

# Highnam Parish Council

Highnam ~ Linton ~ Over ~ Lassington



Chairman – Charlie Coats  
Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer – Wendy Barnard

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2<sup>nd</sup> January 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

**Land South of Maidenhall, Highnam. – Application for Village Green status.  
Ref: JB/80168**

This letter sets out Highnam Parish Council's case for the above land to be formally designated as a Village Green. This is complemented by the previously submitted Evidence File which provides detailed photographs, specific dates, and documentary information to support our application.

Highnam is an attractive residential community set in a rural environment three miles west of Gloucester. It is a vibrant and growing community with housing to suit all age groups and planning approval for significantly more housing to be built over the next few years. It is characterised by a labyrinth of closes, each interlinked by a network of footpaths, and a patchwork of small green spaces laid to grass. This creates a safe, intimate neighbourhood enjoyed by all residents.

The land in question is of a triangular shape sitting alongside a well-used arterial footpath which connects the west of the village, including the Doctors' Surgery, Nursery and Village Stores/Post Office, with the Primary School, Lassington Wood Playing Field and the rest of the village. There are three trees situated on the land; all subject to tree preservation orders. The land is also traversed by a number of services and is subject to covenants which were designed to limit its use.

For over 40 years it had been understood that the land was owned by Gloucestershire County Council and managed on its behalf by Tewkesbury Borough Council who included it in their annual programme for regular mowing and general maintenance. In recent years the Parish Council's Environmental Management Group have, with the formal written agreement of the Borough, planted and maintained a small pollinator patch of wildflowers on the land. This has provided local colour, enhanced the ambience of the immediate locality, and quickly became a much-cherished community feature. It has subsequently transpired that this was not the case and that the land, which it has become clear was originally owned by a private individual, has in fact been owned by a series of owners who specialise in property speculation.

On 13 September 2023, initially unbeknown to any of the Local Authorities including the Parish Council, the land was sold by a London auction house which specialises in marketing small speculative areas of land such as this. The land was purchased by a local business who, soon after completing the purchase on 24 November 2023, erected an unsightly, stark 2m high close board fence together with concrete support posts without planning permission. This totally enclosed the land, thereby obscuring it from public view. During the erection of the fence the owners also severed a street light cabling at an important bend in the road thus creating a dangerous situation for highway

traffic. This demonstrated the owners' lack of concern for the environment and the safety of the local population.



The new landowners were encouraged by the Local Planning Authority to apply for retrospective planning consent to regularise the erection of the fence. The Parish Council, backed by a large groundswell of local opposition, formally objected to this application. The application was duly refused, and an Enforcement Notice was subsequently served on the landowners requiring them to remove the offending fence. This eventually occurred, but only after the threat of formal legal proceedings being taken was made. The land has subsequently remained untouched and completely unmaintained.

On the 19 September 2023 the Parish Council formally resolved to submit an application to have the land designated as a Village Green open space as a means of maintaining it in perpetuity for public enjoyment and to prevent any inappropriate, anti-social activities taking place on it. A petition comprising 1,053 signatures, virtually half the population of the village, was subsequently raised and submitted in support of this application. This more than amply demonstrates the strength of concern and the overwhelming desire from all sections of the community for this land to be maintained for public enjoyment. This issue has been the source of a great deal of local comment, adverse publicity, and has caused a lot of anxiety, especially for those living close by or who require access to the land in order to maintain their adjoining boundaries.

The Parish Council have sought to engage with the landowners in order to reach a sensible solution to the future use and management of this land. Regrettably, we have not been able to secure any response. This fills us with no confidence that further attempts will not be made in the future to use the land for inappropriate, indeed potentially illegal, purposes.

The Parish Council, indeed, the whole community, jealously guards and values our patchwork of small green spaces which provide such enjoyment and pleasure and which enhance our environment. We are a growing community with significant volumes of new housing scheduled to be built over the next few years. We are most anxious to ensure that we do not experience a recurrence elsewhere on other areas of land which we believe to be publicly owned and maintained.

By designating this land as a Village Green, we would hope this would act as a sufficient deterrent to anyone else who might be minded to pursue a similar course of action.

In conclusion, Highnam Parish Council would urge the Commons and Rights of Way Committee to formally approve this application to enable this land, once again, to be retained as a green open space in perpetuity.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charlie Coats', written over a horizontal line.

Cllr Charlie Coats  
Chair Highnam Parish Council