Swinford Neighbourhood Plan

Local Green Spaces
When parishioners of Swinford completed a questionnaire at the start of the neighbourhood planning process a number of points emerged very clearly. One was that parishioners valued highly the green spaces which separate buildings in the village and which enhance the cultural importance of the village setting. In particular the ‘Glebe’ (opposite the church in the centre of the village) was identified as land that a significant number of parishioners wish to have as a preserved open space. The Parish Council have identified seven such spaces which they believe are of significance and important to the context and layout of the village. They reflect the historical, agricultural heritage of the village as well as its close connection to the nearby Stanford Hall estate.

LGS 1 ‘The Glebe’ (play area)

The land for the play area is part of the glebe strip in the centre of the village (241 Environmental inventory). Installed and funded by a local community group the area is well maintained and used extensively by village children.
LGS1 ‘The Glebe’

The Glebe is a small meadow or paddock, historically part of the medieval village layout, with earthworks suggestive of house platforms but also more recent agricultural use. Currently sheep grazed, sloping and undulating. There is a richly biodiverse pond which also acts as a retention feature for surface water from the local area. The pond is a breeding site for great crested newts. An adjoining barn is a bat roosting area (L&R priority species) and there are 4 BAP species bird records.

Access via a permissive path.

The area is a locally highly significant historical, ecological and cultural site, it scored highly in the recent neighbourhood plan questionnaire as an area to be preserved as a village ‘green space’. It was included in the designated Swinford Conservation Area in 1975. The description justifying designation included the following statement:-

“The southern side of the core quadrilateral between the roads to Stanford and Rugby is significant. The south side of the road has a wide grass verge with a Walnut tree; a long stretch of mud wall is behind. ....... Behind this mud wall and along the Rugby Road and Stanford Road the settlement is more open with orchards, paddocks and farmsteads. The open undeveloped space between the two roads is significant and makes a major contribution to the setting.....”

Proposed community asset (application submitted 2016)

Recommended as LGS in HDC draft local plan
**LGS 2 The Orchard**

Old orchard with mown grass and fruit trees, bounded on two sides by an important, partly historic mud wall. This site has been an orchard since at least 1886 (OS 6” map) and is one of the areas referred to in the conservation designation statement of 1975.

‘Behind this mud wall and along the Rugby Road and Stanford Road the settlement is more open with orchards, paddocks and farmsteads. The open undeveloped space between the two roads is significant and makes a major contribution to the setting.....”

**LGS3 The Cemetery**

This is the village burial ground, established on a pre-existing bounded parcel of land around 1900. It consists of mown lawns, mature shrubs and trees, including specimen ornamental species, with gravestones dating back to 1900. It is bounded by mature mixed (mainly hawthorn) hedges and some recently planted trees. There are a good range of garden/village birds on the site, including 4 BAP species, and bats (Priority Species group in L&R).
HDC OSSR
Note: the site was extended in 2013 by purchase of an additional 0.2 ha (approx.). Hedging and new standard trees have been planted on three sides of the site. The combined sites are owned, and will be managed as, a single parcel of land by the Parish Council.

LGS4 The Paddock, Stanford Road

This area is an old paddock, currently ungrazed and partly overgrown with nettles, brambles etc. There is a group of mature lime trees in overgrown hedge on west boundary. The hedge conceals an historic ornamental gateway, originally access to avenue (site 076/085) to Stanford Hall. The paddock has a cultural significance to the village as the site of the 1977 Queen’s Jubilee celebration. There is evidence of this in village photographs.

There is access via a public footpath X5.

Biodiversity includes 2 recorded BAP species birds.

*Maintenance of the footpath and management of the whole of this locally important historic site would restore its amenity value and benefit local biodiversity and the built environment landscape*
LGS 5 The Avenue

Avenue of oaks and other species, first planted mid 18\textsuperscript{th} century, running across ‘The Quicks/Homefield (085) and originally part of the Stanford Hall estate parkland. This avenue of mature deciduous trees surrounded is by grazed grassland with surviving ridge and furrow and is an important component of the village’s landscape and historic context.

The permanent grass field which the avenue crosses is historically also part of the estate, although not of the Registered site. The medieval ploughlands were absorbed into the Park, probably mid 17\textsuperscript{th} century, and have been grassland ever since (including during WW2), ensuring that the ridge and furrow here is among the best-preserved in the parish.

Access via public footpath X5

Part of Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Records (HER) site MLE2633 and listed Grade II in the Historic England Parks & Gardens Register

Natural England Priority Habitat and HDC Wildlife Site
LGS 7 The Village Green

Wide green roadside sward in the centre of the village (seen in the picture stretching between Rugby Road and the Play Area and The Orchard) It has an ancient walnut tree, other trees and bench seating. There are community gardens and grassed area maintained and mown by community volunteers. This space is regularly used as a ‘village green’ for community events. It is part of the highly valued group of open spaces in the centre of the village, including the Glebe (241) and Children’s Play Area (252).

Proposed as LGS in HDC draft local plan