

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

Site Address	Site Area	Site Ref
Jubilee Fields, south of Westbury Park and east of Birmingham Rd, Alcester	Approx. 5.55ha	LGS 5

### Plan



### Site Description and Current Land Use

Bordering the north bank of the mature tree and shrub lined River Arrow, the popular, actively used site is divided into a variety of recreational areas including a well-equipped children's play and multi-use games area enclosed by post and rail fencing, the community orchard with its veteran trees, football pitches and goal posts and a skate boarding area widely used by town's youth.

It provides the setting for the building at the edge of the fields known as the Jubilee Centre which is used regularly for community meetings and part of it, called the Depot, is the base for a Youth Club. It is an attractive, well-maintained site with an open aspect and benches surrounded by a dense tree and shrub lined perimeter. Views to the Nature Reserve and Abbey Field to the west can be seen through trees. A modern housing estate, known as the Conway Estate, lines the site to the northwest where entrances to the site can be found.

Many walkers, local residents, dog walkers and town visitors regularly use of the gravelled path that runs through site and along the river which lines the site's west boundary. Informal paths lead down to the river. It is also used as a beginners' trail for a Nordic Walking group.

<b>Relevant Planning History</b>
<p>Application no: 09/00804/FUL Recreation ground, Conway Fields, St Faiths Road, Alcester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed: Multi use games arena - enclosed sports area with lighting columns.</li> <li>• Decision: Permission with conditions</li> <li>• Decision date: 23/07/2009</li> </ul> <p>Application no: 84/00201/FUL Recreation ground sports pavilion, Conway Fields, St Faiths Rd, Alcester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed: Recreation ground sports pavilion St Faiths Road Alcester - proposed erection of 2 no portable buildings for use as youth club</li> <li>• Decision: Application Permitted</li> <li>• Decision Date: 02/07/1984</li> </ul> <p>Application no: 77/00245/FUL Recreation ground sports pavilion, Conway Fields, St Faiths Rd, Alcester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed: - proposed equipment store.</li> <li>• Decision: Application Permitted</li> <li>• Decision Date: 14/07/1977</li> </ul>
<b>Site Ownership</b>
<p>Designated a Field in Trust site. Owned and managed by Alcester Town Council. Title Ref: WK386388 and WK363232</p>
<b>Site Constraints</b>
<p>The site sits within the Built-up Area Boundary but is in a designated Area of Restraint (SDC Core Strategy CS 13).</p> <p>The site is situated in Zone A09 of the B2 Alcester Landscape Sensitivity Study (2011). 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:</p> <p><i>“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</i></p>
<b>Public Access</b>
<p>The site is open and accessible to the public from entrances along its east boundary, from Kinwarton Road (though this was closed as unsafe at the time of inspection) and from the cycle/pedestrian footpath that runs along its north boundary.</p>



## Site Photo



## Ecological Significance

### Community Orchard

The Community Orchard project was a partnership between the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Alcester Town Council and delivered activities and workshops for the local community which encouraged people to explore their local area and the wildlife it holds. The project planted 45 mixed fruit trees with some traditional varieties like the Wyken Pippin and Warwickshire Drooper and included a new path with a quiet seating area in the centre for relaxing in and of course to access the fruit to pick in the future. The area was also planted up with wildflower seeds and a new picnic area was opened up for families to enjoy.

Orchards have a significant ecological value - the spring blossom provides food for insects such as bees, butterflies and hoverflies and this can be a benefit to the surrounding area as it will encourage more pollinators into that area. The buds and fruit can be important for birds such as bullfinches, fieldfares and redwings. Over the next few years the orchard will add to the community's sustainability, social and recreational value. As it becomes more established, there will be a variety of fruit for local people to enjoy.

### Mixed Habitats

The site contains a variety of habitats including the river and a dense thicket of mature/semi-mature trees and shrubs that line its perimeter. They support a variety of wildlife including insects, amphibians, invertebrates, mammals and birds. Buzzards, mapies and crows were seen flying overhead.

The banks of the River Arrow are edged with willow, alder, oak and hawthorn, which provide ideal perches for kingfishers. This mix of habitats is 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. 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**

The site is locally significant and highly valued by the community. Jubilee Fields is in close proximity to the town centre and is also the closest recreational area to the residential area known as the Conway Estate, which is one of the most deprived areas in the District, falling within the top 30% nationally in terms of income, education and skills according to the Indices of Deprivation 2007 produced by the Warwickshire Observatory. Earlier this century, ATC, together with a group called Vision for Alcester, instigated the provision of improved facilities at Jubilee Fields for all ages. These included the skate park, multi-use games area and adult play equipment and community orchard. As such, it provides sustainability and recreational value to the community and helps enable social cohesion.

Provides setting for the building at the edge of the fields known as the Jubilee Centre which is used regularly for community meetings and part of it, called the Depot, is the base for a Youth Club. The large open grassed area is used by many children for ball games and is also used for community events such as the annual Tug of War Games which are contested by teams across the region and attract many spectators.

The special qualities of the site include its strong contribution to local character and green infrastructure. It is also distinctive due to its natural beauty and restful, open aspect as well as its views to and gentle sounds of the River Arrow. Many walkers, including those with canine friends, use the Jubilee Fields daily. It is also used as a beginners' trail for a Nordic Walking group.

### **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.