

Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space Report

This report has been prepared to consider the allocation of sites as Local Green Space (LGS) as part of the Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan (CNP). Local Green Spaces can be designated as part of the Neighbourhood Plan provided they meet criteria described in Paragraph 100 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which are set out below:

- *‘where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- *where the green area is 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*
- *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.’*

This paper has been prepared in support of the Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan in order to provide the evidence base for sites designated as LGS. The concluding section provides a chart overview assessment of each site with reference to the above NPPF criteria.

Members of the Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (CNPWG) have prepared this report.

Cowfold deserves special consideration due to its location, situated at the junction of two busy ‘A’ roads bordered by narrow pavements. This places special importance on the network of available footpaths and countryside to the general well being of the community.

An AQMA has been declared in the central area of the village as a result of exceptionally high levels of vehicle derived pollutants which have lead to average levels of NO₂ exceeding the maximum levels as laid down in the Environment act of 1995. This further raises the importance of any green areas which have potential carbon sink capability, especially at a time when a ‘Climate Emergency’ has been declared.

The CNPWG considered a total of 21 sites and have selected those considered to meet the criteria for inclusion in this report. The report provides an overview of the selected proposed LGS locations; some of these are very small but is felt that this should not detract from their importance to the community.

Individual Site Descriptions and Local Significance.

LGS01 – Bakers Shaw: 1ha OS Grid Ref. TQ210228

Owners: EA Colvin Trust, Mr & Mrs Hodges, Mr & Mrs Rowland. Under options to Abingdon Developments & Devine Homes. Southern Strip unregistered.

Site and Location

This strip of woodland including a bluebell wood and two ponds adjoins the BUAB at its southern end and borders Development Proposal CNP01.

Public Access

A PRoW runs the entire length of the woodland linking with an East/West PRoW to the North and joining the A272 to the South. Development proposals include the site CNP01 directly to the East and it is anticipated that this footpath will be the natural pedestrian route from CNP01 to the school and local shops.

Criteria for designation as LGS

Reasonable Proximity to local Community

The proposed LGS lies directly North East of the Thornden housing area; it adjoins the BUAB along its southern edge and is therefore demonstrably within reasonable proximity to the local community.

An Extensive Tract of Land

The proposed LGS has an area of 1ha and is therefore not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

Landscape character and views

The proposed LGS is an area listed as Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland; it includes an extensive area of bluebells and two natural ponds. There are views to the North, West and East over open agricultural land. This proposed LGS forms a natural settlement boundary. This area forms an important part of the local character with areas such as this being a key reason why people choose to make Cowfold their home.

Heritage Significance

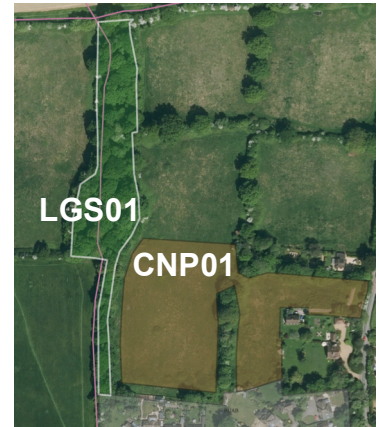
While the mature trees, hedgerows and ponds within the proposed LGS indicate that this is an historic landscape there is limited historic significance.

Wildlife Significance

The ancient hedges and mature oak trees are a significant habitat for a diverse range of species but the bluebell woods makes this area locally significant. This area is an important wildlife habitat preserving biodiversity.

Recreational Value

The area is in daily use by the local community for informal recreation providing a tranquil walk, particularly as part of wider circular walking routes surrounding the village and specifically to view the bluebells when they are in full bloom.



LGS02 – The Bowling Green: 0.034ha OS Grid Ref. TQ211226

Owner: Cowfold Parish Council

Site and Location

A small recreational green with seating often used as a meeting point by parents dropping off or collecting their children from the nearby primary and nursery schools. Potters Green is a private road with no parking facilities hence parents either walk from home or park elsewhere in order to walk their children to the school.

Public Access

This green adjoins the private road, Potters Green, as well as being adjacent to the A281. There is unencumbered public access.



Criteria for designation as LGS

Reasonable Proximity to local Community

The proposed lies within the BUAB and it is therefore demonstrably within reasonable proximity to the local community.

An Extensive Tract of Land

The proposed LGS has an area of 0.034ha and is therefore not considered to be an extensive tract of land.

Landscape character and views

The proposed LGS is of very limited size having no significant views, however, this green oasis surrounded by urban development and the Cowfold Conservation Area forms an essential part of the local character.

Heritage Significance

This proposed LGS is significant from a heritage point of view with its location being bounded by the Cowfold Conservation area. It is adjacent to the cottages built along this road to serve the agricultural community that formed the origins of Cowfold.

Wildlife Significance

There is limited overt wildlife significance.

Recreational Value

The area has significant recreational value with open public access and is well used by the local community; providing a space for children to burn energy before or after school as well as a meeting place for parents before they disperse to the wider village.

LGS03 – Village Green: 0.17ha OS Grid Ref. TQ213225

Owner: Saxon Weald

Site and Location

The Village Green is located in the centre of the village, opposite the Village Hall providing a natural focal point with seating and planters.

Public Access

The Green is fully open to the public and is used for public events. Recently it was the location for a remembrance display for those lost during the First World War with a soldier silhouette and a named cross for each resident killed during the conflict.



Criteria for designation as LGS

Reasonable Proximity to local Community

The proposed LGS bounded by the current BUAB and is adjacent to the crossroads formed by the A272 and A281. It is therefore demonstrably within reasonable proximity to the local community.

An Extensive Tract of Land

The proposed LGS has an area of 0.17ha and is therefore not considered to form an extensive tract of land.

Landscape character and views

The proposed LGS is managed landscaped area with Flower tubs maintained by Cowfold Horticultural Society and a recreational bench. Small areas of open public space form an essential part of the character of the village as part of the setting and as a meeting place.

Heritage Significance

The proposed LGS has been central to the village but has limited specific historical importance however it forms part of the setting of the Village Hall, built in 1896.

Wildlife Significance

The proposed LGS has little overt wildlife significance.

Recreational Value

The proposed LGS has significant recreational value as it forms a focal point to the village particularly given its proximity to the Village Hall and Recreation the Ground. This is widely used by members of the public in general as well as community events.

LGS04 – Recreation Field: 3.2ha OS Grid Ref. TQ214224

Owner: Cowfold Parish Council

Site and Location

This field was bequeathed to the community for recreational use and adjoins the village on 3 sides.

Public Access

This area is fully open to the public, bounded by roads to the West and South and a PRoW along part of the northern boundary. The adjoining fields provide significant opportunity for dog walking. It is recognised that the open access enjoyed by local residents to the adjoining fields is at the discretion of the landowner.

Criteria for designation as LGS

Reasonable Proximity to local Community

The proposed LGS is surrounded by the current BUAB on 3 sides and is therefore demonstrably within reasonable proximity to the local community.

An Extensive Tract of Land

The proposed LGS has an area of 3.2ha. This proposed LGS could be considered to form an extensive tract of land.

Landscape character and views

The proposed LGS comprises an area of open mown grassland bordered by mature trees. This area of open public space forms an essential facility for the community.

Heritage Significance

The proposed LGS has limited historical importance.

Wildlife Significance

The proposal of this LGS is based on its recreational value. However the extensive wildlife potential provided by the mature trees and hedgerows bordering this field, particularly along its eastern boundary, is significant.

Recreational Value

The proposed LGS adjoins the Community Allmond Centre and includes the Scout hut, a children's play area and a skate park. It also provides a permanent home for Cowfold Football Club with prepared and marked football grounds and for wider community events such as the Annual Cowfold Fete and Bonfire Night celebrations. The recreational significance to the community as a whole is without question and demonstrated by its wide daily usage. Having open public access to this area is an important factor in making Cowfold the Community it is.



LGS05 – Alley Groves Green: 0.07ha OS Grid Ref. TQ215228

Owner: Saxon Weald

Site and Location

This tiny green area is part of the recently completed Alley Groves development.

Public Access

This area is fully open to the public and includes a PRow running across it. This forms an important link between the open countryside to the North, East and South.

Criteria for designation as LGS

Reasonable Proximity to local Community

The proposed LGS forms part of the recently completed Alley Groves development. It is therefore demonstrably within reasonable proximity to the local community although the BUAB has not yet been extended to include this extension to the existing Alley Groves residential area which lies within the BUAB and is about 20metres to the West.

An Extensive Tract of Land

The proposed LGS has an area of 0.07ha and is therefore not considered to form an extensive tract of land.

Landscape character and views

The proposed LGS comprises an area of landscaped grassland bordered by mature trees and woodland. This small area of open public space includes a play area and forms an essential part of the character and setting of this new development.

Heritage Significance

The proposed LGS has limited historical importance.

Wildlife Significance

The proposed LGS is very small and by itself has limited wildlife significance; the adjacent mature woodland does have wildlife significance.

Recreational Value

This LGS includes children's play facilities and provides a focal point for the younger residents of this development. Alley Groves is a cul-de-sac; together with this green area provides a relatively safe play environment and is significant in creating the setting for this micro community. The ownership of this land is by the Saxon Weald Housing Association who have made this provision for the use of residents.



LGS06 – Brook Hill Wood: 0.37ha OS Grid Ref. TQ215228
LGS07 – Brook Hill Strip: 0.08ha OS Grid Ref. TQ216230
LGS08 – Three Oaks Pond: 0.36ha OS Grid Ref. TQ217230

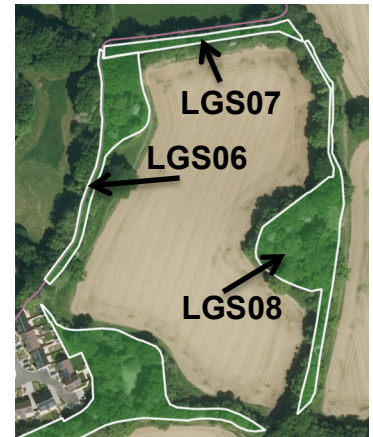
Owner: South Lodge Estates, Mr and Mrs Mortell

Site and Location

These three strips of semi-ancient assart woodland border an agricultural field and between them include three natural ponds.

Public Access

There are PRowWs within or bordering LGS06 and LGS07. The field margins adjoining and within these LGS are in daily use for dog walking. It is recognised that the open access enjoyed by local residents to this and adjoining fields is at the discretion of the landowner.



Criteria for designation as LGS

Reasonable Proximity to local Community

The proposed LGS surround a field that is adjacent to the built up area but do not directly adjoin the BUAB so could be considered to not within reasonable proximity. However, the high level of daily usage by local residents confirms that these areas should be considered to be within reasonable proximity to the local community.

An Extensive Tract of Land

The proposed LGS have areas of 0.375ha, 0.08ha and 0.36ha respectively. These proposed LGS, therefore, are not considered to form an extensive tract of land.

Landscape character and views

The proposed LGS comprise areas of mature assart woodland containing well-established hedgerows and trees. They include open views to the North, East and South.

Heritage Significance

The proposed LGS contain mature natural woodland, natural ponds and hedgerows, although this is an historic landscape there is no particular heritage significance.

Wildlife Significance

The proposed LGS form a natural mature green area providing extensive opportunity for wildlife including nightingales, kestrels, owls and buzzards. These areas link together to provide a wildlife corridor regularly used by wild deer.

Recreational Value

The key recreational value of these areas is for walking, bird watching and hedgerow foraging. They provide a natural division between agricultural and residential areas as well as an area of tranquillity away from the very busy through route that is the A272. The importance of such areas cannot be overstressed as forming the local setting as well as an escape from the noise and pollution created by the traffic passing through the village. Public access via the PRowWs is assured.

LGS09 – Alley Groves Pond: 0.44ha OS Grid Ref. TQ215228

Owner: South Lodge Estates

Site and Location

This area of natural assart woodland including a natural pond and many mature trees is listed as Priority Habitat Inventory-Deciduous Woodland. It provides a natural boundary between the residential area at Alley Groves and the open countryside to the West and South.



Public Access

There are PRowWs to the North and East. The adjoining field margins provide significant opportunities for dog walking. It is recognised that the open access enjoyed by local residents to this and the adjoining fields is at the discretion of the landowner.

Criteria for designation as LGS

Reasonable Proximity to local Community

The proposed LGS adjoins the recent residential development at Alley Groves. It is therefore demonstrably within reasonable proximity to the local community.

An Extensive Tract of Land

The proposed LGS has an area of 0.44ha and is therefore not considered to form an extensive tract of land.

Landscape character and views

The proposed LGS comprises an area of mature Natural Woodland including many mature trees and a natural pond. This small area of assart woodland has open views to the North, East and South and is a significant part of the setting for the Alley Groves residential area.

Heritage Significance

The proposed LGS contains mature natural woodland, a natural pond and hedgerows indicating that this is an historic landscape but without any specific historic significance.

Wildlife Significance

The proposed LGS forms a natural mature wild area providing extensive opportunity for wildlife including songbirds, kestrels, owls and buzzards as well as diverse insect and pond life making this area significant and an important part of retaining the local biodiversity. These areas link together to provide a wildlife corridor well used by wild deer.

Recreational Value

This proposed LGS provides a natural learning resource for local children who use this space to play. It also provides an important part of the character of the wider area and forms part of the setting of the adjoining residential development.

LGS10 – Acorn Avenue Green: 0.2ha OS Grid Ref. TQ215223

LGS11 – Kicking Field: 0.46ha OS Grid Ref. TQ215221

Owner: Cowfold Parish Council

Site and Location

These two green recreational areas lie within the highest density residential developments in Cowfold. Acorn Ave Green includes a wildlife pond whereas the Kicking Field is used for family recreation.

Public Access

These areas are fully open to the public. There are no PRoWs with both being accessed directly from the adjoining residential road/pavement structure.

Criteria for designation as LGS

Reasonable Proximity to local Community

The proposed LGS adjoin the current BUAB on at least 3 sides and are therefore demonstrably within reasonable proximity to the local community.

An Extensive Tract of Land

The proposed LGS have an area of 0.2ha and 0.46ha respectively and are therefore not considered to form an extensive tract of land.

Landscape character and views

The proposed LGS each comprise a landscaped open area with some mature hedgerow and tree cover. These small areas of open public space provide an important green space for children and adults living in the surrounding area.

Heritage Significance

The proposed LGS have limited historical importance.

Wildlife Significance

Acorn Avenue Pond provides particularly good wildlife opportunities including newts and frogs. The Mature Oak trees on the Kicking Field are known to have provided nesting sites for many species including owls.

Recreational Value

Acorn Avenue Green includes a children's play area and a wildlife pond. The Kicking Field is ideally located for all the families who live in this area to be able to enjoy a green space whether for sporting activities or a family picnic. These areas were created specifically for recreational use with open public access at the time of this development and are deserving of LGS protection to ensure their continued availability. They form part of the local setting and help to maintain a sense of the local community.



LGS12 Eastlands Wood: 1.66ha OS Grid Ref.TQ216221

Owner: Hunter Developments

Site and Location

An area of Mature Natural Woodland which includes blanket Tree Preservation Order protection of mature trees under TPO1520. This woodland provides a natural settlement edge.

Public Access

This area is well served by PRoWs with one passing through the area and another along the eastern edge. Eastlands Lane to the South is also a PRoW.

Criteria for designation as LGS

Reasonable Proximity to local Community

The proposed LGS is adjacent to the current BUAB to the West and North and is therefore demonstrably within reasonable proximity to the local community.

An Extensive Tract of Land

The proposed LGS has an area of 1.66ha. This proposed LGS could be considered to form an extensive tract of land.

Landscape character and views

The proposed comprises an area of Mature Natural Woodland with an ancient Oak tree just to the southeast that is apparently listed in the Domesday Book. There are views over open countryside to the East and South. This is an important natural settlement boundary.

Heritage Significance

The proposed LGS contains mature natural woodland, hedgerows and trees indicating that this is an historic landscape. It lies within the setting of the Grade II listed “Clerks” half-timbered house giving historical significance.

Wildlife Significance

The proposed LGS provides the opportunity for significant biodiversity as well as a wildlife corridor linking areas to the North of this site with the open countryside to the South. It is listed as Priority Habitat Inventory-Deciduous Woodland.

Recreational Value

Cowfold is characterised by the network of country walks available to the community and Eastlands wood forms an important part of this particularly given its proximity to the Acorn avenue area which includes over half of all the dwellings within the village. Eastlands wood forms an important part of the setting of the built up area to the West and the residences to the East. The PRoWs are in daily use providing public access and a tranquil route to the Pub as well the wider countryside.



LGS13 Eastlands Lane: 0.05ha Grid Ref. TQ213221

Owner: Hunter Developments

Site and Location

Eastlands lane is a small private lane providing access to a small number of houses, the sewerage works, Eastlands Farm and an allotment area. A line of mature oak trees and hedgerows borders it.

Public Access

Eastlands Lane includes a PRow interconnecting with other PRowS, the A281 and the open countryside beyond. It is recognised that the open access enjoyed by local residents is at the discretion of the landowners.



Criteria for designation as LGS

Reasonable Proximity to local Community

The proposed LGS is adjacent to the current BUAB with the village public house at the corner of this lane and Henfield Rd. It does not directly adjoin the BUAB and could be considered not to be within close proximity, however, given the daily use of the PRow it is considered to be within reasonable proximity to the local community.

An Extensive Tract of Land

The proposed LGS has an area of 0.15ha and is therefore not considered to form an extensive tract of land.

Landscape character and views

The proposed LGS borders a private lane with mature trees and hedgerows and forms part of a screen for the residential area of Acorn Avenue to the Sewerage works to the South giving it significance beyond its size.

Heritage Significance

The proposed LGS contains, mature hedgerows and a number of mature oak trees under TPO1519 indicating that this is an historic landscape but one without specific heritage.

Wildlife Significance

The wildlife significance of this small strip is limited although every area plays an important part in maintaining the overall local biodiversity.

Recreational Value

The shade and separation produced by the trees on this proposed LGS is an integral part to the enjoyment and tranquillity provided by the proposed Kicking Field LGS. Eastlands lane is well used by the local community as part of local circular walks away from the heavy traffic flow within the village as well as for access to the wider countryside. Eastlands lane is a PRow and would be ideal for designation as a “Quiet Lane” given the low level of traffic, the relatively high level of pedestrian and equestrian use within the setting created by its green canopy.

Summary and Conclusions

The busy junction formed by the A281 running North/South and the A272 Running East/West divides Cowfold. This has the benefit of providing convenient connections to places of work and education as well as to the local towns of Horsham, Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath where there are shopping centres and railway stations. This location also has a negative impact in that there are high volumes of traffic, on average 18,500 vehicles pass along the A272 each day. The resulting traffic queues disrupt village life and impact Air Quality. Cowfold is one of only two locations in West Sussex where an Air Quality Management order is in place.

The village survey carried out as part of the initial Neighbourhood Plan process indicated that the location of Cowfold in terms of transport links and its rural setting were two of the most important reasons why people choose to live here.

The impact of traffic in terms of noise and air quality make those areas of green space which characterise Cowfold and provide recreational opportunities particularly special to the community.

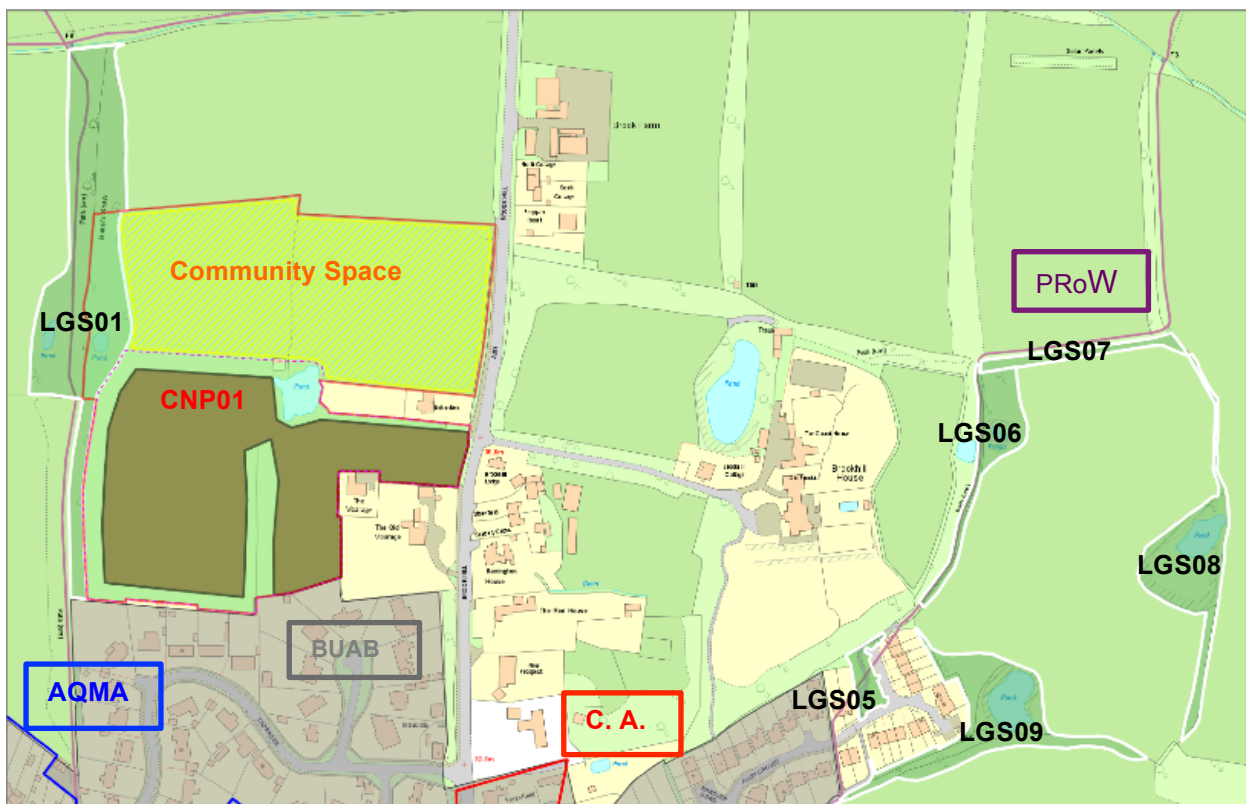
Since the LGS criteria were drawn up the political landscape has changed with a climate emergency having been declared, this coupled with the local air quality issues increases the importance of urban green space.

LGS I.D.	Proximity to Community	Not Extensive	Local Character	Heritage Value	Wildlife Value	Recreational Value
LGS01						
LGS02						
LGS03						
LGS04						
LGS05						
LGS06						
LGS07						
LGS08						
LGS09						
LGS10						
LGS11						
LGS12						
LGS13						

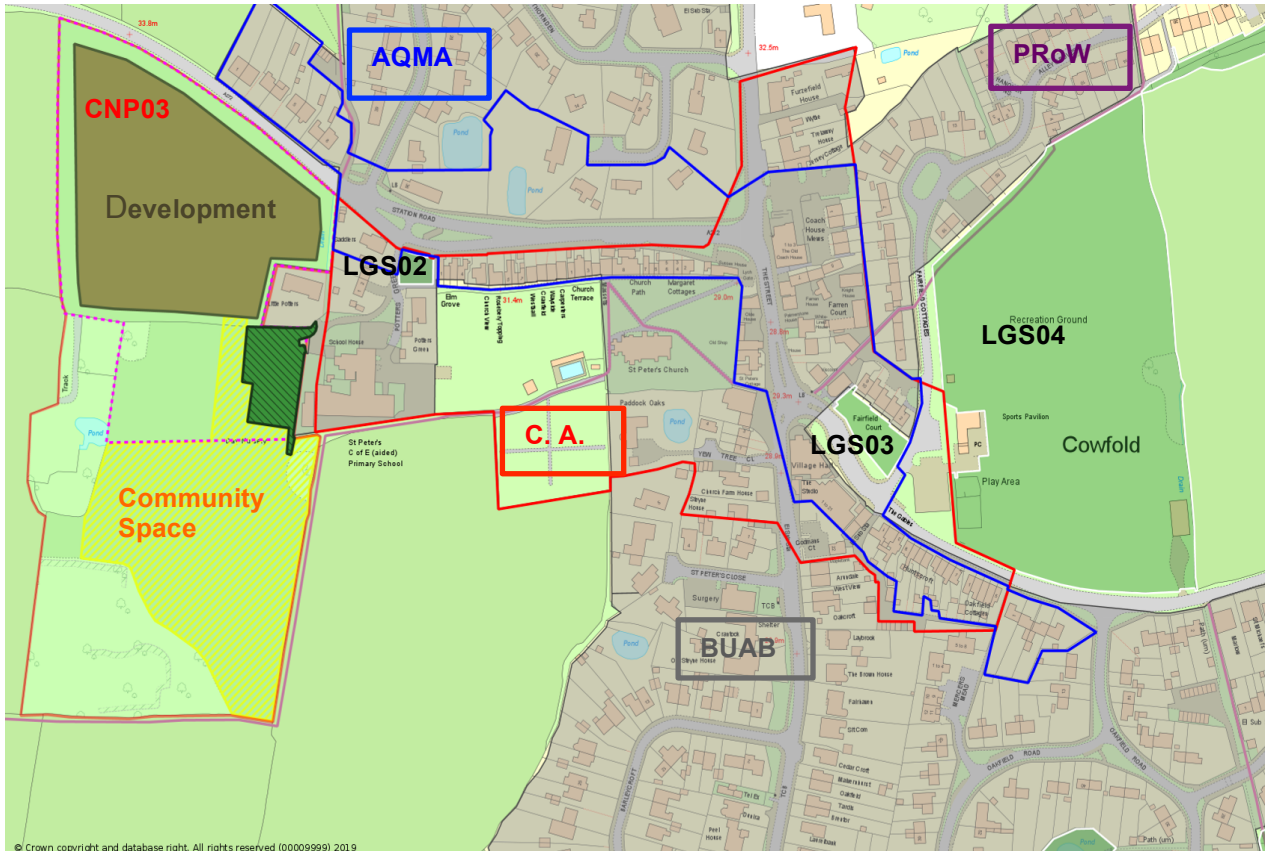
Initially 21 sites were put forward with the thirteen selected sites listed in this report best meeting the criteria and considered to be deserving of LGS designation. All these sites have significance in terms of their recreational value and their contribution to the local character of Cowfold. These green spaces essentially underpin the character of this rural village differentiating it from the urban sprawl found in larger towns nearby.

The Recreation Ground at 3.2ha may well be considered to be an extensive tract of land. This land was gifted to the community for recreation purposes and it would be difficult to have the two football areas on an area of land much smaller than this. It is therefore considered that despite this being possibly considered an extensive tract of land this should not bar it from receiving Local Green Space designation. Clearly, having been gifted for the purpose of recreation this is not a potential development area.

Local Green Space – North



Local Green Space – Centre



Local Green Space - South

