

**Sporle with Palgrave
Neighbourhood Plan
Local Green Space
Assessment
2026**

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Introduction

Sporle with Palgrave 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 Sporle with Palgrave should be designated.

Initial ideas were suggested by residents and the steering group as part of consultation activities in April 2024. In Q16, respondents were asked what areas of green space they value in the parish. 107 people answered this question. All options had support from respondents and the most supported/valued spaces are: the playing field and wildflower meadow (102 people), village sign greenspace (101 people), church grounds (96 people) and Sporle woods (92 people). The option receiving the least support was the railway line.

What areas of green space do you value in the parish?				
Answer Choice		Yes	No	Response Total
1	Playing field and wildflower meadow	102	4	106
2	Bluebell woods	89	4	93
3	The railway line	68	23	91
4	Church grounds	96	7	103
5	Sporle woods	92	3	95
6	Green space in Priors Estate	75	14	89
7	Green space in the Newfields Estate	76	15	91
8	Green space at Sydney Dye Court	77	13	90
9	Triangle of green space where the village sign is	101	2	103
answered				107
skipped				4

In Q17, respondents were asked if there were any other green spaces they valued. 31 people answered this question, and their comments/suggestions are below:

- All green spaces should be protected.

- Bunkers Hill, Palgrave Road, Southgate Road.
- Farmers' fields and footpaths in the area with wildflowers e.g. Opposite Bridge Farm, Southacre Road and Newton Road, Hall Road.
- Ditch streams along The Street
- Playing field pots
- Sporle Wood is private, but it can still be admired from the footpath.
- The wooded area that runs between priory close and hills close.
- The field opposite the community centre where the Queens tree is.
- The field near Highview Houses.
- The Peddars Way between Palgrave Cottages and Southacre Road, all the fields either side of the main roads/Peddars Way.
- The parish council should publish a map giving a list of all the green spaces within the parish and whether access is permitted or not- this may encourage parishioners to get out more.
- Some are unsure where the Bluebell Woods are and questioned the ownership and access to other spaces including Sporle Woods. Others mentioned trackways and lanes which should be footpaths in the village.
- Wildflower meadow behind the church.

These spaces were reviewed to consider 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 for the sites wishing to be taken forward and further evidence gathered including:
 - a) Reviewing any historic evidence related to the green spaces on the Historic England website and via Heritage Gateway;
 - 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 Breckland Council website.
- An assessment against the national criteria for Local Green Space was made for each of the potential areas;
- Landowners were contacted 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.

This document provides the assessment and reasoning of all 4 areas of green space visited or suggested for us to investigate to include in the neighbourhood development plan. Chapter 3 provides the assessment and explanation of the 4 green spaces we feel are justified and supported to be a LGS in the Sporle with Palgrave 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 2024) 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 107 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 land¹.*

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 the Planning Practice Guidance, no specific distance has been set on what the maximum proximity of a Local Green Space should be to the community it serves. Instead, it states in Para 014 that it will depend on local circumstances, including why the green area is seen as special, but it must be reasonably close such as adjacent or in close walking distance². Natural England in January 2023 updated their accessible greenspace standards and stated how everyone should have access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk of their home.

The table below (Table 1) sets out Natural England's accessible standards based on greenspaces up to 10ha (which does not include formal sports provision or play provision since this is covered by Sport England and Play England highlighted in Table

¹[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

² [Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

2). Anything above around 10ha would most likely be an extensive tract of land in a local community and would be inappropriate for Local Green Space Designation so these standards have been excluded in this neighbourhood plan assessment.

All distances are considered to be within a walking distance of 15 minutes or less and distances and sizes have been considered broadly when making a judgement on the local green spaces within this assessment.

Table 1: Summary of Accessible Green Space Standards (Source Natural England 2023³)

Type of green space	Site Proximity Criteria (m)	Size of green space (ha)
Doorstep green space	Within 200m	At least 0.5ha
Local Natural Greenspace	Within 300m	At least 2ha
Medium Sized Neighbourhood Natural Greenspace	Within 1km	10ha

Table 2: Recommended benchmark guidelines for formal outdoor space and informal outdoor space (Source Fields in Trust⁴)

Type of green space	Site Proximity Criteria (m)	Size of green space (ha)
Formal Outdoor Space		
Playing Pitches	Within 1,200m	1.2ha
All outdoor sports	Within 1,20m	1.6ha
Equipped/designated play areas	LAP- 100m LEAPS- 400m NEAPS- 1,000m	0.25ha
Other outdoor provision (MUGA and skateboard parks)	700m	0.3ha
Informal Outdoor Space		
Parks and Gardens	710m	0.8ha
Amenity Green Space	480m	480m
Natural and Semi-Natural	720m	730m

³ [Green Infrastructure Standards for England Summary \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/green-infrastructure-standards-for-england-summary/)

⁴ [Guidance-for-Outdoor-Sport-and-Play-England.pdf \(viewcreative.agency\)](https://viewcreative.agency/guidance-for-outdoor-sport-and-play-england.pdf)

Consideration of whether the green space is local in character, and not an extensive tract of land, suggests spaces within a locality, rather than for example, extensive green areas or fields in the countryside.

The Breckland Local Plan (2023⁵) 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 ENV04 Open Space, Sport & Recreation of the local plan sets out that applications relating to Local Green Space will be determined in accordance with national policy.

The Local Plan sets out that Breckland District Council supports neighbourhood plan groups in identifying Local Green Spaces in their Neighbourhood Plans and the Policies Maps in the Local Plan will be updated in recognition of any Local Green Spaces designated in made neighbourhood plans. The Local Plan itself does not designate any Local Green Spaces in Sporle with Palgrave.

Assessment of the green spaces being designated

The Local Green Space Assessment Tool from My Community: Neighbourhood Planning Local Green Spaces⁶ has been used as the basis to assess each site identified by the community. This includes:

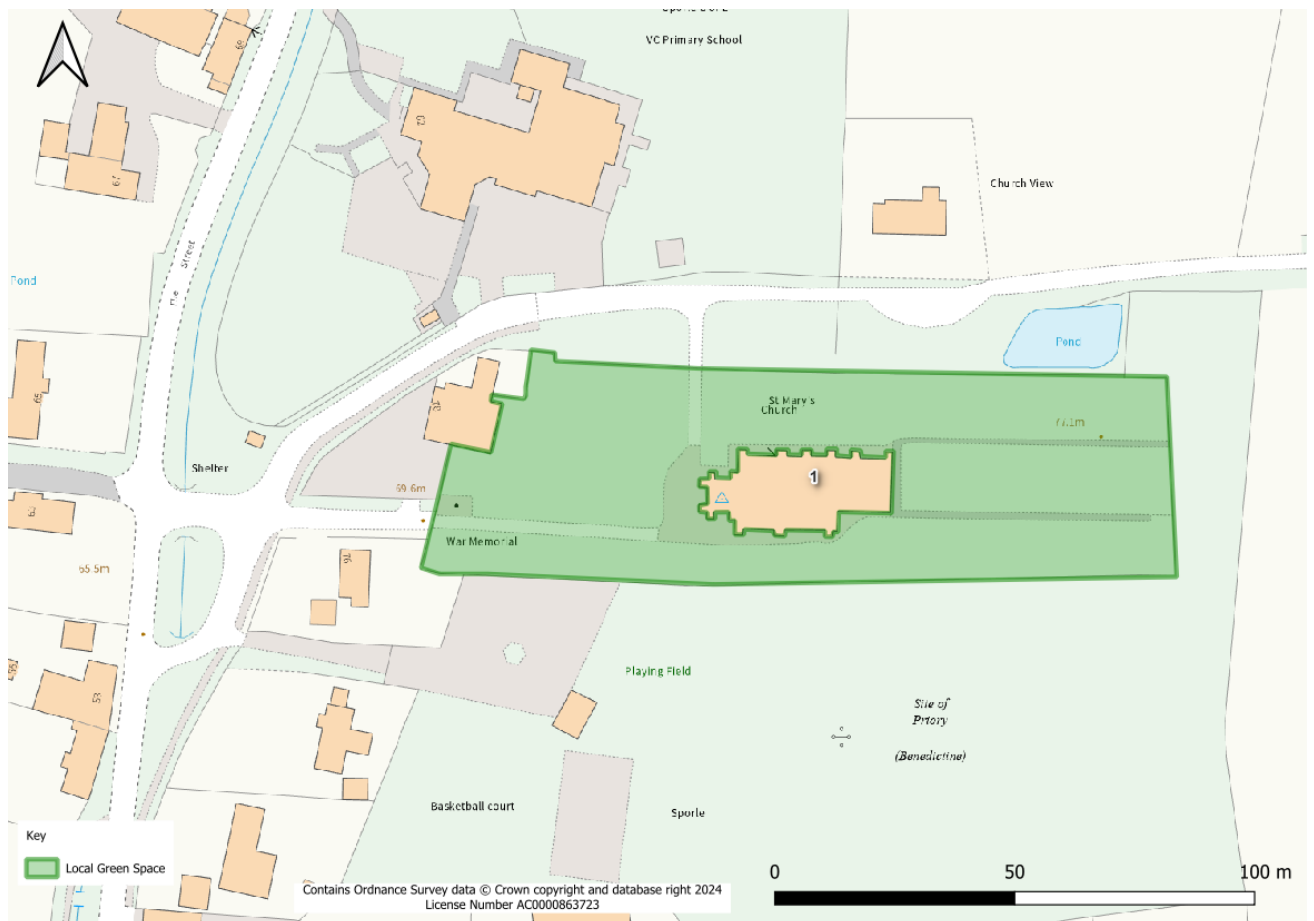
- LGS1 St Mary's Church Grounds and Jane Palmer Memorial Wildflower Meadow, East of The Street
- LGS2 Playing Field, East of The Street
- LGS3 Green Space within Newfields Estate
- LGS4 Green Space North of Highview

⁵ [Breckland Local Plan 2023 \(pdf\)](#)

⁶ <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/>

LGS1: St Mary's Church Grounds and Jane Palmer Memorial Wildflower Meadow, East of The Street





Site Details

Criteria	Description
Site	St Mary's Church Grounds and Jane Palmer Memorial Wildflower Meadow, East of The Street
Description and purposes	The green open space is the burial ground for residents of Sporle with Palgrave. There is also an area to the east of the grounds behind the graves which is now a memorial flower meadow.

Checklist

Criteria	Description
Statutory designations - ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	- Church of St Mary is a Grade I Listed Building - War Memorial is Grade II Listed (within the green space)
Site allocations	None
Planning permissions	None

NPPF Criteria

Criteria	Description
Close to the community it serves.	The green space is within the core of the village and within 100m walking distance to other community facilities and residential dwellings.
Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational, tranquillity, wildlife or other)	The church grounds can be considered demonstrably special to Sporle with Palgrave as they would have been the burial ground for residents from the medieval times ⁷ since the Church was built in the 13 th Century. It is an important local facility which offers a historical and

⁷ [CHURCH OF ST MARY, Sporle with Palgrave - 1169820 | Historic England](#)

Criteria	Description
	spiritual connection for current and previous villagers. There is a wildflower meadow to the east of the site which also offers recreational and wildlife value to the area. This is a memorial area, and people can walk around this green space looking at the trees and flowers. The consultation analysis from the initial community survey conducted in Sporle with Palgrave July 2024 showed that this area in the parish is special to the community with 96 people stating they would like to see the church grounds protected and 102 people wishing to see the wildflower meadow protected.
Local in character and not extensive tract of land.	The total area size is approximately 0.6ha. It is local in character to Sporle with Palgrave serving the purposes of the local area only. It would not necessarily be considered an extensive tract of land.

LGS2: Playing Field, East of The Street





Site Details

Criteria	Description
Site	Playing Field, East of The Street
Description and purposes	The green space sits in the built-up part of the village East of The St. This area is used by the residents and visitors for recreational purposes. The site can be entered by car, cycle or foot via The St. There is also access from St Mary's View.

Checklist

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

Criteria	Description
Planning permissions	None

NPPF Criteria

Criteria	Description
Close to the community it serves.	The green space is within the core of the village and within 100m walking distance to other community facilities and residential dwellings.
Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational, tranquillity, wildlife or other)	A large, grassed area which includes children's play equipment, football pitch and a pavilion used for recreational purposes by the community. The pavilion and field is used by football clubs who come to the greenspace to play. We consider it to be demonstrable special for recreational and health and well-being value. This is one of the most important open green community spaces in our village. The consultation analysis from the initial community survey conducted in Sporle with Palgrave July 2024 showed that this area in the parish is special to the community with 102 people wishing to see the playing field protected.
Local in character and not extensive tract of land.	The area size is approximately 1.1ha. As explained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Para:015 ID:37-015-20140306⁸, there are no hard and fast rules about how big a Local Green Space

⁸ [Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space)

Criteria	Description
	can be, and a degree of judgement will inevitably be needed when making a designation. Para 107 of the NPPF (December 2024) states that a Local Green Space should only be designated if it is not an extensive tract of land, such as making blanket designations of open countryside adjacent to settlements to purposely stop development. This would not be considered appropriate. The recreation ground is not an extensive tract of land and serves as a green space for the local community and is considered an appropriate size in proportion to the village itself.

LGS3: Green Space within Newfields Estate – add triangle





Site Details

Criteria	Description
Site	Green Space within Newfields Estate.
Description and purposes	Green space within a residential area used for informal recreation such as walking, dog walking and playing.

Checklist

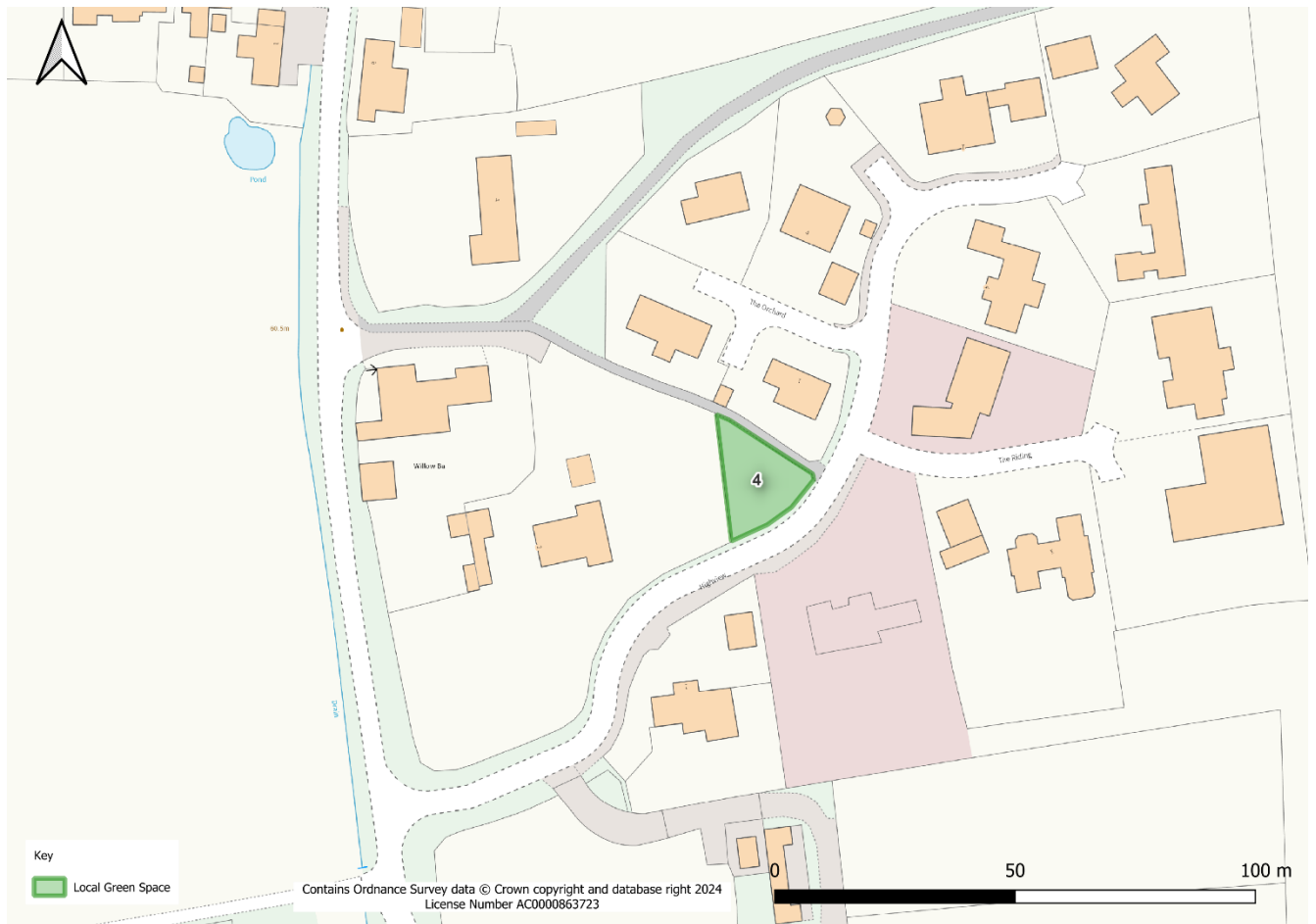
Criteria	Description
Statutory designations - ie CWS, listed status, SSSI, SPA, NNR, SAC	None
Site allocations	None
Planning permissions	None

NPPF Criteria

Criteria	Description
Close to the community it serves. Add distance to centre of village	The green space is within the core of the village and within 500m walking distance to other community facilities and close to residential dwellings.
Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational, tranquillity, wildlife or other) Add as much here as possible to determine whether the green space is demonstrably special.	This green space is demonstrably special to the local community because of its recreational and amenity value within Newfields Estate. It provides an accessible area of open grass and planting within the residential area, giving nearby residents a place to rest, play informally and socialise. The space also contributes to the character of the estate by providing visual openness and soft landscaping within the built-up area. It helps to break up the surrounding development and provides a small but important area of green infrastructure for local residents. The community survey conducted in Sporle with Palgrave in July 2024 showed that green spaces within the Newfields Estate are valued by the community, with 76 respondents saying they would like to see this type of space protected.
Local in character and not extensive tract of land. Add site of green space	The area size is approximately 0.15ha. It is local in character to Sporle with Palgrave serving the purposes of the local area only. It would not necessarily be considered an extensive tract of land.

LGS4: Green Space North of Highview





Site Details

Criteria	Description
Site	Green Space North of Highview
Description and purposes	The green space north of Highview is a small area of open grass within the residential estate. It provides local amenity space for nearby residents and contributes to the green character of the development

Checklist

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

Criteria	Description
Planning permissions	None

NPPF Criteria

Criteria	Description
Close to the community it serves. Add distance to centre of village	The green space is within the built-up part of the village and within 700m walking distance to other community facilities and adjacent to residential dwellings.
Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational, tranquillity, wildlife or other) Add as much here as possible to determine whether the green space is demonstrably special.	This green space is demonstrably special to the local community because of its recreational and amenity value for residents living within and close to the Highview development. It provides a small but accessible area of open green space within the residential area, giving nearby residents visual relief from the built form and space for informal recreation. The space contributes to the character and layout of the estate by providing a green break within the development. It also has local value as part of the wider network of small greenspaces in Sporle that help maintain a softer, greener village character. The community survey conducted in Sporle with Palgrave in July 2024 showed that smaller estate greenspaces are valued locally. The field near Highview Houses was also specifically mentioned by respondents when asked whether there were any other green spaces they valued.

Criteria	Description
Local in character and not extensive tract of land. Add site of green space	The area size is approximately 0.03ha. It is local in character to Sporle with Palgrave serving the purposes of the local area only. It would not necessarily be considered an extensive tract of land.

Recommended Designations

From the assessment work, 4 Local Green Spaces have been determined to meet the national criteria for designation. These are highlighted below.

