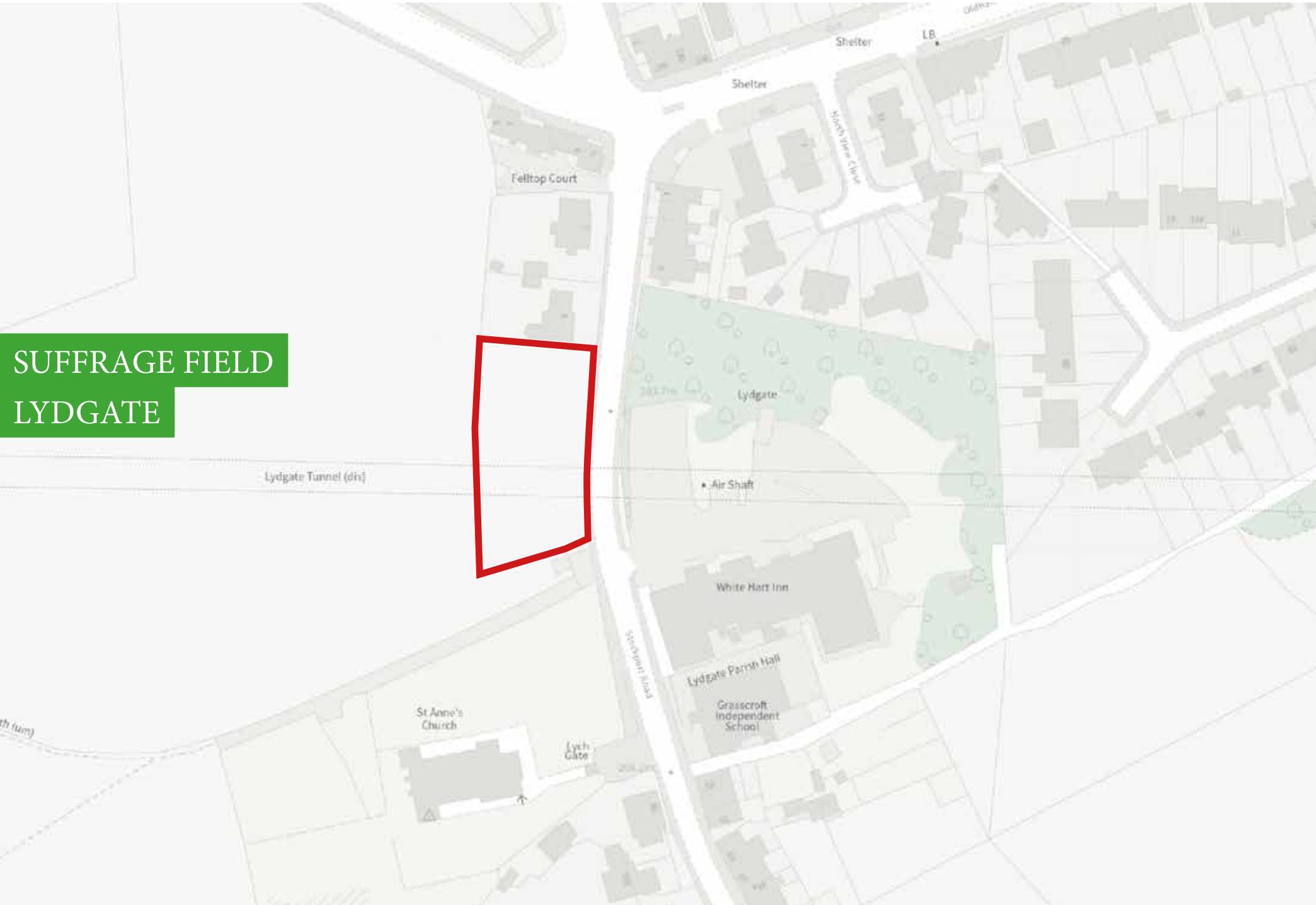
The site scores extremely highly on three categories, beauty, Tranquillity and wildlife. However, the site is already covered by substantial protections in direct relation to these categories – the Green Belt designation, the SBI categorisation, and the Priority Habitat Inventory. As such, the site would be considered to qualify for Local Green Space status only if it scored highly in any of the additional grounds for the status.

However, for these reasons, the Parish Council notes that the site is of extreme importance, and cannot currently foresee any development applications that could come forward that would outweigh the importance of these protections.

Should there be any future development in the vicinity of the site or change in the use of the location, the Parish Council would recommend reviewing whether the Local Green Space classification should be introduced.

The Public Right of Way running around the perimeter of the site





SUFFRAGE FIELD LYDGATE

Current status and classification: Partial Green Belt.

Description of area: The land is a large field, within the Green Belt, bounded to the east by Stockport Road, to the south by St Anne's Church, by farmland to the west, and by two residential properties to the north.

Ownership: Private ownership

Proximity: High The site is located next to the traditional centre of Lydgate village, as marked by the church and pub, which are at the traditional heart of the village.

Beauty: Medium The site is part of the view of St Anne's Church, which is noted in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan as being of particular significance, with reference made to *St Anne's Lydgate: The Story of a Pennine Parish 1788–1988* by Canon CCW Airne, he states "As Lydgate Church enters into its third century, more changes will come, and new opportunities open up. Looking back over the past we learn of times of neglect and indifference: times of inspiration and progress but in spite of the ups and downs the gospel has been preached and countless people have ordered their lives by it. The Church on the Hill, battered by two centuries of wind, rain and snow, still stands as a beacon proclaiming that Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again, and calling God's people to worship and fellowship."

Most of the site is within the Pennine Foothills (Dark peak) Landscape Character Type.

Historic significance: 5/5 (1, 2, 3, 5, 6)

The open field is of notable historical significance, as it has been identified as the first known site to hold a meeting towards the suffrage movement in the UK. A book called *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, by Middleton-born radical



SUFFRAGE FIELD LYDGATE

speaker Samuel Bamford, indicates that a meeting had been held in the field on 4 May 1818. At that gathering, Bamford suggested women be given the right to vote in reformers' meetings, granting them equal status with men.

Its date was 85 years before Emmeline Pankhurst is credited with forming the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903. A memorial plaque to mark the site's importance was unveiled in March 2024.

The site is directly adjacent to the Lydgate Conservation area, and provides the setting for two Grade II listed buildings – the White Hart (LISBREF/1356426), and St Anne's Church (LISBREF/1068142). The view up the valley from Grotton towards the church is one of the protected views as defined in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

Bamford was an English radical reformer and writer born in Middleton, Lancashire. His radical political beliefs led him to be heavily involved in resistance to the British government and to witness to several important historical events relating to working-class advocacy and public defiance.

Recreational value: **Low** The site is not publicly accessible, and there are no public rights of way or commonly used routes across the land – there is an adjacent PRoW

Tranquillity: **Low** The site is located next to Stockport Road, which carries a reasonable level of traffic. There are power lines running next to the PRoW at the south end of the site, and street lighting next to the road.

Wildlife: **Low** Classified as Neutral Grassland under the Living England Habitat map.

Demonstrably special: **High**

As the site of the first recorded instance of the suffrage movement, the field is unique in the United Kingdom.

Recommendation: Request Local Green Space designation from Oldham Council.

The historical significance of the field clearly establishes the location as worthy of Local Green Space status. It has, however, been the subject of repeated planning applications and appeals. Given this repeated challenge to the value of the site, we regard Oldham's planning authority, which has been the deciding body for the applications, as best placed to pursue the allocation of Local Green Space status.