BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, 
’BACKWELL FUTURE’

SUBMISSION TO BACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL

by

BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

of

CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES

located at:

MOOR LANE FIELDS

and

FARLEIGH FIELDS

UNDER SECTION 8 OF NPPF

INTRODUCTION

PREFACE to POST CONSULTATION VERSION

The original BRA/BET report dated January 2013 was written when two LGS options – ‘A’ and ‘B’ were being considered. In this Post Consultation version there remain some references to ‘A’ and ‘B’. Option ‘A’ has been set aside and The Proposal in Option ‘B’ was unanimously adopted by Backwell Parish Council at its meeting on Thursday 16th January 2014 as its ‘Backwell Future’ policy
INTRODUCTION

1: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduced the concept of Local Green Spaces (LGSs) in Chapter 8, ‘Promoting healthy communities’.

2: North Somerset Council adopted its Core Strategy (CS) for the period to 2026, in April 2012. Following a legal challenge some Policies are under Review. The adopted CS does not speak specifically to LGS but the Vision 6, relating to Service Villages such as Backwell, and Core Strategies 4, 5 & 9 are particularly relevant to the LGS policy and are not due to be Reviewed in respect of LGS.

3: In 2011, Backwell Parish Council (BPC) set up a Steering Group (SG) to draft a Backwell Neighbourhood Plan (dBNP) in anticipation of the Localism Act 2012 becoming Law. They were appointed a Vanguard Authority by the Department of Communities and Local Government. The Draft Plan has been subject to public consultation as has the original of this document.

4: Backwell Residents Association (BRA) and Backwell Environmental Trust (BET) are two of the largest voluntary organisations in Backwell Civil Parish. The objectives of both bodies are dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the collective interests of Backwell residents, although with significant differences in emphasis. Many villagers are in dual membership. The BRA & BET backgrounds, leading to this joint submission of this ‘Proposal’ for two LGSs, are fully explained in Section 8.

5: BRA recognised that the introduction of the concept of LGS gave an unprecedented opportunity for our community through its Neighbourhood Plan, promoted by its Parish Council, to designate tracts of land as LGS. This would secure for our village permanent assets, for the enjoyment of present and future generations while recognising long term planning strategies. LGSs would also assist in meeting the condition that the BNP proposals for specific developments, to meet identified needs for housing, employment etc. and located elsewhere in the village, are sustainable.

6: BRA was not invited to be a participant body in the BNP (SG) developing the draft Neighbourhood Plan although a number of its members, including Officers, served in a personal capacity – some for only a limited time. It was noted that the Government grant to BPC as a Vanguard Authority, was totally inadequate to provide for independent expert research or advice on all topics - with the largest part being required to meet public consultation and process costs.
7: BRA’s research proceeded simultaneously outside the SG, but with the initial emphasis on obtaining professional legal advice as to the criteria to be met and the strict interpretation of the terminology, since there was no official guidance or definition and the policies were untested.

8: With the appointment of a Sub-committee BRA’s work was particularly directed initially towards determining what might be the minimum and maximum size of zone that could satisfy the criteria by being a ‘tract of land’ (i.e. an extent) while not being disqualified by being ‘an extensive tract of land’.

9: At this stage BET were invited to join with BRA in view of the many shared interests and their specialist knowledge.

10: Desk research was then extended beyond aspects of definition and interpretation by consulting professional experts and members (many of them practitioners or enthusiasts in numerous specialities). They collated evidence addressing the other criteria of richness of wildlife (and bio-diversity), historical significance, beauty, tranquillity, recreational use etc.

11: It quickly became apparent that the parameters of size and environmental issues, particularly richness of wildlife, bio-diversity, beauty and tranquillity were intimately related and demanded a minimum size that was greater than could be determined by individual fields. It also directed us to coherent, contiguous swathes of land which were adequate in extent to satisfy the tests.

12: Identifying the zones within the village was obvious, once Green Belt areas were excluded. The two areas of Farleigh Fields (FF) and Moor Lane Fields (MLF) have long been demonstrably special to the community. This was recently recorded in the Community Plan reflecting 40 years of efforts by BPC, BRA and the whole community to protect these specific areas.

13: It was also recognised that while both FF & MLF were local in character they included sufficient physical, historical and biological differences to justify two areas being considered. This was fortunate since it was, and has remained, BRA’s wish to provide benefit to the two extremes of the village, north and south, immediately adjacent to the Settlement Boundary.

14: Adopting a holistic approach, BRA & BET then carried out physical site assessments and recreational walks undertaken by Officers, members, experts and volunteer enthusiasts. The purpose was to identify what fields, or areas, would best constitute separate coherent and contiguous tracts of land satisfying the NPPF criteria.
15: BRA/BET advised the dBNP SG of its concern that the separate survey by questionnaire, while guided by the limited advice available to it at that time, was almost certainly unlikely to meet the tests indicated by the professional opinions obtained by BRA. They advised the dBNP SG of BRA’s evolving policy and meetings were held. Unfortunately, the SG was still constrained by cautious advice that they had received. This suggested that, in the absence of considerable evidence, they were obliged to think of small areas as LGS - little larger than village greens or parks. They were not in a financial position to gather evidential material and invited BRA to continue its work and present its evidence as to more coherent areas.

16: It has always been common ground that it is desirable to have an LGS at FF and another at MLF.

17: Having confirmed that the parameters of each LGS’s that were sufficient to meet the NPPF criteria, BRA/BET undertook a survey of their memberships and received widespread support.

18: After the publication of the schedule for the Open Days for public consultation on the dBNP, and, in the light of evolving policy elsewhere and reconsideration within NSC, the dBNP SG received new advice that the extent of a tract of land forming a LGS could be considerably larger.

19: This led to a last minute inclusion at the Open Days of the BRA/BET proposal in the dBNP.

20: The BRA/BET proposal identified 12 fields at MLF and 6 at FF.

21: This Report outlines the background studies and details the evidence leading to a submission that clearly identifies the BRA/BET Proposal as meeting all the criteria to fully comply with the NPPF and merit its adoption in the Backwell Neighbourhood Plan.

22. As stated in the Preface ‘The Proposal’ was unanimously adopted by Backwell Parish Council at its meeting on Thursday 16th January 2014 as its policy for the Backwell Neighbourhood Plan, ‘Backwell Future’.

Please note: although this post consultation version has been extensively updated, it has not been possible to update all references to sections and paragraphs in the latest version of the Draft Backwell Neighbourhood Plan

The location of the two tracts of land at Farleigh Fields and Moor Lane Fields and their proposed boundaries are shown on the map on page 4 below:
Farleigh Fields Local Green Space to consist of the tract of land highlighted in yellow and, to avoid confusion, identified as numbers 1 to 6 inclusive as numbered in the original SG questionnaire and on the map below.

Moor Lane Fields Local Green Space to consist of the tract of land highlighted in yellow and, to avoid confusion, identified as numbers 9 to 15 & 17 to 21 inclusive as numbered in the original SG questionnaire and on the map below.

BRA&BET continue their research as to further evidence.

This document records a summary of current studies of matters concerning the National Planning Policy Framework and Backwell Neighbourhood Plan.

Acknowledgement is made to all sources and professional expertise that have contributed.

The title to all the final documents rests with Backwell Residents Association and should not be reproduced without acknowledgement. © January 2014
BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

'BACKWELL FUTURE'

SUBMISSION TO BACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL

by

BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

of

CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES

located at:

MOOR LANE FIELDS

and

FARLEIGH FIELDS

UNDER SECTION 8 OF NPPF

CONTENTS

&

ABBREVIATIONS
BRA/BET CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES
at
BOTH MOOR LANE FIELDS & FARLEIGH FIELDS
THE PROPOSAL

CONTENTS

Introduction including Preface and Map

Contents and Abbreviations

Section 1: Main Conclusions.
Section 2: Extract of LGS NPPF Statement
Section 3: Compliance with NSC Core Strategy
Section 4: Summary of NSC Advice on Local Green Spaces
Section 5: Emerging Evidence Elsewhere In England as To LGS Size
Section 6: Legal Opinion as to ‘Tract of Land’ and ‘Extensive Tract of Land’
Section 7: Satisfaction of Criterion ‘Close Proximity to the Community’
Section 8: Satisfaction of Criterion ‘Special to the Community’
Section 9: Satisfaction of Criterion ‘Historic Significance’
Section 10: Satisfaction of Criterion ‘Beauty & Tranquillity’
Section 11: Satisfaction of Criterion ‘Richness of Wildlife & Biodiversity’
Section 12: Satisfaction of Criterion ‘Local in Character’
Section 13: Avoidance of Risks:
   a) - Avoidance of Risk of Infilling
   b) - Does not Preclude Future Development pre & post 2026
Section 14: Agricultural Aspects.
Section 15: Consultant Chartered Town Planner’s Appraisal of BRA’s Proposal for two LGSs.
Section 16: Survey Summary Spreadsheet
Appendix 1: BRA & BET Survey Forms
Appendix 2: Examples of Previously Commissioned Studies & Extracts from BPC Minutes
## ABBREVIATIONS

The following acronyms are used in this submission:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALC</td>
<td>Agricultural Land Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AONB</td>
<td>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCP</td>
<td>Backwell Community Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BET</td>
<td>Backwell Environment Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNP</td>
<td>Backwell Neighbourhood Plan – ‘Backwell Future’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPC</td>
<td>Backwell Parish Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRA</td>
<td>Backwell Residents Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRERC</td>
<td>Bristol Regional Environmental Research Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPRE</td>
<td>Council for the Protection of Rural England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Core Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dBNP</td>
<td>Draft Backwell Neighbourhood Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FF</td>
<td>Farleigh Fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGS</td>
<td>Local Green Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLF</td>
<td>Moor Lane Fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NERC</td>
<td>Natural Environment &amp; Rural Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPPF</td>
<td>National Planning Policy Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>North Somerset Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>Steering Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
’BACKWELL FUTURE’

SUBMISSION TO BACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
by
BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
of
CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES
located at:
MOOR LANE FIELDS
and
FARLEIGH FIELDS
UNDER SECTION 8 OF NPPF

SECTION 1
MAIN CONCLUSIONS
SECTION 1

MAIN CONCLUSION

BRA/BET POSITION:

BRA/BET’s evidence (now referred to as Evidence Base ‘K’) fully justifies The Proposal that Backwell Neighbourhood Plan adopt 2 Local Green Spaces within the Parish. The two were identified as fully meeting all the criteria within NPPF and in no aspect conflicting with NSC CS. The areas were identified and refined after critical examination of the land available. Both areas were known to be special to the community and their boundaries were carefully defined to the minimum that could fully meet the criteria. The only serious restraint in identifying land was the policy in NPPF that Spaces should not be seen as an extension of Green Belt. This eliminated some land in the original areas put forward by BPC. Smaller areas than those proposed would be unsustainable in the long term in that encroachment or development of undesignated adjoining land would nullify the attributes of beauty, tranquillity, wildlife and biodiversity etc on which the designation of the LGS is predicated.

BRA/BET SUBMISSION:

It is BRA/BET’s Proposal that the BNP should adopt 2 Local Green Spaces, in the Parish, located at Moor Lane Fields and at Farleigh Fields, now called ‘The LGS Proposal’ in the BNP. The boundaries of the tracts of land forming these Local Green Spaces are delineated on the map overleaf, and the areas are described in the body of this Report with individual fields numbered in the Introduction and in Sections 10 and 11.

It is demonstrated that The Proposal fully meets each aspect of the NPPF, is fully compliant in all respects and should be adopted in the BNP

The evidence demonstrating compliance is contained in this Evidence Base (K) with further support in Evidence Base (L).

Particular reference should be made to Section 15 that includes an independent Report by a Chartered Town Planner. He made a full appraisal of The Proposal on the basis of published information in the dBNP. The resulting Opinion was that The Proposal complied with NPPF with only a single proviso - namely that LGS needs to be ‘demonstrably special to the community’.

This proviso is satisfied with the evidence in Section 8 alone, with additional evidence elsewhere particularly that volunteered by individual respondents to the surveys. It is accepted that further verification may exist in dBNP and that additional evidence may come forward to reinforce that already provided.
BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

‘BACKWELL FUTURE’

SUBMISSION TO BACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL

by

BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

of

CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES

located at:

MOOR LANE FIELDS

and

FARLEIGH FIELDS

UNDER SECTION 8 OF NPPF

SECTION 2

EXTRACT RELATING TO LGS IN

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK
The relevant chapter in NPPF is Number 8, ‘Promoting healthy communities’ that is stated in clauses 69 to 78 inclusive. While clauses 69 to 76 all include statements of policy that have relevance in LGS the topic is formally covered in clauses 77 & 78.

The whole of the chapter is restated below with persuasive statements in clauses 69 – 75 inclusive underlined. Clauses 76 & 77 are absolutely germane to LGS and are emphasised by larger font in blue. These two clauses are examined in greater detail in other sections of the report.

8. Promoting healthy communities

69. The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Local planning authorities should create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see. To support this, local planning authorities should aim to involve all sections of the community in the development of Local Plans and in planning decisions, and should facilitate neighbourhood planning. Planning policies and decisions, in turn, should aim to achieve places which promote:

- opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity;

- safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and

- safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
70. To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

● plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance sustainability of communities and residential environments;

● guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;

● ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community; and

● ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

71. Local planning authorities should take a positive and collaborative approach to enable development to be brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order, including working with communities to identify and resolve key issues before applications are submitted.

72. The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

● give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and

● work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

73. Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.
74. **Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:**

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

75. **Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access.** Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

76. Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

77. The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;

- where the green space 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 space concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

78. Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.
BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN,  
‘BACKWELL FUTURE’

SUBMISSION TO BACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
by
BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
of
CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES
located at:
MOOR LANE FIELDS
and
FARLEIGH FIELDS

UNDER SECTION 8 OF NPPF

SECTION 3
THE PROPOSAL’s COMPLIANCE WITH
NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL CORE STRATEGY
SECTION 3

BACKWELL’S LGS’s COMPLIANCE WITH NORTH SOMERSET CORE STRATEGY

The Adopted Version of North Somerset’s Core Strategy is silent on the subject of Local Green Spaces.

However, the Key Vision 6 and Strategies 4, 5 & 9 set clear parameters for Neighbourhood Plans as to the overall objectives to be achieved. Phrases, words and sentences particularly relevant to Backwell’s Local Green Spaces are underlined. These contribute to the delivery of the appropriate NSC Vision and Strategies. (The relevant parts of these Policies are not subject to the current Review following a legal challenge.)

NSC Core Strategy:
Vision 6: Service Villages Vision

By 2026 the Service Villages will become thriving rural communities and a focal point for local housing needs, services and community facilities. They will become more self-contained in terms of providing jobs and serving the local and surrounding community for all their local day-to-day needs, whilst protecting their individual character.

The settlements as defined in the Core Strategy as Service Villages are:

- Backwell [and 8 others]

BRA Position:

The Core Strategy Vision for Backwell emphasises its individual character as a rural community with the need to protect and enhance its ‘personality’ or character. An essential ingredient of the rural character of Backwell is its existing green spaces at Farleigh Fields and Moor Lane and their coexistence with productive agricultural units.

Proposals elsewhere in the Backwell Neighbourhood Development Plan fully meet the challenge for the provision of local housing needs, services (within the limits of infrastructure limitations) and the Settlement Boundary and physical community facilities.

The green spaces are complementary to the physical community facilities, with controlled recreational access along well located, historical public footpaths. The Proposal is that the letter and the spirit of the Core Strategy Vision for Backwell can only be delivered by the green spaces at Farleigh Fields and Moor Lane being protected as LGS to maintain these essential elements of the rural character of the Parish.
NSC Core Strategy:  
CS4: Nature Conservation

North Somerset contains outstanding wildlife habitats and species. These include limestone grasslands, traditional orchards, wetlands, rhynes, commons, hedgerows, ancient woodlands and the Severn Estuary. Key species include rare horseshoe bats, otters, wildfowl, and wading birds, slow worms and water voles.

The biodiversity of North Somerset will be maintained and enhanced by:

1) seeking to meet local and national Biodiversity Action Plan targets taking account of climate change and the need for habitats and species to adapt to it:

2) seeking to ensure new development is designed to maximise benefits to biodiversity, incorporating, safeguarding and enhancing natural habitats and features and adding to them where possible, particularly networks of habitats. A net loss of biodiversity interest should be avoided and a net gain achieved where possible:

3) seeking to protect, connect and enhance important habitats, particularly designated sites, ancient woodlands and veteran trees:

4) promoting the enhancement of existing and provision of new green infrastructure of value to wildlife:

5) promoting native tree planting and well targeted woodland creation, and encouraging retention of trees, with a view to enhancing biodiversity.

Various clauses have relevance including:

3.71: The council will have close regard to its duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity in exercising its functions, so far as is consistent with the proper exercising of those functions. This includes the need to consider habitats and species of principal importance in England as set out in Section 41 of the NERC Act.

3.75: The council and developers will liaise and work closely with the various advisory bodies and interest groups on biodiversity, including for example Natural England, the Avon Biodiversity Partnership, Avon Wildlife Trust, the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BERC), North Somerset Parish Wildlife Wardens etc.

This policy contributes towards meeting the objectives of Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.
BRA/BET POSITION ON CORE STRATEGY 4:

The BRA/BET Proposal for Local Green Spaces at Farleigh Fields and Moor Lane provide a means of delivery of Core Strategy 4 in Backwell and its connecting areas. While the written opinion of a former Principal Inspector and current Examiner can be précised that it is only necessary for a NP (including ‘Backwell Future’) to conform with the ‘spirit rather than the letter’ of the CS the BRA Proposal is careful throughout to meet both tests. Further evidence on this topic is provided in Section 11.

NSC Core Strategy:
CS5: Living within environmental limits
Landscape

The character, distinctiveness, diversity and quality of North Somerset’s landscape and townscape will be protected and enhanced by the careful, sensitive management and design of development. Close regard will be paid to the character of National Character Areas in North Somerset and particularly that of the 11 landscape types and 31 landscape character areas identified in the North Somerset Landscape Character assessment.

The Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be protected by ensuring that development proposals conserve and enhance its natural beauty and respect its character, taking into account the economic and social well-being of the area.

Historical environment

The council will conserve the historic environment of North Somerset, having regard to the significance of heritage assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings, buildings of local significance, scheduled monuments, other archaeological sites, registered and other historic parks and gardens.

Particular attention will be given to aspects of the historic environment which contribute to the distinctive character of North Somerset, such as the Victorian townscapes and seafronts in Weston and Clevedon

BRA/BET POSITION ON CORE STRATEGY 5:

Landscape

The two proposed LGS areas characterise 2 of the 11 landscape types that NSC have identified in their assessment as objectives to be protected and enhanced at 3.70.

The Proposed LGS at Farleigh Fields and at Moor Lane Fields are a means of delivery in Backwell Neighbourhood Development Plan to enhance protection and aid delivery of Landscape as required by Core Strategy 5.
Historical environment:

Backwell includes 3 of the 34 Conservation Areas in North Somerset (3.82). Two of these are adjacent to the heritage asset of Farleigh Fields and provide a vital part of the character of these Conservation Areas by providing their setting and ambience. Further, its location within 2 of the original 5 hamlets is complemented by the preservation of their original connecting footpaths and historically important, productive agricultural fields divided by historically significant hedgerows.

While the Moor Lane space is not immediately adjacent to the West Town Conservation Area it holds similar significance as part of one of the original hamlets. By their different landscape character they both contribute to the character in a complementary agricultural history. They also carry historical footpaths providing connections between the original hamlets and the adjoining parishes. Further, the hedgerows have similar historical significance.

These aspects are dealt with more fully in Section 9.

The proposed LGS at Farleigh Fields and Moor Lane are a means of delivery in Backwell Neighbourhood Development Plan that will enhance protection and aid delivery of Historical environment Landscape as required by the spirit and the letter of Core Strategy 5.

NSC Core Strategy:
CS9:Living within environmental limits
Green Infrastructure
The existing network of green infrastructure will be safeguarded, improved and enhanced by further provision, linking in to existing provision where appropriate, ensuring it is a multifunctional, accessible network which promotes healthy lifestyles, maintains and improves biodiversity and landscape character and contributes to climate change objectives.

Priority will be given to:

9 bullet points including
- the protection of wildlife sites
- The continued development of a network of green spaces, water bodies, paths and cycleways and bridleways. The management, maintenance, upgrading and extension of public rights of way network including connectivity to areas of green infrastructure within and outside North Somerset
BRA POSITION ON CORE STRATEGY 9:

Green Infrastructure:

The two proposed LGS areas at Farleigh Fields and Moor Lane are part of the existing green infrastructure that requires safeguarding, improvement and enhancement by further protection. Long term protection of these areas would facilitate the community's wish to invest in planting of native trees and hedgerows to reinforce existing plantings to enhance visual amenity, wildlife and biodiversity, beauty and tranquility. Backwell has a long record of public subscription to long term community facilities and environmental enhancement as demonstrated by the BET areas and roadside plantings etc. It is foreseen that the two LGSs would be improved and enhanced by matched funding from the community, with small contributions from CIL etc. and other community funding from quarrying and landfill.

LGS are a means of delivery in Neighbourhood Development Plan terms that will safeguard, improve and enhance provision as required by both the letter and the spirit of the NS Core Strategy. The protection of these Local Green Spaces will assist in the delivery of CS 9 of the Core Strategy.
BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

‘BACKWELL FUTURE’

SUBMISSION TO BACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL

by

BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

of

CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES

located at:

MOOR LANE FIELDS

and

FARLEIGH FIELDS

UNDER SECTION 8 OF NPPF

SECTION 4

SUMMARY OF NSC ADVICE ON LGS
The National Planning Policy Framework, Section 8, is restated in Section 2 of this submission. The NPPF introduces the concept of Local Green Spaces in two clauses of 195 words with a further clause of proviso of 19 words. This is set in a section dealing with ‘Promoting Healthy Communities’ that includes only a further 7 clauses, some of which provide context but are not specific to LGS.

There is no explanatory information and no legal precedent.

The Adopted Version of North Somerset’s Core Strategy is silent on the subject of Local Green Spaces; the drafting predating the concept.

However, the Steering Group sought advice from NSC Officers, to assist them in the production of the draft Backwell Neighbourhood Plan. The SG’s apparent wish was to identify any constraints in untested policy while reflecting the needs and aspirations of the community for two demonstrably special areas in the village being considered as LGSs.

Not unreasonably, the Officer’s advice changed as they examined it internally at NSC and learnt of evolving policy elsewhere in following months.

We have attempted below to summarise the background advice provided by NSC Officers, relying on dBNP where indicated, with our comments and position on each topic of advice:

**EXTENT OF LAND:**

**REFERENCE dBNP 11.5:**

This states:

‘In January 2012, the Parish Council received advice from NSC that, ‘to consider the whole area of Farleigh Fields as open green space may exceed the spirit of the Draft NPPF and similarly the size of the area being discussed west of Moor Lane.’ It decided that further evidence was required and that a questionnaire should be devised for the purpose.

**REFERENCE dBNP 11.49:**

This states:

On 2\textsuperscript{nd} October 2012, North Somerset Council provided further guidance on identifying Local Green Spaces. Extracts from the guidance read, ‘my view is now that as the incentive is to secure protection of these spaces in a similar way to Green Belts, that this could, or perhaps should apply to a wide range of spaces which are of particular importance to local communities’ and ‘I don’t think I would rule the whole of Farleigh Fields out on that basis.’
REFERENCE dBNP 11.50:

The response to 11.49 immediately above this states:

‘The Steering Group noted this guidance was significantly different from that provided by NSC in January 2012 (summarised at 11.5).’

REFERENCE dBNP 11.51:

In furtherance to 11.50, immediately above, this states:

‘If this guidance had been available sooner it is probable that the Parish Council’s questionnaire would have been designed to focus on a holistic approach rather than the field by field investigation.’

BRA/BET POSITION ON ADVICE ON EXTENT OF LAND:

Presumably space constraints required extracts to be used in the draft BNP. However, other extracts would have enlarged on the reasons given for this significant change in NSC’s earlier opinion (11.5). Taking the extract at 11.49, relating to the significant change in the extent of land the Planning Policy Manager also explained:

‘When the NPPF first came out my first instinct was to define LGS quite narrowly i.e. that should only apply to the very special areas which are integral to the character of a village or neighbourhood such as village greens and formal parks. We therefore started out by defining the very best spaces as LGS mindful that these were ‘demonstrably special’ and that LGS ‘will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space’. However, having discussed this internally with colleagues who work in open spaces and in response to comments from other parishes, I think that my view is that this is too strict an approach.’

BRA/BET POSITION:

Having taken preliminary legal advice, BRA/BET never accepted the view (in 11.5) that LGS was an alternative definition for a park or village green. This preliminary advice led to the opinion stated in Section 6. It was against this advice, and evolving policies elsewhere, that BRA/BET undertook a holistic appraisal starting with on-the-ground surveys in those areas highlighted in the BCP (dBNP 11.4), as special to the community. The intention was to identify coherent tracts of land that would meet the NPPF criteria. These detailed field and desk surveys led BRA/BET to exclude a quarter of the fields identified by BPC as being worthy of survey since they did not fully meet candidate status even as supporting areas to those nominated.

BRA welcomes the later advice at 11.49 and the implied acceptance by dBNP SG in 11.50. At 11.51 the SG indicates that, had it ignored the advice in 11.5, it would have adopted a holistic approach identical, or not unlike, that adopted by BRA/BET. This is confirmed at 11.52 in dBNP which includes, ‘The SG accepts the logic of the BRA/BET proposal and is sympathetic to the concept especially in the light of revised guidance from NSC.’ We maintain that the BRA/BET approach has been sound throughout and that this Report provides the evidence called for in later sentences of 11.54. We submit that The Proposal is sound and in full compliance with NPPF.
ADDITIONAL ADVICE NOT INCLUDED IN dBNP:

Additional assistance was provided by the same Senior Officer, in December 2011, on another key aspect when considering the extent of land. No extract of this guidance is published in dBNP. In view of the vital importance of this advice, extracts are stated below:

‘MR [M Reep] suggested initially that all 6 fields [at FF] could be considered for designation. The community also valued fields in the Moor Lane area’ and, ‘I think that my initial concern with promoting the 2 fields is that it could provide a perception to developers (and possible [sic] some residents) that there may be parts of Farleigh Fields where development was more likely.’

It is noteworthy that, the opinion on the risks of housing development infilling expressed in ‘a perception to developers that there may be parts [of surrounding fields] where development was more likely’ remains extant. This is likely to occur if insufficiently coherent LGSs, such as individual fields, were adopted.

The statement has endured and not required revisiting by NSC. This is despite the changing advice on extent of land, which has been revisited a number of times. If the opinion on the risk were unsound it appears inconceivable that this expressed risk would not have been reconsidered. It is manifestly clear that if development takes place in the fields adjoining an LGS of a single field or isolated area, such as in the BPC questionnaire, the result would be a destruction of the virtues that the LGS seeks to protect. This aspect is more fully dealt with in Section 13, ‘Risks.’

This early extract confirms advice received by BRA that to meet the criteria for a Local Green Space the land must have a sufficient extent to be a tract. By meeting this primary requirement it will then be of sufficient size to provide protection of beauty and tranquillity as well as continuing to meet the test of richness of wildlife. It should also be noted that the Officer’s opinion above pre-dates the narrowly cautious one of January 2012 (11.5)

Further advice was received from a NSC Officer concerning the SG questionnaire responses in dBNP 11.43. This is dealt with below:

REFERENCE dBNP 11.43:

On 4th September 2012, under the heading ‘Audit of the Methodology used to identify Local Green Spaces’, Celia Dring, Principal Planning Policy Officer, NSC included the following statement:

‘North Somerset Council confirms that:

[4 paragraphs reviewed in January 2013 submission] followed by:

the limited response (although not necessarily unusual) is to be used as a starting point for consultation on the draft plan to get further views and move towards a well informed and evidenced conclusion.’
BRA/BET POSITION ON RESPONSE TO SG QUESTIONNAIRE:

BRA/BET accepts this opinion was on the basis that it predates the publication of the pre-consultation edition of this Proposal.

It allows for further evidence, particularly this Report, and that it should not exclude those who have expressed an early view in response to the BPC questionnaire from having their support aggregated (at least in some meaningful measure) towards the soundly compliant Proposal. BRA’s position on this clause in dBNP is outlined above. Other aspects of the BPC/SG questionnaire (including 11.43) were dealt with in the BRA/BET January 2013 submission.
BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
‘BACKWELL FUTURE’

SUBMISSION TO BACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
by
BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
of
CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES
located at:
MOOR LANE FIELDS
and
FARLEIGH FIELDS

UNDER SECTION 8 OF NPPF

SECTION 5
EMERGING EVIDENCE ELSEWHERE IN ENGLAND
AS TO LGS SIZE
LGS is a new planning concept published in the NPPF and the criteria are undefined and untested. Criteria include aspects such as beauty, tranquillity, richness of wildlife and being special to the community. A further clause provides that an LGS shall “… not be an extensive tract of land”. The dBNP SG appears to have seized on this latter aspect by indicating individual fields and little more. We believe that there is a danger of failing the village by being too cautious and not taking advantage of the possible scope for more coherent areas. BRA has, therefore, looked elsewhere in the Country to see how other authorities have interpreted size. Since we are a Vanguard NP there is only limited evidence available. Those considered include:

- **Dawlish Parish NP**: This NP has been subject to Inspection but was refused permission to go to referendum on failure to observe relevant Core Strategy. However, in his Report the Inspector observed that, the plan makers sought **an extension of public rights of way and access to open land green areas of local importance**. He indicated that to meet national policy they should have done this through the LGS designation.

- **Walton PC**: This NP has been published with the support of the County Council and has been to public consultation receiving approvals in excess of 90%. The LGS section specifies 8 pieces of land forming 3 areas totalling some 20 fields, in part or totality, with much of the argument resting on visual amenity particularly towards the historic church. Including this historical aspect these are also expressions of beauty and tranquillity, common to the character of Backwell.

- **Oxford**: The Council has adopted a system of assessing visual amenity through conical corridors towards historic landmarks and other amenities. CPRE advises that this planning principle is being used elsewhere looking into, or out of, the community. **These cones cover very considerable areas and distances.**

- **Leicester City & County Councils**: These major authorities have adopted policies towards LGS based on their adopted policies on Green Spaces where the primary factor is value to the community. They indicate extensive as referring to large forests and strategic river corridors but do not exclude parts of these as suitable as LGS where they are special to the community. This gives guidance of the very large areas that are considered to be beyond the criteria. Those identified are widespread and considerably greater than a tract of contiguous fields and, therefore, indicative of an extensive tract of land.

The above review was produced in October 2012. Little new material has been identified since then, with many local authorities concentrating on assisting councils by producing model documents. They have yet to get to the minutiae of interpretation with no precedent to rely on. What is evident is that the Walton PC NP most closely relates to dBNP. Walton identifies 3 tracts as LGSs totalling 20 fields compared with our 2 LGS consisting of one tract of 12 coherent fields and a second tract of 6 coherent fields. The Walton NP has proceeded though public consultation receiving high approval ratings in the mid to high 90% range.

This summary document forms part of an ongoing study of matters arising from the National Planning Policy Framework and Backwell Neighbourhood Plan. Acknowledgement is made to all sources and professional expertise that have contributed.

BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
‘BACKWELL FUTURE’

SUBMISSION TO BACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
by
BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
of
CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES
located at:
MOOR LANE FIELDS
and
FARLEIGH FIELDS

UNDER SECTION 8 OF NPPF

SECTION 6
LEGAL OPINION AS TO ‘TRACT OF LAND’
& ‘EXTENSIVE TRACT OF LAND’
SECTION 6

OPINION AS TO ‘... an extensive tract of land’

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on Local Green Spaces sets a parameter at the third bullet point, of Clause 77 (page 17) of Section 8 that reads as follows:-

‘The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

● where the green area concerned is local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

The NPPF resulted from a policy decision by Government to complement the Localism Bill by a redrafting of Planning Policy to include the new provision of LGS. Ministers laid great emphasis on the fact that policy was restated in 65 pages, rather than previous policy statements that had grown to well in excess of 1,000. It must be assumed, therefore, that no word has been carelessly included. The wording of this criterion was first published in the dNPPF. This was subject to public consultation before being adopted and published unchanged in the NPPF. One must assume, therefore, that it has been fully scrutinised so that each word can be examined within its context.

The requirement to be “local in character” is self evident and dealt with in Section 12. The NPPF does not enlarge on how the words ‘extensive tract of land’ should be considered.

In this Section the words ‘not an extensive tract of land’ are examined, relying on professional opinion and a ‘Plain English’ interpretation throughout. In the absence of binding precedent, or guidance, BRA and its professional advisors have made an extensive search as to other comparable legislation where similar terms are used and may provide obiter dictum guidance. This is dealt with in the second part of this Section.

First, examining the words that give rise to the greatest misunderstanding we have: “Tract of Land”:
“Tract of Land”:

The Collins Dictionary provides only one relevant, unqualified definition of ‘tract’, is “an extended area, as of land”. **NB importantly an ‘extended area’**. In this context a tract within a Service Village (Vision 6) is likely to extend over a larger area than is possible in a restricted, urban built environment (where a park or green might be present) to achieve “… protecting of its rural character” as part of a “rural community”.

Chambers confines itself to ‘tract’ while associating it with space, “a stretch or extent of space [or time]; a region, area”. Synonyms of tract include, area, territory, zone, region, expanse, swathe, strip etc.

“Extensive”:

In this context the word is an adjective, i.e. a word added to the criteria of “a tract of land” to modify, qualify or limit but it does not provide a separate criterion, or definition. The insertion of the word implies that one of the main criteria for a LGS is that it should be “a tract of land”. The only limitation follows from the inclusion of the words “not an extensive” to qualify its overall extent and in no way detracts from the “tract of land” that is the primary requirement. While the tract should be an extended area, the adjective prevents it being of an entirely greater magnitude of size that is huge or vast.

The dictionary definitions of ‘extensive’ include ‘large’, ‘widespread’ and ‘comprehensive’ with synonyms including big, large, huge, vast, massive, widespread, wide-ranging, far-reaching etc.

We have noted the written opinion of a former Principal Inspector and current Examiner that ‘National policy can sometimes be interpreted in different ways when applied to local circumstances – indeed imprecision may be deliberate.

**BRA POSITION:**

To comply with the NPPF, the land selected as LGS needs to be a ‘tract’. This implies an extended area or region, that consists of a meaningful expanse of land such as a zone or a swathe [to “bind round, envelope”] that is more than individual fields in isolation.

In simple terms this cannot be a field in isolation. It is unlikely to be so extensive as to be a complete farm, but could include parts of holdings. The clear indication is that a Local Green Space should be a tract consisting of a coherent group of contiguous fields forming an area, swathe or zone, particularly one that is part of the local rural character and that its protection should contribute to maintaining this rural identity and character.

Further any attempt to dismiss the extent of either space as ‘extensive’ purely on the basis of area measurements will fail the expert’s guidance that any imprecision in national policy may be deliberate to meet local circumstances such as those evidenced in Backwell.

Indeed BRA submits that the absence of binding precedent, or guidance, misled the dBNP SG in its concern not to unduly delay information gathering despite imprecise advice. Such advice as was available led it to an interpretation that was too narrow and does not serve the village well in proposing fields as LGS. On the basis of the above advice, BRA & BET are confident that The Proposal fully complies with this criterion.
**Other Legislation:**

BRA and its professional advisors have made an extensive search as to other comparable legislation where similar terms are used and may provide *obiter dictum* guidance. The only judgement found to date is that in the High Court dated 2nd November 2005 involving Mayrick Estate Management Ltd and Others v Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. This concerned a specific paragraph in a Part of Schedule to the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (since modified but still extant).

Many words used in the legislation are similar, although in some cases slightly more specific to that in the NPPF. Terms included in the National Parks’ legislation that were under enquiry included, ‘extensive extent of countryside’, ‘open-air recreation’, ‘natural beauty’, ‘wildlife’ and ‘cultural heritage’

It may be concluded that those drafting the NPPF were not unmindful of this prior legislation and that some of the terms had been tested, or stood the test of time.

It is also suggested that in drawing on this source of terminology the legislators were seeking to exclude extensive tracts such as those that were covered by National Parks legislation. These are invariably big, large, huge, vast, massive, widespread, wide-ranging, far-reaching etc. or more simply ‘extensive tracts’.

Given that the word ‘land’ is inclusive of all surfaces within England, including those in urban areas, it is not unreasonable to associate the word ‘countryside’ used here in a rural village setting context, such as Backwell, for ‘land’ used in the generic NPPF.

**BRA POSITION:**

To date, this single High Court judgement is the only relevant judgement identified. This authoritative source cannot be considered as a binding precedent but there are strong indications as to a possible source used in drafting the proviso of, ‘an extensive tract of land’. There is nothing in this case to suggest weaknesses in the opinion received defining a ‘tract of land’ and not ‘an extensive tract of land’. We submit, that given the similarities, it is indicative of further confirmation for the opinion received. It provides a further measure of support that The Proposal, evidenced by BRA/BET, is sound and in full compliance with this criterion since neither of the LGSs can be considered as being ‘an extensive tract of land.’

This summary document forms the basis for ongoing study of matters arising from the National Planning Policy Framework and Backwell Neighbourhood Plan. Acknowledgement is made to all sources and professional expertise that have contributed. The title to all the final documents rests with Backwell Residents Association and should not be reproduced without acknowledgement. © January 2014
BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
‘BACKWELL FUTURE’

SUBMISSION TO BACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
by
BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
of
CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES
located at:
MOOR LANE FIELDS
and
FARLEIGH FIELDS

UNDER SECTION 8 OF NPPF

SECTION 7
EVIDENCE AS TO CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE COMMUNITY IN BACKWELL’S LGSs
The NPPF policy framework on Local Green Spaces sets a parameter at the first bullet point, of Section 8 as follows

**The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:**

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;

Dealing with each Space:

**Farleigh Fields:**

This is a completely self-contained, coherent area with clearly defined edges. All six fields, 1 to 6 inclusive are in immediate proximity to the community with one, or more, boundaries adjoining the Settlement Boundary which is largely formed by low density dwellings. Two of the fields are traversed by well used footpaths and the other 4 fields are visible beyond one hedgerow forming a contiguous rural area of tranquillity and beauty where wildlife can be observed and its historic character protected.

**Moor Lane Fields:**

This is a defined coherent area with six of the 12 fields, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, & 18 in immediate proximity to the community with one, or more, boundaries adjoining the Settlement Boundary, or established play areas or playing fields – providing future planning flexibility for these facilities in appropriate very special circumstances. Of the other 6 fields, 10, 17 & 21 are in very close proximity being one removed and 15, 19 & 20 in close proximity being two removed, but contiguous with those adjoining the Settlement Boundary which forms a clearly defined edge with the railway containing a further defined aspect. The boundary at the western end is clearly identified by the buildings of Grove Farm and the immediacy to traversing footpaths. No part of the LGS can be considered so removed as to fail to be in close proximity - with field 16 being deliberately excluded despite its other merits. Five of the fields are traversed by well used footpaths and all the other fields are visible beyond one hedgerow forming a contiguous rural area of tranquillity and beauty within which wildlife can be observed and studied.

The NPPF states that proximity to the community is the criteria. We have taken this narrowly to mean Backwell. However, it is known that these areas of Backwell are extensively visited by those from the remainder of NS and beyond. These recreational visitors include wildlife academics and amateur enthusiasts as well as those involved in rambling, cross country running and other healthy pursuits.

**SUMMARY:**

Both the Local Green Spaces in BRA/BET’s Proposal are in close proximity to the community of Backwell and are self contained with clearly identifiable boundaries.
BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
‘BACKWELL FUTURE’

SUBMISSION TO BACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
by
BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
of
CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES
located at:
MOOR LANE FIELDS
and
FARLEIGH FIELDS
UNDER SECTION 8 OF NPPF

SECTION 8
THE PROPOSAL’S SATISFACTION of
‘SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY’
SECTION 8

“DEMONSTRABLY SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY” IN BACKWELL’S PROPOSAL FOR LGSs

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on Local Green Spaces sets a parameter at the second bullet point, of Clause 77 of Section 8 that reads as follows:-

‘The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

● 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 ‘ … [next bullet point]

The NPPF does not enlarge on how the words ‘demonstrably special to a local community’ should be considered. A tract of land will be particularly special to every interest group and individual member of the community in a different way depending on their experiences and use but with a cumulative result. Individual villagers have expressed their support by responding to surveys. We have, therefore, elected here to select three examples of collective action by the community that have manifested themselves over a substantial and continuing number of years to illustrate the very special regard that the community has for the two tracts of land that are proposed as Local Green Spaces. The three examples of collective action are those of

- recreational use
- richness of its wildlife and biodiversity
- individual and collective financial and personal commitment

Dealing with these as listed:

Recreational use:

This editor moved to his first home in the village in 1963. Early in the Summer of 1964, he was advised by neighbours of the ‘Friday Evening Village Walks’ - that had already been undertaken for a number of years. At that time they were normally led by a third generation, native born, Backwell Parish Councillor, Jack Griffin - then retired.
The primary purpose was to walk the footpaths and record in the Parish Council Minutes their use. This was at a time when footpaths were not well marked and landowners encroached at will and it was frequently necessary to clear the way to keep them open. The secondary purpose was for newcomers to learn the oral history of Backwell and share this countryman’s knowledge and love of wildlife and the countryside while learning the historic routes around the village.

The Walks usually started from the Parish Hall and invariably used the routes through Moor Lane and Farleigh Fields as their basis from which to branch out.

The Walks were always well attended and our children were introduced to them, from an early age. In turn, they have passed their enjoyment to the next generation. Others have successively taken over the role of leader. Villagers dropped out of the Walks as their knowledge increased and they preferred to walk independently at times of their choosing - indulging their hobbies (whether involving flora or fauna) or merely enjoying the exercise in beautiful surroundings close to the community.

These led walks continue today, despite the formalisation of the footpaths with way mark sign posting (at first undertaken by residents) and improved maintenance.

Better documentation of the routes has been created subsequently; e.g-

The 2003 publication ‘The Inn Thing – Pub Walks in Nailsea & District’ (ISBN: 0-9545543-0-2) was published by Nailsea & District Footpath Group. It described 10 walks starting at pubs in 10 villages, or towns, in the District as the basis for walks. Backwell and Nailsea were 2 of the nominated starting points – the first walking Farleigh Fields’ footpaths and the second skirting them with views to the area. This brochure shows the special nature of these areas is district wide and not limited to the community of Backwell.

In 1990 a collection of six Backwell walks was devised by Geoff White, with his wife, Jo, contributing illustrations of historic or landscape features. (Geoff and Jo are long standing residents and BRA members).

In 2007 NSC produced the ‘Backwell Round’ (100023397 2007) of 2 walks, of 8.4 & 4.8 km, with a further option. These used all the footpaths in the proposed LGSs as well as many others. This was published in response to popular demand in 2010.
In March 2011 Backwell Parish Council’s Rights of Way Committee, recognising how special the areas and recreation were to the community, updated the narrative guides and information under its Chair, Chris Perry. This was published, (with maps by resident Peter Hemmings) together with a copy of the ‘Backwell Round’ as ‘A Collection of Backwell Walks including The Backwell Round’. The first print run of 200 copies was soon exhausted and a reprint was undertaken in 2012 of a further 200 copies. A third print run was completed in 2013.

The wider community interest is also demonstrated by the Ramblers Association interest in the preservation of these footpaths, as demonstrated in their objection to a deviation request for one in a recent Planning Application.

Of this Collection of 6 walks, 3 include Farleigh Field’s and 2 Moor Lane Field’s footpaths. The commentary emphasises the setting, features and surroundings to the immediate areas seen and enjoyed from the footpaths. It is clear that while attention is drawn to ‘The Country Code’s’ strictures on access being limited to the footpaths, the quality and beauty of the experience is within the whole tracts of land, including their surroundings in productive agricultural use.

The recent photographs in Section 11 of dBNP (11.4, pp 40, 11.23, pp 43, 11.24, pp 44, 11.28 pp 44, 11.30 pp 44 & 11.34, pp 45) all show well used footpaths, with that at 11.23 populated by a group (possibly led) walk and that at 11.28 by an individual. All (particularly 11.30) show the agricultural use to be well respected.

The half century of community involvement in protecting, developing and enjoying access to the two proposed areas of Local Green Spaces for recreation and hobbies while supporting continuing productive agricultural use exemplifies that both these areas are **demonstrably very special to the community and should be designated as Local Green Spaces.**

**Richness of Wildlife & Biodiversity:**

In considering the words ‘**demonstrably special to a local community**’ it is particularly relevant to consider the very special value that the community places on the very diverse and prolific wildlife, including endangered species, in both areas in of the proposed Local Green Spaces.

A special section is devoted elsewhere to the richness and diversity which does not need to be repeated here. What is significant is the extensive list of Acknowledgements. This includes a wide range of Societies, each with considerable memberships, and the professional and amateur individuals who have participated – largely from within Backwell but also from the wider district community. It demonstrates that this criterion is not the preserve of a few people but of a significant part of the Backwell community. Their amateur and professional diverse interests, recreations and enjoyment of the proposed LGS areas confirms that both areas are **demonstrably very special to the community.**
Individual and Collective Financial and Personal Commitment

In considering the words ‘demonstrably special to a local community’ it is particularly relevant to consider the effort that the community has expended in man hours of personal and passionate commitment, together with the significant sums of money invested in protecting areas of green space over the last 40 years. This has been carried out by the whole community but particularly Backwell Parish Council, Backwell Residents Association and latterly Backwell Environmental Trust. The Parish Council has a statutory duty to represent the whole village. BRA and BET are the largest voluntary membership organisations in the Parish. While many people are in dual membership the two organisations represent a significant proportion of the adult population comparable to those who take part in local elections. The Councillors and Officers of all three bodies undertake their work on a voluntary, unremunerated basis. BPC relies on the precept to serve electors and the other two rely on voluntary subscribing membership and donations.

In recent years all three have complemented and supported each other while fulfilling different roles towards the shared objectives but it is useful to explain their differing histories, administration and memberships to demonstrate the breadth of the community who have been actively involved in protecting the areas proposed as Local Green Spaces:

Backwell Parish Council (BPC):

BPC is a Statutory Consultee in planning procedures. As an elected body of 15 Councillors, it has to be sensitive to the amount of precept raised and its effective expenditure to reflect the community’s wishes. BPC’s work is constrained by local authority legislation that limits the amount time it can devote to planning matters at the expense of its other duties. Similarly, it is not free to spend the precept on purely speculative concerns regarding actual or potential planning developments.

Nonetheless, as will be seen below BPC has repeatedly responded to planning applications in areas that were demonstrably special to the village community by use of the precept to appoint qualified persons to represent the community and to secure professional reports and witnesses at all levels of the planning process through to Appeal Inquiries.
Backwell Residents Association (BRA):

BRA was originally formed in the early 1960’s as the Backwell Ratepayers Association as a ginger group to attempt to influence and discipline BPC when there was considerable public disquiet as to its conduct. With subsequent elections and changes in standards, BPC was seen as more in tune with the community and BRA started to look for ways of being more sympathetic to its work. Older residents expressed their dissatisfaction with the inappropriateness and lack of character of the rampant developments of the 1950s and 60s. It was also apparent that with its inherited facilities and as the village became more cohesive it was an attractive place for developers to target readily marketable, higher margin, developments. BRA became increasingly occupied in this aspect, that fell outside the interests of other Societies. It engaged the professional skills and talents of residents. Today it remains a voluntary members’ Association, dependent on a basic (£10) household subscription. This is supplemented by donations and special ‘fighting funds’ when areas that are demonstrably special to the local community are threatened. The voting membership rose to over 700 when these events occurred in the past. Currently, the membership is some 317 households with 555 voting members, representing an estimated 825 villagers after accounting for dependents and other occupiers. It is administered by an elected Committee of 12 volunteers, drawn from a wide spread of locations in the Parish.

BRA is able to take advantage on a Pro Bono basis of its many professional members’ skills and experiences ranging from engineering, architecture, local history, finance, planning, highways, statistics, mineral extraction, etc to those with experience in communications, education, the environment and wildlife, administration, market research, local government etc. Where necessary it employs its funds to engage consultants to provide specialised professional expertise when not available within its membership or to provide independent views or status.

In the last 25 years BRA has been an active participant in evolving planning policies at all levels, from national and regional to district and local. At national level we have campaigned either directly e.g. to our MP or Ministers, or indirectly through bodies such as our membership of CPRE. We were among the few participants from North Somerset at the Regional Spatial Strategy and before that in Avon CC’s evolving strategies. At District level we have played a part in Local Plans and Replacement Local Plans and latterly, through our former Chairman (then a NSC District Councillor) in the Core Strategy. BRA has held Rule 6 status at many Public Inquiries.

Unlike BET, BRA owns no property, with its assets being entirely in its financial reserves and its extensive archives. These cover previous planning issues and Inquiries including witness statements, decisions, press cuttings, copies of petitions, summaries of letters of objection etc.

BRA has also played an active part in associated issues relating to the community including retention of their Post Office and late collections, Quarry Liaison Committees, transport issues, Superfast Broadband, Youth Club support, National Grid 400kv line routing, quarrying, renewal energy installations and airport development issues etc.
Backwell Environment Trust (BET):
(Edited by Bill Charnock  Founder Trustee and BET Chairman 2004-2012.)

Backwell Environment Trust (BET) began in December 2004 when the woodland situated at the top of Backwell Hill and containing the village’s historic Jubilee Stone came up for sale. A group of Backwell residents and Backwell Parish Wildlife Wardens decided to try to raise the funds to buy the wood and between January and April 2005 they leafleted every household in Backwell and received generous and widespread support.

By May 2005, BET had raised sufficient funding from individual membership fees and donations to become a registered charity (No. 1109406) and adopted a model Charity Commission constitution the first objective of which is:

*To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment by promoting biodiversity*.

*This original objective was extended at the 2010 AGM to cover historical aspects of the natural environment in anticipation of acquiring Backwell Cave to allow expenditure by the Trust on carbon dating of artefacts from the Cave.*

Thus, BET is directly concerned with the issue of Local Green Spaces.

BET’s Constitution provides for one member one vote and, since its inception, membership has fluctuated between 250 and 350. An Annual General Meeting is held each November at which up to 12 Trustees are elected to manage the Trust. BET is up to date with all its reporting to the Charity Commission.

On the basis of widespread local support providing ~10% of the purchase price for Jubilee Stone Wood, BET received a grant for the other 90% from the North Somerset Aggregates Levy in September 2005 and assumed legal title to the 4 hectare (10 acre) wood in January 2006.

Most of the adjacent Badgers Wood, a further 4.8 hectares (12 acres) was bought in early 2010 with a Landfill Levy Grant made by the Yanley and North Somerset Environmental Company. Unfortunately, that 1.2 hectare (3 acres) part of Badgers Wood containing a cave in which prehistoric human remains had been discovered was withdrawn from the sale by the vendor at a late contract stage and sold instead to the current owner of adjoining Coles quarry. BET remains committed to acquiring the cave and its surrounding woodland whenever this becomes possible.

In the case of both woods subsequent maintenance and development costs have been met by contributions from BET members, from private donations sometimes by Pro Bono work, from Bristol International Airport and from Backwell Parish Council.

The adjacent Jubilee Stone and Badgers Wood Nature Reserves occupy a strategically important part of the northern flank of Broadfield Down stretching from Flax Bourton Combe to Congresbury creating and maintaining an important wildlife corridor. Open fields connect the reserves to Church Lane and beyond across Farleigh Fields and the A370 to Backwell Common and the green belt areas to the east. There are similar western connections across and around Coles Quarry to the extensive and open tracts of land west of Backwell. All these connections underpin the relatively rich biodiversity of the whole district.

6 of 11
The two nature reserves are maintained, managed and improved by volunteers working five half-day sessions each month giving historically of the order of 2000 man-hours donated in each year. This figure continues to rise and in the most recent reporting year 2011/12 was 3489 hours.

This substantial contribution of the community was recognised in 2010 when BET received the Queen’s Award for Volunteering, the equivalent for groups of an MBE for individuals. A presentation of a Royal Citation and a commemorative crystal was made to BET at the Jubilee Stone by the deputy Lord Lieutenant of Somerset in June of 2010 and 4 members attending a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

Jubilee Stone Wood and Badgers Wood Nature Reserves are owned and independently managed by Backwell Environment Trust. They are listed by the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre as a wildlife site and are recognised nationally as an important Dormouse haven. A licensed Dormouse handler inspects the numerous boxes monthly and the population is flourishing.

The two Backwell Hill nature reserves, rising high above Farleigh Fields, form a significant part of the ecological connectivity that rings the main residential area.

**SUMMARY**

So far, we have identified that BPC & BRA have together spent £74,533 in defending these 2 Local Green Spaces. Of this total, BRA has incurred £22,750. It is conservatively estimated that when the examination of BPC’s archived Minutes are completed the total figure will exceed £85,000 but that such further evidence is not material to the argument proven already.

The special nature of these tracts of land to the Backwell Community is also demonstrated by the level of public participation whenever there is a major proposal to encroach on them. On each occasion the community has submitted 100’s of letters, and in 2005 one petition on the Moor Lane area secured 1,631 signatures (47% of electorate) At each Public Inquiry there have been more people wishing to appear as witnesses than could be accommodated since some might repeat the objections of others and seriously extend the costs.

**HISTORICAL SUMMARY:**

The table below (pp 8) summarises the continuing involvement of the community in these two tracts of land:
OUTLINE OF ABOVE EVENTS IN ABOVE TABLE:

The detail arising from the above summary is very extensive but we give an outline of BPC & BRA’s joint and several involvement with a few further details as to individual and shared costs and some indications of the large numbers of the community involved etc. to demonstrate the special nature of these two proposed Local Green Spaces to the Backwell Community:

FARLEIGH FIELDS

1978ca. Second City

Entrance through what is now Fairfield Way with ca. 650 houses to the back of Dark Lane

Avon CC suggested too many on a cul-de-sac so withdrawn

(Val Wells 16.11.2012)
1985: Second City (Beazers). Application for 250 houses
(Oct) Entrance through Fairfield Way with 225 houses to Dark Lane
Refused Woodspring DC & Appeal at Public Inquiry (15.10.1985)
BRA instructed Bennett Legatt (Ian Forsyth partner appeared) He called a number
of BRA villagers including Dr Clive Roberts, Tom Collinson, Bruce Stewart, and Dick
Westmacott
BRA costs £5,000 + £1,000 disbursements. 

TOTAL BRA: £6,000

BPC costs yet to be determined
Appeal recommended for approval by Inspector with caveats – particularly agricultural
grounds. Refused by Secretary of State, Nicholas Ridley, on grounds of excellence of
agricultural land.

Beazers sought Judicial Review in the High Court on basis that the Secretary of State had
misdirected himself since, although agricultural basis was sound, no evidence had been
presented to the Inquiry that land of lesser agricultural quality was available to meet the
pressing housing need (Locking Castle was delayed by Developers failing to agree access etc.
This seriously reduced 5 year land supply with result that housing trajectory was below
target). Appeal upheld by High Court with instruction that the Inquiry be redetermined.

1986: Second City (Beazers). Modified Application for 225 houses
(Feb) Refused.
Second City (Beazers) Fairfield Way, adjacent Farleigh Fields - 6 homes: Approved
Second City (Beazers) Court Close, adjacent Farleigh Fields - 9 homes Approved
(Farm Buildings demolished)
Second City (Beazers) Linemere Close, adjacent Farleigh Fields - 4 homes Approved

1988: Modified Application for 225 houses. Call for objections

1989: Second City (Beazers). Modified Application for 225 houses
Refused. Appeal entered – later withdrawn.

1996 Second City (Beazers) submitted new Planning Application for 150 houses.

1999 Second City (Beazers) submitted modified Planning Application for 150 houses.
2000  Second City (Beazers) 150 houses in Farleigh Fields. from Farleigh Road towards Dark Lane, with holding pond etc and emergency entrance opposite Swimming Pool (i.e. along line of footpath)
Entrance 54, 56 & 58 Farleigh Road with land needed from 60 & 62
Refused Woodspring DC & Appeal at Public Inquiry (3, 4, 5 & ? May 2000)
BPC instructed Cartrights Solicitors & Michael Cause QC. They also retained Colin Jones as specialist Development Consultant, who appeared with PC Chairman (Tom Wilson) Tom Collinson, & others. Cost to PC: £42,785.27 + £1,000 disbursements (Minutes 535/16/03/00, 007/06/04/00, 031a/20/04/00 & 054a/4/05/00). In addition the PC commissioned a Village Appraisal at a cost of £3,000 (Minute 504/02/02/00).

BPC TOTAL: £46,783

BRA was represented by Bruce Stewart & Dick Westmacott who called a number of residents and had full powers of cross examination. BRA contributed £500 for Oxford Bat survey, £2,000 retainer to Colin Jones and paid £4,750 for Hallcrow Transportation Study.
Disbursements were £1,000

TOTAL BRA: £6,250

TOTAL BPC & BRA: £53,033

Highway design access was thought adequate subject to controlling sufficient land.
However, Beazers failed to prove they owned sufficient land to deliver it. As a result the Inspector allowed Inquiry to proceed only subject to a Grampian Condition (All off-site works must be completed before any development can commence)
Refused by Inspector on agricultural grounds among others.

2007:  T & J Building Services South-West) Ltd Application to build 8 executive houses at 3 & 5 Farleigh Road. Refused by NSC following extensive campaign
BRA was represented by Bruce Stewart under Inquiry Rule 6 with full power of presentation and cross examination. Various members were witnesses.
BPC were represented by Colin Jones under Rule 6. Colin Pope (Chair BPC), Tom Collinson (BRA & BPC) were among those who appeared.
Appeal dismissed grounds of not fulfilling local need and risk out-commuting.
BPC costs still to be quantified but estimated at £5,000
BRA costs in disbursements: £1,300.

BPC Total: £5,000E
BRA Total: £1,300.00
BPC & BRA Costs: £6,300.00E

MOOR LANE


1987ca. ?Bryant Homes, The Briars 17 homes Approved
1988  Fairclough Homes applied for 80 houses. Refused Woodspring DC July 1989, following letter writing and opposition coordinated by BRA. BRA represented by Bennett Legatt (Ian Forsyth, partner and BRA appeared). A number of residents appeared including Dr Clive Roberts (Chair BRA), Tom Collinson & Bruce Stewart (BRA) BRA costs £6,000 + £2,000 other professional fees + £1,200 disbursements. **BRA Total: £9,200**

BPC costs still to be quantified
Appeal dismissed by Inspector Sept. 1989

2000  Bryant Homes built 90 homes including 9 affordable following NSC scheduling the land in a Sites & Policy DPD

2005:  North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (Adopted 2007): Proposal for 1,000 houses, district shops etc at Moor Lane/Chelvey. Access to ‘West Backwell’ to be from A370, Chelvey Road & Moor Lane etc. BRA campaigned in support of residents’ letters. The petition organised sampled by 31 tellers and administered by others secured 1,631 signatories out of electoral roll of 3,485 (47%)

**EXAMPLES OF OTHER COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

An extract of further examples of co-operation between the above representative bodies on behalf of the community include:

1988  Parish Survey: BPC & BRA worked together and received a response from 521 households.

2009  Community Plan: 1011 The highest rate of response to an individual question being that concerning new housing development - 73.7% indicated a preference for 50 or less new houses in the plan period, if there were no major changes in infrastructure provisions.

2012  Draft Backwell Neighbourhood Plan: BPC Councillors and BRA Committee distributed leaflets advising of Open Days to every household in the Parish. A number of BRA members were actively involved in the Steering Group and a Working Group used BRA archives.
BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
‘BACKWELL FUTURE’

SUBMISSION TO BACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
by
BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
of
CASE FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACES
located at:
MOOR LANE FIELDS
and
FARLEIGH FIELDS

UNDER SECTION 8 OF NPPF

SECTION 9
THE PROPOSAL’S SATISFACTION of
‘HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE’
SECTION 9

EVIDENCE as to HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE IN BACKWELL’S LGs

NPPF Chapter 8, “Promoting Healthy Communities”:
Clause 77 (page 17), Second Bullet Point:

- 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), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; ...

Considering the words, “historic significance” within this bullet point, the following is particularly relevant:

Settlement:

Broadfield Down (the name given to the northern slopes of Backwell Hill) has many signs of prehistoric activity (possibly including Mesolithic hunter/gatherers), although probably as summer migrants with evidence of settlement yet to be found. Backwell Barrow, by the Jubilee Stone, was excavated in 1898 and the Cave in Badgers Wood in 1936. The latter is a Neolithic Burial Cave (3360-3090 B.C) that deserves early legal protection.

There was Roman occupation of surrounding areas, e.g. Gatcombe and Charterhouse, with the probability that the lead ore and ochre in Jubilee Stone Wood was worked by the Romans (100BC-100AD), but no signs yet of settlement in Backwell other than scattered fragments of pottery and spindle whorls.

The earliest known settlement was by the Saxons.

The name recorded in Domesday Book (1086) was Bacoile, an Old English name meaning, ‘the well or stream coming from the ridge’. This refers to the springs which emerge where the limestone hill meets the underlying impervious clay. The Domesday Book entry covered all the hamlet settlements which had been held up to the Conquest by one Thane. The tillage of Farleigh Fields from 1086 came under the supervision of the Manor Farm.

The Hamlets that are Backwell:

Backwell was a Parish of scattered hamlets with no central village. The Civil Parish now consists of 5 hamlets:

Church Town: The springs were the site for this earliest settlement with its Church, medieval manor house (lost in 18C), with its 17C stable block (now Court Barn) and the demesne or home farm (Court Farm). In 1703 the lease to the latter referred to it as ‘the well called Backwell.’

Farleigh: This hamlet, to the east, was another early Saxon settlement. The Charter for its market was granted in 1267 by Henry III. The Sheep Fair survived until the 1960s from medieval times.
West Town: The third early hamlet, although later, lay to the west, and includes several older properties, including West Town House dating from 1647. The hearts of all three of these hamlets are designated as Conservation Areas.

Moorside, incl. Backwell Common: & Moor Lane: This low lying area to the north would have been subject to flooding but drainage work allowed several scattered farmsteads to develop. In the early 19C, coal mines, with their attendant homes etc, were located here and the building of the railway was undertaken in the 1840s.

Downside: The scattered activity in the south of the Parish became a more populous settlement following the 1812 Enclosures Act.

Backwell: From 1709 almost the whole of Backwell’s lands were owned by the Marquess of Bath’s Longleat Estate. The hamlets retained their individuality until the Longleat Estate progressively sold its lands - which was finally completed in 1939. This released parcels for piecemeal development, allowing the original 3 hamlets to join along almost continuous ribbons of housing. The latter took place particularly along the line of the main road (now A370); a historic track improved from 1768, with the almost complete coalescence forming the village whose name now prefaces the names of the hamlets.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL POINTS:

Footpaths:

Most of today’s footpaths are of historical significance being the original core routes between the five hamlets and to the adjoining settlements – such as that from Moorside to Chelvey. Today they are extensively used for recreational purposes with only lower frequency use (such as routes to schools or Church) for their historical purpose of connecting the historic hamlets.

Local Green Spaces:

Context:

The Parish Church of St. Andrew includes some Saxon foundations but the Normans are widely credited with its rebuilding. In the 13C further reconstruction was undertaken in Early English style and the tower dates from 15C. As early Lords of the Manor, the Rodneys were responsible for later work in the Perpendicular Style. The basic fabric survived the changes arising from the Reformation and successive benefactors and the congregation have cared for it to the advantage of everyone today – Congregation and the remainder of the public.

As the surviving building of most obvious historical significance, it stands handsomely on the northern slopes of Backwell Hill with its beautiful and tranquil setting at the head of Farleigh Fields providing a unique visual amenity to both villagers and those in parts of Wraxall, Nailsea, Chelvey and beyond.
Farleigh Fields:

Farleigh Fields were the main food producing area for the Church Town hamlet from Saxon times. That they have been farmed for 11 centuries is undoubtedly due to the excellent quality of the Keuper Marl soil - a highly fertile medium that covers the lower slopes of Broadfield Down. This is confirmed in current agricultural grading and the versatility and flexibility with which they have been productively worked. Initially farming was undertaken from Court Farm, the demesne to the Manor but the undertaking later passed into the Longleat Estate. While many of the hedgerows were used as boundaries before the Enclosures Act 1812, it brought about some re-allocation of land formalising the field boundaries with increased planting of Blackthorn and Hawthorn for their stock proof qualities. The County Archaeologist confirmed (2007 – 2009) to a professionally interested resident, that the lines of hedge are of historical significance dating from prior to and arising from this Act. Much of their current poor condition was brought about by the ravages of Dutch elm disease in the early 1970s when trees 150 years of age, and more, were felled. The dating of these trees coincides with the Enclosures Act. However, despite the condition of the hedgerows, the County Archaeologist was able to identify sufficient additional specimen plants still existing, to date them to the 1812 enclosures and before.

The development of modern British Agriculture from Townshend’s promotion of crop rotation in the late 18C was facilitated by the enclosures.

Moorside

Further arable land lay on the lower slopes of the hill to the north of the main road. As in Farleigh Fields, some boundaries even predate the Enclosure Act. As an example, geophysical studies in 2000 found ditch-like features, one of which may have been late prehistoric or Romano-British. Others are thought to be agricultural drainage ditches or, possibly marl-pits (one field name here was Marl Pits) which were a medieval way of fertilising peaty soils with clay. (A recommendation for further investigation of these areas has yet to be undertaken.) Further, a map of 1787 shows medieval open fields that were long established at The Tynings (meaning a fenced area) and Farleigh Tynings enclosed by hedgerows. The Backwell Enclosure Act of 1812 led to the enclosure of some 885 acres on Backwell Hill and the Common (Moorside). The land was divided by hawthorn hedges and allotted to those with grazing rights.

Moorside is one of the areas of North Somerset in proximity to a significant settlement with particular strengths in beauty and tranquillity. It has exceptional recreational values in wildlife observation and the visual amenity includes 360° views. The visual cones include those to the three historically significant churches of Backwell, Wraxall & Chelvey Parishes.
**Historical Significance of Farleigh Fields & Moorside Hedgerows:**

As outlined above, both these areas formed part of the Manor of Backwell owned by the Marquess of Bath. An 1812 map of the Manor is hung in the Committee Room of the Parish Hall. This map demonstrates that every single one of the remaining boundary hedgerows, to the 6 fields at Farleigh Fields and the 12 fields at Moor Lane, included in this Proposal as LGS, date from, or pre-date, the Enclosure Act 1812. The only differences are losses of small sub-divisional hedges in fields 1 & 4 at Farleigh and in fields 12, 14, 17 & 18 at Moor Lane.

The dependencies of the flora and fauna – including rare bat species, butterflies, bees, birds etc on the full extent of these ancient hedgerows is dealt with elsewhere. The material importance to the richness of wildlife, by the hedgerows providing separation of public footpaths from adjoining fields, while not detracting from public enjoyment, is also explained in the Wildlife and Biodiversity section.

**Backwell Common:**

The Backwell Common zone to the east of Station Road is not considered since it lies entirely within Green Belt and is, therefore, specifically excluded from the criteria for LGS.

**Conclusion:**

The historical significance of both tracts of land at Farleigh Fields & Moor Lane (formerly Moorside) lies in the entirety of each as separate areas, or swathes of land, with their hedgerows. Anything less, such as isolated fields, or pairs of fields, cannot meet these essential criteria.

The particular historical significance to this community justifies the designation of these two unique and invaluable local tracts of land as individual Local Green Spaces. The protection of the two areas immediately following the 200th Anniversary of the Act would ensure their continued unfettered agricultural use thus delivering the other criteria to the community. This would endure beyond the end of the plan period and perpetuate their demonstrably, particular significance to the community.
References:

‘A Short History of Backwell’, Norma Knight, B.A.

Public Record Office, London – Medieval Records of Backwell

Longleat Archives, Marquess of Bath. Manorial Deeds, Rentals & Surveys

Somerset Records Office, Taunton. County Material & Private Deeds including Registers of Birth, Marriages & Deaths from 1558 and the 1840 Tithe Award.

Backwell Parish Council, 1812 Map of the Manor of Backwell (Copy of map from Longleat Archives – original now held at Somerset County Records Office).


‘Delineations of the North Western Division of the County of Somerset’ (1829), J. Rutter.

‘The Story of Backwell Baptist Church’ (1894 – 1994), Peter H. Steel


The Story of Backwell, Lillian C. Pearce

Acknowledgements :

Particular acknowledgement is made to “A Short History of Backwell” by Norma Knight, B.A. (Hons.), President of Nailsea & District Local History Society. The author drew on London Public Records Office, Somerset County Records and Longleat Archives.

Further acknowledgements are due to

Brian Mayled, C. Biol.: Former Head of Biology at Backwell School.

Vince Russett, North Somerset County Archaeologist.

Jenny Greenslade, Community Archaeology Mendip Plateau, Charterhouse Environ Research Team;