

Living Networks

Renhold Parish

Green Infrastructure Plan 2023

(with June 2025 map revisions)

RENHOLD PARISH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN 2023 (with June 2025 map revisions)

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RENHOLD PARISH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN 2023

(with June 2025 map revisions)

Introduction

The Renhold Parish Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan is one of more than 40 parish and town GI plans to have been produced across Bedfordshire.

The production of the Renhold Parish GI Plan has been funded through the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan and facilitated by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC).

The production of the GI Plan was requested by Renhold Parish Council both to be a valuable tool in its own right as a planning document and to inform policies and objectives in the emerging Renhold Neighbourhood Plan.

BRCC was appointed to facilitate the production of this Plan, as it is a charity that works with local communities and landowners to conserve and enhance the landscape, wildlife and history in this area. At the heart of BRCC's work is the belief that the best results are achieved by empowering local communities, giving them a say in issues that affect them. BRCC has over 60 years of experience in community development support and facilitating community consultation; and has 20 years' experience of planning and delivering green infrastructure projects in Bedfordshire.

The need for GI Planning has been identified at all levels, from central government, through regional bodies (the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy), to County and District levels. The Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic GI Plan was produced in 2007 by the Bedfordshire & Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium. Parish and Town GI Plans are a valuable tool for planners, committees, developers and communities themselves. They can help inform important decisions and help local people identify what is important to them and what they would like to happen in the future. Parish and Town GI Plans have been used to support funding bids, helping people make important improvements to their local environment and they also provide a snapshot of the local environment.

It should be acknowledged that not all of the aspirations identified will be delivered, because there are many other influencing factors, such as the views of landowners, existing planning permissions and allocations, potential future land use allocations and the cost of implementation. The value of this GI Plan lies in the fact that it has been produced by local residents for their own community. It can help inform planning decisions and be used as a mechanism to identify where financial benefits from development should be directed. It cannot be used as a tool to prevent development but may influence considerations in the planning process. All aspirations that gained community support have been included; however, it remains a community owned document which, while acknowledged by Bedford Borough Council, has not been formally adopted. The plan as a whole is based on a robust approach to mapping and implementing a high quality GI network for the existing and future residents of the parish of Renhold.

Context

Renhold is a distinctive ancient parish lying within rural countryside to the north-east and approximately four miles from Bedford Town Centre. It is first found in 1227 when Sybil de Renhold and others owned about 15 acres of land in the Parish. By the middle of the thirteenth century, Renhold was held by William de Beauchamp and it was assessed as being worth half a knight's fee which means that it was capable of giving rise to half of the revenue that might be needed to equip and support one knight - approximately 750 acres. William is recorded as having ownership of 45 knights' fees - so Renhold was only a very small part of a very large feudal landholding.

Renhold has a distinctive topography. For centuries, the dominant land use within the Parish has primarily been agricultural with approximately 750 acres of highly cherished food producing arable farmland, pastures for sheep and cattle and native hedgerow and woodland which define its unique character. Open and undeveloped countryside due north in Wilden, Ravensden and Thurleigh, and to the east at Great Barford, is a common characteristic and the open views gained from the elevated land within the Parish are an important and intrinsic feature.

The Bedford Borough Green Infrastructure Plan 2009 identified the land to the north of Bedford as a key search area for strategic scale green infrastructure. The benefits of connecting valuable green infrastructure assets such as Mowsbury Park to features in the wider landscape set within the tranquil open spaces of Clapham, Ravensden and Renhold were recognised. Enhancement of public access and the public rights of way network was also seen as a priority. The public rights of way within Renhold, which are so important to mental health and physical wellbeing, provide scope to develop walking, cycling and horse riding routes linking villages to the north of Bedford with the northern section of the Bedford Green Wheel and connecting all important wildlife corridors of woodland and hedgerow.

Renhold is justifiably proud of its biodiversity and its ancient woodland and it has richly diverse wildlife and habitats, including mammals such as otters, water voles, deer, grey squirrels, badgers and bats, and hares have been sighted in the parish and the surrounding areas. Renhold also has a wide range of birds, many of which are red listed and include several water birds such as kingfishers and little egrets, along with great spotted woodpeckers, green woodpeckers, barn owls, tawny owls and little owls.

Renhold village is a small, rural linear village with many listed buildings throughout the parish and historical feature buildings which include: Abbey Farmhouse which is mentioned in the Domesday Book, the fourteenth century Parish Church of All Saints with its Norman font, the Victorian Ice House at Howbury Hall, the village school which opened in 1865 and the Baptist Chapel which was built in 1873. The old village is essentially a collection of 'ends' - each separated by green space - and with its own distinctive character.

The Parish of Renhold has experienced rapid housing growth in recent years. Renhold's population increased by 1,000 to 2451 between 2001 and 2011 due to the new developments on the east side of Norse Road: Cranbourne Gardens, Aspire and The Spires - each with its own vibrant community and individuality. The number of dwellings rose to 999 within an area of 885 hectares in 2011. The Parish now comprises 1375 houses.

Endorsements

Endorsement by Renhold Parish Council:

Renhold Parish Council is happy to endorse this Green Infrastructure Plan, which has been produced by current residents of the parish, for this and future generations. In endorsing this Plan, the Parish Council confirms its support for the concept of GI Planning and the methodology used to produce the Plan. In addition, the Parish Council will seek to be an active partner in the delivery of this Plan, leading and assisting the implementation of those actions which fall into the remit and plans of the Council.

The Parish Council will regularly review the Plan, reporting to the community activity undertaken and planned, both by the Council and others, towards implementing the Plan.

Endorsement by Renhold Parish Neighbourhood Plan Working Group:

Renhold Parish Neighbourhood Plan Working Group is pleased to endorse this Green Infrastructure Plan. It has been produced using an agreed and well-developed process involving current residents in a series of focussed working groups. As such, it represents their more detailed views on how the issues previously identified can be addressed in the future. It sets a clear plan for the future that will be supported by Local Planning Policies in the forthcoming Renhold Neighbourhood Plan.

Support from BRCC:

BRCC will support the community of Renhold in implementing this Plan where appropriate and feasible, providing advice, support in securing funding and leading practical works.

Definition of Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is the network of green spaces, access routes, wildlife habitats, landscapes and historic features, which provide:

- a healthy and diverse environment
- attractive places to live and visit
- a good quality of life
- a sustainable future

Green Infrastructure assets include:

- Accessible green space
- Country parks
- Green corridors
- Urban parks and gardens
- Habitats for wildlife including nature reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and County Wildlife Sites.
- Historic parks and gardens and historic landscapes
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Waterways and water bodies, including flooded quarries
- Public rights of way and cycleways
- Allotments
- Children's play space
- Formal sports facilities
- Cemeteries

It is important to plan the GI network in the same way that we plan other networks and facilities, so that we can safeguard and enhance the environment and meet the needs of a wide range of people, both now and in the future. Green infrastructure also provides social and economic benefits, including:

- Places that can be used as a focus for community activity and events
- Opportunities to keep fit and healthy
- Helps support the local economy, including village shops, pubs and B&Bs
- Links between town and country helping people in rural areas to access facilities
- Helps reduce the use of cars

Green Infrastructure Themes

Green Infrastructure is composed of five themes; landscape, history, biodiversity, access and open space. These themes are presented separately to enable the different elements of GI to be considered both individually in detail and as part of the integrated GI network.

Aims of this Plan

To identify the key existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets, accessible green space and rights of way and to plan new features that will provide a connected network of green infrastructure for the benefit of present and future generations.

To inform the emerging Renhold Neighbourhood Plan, including through the identification of important green spaces and the proposal to designate eligible sites as Local Green Spaces.

Objectives

To create a comprehensive document that will assist the local community to:

- Protect and where possible enhance the landscape, biodiversity and the historic Environment.
- Improve access and links for people and wildlife.
- Provide a multi-functional green infrastructure network.
- Provide a source of information and guidance for planners, landowners and developers in formulating land use plans.
- Promote community involvement.
- Identify projects and produce an action plan to implement projects.

Links to other GI related plans

Bedfordshire & Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan (2007)

The Bedfordshire & Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan (2007) identifies a broad, spatial vision for green infrastructure across the area and highlights 11 strategic GI corridors across the county. The parish of Renhold is identified by the Plan as lying within Historic Environment Character Area (HECA) Number 15.

Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030

The Local Plan 2030 sets out how much growth and development there will be in Bedford borough until 2030 in order to meet local needs. It plans for the additional houses and facilities required to support new communities and provide jobs and services such as schools, transport and shops. The proposed LP2040, which is intended to replace this version, was submitted for Government approval in Jan 2023.

The Bedford Green Infrastructure Plan (2009)

The Bedford Green Infrastructure Plan complements the Bedford and Luton Strategic GI Plan (2007) by identifying more detailed spatial priorities across Bedford borough and provides detailed background information to support other Bedford Borough Council policies and proposals. See Appendix 1 for extract relating to the Bedford's Northern Fringes network area.

The Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy 2012 – 2021

The Green Space Strategy 2012 – 2021 provided a framework to guide the planning, management and investment of high quality publicly accessible green space over that period. The Strategy includes an assessment of the available publicly accessible green space resource, both in terms of its quantity and quality and fit with community needs; and a summary of the main associated recommendations for provision standards and priority areas of investment. The Strategy is currently being updated and the new version will be published later this year.

Sustainable Community Strategy 2009 - 2021

Produced by the Bedford Borough Partnership in 2009, the Strategy sets out the Partnership's vision for the future of Bedford borough and the goals that the Partnership was seeking to achieve. Although the Partnership itself no longer exists, the goals and aims remain relevant; many have direct links to the Local Plan 2030 and can be delivered by the local plan's policies. *(Whilst the Deregulation Act 2015 removed the duty for local authorities to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy, the existing Strategy still sets the overall strategic direction and vision for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the borough.)*

Bedford Borough Corporate Plan 2022 - 2026

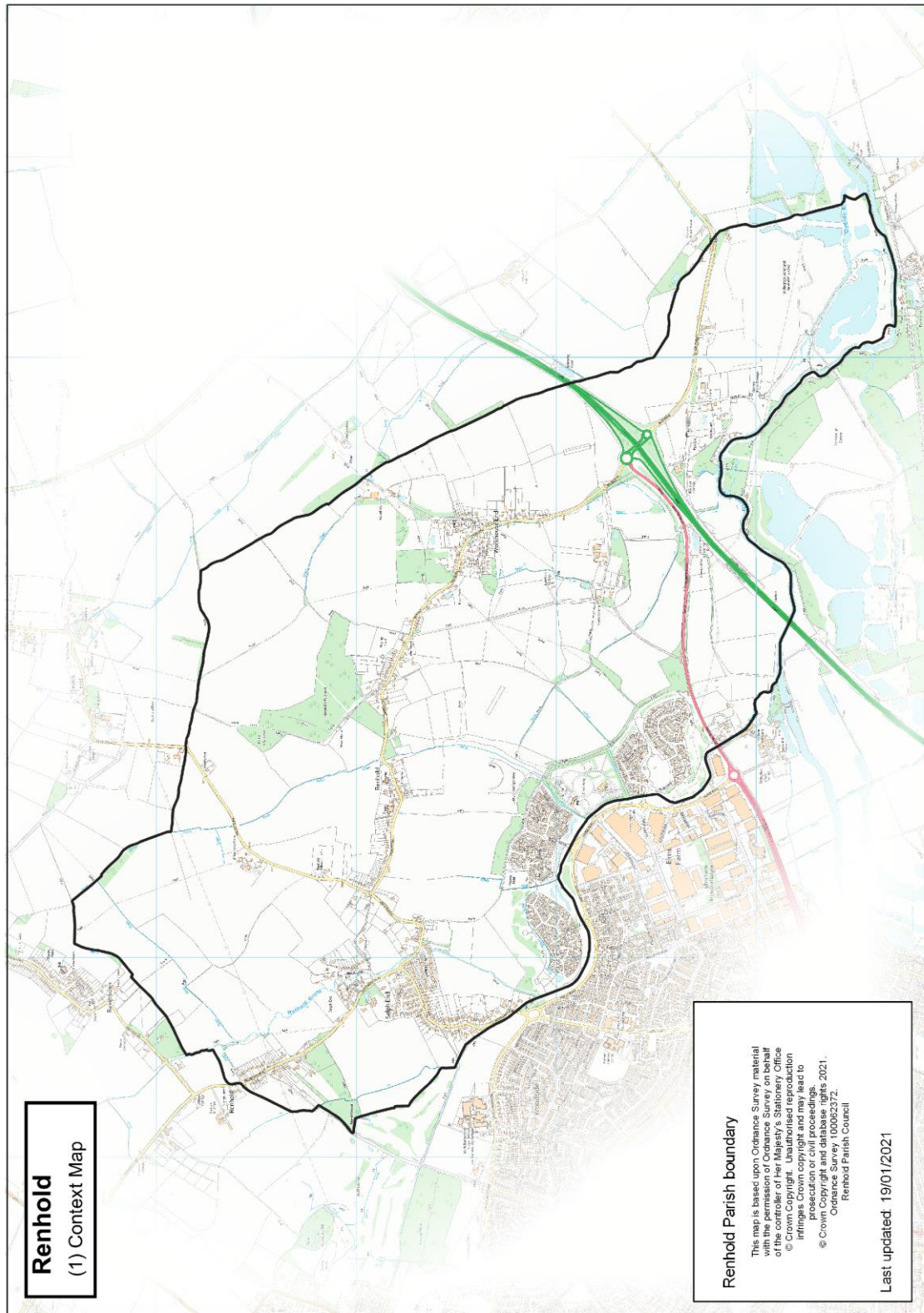
The Corporate Plan is part of the Council's adopted Policy Framework and describes the Borough Council's contribution to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

GI Themed Maps and Map Information

To provide background information and to inform residents' thinking in the identification of aspirations, a series of maps giving information on the main GI themes were provided. These maps are shown in the following pages.

Context Map (Figure 1)

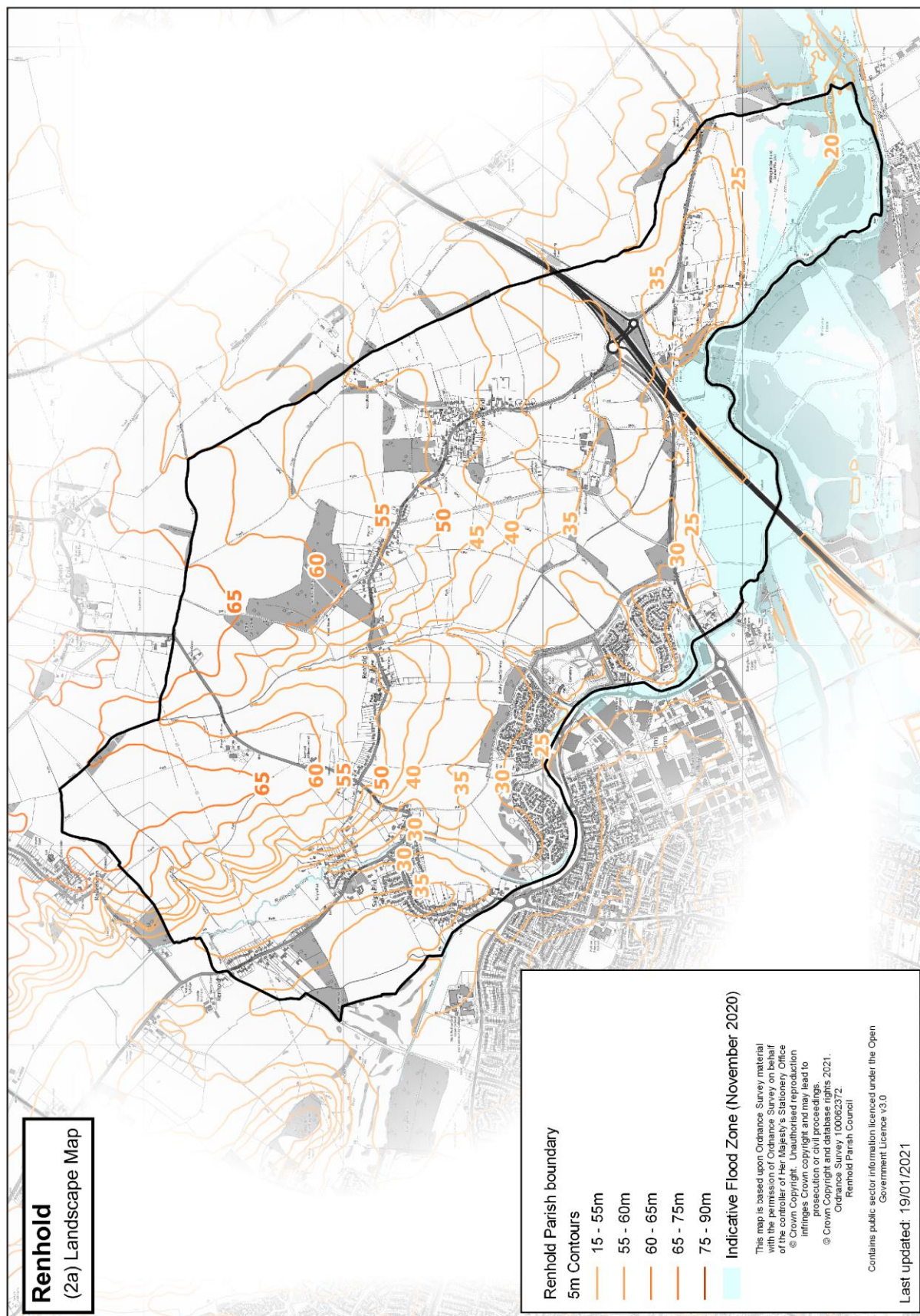
The Context map shows the boundaries of Renhold in relation to the villages, road routes and countryside that surround the parish.



Landscape Map (Figure 2a)

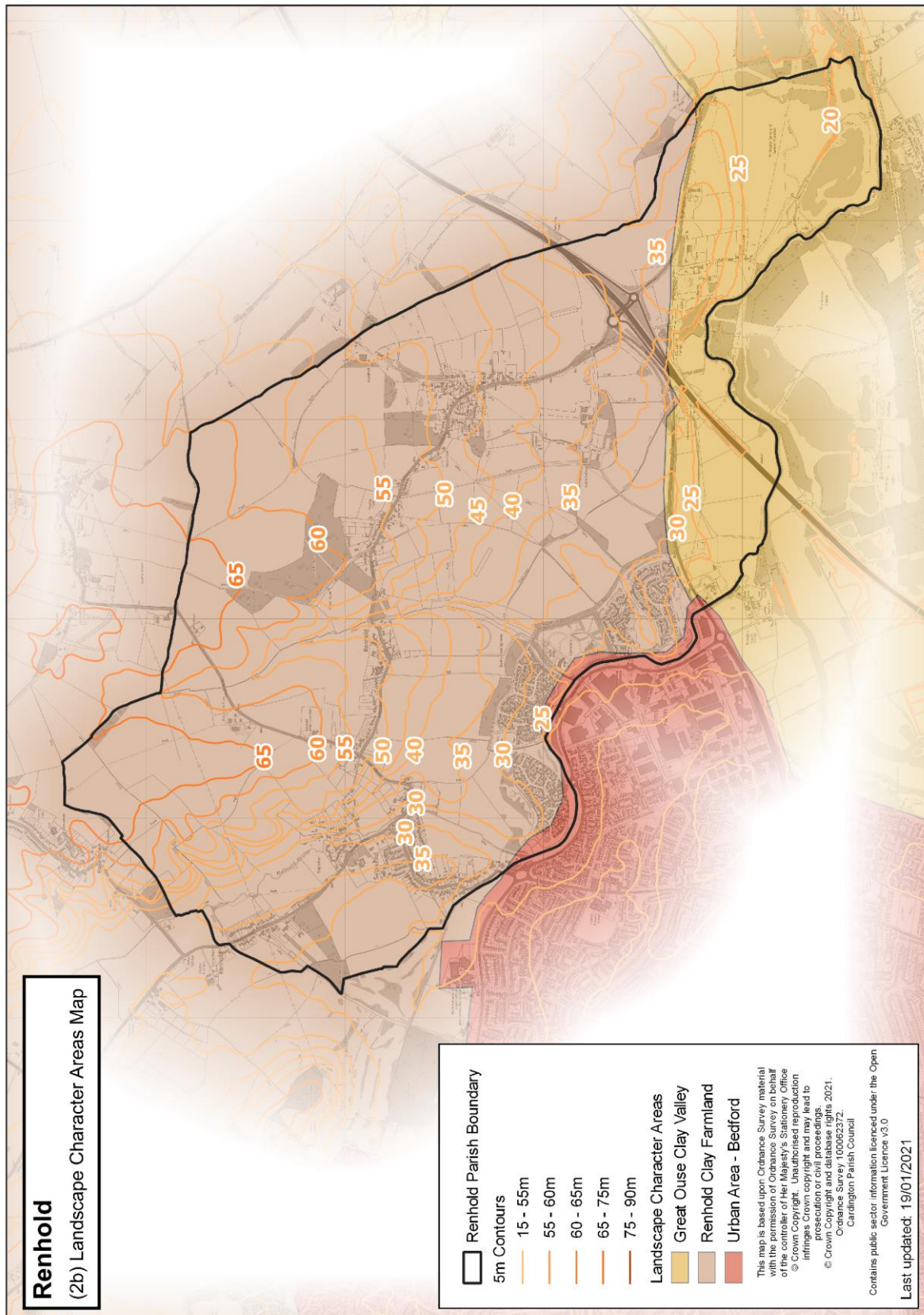
The landscape map shows the position of contours within your parish. It also shows the areas at risk from a 1% chance flood from a river.

Contours and flood zones can be useful when creating green infrastructure corridors.



Landscape Character Areas Map (Figure 2b)

The Landscape Character Areas are used to understand what the landscape is like, how it formed and how it may change in the future. Each area is a distinct part of the landscape with a particular sense of place. Assessments of these areas can be used to help make decisions on the appropriate location, scale and design of new development. Further information can be found on the Bedford Borough Council website (<http://www.forms.bedford.gov.uk/planning/BBCLCAFinal2014-11-28.pdf>).



Biodiversity Map (Figure 3)

This map (below) shows the location of designated sites, important habitats and opportunities to enhance wildlife in Renhold parish.

Within the parish there are three County Wildlife Sites (CWS): Great and Little Early Groves CWS, Castle Dairy Farm Meadows CWS and along the south of the parish boundary the River Great Ouse CWS.

Great and Little Early Groves CWS towards the north of the parish is ancient woodland, composed of predominantly mature maiden and coppiced Ash, with large Field Maples, scattered Pedunculate Oak, Horse Chestnut and Apple (*Malus pumila*) with possible Crab Apple. Sycamore and Elm tend to form more localised patches. There is also a species-rich hedgerow extending from TL091531 north to TL090533 along the western side of Wood Lane. Castle Dairy Farm Meadows CWS in the south of the parish south of St Neots Road is a good example of lowland meadow, consisting of semi-improved neutral grassland, mature trees, a small lake, planted woodland, hedgerow and medieval bank. The whole length of the river Great Ouse has been recognized as a CWS and a section of it flows along the southern boundary of the parish.

Not all of the sites listed above have public access and are in private ownership, but where they do this has been shown on Map 5.

County Wildlife Sites are sites that have been recognized as important for wildlife when assessed against a set of criteria. The selection guidelines consider aspects of the site such as size, diversity, rarity, fragility, typicalness and recorded history. Recognition as a CWS does not confer protection on the site, or right of access, however for any significant change of land use the planning authorities will expect the wildlife interest to be taken into account alongside other normal planning considerations. Local conservation organisations may comment on planning applications that could affect a CWS.

Within the parish are approximately 32 hectares of land that were identified as semi-improved neutral grassland in the late 1980s and may have remained as grassland since then.

Species records of note found across the parish include: mammals (brown hares), amphibians (Smooth and Great Crested Newt), birds (such as Wren, Tree Creeper, Nuthatch, Hawfinch and a recent record of a Common Crossbill), birds of prey (such as Tawny Owl, Barn Owl, Sparrow Hawk and Red Kite), and plants such as Bluebells found in Great and Little Early Groves CWS. There are a scattering of other notable records including White-Letter Hairstreak butterfly and some older records of Water Vole, although these have not been recorded in the last 10 years or so. Swallows have been recorded in the last couple of years, with a few older records of House Martins but there are no records of Swifts within the Parish. *(Note: although not featuring in the formal records, there have been casual sightings of Swifts reported in Renhold.)*

Green infrastructure planning can help to link or buffer existing wildlife sites, providing them with increased protection from harmful activities and making their wildlife populations more sustainable. The Biodiversity Network suggests where this could be most beneficial.

If you would like further information or advice about the wildlife in your parish, please contact The Wildlife Trust (01234 364213 or bedfordshire@wildlifebcn.org). The Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre (BRMC) has a wealth of records about the species seen in your parish and is beginning to compile habitat data. If you would like to access this resource please contact them (01234 355435 or brmc@bedsbionet.org.uk).

Renhold

(3) Biodiversity Map

Recognised Wildlife Sites













Three County Wildlife Sites (CWS) lie within the parish, none of which are publicly accessible.

Permanent Grassland

Approx 32 hectares of land in the parish may have been grassland throughout the last 25 years.

Biodiversity Network

The network has been created to suggest where biodiversity enhancements would be most beneficial. The aim is to buffer and link existing wildlife rich areas, creating a landscape through which species can move. This will make populations more sustainable and help them to respond to climate change. Within the network there are a range of options which could benefit biodiversity, from creating new habitats to improving existing hedgerows.

-  Parish boundary
-  County Wildlife Site
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Deciduous Woodland
-  Wood Pasture and Parkland
-  Wet Woodland
-  Water
-  Traditional Orchards
-  Floodplain Grazing
-  Lowland Meadow
-  Neutral Grassland
-  Biodiversity Opportunity Network

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Last updated: 05/10/2022

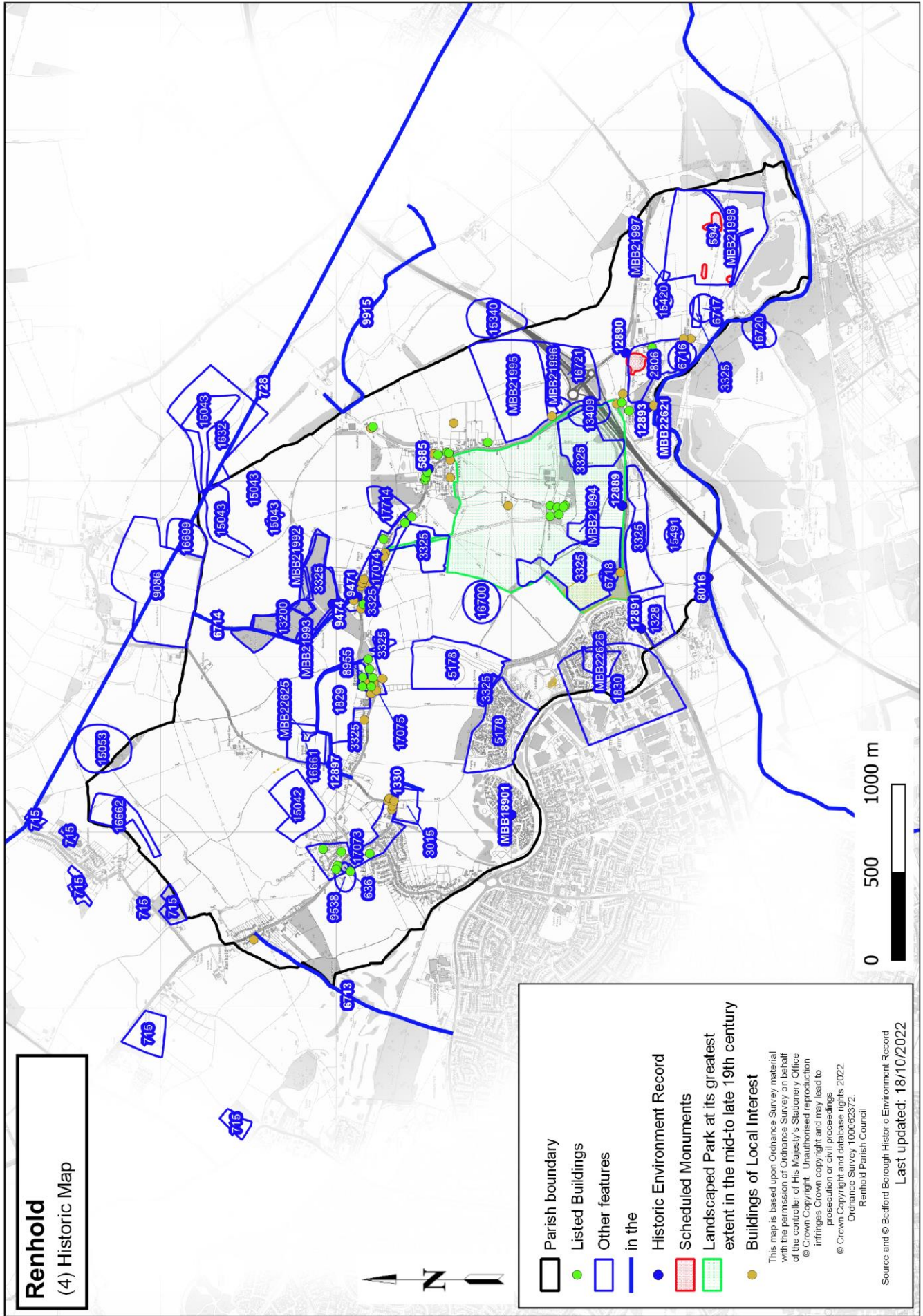
Historic Map (Figure 4)

A variety of historic sites are shown on this map. Integrating these sites into green infrastructure plans can help to preserve parish history. The numbers associated with the site boundaries represent locations in the Historic Environment Record (HER) which is maintained at Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford. The table below gives a brief summary of each numbered site; more details are available from the HER, along with historic maps of your parish. Listed Buildings and Buildings of Local Interest are shown, including two features identified as areas: the site of a demolished medieval windmill and Norse Road Crematorium built in 1995 to replace the 1955 crematorium at Bedford Cemetery. The chapel has Art Deco style leaded windows but is free from any apparent religious symbolism as it was designed for multi-cultural use. Howbury Hall Park is also identified as an important landscape area: an 18th century landscape park [1] with specimen park trees and some woodland remaining.

For advice or further information about historic areas in your parish please contact the Historic Environment Team at Bedford Borough Council (archaeology@bedford.gov.uk) or use the online Heritage Gateway <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>).

Note [1]

The source of the extent of parkland illustrated on the Historic Map (4) was a survey map of Bedfordshire produced by A Bryant in September 1826. From the mid 1900's however the first and subsequent Ordnance Survey maps defined the smaller area of parkland which remains to the present as indicated on the Biodiversity Map (3).



No.	Feature	No.	
*594	CROPMARKS; SE of Dairy Farm	13200	GREAT/LITTLE EARLY GROVES, Ancient Woodland
636	GRAVEL PIT, Abbey Farm	13409	SAXON AND MEDIEVAL OCCUPATION, Water End
715	RIDGE AND FURROW, Ravensden historic parish	15042	CROPMARKS, NW of Abbey Hill Farm, Renhold
728	ROMAN ROAD (Viatores no. 225)	15043	MEDIEVAL CROPMARKS, NE of Great Early Grove
1328	BRICKWORKS	15053	CROPMARKS, West of Avenue Farm
1330	EARTHWORK	15340	CROPMARKS, West of Brewer's Hall Farm
1632	CROPMARKS; N of The Creakers	15420	RING DITCH, South West of Dairy Farm
1829	SOILMARKS, North of Church End	15491	RING DITCH, East of Castle Dairy Farm
1830	IRON AGE/ROMAN OCCUPATION AND RIDGE AND FURROW EARTHWORKS	16661	MEDIEVAL/POST-MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT CROPMARKS, NW of Church End
*2806	HOWBURY RINGWORK	16662	CROPMARKS, East of Ravensden Church End
3015	VICTORIA BRICKWORKS	16699	CROPMARKS, South of Sevicke End Farm
3325	RIDGE AND FURROW, Renhold parish	16700	CROPMARK, North West of Howbury Hall
5178	IRON AGE, ROMAN AND MEDIEVAL OCCUPATION, Norse Road, Bedford.	16720	RING DITCH & RECTILINEAR ENCLOSURE; E of Willington Plantation
5885	ROSE COTTAGE, Green End (Workhouse End)	16721	ROMANO-BRITISH CROPMARKS, MEDIEVAL FIELD SYSTEM AND MULTIPERIOD SETTLEMENT SITE; N of Great Dairy Farm
6713	GREEN LANE	12897	OLD TRACKWAY
6714	GREEN LANE/ OLD ROAD	17073	SALPH END MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT
6716	SAND PIT	17074	TOP END MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT
6717	GRAVEL PIT	17075	CHURCH END MEDIEVAL VILLAGE
6718	GRAVEL PIT, Howbury Park	17714	CROPMARKS, East of Top End
8016	CASTLE MILLS STAUNCH	MBB18901	MEDIEVAL/POST-MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT CROPMARKS, NW of Church End
8955	ALL SAINTS' PARISH CHURCHYARD	MBB21992	CROPMARKS, East of Ravensden Church End
9086	CROPMARKS, South of Sevicke End	MBB21993	CROPMARKS, South of Sevicke End Farm
9471	RENHOLD MEMORIAL & DRINKING FOUNTAIN (site of) Top End	MBB21994	CROPMARK, North West of Howbury Hall
9474	WATER TANK, Great Early Grove Wood, Wood Lane, Top End	MBB21995	BRONZE AGE/ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT CROPMARKS; Workhouse End, Renhold
9538	?MOAT, Abbey Farm	MBB21996	BRONZE AGE TO ROMANO-BRITISH CURVILINEAR ENCLOSURE; Great Dairy Farm, Renhold.
9915	CREAKERS LANE	MBB21997	ENCLOSURE CROPMARKS; S of Dairy Farm, Renhold
12889	MILESTONE (Site of)	MBB21998	EARLY PREHISTORIC FIELD SYSTEM; Dairy Farm, Renhold
12890	MILEPOST (Site of)	MBB22621	RIVER GREAT OUSE POST-MEDIEVAL NAVIGABLE EXTENT
12891	MILEPOST (Site of)	MBB22625	MEDIEVAL SUB RECTANGULAR MOAT AND PLATFORM; NW of Church Farm, Renhold
12893	BOATHOUSE (Site of Building)	MBB22626	IRON AGE/ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT; Asgard Drive
12897	OLD TRACKWAY		

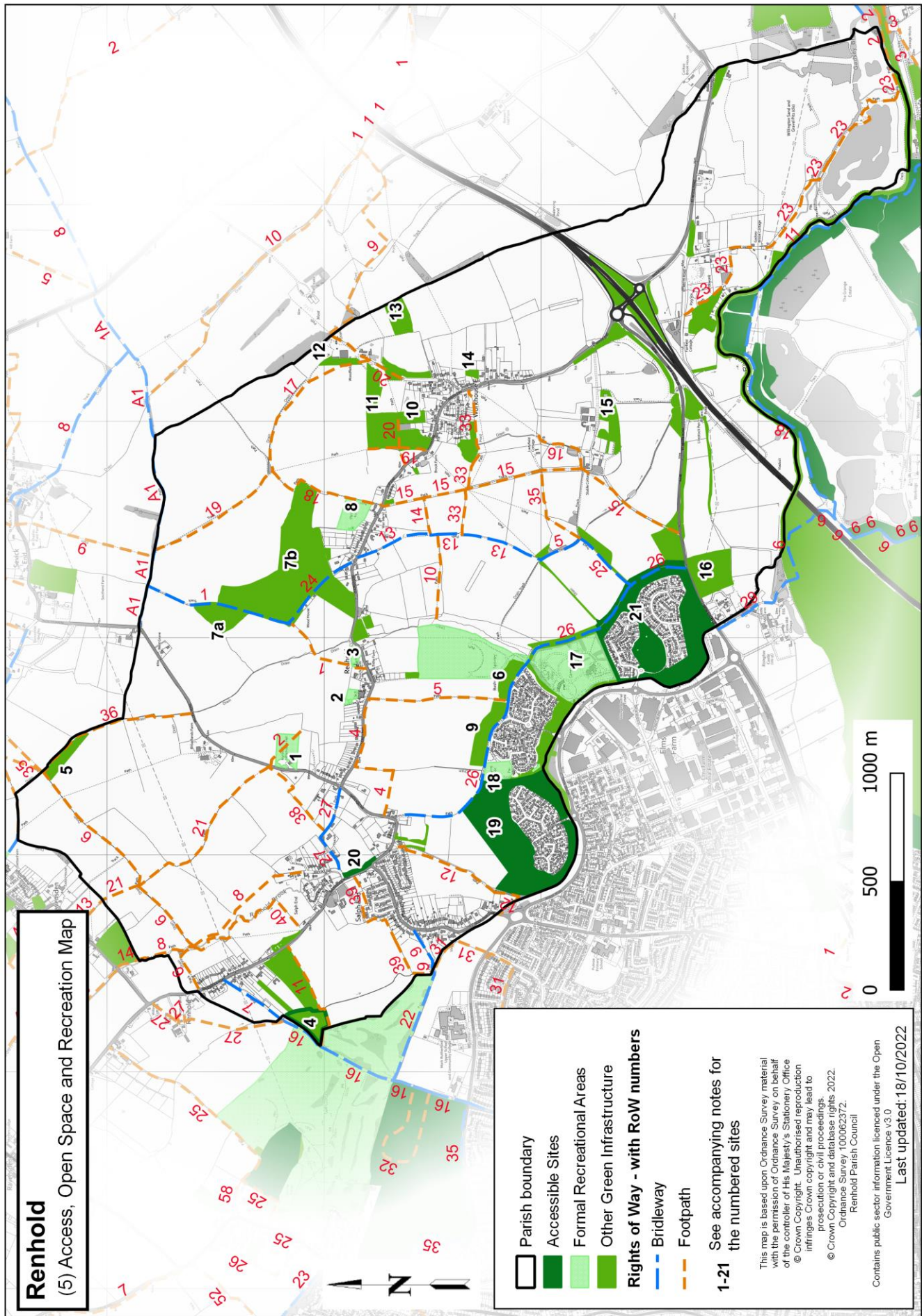
* Also part of, or areas within the site are, Scheduled Monument.

Open Space, Access and Recreation Map (Figure 5)

The following map shows the positions of open spaces (e.g. golf courses, recreation grounds or school playing fields) within the parish. Rights of Way are key to providing access to open spaces within green infrastructure plans. When creating networks access barriers, such as busy roads, would need to be considered. The main (illustrated) green spaces are summarized below.

Map ref	Name	Publicly accessible?	Area (Hectares)
1	Village Hall	No	1.30
2	School Playing Field	No	0.29
3	All Saints Church, Renhold	Yes	0.31
4	Marsh Wood	No	4.62
5	Woodland	No	0.95
6	Bushy Close Spinney	No	1.01
7a	Little Early Grove (CWS)	No	1.92
7b	Great Early Grove (CWS)	No	13.78
8	Sports field	No	1.51
9	Jubilee Spinney	No	1.77
10	Woodland and open space	No	0.61
11	Green Space	No	1.03
12	Tree belt	No	0.45
13	Woodland	No	1.33
14	Horse paddock	No	0.16
15	Howbury Hall Parkland	No	35.0
16	Castle Dairy Farm Meadows CWS	No	3.19
17	Bedford Cemetery and extension	Yes	7.86
18	Playing Field – formerly Low Field	Yes	1.01
19	Pedleys Field (Norse Road Green Space)	Yes	12.69
20	Tree belt	Yes	0.29
21	Cranbourne Gardens Green Space	Yes	9.25

Please Note: The identification of a site as a 'green space' does not infer that it is either publicly owned or has public access. Many of these sites are privately owned and / or do not have public access.



Methodology & Community Involvement

A methodology for the production of Parish Green Infrastructure Plans was developed in 2007 and 2008 by the PGIP Working Group and endorsed by the Beds & Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium (now the Beds & Luton Local Nature Partnership). This standard methodology has been used to produce 40 parish-level GI Plans across Bedfordshire.

This methodology usually involves two facilitated community workshops and a drop-in session, to which local stakeholders and the wider community are invited. However, because of social distancing requirements due to the Covid restrictions throughout the period of this plan production, it proved necessary to undertake a different approach to the community consultation aspect of the Renhold GI Plan.

In place of the first workshop an online presentation hosted as a Zoom meeting by BedsRCC was promoted to local stakeholders and residents through the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. The presentation, which took place on 4 February 2021, provided an overview of GI Planning and its use in helping to shape and prioritise actions for future enhancements to Renhold's network of public access, biodiversity and landscapes assets.

The meeting also introduced an online survey which was open to all stakeholders and residents to provide their views on what they valued about the local area and what their future aspirations were for Renhold. In addition to the survey questions, maps and guidance were available on a dedicated webpage and consultees were asked to view the information and answer the questions in their own time over the following weeks.

Renhold GI Plan – Stage 1 survey

- 1 In which road do you live?
- 2 Where do you like to walk/run/ride/cycle within the parish? Please be specific: what mode, where from (location), via (features en-route), to (location)?
- 3 Are there any public rights of way, tracks, stiles, gates or bridleways in the parish that you feel need to be recognised and/or improved (condition, widening, signage etc.)? Please be specific as to location and improvements you feel should be undertaken.
- 4 Are there any public rights of way, tracks, stiles, gates or bridleways in the parish that you would like to see upgraded to allow full accessibility and multi-use? Please be specific as to location and upgrades you would like to see.
- 5 Which are your three favourite open spaces in the parish? Please name and describe their location(s).
- 6 Would you like to see more accessible community green areas in the parish? (e.g. playing field, community orchard, woodland etc.)? If so where, and what type of open space?
- 7 Do you have any favourite views looking into or from the parish? Please specify where you would be standing and what the view is.
- 8 Are there any specific wildlife habitats that you would like to see protected / enhanced? e.g. woodland, wetland, meadow, hedgerow. Please specify what and where these habitats are.
- 9 Are there any specific wildlife habitats that you would like to see created? e.g. woodland, wetland, meadow, hedgerow. Please specify what type(s) of habitat(s) and where you would like to see them.
- 10 Are there any specific environmental and/or heritage features that you would like to see protected/enhanced? e.g. trees, ditches, ponds, badger setts, nesting sites, structures, etc. Please specify what and where these features are.
- 11 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about Renhold's green infrastructure?

The Stage 1 online survey, which was undertaken in February 2021, was completed by 89 residents.

The survey was supported by a dedicated Renhold GI Plan webpage (hosted on the BedsRCC website). This webpage contained the information presented at February's Zoom meeting, including a range of context maps for the parish based on the five green infrastructure themes.

The Stage 1 survey responses - based entirely on the aspirations that had been put forward by the survey respondents - were then reviewed to draw out the main priorities of respondents and produce a Draft Renhold GI Map and Table of Aspirations.

The second phase of the online consultation was undertaken in June/July 2021. Stakeholders and residents were invited to view (online) the draft GI map and its associated aspirations table, along with information explaining what green infrastructure is, what its benefits are, and why a GI Plan was being produced.

Respondents were asked to study the aspirations and complete a short survey by listing up to five of the aspirations that they most supported and up to five that they disagreed with.

Renhold GI Plan – Stage 2 survey

- 1 Are there any of these identified aspirations which you particularly support and would like to see in the final GI Plan?
- 2 Are there any of these identified aspirations which you do not support and would like to see removed from the final GI Plan?
- 3 Are there any new GI aspirations which you would like to suggest for inclusion in the final GI plan?
- 4 From the accompanying Green Spaces map and list of 20 sites, please rank the top 5 sites which are most important to you.
- 5 There were requests to replace stiles with kissing gates or gaps. Do you support this? If yes, please detail exact locations of any stiles that you would like to see replaced.
- 6 There were requests to have a community orchard. Do you support this? If yes, please suggest a specific location for it.
- 7 There were requests to have a community woodland. Do you support this? If yes, please suggest a specific location for it.
- 8 There were requests to have allotments. Do you support this? If yes, please suggest a specific location for it.
- 9 There were requests to have a new accessible playing field. Do you support this? If yes, should this be for formalised sports or informal recreation? Please suggest a specific location for it.
- 10 There were requests to have wetland areas/ ponds. Do you support this? If yes, please suggest a specific location for it.
- 11 The historic map provided on the GI plan webpage identifies a number of sites and features of historic interest within the parish. Are there any which you feel could be enhanced for public enjoyment?
- 12 How long have you lived in the parish?
- 13 Which area of the parish do you live in?

The Stage 2 survey was completed by 76 local residents.

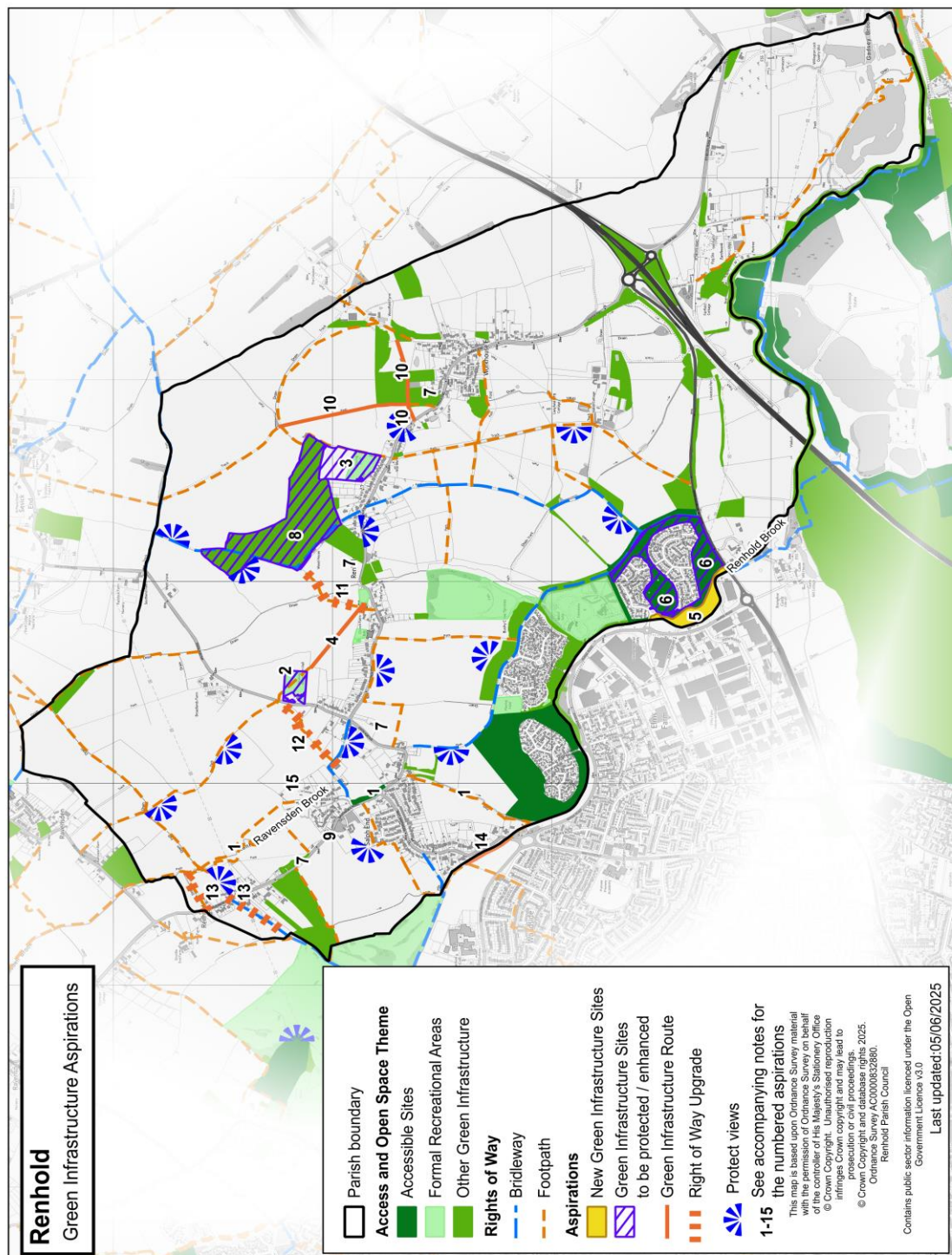
The results from this exercise were reviewed and the draft map and aspirations table were revised in line with the priorities and comments submitted by the respondents.

The collation and analysis of the survey responses led to the production of the final GI map and prioritised table of aspirations; and the identification of important green spaces as detailed in the following pages.

Renhold Parish Green Infrastructure Aspirations Map 2023 (revised in June 2025)

The numbered locations on the map below refer to the aspiration numbers shown in the following tables.

NOTE: Following a request from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group in 2025, a further seven 'Protect views' symbols were added to the Aspirations Map, along with an additional location for the aspiration to 'Preserve the separation between the Ends; protect against infill' (Aspiration 7).



Renhold GI Plan – Aspirations	
Aspirations with map numbering	
1	Improve maintenance of Renhold and Ravensden Brooks and surroundings for wildlife and people – and as a flood protection measure. To include planting, restoration of hedgerows and improved access/ visibility.
2	Create publicly accessible green space at village hall e.g. play area, community woodland.
3	Improve public access to current sports field. If this is not possible, create a new sports / playing field.
4	Reinstate south-east section of FP2 to Church End.
5	Create a managed wetland area at Cranbourne Gardens, close to Renhold Brook, for wildlife and to alleviate flooding of pathways and gardens; and/or a similar area on land close to Marsh Wood.
6	Protect natural areas on Cranbourne Gardens estate.
7	Preserve the separation between the Ends; protect against infill.
8	Protect Great Early Grove and Little Early Grove for wildlife.
9	Plant, protect and enhance hedgerows and trees, including along Ravensden Road.
10	Reinstate the current gaps in routes of FP19 and FP20.
11	Surface FP1 from rear of church towards Great Early Grove to prevent flooding, and widen the kissing gate to allow access for buggies.
12	Improve and sign FP 38, opposite village hall.
13	Provide RoW signage for FP6 and BW7 at Ravensden Road.
14	Create new footpath from southern end of Hookhams Lane heading north west along brook to FP31.
15	Resolve access issues regarding the southern end of FP8 (Brook Lane) – overgrown and blocked.
General aspirations – non-specific locations, thus not shown on map	
16	Replace all stiles with gates or gaps as appropriate (especially on Howbury Estate).
17	Improve surfacing on public footpaths and bridleways – especially those that undergo regular flooding – and manage encroaching natural vegetation.
18	Protect wildlife habitats for animals (e.g. badgers) and birds.
19	Create community woodland – location to be determined.
20	Create allotments – location to be determined.
21	Create a wildflower meadow – location to be determined – and plant wildflowers on roadside verges.
22	Designate old / mature trees in the ‘old village’ with TPO orders (if not already designated).
23	Provide map and information on rights of way – leaflet / interpretation panel.
24	Provide seating at viewpoints and along rights of way for elderly and frail walkers.

Where future built developments are proposed on land where GI aspirations have been identified, consideration should be given as to whether the aspiration(s) can be delivered either as part of a potential built development, or whether an alternative location for the aspiration(s) can be found. Such developments may contribute, either financially or through direct works, to the implementation of GI aspirations.

Prioritisation activities

In the Stage 1 survey, respondents were asked (Question 3) to identify their favourite open spaces within the parish.

The sites identified by the community as the most popular are shown in priority order in the following table.

Ranking	Open space
1st	Fields and woodlands behind the church (Includes sites 7a and 7b on the Access to Green Space map)
2nd	The land behind Pedley Way (Pedleys Field, site 19 on the Access to Green Space map)
3rd	Tree belt by Ravensden Road (Site 20 on the Access to Green Space map)
4th	Grassed areas with copses surrounding Cranbourne Gardens
5th	Open spaces between village 'Ends'

In the Stage 2 survey respondents were asked (Question 1) which of the listed aspirations they most supported - and to identify their top five aspirations.

The survey results were collated and the table below shows the priority aspirations.

Ranking	Ref. on map	Priority Aspirations Identified in Renhold GI Plan 2022
1	1	Improve maintenance of Renhold and Ravensden Brooks and surroundings for wildlife and people – and as a flood protection measure. To include planting, restoration of hedgerows.
2	7	Preserve the separation between the Ends; protect against infill.
3	2	Protect Great Early Grove and Little Early Grove for wildlife.
=4	8	Create publicly accessible green space at village hall e.g. play area, community woodland.
=4	16	Replace all stiles with gates or gaps as appropriate (especially on Howbury Estate).

Local Green Space (LGS) Designation

A stated aim of this GI Plan is to propose the designation of important green sites as Local Green Spaces through the emerging Renhold Neighbourhood Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – original version published in 2012, updated in July 2021 - sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. A new designation to protect local green areas of particular importance to local communities has been introduced. The Local Green Space designation will allow communities to identify and protect areas that are of value to the community through local and neighbourhood plans.

The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

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

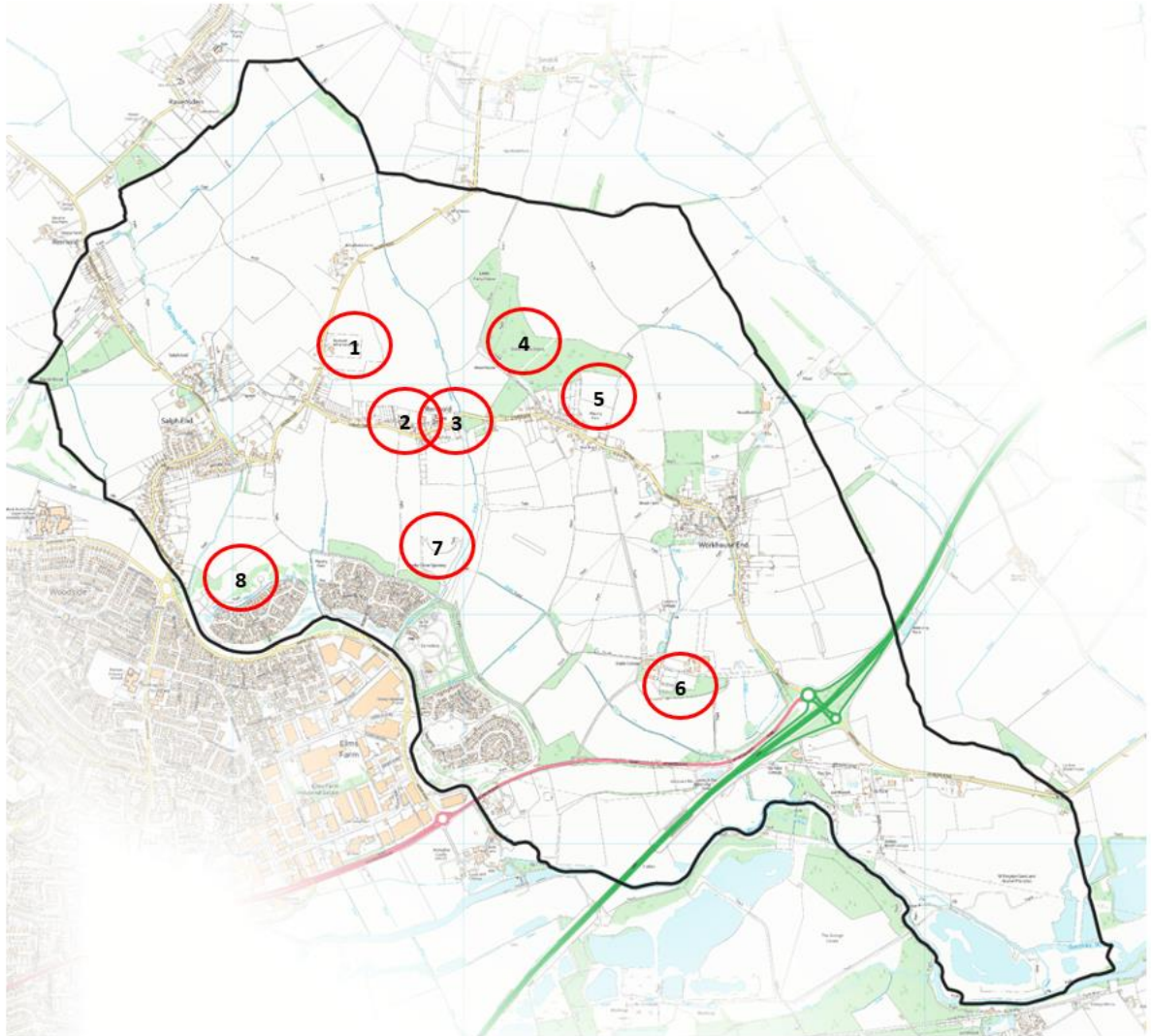
Summary of the LGS Assessment

Stage 1 Assessment

The stage 1 assessment is designed to filter out which sites - proposed for LGS Designation by the 2022 Renhold Green Infrastructure Plan - do not meet the basic NPPF LGS eligibility criteria. Sites which have current planning permission, or have been allocated for development, or have an existing designation giving the same level of protection as a LGS designation, do not meet the criteria and are not carried forward to the stage 2 assessment.

Site name and reference number	Current Planning Permission?	Allocated for Development ?	Already Designated ?	Pass to Stage 2?
1. Village Hall grounds	N	N	N	Y
2. Renhold Primary School playing field	N	N	N	Y
3. All Saints Church	N	N	N	Y
4. Little Early Grove & Great Early Grove	N	N	CWS	Y
5. Sports field (including rough grassland area to north)	N	N	N	Y
6. Howbury Hall Parkland	N	N	N	Y
7. Northern extension of cemetery	N	Being developed as cemetery	Burial ground	Y
8. Pedleys Field (Norse Road Green Space)	N	N	N	Y

Map of sites to be assessed for LGS designation



Stage 2 Assessment – Overall Summary

Site	Not Extensive	Close Proximity	Demonstrably Special/ Locally Significant	Recommend for Designation?
1 Village Hall grounds	Y	Y	Y	Y
2 Renhold Primary School playing field	Y	Y	Y	Y
3 All Saints Church	Y	Y	Y	Y
4 Little Early Grove & Great Early Grove	Y	Y	Y	Y
5 Sports field (including rough grassland area to north)	Y	Y	Y	Y
6 Howbury Hall Parkland	N	Y	Y	N [1]
7 Northern extension of cemetery	Y	Y	Y	Y
8 Pedleys Field (Norse Road Green Space)	Y	Y	Y	Y

[1] Typically, within LGS designations, a site greater than 10 hectares is considered to be an extensive tract of land and as such ineligible to be designated. In some extreme cases, sites of up to 20 hectares have been designated due to not being considered in their local context. At approximately 30 hectares, Howbury Hall Parkland far exceeds this upper maximum. Given that this site clearly fails on this criteria, a detailed site assessment has not been undertaken at Stage 2. However, given its importance to the community, it is recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan includes a policy to protect the parkland and its setting.

Final Proposed Local Green Space Designations

Sites assessed and proposed for LGS Designation within the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan
1 Village Hall grounds
2 Renhold Primary School playing field
3 All Saints Church
4 Little Early Grove & Great Early Grove
5 Sports field (including rough grassland area to north)
7 Northern extension of cemetery
8 Pedleys Field (Norse Road Green Space)
Sites assessed and considered to not meet LGS criteria
6 Howbury Hall Parkland

NP Plan policy recommendations

In addition to the aspirations identified by the community earlier in this plan; and taking into account the existing GI network and assets, as displayed on the maps in the GI map pack, this GI Plan proposes a number of recommendations for policies to be included in the NP.

Green Infrastructure Policy Recommendations

It is clear from the consultations that respondents greatly value the beauty of the village and its surroundings, recognising that “it is a privilege” to live in Renhold. Hence, the protection and enhancement of Renhold’s existing green infrastructure is of paramount importance.

Of particular significance is the need to preserve the distinct identities of the various ‘Ends’ of the village by preventing infill between them (*keeping them separated*).

Landscape Policy Recommendations

- Protect / maintain and enhance the watercourses and water bodies and their immediate surroundings.
- Ensure that open spaces between the various ‘Ends’ remain undeveloped.
- Protect the historic parkland landscape of Howbury Hall (*also under Historic Environment*).

Biodiversity Policy Recommendations

- Protect and enhance biodiversity networks / wildlife habitats throughout the parish, both at publicly accessible and private (non-accessible) sites and routes.
- Create a range of new wildlife habitats.

Historic Environment Policy Recommendations

- Protect local historic features and provide interpretation through a variety of media.
- Protect the historic parkland landscape of Howbury Hall (*also under Landscape*).

Open Space, Access and Recreation Policy Recommendations

- Protect and enhance public rights of way.
- As appropriate, improve access to current green spaces, and create a variety of new accessible green spaces. This should include using the Local Green Space (LGS) designation where this may be applicable.
- Provide local information to encourage the use of the public rights of way and accessible green spaces.

Renhold Parish Green Infrastructure Plan Action Plan

- [1] Lead Partner Organisation / individual taking the lead in the planning and implementation of the aspiration (see key below).
- [2] Other Partners Other organisations to be involved in the planning and implementation of the aspiration (see key below).
- [3] Resourcing Likely level of funding needed: Low (achievable with no or minimal funding), Medium (achievable with moderate new funding), High (achievable with significant new funding).
- [4] Timescale Likely date of implementation: Short 2023-25; Medium 2026-28; Long 2029+.

RPC Renhold Parish Council
 BBC Bedford Borough Council
 RNPWG Renhold Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

LO Landowner
 BRCC Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
 BCNWT Beds, Cambs and Northants Wildlife Trust

Ref	Aspiration	Possible Lead Partner [1]	Other Partners [2]	Resourcing [3]	Timescale [4]	Next Steps
1	Improve maintenance of Renhold and Ravensden Brooks and surroundings for wildlife and people – and as a flood protection measure. To include planting, restoration of hedgerows and improved access/ visibility.	RNPWG	RPC, LO's, Internal Drainage Board	Medium	Ongoing	Progress with LO's
2	Create publicly accessible green space at village hall e.g. play area, community woodland.	RNPWG	RPC, Village Hall Management Committee	Medium - High	Long	Dialogue with Village Hall Management Committee
3	Improve public access to current sports field. If this is not possible, create a new sports / playing field.	RNPWG	RPC, Sports Field Trustees	Low	Medium	Dialogue with Sports Field Trustees
4	Reinstate south-east section of FP2 to Church End.	RNPWG	BBC Highways, Ramblers, key residents	Medium	Short	Site meeting with BBC and Ramblers
5	Create a managed wetland area at Cranbourne Gardens, close to Renhold Brook, for wildlife and to alleviate flooding of pathways and gardens; and/or a similar area on land close to Marsh Wood.	RNPWG	RPC, BCNWT	Medium	Medium	Site meeting with key stakeholders
6	Protect natural areas on Cranbourne Gardens estate.	RNPWG	RPC, BCNWT	Medium	Medium	Undertake survey to identify protective measures
7	Preserve the separation between the Ends; protect against infill.	RNPWG	RPC, LO's	Low	Short	Include as policy in N'hood Plan
8	Protect Great Early Grove and Little Early Grove for wildlife.	RNPWG	LO's, Woodland Trust	Low	Short	Dialogue with LO's

Ref	Aspiration	Possible Lead Partner [1]	Other Partners [2]	Resourcing [3]	Timescale [4]	Next Steps
9	Plant, protect and enhance hedgerows and trees, including along Ravensden Road.	RNPWG	RPC, BCNWT	Low	Ongoing / short	Implementation - planting
10	Reinstate the current gaps in routes of FP19 and FP20.	RNPWG	BBC H'ways, Ramblers, key residents	Medium	Short	Site visit with stakeholders
11	Surface FP1 from rear of church towards Great Early Grove to prevent flooding, and widen the kissing gate to allow access for buggies.	RNPWG	BBC H'ways, LO	Medium	Short	Site visit with stakeholders
12	Improve and sign FP 38, opposite village hall.	RNPWG	BBC H'ways, LO	Medium	Short	Site visit with stakeholders
13	Provide RoW signage for FP6 and BW7 at Ravensden Road.	RNPWG	BBC H'ways	Low	Short	Site visit with BBC H'ways
14	Create new footpath from southern end of Hookhams Lane heading north west along brook to FP31.	RNPWG	BBC H'ways, LO	High	Medium	Site visit with BBC H'ways
15	Resolve access issues regarding the southern end of FP8 (Brook Lane) – overgrown and blocked.	RNPWG	BBC H'ways	Low	Short	Dialogue with BBC H'ways
16	Replace all stiles with gates or gaps as appropriate (especially on Howbury Estate).	RNPWG	BBC H'ways, LO's	Low	Short	Dialogue with BBC H'ways and LO's
17	Improve surfacing on public footpaths and bridleways – especially those that undergo regular flooding – and manage encroaching natural vegetation.	RNPWG	BBC H'ways, LO's	Medium	Ongoing	Site visit surveys with BBC H'ways to identify improvement measures
18	Protect wildlife habitats for animals (e.g. badgers) and birds.	RNPWG, LO's	-	Low	Ongoing	Liaise with LO's (email circular)
19	Create community woodland – location to be determined.	RNPWG	RPC, LO's, BRCC	Low	Short	Determine location, initiate discussions with LO's
20	Create allotments – location to be determined.	RNPWG	RPC, LO's	Low	Short	Determine location, initiate discussions with LO's
21	Create a wildflower meadow – location to be determined – and plant wildflowers on roadside verges.	RNPWG	RPC, LO's	Low	Short / Medium	Investigate permissible locations

Ref	Aspiration	Possible Lead Partner [1]	Other Partners [2]	Resourcing [3]	Timescale [4]	Next Steps
22	Designate old / mature trees in the 'old village' with TPO orders (if not already designated).	RNPWG	BBC (Tree Officer), RPC	Low	Ongoing	Liaise with BBC Tree Officer
23	Provide map and information on rights of way – leaflet / interpretation panel.	RNPWG	RPC, key residents	Low	Short	Update leaflet, investigate re. interpretation panels
24	Provide seating at viewpoints and along rights of way for elderly and frail walkers.	RNPWG	BBC H'ways, LO's	Low	Medium	Research locations, liaise with BBC H'ways and LO's. Promote memorial benches

Extract from Bedford Green Infrastructure Plan 2009

4.6 Bedford northern fringes

The rolling northern fringes of the town contain a number of green infrastructure assets including Bedford Park and, further north, Renhold Brook, Renhold Wood (*actually named Renhold Little and Great Early Groves*), Clapham Park Wood, Mowsbury Park, Putnoe Wood and historic parkland at Howbury Park. Some of these woodlands are ancient, and contain archaeological earthworks, as does Howbury Park.

This network of existing assets means that there is an opportunity to create a green wooded edge to the town, and to create a “linear” park, providing informal recreation, a buffer between the urban and rural areas, and protect the visual quality of the rising land to the north of the town. The area also provides an important opportunity to establish new habitats and routes for wildlife. This “linear park” concept would provide a green infrastructure corridor around the northern fringes of Bedford, and has been identified as an ambition for the town since the 2002 Local Plan for Bedford Borough.

Opportunities include;

- ☐ Delivering the north-west section of the Bedford Green Wheel project to create a green access route around and into the town.
- ☐ Creating new accessible woodland linking Clapham Park Wood, Mowsbury Park, Putnoe Wood and Renhold Brook.
- ☐ Integrating the management and development of publicly accessible natural greenspaces between Parkwood Local Nature Reserve and Putnoe Wood to create a green arc to the north and west of Bedford.
- ☐ Conserving existing historic parkland and improving interpretation, particularly around Renhold, Clapham Park Wood and Howbury Park.
- ☐ Enhancing the existing public open spaces, and improving the interpretation of historic environment features such as the hillfort and moat on Mowsbury Hill, a scheduled monument.

- Creating walking, cycling and horse riding routes linking villages to the north of Bedford with the northern section of the Bedford Green Wheel.
- Managing and enhancing ancient woodlands and hedgerows, and linking habitats through adjacent green spaces associated with schools and sports fields.