

# Appendix E KET11 - Local Green Spaces Evidence Report

## 1. Introduction

This Local Green Spaces (LGS) Evidence Report has been prepared to accompany the Central Kettering Neighbourhood Plan (KNP) and provides the justification for the designation of Local Green Spaces under Policy KET11. The purpose of this report is to demonstrate how each proposed LGS meets the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and to present clear, proportionate evidence to support designation.

The KNP recognises the critical role played by accessible green spaces in an urban environment. These areas contribute to health and wellbeing, biodiversity, climate resilience, children's play, community identity, heritage setting, and opportunities for quiet enjoyment. As the NPPF allows neighbourhood plans to provide special protection for green spaces of particular importance to local communities, the designations in KET11 represent the most valued and distinctive open spaces within Central Kettering.

Policy KET11 identifies the spaces listed below and confirms that development will not be permitted except in very special circumstances or where proposals are ancillary to public recreational use.

## 2. National Planning Policy Context

Paragraphs 106–108 of the NPPF (2024) define the criteria for Local Green Space designation. The KNP reproduces these directly and applies them in assessing each site:

A Local Green Space must:

- a) be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b) be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance (beauty, historic value, recreational value, tranquillity, or wildlife);
- c) be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

Planning Practice Guidance further clarifies that public access is not required, and that size limits depend on context. Urban spaces, pocket parks, play areas, gardens, sports spaces and green corners may all qualify.

## 3. Methodology

The assessment process has been undertaken as follows:

1. Identification of the green spaces valued locally, as evidenced through community feedback from informal engagement "Conversation 1", Advisory Panel walkabouts work, site visits and consideration of existing designations.
2. Assessment each site against the NPPF criteria.
3. Contacting landowners to advise their site is being considered for inclusion in the KET11 and any initial feedback.
4. Testing the proposed sites at the second informal engagement "Conversation 2"
5. Adducing further evidence describing each LGS's qualities, including role, setting, biodiversity, recreational function and contribution to local identity.
6. Further landowner liaison (NNC)
7. Map sites on the KNP Policies Map.
8. Refined list of spaces meeting the NPPF tests and recommended for designation.

#### **4. Overview of Proposed Local Green Spaces (Policy KET11)**

Policy KET11 proposes the following 12 spaces for Local Green Space designation

1. Mill Road Park and Sports Facilities
2. Mill Road Pocket Park
3. Rockingham Road Pleasure Park
4. Reed Close Play Area
5. Corner of Rockingham Road / Northfield Avenue
6. Grafton Street Park
7. Meadow Road Park
8. Manor House Gardens
9. Garden of Reflection (north of Corn Market Hall)
10. Corner of Stamford Road / Catesby Street
11. Jubilee Gardens (either side of St Mary's Rd at London Rd junction)
12. Union Street Copse

These sites represent a mix of parks, pocket parks, play areas, landscape features and green corners that collectively define the character and identity of Central Kettering.

#### **5. Assessment of Each Local Green Space Against NPPF Criteria**

Below is a site-by-site assessment of each location. In determining whether a proposed Local Green Space is demonstrably special to the local community, it has been considered how each site holds local significance under one or more of the NPPF categories:

- a) Beauty - Evidence of landscape quality, mature trees, planting, visual amenity, townscape contribution.
- b) Historic Significance - Relationship to heritage assets, historic layout, contribution to Conservation Area, cultural associations.
- c) Recreational Value - Play equipment, sports use, walking routes, informal play, social function.
- d) Tranquillity - Opportunities for quiet enjoyment, separation from traffic, woodland feel, shading, peacefulness.
- e) Wildlife / Biodiversity Value - Habitats, species, presence of trees, watercourses, ecological connectivity, GI corridor role.

## 5.1 Mill Road Park and Sports Facilities



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## Description

A significant recreational area incorporating playing fields, ballpark/skate facility and associated open green environments in a highly accessible location. Located within easy walking distance for the surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

Mill Road Park was officially opened on the afternoon of Sunday, 22 May, 1925, when people flocked to enjoy music by Kettering Town Band. Originally waste ground, the two acres of land were transformed by the council, thanks largely to a generous donation by local shoe firm Frank Wright.

This large green space sits in the middle of densely populated area, and next to the main primary school in the area.

It provides children's play equipment, toddle play, a teenage shelter and a fenced off area for dogs to be off lead. The central path through the middle is light, with seating areas & bins. It is also covered by the CCTV network. This path leads to further facilities providing hard surfaces with ramps for skating and bike skills. Then there is a second hard court with hoops for basketball, and nets for football.

**Site owner** North Northamptonshire Council

### Demonstrably Special Qualities

- Recreational value: One of the town's primary sports and youth facilities.
- Community significance: Frequently used by families, young people, and sports groups.
- Health and wellbeing: Provides crucial green space in an otherwise dense urban area.

### Local Character

Large enough to support meaningful recreation but still clearly a local community facility; not an extensive tract.

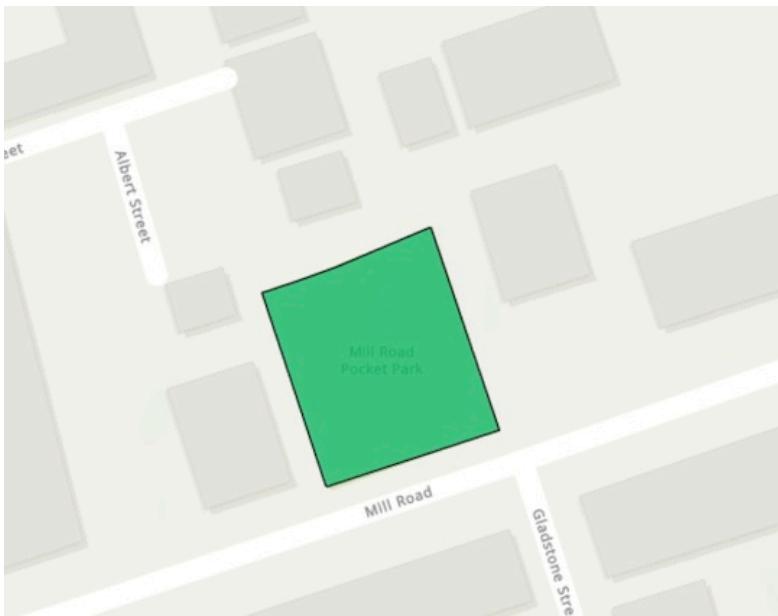
## 5.2 Mill Road Pocket Park



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## Description

A small, narrow green space forming a green corridor between Mill Road and Tudor Court. Directly serves residents in nearby streets.

This small space is at the top of Mill Road and provides a walk way through to Tudor Court which houses mostly older residents. It has 3 beautiful silver birch trees, and provides a small green oasis in a densely populated part of town. It could do with some more care, but it breaks up the relentless march of terraced house frontages on the street.

**Site owner** North Northamptonshire Council

### Demonstrably Special Qualities

- Provides breathing space in a dense residential street pattern.
- Offers greenery, wildlife habitat, and a safe walking connection.

**Local Character** Small and intimate in scale—typical of a pocket park; meets NPPF tests.

### 5.3 Rockingham Road Pleasure Park



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## Description

A major historic park providing play, walking, sports and leisure opportunities. Centrally located with strong pedestrian access.

As the name implies the town's premier park was originally opened for women and children in 1894 as a result of the efforts of John Byran, a local shoe manufacturer, to be "a very different green space" to those used for "rougher sports". With a fascinating history, today the park features a very popular enclosed dog free area for children to play on a wide range of swings, horizontal trees etc. as well football and basketball secured through the joint efforts of Friends of Park Group and Kettering Borough Council, along with a physical exercise activities area with several pieces of equipment for a good workout to encourage health and wellbeing. Wildlife is supported by many mature trees including a delightful avenue of such, as well as ample other opportunities for biodiversity including herbaceous borders, and even a long grass pollinator area with bug hotel. Its open spaces for seating and picnicking surrounds the historic bandstand which is brought to life each summer with a programme of free Sunday afternoon music including brass and silver bands to jazz, funk and more.

In addition, the park hosts the town's annual carnival and many other community events. Adjacent sits the town bowling green used by three different clubs with its art deco styled pavilion. Grand three-story town houses overlook the park on all sides with a magnificent view of all the splendour. The park is well covered by cctv and lighting.

**Site owner** North Northamptonshire Council

## Special Qualities

- Historic significance: Long-established community park contributing strongly to local identity.
- Recreational value: Contains play equipment, paths, landscaping.
- Biodiversity: Mature trees and informal habitats.

**Local Character** Neighbourhood-scale facility; not an extensive tract.

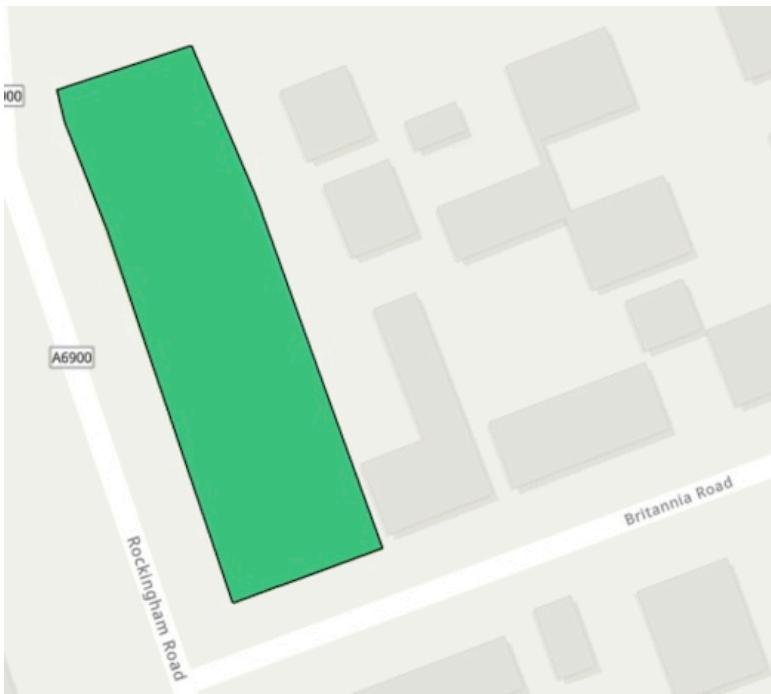
## 5.4 Reed Close Play Area



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## Description

This newly created green space, opened to the public in 2025, provides a valuable recreational area for the community. Covering approximately 1,130 m<sup>2</sup>, it features a grassed area interspersed with a winding path that links two access points: one from Reed Close and the other from Britannia Road. The space currently includes 12 newly planted tree saplings, three benches, and three to four children's play items.

Although still in its early stages of development, the green space has significant potential to enhance local biodiversity and contribute to the area's ecological requirements. With Northfield Pocket Park only a stone's throw away and the Rockingham Road Pleasure Park located only 385 metres as the bird flies, to the south-east, this site will become part of the wider network of green spaces. Additional planting and careful maintenance of the young trees will help establish a more resilient habitat for wildlife and improve the park's environmental value.

At present, the site is exposed to weather conditions and the surrounding busy roads. Increasing tree and shrub planting will provide much-needed shelter, improve visual screening, and create a more pleasant and sustainable environment for residents.

**Site owner** Development Management Company

## Special Qualities

- Recreational: Serves younger children in an area lacking alternative play space.
- Community significance: A focus of local family activity.

**Local Character** Fits the definition of a pocket LGS.

## 5.5 Corner of Rockingham Road / Northfield Avenue



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### Description

Northfield Pocket Park is located at the junction of Northfield Avenue and Rockingham Road. This well-established green space, cherished by the local community for over 70 years, provides a tranquil and attractive environment. Its proximity (just 100 metres) to the Slade River enhances its ecological value, offering a haven for birds and other wildlife.

The park has two access points: entering at the highest point, Rockingham Road, the meandering path runs through the park and concludes with seven steps leading down to Northfield Avenue. The southern boundary is lined with mature bushes and trees, creating a natural screen from neighbouring residential properties. Midway along the path, a bench provides a resting spot where visitors can enjoy the peace and quiet, aided by the greenery on the northern side that helps buffer traffic noise from the nearby junction.

The park's mature planting includes Irish and English Yew, Hornbeam, Cedar, various species of Cypress, and several varieties of Holly, including an impressive, variegated specimen. Despite its modest size of 1,322 m<sup>2</sup>, the layout ensures ample space for picnics, children's play, and dog exercising on the grassed area to the north.

**Site owner** North Northamptonshire Council

### Special Qualities

- Amenity and beauty: Mature planting contributes to the streetscape.
- Local identity: Recognised landmark.

**Local Character** Fits the definition of a pocket LGS

### 5.6 Grafton Street Park



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## Description

Neighbourhood Park providing open space, sitting areas and informal play space.

Grafton Street Park has lots of play equipment, upgraded in 2015. As well as the usual provision of swings and so forth for very young children, there is a modest 'adventure' section, a basketball hoop, goal posts and plenty of sitting areas both in formal benches and metal gazebo-style seating structures. All the equipment is in good condition. The play area is fenced off and flagged as 'dog free', although there are gaps in the fencing that might be better as gates.

Beyond the play area, there is a good expanse of grass, with evidence of fairly recent planting. On the long edge furthest from Northfield Avenue, there are wooden steps leading a short walk through the wooded area that leads to Grafton Street. The bottom edge abuts Slade Brook, forming a natural barrier to the traffic on Northfield Avenue.

This is a well-used park in a densely populated part of Kettering. The range of equipment and other resources means it is suitable for visitors of all ages. It is the only such park in this part of town.

**Site owner.** North Northamptonshire Council

### Special Qualities

- Recreation: Used for informal leisure.
- Wellbeing: Serves densely populated surrounding streets.

**Local Character** Neighbourhood-scale facility; not an extensive tract.

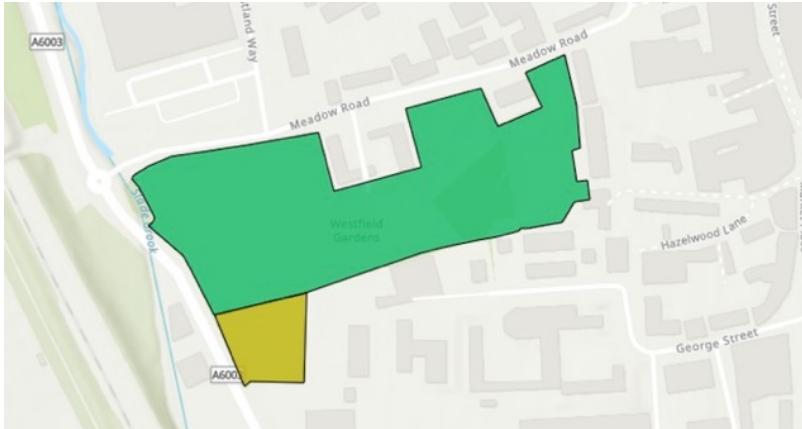
### 5.7 Meadow Road Park



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## Description

Large central green space with scenic walking paths, playgrounds for children and fitness zone. The park is used for picnics, leisurely strolls, and enjoying nature, providing a peaceful retreat in the heart of the town. Provides a local recreational space for those living in the town centre.

This park makes for a beautiful setting for the older buildings located at the north end. This end is truly beautiful and its many mature trees add an ideal setting to the historic buildings they border, offering a truly tranquil area to sit and rest. At the south end runs the Slade Brook, prone to flooding. Meadow Road Park enhances the view from Northfield Avenue a very busy road.

Recently, new trees have been planted in avenues and annual wildflower seed has been sown in a large area. All this adds to much needed biodiversity with trees and flower offering a home to insects

and birds, etc. Mature trees offer even greater biodiversity and their positive effect on mental health is well documented. Pond works are planned for the area by the brook, and this will further increase biodiversity, as well as much needed flood mitigation.

The Westfield Play area is a safe space for adults to take children to play with a good variety of play equipment. The park is enjoyed by all, offering a peaceful space with high quality paths as well as benches.

*Please note the extent of the park highlighted in yellow is excluded from the designation due to the need for the landowner to retain this part of the site for a potential access road to facilitate redevelopment of adjacent property in Saunders Close and potentially for improvements to Slade Brook (deculverting)*

**Site owner** North Northamptonshire Council

### Special Qualities

- Recreational: Important for walking and community activity.
- Setting: Enhances character at a gateway into town.
- Strategic GI role: Supports the green-blue infrastructure corridor.

**Local Character** Neighbourhood-scale facility; not an extensive tract.

### 5.8 Manor House Gardens



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## Description

Prominent green space at the heart of the Conservation Area and Cultural Quarter. The Manor House Gardens have been an important feature of Kettering's landscape since 1240, when the Abbot of Peterborough commissioned the building of what we now call the Manor House.



Hatton map – 1587



Sawyer map - 1631

Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536-41, the house was bought by the Sawyer family. Maps of Kettering commissioned by Sir Christopher Hatton (1587) and John Sawyer (1631) show the land around the house bounded by Bowling Green Road and Sheep Street and nearly reaching London Road as (initially) open park land and subsequently as established gardens and orchards. Thomas Eayre's map of 1720 also shows established gardens – looking across Sheep Street to the newly-built Hospital built by the Sawyer family.



Thomas Eayre's map – 1720

Following the Sawyers' loss of their Kettering estate in the aftermath of the South Sea Bubble, the house and land was acquired by the Montagu family at Boughton. The house was rented out, while much of the land was gifted to Kettering Urban District Council in 1885, with the stricture that "the said premises...shall never at any time be used for any purpose or purposes other than as a site for municipal buildings for the Town and District of Kettering...". The extent of the available land is shown in the map resulting from the Ordnance Survey of 1854.



Ordnance Survey Map 1854

The gardens were substantially reduced in size by the Council over following years, with allocations of land made to build the Library (1904), the Alfred East Art Gallery (1912), Kettering Grammar and High Schools (1913), Cornmarket Hall (1913) and the War Memorial (1921) – to say nothing of the

Council's extensive car park. The area at the corner of Bowling Green Road and Sheep Street, incorporating a fountain built in 1931 to mark the centenary of Michael Faraday, with its mature trees and shrubs, along with flower beds is now all that remains. The gardens, originally surrounded by a stone wall but now by iron railings, feature in the historic town walks developed by the Friends of Kettering Art Gallery & Museum and also on our [Heritage Map](#) of the town.

**Site owner** North Northamptonshire Council

### Special Qualities

- Historic significance: Direct setting to the Manor House Museum and part of town's medieval pattern.
- Beauty and tranquillity: Mature landscape in an otherwise urban context.
- Contribution to heritage townscape: Recognised in Conservation Area appraisal text within the KNP (verdant transition zone)

**Local Character** Neighbourhood-scale facility; not an extensive tract

### 5.9 Garden of Reflection (north of Corn Market Hall)



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## Description

Tranquil green space at the heart of the town designed for personal contemplation.

Tucked away between the old police station, Corn Market and busy London Road sits this small but aptly named oasis of tranquillity. Local folk often sit in quiet contemplation amongst the well-maintained wildlife inviting herbaceous borders overlooking a neatly kept lawn. Not surprisingly, numerous plaques honour and commemorate; family; the public works including ex-mayor and Alderman John E. P. Dainty 1934 - 1947; William Barber late charman of the Amalgamated Clubs Committee for the Blind 1950-60; and Workers Memorial Day planted by MP Phil Sawford, donated

by Kettering Unison Branches. The “entrance gates were presented to the borough by the Ladies Committee for Maternity and Child Welfare as a tribute to their founder members and to commemorate the continuance of 46 years of voluntary service”.

Once part of the graveyard for St Peter and St Paul’s a number chest tombs and headstone still remain which are of potential significant historical value, as such often date from the 17th century onward, showcasing notable craftsmanship, architectural quality, and cultural heritage.

**Site owner** North Northamptonshire Council

### Special Qualities

- Civic role: Supports reflective quiet use.
- Townscape value: Enhances views in the civic quarter.
- Historic connection: Adjacent to heritage buildings.

**Local Character** Neighbourhood-scale facility; not an extensive tract

### 5.10 Corner of Stamford Road / Catesby Street



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## Description

This accessible pocket park, measuring approximately 600 m<sup>2</sup>, is located between the rear of residential properties on Scotland Street, Weldon Street, and Catesby Street and where Stamford Road begins. The park features a gently curved footpath that runs through the site, with two benches positioned for community use. Open grassy areas provide space for informal recreation, including sitting, children's play and dog exercising.

Several mature trees are distributed throughout the park, offering shade and visual interest, while smaller shrubs and planting help define its boundaries. The surrounding residential gardens create a sense of enclosure, yet the park remains open to the street, ensuring visibility and easy access. Despite its modest size, this green space serves as an important local amenity, fostering opportunities for relaxation and social interaction.

Historic mapping indicates the park has been present since at least 1950, highlighting its long-standing role in supporting the neighbourhood's green infrastructure and wildlife habitat. It complements Mill Road Park, located just 170 metres away and provides a vital resource given that the next significant green space to the north, Rockingham Road Pleasure Park is approximately 670 metres away. This continuity of green spaces contributes significantly to the character, biodiversity, and wellbeing of the area.

**Site owner** North Northamptonshire Council

## Special Qualities

- Townscape contribution: Softens a tight street network.
- Local identity: Recognisable as a green waypoint along movement corridors.

**Local Character**      Fits the definition of a pocket LGS

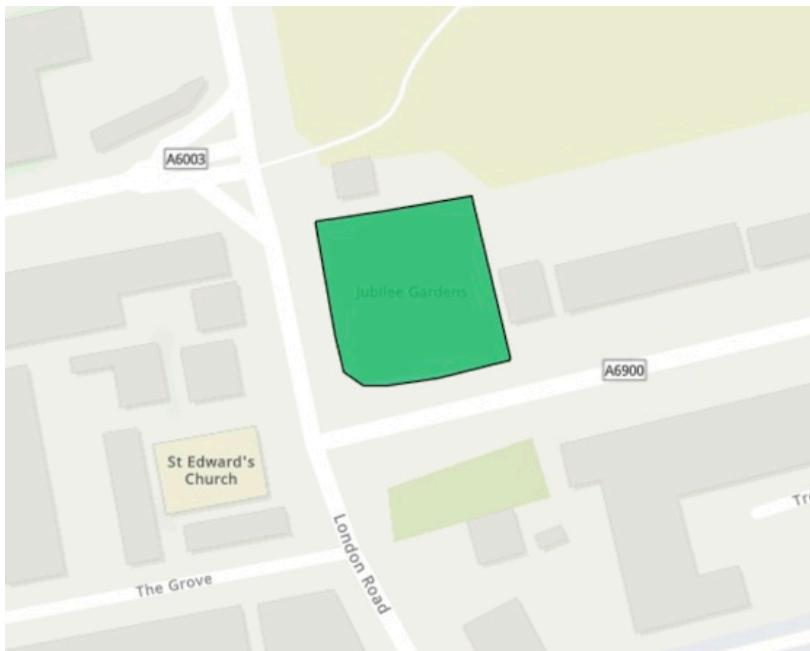
### 5.11 Jubilee Gardens (St Mary's Road / London Road)



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## Description

Twin green spaces located on either side of St Mary's Road at its junction with London Road.

The green spaces are well maintained by the council with mown lawns, paved footpaths, and planted areas laid out in an orderly manner. Flowerbeds are filled with colourful flowers, cast iron posts are provided for hanging baskets, and borders planted with a variety of bushes and plants. Deciduous, ornamental, and coniferous trees are planted sparsely to allow plenty of daylight into the area. The planting provides homes for nesting birds and a suitable habitat for invertebrates and pollinators. Benches are provided to allow people to relax and enjoy the grounds, particularly circular sunken garden. Memorial benches and trees have been donated, and the tranquillity of the space is helped by a ban on ball games. These gardens are bounded by a wrought iron railings allowing sight of the beautiful gardens by motorists and pedestrians. Members of the public have enjoyed decorating the fir tree with Christmas decorations to give the space some colour in the depths of winter. The gardens' close proximity to St Edward's Church allows wedding parties an ideal location for group photographs.

**Site owner** North Northamptonshire Council.

## Special Qualities

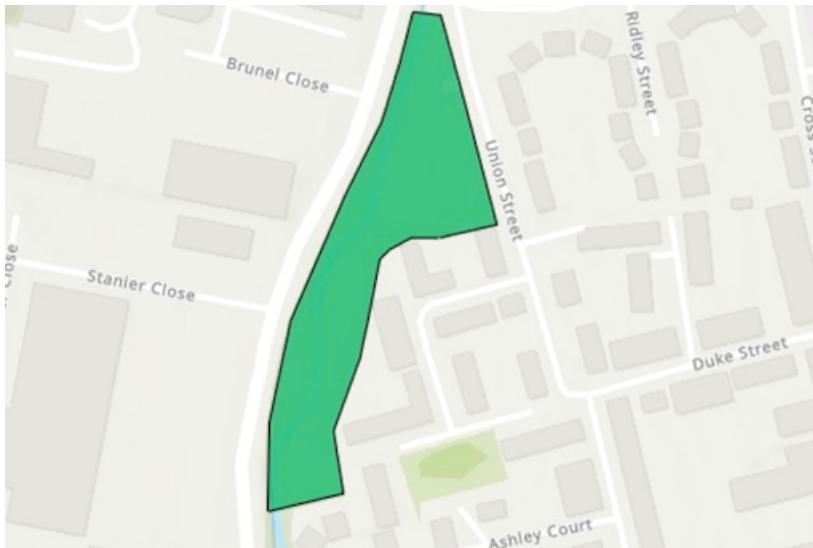
- Amenity and tranquillity: Offers space for rest within a busy movement corridor.
- Civic identity: Provides visual character framing the approach to the church and London Road.

**Local Character** Neighbourhood-scale facility; not an extensive tract

## 5.12 Union Street Copse



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### Description

Small woodland copse providing important greenery and habitat between Union Street and Northfield Avenue. The copse is on an undulating slope down to the Slade Brook, punctuated with small glades allowing daylight to penetrate the shade. The copse was managed during the 80s-90s by the British Trust of Conservation Volunteers, clearing undergrowth and encourage native flora and fauna to thrive. A small network of dirt paths allows people to move around from the Union Street entrance down to the Slade Brook. The copse has one entrance so that users are not disturbed by pedestrians using the area

as a cut-through. The copse provides visual and acoustic screening for the residents of Union Street and Bellway Close from the busy Northfield Avenue with its commercial and retail parks beyond. The copse provides a significant clump of woodland with a variety of trees species, helping to maintain the Slade Brook's tenuous ecological corridor running north to south through the urban area. The copse provides a habitat for squirrels, hedgehogs, moles and other small mammals. Bird song permeates the mature trees, which provide nesting sites for birds and bats. Fallen, decaying trees sustain a variety of beetles and fungi.

**Site owner** North Northamptonshire Council

### Special Qualities

- Wildlife value: Offers habitat in an intensely urban area.
- Community significance: Established natural feature valued for screening and greenery.
- Tranquillity: Provides quiet and shade.

**Local Character** Neighbourhood-scale facility; not an extensive tract

### 6. Summary Table of NPPF Compliance

Site	Proximity	Demonstrably Special?	Local in Character?
Mill Road Park	✓	Recreation,	✓
Mill Road Pocket Park	✓	Green corridor, amenity	✓
Rockingham Road Pleasure Park	✓	Historic, recreation, beauty	✓
Reed Close	✓	Play, community	✓
Rockingham/Northfield	✓	Landmark, greenery	✓
Grafton Street Park	✓	Recreation, wellbeing	✓
Meadow Road Park	✓	GI significance, biodiversity	✓
Manor House Gardens	✓	Heritage setting, tranquillity	✓
Garden of Reflection	✓	Civic, heritage	✓
Stamford/Catesby	✓	Townscape benefit	✓
Jubilee Gardens	✓	Civic approach, amenity	✓
Union Street Copse	✓	Wildlife, tranquillity	✓

All sites therefore meet the statutory requirements for Local Green Space designation.

### 7. Conclusion

The fourteen green spaces identified in Policy KET11 are justified for designation as Local Green Spaces. Each site is:

- Close to the communities it serves (proximity)
- Demonstrably special, contributing important recreational, aesthetic, historic, ecological or tranquillity benefits
- Local in character, none being large tracts of land

Designation will safeguard these valued environments for future generations and ensure that development proposals respect their special qualities. The LGS designations also reinforce other KNP objectives including biodiversity enhancement, movement and connectivity, heritage setting and wellbeing.