

5. Green Spaces and the Environment

This design statement is significant in any consideration of green spaces whether:

- within the built-up area;
- the woodlands;
- hedgerows; or
- watercourses.

It supports BMBC's Bio-diversity Action Plan and the Barnsley Green Space Strategy¹.

Any green spaces, even those within the built-up areas of the parish, are potentially valuable oases for wildlife. Everyday contact with nature is important for well-being and quality of life. Furthermore the value of the wildlife around us is that it serves as a constant barometer of the health of our environment. Like the canaries used to warn underground workers of toxic gases, our wildlife has in the past warned us of things going wrong in the environment above ground. Screens of trees provide protection from noise and air pollution, extract carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and emit oxygen.

Grassland, left to grow to maturity, provides seeds and insects for larks, sparrows, finches and buntings and habitat for butterflies and moths.

5.1 What is a Green Space?

A green space can be as small as a few square metres or as large as many acres. Essentially they are areas predominantly of grass, shrubs and trees. These spaces are an essential parish asset providing environmental and social impact.

Environmental: -

- Provide places for wildlife to live and for people to see and learn about wildlife.
- Improve the appearance of the villages by giving a more 'open' feel and look.
- Maintain the rural character of the parish both within the villages and between them.
- Help to absorb pollution such as carbon dioxide.

Social: -

- Provide sports and play facilities in appropriate places.
- Provide other recreational opportunities e.g. allotments.

Two different types of open space are significant; open countryside between settlements and important open spaces within the villages.

5.2 Inside the Villages

The open spaces in the villages contribute towards the feeling of their rural nature as opposed to being a city suburb. The open spaces situated within the villages include:

Silkstone:

- Silkstone Recreation Ground and adjoining Conroyd Wood.
- The Chestnuts.
- Open green space within and fronting Manor Park.
- The woodland and grassed area between Manor Park and Towngate through which Footpath 29a passes.
- 'Hillside' on High Street, opposite the Ring 'o' Bells.
- The entrance to Silkstone Primary School and playing field.
- 'Ribbon' open-space along Silkstone Waggonway from Silkstone Cross to the Parish boundary.
- The area adjacent to the War Memorial in Martin Croft.
- Broadgates play area.
- Tanyard, Hollow Spring and Conroyd Woods.
- Pack Horse Allotments.

¹ These documents are available from Barnsley Council's Planning and Transportation Service

Silkstone Common:

- Orchard Wood and adjoining Orchard Meadow.
- Silkstone Common Recreation Ground including wooded area.
- Planted open space at Beacon Court.
- 'Ribbon' open space along the Dove Valley Trail section of the Trans-Pennine Trail.
- Hall Royd Wood in private ownership, but open to public use.
- Knabbs Wood, owned by the Woodland Trust, and open to the public.
- Hill Top Wood.
- Silkstone Common Primary School playing field.

The Chestnuts, Silkstone and Orchard Wood and Meadow, Silkstone Common

The residents are of the opinion that these are very special areas. They should become protected areas of tranquility. This would enable the native flora and fauna to thrive and the residents to enjoy these areas with pride.



The Chestnuts was developed from a disused quarry. It is a green area set in the middle of the village. We strongly believe that this area should retain its character. We do not want change for change sake. Just as a building should focus respect for its neighbours so should the Chestnuts focus respect for its neighbours. This is a small grassy and tranquil setting bounded by large mature trees and native shrubs. The neighbouring housing is taken up by mainly senior citizens and the disabled in bungalow accommodation. Peace of mind is a priority for the residents of this area. It is a very desirable place to live. Every facet is valued. Any proposed alteration to the Chestnuts should be vigorously resisted. We believe that full consultation with the locals is essential. In the Chestnuts we have a

sense of place and it feels good. This should become a protected area.

The list of green spaces are the main ones within the villages, but there are a substantial number of smaller green spaces. These are of equal importance to the open rural feel of the villages. These are shown in green on the maps on pages 6 and 7

5.3 Outside the Villages

• Greenbelt

Silkstone and Silkstone Common wish to keep all their open spaces. It is a priority. New development of any kind should not result in the loss of the green spaces and views. The unique characteristic of the two villages is that green belt areas surround them. There is a particular green area between the villages, which, whilst separating them, also joins the two with lovely views of each other across the rolling hills and farmland in a wonderful green swathe. The village envelopes, already established, should be enforced in the future. Ribbon development and sprawl into the open countryside should be resisted. The village boundaries are shown on the map on page 5.

• Farmland

The current feeling in the parish is that farmland should not under any circumstances be developed as housing estates or industrial sites. This pastoral legacy should be valued and carefully managed.

5.4 Recreation

In Silkstone, the Recreation Ground has a football pitch and a cricket pitch. Membership of the clubs is open to non-Silkstone residents. These facilities are kept in excellent order and create a sense of local pride and community spirit. However, we are very conscious that unless thoughtfully managed by dedicated people, these areas could fall below their present standard. Other areas of importance are the children's play areas located at Manor Park, Broadgates and Martin Croft.

In Silkstone Common the Recreation Ground has a football pitch and the children's play area known as 'Mike's Place'.

Recreation areas are highly valued and should not be taken for building purposes in the future.

Reference should be made to the Barnsley's Green Space Strategy in accordance with Government

Guidelines.

We need to promote and coordinate sport and leisure facilities for people of all ages and abilities. This would encourage a healthier lifestyle for all. Amenities for young people should be accessible, affordable, safe and relevant, especially for teenagers. This should be a priority.

5.5 Nature Conservation

The importance of protecting the native species in our woodlands and hedgerows cannot be overstated. A list of some of the native species is given in Appendix C. The wildlife we see around us has evolved over millions of years to be dependent on the plants found there. In particular the planting of non-native species and the tipping of discarded garden plants or plants from garden ponds within natural areas should not occur. Similarly, and for the same reasons, the extension of gardens involving the planting of non-native species, beyond the boundaries of private property, into areas of native woodland or other green space, will not be tolerated. Note that bluebells purchased from plant nurseries may be the Spanish bluebell that hybridises with our own bluebell and creates a non-native hybrid. Do not plant purchased bluebells in our woods.

Small pockets of woodland in the steep-sided valleys around Silkstone may be described as remnants of ancient woodland, never cleared for cultivation since the end of the last ice-age. However most of our woodland can be described as 'plantation', though it is largely of native species with some non-native species planted for their commercial value, as may be seen in Conroyd Wood, Fall Wood and Lindley Wood. Unimproved woodland provides important havens for hole-nesting fauna such as woodpeckers, nuthatch, treecreeper and various bat species, all present in our local woodland, and the ground cover in these woods is often as important as the trees themselves. Bats and badgers, both protected by legislation, are also present in underground sites provided by mine-workings and disused railway tunnels.

Two areas of particular conservation value are worthy of note: Pye Flatts Meadow on the Hoylandswaine boundary of the parish is a scheduled Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the regulation of English Nature. Its special attributes arise from the fact that its sward has not been disturbed over many years, has not been ploughed or fertilised, and the wide range of plant species found there are entirely native species. The owners of Pye Flatts are responsible under the regulations in force for its management. English Nature depends to a degree on local surveillance, and local people should be alert to any untoward treatment of the meadow. Section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) states that public bodies must "take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs".

The second area is Knabbs Wood, which includes some ancient woodland, and is in the ownership of the Woodland Trust. It is highly likely that the site of the Huskar Disaster lies in this woodland.

Some hedgerows close to the villages are also of significant conservation interest. Under a study supervised by the Campaign to Protect Rural England, one on Mill Lane was found to be a thousand years old, which indicates the longevity of the field boundaries in that area. Some hedgerows, within the built-up areas, serve as 'corridors' for wildlife along which birds, butterflies and small mammals travel.

5.6 Woodland

Ref. Legal protection Schedule 13 (schedule 8) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 There are several ancient woodlands in the area. These allow for diversity in the general landscape and also add to the character of the villages. The carpet of bluebells in spring is a sight to behold and should be preserved. Maintenance of these woodlands should be carefully managed and native trees and shrubs planted when deemed necessary. This would encourage wildlife to flourish. It will add to the joy and contentment of living in the villages. These are the values that we hold dear.



5.7 Watercourses

Watercourses provide wildlife habitat and a commercial resource used by local farmers and a nurseryman. Pollution threatens both wildlife and the commercial activities along their banks. Both Silkstone Beck and Husker Dike are currently categorized, by the Environment Agency, as 'at risk' from pollution. Past incidents have arisen from mine water 'yellow ochre' pollution and silage clamp off. Pollution incidents should be reported to the Environment Agency.

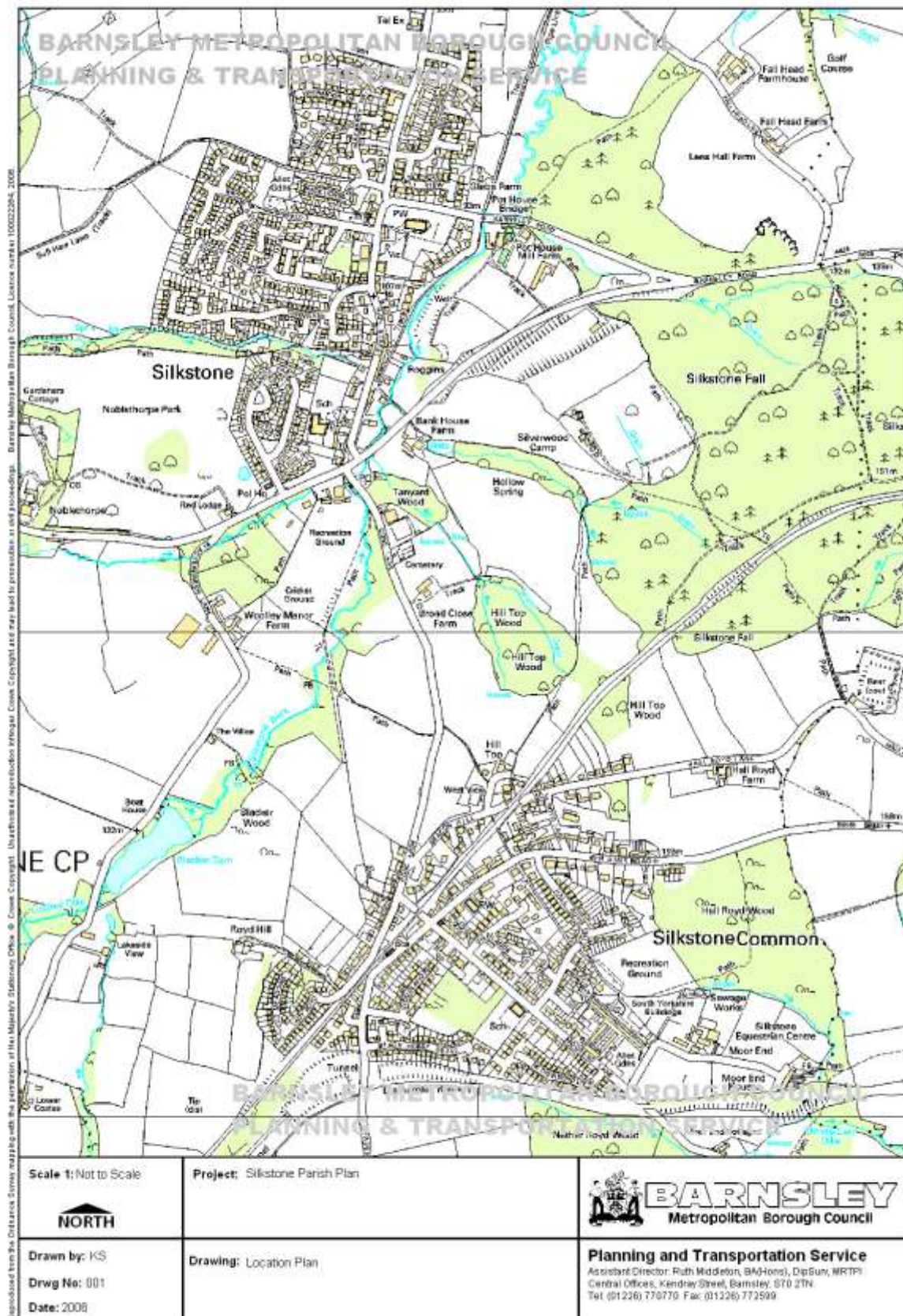


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Green space Guidelines (GS)

- GS1.** In future developments, a priority should be to preserve and enhance the landscape character of the parish. Areas such as the Chestnuts, Orchard Wood and Meadow should be preserved and smaller are also of vital importance to the people of the parish. All of these should not be encroached upon or neglected.
- GS2.** All open spaces within the villages should be retained as a priority irrespective of size.
- GS3.** Recreation areas, within the parish, are highly valued and should not be taken for building purposes in the future.
- GS4.** The unique characteristic of the two villages is that green belt areas surround them. In order to retain this important feature, ribbon development and sprawl should not be allowed.
- GS4.** Any new development should provide green spaces to preserve and enhance the habitats of the flora and fauna of the parish. Future planting should always be of native species in these areas (see Appendix C).
- GS5.** All the green space management should be in line with BMBC Green Space Strategy.

Village boundaries



Silkstone's Green Spaces



Silkstone Common's Green Spaces

