



Ringstead Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space Assessment

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Introduction

1. Ringstead is preparing a neighbourhood plan which will include a policy designating areas of Local Green Space which are particularly valued by the community.
2. In consultation with the community in 2021, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group identified nine areas of green space. Each of these was visited and further evidence gathered on them to determine whether they meet the national criteria for Local Green Space designation.
3. This document provides the assessment and reasoning of all six areas of green space visited or suggested for us to investigate to include in the neighbourhood development plan; however, those we wish to take forward have been separated from ones which were eliminated to make this easier for readers.
4. Chapter 3 and 4 provides the assessment and explanation of the five green spaces we feel are justified and supported to be a LGS in the Ringstead Neighbourhood Plan.
5. Chapter 5 sets out in a summary table followed by the assessment forms of the three green spaces we did not meet the criteria to make an LGS designation for the plan.

Policy Context

6. Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection for green areas of particular importance to local communities. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in 2012 (revised July 2021) introduced the concept of Local Green Space designation.
7. Paragraph 101 of the NPPF sets out that communities should be able to identify green spaces of particular importance through neighbourhood plans, with para 101 Determining:
8. 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), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and
 - c) Local in character and not an extensive tract of land¹.
9. In addition, the National Planning Practice Guidance states:

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¹ [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented.

10. Other designations, such as Special Areas of Conservation, do not necessarily preclude or support designation as a Local Green Space. However, it is necessary to consider whether the additional designation is necessary and would serve a useful purpose.
11. In applying the NPPF criteria, close proximity would normally mean easy walking distance, which based on Natural England standards would mean 1.25 miles or less.
12. Consideration of whether the green space is local in character, and not an extensive tract of land, suggests spaces within a locality, rather than for example, extensive green areas in the countryside.
13. The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan includes strategic policies for the neighbourhood area. Planning Practice Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning sets out that plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan if it is to meet the basic conditions. Policy CS08 of the local plan sets out that new development should incorporate green space to safeguard wildlife, provide recreational opportunities and improve the quality of life for people living in the area.

Assessment of the green spaces being designated

14. The Local Green Space Assessment Tool from My Community: Neighbourhood Planning Local Green Spaces² has been used as the basis to assess each site identified by the community. This includes:
 - The Church Yard
 - Ringstead Playing field
 - Greenspace on the corner of Chapel Lane and High Street
 - Ringstead Downs
 - Ringstead Common

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² <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/>

The Church Yard



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
The Church Yard of Church St Andrew	St Andrews Church sits east of High St in the village of Ringstead and stands on a terrace with a commanding view over the playing field to the south, the village below and the countryside beyond ³ . The green open space and church yard surrounding the parish church is the burial ground for residents of Ringstead.

Checklist			
Statutory designations – ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	Site allocations	Planning permissions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Andrew's Church is Grade II* listed. • Ringstead War Memorial in the Churchyard is also a Grade II listed building - Ringstead War Memorial, Ringstead - 1454944 Historic England • The site also falls within Ringstead Conservation Area. • Site also falls within the Norfolk Coast AONB designation 	None	None, however, a tree application took place on 04/01/22 under reference 22/00001/TREECA with no objection on 07/02/22.	

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³ [Ringstead conservation area leaflet.pdf](#)

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it Serves.</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other).</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land.</i>
The church yard is within the village centre and walking distance to many of the village's amenities, including being next door to the villages playing field, and on the same road as a number of residential and business properties.	<p>The church yard can be considered demonstrably special to Ringstead as it has been the burial ground of Ringstead residents since at least the early fourteenth century. It contains gravestones dating from the eighteenth nineteenth and twentieth centuries.</p> <p>It is an important local facility which offers a historical and spiritual connection for current and previous villagers. Also, being a green space offers value for biodiversity and wildlife which chooses to nest or settle here.</p>	<p>St Andrews Church is approximately 0.05 ha, this would be excluded from the Local Green Space. The church yard surrounding the church is approximately 0.6 ha.</p> <p>It is local in character to Ringstead serving the purposes of the local area only. It would not necessarily be considered an extensive tract of land.</p> <p>However, as explained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Para:015 ID:37-015-20140306⁴, there are no hard and fast rules about how big a Local Green Space can be and a degree of judgement will inevitably be needed when making a designation. Para 101 of the NPPF (2021) states that the green area should only be designated if it is not an extensive tract of land, this may be making blanket designations of open countryside adjacent to settlements which would not be considered appropriate. Nevertheless, the church yard serves as a green space for the burial of the local community so is considered an appropriate size in proportion to the village itself.</p>

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⁴ [Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space)

Ringstead Playing Field



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Ringstead Playing Field	The playing field can be accessed by the public on foot/car to the east of High St. It is a setback piece of pastureland to the south of St Andrews Church and the Churchyard where one would enter a reasonable sized car park before walking into the green space. The park sits behind a Carstone built wall which acts as a boundary for pedestrians on the east side of the footpath. The local green space has several pieces of play equipment to the north of the space on a large piece of grassed area for children including a slide, swings and so on. The rest of the space is undeveloped and open for all ages to sit, exercise or play as they wish.

Checklist		
Statutory designations – ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	Site allocations	Planning permissions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The playing field is within Ringstead Conservation Area. Site also falls within the Norfolk Coast AONB designation 	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it Serves.	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other).	Local in character and not extensive tract of land.
The playing field is within the village centre and walking distance to many of the village's amenities, including being adjacent to the south of St Andrews Church and the north of the General Store (local shop). The play area is also on the same road as a number of residential and business properties including holiday cottages.	<p>This piece of land has not been ploughed for many years, and as rough pastureland is host to much wildlife.⁵</p> <p>From a historic significance, the playing field sits opposite the former Great Ringstead village school, which was built in 1852, and used for many years by the school and its previous children for exercise before it closed in 1985⁶. After the school closed a play area was created for the local community with play equipment for children and exercise equipment for adults. This play area holds a special connection to the historical connection of the village for many residents who grew up here particularly as children before the school closed in 1985.</p> <p>The use of the playing field also holds high value as a recreational facility for the village since this is the main space in the village centre for the local community to come with children to play. Also, very occasional events are celebrated here such as the Royal Jubilees.</p>	Approx 0.68 ha. The playing field is local in character and would not be considered an extensive tract of land.

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⁵ R.J.Silvester, Ridge and Furrow in Norfolk, Norfolk Archaeology, 40, 1989, pp 286-296 (Aerial Photography of Medieval 'Ridge and Furrow' cultivation)

⁶ [Ringstead walking route.pdf](#)

Greenspace on the corner of Chapel Lane and High Street



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Green space on the corner of Chapel Lane and the High Street	A greenfield situated on the corner of the east side of High St and at the west end of Chapel Lane which is bounded by a low wall. This site is enclosed by a number of trees.

Checklist		
Statutory designations – ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	Site allocations	Planning permissions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is within Ringstead Conservation Area Site also falls within the Norfolk Coast AONB designation 	None	None, although land adjacent to the east of this green space, land south of 8 Chapel Lane, was granted planning permission under reference 21/00546/FM on 03/12/2021 which is now under construction.

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it Serves.	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other).	Local in character and not extensive tract of land.
Within the heart of the village centre and the most densely	The south of High St, where this greenspace lies, is the most dense part of Ringstead Village. It is private land and the openness of the green stretches between two of the village streets	The land is local in character and not an extensive tract of land being approx. 0.3ha

developed part of the historic village ⁷ .	<p>(High St and Chapel Lane) which are built up on both sides, and contributes to the open feeling of the village. The field can be viewed easier on the side of the high St, since Chapel St has a larger barrier of trees, the green space is special since it lies in the heart of the Ringstead Conservation Area, once planning permission adjacent takes place this will be the last section of green villagers can view unless walking further up to the recreational ground.</p> <p>As an open space it is a reminder of the relative openness of the village street, and the historic episodisation of housing.</p>	
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⁷ [Ringstead conservation area leaflet.pdf](#)

Ringstead Downs

Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Ringstead Downs	A tree-lined valley representing a geological feature surviving from the last Ice Age leading down to the Wash, most of which has not been cultivated for many years. It has been used as a recreation area by residents and tourists of Ringstead and neighboring villages/towns for at least 150 years.

Signpost to the different routes walkers can take within Ringstead Downs including to Ringstead Chalkpit, the Woodland Garden or following the linear path to the Downs



Checklist		
Statutory designations – ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	Site allocations	Planning permissions
<p>Ringstead Downs covers a large scope of land which parts of it fall within designations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site of Special Scientific Interest • County Wildlife Site • Considered Rolling Open Farmland in Landscape Character Assessment (2007)⁸ • North Norfolk Coast (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) <p>However, the SSSI designation for Ringstead Downs falls outside of the neighbourhood plan designation area. The part of Ringstead Downs which this neighbourhood plan wishes to designate falls west of Sedgeford Rd at the entrance of the car park for Ringstead Downs which leads into the eastern edges of Ringstead Downs wooded area.</p>	None	None

Path towards the Ringstead Downs Chalk Pit & Woodland Garden



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⁸ [Landscape Character Assessment | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](http://west-norfolk.gov.uk)

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it Serves.</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other).</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land.</i>
<p>The entrance of the car park of Ringstead Downs is approximately 0.5km away from the more built-up settlement near Ringstead Village Hall and the Gin Trap Inn. This is approximately a 5-minute walk or 1 minute bike ride.</p> <p>There is a narrow footpath which runs towards Ringstead Downs from the village. However, stops off Hall Lane. To carry on walking the last few minutes one would walk along the road which goes from a 30mph road into a 60mph for a brief distance. The entrance is alongside the residential development and woodland on the west side if looking at the map.</p>	<p>Ringstead Downs as a whole is one of the largest remaining unimproved chalk grassland areas in the East of England and falls within the Ringstead Downs Nature Reserve (south). The chalkland cliffs (SSSI) which falls outside of the designated area is an unusual geological feature in this part of Norfolk. With a steep sided valley supporting a range of local wildlife species including the common rockrose (typical chalkland species flower) and several nationally declining birds such as the yellowhammer, whitethroat and linnet⁹.</p> <p>The disused chalk quarry from which most of the chalk is from older buildings in the village, and provides an attractive well-wooded walk from Ringstead to Hunstanton. Historical evidence has been unearthed of burials dating from the Late Neolithic or early Bronze Age (c 2500 to 2000 BC) roughly contemporary with the great earth and stone structures at Avebury¹⁰. An account of 'land-tobaggoning' on the slopes is described by L.P. Hartley in The Shrimp and the Anemone.</p> <p>Ringstead Downs as a whole including the area which could be designated in this plan, has been a special place used by many through the years. The area is considered to have a strong sense of tranquility away from the urban edges as stated in the BCKLWN Landscape Character Assessment (2007¹¹).</p> <p>The part of Ringstead Downs which falls within the designated neighbourhood plan area is where there are two routes' initially recreational walkers can take through the Downs. One of the paths runs linear through</p>	<p>Approximately 11.5ha of Ringstead Downs falls within the neighbourhood plan area. Whilst this land could be considered an extensive tract of land in numerical terms, as shown on the map with the red boundary, in comparison to the parish settlement itself it is of an appropriate size. It is demonstrably special to the local community and local in character for its rural setting and significance as a recreational facility and home to different wildlife.</p> <p>As explained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Para:015 ID:37-015-20140306¹², there are no hard and fast rules about how big a Local Green Space can be, and a degree of judgement will inevitably be needed when making a designation. Para 101 of the NPPF (2021) states that the green area should only be designated if it is not an extensive tract of land, this may be making blanket designations of open countryside adjacent to settlements which would not be considered appropriate.</p> <p>Nevertheless, designating this part of Ringstead Downs would be to add further protection to the statutory designation given to Ringstead Downs (SSSI) which sits west to the green space. Which is home to a number of wildlife species, beauty in its unique</p>

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⁹ [Ringstead Downs - Norfolk Wildlife Trust](#)

¹⁰ [Ringstead conservation area leaflet.pdf](#)

¹¹ [Local Character Assessment.pdf](#)

¹² [Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<p>two sides of woodland and leads you directly to the SSSI, which falls outside of this designation, where one can carry on walking into Hunstanton along a permissive footpath on a stony track adjacent to farmland which is south of Smithdon High School.</p> <p>The other path is a short circular route one can take walking east from the entrance of the Downs past the car park, this is where you can walk up a small hill on your left, to find a large open space and grassed area which is used as a recreational area and enjoyed by many with a variety of spaced-out picnic benches. The walk people can enjoy follows into the woodland of Ringstead Downs for a short distance and back down the hill onto the linear grassed walkway as detailed first.</p> <p>Ringstead Downs is an area where residents and visitors can use this landscape as an area of open space to enjoy for exercising and exploring. This large area can be used as an informal recreational space to take children, dogs or just to explore for their own physical and mental wellbeing. The part of Ringstead Downs which falls in this neighbourhood plan area is predominantly the section of the downs used for recreational value by the local community but offers a special place for wildlife too.</p>	<p>nature and tranquility and for the local community.</p>
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Comparison of an historical and current photograph of the linear path through Ringstead Downs¹³



Car park for Ringstead Downs which can be entered west of Ringstead Rd



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¹³ [Ringstead Downs | North Norfolk Coast | Anna's House Hotel & B&B \(annasnorfolk.co.uk\)](http://annasnorfolk.co.uk)



Ringstead Common





Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Ringstead Common, Burnham Road	The greenspace can be accessed by pedestrians from North and South of Burnham Rd next to a dirt track leading to private property, Burnham Road is a narrow country B-road, with no footpaths, however grass verges on both sides for individuals to walk along. The purpose of the common is for pedestrians to enjoy for recreational value such as walking and for a range of biodiversity. This site compromises of largely unimproved grassland surrounded by scrub.

Checklist			
Statutory designations – ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	Site allocations	Planning permissions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Wildlife Site¹⁴ Falls within the Norfolk Coast AONB 	None	None	

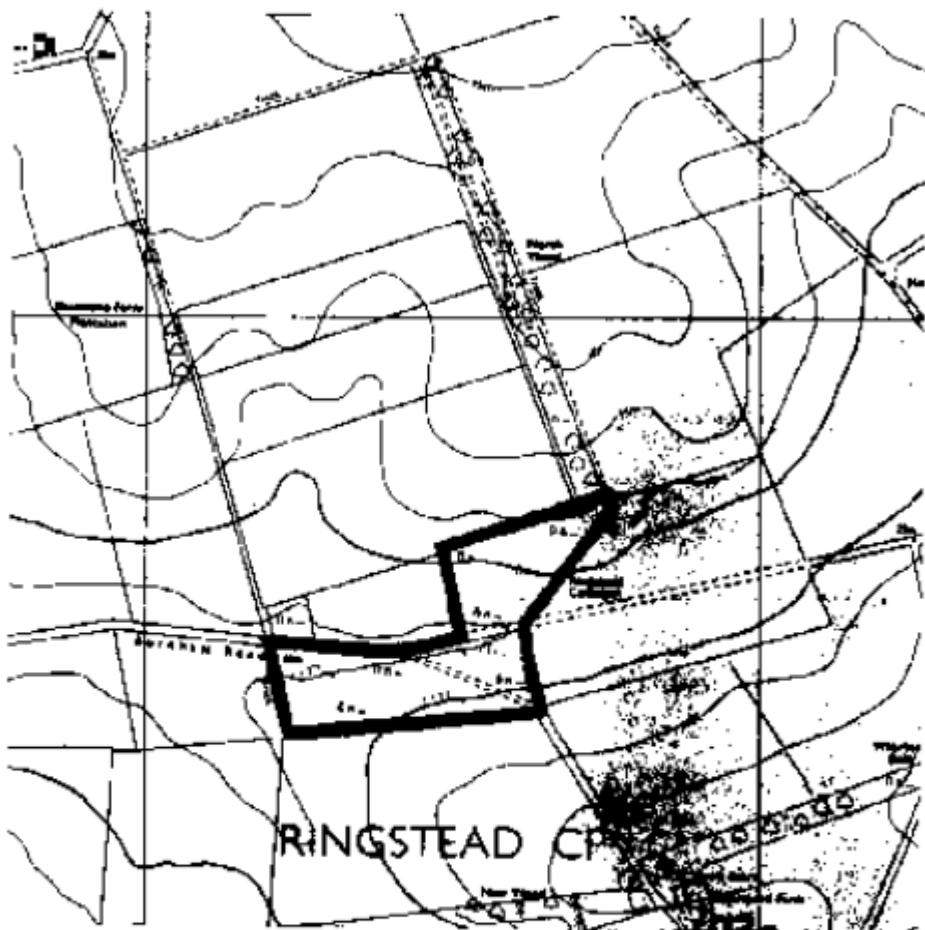
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¹⁴ Appendix 1 Outcome of CWS Review (nbis.org.uk)

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it Serves.</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other).</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land.</i>
Ringstead Common is approximately 1 mile away from the village centre; which is approximately a 20 minute walk from the more built up residential setting and from business facilities. However, it is not easy to walk there for everyone.	<p>It is land granted to trustees at the pasture of the open fields in 1784 to provide furze [fuel] for the poor of Ringstead. It is now leased by the Courtyard Farm Trust and maintained as rough enclosure with gorse, with footpaths for permissive public access. Which are very popular with walkers and connects with the Coastal Path enhancing its recreational value for the village.</p> <p>The grassland supports a range of species supporting biodiversity and local wildlife. It is most widespread in the northern half of the site with species-rich grassland containing occasional smaller cat's-tail and dropwort suggesting slightly basic conditions. Grasses include yellow oat-grass, false oat-grass, Yorkshire fog and common bent. Whilst herbs include agrimony, yarrow and germander speedwell. There is a coarse mix of continuous and scattered scrub, bramble, bracken and common arable weeds (County Wildlife Site Ref No: 571, 1998)¹⁵.</p>	Local in character and not an extensive tract of land. Approx 7.2ha.

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¹⁵ Ringstead Common – County Wildlife Site Ref 571- Documentation supplied by Norfolk County Council Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (Accessed on 11/02/2022)



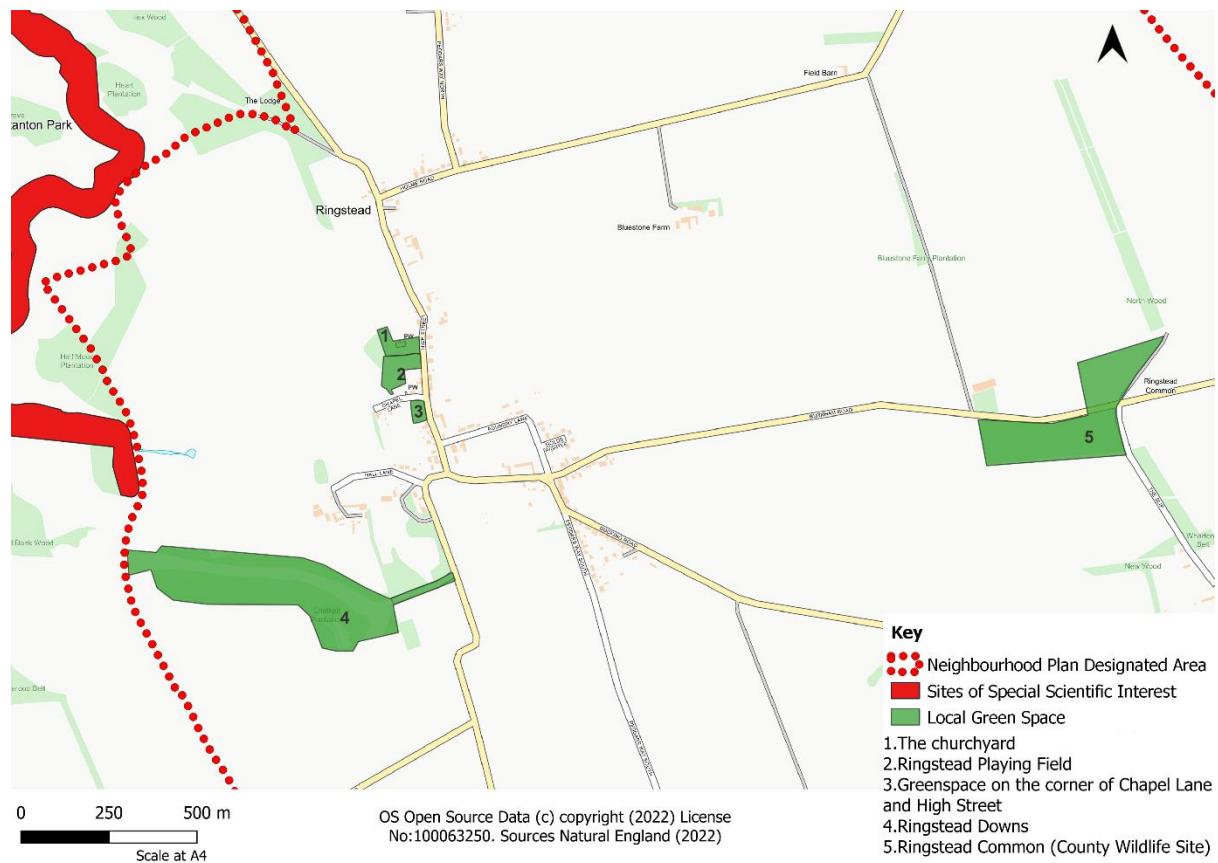
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Norfolk County Council
County Hall
Norwich

Recommended Designations

17. From the assessment work, five Local Green Spaces have been determined to meet the national criteria for designation. These are highlighted below.



Assessment of the green spaces not being designated

Three green spaces put forward by the community were considered not to meet the criteria, the reasoning for which is provided below.

Green Space	Reason not designated
The verge to the south of Holme Road	This is highway land and it is not possible to say with certainty that the land will endure beyond the plan period.
Land around the village sign	This is highway land and it is not possible to say with certainty that the land will endure beyond the plan period.
The verge on the south side of Docking Road from the Jubilee Seat to the White House	This is highway land and it is not possible to say with certainty that the land will endure beyond the plan period.
Ringstead Allotments	This was decided by the parish council to not take forward this inclusion.

The verge to the south of Holme Road



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
The verge to the south of Holme	This is the grass verge where a sheltered bus stop sits, opposite a row of houses, South of Holme Road. Commonly the verge is used by

Road	residents or visitors to park their cars on which is a negative aspect to the use of the green space.
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Checklist		
<i>Statutory designations – ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC</i>	<i>Site allocations</i>	<i>Planning permissions</i>
This is highway verge which falls within the borders of the Norfolk Coast AONB designation.	None	None, although it could potentially be changed by NCC given it is highway verge

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it Serves.</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other).</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land.</i>
Within 500m of the village centre and sits opposite a few residential dwellings on Holme Road.	The grass verge acts as a current border to agricultural land south of Holme Road. Its openness allows one to see the large gaps of undeveloped fields and landscapes further into Ringstead and afar due to the terrain being flat. From this part of the rural village the site enhances the sense of openness from this locality. This local green space area also can view openly a few properties in Ringstead village which sit alongside High St including Gedding Farm. It does not act as a recreational area for residents, unless residents/tourists may stand on the verge to admire the view over Ringstead?	<i>The grass verge is clearly a small area of land and not an extensive area. It is approx. 0.05 ha.</i>

Land around the village sign



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Land around the village sign	This green space is a wide grass verge that sits east of High St and has bench, picnic bench and interpretation board next to the village sign which was erected 25 years ago. The site was a former roadside pond and communal well for this part of the village a memory shared by residents.

Checklist			
Statutory designations – ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	Site allocations	Planning permissions	
This is highway verge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falls within the Norfolk Coast AONB • Falls within Ringstead Conservation Area • Site also falls within the Norfolk Coast AONB designation 	None	None, although it could potentially be changed by NCC given it is highway verge	

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it Serves.	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other).	Local in character and not extensive tract of land.
Within 400m of the village centre. It is east of the High St and walking distance	This local green space is special to the local community since it is at the heart of the village where the village sign sits for all to see. Located off the Peddars Way Coastal Path, a picnic bench, resting bench and information board has	It is clearly a small area which is not extensive of approximately 0.1ha.

<p>of less than 5 minutes to many of the village's amenities, the villages recreation playground/field, and on the same road as a number of residential and business properties including the general store, the Gin Trap Inn and holiday cottages.</p>	<p>been added in this area for recreational value; allowing residents and visitors to use the area as a resting spot in the village.</p> <p>The space provides a sense of place and contributes to the local character within this conservation area; particularly with the village sign made of local materials including Carstone and chalk?</p>	
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Verge on the south side of Docking Road from the Jubilee Seat to White House



photo



Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Verge on the south side of Docking Road	add

Checklist		
Statutory designations – ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	Site allocations	Planning permissions
This is highway verge	None	None, although it could potentially be changed by NCC given it is highway verge

NPPF Criteria		
Close to the community it Serves.	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other).	Local in character and not extensive tract of land.
Within 500m of the village centre	<p><i>This stretch of rough verge opposite a long seventeenth century(?) wall, the boundary of a pasture adjoining the finest seventeenth century farmhouse in the village again indicates the openness and episodic nature of the settlement pattern.</i></p> <p><i>The history behind the verge was it was once the village cricket and football pitch for Ringstead.</i></p>	0.1ha

Ringstead Allotments

No Photo

Site Details	
Site	Description and purpose
Ringstead Allotments	The allotments are part of an arable field which sits east of Peddars Way South and can be accessed by foot/car opposite number 17 Peddars Way S a residential dwelling. The allotments are located further south of the parish boundary in a less built-up area which runs on a 30mph B Road with no footpaths. The allotments are adjacent to a few greenfield sites and opposite a row of residential properties which are predominantly bungalows. However, the allotments are sheltered by a row of hedges keeping this enclosed from the road.

Checklist		
<i>Statutory designations – ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC</i>	<i>Site allocations</i>	<i>Planning permissions</i>
Site falls within the Norfolk Coast AONB designation	None	None

NPPF Criteria		
<i>Close to the community it Serves.</i>	<i>Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, wildlife or other).</i>	<i>Local in character and not extensive tract of land.</i>
Within approximately 500m of the village centre which is around a 10-minute walk from other amenities such as the Village hall and Gin Trap Inn. It is close by to a number of residential dwellings particularly on Peddars Way South, Docking Road and Burnham Road.	In the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries Land was allocated by the le Strange Estate for allotments for rent by occupants of cottages with small gardens. Only a few allotments continue to be occupied. Allotments are a great use for local communities for a variety of sustainable benefits including growing food for your own family, to sell to the local community or to socialize with other residents. This space is special for its recreational value to Ringstead.	The area is of 0.2ha which is not an extensive tract of land. It is local in character since it is used by community residents for social or economic benefits.