



WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL



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WoottonParishCouncilBedfordshire

Minutes of the **Full Council** meeting held on Wednesday 17th June 2026 at 7pm at Wootton Community Centre, Harris Way, Wootton, MK43 9FZ.

Open Forum	Cllr Lloyd took the opportunity during Open Forum to thank Cllrs O'Dell and Wheeler for their attendance over the past two days at a Planning Appeal by Gladman Developments Ltd, held at Borough Hall (26/000009/REF – Outline application with all matters reserved except for means of access for the erection of up to 90 dwellings with public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access point). All efforts had been made to defend Wootton's Neighbourhood Development Plan. There were no members of the public or press present and so the meeting continued without adjournment.			Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, s1(1).
Present	Cllrs Lloyd (in the chair), Bygraves, Noakes, O'Dell, Randell and Wheeler Cllr Wheeler is also Borough Councillor for Wootton and Kempston Rural.			
Absent (no apologies received)	Cllrs Hensher and Whittington.			
Agenda no	Agenda item title	Resolution	Action	Power
FC26/176	Apologies for absence. Cllrs Wallace and Ward. Sue Edgar Playford (Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer) was not in attendance.	Noted for the minutes.	Clerk to keep on file.	Local Government Act 1972, Part V, s85 (1+2) & Sch 12, Part VI, p40.
FC26/177	Disclosure of local and/or disclosable pecuniary interests. None.	N/A.	N/A.	Localism Act 2011, Ch 7, s31.
FC26/178	To consider any dispensation requests received by the Clerk in relation to local and/or disclosable pecuniary interests, not previously recorded.	N/A.	N/A.	Localism Act 2011, Ch 7, s33.

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	No requests received.			
FC26/179	To resolve under the terms of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, s1(2) that any members of the public or press present please leave, in order to discuss the following item(s).	There were no members of the public or press present.	N/A.	Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, s1(2).
FC26/180	To consider a course of action in relation to the potential management/landscaping of land parcel W10b as referenced within Policy W10 of Wootton's Neighbourhood Development Plan and to resolve a suitable course of action.	After detailed discussion the following was resolved (see also Appendix One): • To accept the constraints report following removal of the recommendations and Appendix One map (Cllr Lloyd to amend). • To disregard report LA26/067 due to inaccuracies. • Earmark the entire area of W10b as meadowland (excluding stream and footpaths) and include fruit-bearing trees/ bushes where a need has been identified to sustain wildlife (during creation of a Sustainable and Biodiverse Plan). • To consider installation of a hard-surfaced footpath in the coming years, given there was no legal requirement for the same. This approach would allow the meadowland to establish and for resident comments to be considered. It was noted there was a need to install a new bridge at the entrance behind Hoo Close at the earliest opportunity, along with a 10 metre 'boardwalk-style' structure where the footpath adjoins Keeley Lane, due to the boggy nature of the land. • To name the land parcel 'Wootton Nature Reserve'.	Cllr Lloyd to take forward.	Localism Act 2011, Ch 1, s1-8.

		Cllr Lloyd confirmed he would update his draft proposal (to be taken to the next Leisure and Amenities Committee meeting) to reflect: • No requirement for fencing between the cut grass footpath and meadowland. • Upon acquisition of the land, at least six months' notice would be given to denote the area was to become a nature reserve and that dogs should be kept on leads/walkers should keep to the footpaths. • Addition of two-meter-high green metal fencing between what will become a further extension to Lorraine Road Cemetery and remaining meadowland. • A double hedgerow would be added on the cemetery side of the above metal fencing. A potential option for the future management of the land could be via the creation of a Charitable Trust (to include Parish Councillor members). Proposed: Cllr Bygraves. Seconded: Cllr Noakes. Resolved by all present.		
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Meeting closed at 7.50pm

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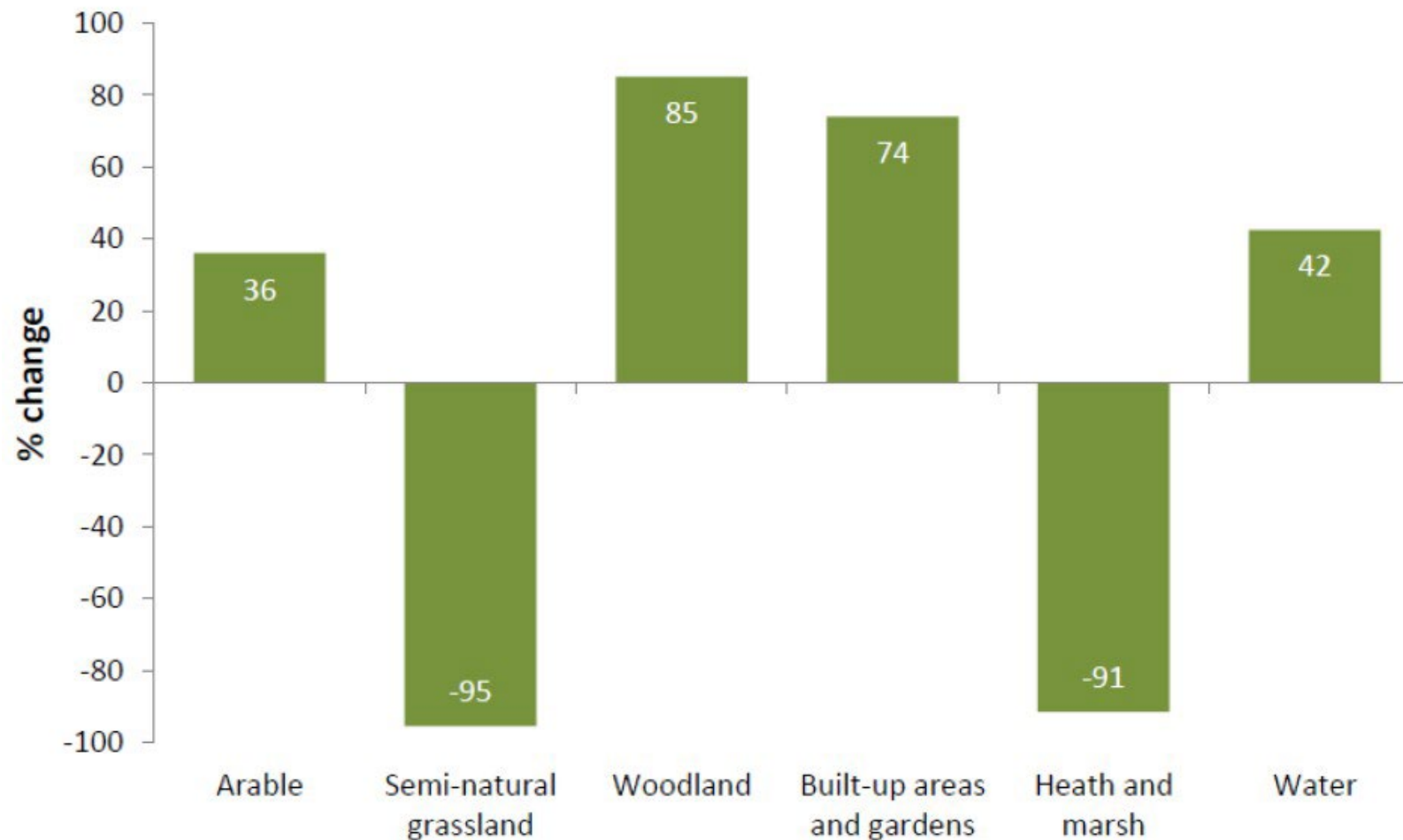
Chairman.....

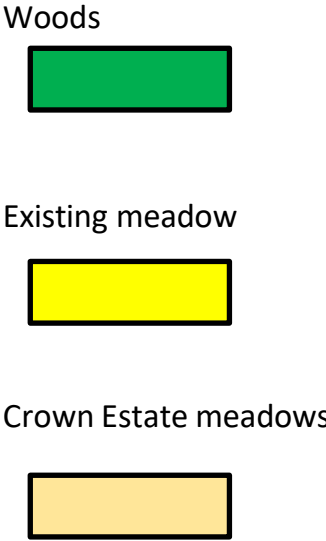
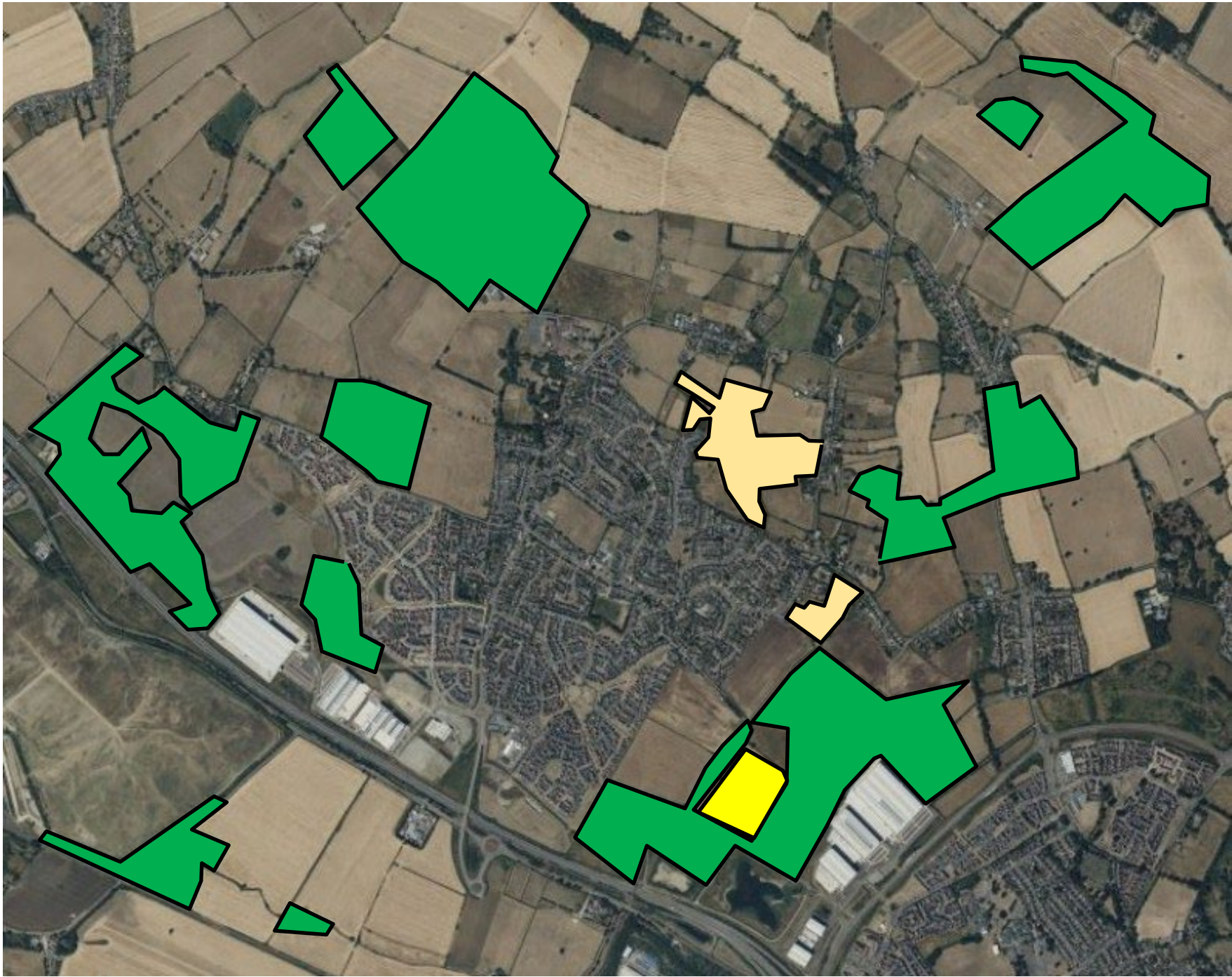
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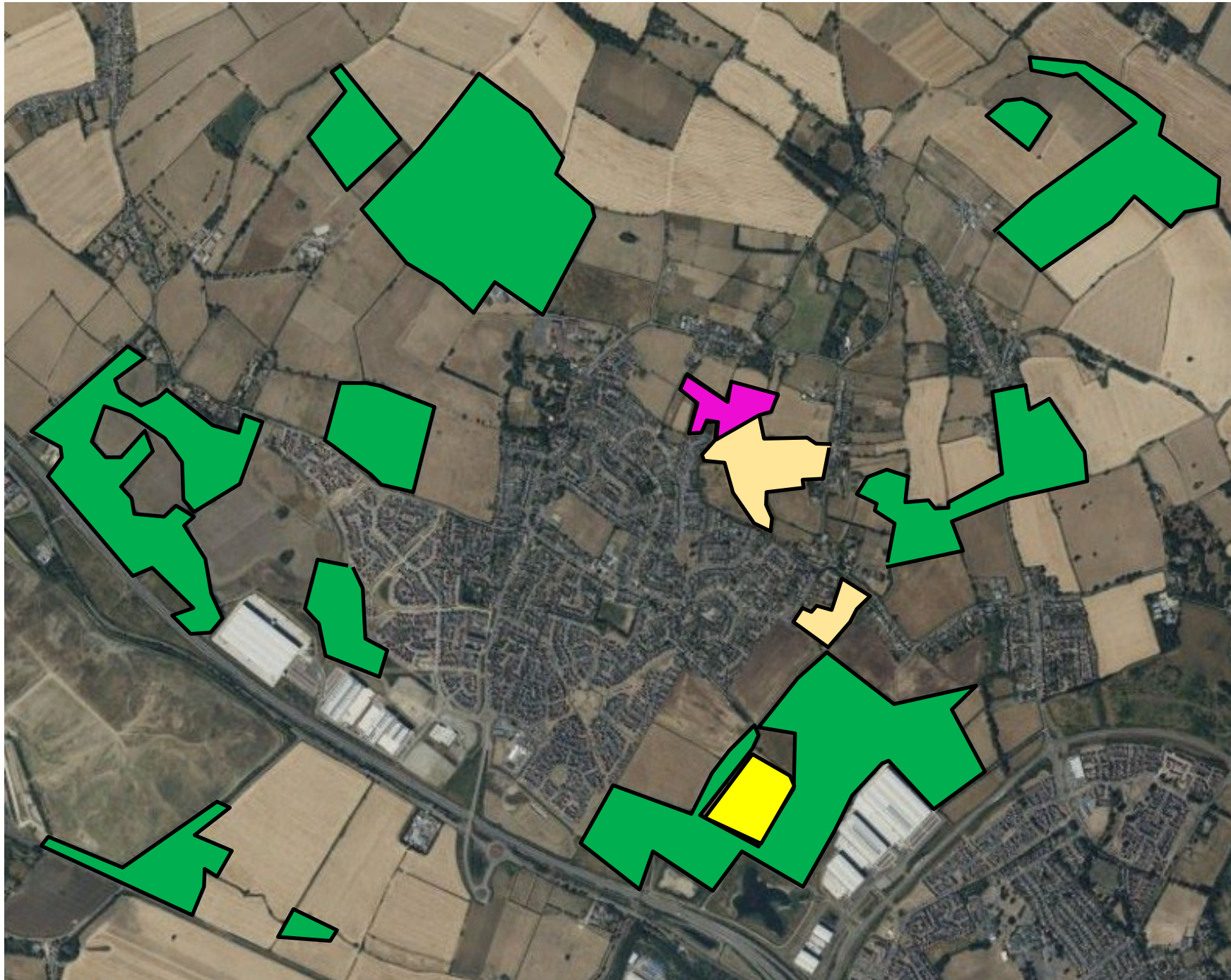
Data taken from the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Changes over time for different habitats: 1930-2030 in the Marston Valley

(Natural Capital Solutions 2020)







Woods



Existing meadow



Crown Estate meadows



New Trees (proposal)



The number of new trees being added is insignificant compared with the stock we already have, so the environmental gain is effectively negligible.

By contrast, the scale of meadowland loss is enormous, and that reduction would cause a major and damaging impact on the local environment.

Forest of
Marston Vale

The Forest of Marston Vale Trust was approached by Wootton Parish Council to assist with the design of a proposed new area of publicly accessible greenspace off Keeley Lane, Wootton. The landholding is currently owned by The Crown Estate and is proposed to be transferred to the Parish Council as part of a wider dialogue regarding development aspirations on other land assets held by The Crown Estate within Wootton.



Constraints analysis

- Cadent Gas – 125mm gas main located within highway verge on Keeley Lane
- UK Power Networks – Assets shown within red boundary along some internal and adjacent boundaries.
- Anglian Water (clean and waste pipes) – TBC (Payment required for records)

A constraints report is a document that identifies and analyses limitations or restrictions that may impact a project, often focusing on environmental, ecological, or regulatory factors.

If we are to use it, the recommendations on page 5 and the map (Appendix 1) on page 6, should be removed.

ADDITION A. TREE PLANTING in W10b

When major planning applications are made in the Forest of Marston Vale area (in which Wootton lies) the developer must take into consideration 'Bedford Borough and National policies' that support the Forest of Marston Vale and tree planting' – see Appendix 1 below.

This condition is unlikely to apply to the Development of W10b since it is not expected that planning approval will be necessary. However, it is strongly suggested that the principle should be adhered to for W10b because of the nature of the project.

In 2024 WPC asked the FoMVT to prepare a **Constraints Analysis** (attached) for W10b. The report includes a Memo from an Environmental Officer at Bedford Borough Historic Environmental Team (BBHET). W10b is an area of high archaeological interest and preservation of ridge and furrow earthworks should be paramount in any land management plan. Tree planting should be minimal. However, the report does state that Wood Pasture planting would be acceptable in the southwest of W10b indicated in area B of Appendix 1 of the report.

In January 2022 WPC planted 70 trees to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee on WPC land at Lorraine Road cemetery and adjacent Crown Estate land (part of W10b). **It is proposed that Wood Pasture planting is done in Area B of Appendix 1.** This is next to the 'Queen's Green Canopy' 70 trees. Note that the site abuts the proposed Cemetery extension.

It is expected that 'Trees for Climate' grants will be available to cover the cost of planting and probably the first 3 years of maintenance. The Area referred to is sketched in the diagram below.

Cllr Wallace report - LA26/067

In summary Cllr Wallace's report: -

- A. Lists multiple policies that developers must plant trees.
- B. Mentions funding as part of the Trees for Climate control.
- C. References accessibility issues and installation of a hard surface footway.

In response to Cllr Wallace's report: -

- A. Land parcel W10b DOES NOT form part of any development proposal or policy and as a result, the policies referenced by Cllr Wallace to not apply in this instance.
- B. Funding available will not cover the cost of tree maintenance costs in perpetuity. Therefore, trees will become a liability not an asset.
- C. National guidance on countryside access emphasises the principle of "Least Restrictive Access." This means making paths as accessible as possible without damaging the natural environment. Wildlife Trust has offered guidance, which notes there are no legal requirements for a hard-surface walkway. Plenty of rights-of-way do not provide hard surfacing.

Government's Environmental Improvement Projects

Civil servants making decisions without the scientific knowledge to back them up.

Electric Vehicles

They will never deliver what governments expected or what the public believe.

The environmental cost in: -

- Scrapping an old car.
- Mining the materials.
- Shipping.
- Building new manufacturing equipment
- Expansion of factories.
- Improvements to car parks and highways – not least as the vehicles are heavier.
- Installation of charging points.
- Building of new power stations.
- Generating the electricity.

Climate Control - Plant Trees

Facts that need to be considered.

- 50-80% of oxygen comes from oceanic phytoplankton and marine algae.
- 20-30% of oxygen comes from trees in forests with a large coverage of green leaves.
- It is believed that trees reduce carbon (CO₂). However, in the tree's lifetime, they have zero impact on reducing carbon.
- Farmers make money from planting trees. A farmer can fill a field with trees that the public has no access to. Therefore, those trees do not need to follow the same robust inspection programme as the Parish Council follows for its trees, because if one fell it would not endanger human life.

Proposed Recommendations

1. The recommendations on page 5 and the map (Appendix 1) on page 6 of the constraints report are removed.
2. Report LA26/067 is not included in this project due to inaccuracies as detailed above.
3. Make the entire area a meadow land (excluding stream and footpaths), and include fruit-bearing trees and bushes where a need has been identified during the creation of our Sustainable and Biodiverse Plan for the area.
4. In terms of accessibility, there is no legal requirement to install a hard-surfaced footway. However, this is something that can be considered in the coming years and after the meadowland has been created, should resident comments and concerns be received. There is a need to install a new bridge behind Hoo Close along with a 10 metre 'boardwalk-style' structure, due to the boggy nature of the land.
5. This area be called "Wootton's Nature Reserve"



Remove the kissing gate and install a 10 meter boardwalk over what becomes boggy ground in the winter months



Kissing gate

Boggy ground in winter

3 steps down to the bridge