

Wilstead Neighbourhood Plan 2020 - 2035 Annex B

Green Spaces, Strategic Gaps and Important Views

Draft Mar 2021

Local Green Spaces, Open Spaces, County Wildlife Sites, Strategic Gaps and Important Views

Introduction

This document identifies and describes existing open spaces, County Wildlife Sites, strategic gaps and important views in the Parish of Wilshamstead and assesses them to determine if they fit the criteria for designating as Local Green Space as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Bedford Borough Council identify a number of open space designations in their development plans (open spaces in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 and Local Green Spaces in the Local Plan 2030). These should remain in place. However, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect specific spaces against development because of their importance to the village. A fresh look has been taken and the identified green spaces, strategic gaps and key views are set out on the Policies Map which follows and are described in detail on subsequent pages.

The document is divided into 4 sections:

- Local Green Spaces (GS) proposed
- Existing County Wildlife Sites (CWS)
- Strategic Gap sites (SG)
- Important Views (V)

Local Green Space (GS) Designation

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. As part of promoting healthy and safe communities, the value of access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of communities. The Local Green Space designation will allow communities to identify and protect areas that are of value to the community through local and neighbourhood plans.

The designation should only be used:

- 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), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Bedford Borough Council, as part of preparation for the Local Plan 2030 asked for nominations for Local Green Space. Three spaces were nominated at that time, an area off Bedford Road, (the Community Woodland), an area south of Whitworth Way and land north of Wilstead Wood. BBC designated parts of the two latter and rejected the Community Woodland as being not special enough at that time.

Their assessment can be seen here

<https://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/OpenDocument.aspx?id=ZZ3uVNsgT9VvmBkYLXyUvg%3d%3d&name=Local%20Green%20Space%20Assessment%20-%20Wilstead.pdf>

This Neighbourhood Plan methodology differs from the Borough's and therefore these sites have been reassessed.

Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area (NIA)

Part of the Parish of Wilshamstead lies within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area (see Policies Map). The objectives of the Greensand Trust are fully supported by the Parish Council and it is assumed that adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan will mean that this part of the Parish will be protected from unsuitable development.

The Greensand Ridge NIA is a partnership led by the Greensand Trust, the Wildlife Trust and the RSPB, working closely with Central Bedfordshire Council and Natural England, committed to working together and with others to achieve a real and lasting difference to the habitats, species and landscape of the Greensand Ridge. The partners are particularly committed to strengthening ecological networks at all levels, enhancing and buffering existing sites and linking them together across the wider countryside.

For further information see: <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/44173-Greensand-Ridge-6pp.pdf>

Three of the County Wildlife Sites shown under consideration for Local Green Space recognition are (largely) included within the NIA but are documented separately from the NIA to emphasise their importance.

Policies Map

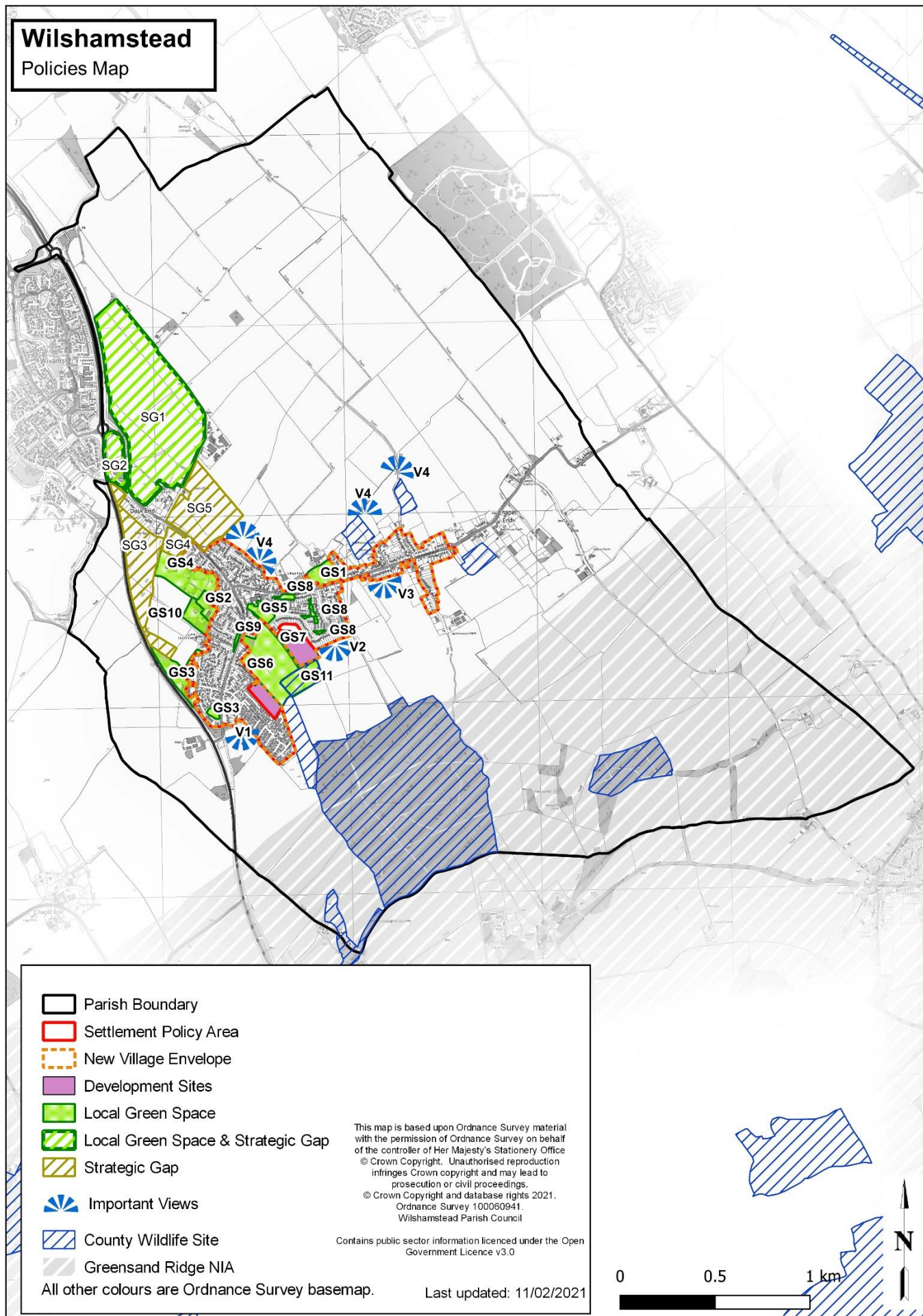
The Preliminary Policies Map which follows shows all sites considered for LGS status. Not all sites figure in the final selection. Those that are proposed for LGS status are shown on the Final Policies Map at the end of this document.

The Preliminary Map and smaller maps used to identify specific areas show (in darker green) the areas designated by Bedford Borough Council as Village Open Spaces. These are removed from the Final Policies Map for reasons of simplification.

(N.B. All Satellite pictures used are courtesy of Google Earth)

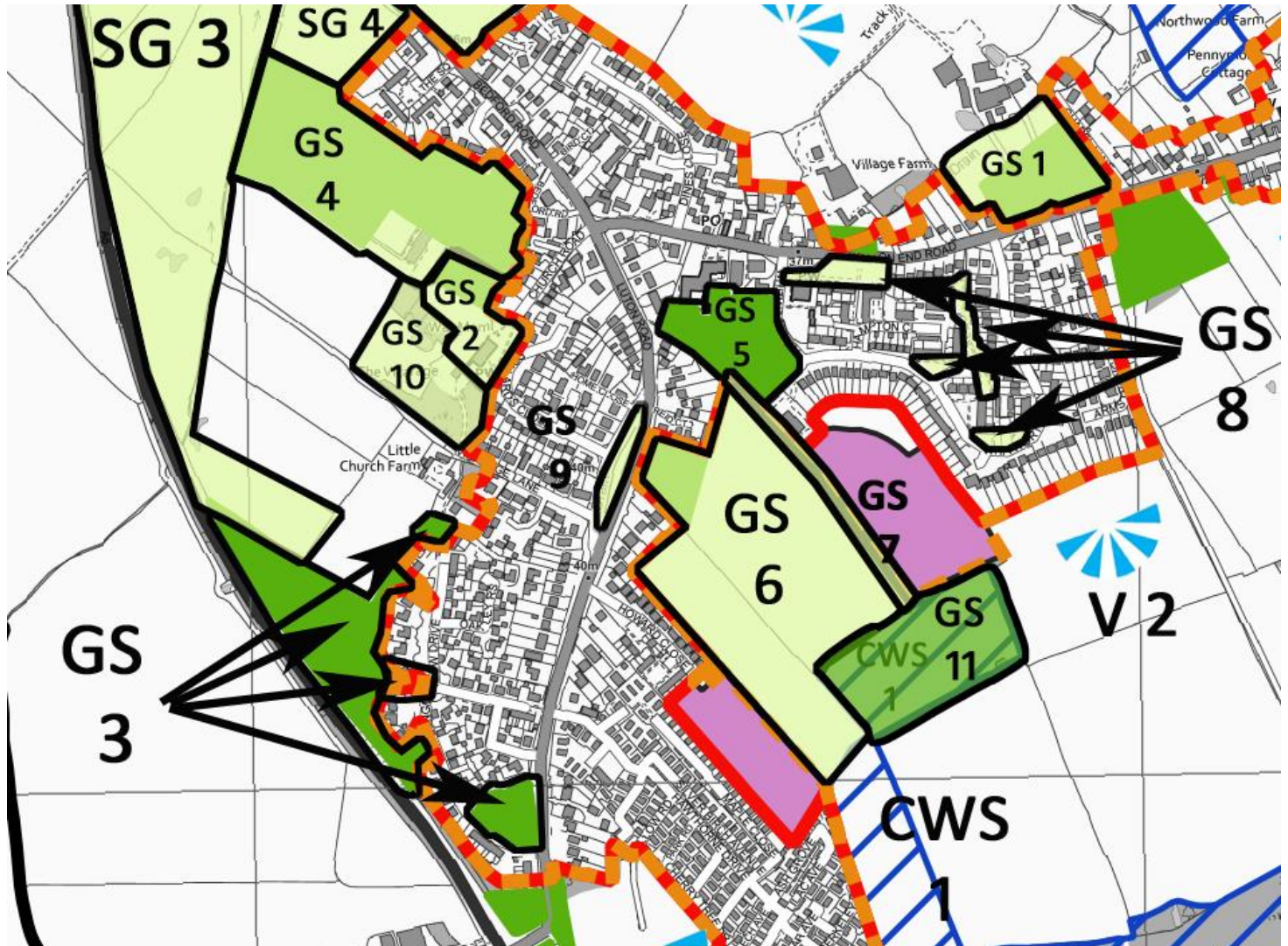
Wilshamstead



Policies Map






Policies Map – Proposed Local Green Spaces Only


This map shows the 11 sites first considered as Local Green Spaces. Each is given a “GS” reference and is shown in detail on the pages which follow:







	GS 1		
Site Name	Field in front of Manor Farm		
Site Map			
Site Area	1.42 ha		
Site Location	North of Cotton End Road between 95 Cotton End Road including the copse of trees that borders Chapel Lane.		
Site Description	Open field and woodland that helps maintain the rural feel to the village as it reaches right into the heart of the village. Part of the area is already recognised as an important open space by Bedford Borough Council.		
	Beauty Open aspect providing views past to open countryside		
	Historical significance The majority of the trees within the wooded copse are over 50 years old and the field has been part of the village scene for more than 100 years.		
	Tranquillity The site is peaceful except for the road along the Southern boundary.		
	Recreational Value There is no public access. However, it provides an area of natural pasture land, often grazed by sheep, that is close to the centre of the village providing educational value for village children. The woodland copse has scope to be managed as a small nature reserve.		
	Wildlife The small area of mixed native woodland has not received a wildlife survey. However, it will contain many species of bird and ground wildlife typical of an English wood. Owls are regularly heard calling in the wood after dark.		
Site Ownership	Private (Manor Farm)		
Site Access	No public access		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y



Ref	GS 2		
Site Name	Church Yard & Burial Ground		
Site Map			
Site Area	0.8 ha		
Site Location	South & West of Church Rd. West of Pollards Close.		
Site Description	<p>Land surrounding the church. East of Church: grass area used for wedding photos and cremation plots. North of Church: War memorial and almost full cemetery. West of Church: Remembrance Garden.</p> <p>Burial Ground to north of churchyard for cremations, burials and scattered ashes. Path through Burial Ground lined with Himalayan Birch. Part of this (shaded a darker green on the first map) is already recognised as an important open space by Bedford Borough Council.</p>		
	<p>Beauty Undisturbed natural habitat</p>		
	<p>Historical significance Contains many interesting graves.</p>		
	<p>Tranquillity The site is peaceful.</p>		
	<p>Recreational Value Footpath FP 4 runs through it and is used extensively for recreational walks and access to the centre of the village from residents on the Longmeadow estate.</p>		
	<p>Wildlife Has not received a wildlife survey. However, it will contain many species of bird and ground wildlife typical of undisturbed natural grassland, shrubs and woodland, which borders the site.</p>		
Site Ownership	Churchyard – Church (maintained by PC) Burial Ground - PC		
Site Access	From Church Rd, Vicarage Lane, Pollards Close & Jubilee Way (unadopted) via Allotments. Wilstead Footpath 4 goes through the Churchyard.		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	N (already protected)


Ref	GS 3
Site Name	Green Spaces and Ponds off Longmeadow Drive
Site Map	
Site Area	See below
Site Location	South west part of the village off Luton Road
Site Description	<p>Four important green spaces within the Longmeadow Drive estate, one with a LEAP & MUGA (Local Enhanced Area of Play & Multi Use Games Area), one with a LAP (Local Area of Play), one with a pond and one with a circular seat / specimen tree.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Between No's 34 & 36 – 0.09 hectares 2. Between Nos 42 & 44 through to the land behind, which stretches to the A6, including the MUGA and balancing pond. – 1.29 hectares. This land is already recognised as an important open space by Bedford Borough Council. 3. Triangle of land opposite Nos 16 to 22 and next to Luton Road which includes a pond – 0.23 hectares 4. The very top of Longmeadow Drive before the footpath leading to Vicarage Lane – 0.06 hectares <p>Beauty: No's 1 & 4 are areas of mown grass No's 2 & 3 are important natural habitats including substantial water features</p> <p>Historical significance None</p> <p>Tranquillity Close to the busy A6 and Luton Road, so not particularly tranquil</p> <p>Recreational Value These spaces provide area within the estate for recreation and rest. They also provide important space to reduce the "built-up" feel.</p> <p>Wildlife Areas 2 & 3 are home to a variety of pondlife and grassland creatures</p>
Site Ownership	Being transferred from the developer to the Parish Council.
Site Access	From Longmeadow Drive, Church Farm Avenue. Wilstead Footpath 4 from Vicarage Lane goes along part of Longmeadow Drive before going over the A6 bund to Houghton Conquest.




Ref	GS 3 (ctd)		
Site Name	Green Spaces and Ponds off Longmeadow Drive		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y



Ref	GS 4		
Site Name	Allotments, Bowls Club and Jubilee Playing Field		
Site Map			
Site Area	3.51 ha		
Site Location	West of Bedford Road, SW of The Square and Black Hat Close		
Site Description	Area of Allotments, Bowling Green and Playing Field used extensively for recreation. This land is already recognised as an important open space by Bedford Borough Council.		
	Beauty Not a particular reason for designation		
	Historical significance Allotments have been at this site for 50+ years. The Jubilee Playing Field was established to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee.		
	Tranquillity Peaceful site some distance from traffic		
	Recreational Value Very high. The main area for recreation in the village with facilities for football, horticulture, Bowls, tennis and netball.		
	Wildlife Not a particular reason for designation		
Site Ownership	Parish Council		
Site Access	From Jubilee Way (unadopted) off Bedford Rd		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y



Ref	GS 5		
Site Name	Whitworth Way Playing Field		
Site Map			
Site Area	0.54 ha		
Site Location	West of Whitworth Way to rear of School		
Site Description	Large, grassed area used by the school. Includes a children's play area which can be used at all times. This land is already recognised as an important open space by Bedford Borough Council		
	Beauty Not a reason for designation		
	Historical significance Has been set aside for recreation since the 1960's		
	Tranquillity Not a reason for designation		
	Recreational Value Invaluable site close to the centre of the village for children's play and exercise		
	Wildlife Not a reason for designation		
Site Ownership	Bedford Borough. Children's Play Area rented by Parish Council.		
Site Access	Public access from Whitworth Way and Public Right of Way Wilstead Footpath 5.		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y

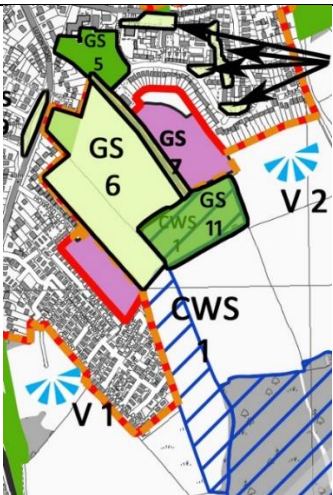


Ref	GS 6		
Site Name	Fields between Dragons Wood, Wilstead Woods and Luton Road		
Site Map			
Site Area	5.72 ha		
Site Location	East of Luton Road and eastern end of Howard Close		
Site Description	<p>2 grass fields bordered by mature trees and hedgerows. Provides views into the surrounding countryside from Reid Court, Howards Close and Briar Bank Park Home site keeping the rural feel to the village. These fields provide an informal footpath for Howards Close and Briar Bank to the heart of the village. Wilstead Footpath 5 runs along eastern edge through Dragons Wood.</p> <p>Part of the land (shaded in darker green) contains an area of shrubs and trees recognised as an important open space by Bedford Borough Council.</p>		
	<p>Beauty Natural countryside extending into the heart of the village</p>		
	<p>Historical significance Not a reason for designation</p>		
	<p>Tranquillity Provides an area away from development</p>		
	<p>Recreational Value Used by villagers for walks across country to Wilstead Woods and the County Wildlife site at the end of Dragons Wood</p>		
	<p>Wildlife Varied wildlife including many species of woodland mammals and birds</p>		
Site Ownership	Privately owned		
Site Access	Informal paths off Howard Close and from Dragons Wood & Wilstead Woods		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y

Ref	GS 7		
Site Name	Dragons Wood		
Site Map			
Site Area	0.16ha		
Site Location	Linear space south west of Wooding Way		
Site Description	Linear woodland along part of Wilstead Footpath 5 from its junction with the path from Whitworth Way by the Telephone Exchange running south to the County Wildlife Site		
	Beauty Narrow strip of natural woodland and hedgerow.		
	Historical significance Part of Footpath 5 used historically to access Wilstead Woods		
	Tranquillity Close to the Wooding Way/Whitworth Way estates so not particularly tranquil		
	Recreational Value Used extensively for walking and access to the CWS and woods to the South		
	Wildlife Contains many species of bird and small mammals typical of an English wood.		
Site Ownership	Private		
Site Access	Public access from Luton Rd and Whitworth Way via Public Footpaths Wilstead FP5 and 18 respectively		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y

Ref	GS 8		
Site Name	Whitworth Way Estate		
Site Map	 		
Site Area	0.51 ha		
Site Location	Whitworth Way estate south of Cotton End Rd		
Site Description	Green spaces within the housing as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bordering Cotton End Road with Whitworth Way to the West and houses on Cotton End Road to the West. Has a brook running through part of the site. 2. Large linear area running between Hampton Close and the NE/ East side of Whitworth Way. 3. Triangular area in front of no's 1- 11 Morgans Close and Phipps Close with Whitworth Road to the West. 4. Area at the end of Morgans Close on the bend at the South of Whitworth Way. 		
	Beauty Not a particular reason for designation		
	Historical significance Not a particular reason for designation		
	Tranquillity Not a particular reason for designation		
	Recreational Value Very important to help give a more open and rural feel to a large-scale development. Much used by children playing and for social gatherings.		
	Wildlife Not a particular reason for designation		
Site Ownership	Bedford Borough		
Site Access	By roads and footpaths within the estate		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y

Ref	GS 9		
Site Name	Island to the West of Luton Road		
Site Map			
Site Area	0.22 ha		
Site Location	At junction of Pollards Close and Luton Rd		
Site Description	Planted with trees and spring bulbs with a seating area. To enhance the area and provide a valuable break in the housing along Luton Road with seating to allow people to rest.		
	Beauty Not a reason for designation		
	Historical significance Established at the same time as the Pollards Close estate to provide a break in the housing and access over a deep ditch		
	Tranquillity Close to Luton Road		
	Recreational Value Providing a shortcut to Luton Road and an area of seating		
	Wildlife Area enhanced with spring bulbs. Attracts birds. Pondlife in ditch.		
Site Ownership	Borough Council		
Site Access	From Pollards Close and Luton Road		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y

Ref	GS 10		
Site Name	Rectory Grounds		
Site Map			
Site Area	1.44 ha		
Site Location	Western end of Vicarage Lane adjacent to Churchyard		
Site Description	Grassed and wooded area surrounded by mature trees		
	Beauty Natural area		
	Historical significance Used for village fetes for many years. Provides a setting for the listed church		
	Tranquillity Background noise from A6 but provides a buffer area for the peaceful churchyard and burial ground (GS 1)		
	Recreational Value See historical significance		
	Wildlife Many species of birds, small mammals and deer.		
Site Ownership	Church Authorities		
Site Access	No public access		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y

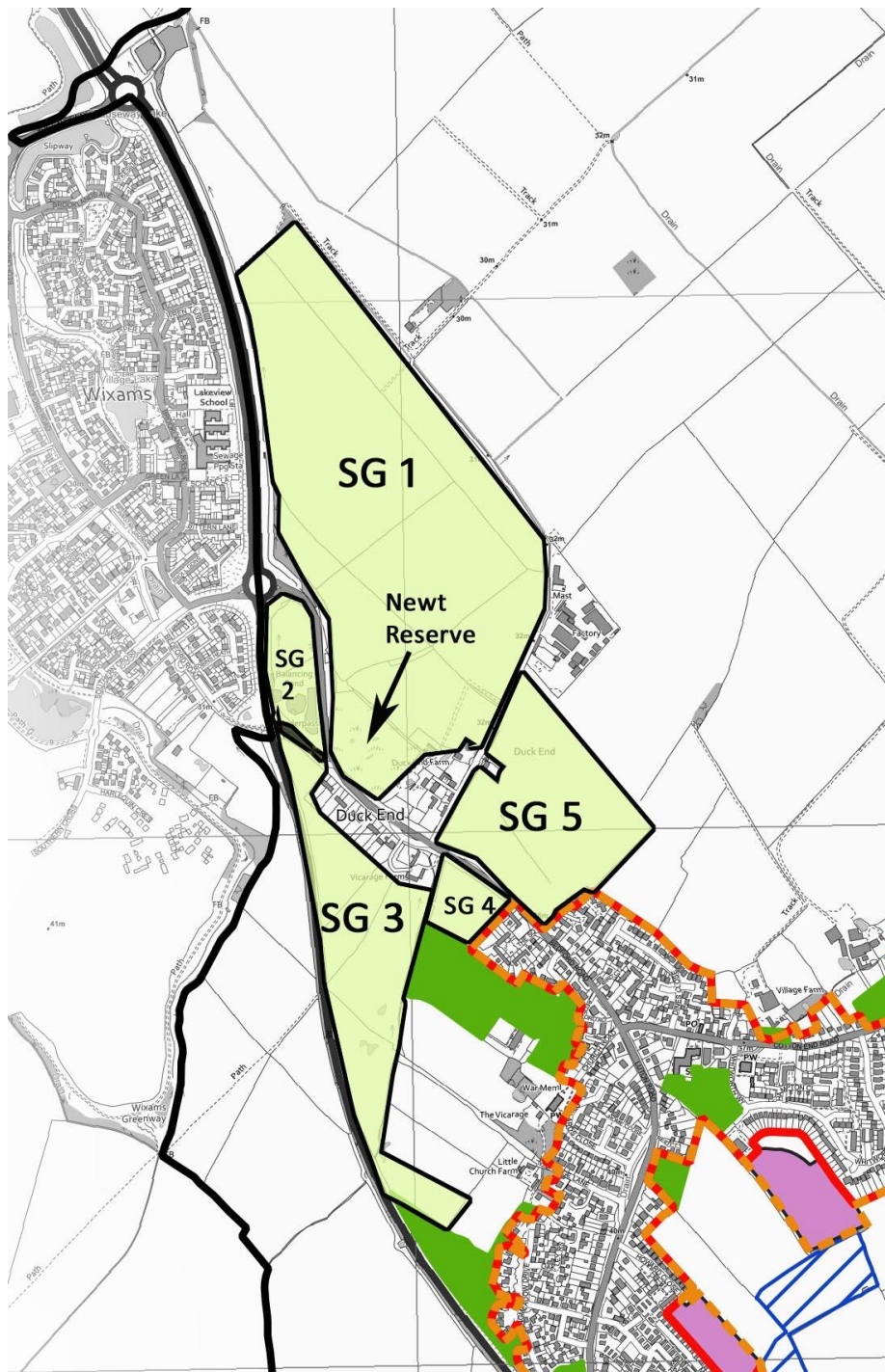
Ref	GS 11 (part of CWS 1)		
Site Name	Wilstead Meadows - Butterfly Field		
Site Map	 		
Site Area	2.0 ha		
Site Location	South of Wooding Way & Dragons Wood		
Site Description	Part of the already designated County Wildlife Site. South of the New Development (Wooding Way) east of Whitworth Way with open views of the Greensand Ridge.		
	Beauty This is a ridge and furrow wildlife area and has developed unique habitats, it is a very rare feature in Bedfordshire. Neutral grassland on Oxford Clay, the fields are surrounded by tall mature hedges. Contains many species of wild flowers. Plants include: black knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>), common sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosa</i>), with lady's bedstraw (<i>Galium verum</i>), pepper saxifrage (<i>Silaum silaus</i>), dropwort (<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>) and restharrow (<i>Ononis repens</i>).		
	Historical significance Part of the CWS recognised in 1990		
	Tranquillity Tranquil – away from the heart of the village		
	Recreational Value Much used by residents for walking /exercise and a valuable natural site		
	Wildlife The variety of grasses and wildflowers encourage many small mammals and insects, particularly butterflies		
Site Ownership	Private ownership		
Site Access	Public access via Wilstead Footpath 5 and informal paths from Howard Close and Wilstead Wood		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation ?
Y	Y	Y	Y – as LGS Already a CWS

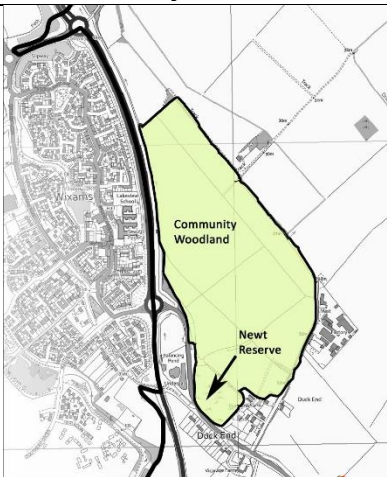


Strategic Gap (SG)

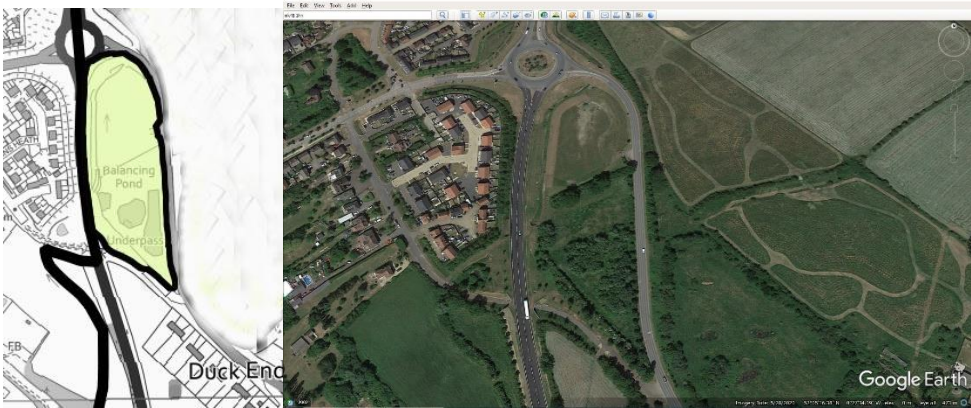

As explained in the Neighbourhood Plan, Wilstead is very close to the new housing developments at the Wixams and residents are keen that both settlements remain separated to support the retention of the rural character of Wilshamstead Parish. Other historical gaps between the village and its “Ends”, Duck End, Chapel End, Littleworth and Briar Bank, are also strategically important to maintain.



The gap to be preserved between the settlements should encompass the five areas shown below.



Whilst important as gaps, not all the areas shown can necessarily be designated as Local Green Spaces. See the Assessments at the end of each description to determine which have been selected.






Ref	SG 1		
Site Name	Community Woodland and Newt Reserve		
Site Map	 		
Site Area	9.69 ha		
Site Location	Equidistant from the communities of Wilstead and Wixams. East of Bedford Road and north of Duck End Lane		
Site Description	<p>Part of the Landscape Enhancement Area created as part of the Wixams development. Together with the adjacent Newt Reserve, provides a green buffer between the village of Wilstead and the new community of Wixams.</p>		
	<p>Beauty Recently planted by villagers, under the direction of the Marston Vale Community Forest Project, with a variety of native trees. Will grow into a well-managed woodland area with wide pathways</p>		
	<p>Historical significance Designed as a result of a Consultation Report issued in November 2006 following discussion between the owners (Gallagher Estates) and a group of villagers.</p>		
	<p>Tranquillity Whilst close to the busy A6 trunk road it will none-the-less provide an area of reasonable tranquillity in a secure environment</p>		
	<p>Recreational Value Walking, cycling, horse riding, study of ecology & wildlife in a secure environment. Defined seating and interpretation points. Disabled access. Has already been supported by villagers who have planted 100's of young trees.</p>		
	<p>Wildlife The newt reserve (pond and wetland) was specifically created to take all newts found on the site of the Wixams development. The woodland will eventually be alive with native birds and mammals.</p>		
Site Ownership	<p>Transferred to Parish Council from L & Q Estates. Maintenance by Forest of Marston Vale.</p>		
Site Access	Gated access off Duck End Lane. Future access from Newt Reserve off Bedford Rd		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y – as SG and LGS

Ref	SG 2		
Site Name	Area between the A6 and Bedford Rd.		
Site Map			
Site Area	2.51 ha		
Site Location	Between pedestrian underpass (under A6) and A6 Southern Cross Roundabout		
Site Description	<p>Landscape Enhancement Area created as part of the Wixams development. The northern section is a balancing pond to control run off from the Wixams. The middle section is grass with the southern section covered with young trees.</p>		
	<p>Beauty Provides the initial break between the village of Wilstead and the new community of Wixams.</p>		
	<p>Historical significance An important part of the gap designed as part of the Wixams development to separate the two communities</p>		
	<p>Tranquillity Close to the busy A6 trunk Road</p>		
	<p>Recreational Value Ideal location for use by both communities for recreational activity such as Scouting, Skate Park, Outdoor Gym</p>		
	<p>Wildlife Balancing pond will support various wetland creatures. Woodland will contain many small mammal species</p>		
Site Ownership	Balancing pond – Bedford Borough/Anglian Water		
	Remainder being transferred from Bedford Borough to Parish Council		
Site Access	Off Bedford Rd		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y – as SG and LGS

Ref	SG 3		
Site Name	Fields running between A6 and Bedford Road		
Site Map			
Site Area	9.47 ha		
Site Location	Closest fields to A6 west of Bedford Road		
Site Description	These fields are located between the new town of Wixams and Wilstead. They help to maintain the strategic gap between the two communities which was always envisaged when the new community at Wixams was established.		
	Beauty No		
	Historical significance Not a reason for designation		
	Tranquillity Not a reason for designation		
	Recreational Value Not a reason for designation		
	Wildlife Not a reason for designation		
Site Ownership	Privately owned.		
Site Access	No public access at present, however there is a public footpath running across		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	N	Y – as SG N – as LGS

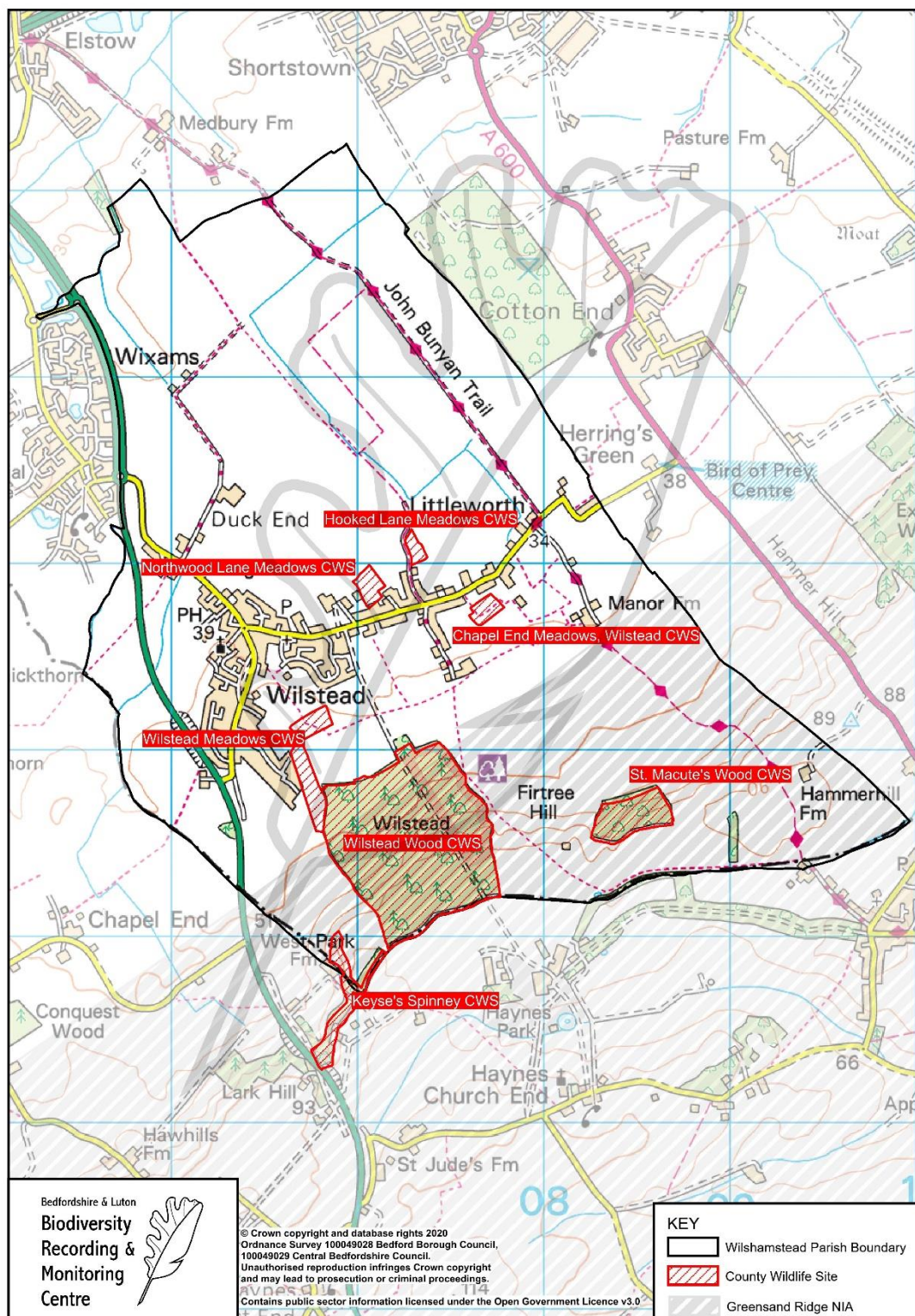
Ref	SG 4		
Site Name	Field West of Bedford Rd between the Square and Vicarage Farm		
Site Map			
Site Area	1.38 ha		
Site Location	Between Bedford Road and the Jubilee Playing Field		
Site Description	Bordered by hedgerows. Used by the owner often for arable farming but presently sheep grazing. Represents another instance of the countryside reaching into the very heart of the village. Forms an important buffer or gap between the main village and Duck End		
	Beauty Not a reason for designation		
	Historical significance Not a reason for designation		
	Tranquillity Not a reason for designation		
	Recreational Value Alongside the Jubilee Playing Field and would make a much-needed extension to that field to extend the football areas. It would also provide access to the Jubilee field, Jubilee Centre, MUGA and changing rooms from the Bedford Road.		
	Wildlife Not a reason for designation		
Site Ownership	Private ownership		
Site Access	No public access		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y – as SG N – as LGS



Ref	SG 5		
Site Name	Land South of Duck End Lane and East of Bedford Road		
Site Map	 		
Site Area	8.84 ha		
Site Location	West of the main entry into the village and north of Cawne Close.		
Site Description	Large arable field with a copse of trees in it. Contributes to the rural setting of Wilstead coming from A6 / Wixams.		
	Beauty Being south of the new Community Woodland (SG1) it enhances the woodlands surroundings.		
	Historical significance Duck End is one of the view separate "Ends" within the Parish. This field provides a Strategic Gap keeping the historic form of the village with a gap between Duck End and the heart of the village.		
	Tranquillity Separates Duck End making it a more tranquil section of the village.		
	Recreational Value Not a reason for designation		
	Wildlife The copse of trees is invaluable for birds		
Site Ownership	Privately owned.		
Site Access	No Public access		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	Y – as SG N – as LGS


County Wildlife Sites



County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) are areas of land important for their wildlife and they can be found on public and private land. CWS recognition is non-statutory but is recognition of a site's high value for biodiversity. The Wildlife Trust, Local Authorities and other organisations are working to protect and enhance such sites in co-operation with land owners and land managers. CWSs vary in size and shape from small meadows, green lanes, ponds and hedges through to much larger areas of ancient woodlands, species rich grassland, heathland and commons.


This map shows the location of six main sites within the Wilshamstead Parish and one which crosses its border. These are described in detail in the following pages and some are included in the sites recommended for inclusion as Local Green Spaces. They are shown as blue cross-hatched areas on the map included within the description of each and on the Policies map.

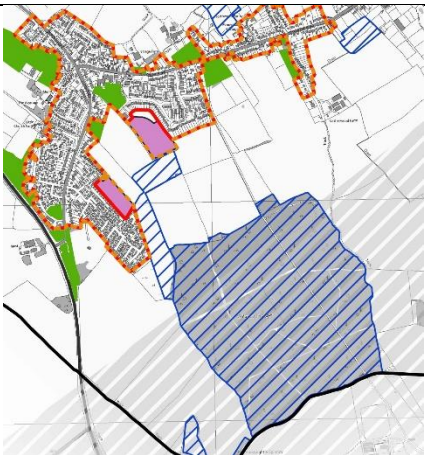







Ref	CWS 1		
Site Name	Wilstead Meadows - Butterfly Field		
Site Map			
Site Area	6.1 ha		
Site Location	South of Wooding Way & Dragons Wood		
Site Description	County Wildlife Site. South of the New Development (Wooding Way) east of Whitworth Way with open views of the Greensand Ridge. The site stretches south past the Briar Bank park home site up to Wilstead Woods (CWS 5)		
	Beauty This is a ridge and furrow wildlife area and has developed unique habitats, it is a very rare feature in Bedfordshire. Neutral grassland on Oxford Clay, the fields are surrounded by tall mature hedges. Plants include: black knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>), common sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosa</i>), with lady's bedstraw (<i>Galium verum</i>), pepper saxifrage (<i>Silaum silaus</i>), dropwort (<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>) and restharrow (<i>Ononis repens</i>).		
	Historical significance Recognised as a CWS in 1990		
	Tranquillity Tranquil – away from the heart of the village		
	Recreational Value Much used by residents for walking / exercise and a valuable natural site		
	Wildlife The variety of grasses and wildflowers encourage many small mammals and insects, particularly butterflies		
Site Ownership	Private ownership		
Site Access	Public access via Wilstead Footpath 5 and informal paths from Howard Close and Wilstead Wood		
Site Photos			
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation ?
Y	Y	Y	Y –see GS 11 Already a CWS


Ref	CWS 2		
Site Name	Northwood Lane Meadows		
Site Map			
Site Area	1.74 ha		
Site Location	North west of Northwood Lane		
Site Description	<p>A County Wildlife site containing a good example of neutral grassland.</p> <p>Beauty Hedgerows border the site along its southwest and northwest edges, and a hedge runs between the southwest and middle fields. They are mostly dominated by hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>), with english elm (<i>Ulmus procera</i>), blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>), elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>), dog rose (<i>Rosa canina</i>) and bramble (<i>Rubus agg.</i>). Field maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>) and spindle</p> <p>Historical significance Extra interest is provided by the old hedges, with faint ridge-and-furrow marks in some areas.</p> <p>Tranquillity Situated away from busy areas of the village</p> <p>Recreational Value Not a reason for designation</p> <p>Wildlife Not a reason for designation</p>		
Site Ownership	Private ownership		
Site Access	No public access		
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	N	N as LGS Already a CWS

Ref	CWS 3		
Site Name	Hooked Lane Meadows		
Site Map	 		
Site Area	1.1 ha		
Site Location	North of Hooked Lane alongside a public footpath from the end of the lane		
Site Description	A single field of neutral grassland on Oxford clay.		
	Beauty The grassland has a range of grasses including crested dog's-tail, Yorkshire fog, perennial rye-grass, cock's-foot, false oat-grass, common bent, meadow foxtail, timothy, meadow barley and yellow oat-grass. A good range of neutral grassland species are present including agrimony, bird's-foot-trefoil, pepper saxifrage, lady's bedstraw, dropwort and great burnet.		
	Historical significance Not a reason for designation		
	Tranquillity Situated away from busy areas of the village		
	Recreational Value Not a reason for designation		
	Wildlife Not a reason for designation		
Site Ownership	Private ownership		
Site Access	No public access		
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	N	N as LGS Already a CWS

Ref	CWS 4		
Site Name	Chapel End Meadows		
Site Map			
Site Area	11.72 ha		
Site Location	South of the Stables Equestrian Centre, Cotton End Road		
Site Description	This is the site of an equestrian centre with stabling, menage and adjacent paddocks. Its fields include a County Wildlife site of neutral grassland.		
	Beauty The site is not a reason for designation. However, the open aspect from Cotton End Road gives good views of Macute's Wood and the Greensand ridge and is another example of the countryside coming into the heart of the village. The fields also offer a strategic gap between the more central part of Wilstead and the "End" of Chapel End.		
	Historical significance Not a reason for designation		
	Tranquillity Not a reason for designation		
	Recreational Value The Equestrian Centre offers private horse riding for villagers and visitors		
	Wildlife Not a reason for designation		
Site Ownership	Privately owned		
Site Access	Wilstead Footpath 8 goes from Cotton End Rd though The Stables between the paddocks to join Footpath 9 near Elms Lane		
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	Y	Y	N as LGS Already a CWS

Ref	CWS 5		
Site Name	Wilstead Wood		
Site Map	 		
Site Area	67.2 ha		
Site Location	South of village, much of it within the Greensand Ridge		
Site Description	<p>Wilstead Wood is an attractive site which is being gradually restored to native woodland under 'The Ancient Woodland Project'. The Wilstead Wood is managed by the Forestry Commission and there is open access on the eastern side</p> <p>The Western half of the wood is owned by the Radha Soami Satsang Beas British Isles (RSSB), an Indian sect and is occupied by the associated organisation, Science of the Soul. RSSB have given permissive access to this side of the wood.</p>		
	<p>Beauty Mixed deciduous woodland, pond and coniferous plantation.</p>		
	<p>Historical significance Ancient semi-natural woodland</p>		
	<p>Tranquillity Very tranquil, natural habitat.</p>		
	<p>Recreational Value Used very extensively by villagers and visitors for recreational walks and exercise.</p>		
	<p>Wildlife Varied bird life and small mammals plus deer.</p>		
Site Ownership	Forestry Commission and RSSB		
Site Photos	 		
Site Access	Most of the wood has either open access or permissive access, but a strip approximately 170m deep across the southern end of the wood is private.		
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
N	Y (Briar Bank site)	Y	N as LGS (too large) Already a CWS

Ref	CWS 6		
Site Name	St Macute's Wood		
Site Map			
Site Area	7.8 ha		
Site Location	On Greensand Ridge escarpment south of Cotton End Rd.		
Site Description	Ancient woodland to the East of Wilstead Wood. Site of the former chapel of St Macute and a County Wildlife site		
	Beauty The CWS comprises a single block of mature semi-natural broadleaved ancient woodland consisting of ash and maple and sycamore trees plus shrubs, with hazel and hawthorn dominant. Ground flora are rather grassy due to open nature of the wood.		
	Historical significance Ancient semi-natural woodland. Recognised as a CWS in 1990		
	Tranquillity Very tranquil, natural habitat.		
	Recreational Value Provides a natural background for the view past the Stables from the eastern end of Cotton End Road.		
	Wildlife Varied bird life, small mammals and deer.		
Site Ownership	Private		
Site Photos			
Site Access	No public access. Public Rights of Way Bridleway 16, Footpath 7 and Footpath 17 run to the east, west and south of the wood respectively		
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	N	Y	N as LGS Already a CWS

Ref	CWS 7		
Site Name	Keyse's Spinney and Hurstpightle Spinney		
Site Map			
Site Area	1.96 ha within the parish boundary		
Site Location	East of the A6 and East of West Park Farm running along the top of the Greensand ridge to the West of Wilstead wood. Most of the CWS is not in Wilstead.		
Site Description	County Wildlife Site. Woodland and field of semi-improved neutral grassland on Boulder Clay and scattered oak, field maple and elder trees.		
	Beauty Natural habitat		
	Historical significance Recognised as a CWS in 1990		
	Tranquillity Some noise from the A6 trunk road to the west.		
	Recreational Value No		
	Wildlife Birdlife and small mammals.		
Site Ownership	Private ownership		
Site Access	Varied bird life and small mammals plus deer.		
Under 10 ha	Within 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Recommended for Designation?
Y	N	Y	N as LGS (remote) Already a CWS

The following assessment has been undertaken using a methodology for identifying spaces suitable for designation as Local Green Spaces (LGS) according to the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and subsequent Government guidance (Planning Practice Guidance: Local Green Space designation).

Stage 1 Assessment

The stage 1 assessment is designed to filter out which sites do not meet the basic LGS eligibility criteria. Sites which have current planning permission, or have been allocated for development, or have an existing designation giving the same level of protection as a LGS designation, do not meet the criteria and are not carried forward to the stage 2 assessment.

The following table provides information on the most important sites in the Parish.

Site	Ref	Current Planning Permission?	Allocated for Development?	Already Designated?	Pass to Stage 2?
Field in front of Manor Farm	GS 1	N	N	N	Y
Church Yard & Burial Ground	GS 2	N	N	N (churchyards are protected)	N
Green Spaces and Ponds off Longmeadow Drive	GS 3	N	N	N	Y
Allotments, Bowls Club and Jubilee Playing Field	GS 4	N	N	N	Y
Whitworth Way Playing Field	GS 5	N	N	N	Y
Fields between Dragons Wood, Wilstead Woods and Luton Road	GS 6	N	N	N	Y
Dragons Wood	GS 7	N	N	N	Y
Whitworth Way Estate	GS 8	N	N	N (part of estate design)	Y
Island to the West of Luton Road	GS 9	N	N	N	Y
Rectory Grounds	GS 10	N	N	N	Y
Wilstead Meadows - Butterfly Field	GS 11	N	N	N	Y
Community Woodland and Newt Reserve	SG 1	N	N	N	Y

Site	Ref	Current Planning Permission?	Allocated for Development?	Already Designated?	Pass to Stage 2?
Area between the A6 and Bedford Rd.	SG 2	N	N	N	Y
Fields running between A6 and Bedford Road	SG 3	N	N	N	Y
Field West of Bedford Rd between the Square and Vicarage Farm	SG 4	N	N	N	Y
Land South of Duck End Lane and East of Bedford Road	SG 5	N	N	N	Y
Wilstead Meadows - Butterfly Field	CWS 1 & GS 11	N	N	Y CWS	Y
Northwood Lane Meadows	CWS 2	N	N	Y CWS	Y
Hooked Lane Meadows	CWS 3	N	N	Y CWS	Y
Chapel End Meadows	CWS 4	N	N	Y CWS	Y
Wilstead Wood	CWS 5	N	N	Y CWS	Y
St Macute's Wood	CWS 6	N	N	Y CWS	Y
Keyse's Spinney and Hurstpightle Spinney	CWS 7	N	N	Y CWS	Y

Stage 2 Assessment

- Not extensive means less than about 10ha
- Close proximity means within easy walking distance (10 minutes) from the nearest part of the built area of the village.
- '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.

Site	Ref	Not extensive Under 10 ha	Close proximity Within 10 min walk / 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Designation?
Field in front of Manor Farm	GS 1	Y	Y	Y - Open field in the very heart of the village that helps enhance the rural feel to the village. A copse of tall trees by the side of the field represents a valuable wooded site.	Y
Green Spaces and Ponds off Longmeadow Drive	GS 3	Y	Y	Y – the 4 green spaces are visually important to the built environment, the ponds provide wildlife value and of recreational value	Y
Allotments, Bowls Club and Jubilee Playing Field	GS 4	Y	Y	Y - The plots are well used for growing fruit and veg. Bowls and football are the most popular recreations in the village	Y
Whitworth Way Playing Field	GS 5	Y	Y	Y - Large grassed area used by the school and also includes the children's play area. This is used by all ages for recreation	Y

Stage 2 Assessment Continued					
Site	Ref	Not extensive Under 10 ha	Close proximity Within 10 min walk / 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Designation?
Fields between Dragons Wood, Wilstead Woods and Luton Road	GS 6	Y	Y	Y - Helps keep rural feel to the village providing an informal footpath for Howards Close and Briar Bank to the heart of the village. Footpath 5 runs along eastern edge through Dragons Wood	Y
Dragons Wood	GS 7	Y	Y	Y - Linear woodland along part of Wilstead Footpath 5 from its junction with the path from Whitworth Way by the Telephone Exchange running south to the County Wildlife Site	Y
Whitworth Way Estate	GS 8	Y	Y	Y - Large development with green spaces among the housing, and in front of This is very important to help give a more rural feel to a large-scale development	Y
Island to the West of Luton Road	GS 9	Y	Y	Y - Planted with trees and spring bulbs with a seating area. To enhance the area and provide a valuable break in the housing along Luton Road with seating to allow people to rest	Y
Rectory Grounds	GS 10	Y	Y	Y - Used for village fetes. Bordered by Wilstead Footpath 4	Y

Stage 2 Assessment Continued					
Site	Ref	Not extensive Under 10 ha	Close proximity Within 10 min walk / 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Designation?
Wilstead Meadows - Butterfly Field	GS11	Y	Y	Y – Part of the County Wildlife Site CWS 1	See CWS 1 below
Community Woodland and Newt Reserve	SG 1	Y	Y	Y – planting has taken place to increase biodiversity value, land used for community purposes	Y
Area between the A6 and Bedford Rd.	SG 2	Y	Y	Y - part of the Landscape Enhancement Area created as part of the Wixams development	Y
Fields running between A6 and Bedford Road	SG 3	Y	Y	N - Forms part of the Strategic Gap between Wilstead and Wixams but not sufficiently exceptional to be an LGS	N as LGS Y as SG
Field West of Bedford Rd between the Square and Vicarage Farm	SG 4	Y	Y	N - Forms part of the Strategic Gap between Wilstead and Duck End but not sufficiently exceptional to be an LGS	N as LGS Y as SG
Land South of Duck End Lane and East of Bedford Road	SG 5	Y	Y	N - Forms part of the Strategic Gap between Wilstead and Duck End but not sufficiently exceptional to be an LGS	N as LGS Y as SG
Wilstead Meadows - Butterfly Field	CWS 1 & GS 11	Y	Y	Y – County Wildlife Site - Ridge and furrow wildlife area and has developed unique habitats. Much used by residents and a valuable natural site. With open views of the Greensand Ridge	Y Part designated GS 11

Stage 2 Assessment Continued					
Site	Ref	Not extensive Under 10 ha	Close proximity Within 10 min walk / 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Designation?
Northwood Lane Meadows	CWS 2	Y	Y	N - A County Wildlife site containing a good example of neutral grassland and enabling important views to the North/NE. Not sufficiently exceptional in itself to be an LGS	N
Hooked Lane Meadows	CWS 3	Y	Y	N - A County Wildlife site containing a good example of neutral grassland and enabling important views to the North/NE. Not sufficiently exceptional in itself to be an LGS	N
Chapel End Meadows	CWS 4	Y	Y	Y – County Wildlife Site. The open aspect from Cotton End Road gives good views of St Macute’s Wood and the Greensand ridge and is another example of the countryside coming into the heart of the village. The fields also offer a strategic gap between the more central part of Wilstead and the “End” of Chapel End. Not sufficiently exceptional in itself to be an LGS	N

Stage 2 Assessment Continued					
Site	Ref	Not extensive Under 10 ha	Close proximity Within 10 min walk / 300m of village community	Demonstrably Special / Locally Significant	Designation?
Wilstead Wood	CWS 5	N	Y	Y – County Wildlife Site -an attractive site which is being gradually restored to native woodland under 'The Ancient Woodland Project' Mixed deciduous woodland, pond and coniferous plantation Used very extensively by villagers and visitors for recreational walks and exercise	N (too large)
St Macute's Wood	CWS 6	Y	N	Y – County Wildlife Site - Ancient woodland to the East of Wilstead Wood. Site of the former chapel of St Macute	N (remote)
Keyse's Spinney and Hurstpightle Spinney	CWS 7	Y	N	Y- County Wildlife Site. Woodland and field of semi-improved neutral grassland on Boulder Clay and scattered oak, field maple and elder trees	N (remote)

The following sites are therefore put forward for LGS designation:

- Field in front of Manor Farm GS 1
- Green Spaces and Ponds off Longmeadow Drive GS 3
- Allotments, Bowls Club and Jubilee Playing Field GS 4
- Whitworth Way Playing Field GS 5
- Fields between Dragons Wood, Wilstead Woods and Luton Road GS 6
- Dragons Wood GS 7
- Whitworth Way Estate GS 8
- Island to the West of Luton Road GS 9
- Rectory Grounds GS 10
- Wilstead Meadows - Butterfly Field GS 11
- Community Woodland and Newt Reserve SG 1
- Area between the A6 and Bedford Rd (north of the underpass) SG 2

The following sites are put forward for designation as important Strategic Gaps:

- Fields running between A6 and Bedford Road SG 3
- Field West of Bedford Rd between the Square and Vicarage Farm SG 4
- Land South of Duck End Lane and East of Bedford Road SG 5

Important Views

Local surveys have identified the key views in the local landscape. These are identified on the Policies Map. The key views have been identified for their particular value to residents and visitors and should be retained and not blocked by insensitive development.

The way the countryside comes into the very heart of Wilstead, including the footpaths, bridleways and Green Spaces within it and the views from within the village into the surrounding countryside, were highlighted in the Village Design Survey in 2000 and the NP survey resulted in an overwhelming number (close to 100%) continuing to support the need to protect these - indicating very little has changed in the way people feel about the village in the last 20 years.


Especially important and emphasised in the responses to the surveys are the views of the Greensand Ridge, the Cardington hangars and All Saints Church from Church Road

Countryside surrounds the village and reaches into its very heart in places. This allows views in the opposite direction, allowing villagers to appreciate their natural surroundings and provides a contrast to the housing estates which have been added since the 1960's.

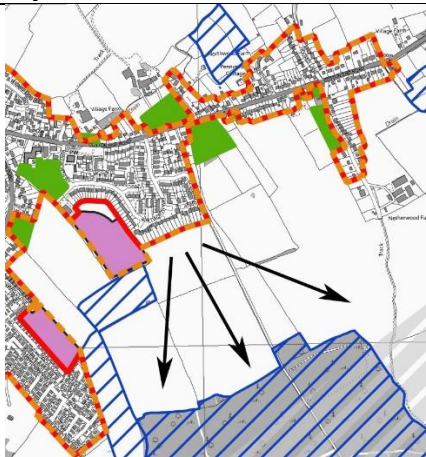


The Greensand Ridge, to the south of the village, forms an important backdrop to the flat ground upon which the village is situated. In addition, there are important views to the north east where the historic Cardington hangars are situated.

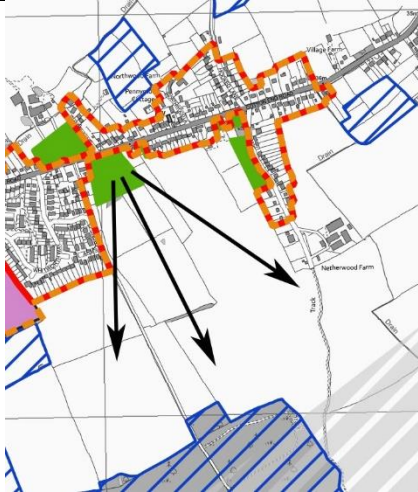


This map shows the location of four views from the heart of the Wilshamstead Parish. These are described in detail in the following pages and are included in this report in order to draw attention to the importance of maintaining them and ensuring that development does not obstruct them.



They are shown with Important View signs on the Policies Map and with arrows on the maps accompanying each description below.

Ref	V1
Name	Large Meadow
Site Map	
Site Location	East of the A6 and South of Briar Bank Park Homes
Site Description	<p>Large open meadow surrounded by hedgerows and forms a natural boundary to the south of Wilstead. This gives clear views of the 90m elevation of the Greensand Ridge from Briar Bank, enhancing the environment.</p> <p>Forms an important part of the view of the village when approaching on the A6 from the south, down the Greensand Ridge escarpment, (Wilstead Hill).</p> <p>Has formed an important open space for residents of the Briar Bank site since it was established in the mid-20th C, allowing unobstructed views to Wilstead Wood and the Greensand Ridge.</p>

Photos	
---------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Ref	V2
Name	Open Fields, South of Whitworth Way and Armstrong Close
Site Map	 
Site Location	Adjacent to the Carriage Drive (rear entrance to Haynes Park) and east of County Wildlife Site.
Site Description	Large arable fields surrounded on three sides by hedgerows and on the Northern edge the fences of the gardens of houses in Whitworth Way and Armstrong Close. Formed an important open space for residents of Whitworth Way and Armstrong Close since the estate was established in the 1960's, allowing unobstructed views to Wilstead Wood and the Greensand Ridge.
Photos	

Ref	V3	
Site Name	South of Cotton End Road	
Site Map		
Site Location	South of Cotton End Rd east of Chapel Lane and west of Public Right of Way Footpath 6	
Site Description	Open fields surrounded by hedgerows on 3 sides giving views up to the Greensand Ridge and Wilstead Wood. Another finger of the countryside that reaches into the village.	
Site Photos		

Ref	V4
Site Name	To the North & North East of Village
Site Map	
Site Location	From the ends of Dines Close. Chapel Lane, Northwood Lane and Hooked Lane
Site Description	<p>Views across the open fields, with a lone and impressive oak tree standing in the foreground to the distant listed Cardington Hangers (formerly airship sheds). Providing welcome rural views through breaks between houses.</p> <p>Similar views from the ends of Chapel Lane, Northwood Lane and Hooked Lane.</p>
Site Photos	

Policies Map – the Centre of the Village

