

Further Local Green Spaces in Weybridge

Miles Macleod (Chair of Portmore Park & District Residents Association)

This document identifies significant areas of local green space in Weybridge, not yet assessed in the draft EBC Local Green Space study.

These are publicly accessible areas of green space within, or adjacent to, residential areas: spaces which are highly valued by local residents, are attractive, contribute to landscape or townscape character and setting, and offer tranquility and recreational amenity, and multiple habitats for wildlife.

All are worthy of inclusion in the study.

Below we describe eight omitted local spaces and outline their value to the community.

1/ The EBC Local Green Space Study identifies 25 potential Local Green Spaces around Weybridge, to be assessed against criteria.

This list of potential local green spaces omits a significant number of green spaces in Weybridge, which are recognised as Green Spaces by EBC in existing documentation outside the study:

- EBC Parks and Recreation (see list in Appendix 1 below)
- EBC Land Availability Assessment 2021

The Local Green Space Study reduces this to 6 in a sieving exercise:

- Church Walk open space
- “Churchfield Road Allotments, Sports Ground & play area” (comprising Churchfields Recreation Ground, Churchfields Wildflower Meadow, Churchfields Allotments)
- Cricket Way open space & play area
- Oatlands Recreation Ground
- Whittets Ait (Section 106 Public Green Space)
- Wooded areas in Burwood Park - Area D

2/ The 25 areas assessed appear to omit some very significant local green spaces in Weybridge.

The following omitted areas are however recognised in the EBC Leisure and Culture green spaces list:

- **Desborough Island**

Two meadows, one belonging to EBC one to SCC, plus a wooded footpath around the island belonging to the EA; also Football, Rugby and Cricket fields.

Hugely valued local landscape, rich in diverse natural habitats. Used recreationally daily by hundreds of walkers, dog walkers, fisherman, or simply those seeking tranquillity.

Our little piece of tranquil local countryside, full of wildlife, within 100 metres of town.

- **Cowey Sale Open Space(s)**

Used recreationally by many hundreds daily, thousands at summer weekends.

The Cowey Sale Open Spaces comprise three elements:

- Riverside land saved by the New Walton Bridge Public Inquiry (circa 2006) from being turned into road, because of its high amenity value.
- Public green land next to (and outside) Walton Village Green.
- A large public meadow between Cowey Sale and Broadwater (Walton Bridge exchange land)

- **Grotto Road Recreation Area**

Football field and practice goal (plus suggested addition of EBC owned part of Broadwater).

- **Grotto Road Open Space**

A long strip of green space between Marlborough Road and Oatlands Drive, traditionally known locally as 'The Grotto', recognised by EBC for its plant diversity circa 2010.

- **Darnley Park Open Space**

A small green space significant to the character of Darley Park.

- **Finnart Close / Meadows Leigh Open Spaces (including play area)**

Several small green spaces in Finnart Close and Meadows Leigh significant to local character and recreational amenity.

- **Walton Lane Open Space**

Much used EBC green space next to Elmbridge Canoe Club, adjacent to the Thames Path, with EBC provided picnic tables, mature trees and (in EBC words) a 'magnificent riparian panorama' of the Thames around D'Oyly Carte Island and Desborough Island.

Green space recognised in the LAA 2021:

- **Green Space between Genside Road and Thames Street (LAA 2021 US401), aka the Thames Street Green Space**

A substantial stretch of green space greatly valued by local people, highly visible from all directions, with mature trees, essential to the character of Thames Street, and significant to the view approaching from the Monument Green Conservation Area.

PPDRA commissioned a tree survey, which we include below.

Weybridge Local Green Spaces yet to be assessed

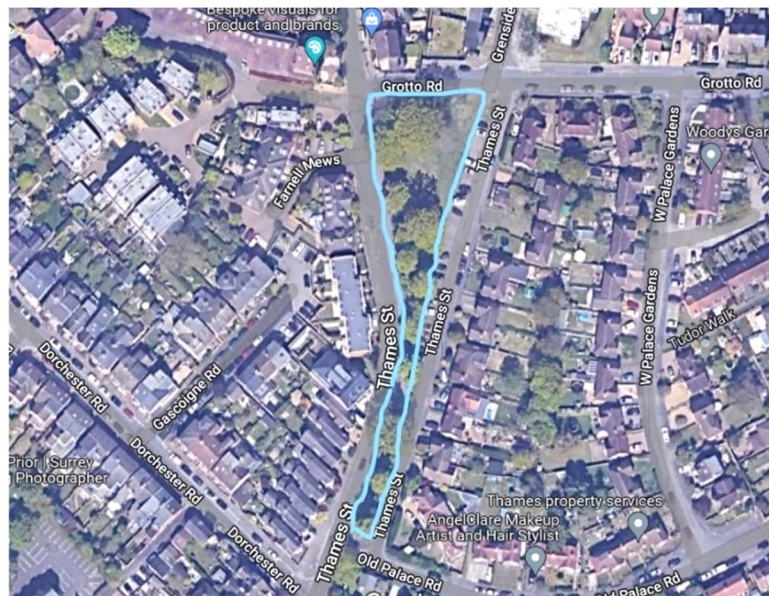
Below are details of locations and characteristics

Thames Street Weybridge Green Space

Green Space between Grotto Road and Thames Street (LAA 2021 US401, assessed as not for development in the next fifteen years as it is Green Space, plus a further strip of tree filled green)

Greatly valued by local residents, this is a significant stretch of green space in a residential area:

- Visually attractive, with mature trees and mown grass
- Essential to the local townscape - highly visible from all directions, and significant to the view approaching from the Monument Green Conservation Area
- Contributes to the local townscape - key to the character of this end of Thames Street
- Contributes to the local sense of place
- Has multiple publicly accessible informal recreational uses
- Within a residential area, it offers tranquillity – low levels of noise and visual intrusion
- Multiple habitats for wildlife – birds, squirrels and other creatures – in the mature trees



Thames Street Green Space, viewed from Grotto Road

PPDRA commissioned a tree survey of the Thames Street Green Space:

**6, Camden Cottages,
Church Walk,
Weybridge,
Surrey KT13 8JT**

17th March 2022

Elmbridge Borough Council,
The Civic Centre,
High Street,
Esher,
KT13 9SD. **(Via email: tplan@elmbridge.gov.uk)**
Attn. The Senior Tree Officer.

Dear Sir,

Ref: Thames Street, Green Space - KT13 – Proposal to protect trees.

As a retired horticulturalist and a former manager of open spaces I was asked by the Portmore Park District Resident's Association (PPDRA) to survey the trees on the Thames Street Green Space to consider if there were trees that merit safeguarding with a TPO.

Having looked at the site many trees form a significant feature, visible from public spaces in all directions, which local residents consider should be protected. A number are fine looking specimen trees. The PPDRA was surprised to find that no tree on this prominent green space appears on the current Elmbridge TPO register.

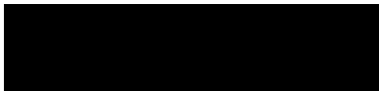
The PPDRA request that you list at least the following seven trees:

- 1) Oak tree opposite 17 Thames Street approx. 18 metres.
- 2) Lime tree opposite 27 Thames Street 18 metres+
- 3) Lime tree opposite 29 Thames Street approx. 18 metres.
- 4) Oak tree opposite and beyond in line with 31 Thames Street approx. 16 metres.
- 5) Oak tree opposite Farnell Mews entrance approx. 14 metres.
- 6) Oak tree beyond Oak 5 in line with Farnell Mews approx. 16 metres
- 7) Sweet Chestnut beyond Oak 6 in line with Farnell Mews approx. 12 metres

Many of the trees have substantial amenity value and warrant (TPO) safeguarding so we request that you visit the site to consider this proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Mr P N H Butler



Desborough Island

Desborough Island is hugely valued locally. This is our beautiful stretch of local tranquil countryside and riverside, rich in wildlife, on the doorstep of Weybridge, within 100 metres of the edge of the built environment. It is part of the Weybridge Riverside EBC Council Ward.

The public areas comprise two large meadows, one belonging to EBC, one to SCC, plus a wooded footpath around the island belonging to the EA. Further parts of Desborough Island host Hersham Football Club and Weybridge Vandals Rugby and Cricket Club

Beauty: Visually attractive, it makes a high contribution to landscape and the setting of Weybridge (many residents choose to live in Weybridge in part because the character of the town is shaped and enhanced by the publicly accessible riversides and green spaces), offering access to riverside away from traffic noise.

Tranquillity: On most parts of Desborough Island, one can forget completely about urban noise and rush.

Recreational value: Desborough Island is used daily by hundreds of walkers, dog walkers, fisherman, picnickers, etc for informal recreational uses. Note the multiple informal footpaths visible on Google satellite images (see below). There are also formal recreational activities on the football, cricket and rugby grounds.

Richness of wildlife: countless natural habitats.

This is a rare gem of natural riverside and rural public space within the M25.



EBC unnamed public Desborough Island meadow, and SCC Point Meadow, with multiple informal footpaths, plus a wooded public footpath around the island's perimeter

Cowey Sale Open Space(s)

Enjoyed recreationally by many hundreds daily, thousands at summer weekends.

These spaces comprise three elements (and parts are within Weybridge Riverside):

1. Riverside public land saved because of its high amenity value by the New Walton Bridge Public Inquiry circa 2006 from being turned into road: there were plans to reroute Walton Lane immediately along the riverside and to build a huge Twin Loop Junction, for which SCC gave itself planning consent; overturned by the Secretary of State after the residents' case for the riverside land's amenity value won at the Public Inquiry)



This public riverside land attracts countless visitors because of its visual attractiveness

- It contributes to the local landscape, character and setting of the local residential areas, local identity (for Walton-on-Thames and Weybridge), and sense of place.
- It includes the site of historic Thames crossings, even featuring in H.G Wells' classic novel The War of the Worlds.
- It has multiple formal and informal recreational uses.
It includes a slipway and landing stage, many EBC park benches. It includes part of the Thames Path & National Cycle Route 4.
- Parts are very tranquil, parts are in earshot of traffic on Walton Lane – an unclassified road which traffic calmed to give pedestrians and geese priority – but the traffic does not deter visitors from sitting on the adjacent benches looking at the river.
- It is rich in wildlife, with many visitors attracted by the swans, geese and other water birds.

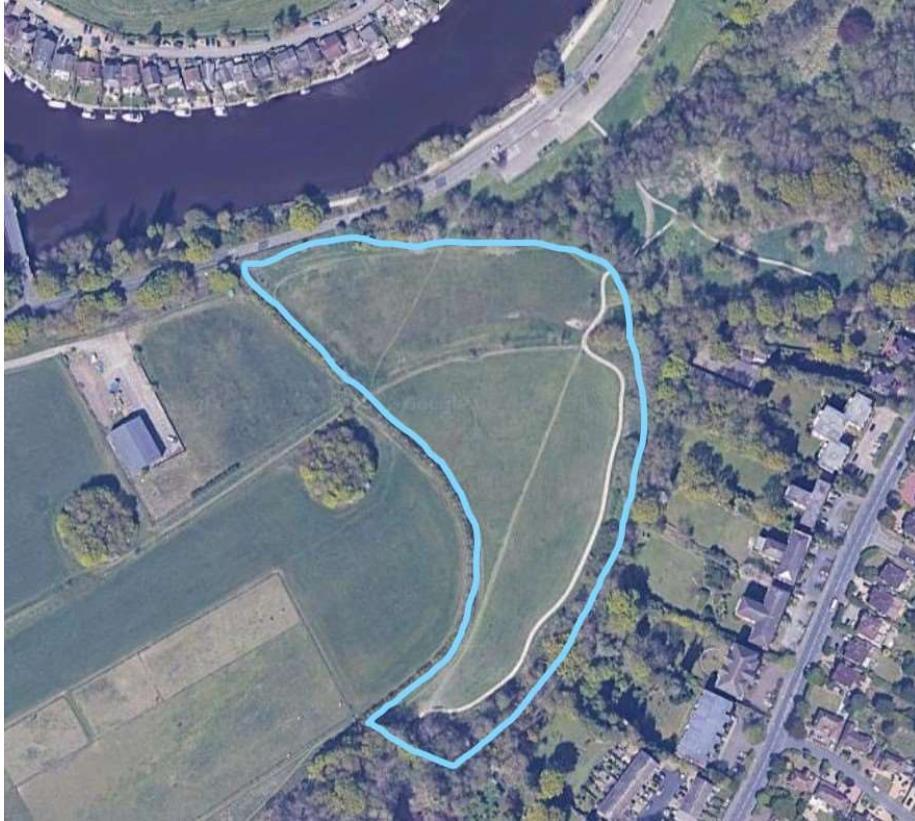
2. Public green open space on the other side of Walton Lane, next to the former Walton Village Green (which is now wooded land by the historic arches).



This part of Cowey Sale Open Space slightly away from the river also attracts countless visitors because of its visual attractiveness

- It contributes to the local landscape, character and setting of the local residential areas, local identity, and sense of place.
- Away from Walton Lane, this is pleasingly tranquil.
- It has multiple formal and informal recreational uses.
It is adjacent to the Cowey Sale public car park, includes a café and picnic tables and benches, and is very popular with families enjoying the green space and riverside views.
It includes the eastern end of Broadwater Path, and thus is much used by walkers.
- It is rich in multiple wildlife habitats.

3. The public meadow between Cowey Sale and Broadwater (Walton Bridge exchange land)



This part of Cowey Sale Open Space(s) also attracts numerous visitors. It includes a section of the Broadwater Path.

- It is visually attractive, changing from season to season, and contributes to the local landscape, character and setting, local identity, and sense of place.
- Its main recreational use is walking, and it includes formal and informal footpaths, and a park bench to rest upon.
- It is delightfully tranquil, sheltered from Walton Lane by earth banks and trees.
- It is rich in multiple wildlife habitats.

Grotto Road Recreation Area aka 'the football field' or Grenside Road Local Green Space

This is an EBC owned public football (half-)field and practice goal, at the end of Grenside Road, adjacent to the Broadwater Path, partly edged with trees.

As illustrated and described below, a Local Green Space designation could usefully also include the immediately adjacent EBC owned section of Broadwater which was recently dredged and restored, to create greater wildlife habitat diversity.



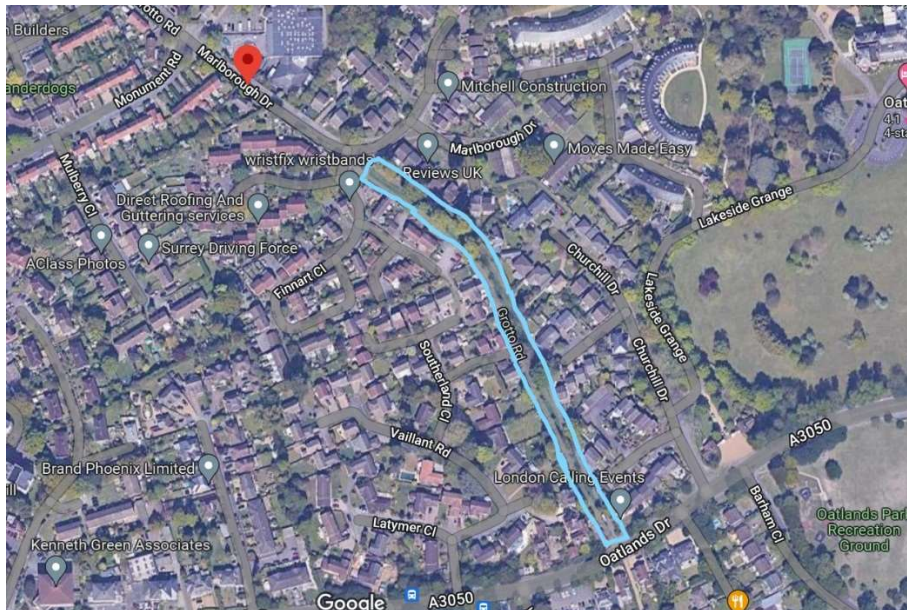
This local green space attracts young people and many passing residents visitors enjoying the recreational facility of the Broadwater Path.

- It is part of the local Green Belt landscape, contributing to local character and setting.
- Its main recreational uses are football practice and walking. It includes a practice goal, and a section of Broadwater Path (Public Footpath 40).
- It is very tranquil, in Green Belt, away from roads.
- EBC has recently planted some more trees on the edge of the field. It would benefit from a bench or two, if EBC can afford that.
- This local green space (including the stretch of Broadwater) is rich in multiple wildlife habitats.
- It could perhaps be formally renamed, e.g. "Grenside Road Local Green Space" – or there could even be a local competition to name it properly.

Grotto Road Open Space

This is a long strip of green space alongside a footpath between Marlborough Drive and Oatlands Drive, traditionally known locally as 'The Grotto'.

It was recognised by EBC for its plant and wildlife diversity circa 2010, with an EBC information board depicting plant species installed at its Marlborough Drive end.



Grotto Road Open Space

- This is a long green space whose visual attractiveness changes from season to season, and contributes to the local landscape, character and setting, local identity, and sense of place.
- It is very tranquil.
- Its main recreational use is walking and dog walking, with a valued formal footpath which SCC has recently repaired to get around tree root damage.
- It is rich in multiple wildlife habitats.
- It has grassland which has traditionally only been cut twice a year, to encourage wild flowers, and some large mature trees.

Darnley Park Open Space

This is a small green space significant to the character of Darley Park

It may perhaps be too small to qualify as Local Open Space in this assessment (?), but is none the less highly valued by local residents.



Note that there is further green space at the end of Darnley Park. Together these spaces help define the green character of Darnley Park, offering a much-valued green outlook for residents, tranquillity, recreational value and wildlife habitats.

Finnart Close / Meadows Leigh Open Spaces (including play area)

There are several small green spaces in Finnart Close and Meadows Leigh Close which are significant to the local character of these residential roads and to local recreational amenity.



The Meadows Leigh play area and green space
(several small green spaces in Finnart Close are not illustrated)

This may be too small and diverse an area to qualify as a formal Local Green Space, but residents greatly cherish the play area, and the tree lined green spaces and verges, and would love to see them protected.

Walton Lane Open Space

This is a much-used EBC green space next to Elmbridge Canoe Club, adjacent to the Thames Path, with a gravel surfaced car park, grassland, EBC provided picnic tables and seats, mature trees, multiple wildlife habitats, and (in EBC words) a ‘magnificent riparian panorama’ of the Thames around D’Oily Carte Island and Desborough Island.



This cherished green space is adjacent to the Thames Path and National Cycle Route, and provides a welcome stopping off and resting point, or simply a delightful place to visit, to picnic, or perhaps have a coffee from a stall next to the canoe club. It is also highly popular with families and those of limited mobility because of the convenient parking.

- This green space is visually highly attractive, a destination to contemplate the riverside panorama.
- It contributes to the local landscape, character and setting, local identity, and sense of place.
- Its main informal recreational uses are admiring the riverside view, sitting, playing, picnicking, exercising, meeting friends.
- This space is also the centre of more formal community recreational activity associated with the hugely popular Elmbridge Canoe Club.
- It is delightfully tranquil, sheltered from Walton Lane traffic by a twin hedge (which local residents persuaded EBC to retain in 2005 when the space was opened up to the riverside, to provide an acoustic and visual screen from the road).
- The space is rich in wildlife habitats, with its beautiful mature trees and riverside.