

# HONITON TOWN COUNCIL

## OPEN SPACES POLICY

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### 1. Introduction

Honiton Town Council has developed this Policy to identify :

- a) Its priorities for open spaces
- b) Current provision
- c) Limitations to current provision
- d) Strategies to increase provision to national standards

This Policy aims to complement and enhance a range of policies and strategies produced by East Devon District Council and Devon County Council and also current Government legislation (see section 6).

Honiton has a population of 12,000 people, with 5,000 more within the wider boundaries. The policy guidance would be for a minimum 24-35 hectares including proximate areas in the Blackdown Hills AONB to the north and the East Devon AONB to the south.

It has been repeatedly acknowledged (see East Devon Local Plan 2006 and Draft New Local Plan) that Honiton's facilities have lagged behind the growth of its population in recent years; recreational land and open space are significantly below the NPFA (now Fields in Trust (FIT)) standards.

The main issues relating to open spaces in Honiton are :

- During the development of Honiton over the past few years a great deal of pre-existing open space has been lost; this has included allotment sites
- There is an ongoing and growing need for allotments for residents

- The Open Space Study Review identifies that the people of Honiton felt that there should be provision for more public amenity open space (public parks and gardens)
- The East Devon Local Plan 2006 refers to Honiton having “approximately 7 hectares of formal playing field space, which is significantly below the acreage required to meet the minimum standard as laid down by the National Playing Fields Association
- The current open space, footpaths and cycle links are appreciated but Honiton residents when consulted in 2010 felt there should be more provision

## **2. Definition of Open Spaces**

Open space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground.

In PPG17, open space is defined as : *“all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water ... which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.”*

The Town Council wishes that all open space of public value is retained. The types of space fall into the following categories and include both hard standing and soft ground:

- a) Parks and gardens
- b) Natural and semi-natural spaces
- c) Green corridors
- d) Outdoor sports facilities
- e) Amenity green spaces
- f) Provision for children and young people
- g) Allotments, community gardens and urban farms
- h) Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds
- i) Public space

## **3. Town Council Priorities for Open Spaces**

The priorities for open space in the parish of Honiton are :

- a) To provide a sufficient amount of open space
- b) To provide a sufficient amount of local play space, including space for organised sports
- c) To develop the green infrastructure including green spaces both on the borders of the parish and within the parish

## **4. Quality Principles**

The Town Council will work with its partners to ensure a basic standard for its open spaces as follows :

- Be clean, attractive and well maintained
- Be welcoming and well signed with attractive entrances and exits
- Be safe and secure for all users
- Have good access routes into and around the open spaces
- Be managed in a sustainable manner
- Reflect the needs of the community

- Promote the conservation of wildlife and East Devon's landscape
- Promote community involvement

## 5. National and Regional Guidelines

The average allocation for green spaces nationally is 2 hectares per 1,000 population rising to 3.7 hectares per 1,000 in neighbouring authorities. In Honiton this would mean in excess of 25 hectares should be available as a minimum; the Town Council would wish to see the allocation at its highest level of 3.7 hectares..

## 6. Comparative Information

The Open Space Study Review contains a detailed analysis of Open Spaces across East Devon for both Towns and Rural Areas.

### 7. Relationship to Other Policies and Legislation

- a) This Policy supports the East Devon Local Plan :  
*Where new housing development generates a need for additional formal and informal recreational facilities, provision will be made pro rata in accordance with the following standard per 1,000 population :*
  - *Youth and adult use : 1.8-2.0 hectares of which 1.4 hectares should be playing pitch provision*
  - *Young people and children's use : 0.6-0.8 hectares comprising :*
    - *Outdoor equipped playgrounds 0.2 -0.3 hectares*
    - *Casual or informal play space 0.4-0.5 hectares*
- b) Planning Applications should take into consideration general provision of open space amenities on site as well as contributing to the Town facilities.
- c) This Policy will form part of any subsequent Honiton Neighbourhood Plan put forward by the Town Council under the Localism Act 2011 by agreement with East Devon District Council
- d) This Policy is informed by the East Devon District Council study on Open Spaces, Recreation & Sport 2011 and Open Space Study Review 2014
- e) This Policy is informed by the Devon County Council Green Infrastructure Strategy 2011
- f) This Policy is informed by the Localism Act 2011 introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy which amends The Planning Act 2008 section 205(2)
- g) This Policy supports the Sustainable Development Plans of both Devon County Council and East Devon District Council
- h) This Policy aspires to meet the Fields in Trust standard (settlements with 0.55 hectares public gardens and 0.5 hectares of open space per 1,000 population)
- i) This Policy aspires to meet the Angst Standards of 1 hectare of natural open space, and for green corridors extending from countryside into towns, and green infrastructure providing green wedges between settlements
- j) This Policy aspires to meet the Natural England "Green Test" to be applied to all new developments L
  - 2 hectares per 1,000 population in accord with PPG17
  - Provide greenspace within 300m of every home
  - Support an increase in priority species and habitats in and around new developments
  - Provide a wide variety of parks, wild areas and open spaces to meet the needs of both nature and people
  - Equip new development to cope with the effects of climate change and extreme weather events

- Be designed to ensure it fits into any surrounding countryside and into its landscape setting
- k) This Policy is informed by PPG17 :  
*Planning obligations should be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of open space, sports and recreational provision. Local authorities will be justified in seeking planning obligations where the quantity and quality of provision is inadequate or under threat, or where new development increases local needs. It is essential that local authorities have undertaken detailed assessments of needs and audits of existing facilities, and set appropriate local standards in order to justify planning obligations.*
- l) The spending of developer contributions will be guided by the priorities outlined in the Open Space Study. Money could be spent on:
- Acquisition of land, facilities or equipment for open space, sport and recreation;
  - Laying out of land for open space, sport and recreation;
  - Where appropriate maintenance of land and facilities for open space, sport and recreation;
  - Upgrading of land, facilities and equipment for open space, sport and recreation all within the reasonable catchment of the development in question. Where contributions are made towards the upgrading of facilities, monies will be spent on the first relevant priority scheme for improvement at the point where sufficient monies have been collected to defray the cost.

## **8. Actual and Potential Provision in Honiton**

Needs doing : to include

### **Essential**

Allotments

Public garden outside Thelma Hulbert Gallery

Sports pitches and general sports playing areas

Cycle links

Children's play areas (and additional)

Community gardens, orchards, apiaries and community woodlands

### **Aspirational**

Gissage walk

In-town walkways

Current and future footpaths under the Definitive Map Review

The Glen – enhancement (Water Garden)

Nature Reserve

Allhallows

Review of AONB boundaries

Roundball Wood

Use of old showground