

LOCAL GREEN SPACES IN HISTON & IMPINGTON

INFORMATION ON SITE: “Girton Wood”

Version 27 May 2019

INTRODUCTION

This template is for the compilation of information relevant to the designation of a particular site as a Local Green Space (LGS) in the Histon & Impington Neighbourhood Plan. It serves to inform decisions about LGS designation, to provide supporting evidence to the District planning authorities and to inform specific policies and management plans for the site. It is based on the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and draws on other guidance documents, as explained in the Histon and Impington LGS Framework paper. It is organised into sections, as listed below, but most sites will be significant for only a couple of the criteria covered.

1. General Information
2. Planning history and legal status
3. Size, scale and “local nature”
4. Need for and proximity/accessibility of Local Green Space
5. Evidence that it “is demonstrably special to a local community”
6. Evidence that it “holds particular local significance for its beauty or tranquillity”
7. Evidence that it “holds particular local significance for its historical or cultural value”
8. Evidence that it “holds particular local significance for its recreational value”
9. Evidence that it “holds particular local significance for the richness of its wildlife”
10. Evidence that it holds particular local significance for other ecosystem services
11. Evidence about the site’s connectivity to other green areas for ecological or recreational purposes
12. Evidence that the green space holds particular local significance for any other reason

REFERENCE NUMBER OF THIS CANDIDATE LOCAL GREEN SPACE = V13

WORKING NAME OF THIS CANDIDATE LOCAL GREEN SPACE = “Girton Wood”

DATE of most recent amendment / addition to the dossier = 14 May 2019

IN A NUTSHELL (recommend up to 100 words), the case for this Local Green Space:

Providing shade and shelter for walkers and wildlife, away from roads and other disturbance, yet on much used paths between Histon and Girton, the bulk, diversity and position Girton Wood allows the community get close to nature and experience tranquillity. The site contributes to ecological connectivity (birds, small mammals, etc), providing an intermediate stopover on the contiguous hedgerows and woodland linking Histon with Girton. It is a breeding site for woodland and farmland species and a year-round refuge from the adjacent fields. Astride several circular routes, the Wood adds interesting variety for walkers and runners, so enriching their leisure activities.

Contributors to this dossier (with initials to facilitate reference in the sources column):

All inputs are by first contributor, except where indicated otherwise

Jon Pavey (JFP)

	STATEMENTS ABOUT EACH TOPIC	EVIDENCE / SOURCES What evidence supports statement? References? Also provide the initials of the contributor and other relevant people for follow-up queries.
1	GENERAL INFORMATION	
1.1	Name(s) and location/address of site. <i>Some sites have several names, in which case mention all known names.</i>	
	<p>Girton Wood (NGR TL 429 630) Located south west of Histon. The hedgerow, which forms part of the site (see below) is approximately 180m south-southwest of St Audrey's Close. The main part of the Wood lies approximately 450 m south-southwest of St Audrey's Close and 580m from Manor Park.</p> <p>The site is about 300m west of Park Farm and 380m north-northeast of Manor Farm (Girton).</p> <p><i>Note there is another piece of woodland known by some as Girton wood which lies within Girton's parish boundary near Girton recreation ground.</i></p>	<p>https://getoutside.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/local/girton-wood-south-cambridgeshire</p> <p>http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/wood/5350/girton/</p>
1.2	Site location map(s) and photographs <i>The plan can be at any scale but must show location and boundaries of the site. Indicate the scale. Add explanatory text about site location and boundaries in box below.</i>	<p>Has a map been provided? YES Have photos been provided? YES</p> <p>Attach the map(s) and photo(s) separately.</p>
	<p>The site comprises the woodland area lying immediately south east of the Histon to Girton (Manor Farm) Public Right of Way footpath. The drains on the south-west and north west boundaries are outside the site but that running partially along the north east boundary is included. The south east boundary includes all tree and hedge vegetation up to the adjacent field edge. The drain, hedge and scrub (here termed collectively as "hedgerow") running alongside the abovementioned footpath between Girton and Histon Woods are also included.</p>	<p>https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx</p>
1.3	Ownership of site Information on land ownership can be obtained from the Land Registry or local knowledge.	
	Owned by Cambridgeshire County Council	<p><i>file:.... /AppData/Local/Packages/microsoft.windowscommunicationsapps_8wekyb3d8bbwe/LocalState/Files/S0/1424/Attachments/Histon&Girton%20Woods[1533].pdf - from Denis Payne</i></p>

1.4	Is the owner aware of the potential designation as LGS? Do they support the designation? <i>Support is highly desirable, but it is possible for a site to be designated as a LGS, even if there are objections from the site owners.</i>	
	The owner is aware. In their response to the NP consultation, the County Council expressed no objection to LGS status for this site.	
1.5	Organisation(s) or individual(s) proposing the site for LGS designation <i>e.g. the Parish Council itself, a specific community group, or an informal group of residents</i>	
	H&I Parish Council.	
1.6	Community served by the candidate LGS <i>Does the site serve the whole village or a particular geographic sector of it or a particular interest group?</i>	
	The site is used by residents of both Histon & Impington (particularly from the west of the village). Girton's residents also use the site.	
2	PLANNING HISTORY AND LEGAL STATUS	
2.1	Is there currently a planning application for this site? If permitted, could part of the overall site still be used as a Local Green Space?	
	No current planning applications for the site exist.	
2.2	Is the site currently allocated for development in the draft Neighbourhood Plan? If development were permitted, could part of the overall site still be used as a Local Green Space?	
	No, it is not allocated for development.	
2.3	Does the site have any existing legal protection of any kind and since when? Or has it ever been proposed for legal protection? e.g. <i>Local Nature Reserve, Village Green, land designated as open access in agreement with the landowner. Also Protected Village Amenity Area PVAA, which is similar to LGS but not as strong in restricting development.</i>	South Cambs PVAA - LGS Right of way and open access land - GOV.UK Cambridgeshire LNR Open Spaces Society describes options www.oss.org.uk
	The site is all Green Belt land.	
3.	SIZE, SCALE AND "LOCAL NATURE" OF CANDIDATE LGS	
3.1	Area of proposed site (preferably in hectares)	(No fixed limits. Cotswold District suggests an upper limit of 20ha for LGS designation.)
	The woodland is estimated at 2.6ha with the hedgerow (including ditch and scrub) adding a further 0.2ha.	From https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx

3.2	<p>Is the site an “extensive tract of land”? Extensive tracts can’t be designated as LGS but “extensive” is not defined. How large is it in comparison to other groups of fields or areas of land in the vicinity? Does it feel like a local H&I site or something on a larger scale?</p>	
	<p>No. It is a discrete young woodland site sitting in farmland between Histon & Impington and Girton. Nearly all the site has been planted as woodland in the past 20 years. The remainder is a well-established hedgerow which provides physical connectivity with the Histon & Impington village.</p>	<p>It is not clear who planted this and when? Maybe for the Millenium?</p>
3.3	<p>What makes the site “local in character”? <i>How does the site connect physically, ecologically, visually and socially to the local area?</i></p>	<p>To avoid repetition you may be able to simply refer to other sections of this template e.g. on recreation.</p>
	<p>The site lies astride and beside circular routes running out from west Histon, much used by walkers and runners (many of whom also pass through the nearby Histon Wood). A footpath (not right of way) runs from the south east corner linking with Girton’s church and recreation ground.</p> <p>The Wood affords a valuable refuge for wildlife (in a landscape with limited woodland), whether transiting to the south or as shelter from the adjacent arable / pastoral land. Along with the hedges and ditches beside the paths, it delivers an unbroken wildlife corridor connecting Histon’s woodland with that of Girton.</p> <p>The Wood, together with adjoining hedges, draws local people as a place with a calming, human dimension in a landscape that is otherwise dominated by large, rather characterless fields. People are attracted by its natural beauty and wildlife.</p>	<p>JFP</p>

4.	NEED FOR AND PROXIMITY / ACCESSIBILITY OF GREEN SPACE	
4.1	Is there a particular need for a Local Green Space in this location? <i>e.g. is there a shortage of accessible green space in this location? Has the need been identified in other assessments or surveys?</i>	Make this specific. General shortage in H&I is described in the NP and in the framework document.
	<p>Through its diversity, the Wood provides a focal point for walkers, those with an interest in the natural world and others. It draws people into the agricultural landscape, with the attendant health benefits of increased exercise.</p> <p>There is relatively little woodland in the area and the Wood's position, along with the adjacent hedgerows running between Histon and Girton provide a wildlife corridor not otherwise replicated. The footpaths within the wood are well used, year round, demonstrating the site's value to the community.</p> <p>People use the wood throughout the day; it provides a safe environment catering for many interests. This ranges from the elderly looking for a gentle walk of reasonable length, young people chilling out, people taking their dog on an extended circular walk, runners and others simply enjoying quiet countryside which is accessed easily and lies close to the villages.</p>	
4.2	How far is the site from the community it serves? <i>It should be in "reasonably close proximity" but this is not defined.</i>	It may be helpful to attach a map or diagram showing proximity and access.
	The site boundary reaches approximately 180 m south-southwest of St Audrey's Close. It is easily reached from the west and south of Histon and Impington across Manor Park Field and via the Guided Busway.	See map.
4.3	Are there any barriers to the community accessing the site from their homes? If so, how could they be overcome? <i>e.g. a busy road to be crossed</i>	
	No. There are busway crossing points which enable access via Histon Woods for people living on the north-east side of the busway.	
5.	EVIDENCE THAT IT IS SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY	
5.1	List the community organisations, societies, local leaders, schools, organisations concerned with health and well-being, groups of residents or other groups, who have expressed support for the protection of this site?	Attach evidence, which could be letters of support, petitions, surveys, council resolutions etc.

	<p>The site's users are many and varied: general walkers, dog walkers, naturalists, runners.</p> <p>Responses obtained at the stand outside Tesco's during the consultation showed that this site, along with Histon Wood and Buxhall Farm, are the most valued green spaces in the Parish (after the Village Green).</p>	
6.	EVIDENCE OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR BEAUTY OR TRANQUILLITY	
6.1	Is this criterion relevant for this site?	If no, go on to the next section
	Yes.	
6.2	If yes, describe briefly the views and other characteristics that contribute to this beauty and/or tranquillity. Why do local people consider it to be of particular significance?	If possible, provide photographic or other evidence.
	<p>The Wood has both areas of dense planting and areas with low shrubs. The paths form open glades. This mix of lightness provides uplifting variety and diversity as well as enhancing biodiversity.</p> <p>The Wood and adjacent hedgerow provide shelter in a fairly open landscape. Being slightly away from the villages it serves, and with no roads nearby, the Wood provides a place of tranquillity.</p> <p>This allows people to truly appreciate the spring flowers (eg hazel catkins, pussy willow), the greens of summer, autumnal colours and, from shelter, the gaunt bare trees of winter.</p>	
7.	EVIDENCE OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, SOCIAL OR EDUCATIONAL VALUE	H&I Historical Society could compile this section, where relevant.
7.1	Is this criterion relevant for this site?	If no, go on to the next section
	No.	
7.2	Describe the associated historic buildings, memorials, gardens, landscape features (e.g. old hedgerows, trees or ponds), cultural activities or relevance to the historic development of the village (e.g. fruit and jam production).	If possible, provide references or other evidence.
7.3	Is the site used for educational purposes, either by schools or by other community groups?	

7.4	Does the site have other social uses, for example as an area where people get together, for example for picnics, communal children's play or teenage socialising? <i>Consider various age groups. For example, is it a site where young people hang out together or where older people meet up with friends.</i>	
8.	EVIDENCE OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR RECREATION	H&I Walking Group, Histon Hobblers, Cycling Group, youth groups and others could compile this section, where relevant.
8.1	Is this criterion relevant for this site?	If no, go on to the next section
	Yes.	
8.2	Is the site used for playing sport? <i>If so, which sports, involving which sections of the community? Since when has it been used for sport? Is it free or does it require club membership?</i>	
	No.	
8.3	Is the public able to physically access the site? <i>e.g. public rights of way across or adjacent to the site. Has access been allowed hitherto on a discretionary basis? Is there access to the whole site or just part of it? Is there good disabled access? (A site can still be designated even if there is no public access).</i>	
	Yes. There is open access, with footpaths running through the Wood. A bench seat, understood to be for community use is provided near the entrances on the south east side. There is Public Right of Way footpath to the west of the hedgerow whilst, on the east side, a well-used path runs between the hedgerow and the neighbouring pasture. In addition to the Public Right of Way footpath alongside the north eastern boundary (and the hedgerow to the north east), there are well-used paths within the Wood and a path to Girton from the south eastern corner. There is also access from the informal paths around the pasture between the Wood and Histon Wood. The rough ground makes disabled access challenging.	See map
8.4	Is the site used for walking, dog-walking, foraging (berries etc), birding, nature observation, horse-riding, cycling, children's games or other informal recreation? <i>If so, how much is it used and by which parts of the community? Since when has it had these uses?</i>	

	<p>The Wood is used daily by walkers, dog walkers and runners. It is also used for birdwatching and general wildlife appreciation.</p> <p>For some, the Wood defines the extent of a circular walk. Many of these follow alongside one or other side of the hedgerow. Others pass through the Wood, often on walks which include both Histon & Impington and Girton.</p> <p>On a typical weekday from early to mid-morning morning there is a steady passage of people using the site, albeit spaced reasonably far apart. Many of the users are regular. The site is used throughout the day, with an increase in late afternoon and especially in the evenings when the day length permits.</p> <p>The Wood is less than 20 years old; it is only since it was planted that it has been used. Before then people could appreciate the hedgerow from the adjacent public footpath.</p>	
9.	EVIDENCE OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR RICHNESS OF WILDLIFE	
9.1	Is this criterion relevant for this site?	If no, go on to the next section
	Yes.	
9.2	<p>What wildlife of interest to the community has been found on the site?</p> <p><i>Include plants, fungi, mammals, birds, amphibians, invertebrates etc. Explain briefly the use of the site by the species concerned and the conservation requirements. Mention any population trends, supported by monitoring data or anecdotal evidence.</i></p>	<p>Consider sightings within the past five years. To organise species information, a checklist of potential species will be made available. Additional species can be added, as needed. The checklist and other evidence should be provided as an attachment.</p>
	<p>Redwings and Fieldfares (Birds of Conservation Concern 4 Red List) use the site in winter.</p> <p>Yellowhammers and Linnets (also Red List) use the hedgerow, potentially year round. Dunnocks (Amber listed) use the Wood and hedgerow.</p> <p>The Wood as a woodland patch in the middle of extensive agriculture is great for biodiversity because it provides a safe place to shelter, nest etc for wildlife that forages in the fields. This is borne out by residents' observations (non-systematic). This value will increase as the woodland matures.</p> <p>Furthermore, the woodland's biodiversity value is increased because of the ecological connectivity.</p>	<p>https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/shared_documents/publications/birds-conservation-concern/birds-of-conservation-concern-4-leaflet.pdf accessed 13 Feb 19</p>
9.3	<p>Are any of the habitats or species found on the site considered to be of special importance? <i>e.g. habitats or species in national or regional lists of priorities or in a biodiversity action plan. Explain briefly the use of the site by the species concerned and the conservation requirements, if not already covered above.</i></p>	<p>For national and county priority species, see CPbiodiversity . Consider sightings within the past five years. Elaborate further in an attachment, if necessary</p>

	<p>Redwings and Fieldfares (Birds of Conservation Concern 4 Red List) use the site in winter. Redwing forage among the Wood's trees whilst Fieldfare tend to use the Wood as a refuge when adjacent fields are disturbed.</p> <p>Both Yellowhammer and Linnet use the hedgerow; in the past Yellowhammer had song posts here (no recent observations to confirm if this is still so). The hedgerow habitat structure has potential as breeding sites for both species.</p>	
9.4	<p>Are there trees with preservation orders in the site? If so, how many, which species and what special characteristics?</p>	<p>Parish Council tree warden could provide the information for this question. South Cambs Local Plan policy NH/7 (paras 6.32-6.33) on ancient woodlands and veteran trees is relevant on this question.</p>
	No	

9.5	<p>What has been the involvement of community members in studying, observing or simply enjoying the wildlife of this site?</p> <p><i>Have local people been monitoring the site or recording its species and, if so, for how long? Have they produced any data sets, articles, reports, blogs, talks, exhibits etc about any of the wildlife present at the site?</i></p>	You could attach copies of materials produced, if appropriate.
	There has been some ad hoc recording of wildlife in and around the site. Available historic data has not discriminated between the site and the adjacent areas.	
10.	EVIDENCE OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR OTHER ECOSYSTEM SERVICES	There is unlikely to be quantitative data on ecosystem services, but you can make qualitative arguments – as specific as possible. In some cases there may be supporting anecdotal evidence (e.g. of pollinator activity).
10.1	Is this criterion relevant for this site?	If no, go on to the next section
	No	
10.2	Does the site contribute significantly to flood prevention, absorption of rainwater or maintenance of water quality (by reducing run-off of silt, agrochemicals and other pollutants into water courses)? If so, describe briefly the function and how significant it is likely to be.	Attach supporting documents, diagrams etc, if needed.
10.3	Does the site provide significant habitat for pollinators or for predators valuable in controlling plant pests (especially if near allotments, orchards, gardens)? If so, describe briefly the pollinators and/or predators concerned.	Attach supporting documents, diagrams etc, if needed.
10.4	Does the site contribute significantly as a barrier to noise pollution or air pollution, as a windbreak, or in maintaining a favourable microclimate (e.g. a moist, cool area during hot, dry periods)?	Attach supporting documents, diagrams etc, if needed.
11.	CONNECTIVITY TO OTHER GREEN AREAS	As explained in the Framework document, ecological connectivity is essential for long-term sustainability of the other local values, while connecting sites with vegetated paths greatly enhances recreational value.
11.1	Is this criterion relevant for this site?	If no, go on to the next section
	Yes.	

11.2	<p>Is the site connected – or potentially connected – ecologically to other green areas? If so, which other areas? Which kinds of wildlife benefit from the connectivity?</p> <p><i>The connectivity could be physically continuous, e.g. a hedgerow, or depend on sites being close enough for birds or insects to move between them. If the connectivity is weak or only potential, indicate briefly how it could be enhanced e.g. by restoring vegetation alongside a drainage ditch.</i></p>	Attach a map or diagram to illustrate the connectivity.
	<p>From Girton Wood, the site includes a physically continuous hedgerow (hedge, ditch and scrub) running northeast, connecting with the woodland on the edge of Histon and Histon Wood. This route orientation is continued by another hedgerow (including mature trees, brambles and grasses) running southwest alongside the pass to the woodland on the edge of Girton (near the church). The site is the kingpin to the only woody-structured corridor running between Girton and Histon & Impington.</p> <p>Passerines and no doubt small animals and invertebrates will make use of this corridor. As it is a strong linear feature, it may be used by bats (no data).</p> <p>Retaining, as a minimum, the current management regime for the hedgerows is necessary to maintain this continuity.</p>	
11.3	<p>Is the site connected – or potentially connected – for recreational purposes to other green areas? If so, which other areas and for which kinds of recreation? Which parts of the community use the connected green areas and how much?</p> <p><i>This will generally be about walking, dog-walking, running, horse-riding and cycling routes, which link green areas in a loop. If the connectivity is only potential, indicate briefly how it could be achieved e.g. by establishing an additional permissive way.</i></p>	Attach a map or diagram to illustrate the connectivity, or simply cross-refer to the ecological connectivity, if the links are similar.
	<p>The Wood is connected to the Manor Field – Histon Wood proposed LGS by both footpaths and wildlife corridors.</p> <p>Walkers / dog walkers and runners follow one of several circular routes passing through both Manor Field – Histon Wood and Girton Wood.</p> <p>The ecological connectivity is noted above.</p> <p>One of the radial routes identified in the Neighbourhood Plan runs alongside the Wood and hedgerow; the Wood also lies in the vicinity of the general location proposed for a future circular route around the southwest of Histon and Impington.</p>	
12.	EVIDENCE OF ANY OTHER SPECIAL LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	

