

Carbrooke

Neighbourhood Plan



Local Green Space Assessment

2026

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1. Introduction

1. Carbrooke is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan which will include a policy to designate areas of Local Green Space that are particularly valued by the local community. The designation of Local Green Space provides a means of safeguarding important local green areas from inappropriate development, in accordance with national planning policy.
2. The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) enables communities, through neighbourhood plans, to designate Local Green Spaces where they are able to demonstrate that the land is reasonably close to the community it serves, demonstrably special to that community, and local in character rather than an extensive tract of land.
3. Existing sites that are already subject to statutory or non-statutory wildlife designations (for example, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) or County Wildlife Sites/Local Wildlife Sites) have not been proposed as Local Green Spaces (LGS). These areas benefit from established policy and, where applicable, legal protection in respect of their biodiversity value. The purpose of the LGS designation is therefore not to duplicate existing safeguards, but to identify and protect additional locally important green spaces that do not otherwise benefit from equivalent protection within the planning framework.
4. Through Steering Group discussions and community engagement, a number of green spaces within and around the village were identified as being of particular importance to residents. These spaces reflect Carbrooke's character as a place with a strong relationship to its surrounding landscape, valued recreational spaces, and accessible areas for nature, tranquillity and community life.
5. Each of the identified green spaces has been considered against the national criteria for Local Green Space designation. Site visits were undertaken and available evidence reviewed to assess if each space meets the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
6. This document provides the assessment and reasoning for the green spaces considered for designation as Local Green Space in the Carbrooke Neighbourhood Plan. For clarity, the assessment distinguishes between those spaces which are proposed for designation and those which were considered but not taken forward, including where sites are already allocated for development or where the national criteria are not met.
7. The Local Green Spaces proposed for designation are set out and assessed in the following chapters. Together, they represent a network of valued local green areas that contribute to Carbrooke's sense of place, support biodiversity and wellbeing, and play an important role in the everyday life of the community.

2. Policy Context

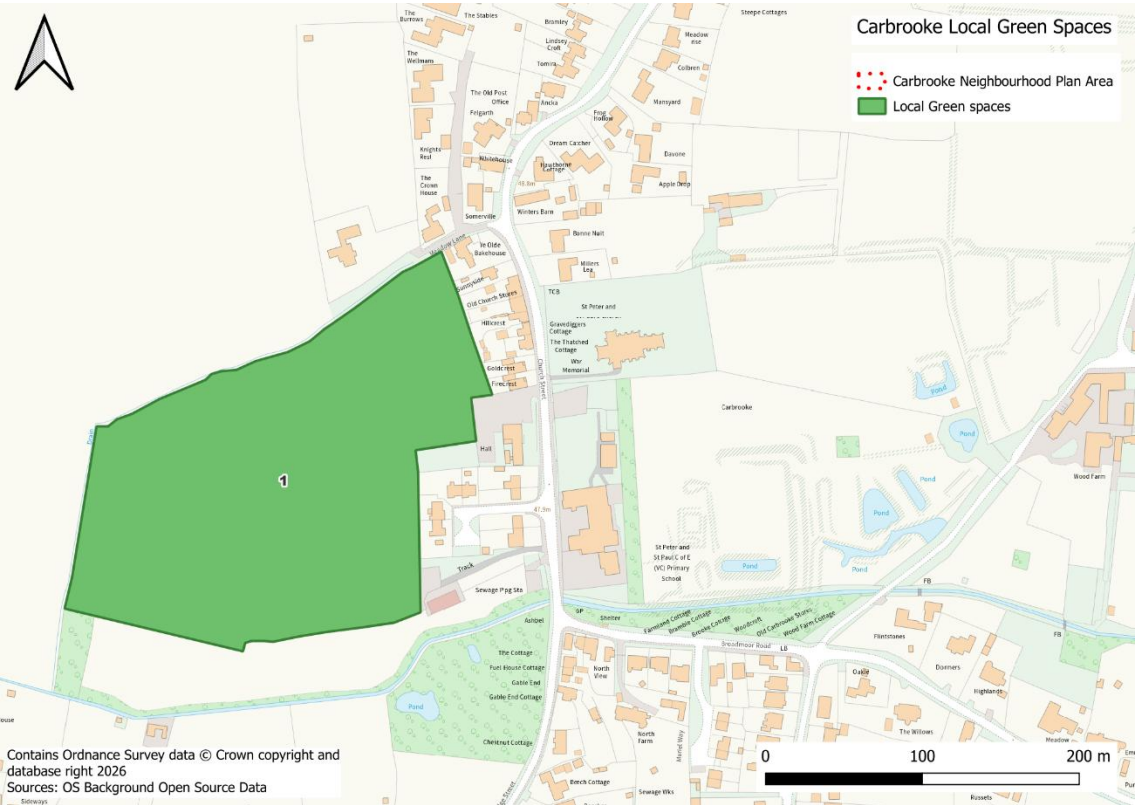
8. The designation of Local Green Space provides a mechanism for communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance through neighbourhood plans. This approach was introduced through the National Planning Policy Framework and continues to be supported in the current NPPF (2024) as a means of safeguarding valued local green spaces from inappropriate development.
9. Paragraphs 106 to 108 of the NPPF (2024) set out the national policy tests for Local Green Space designation. Paragraph 106 confirms that communities should be able to identify and protect green spaces of particular importance to them through neighbourhood plans. Paragraph 107 states that 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 holding 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 land.
10. Paragraph 108 of the NPPF confirms that once designated, Local Green Spaces should be protected in a manner consistent with Green Belt policy, thereby affording them a high level of protection.
11. National Planning Practice Guidance provides further clarification on the application of Local Green Space designation. In particular, it states that Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where land has planning permission for development. Exceptions may apply where the proposed development would be compatible with the reasons for designation, or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented. This guidance has informed the assessment of sites considered within this document.
12. In applying the NPPF criteria, “reasonably close proximity” is generally understood to mean that a green space should be within easy walking distance of the community it serves. While no specific distance threshold is prescribed in national policy, Natural England standards commonly refer to walking distances of up to approximately 1.25 miles as being reasonable for accessible green space.
13. The requirement that a Local Green Space should be local in character and not an extensive tract of land indicates that such designation is intended for green spaces that serve a clearly defined local community, rather than large areas of open countryside that perform a strategic or landscape-wide function.
14. The Local Plan prepared by Breckland Council provides the strategic planning framework for the neighbourhood area. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in order to meet the Basic Conditions. The Local Plan includes policies which seek to protect and enhance green infrastructure, safeguard biodiversity, provide opportunities for recreation, and improve the quality of life for residents. The

Local Green Space designations proposed through the Carbrooke Neighbourhood Plan are intended to complement and add local detail to this strategic policy framework, rather than duplicate or conflict with it.

3. Assessment of the green spaces being designated

15. The Local Green Space Assessment Tool published by Locality (My Community: Neighbourhood Planning – Local Green Spaces) has been used as the basis for assessing each green space identified by the community. The tool provides a consistent framework for assessing sites against the national criteria for Local Green Space designation.
16. A number of green spaces within Carbrooke were identified through Steering Group discussions and community input, as being of particular local importance. These spaces reflect the village's strong relationship with its surrounding landscape, its network of recreational and natural spaces, and areas valued for biodiversity and community use.
17. Each identified green space was subject to an initial site appraisal and assessed against the Local Green Space criteria, including proximity to the community, demonstrable special qualities, and whether the site is local in character rather than an extensive tract of land. Planning status was also considered, including whether land is allocated for development in the adopted Local Plan, in line with national guidance.
18. For clarity, the assessment distinguishes between green spaces that are proposed for designation and those that were identified but not taken forward, where the national criteria are not met or where designation would conflict with adopted strategic planning policies.
19. The following sections set out the detailed assessment of each green space proposed for designation.

Millennium Green





Location and description

Millennium Green is a publicly accessible area of open space located on Church Street behind the village hall within the built-up part of the village, making it an easily recognised and well-used community space. The site is around 1.3 hectares and includes a large flat grassy area, suitable for general play, gatherings, fetes, football matches and sports days. A pre-school play area, play area for older children, maze, orchard, amphitheatre, wildlife meadow, pond, and dog walking areas. There are paths and walking routes across the site, several dog waste bins and benches/seating areas.

The green was created as part of the national Millennium Green initiative and is managed by a charitable trust established in 1997 to provide and maintain the space for the benefit of local residents and for recreation and community activities. The green is a well-established part of the village landscape and functions as a focal point for outdoor recreation and community activity within Carbrooke.

Millennium Green is approximately 4.12ha in size.

Proximity to the community it serves

The Millennium Green is located within the main built-up area of Carbrooke and is within easy walking distance of surrounding residential areas. Its position close to community facilities such as the village hall and primary school reinforces its role as

a space that is directly accessible to local residents. Because of its central location, the green can be reached easily on foot by residents living in the village centre. There is a good-sized car park allowing residents who live further away and those with limited mobility to access the green.

Demonstrably special to the local community

Millennium Green has particular significance to the local community because it was created through a locally driven project involving fundraising and volunteering from residents. Local people contributed to preparing the land and planting the site during its early development, helping to establish it as a community asset from the outset.

The green was formally opened in 2000 and has since become a focal point for village life. The large open area allows space for informal sport and recreation and has also been used for community gatherings such as fetes and local events.

In addition to its recreational value, the site has social and environmental importance. The wildlife areas, meadow planting and pond contribute to local biodiversity, while the seating areas and open landscape provide opportunities for relaxation and informal social interaction. The combination of these roles means the green is widely recognised as a valued village space that contributes to the quality of life for residents.

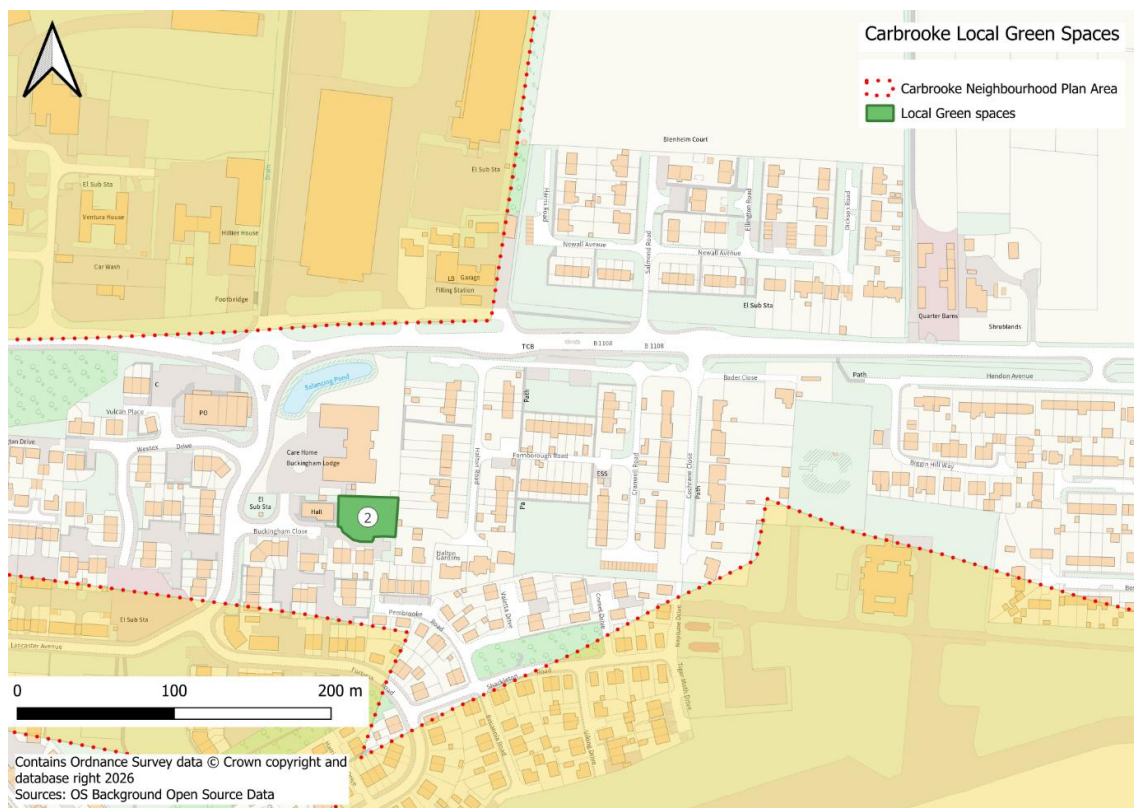
Local character and scale

Millennium Green is contained within the built-up area of Carbrooke and is directly related to surrounding residential development and community facilities e.g. the village hall. While large in size (approximately 1.3ha), the site functions as a single, cohesive village green space used primarily by local residents. It does not extend into the wider countryside or form part of a larger tract of land and is therefore local in character and appropriate in scale to the village centre. Its layout reflects typical rural village greens, with a mixture of open grassland, informal recreation areas and wildlife habitats.

Conclusion

Millennium Green meets all three criteria set out in paragraphs 106 to 108 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). It is reasonably close to the community it serves, demonstrably special to the local community for its recreational, biodiversity, and community value, and is local in character. The site is therefore suitable for designation as Local Green Space within the Carbrooke Neighbourhood Plan.

Community hub play area



Location and description

The play area is located adjacent to the community hub on Buckingham Road within a built-up area of Carbrooke south of Norwich Road. It is close to other village facilities, including a shop and café, and is close to surrounding newer housing in this residential part of the parish. The site comprises a fenced and managed children's play area set within a grassed space. The equipment is primarily natural in character, including wooden play features such as balance beams and a small climbing frame, alongside seating for parents and carers. The space is enclosed by low metal railings, providing a safe and contained environment for play while remaining visually open to the surrounding area. Mature trees within and around the site contribute to its character and provide a degree of enclosure. The play area sits immediately adjacent to residential properties, reinforcing its role as a neighbourhood facility, and forms part of a wider cluster of community uses centred on the nearby hub.

The community hub play area is just under 0.1ha in size.

Proximity to the community it serves

The community hub play area is located on Buckingham Road and is within the built-up part of the parish that is south of Norwich Road. The play area is immediately adjacent to the community hub and within easy walking distance of the many surrounding residential properties. Its proximity to newer housing development means it is easily accessible to local residents, particularly families with young children, with many homes in this part of the parish within a short walking distance of the hub.

The site is connected to the local road network and can be reached on foot from nearby housing without the need to travel outside the village. Its co-location with the community hub strengthens its role as a focus for everyday community activity, providing opportunities for play and informal social interaction close to other village facilities, including the nearby shop and café.

Demonstrably special to the local community

The Buckingham Road play area is demonstrably special to the local community as it provides one of the few dedicated spaces in Carbrooke specifically designed for children's play. Its location next to the community hub increases its importance as a shared social space, where parents and carers can meet while children play. This dual function strengthens its contribution to community cohesion and everyday social interaction, particularly for families and children. This is a well-used and locally important facility that contributes to the quality of life for local children.

Local character and scale

The play area is clearly local in character, serving the day-to-day needs of Carbrooke residents rather than attracting visitors from a wider area. Its function as a small, equipped play space means it is inherently tied to the immediate community and its facilities. In terms of scale, the site is modest and proportionate to the size of

the parish. It forms a contained and clearly defined area associated with the community hub and surrounding housing development, rather than extending into the wider countryside or forming part of a larger tract of land. The space therefore represents a typical village-scale facility that is appropriately sized and closely related to the settlement it serves, meeting the Local Green Space requirement of being local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

Conclusion

The community hub play area meets all three criteria set out in paragraphs 106 to 108 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). It is reasonably close to the community it serves, demonstrably special to the local community for its recreational, play, and community value, and is local in character. The site is therefore suitable for designation as Local Green Space within the Carbrooke Neighbourhood Plan.

Green space at the church





Location and description

The green space comprises the churchyard surrounding St Peter & St Paul Church, located within the historic core of Carbrooke village. The site occupies a prominent position within this part of Carbrooke and is enclosed by a low flint wall with views into the churchyard from the surrounding road. The space is mainly laid to grass and is used as a churchyard, with gravestones spread throughout. The substantial flint church building, with its tower, forms a focal point and landmark from around the village and surrounding area.

The churchyard is open in character, with scattered mature trees and a relatively informal layout. Its appearance is defined by the combination of grass, memorials and the flint stone of the church. It is an open public green space that offers a quiet place for reflection. Overall, the site forms a significant area of open green space within the village centre, contributing to both the setting of the church and the wider character of Carbrooke.

The green space at the church is approximately 0.6ha in size.

Proximity to the community it serves

The churchyard is centrally located within the older part of Carbrooke village and is immediately accessible from the surrounding road network and is in walking distance of nearby houses. Its central location to this part of Carbrooke and location opposite the village hall and Millennium Green means it is a regular feature of village life, physically seen by residents as part of everyday movement through the village. The

visibility of the site from surrounding streets further reinforces its relationship with the local community.

Demonstrably special to the local community

The churchyard is demonstrably special to the local community due to its historic, cultural, religious, spiritual and community significance. As the setting of St Peter & St Paul Church, it forms part of the historic heart of Carbrooke village and reflects the long-established development of the settlement. The presence of gravestones across the site gives the space a strong sense of continuity and connection to past generations of residents. It functions as a place of remembrance and reflection, giving it a particular spiritual, social and emotional value within the community.

In addition to its heritage value, the churchyard contributes to the visual character of the village. The open grassed space, historic memorials and prominent church building together create a distinctive and recognisable landscape that is closely associated with Carbrooke's identity.

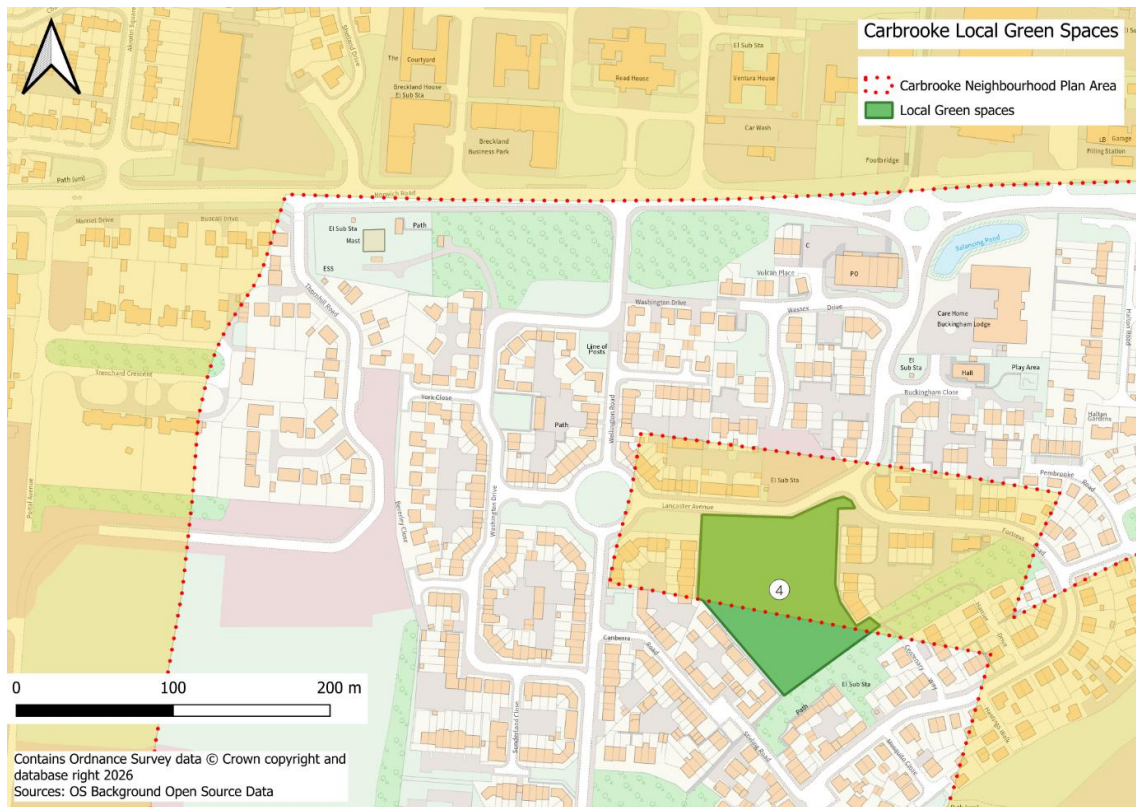
Local character and scale

The churchyard is clearly local in character, serving the community of Carbrooke as a place of burial and remembrance and as a key component of the village centre. Its function and significance are directly related to the local community rather than a wider catchment. In terms of scale, the space is well-defined and contained by its boundaries, forming a single area focused on the church tower. While it extends across a noticeable area within the village centre, it remains closely related to the church and surrounding development and does not extend into the wider countryside. The site therefore represents a typical village churchyard that is proportionate to the settlement it serves and is appropriately regarded as local in character rather than an extensive tract of land.

Conclusion

The green space at the church meets all three criteria set out in paragraphs 106 to 108 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). It is reasonably close to the community it serves, demonstrably special to the local community for its historical, social, and community value, and is local in character. The site is therefore suitable for designation as Local Green Space within the Carbrooke Neighbourhood Plan.

Blenheim Grange play area



Location and description

The play area at Blenheim Grange is located within the built-up residential part of Carbrooke south of Norwich Road and is surrounded by recent housing development. The green space sits centrally within the newer housing developments and is directly overlooked by houses, giving it a strong relationship with the surrounding neighbourhood. The site comprises a large area of open grass alongside a fenced children's play area. The equipped play space includes a range of modern play equipment and is set within a secure enclosure, while the wider green space remains open and accessible. There are football goals to encourage informal games. Informal footpaths cross the site, linking different parts of the development and providing pedestrian routes.

Mature and semi-mature trees are present within the space, and there is seating such as benches and picnic tables to facilitate socialising and picnics. Overall, the site functions as both a play area and a wider area of community open space, forming a key green space within this part of the village.

Part of this green space is outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area as can be seen on the map above.

Blenheim Grange play area is approximately 0.89ha in size, of which 0.6ha is within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Proximity to the community it serves

The play area is located within the Blenheim Grange development and is immediately accessible to residents living nearby. Many properties directly adjoin or overlook the space, meaning it can be reached within a very short walking distance by a large number of households. The network of footpaths running through the site and connecting to surrounding streets makes it easy to access on foot, particularly for families with young children. Its central position within the development ensures it is well integrated into the layout of the neighbourhood.

Demonstrably special to the local community

The Blenheim Grange play area is demonstrably special to the local community as it provides a substantial and well-used area for recreation within a part of the parish that has experienced recent housing growth. The combination of equipped play facilities and a large open grassed area allows for a range of activities, including children's play, informal sports, dog walking and general recreation. The presence of seating and picnic benches also supports its use as a place for social interaction. Its role is particularly important given the density of surrounding development, providing accessible outdoor space for residents who may not otherwise have easy access to larger green areas.

Local character and scale

The play area is local in character, serving primarily the residents of the Blenheim Grange development and the wider Carbrooke community. Its use is focused on

everyday recreation rather than attracting visitors from a wider area. In terms of scale, while the site is relatively large compared to smaller village play areas, it functions as a single, contained area of open space within the development. It is clearly defined by surrounding housing and does not extend into the wider countryside. The space is therefore proportionate to the scale of the development it serves and represents a typical neighbourhood-scale area of public open space, rather than an extensive tract of land.

Conclusion

Blenheim Grange play area meets all three criteria set out in paragraphs 106 to 108 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). It is reasonably close to the community it serves, demonstrably special to the local community for its recreational, play, and community value, and is local in character. The site is therefore suitable for designation as Local Green Space within the Carbrooke Neighbourhood Plan.

Recommended Designations

Based on this assessment, four Local Green Spaces have been determined to meet the national criteria for designation. These are shown on the map below.

