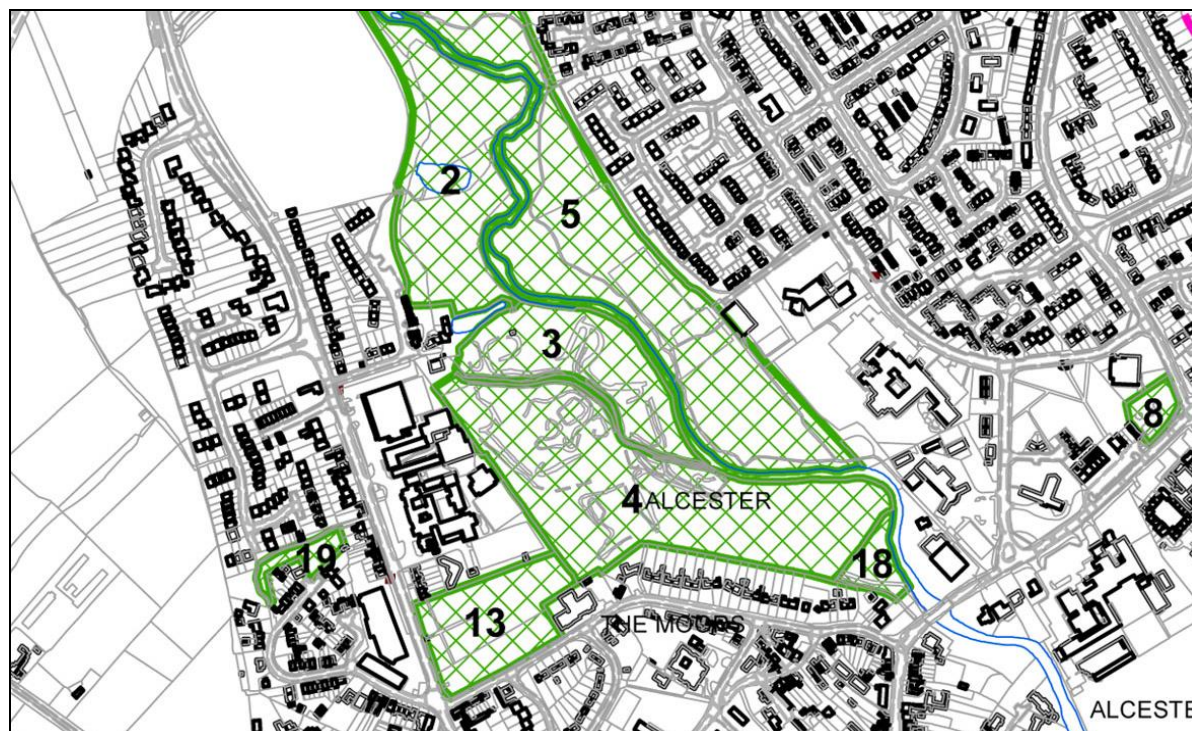


Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan Local Green Space Site Assessment - August 2018

Site Address	Site Area	Site Ref
School Road Allotment, North of Kinwarton Rd, Alcester	Approx. 0.28ha	LGS 18

Plan



Site Description and Current Land Use

This well-maintained and well-used allotment is located north of Kinwarton Road and east of School Road. It has a sloped section at the southern end of the site. A path leads to the site from Priory Meadow which is part of a Scheduled Monument site and which borders it to the north. It runs through the site and horticultural beds can be found on either side of it.

Scenic, open views can be found looking toward Priory Meadow and to the mature trees and River Arrow which line its east and north boundaries. Residential dwellings lie to the west of the site. In close proximity to the south is the Grade II listed, Gunnings Bridge, and Alcester's High Street with its many shops, pubs and eateries.

Within the site are numerous well-tended horticultural beds, water butts, outside tap, sheds, compost bins and poly tunnels. A 5-bar metal gate and pedestrian gate sit at the site's entrance off School Road from which a small unmade drive leads into the lower section of the sites. Old notices of Alcester Gardening Club have been posted on the site.

A brick building owned by Seven Trent lines the sites east boundary opposite the River Arrow.

Relevant Planning History

No relevant planning history found.

Site Ownership

Owned and managed by Alcester Town Council. Title Ref: WK486992

Site Constraints

The site sits within the Built-up Area Boundary and the majority of the site is within the conservation area. It is also within a designated Area of Restraint (SDC Core Strategy CS 13).

The site is situated in Zone A09 of the B2 Alcester Landscape Sensitivity Study (2011) and is identified as having medium high sensitivity to residential and high sensitivity to commercial development. The northern section of the zone is identified as a Parks, Gardens and Amenity Greenspaces Area. The middle section of the zone is identified as a Warwickshire Wildlife Reserve. The zone is categorised as having high sensitivity to both commercial and residential development. The reports states that:

“This flat valley floor zone, mostly in the floodplain of the River Arrow, runs through the centre of the settlement separating the older part of the town to the west from the new to the east. It comprises well used and managed amenity space to the east and north west and permanent grazed pasture to the west, part of which is a scheduled ancient monument [Alcester Abbey- with no visible remains] and part of which is the River Arrow local nature reserve. The river has a winding natural course and strong riparian tree cover and with other trees and hedgerows on boundaries strongly enclose the area screening the settlement edge and acting as a setting for the town including Gunners Bridge to the south. Overall the area is either a valuable community resource or provides a rural setting for a SAM. It is therefore highly sensitive and unsuitable for housing development..” p.28

Public Access

The site is open and accessible to the public but only for use by allotment holders. There are access is gained from Priory Meadow to the north and School Road to the south.

Site Photo



Ecological Significance

The allotment gardens contain a variety of food and ornamental planting. Within the site and along its boundaries are mixed species hedgerows, shrubs and trees. All of which are important for a number of birds and mammals as they provide food, shelter and nesting sites. They increase the diversity of insect species (including butterflies and bees which are currently in decline), which are a food source for bird and mammal species and can also play an important role in the pollination of plants and crops in the surrounding area. Being adjacent to the River Arrow and near to River Arrow Nature Reserve, the site also provides a useful habitat and natural wildlife corridor for amphibians, insects, invertebrates and small mammals.

The diversity and population numbers of insects directly impacts the food chain for other fauna in the area and has a wider impact on the cultivation of crops. These are all vital for the wider food web and species diversity within the town's ecosystem. In the town, there have been sightings of larger fauna species such as bats, birds of prey (e.g. buzzards and owls), rabbits and hedgehogs. The site plays an important contributory role in the wider ecological significance of the town.

Special Qualities and Local Significance

Allotments are particularly popular among the residents of Alcester. SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.2 B5 provided for additional allotments given a shortfall. Since then Alcester Town Council has established the School Road allotments and currently supply is equalling demand. The well-tended allotments provide recreational value for residents with the opportunity to exercise and socialise while gardening. The produce grown also contributes to sustainability.

The site is locally significant because it is well used and valued by the local community as an allotment garden. The special qualities of the site include its strong contribution to local character and distinctiveness due to its natural beauty with views to the River Arrow and Priory Field with its historical importance.

It is also highly appreciated and prized by the local community as an undeveloped tranquil area of open land serving the centre of the town as well as its easy access which contributes to its green setting and infrastructure.

Summary and Suitability for Designation as Local Green Space

This site is well related to and appreciated and valued by the local community and makes a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of the village.

The LGS as outlined on the above plan is considered to be suitable for Local Green Space designation in accordance with paragraphs 99-101 of the National Planning Policy Framework in that it is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance because of its recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity and richness of its habitats and wildlife potential; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.