

# The Walpoles Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036



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## Introduction

The Walpoles (Walpole St Andrew, Walpole St Peter, and Walpole Marsh) is preparing a neighbourhood plan which will include a policy designating areas of Local Green Space which are particularly valued by the community. A robust process has been followed to determine which green spaces within The Walpoles should be designated:

- Initial ideas were suggested by residents as part of consultation activities in 2022/2023, with residents also asked to provide reasons as to why their ideas were special. These were reviewed by the parish council and further investigation was taken by the steering group and Collective Community Planning Ltd as to whether they would meet the national criteria for designation with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.
- A site visit was undertaken by the consultants for all sites and further evidence gathered with help of the steering group including:
  - a) Reviewing any historic evidence related to the green spaces on the Historic England website and via Norfolk Heritage Explorer;
  - b) Reviewing Statutory or Local Designations within mapped data sources available in the public domain via Natural England, Historic England, Norfolk County Council, and the Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk website.
  - c) Reading and referencing relevant locally sourced information which refer to Walpoles Parish and the sites identified.
- An assessment against the national criteria for Local Green Space was made for each of the potential areas;
- Landowners were contacted ahead of the Regulation 14 consultation to make them aware that their land was being considered for local green space designation and to invite them to make representations;
- A final decision was recommended by the Steering Group, and confirmed by the parish council, as to which green spaces to designate after considering feedback from the Regulation 14 consultation.

Chapter 4 provides the assessment and explanation of the four green spaces we feel are justified and supported to be a LGS in the Walpoles Neighbourhood Plan.

## Policy Context

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 December 2023) introduced the concept of Local Green Space designation.

Paragraph 106 of the NPPF sets out that communities should be able to identify green spaces of particular importance through neighbourhood plans, with para 106

Determining:

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 not an extensive tract of land<sup>1</sup>.

In addition, the National Planning Practice Guidance states:

*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.*

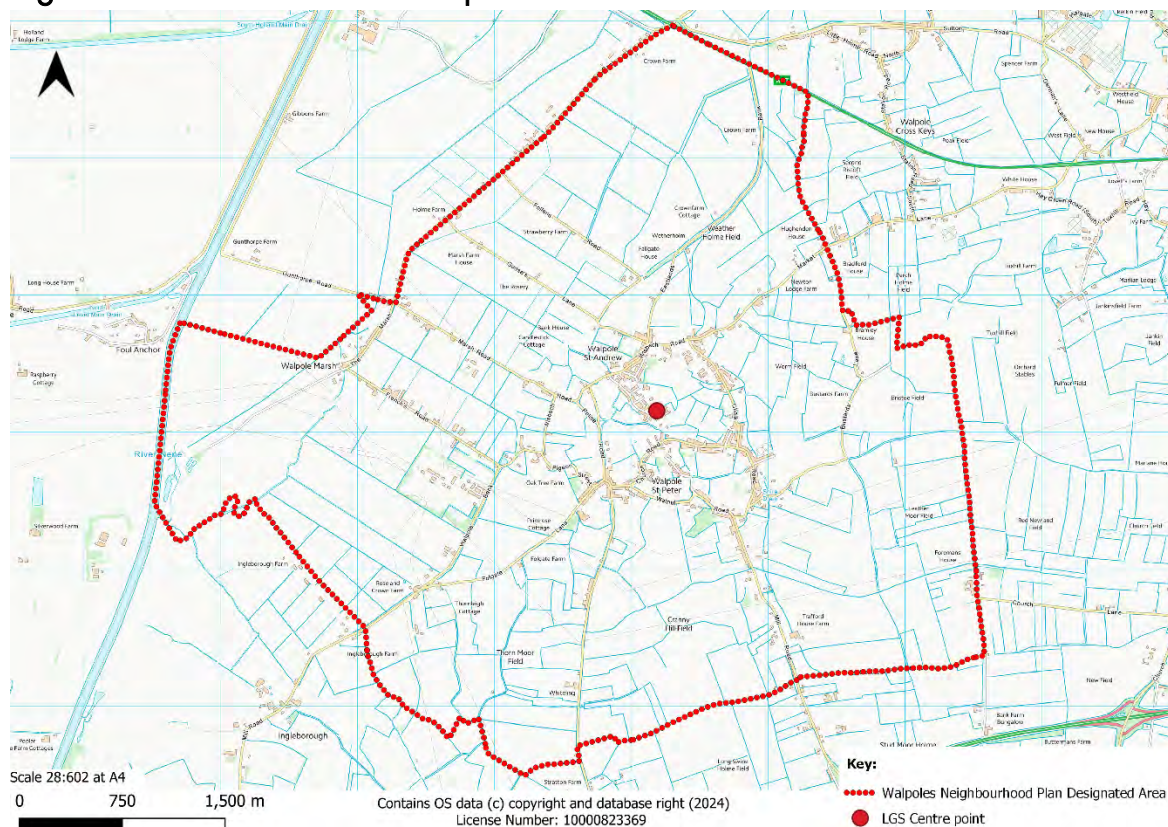
Other designations, such as Special Areas of Conservation, do not necessarily preclude or support designation as a Local Green Space. However, it is necessary to consider whether the additional designation is necessary and would serve a useful purpose.

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. For this reason, a centre point has been made within the neighbourhood designated area. This is within the built-up area of Walpole next to the playing field.

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<sup>1</sup>[National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/publishing-service)

**Figure 1: LGS Centre Point Map**



Consideration of whether the green space is local in character, and not an extensive tract of land, is not defined in the NPPF Para 106(c). However, blanket designations of open countryside adjacent to settlements is not appropriate as stated in the Planning Practice Guidance<sup>2</sup>. Extensive tracts of land may differ between settlements due to their physical size and population, but the areas would usually be fairly self-contained with clearly defined edges<sup>3</sup>. There is also no lower size limit for a local green space as stated in the Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph 016.

Regarding land being demonstrably special to a local community, evidence must be provided of the lands value to the community to show it holds a particular local significance. **This must fulfil one or more of the following criteria:**

**(a) Beauty**

This relates to the visual attractiveness of the site, and its contribution to landscape, local character and or setting of the settlement. The LGS would need to contribute to local identity, character of the area and a sense of place, and make an important contribution to the physical form and layout of the settlement. It may link up with other open spaces

<sup>2</sup> [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) Para 005 to 022.

<sup>3</sup> [Local Green Space Designation | FAQs - The Open Spaces Society \(oss.org.uk\)](https://www.oss.org.uk/faq)

and allow views through or beyond the settlement which are valued locally.

**(b) Historic significance**

The land should provide a setting for, and allow views of, heritage assets or other locally valued landmarks. This could include war memorials as suggested in the Planning Practice Guidance. It may be necessary to research historic records from the relevant Local Authority such as Norfolk County Council and Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, Norfolk Heritage Explorer, Historic England, or Heritage Gateway.

**(c) Recreational value**

It must have local significance for recreation, perhaps through the variety of activities it supports, and be of value to the community. This could land where sport pavilions are located, or allotments as suggested in the Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph 013.

**(d) Tranquillity**

Some authorities have an existing tranquillity map showing areas that provide an oasis of calm and a space for quiet reflection. However, the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk does not have this.

**(e) Richness of wildlife**

This might include the value of its habitat, and priority areas may have been identified by the council. It may require some objective evidence, such as a land use designation, like a wildlife site, Local Nature Reserve/County Wildlife Site, Priority Habitats. This could be done by assessing land use designations via Natural England or researching detail in local wildlife records held by Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and so forth.

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.

A local green space does not need to be in public ownership. However qualifying bodies for neighbourhood plans should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land so they have the opportunity to make representations with respect of proposals in a neighbourhood plan. As well as this land being designated does not always need to have public access such as areas valued because of historic significance, wildlife, or beauty.

## Initial screening of the proposed green spaces by the community

An initial desktop screening exercise has been undertaken following the NPPF criteria and further planning guidance to see if any of the green spaces proposed by the community through the 2022/2023 consultation are appropriate to move forward further for assessment. This has been done by:

- creating a QGIS mapping project to locate the green spaces and where they are situated in the parish;
- measuring the area size (hectares) to judge if the greenspaces would be considered local in character and not an extensive tract of land such as open countryside.
- Village centre points have been located in the built-up settlements so the distance of 1.25 miles as easy walking distance (based on Natural England Standards) could be achieved by the community.
- Considerations to one or more of the criteria of what may make land demonstrably special to the local community has been noted from Investigations Into relevant evidence such as historic or nature-based records and its current use such as recreation.

## Assessment of the green spaces being designated

The Local Green Space Assessment Tool from Locality “Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan”<sup>4</sup> has been used as the basis to assess each site identified by the community. This includes:

- LGS1- Swingfield south of Wisbech Road
- LG2- The Church Yard of St Andrew
- LGS3- Walpole St Peter Community Centre Recreational Field

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<sup>4</sup> [Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)



## LGS1- Swingfield south of Wisbech Road



The Swing Field on a sunny day in May 2024.

## Site Details

Criteria	Description
Site	Swingfield South of Wisbech Road
Description and purposes	Greenspace adjacent to St Andrew Church. There are a few benches present and used by the public.

## Checklist

Criteria	Description
Statutory designations - ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	None.
Site allocations	None
Planning permissions	None.

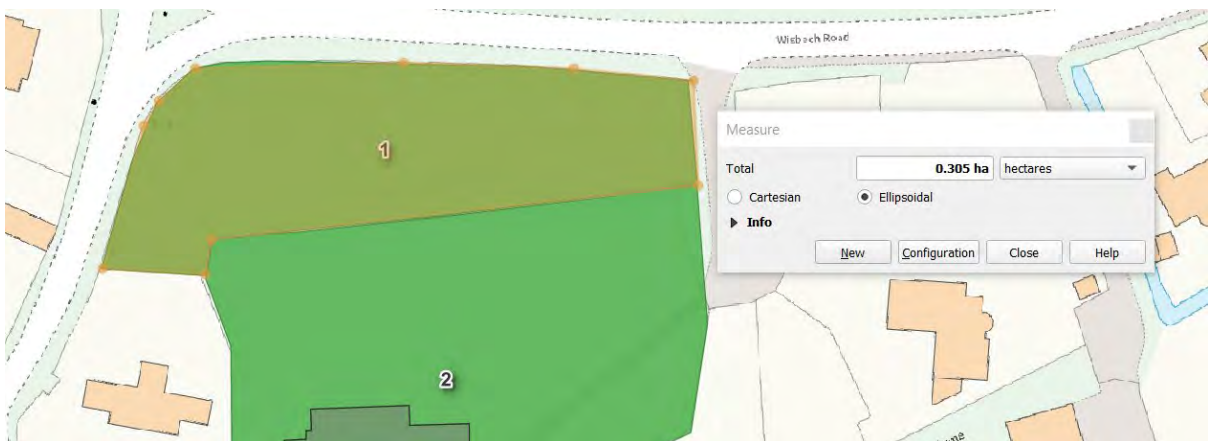
## NPPF Criteria

Criteria	Description
Close to the community it serves.	The field is 0.6miles away from the village centre point and walking distance to many of the village's amenities, including St Andrews Church which is adjacent to this greenspace It is also close to a number of residential and business properties.
Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational, tranquillity, wildlife or other)	Swingfields was put forward as a suggestion by a few people in the community survey. It is demonstrably special to the community due to its recreational value because it is used for events and community gatherings by local people of all ages. It is an area where people can rest and play.  The field is adjacent to St Andrews Church was left to the Parish after the church was made redundant (1985). It is now in the care of the vicar and Churchwardens of St Peters since (in the eyes of the Church all parishes are one)

Criteria	Description
	<p>and the parish Council pay for the grass to be cut.</p> <p>The Friends of Walpole St Andrew who also volunteer cleaning the church and keeping it open every day, hold two or three events throughout the year (the photo was a Summer Fair, these are free to attend with refreshments stalls raising a little money to keep the Wednesday coffee mornings viable). This year we will be holding a D Day themed event on June 8th.</p> <p>The Parish Council organised the benches to be placed on it with money gifted by the Solar Farm . Reverend Canon Barker did once apply to the Parish Council to have swings put back, but nothing came of it.</p>
Local in character and not extensive tract of land.	The field is approximately 0.305ha. It is local in character to Walpoles parish, serving the purposes of the local area only. It would not necessarily be considered an extensive tract of land.



The Swing Field, adjacent to Walpole St Andrew Church, in use Summer 2022.



## LGS2- The Church Yard of St Andrew



### Site Details

Criteria	Description
Site	The Church Yard of Church St Andrew
Description and purposes	St Andrews Church sits south of Wisbech Road. The green open space and church yard surrounding the parish church is the burial ground for residents of Walpole St Andrew.

### Checklist

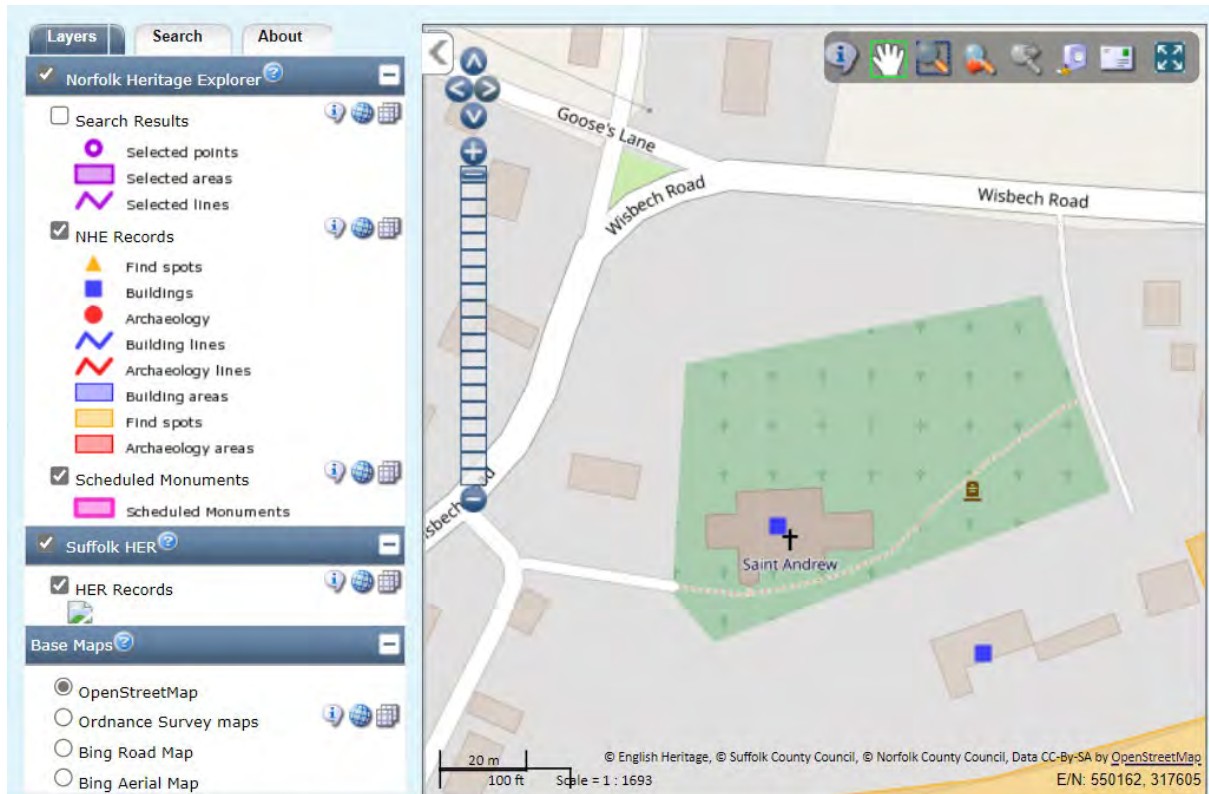
Criteria	Description
Statutory designations - ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>St Andrew's Church is Grade I listed.</li> <li>The church is a Grade I listed building and there are 2 listed buildings (sculptures) in the churchyard.</li> </ul>
Site allocations	None
Planning permissions	None.

## NPPF Criteria

Criteria	Description
Close to the community it serves.	The church yard is 0.52 miles from the village centre point and within walking distance to many of the village's amenities and on the same road as a number of residential and business properties.
Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational, tranquillity, wildlife or other)	<p>The church yard can be considered demonstrably special to the Walpoles as it has been the burial ground of Walpole St Andrew residents since approximately the 14th to late 15th century.</p> <p>There have been associated historic finds with the area including human remains and a coffin from medieval times (1066AD-1539AD) as well as gravestones and a Grade II listed war memorial<sup>5</sup>. 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>
Local in character and not extensive tract of land.	St Andrews Church is approximately 0.044 ha in size, and this would be excluded from the Local Green Space. The church yard surrounding the church is approximately 0.559ha which will be designated as a local green space. It is local in character to Walpoles parish, serving the purposes of the local area only. It would not necessarily be

<sup>5</sup> [St-Andrew's-Church-Walpole-St-Andrew - Norfolk Heritage Explorer](#)

Criteria	Description
	considered an extensive tract of land.

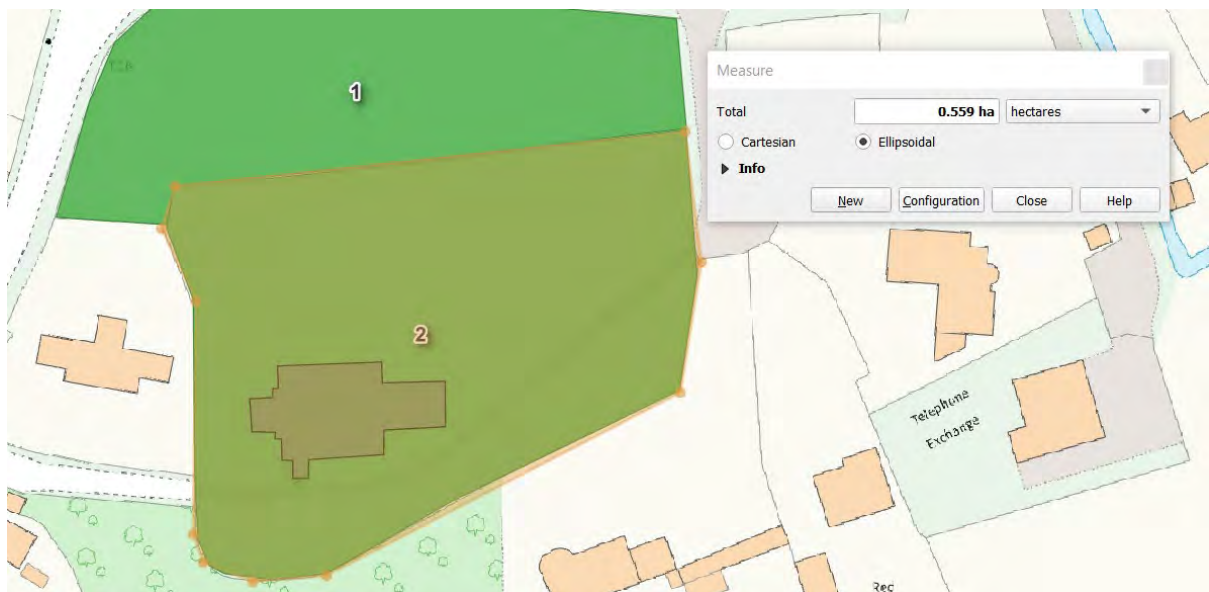


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Source: Norfolk Heritage Explorer, 2023<sup>6</sup>.



<sup>6</sup> [Map Selection - Norfolk Heritage Explorer](#)

## LGS3- Walpole St Peter Community Centre Recreational Field





## Site Details

Criteria	Description
Site	Walpole St Peter Community Centre Recreational Field
Description and purposes	The recreational field sits east of Springfield Road. The green open space is used by the community for recreational activities including events linked to the community centre.

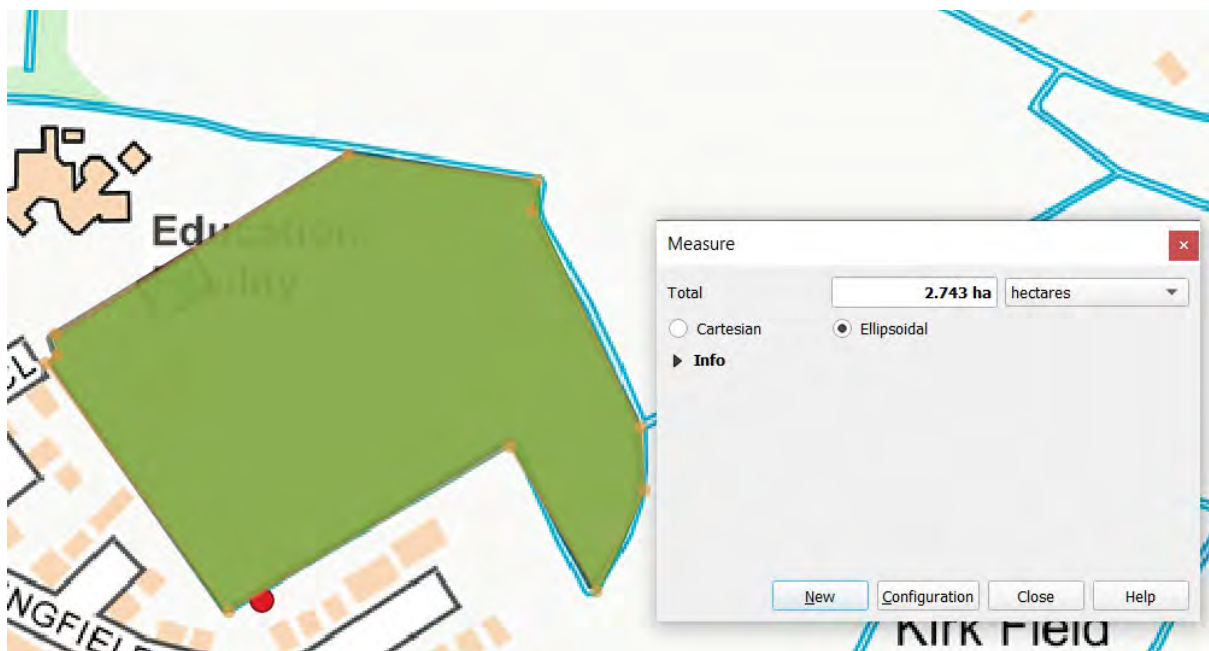
## Checklist

Criteria	Description
Statutory designations - ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	None.
Site allocations	None
Planning permissions	None.

## NPPF Criteria

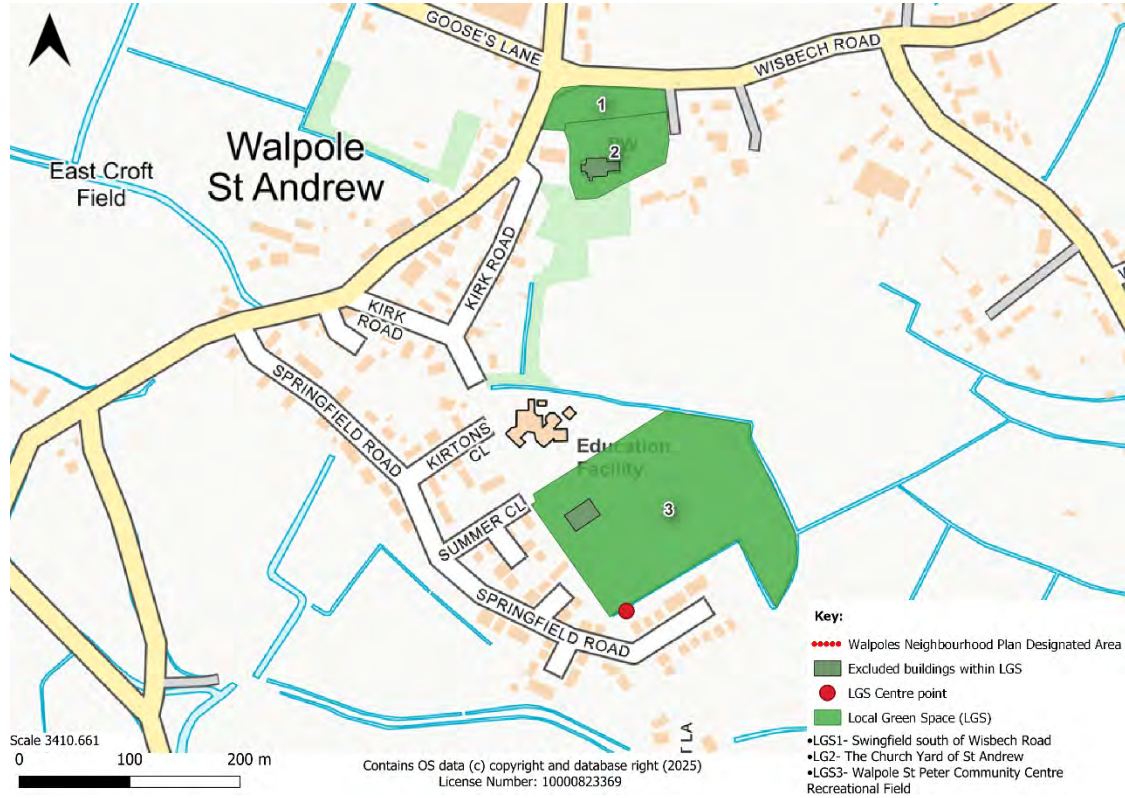
Criteria	Description
Close to the community it serves.	<p>The recreational field is within the heart of Walpole St Peter village centre and adjacent to the centre point. It is walking distance to many of the village's amenities, including the community centre and school, and on the same road as a number of residential and business properties.</p> <p>The field is used for activities such as football and other events including the King's Lynn Cruisers car meet in July, car boot sales and events to raise money for the Walpole Foundation and Recreation Trust that owns these fields and the Community Centre. The benches were</p>

Criteria	Description
	supplied at the same time as those on the Swing Field from the Solar farm donation.
Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational, tranquillity, wildlife or other)	The green space is demonstrably special to the community for recreational reasons.
Local in character and not extensive tract of land.	<p>The community center's recreational field is approximately 2.74ha including buildings on site. Buildings must be excluded from LGS designations which make up 0.048ha, so for LGS the hectare size in total is 2.69ha.</p> <p>It is local in character to Walpoles parish, serving the purposes of the local area only. It would not necessarily be considered an extensive tract of land.</p>



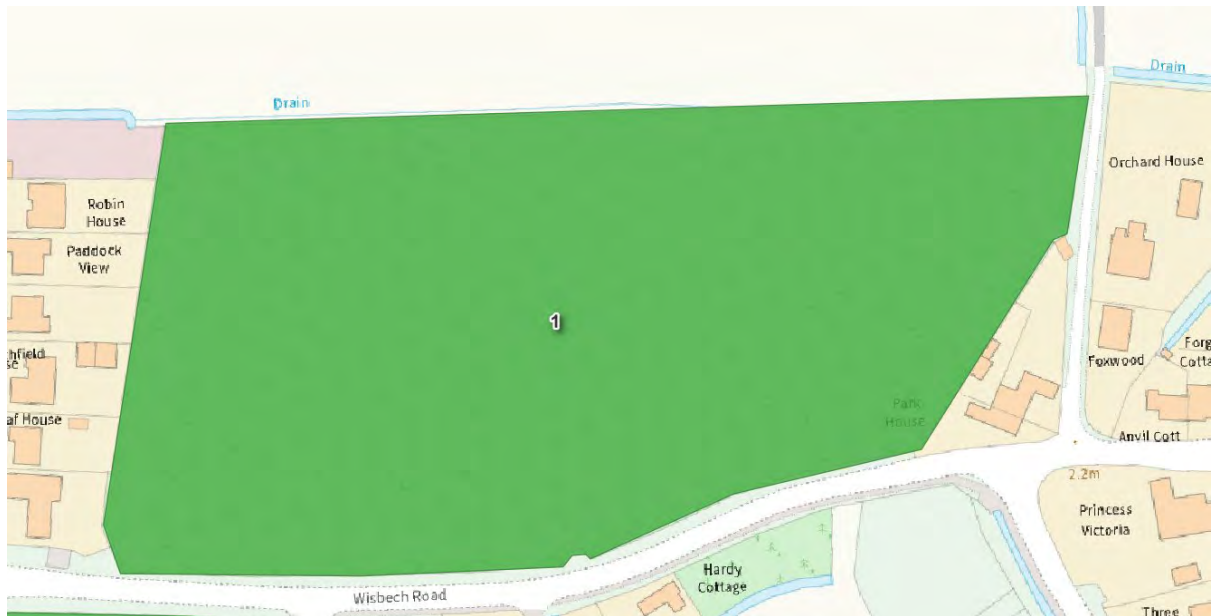
# Recommended Designations

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



# Sites Not Taken Forward for Designation

## Wingsfield North of Wisbech Road



### Site Details

Criteria	Description
Site	Wingsfield North of Wisbech Road

Description and purposes	This field historically used for multitude of village events. It is privately owned by a member of the parish who farms several acres in the local area.
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## Checklist

Criteria	Description
Statutory designations - ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	None.
Site allocations	None
Planning permissions	None.

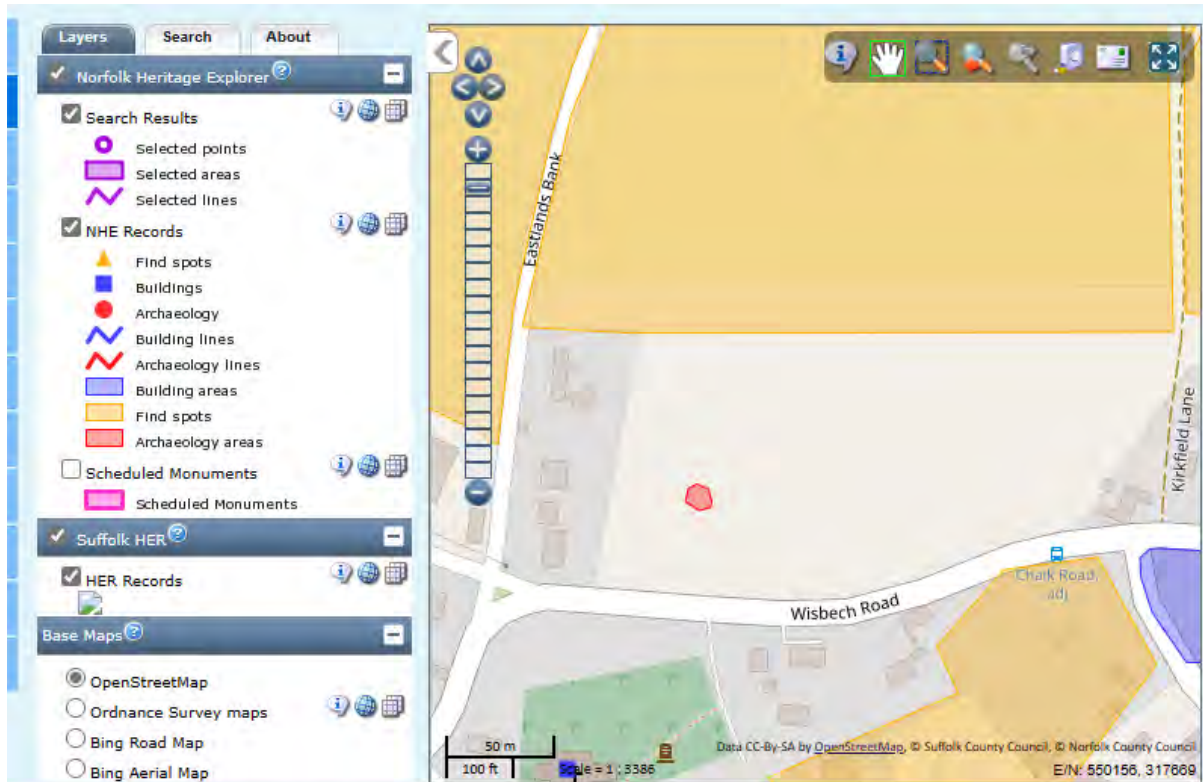
## NPPF Criteria

Criteria	Description
Close to the community it serves.	The field is 0.6miles away from the village centre point and walking distance to many of the village's amenities, including St Andrews Church. It Is also close to a number of residential and business properties.
Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational, tranquillity, wildlife or other)	<p>Wingsfield was put forward as a suggestion by a few people in the community survey. It is demonstrably special to the community due to its recreational value now and over the years.</p> <p>Currently once a month it is used for Tilney pony Club gymkhanas. However, the owner is usually very open to local clubs and charities using the field as long as it's not abused.</p> <p>Most memorable the Steam Engine Rallies of the 1980's when thousands of people came from all over the country. The Swing Field and local farmer's fields were used as car parks. It was always the first weekend in May and evolved to become a</p>

Criteria	Description
	<p>3-day event until the testing of the engines boilers became compulsory and many failed and they were too expensive to repair. It was also used by the cricket club, and tug-of-war teams such as the Walpole Wombles in 1991.</p> <p>The site also has historical significance. Looking on Norfolk Heritage Explorer part of this field is identified as an archaeological area for a site of post medieval dovecote (monument NHER221<sup>7</sup>) and further back near eastland banks are find spots for artifacts such as Roman, Late Saxon and Medieval pottery NHER2004<sup>8</sup>).</p>
Local in character and not extensive tract of land.	The field is approximately 2.92ha. It is local in character to Walpoles parish, serving the purposes of the local area only. It would not necessarily be considered an extensive tract of land.

<sup>7</sup> [MNF2221 - Norfolk Heritage Explorer](#)

<sup>8</sup> [MNF20049 - Norfolk Heritage Explorer](#)



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A newspaper cutting of the rally