

What site do you wish to nominate as a Local Green Space?

- **name of site (if applicable)** - Spa Ponds
- **address of site** - Off Clipstone Drive, Forest Town
- **any adjacent properties / landmarks** - Includes the ponds themselves as well as Packman's Bridge over the river Maun, and abuts the site of Beeston Lodge as well as Cavendish and Garibaldi Woods
- **grid reference (if known)** - SK 570634

If you have a location plan of the site, you can upload it here. Map of Spa Ponds showing the extent of FTNCG ownership of Spa Ponds was uploaded.

Which community / communities do you consider the site serves? The geographical community of Forest Town

Beauty	Very Important
Historic Significance	Very Important
Recreational Value	Important
Tranquillity	Important
Richness of Wildlife	Very Important

Please explain why you consider the site to be of particular importance for its beauty:

Spa Ponds' beauty derives from its uniqueness. According to the Nottinghamshire County Council website [<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allid=122020>] Spa Ponds "is a bit of an oddity [because] springs and ponds are rare in this district, due to the porous nature of the underlying Sherwood Sandstone rocks". The unique situation of these ponds in their woodland setting gives rise to stunning views, including trees reflected in the waters of the ponds. The Forest Town Nature Conservation Group website at: <http://www.foresttown.net/nature/> includes numerous digital photographs demonstrating the beauty of this special local site, some of which have also been uploaded using the upload facility of this on-line form.

Please explain why you consider the site to be important for its historic significance:

Much has been written about Spa Ponds' historic significance. The aforementioned Nottinghamshire County Council webpage refers to the ponds as medieval, explaining simply that they were "dug in the 14th Century when the area was part of the royal hunting grounds of Clipstone Park, a particular favourite of King John".

Archaeological research has revealed additional information, and the Sherwood Forest Archaeology Project notes the following in relation to Spa Ponds: "On the western edge of the former royal deer park of Clipstone, in the heart of Sherwood Forest, are a series of large ponds fed by a spring and a tributary of the River Maun. They are overlooked by steep slopes of ground to the east which once housed a fortification built by Edward II in the early 14th century. This fortification was Clipstone Peel - built as a refuge during 'a time of political turmoil'...Overlooked by this fortification the ponds were kept for provision of fish for the king – and represent a massive undertaking by the crown. They are a hugely important part of local medieval heritage, and are an important part of a national story relating to the time of Edward II". (emphasis added)

Sources: <http://sherwoodforesthistorystory.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/clipstone-peel-and-spa-ponds-in.html> and *Castles of Nottinghamshire* written by Dr. James Wright and published by Nottinghamshire County Council in 2008.

In a letter dated 23rd December 1749, sent from Welbeck to her friend Lady Mary Montague, the Countess of Oxford wrote about Spa Ponds, saying: "There is a mineral spring no further away than in Clipstone Park which restores some to health but does not agree with me" (*A Celebration of Kings Clipstone* by Jane Bealby, published in 2002).

Please explain why you consider the site to be important for its recreational value:

In modern times Spa Ponds provides a focus for recreation. Local residents speak of how, as children, they used to fill their canteens with water from the ponds before setting off on walks around the area. Spa Ponds has long provided a place for families, dog walkers, horse riders and ramblers to enjoy. More recently, with the formation of the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group, Spa Ponds has become a focus for those interested in nature conservation to learn skills and spot wildlife (see more about the nature conservation value of Spa Ponds below). Spa Ponds is included as a feature of interest in a Nottinghamshire County Council "Heritage walk" and is part of health walks promoted by Mansfield District Council (MDC) as part of the Walking for Health and In-Step initiatives.

Please explain why you consider the site to be important for its tranquillity:

It is not surprising that Spa Ponds should be attractive for those engaged in recreational activities, as this extraordinary urban space provide a tranquil oasis. Despite the close proximity of houses on Clipstone Drive, the view from Spa Ponds is conducive to relaxation, and the woods help provide an atmosphere of being "away from it all".

The site matches the description of "tranquillity" found in Mansfield District Council's Local Green Space Nomination guidelines. FTNCG members report how being at Spa Ponds invokes feelings of remoteness giving rise to quiet contemplation. The site offers a space where one cannot see modern man-made structures, and the site is characterised by a general lack of artificial noises from vehicles and industry. All of these factors combine to make Spa Ponds a tranquil haven for humans and creatures.

Please explain why you consider the site to be important for its richness of wildlife:

Indeed it is this richness of wildlife that meant the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) has managed the site as a nature reserve since 1984. According to the NWT website <http://www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org/nature-reserves/spa-ponds/> Spa Ponds is a: "wildlife-rich reserve [that] comprises an interesting mixture of dry acidic grassland and woodland and a series of ponds fed by a spring...The wetland flora and fauna is diverse and includes brooklime, skullcap, yellow iris, greater tussock-sedge and gypsywort. Oak and ash dominate the woodland, with alder and sallow close to the ponds. Other grassland plants include wavy hair-grass, sheep's fescue, bracken, sheep's sorrel, wood sage and gorse. These dry habitats are likely to support a diverse invertebrate fauna, but only limited survey work has yet been carried out. The reserve is an important site for dragonflies and many butterflies can be also be seen including common species such as small tortoiseshell, meadow brown and brimstone. Kingfisher and little grebe can be seen among many other interesting birds".

FTNCG members have reported seeing toads, frogs, water vole, kingfisher, and evidence of deer, as well as a variety of butterfly, dragonfly and damselfly species. The wetland habitat provided by Spa Ponds is important, especially in the face of climate change, as noted on pages 55-56 of MDC's *Interim Planning Guidance Note 11 on Green Infrastructure*: "...Smaller wetlands are located in areas such as Spa Ponds...The amount and distribution of floodplain wetlands (those associated with rivers and streams) [such as spa Ponds] has greatly diminished in recent decades. This is mainly due to drainage works associated with agricultural intensification and

development of floodplains for housing and industry. There is now increasing awareness amongst planners and land developers that existing wetlands need to be conserved, and others created, as these habitats perform a vital function in regulating water flow and reducing severity of floods".

In Natural England (NE) Research Report NERR049 – *Assessing the potential consequences of climate change for England's landscapes: Sherwood* (Published on 16 August 2013) NE identified a number of changes in climate variables likely to affect the assets of the Sherwood National Character Area (NCA), which includes Spa Ponds. NE anticipates climate change are likely to increase the importance of public access to shaded areas, such as the Spa Ponds site. The report also notes that: "Urban and rural woodlands and trees offer a cooling effect and provide shade on hot days, and help to ameliorate the effect of high winds (Read, 2009) (AECOM/Climate East Midlands, 2010). Tree-lined roads, local parks, University and College grounds, allotments, private gardens and Local Nature Reserves contribute to this service in Sherwood's urban areas. Water also has a moderating effect on temperatures (Natural England, 2009g), (AECOM/Climate East Midlands, 2010)"; and: "Changes in climate are considered very likely to affect patterns of recreation. Hotter, drier summers may result in an increase in visitor numbers, particularly to areas offering shade, such as woodland. There may also be a shifting pattern of use: more visitors to parks and green spaces in early morning and late evening for example. Impacts on access and recreation assets are therefore something people are likely to notice".

It is FTNCG's understanding that the Spa Ponds site has a role to play in helping both to regulate the local climate and to provide climate adaptation possibilities, through the provision of a range of ecosystem services, e.g. by being a relatively cooler, shadier and wetter space for people and wildlife to escape the heat. Thus, we anticipate the importance of the site to increase, alongside the need for greater protection for this site.

Please explain how the site could be looked after so that its special characteristics can endure in the long term:

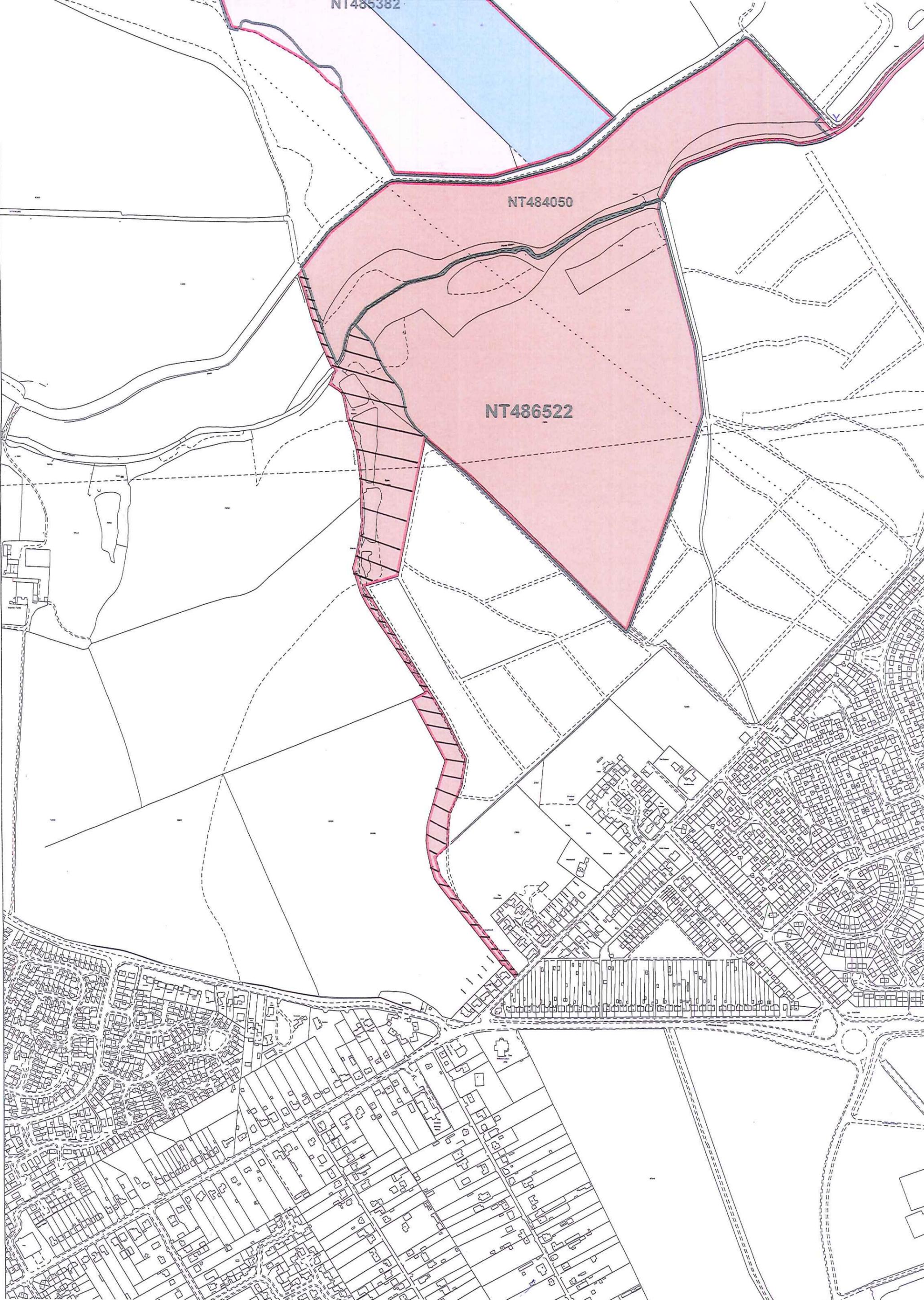
It is to protect the site that the local community banded together to buy Spa Ponds, and it is for the same reason that we nominate the site for consideration for Local Green Space designation as part of MDC's emerging Local Plan – to provide special protection against development for this green area of particular importance to the local community of Forest Town. We believe that designating the Spa Ponds site as a Local Green Space would be entirely consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area, and with Paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

We understand that management of land designated as Local Green Space will remain the responsibility of its owner, the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group. As some of the features that make Spa Ponds special and locally significant will to be conserved, how it will be managed in the future is likely to be an important consideration. Indeed, FTNCG is already actively involved in the site's conservation management, in partnership with other interested organisations such as NWT, the Forestry Commission, and the Environment Agency. Provisions are in place to ensure that should FTNCG fold, NWT will continue to manage the site for nature conservation.

NT485382

NT484050

NT486522



Additional information in support of Spa Ponds' nomination for Local Green Space status (approx. 250 words)

Spa Ponds is the ideal candidate for nomination as a Local Green Space, and this nomination is made by the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG), with the endorsement of both the Forest Town Heritage Group (FTHG) and the Forest Town Community Council (FTCC). Spa Ponds is indisputably local. Embedded within the community of Forest Town, Spa Ponds comfortably meets the 'reasonably close proximity' criterion by being located within easy walking distance of the community served by this green space.

Spa Ponds is a green area that is demonstrably special to the local community of Forest Town, as evidenced by the enthusiastic support for this nomination from the FTHG and FTCC. The fact that both organisations, alongside numerous members of the community, donated a total of more than £16,000 to enable FTNCG to purchase the site also attests to the special affection felt by local residents for Spa Ponds.

On its own Spa Ponds is not an extensive tract of land, however Spa Ponds is a unique green area that is local in character and that has survived as a small but vital part of the larger historic Clipstone Park Landscape Area, itself a characteristic subset of the Sherwood Landscape Character Area as described by Natural England. Spa Ponds has endured for very nearly 700 years, and can be expected to continue to exist well beyond the end of the plan period of Mansfield's emerging Local Plan.









