

Proposal to categorise Austrey's Bishops Field and the new Village Green as Local Green Space

Introduction

Currently Austrey has effectively no green space allocated around the village. This proposal is for an area effectively in the centre of the village and including some village amenities be formally categorised as Local Green Space.

Local green space is a planning category similar to the green belt around major towns which provides an amenity to the villages. A green space would be widely used for pastimes such as dog walking, kite flying, ballplaying etc. A Local Green Space is still available to use by the landowner for grazing animals etc.

Current situation

Currently the only nominated Local Green Space in the village is very small area of some front gardens on Bishops Cleeve which have now been hedged in and are not currently available for use by the village. See appendix B.

A recent development of 40 houses on the east side of the village has provided a new village green which includes a small play area, parking on the grassy area. This is not currently protected.

Proposal

The new village green is next to the churchyard and was created as part of the Wulfric Avenue development. It includes a small play area and car parking and a large grassy area which will be developed by the village.

The village green abuts an area south of the church in the centre of the village which is historically known as the Bishops field. This was originally communal land that was laid out as water meadows in the middle ages and rented out to villagers to grow their own crops. A tythe barn stood at the top of the field with a series of ponds and water bunds managing the water flow through the field.

The Bishops field has a number of public footpath running across, dating from the Middle Ages, and is widely used by villagers as a cut through to the shop and pub and for dog walking and general amusement. When there is snow it is filled with children on sledges. In summer the dog walkers are joined by kite and drone flyers and small children on bikes.

In a corner of the Bishops field is a spring and pond area known to generations of village children as 'The Bog', with fallen trees and teeming with wildlife yet in full view of the houses. It is a place where children have played for generations and yet sufficiently overseen for safety.

The full Bishops field is extensive and would not be appropriate for complete categorisation as local green space. This proposal therefore limits the amount of Bishops field to be categorised as Local Green Space with a southern point at the final bund of the water meadows that is followed by the southernmost footpath. The end of the local green space matches the southern end of the built village. See Appendix A.

Although the Bishops field was used for grazing up to 5 years ago it has since been left in disrepair and most of the fences have now fallen down. The current owners are not farmers and appear to have no interest in maintaining the field.

Conclusion

This application to categorise the village green and field in the centre of the village is included in the village plan but is separate from it. The allocation of a substantive local green space to Austrey is long overdue and in line with that allocated to most of the North Warwickshire and the youth want villages.

Appendix A



Appendix B

