

5.4 Communities and Community Facilities

5.4.1 Coleford is made up of a number of separate communities which see Coleford as their service centre. There are some green areas between some settlements, and there are green areas between Coleford town and the settlements. Further information about these areas is provided in the Character Assessments prepared by members of the Steering Group.

5.4.2 The Forest of Dean Core Strategy vision seeks to create a thriving sustainable community and the Neighbourhood Plan will seek to support this vision.

40 5.4.3 Our initial community consultation has shown us that local people value the separate and different settlements with their own identities; the range of facilities and services available in the Parish; and the range of sport and recreation facilities (Fig 17).

Community Consultation

The extensive community consultation and engagement activity has provided a range of suggestions for improving communities and community facilities which have led to the policies following.

5.4.4 In the consultation 2015, people mentioned: their use of the Five Acres site for indoor leisure, swimming pool, theatre, sports centre especially; walking and countryside; sports including an improved Bells Field; Local Green Spaces round the Parish and Forest green environment. Improvements recommended: provide more/enhance green spaces including in town centre, Bells Field plans.



Figure 17
Communities
and Community
Facilities:
Initial
Consultation
Results

5.4.5 To support this objective the Neighbourhood Plan has a number of policies for the protection and improvement of community facilities and communities in the Coleford area and supporting facilities in neighbouring areas used by Coleford people, but outside Coleford's NDP Area. (see 5.4.8 re Five Acres)

5.4.6 Coleford already has a range of community facilities that provide support to residents of the town and a wider hinterland. These facilities should, wherever possible, be retained. The provision has been categorised into the following: worship; community and other halls; pubs/hotels; outdoor sports and recreation not including those

designated as Local Green Spaces (see Table 11) and other. Where Coleford people use and value provision outside the NDP area, these are noted as such. Not all community facilities are voluntary and reference is made to examples of businesses which provide services for the community.

5.4.7 Five Acres (theatre, leisure centre and associated buildings and grounds) is within West Dean Parish and BHCEE NDP area, and is next door to Lakers School. Lakers School is the nearest secondary school providing education for Coleford children aged 11-16, there being no secondary school within this NDP area. Gloucestershire College is adjacent for education 14+. This is planned to move

to Cinderford. The West Dean and Coleford Regeneration Board is steering the project on this site as outlined in BHCEE NDP²⁷.

5.4.8 As well as shops and services within the town centre, there are also a number of shops and service uses outside the town centre. These uses often provide valuable local resources in terms of convenience shopping, particularly for the elderly and others who cannot get around too easily; and vital sources of local employment. The Neighbourhood Plan will seek to protect these uses and support their future development in appropriate circumstances.

²⁷ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByKmJl9A2gSKdjQwaDUzNjF0TGs/view>

Table 10 Part of Communities Facilities List

Community & other Halls

Berry Hill Memorial Hall	Community rooms	Outside NDP area	Charity
Broadwell Social Club	Various	Outside town centre	Voluntary
Broadwell Memorial Hall	Community rooms	Outside town centre	Charity
Coalway Methodist Hall	Community rooms	Outside town centre	Voluntary
Coalway Rec Hall	Sports/Fitness	Outside town centre	Charity
Evergreen Hall	Community rooms	Outside town centre	Voluntary
Milkwall Hall	Community rooms	Outside town centre	Voluntary
Main Place	Community rooms	Within town centre	Voluntary
St Mary Magdalene Hall	Community rooms	Outside town centre	Church
Community Rooms at Parkside, Kings Meade & Oakfields	Recreational	Outside town centre	Two Rivers Housing

The full list of all communities' facilities is in Appendix F. This extract from Appendix F shows the spread of community halls in and around Coleford; for more details on each see Gloucestershire Rural Community Council's Village Hall (GRCC) database.

5.4.9 The Forestry Commission manages 35,000 acres of land within the Forest of Dean. Parts of the Forest of Dean are known as forest waste, which are predominantly found around the edges of the forest adjacent and within the towns and villages that encircle the main forest. The land is designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as open access land as part of the wider Public Forest Estate in England. Therefore the Public Forest Estate has a level of protection for use by local communities already in place. Also see CSP9 in the Core Strategy.

5.4.10 Local Green Spaces are defined in paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF:
 ■ *Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.*

Policy CC1 Retaining and Enhancing Community Facilities

The Plan will support proposals that will safeguard and/or enhance the community facilities in the neighbourhood area as listed in Appendix F.

Proposals which enhance existing community facilities will be supported. This applies in particular to those which increase both indoor and outdoor youth provision, provided that they:

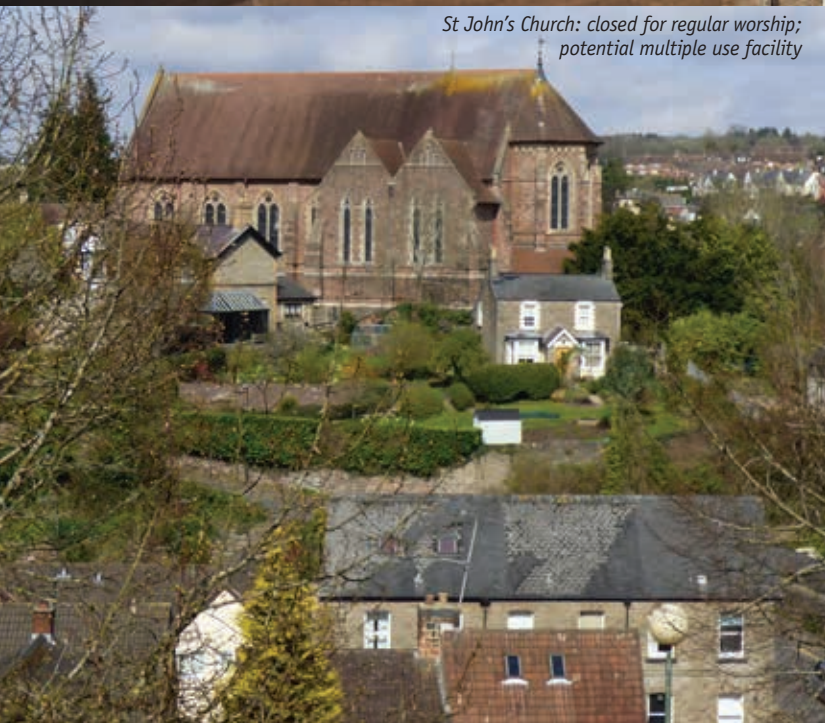
- are sensitive to the distinctive character of the location, key views as in Map 13
- are designed to be proportionate to the location in terms of scale and type
- would not have an adverse impact on the natural environment and biodiversity and
- are designed to mitigate any traffic impact or congestion

Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of the community facilities in the neighbourhood area listed in Appendix F will only be supported in the following circumstances and in this order of priority:

1. When the existing community use can be re-located to an alternative nearby location in the Neighbourhood Plan area; or
2. Exceptionally, where a part-residential, part community use would allow a more viable service to be provided.
3. When the community building has been underused/vacant for more than a year, and where the applicant can demonstrate it has been actively marketed for community use (as per national guidance) and such marketing has not been successful, other uses that would not conflict with other policies in this plan may be acceptable.



*St John's Church: closed for regular worship;
potential multiple use facility*



*The Main Place: Library,
Adult Day Care; Community Hall;
Youth Service; Enterprise Centre*

Policy CC2

Shops and Services in the Arc of Settlements within Coleford Parish but outside the Town Centre

Proposals to enhance existing convenience shops and service uses will be supported when they do not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity, the natural or historic environment or public access to the facility concerned.

Development proposals that would lead to the loss of local shops and service uses will not be supported unless:

- Replacement provision is provided in a suitable location within the area that the facility to be replaced served; or
- The local shop or service use is no longer viable.

■ *The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:*

- *where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- *where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

■ *Once identified, such spaces can only be developed in 'very special circumstances', the same protection as Green Belt.*

5.4.11 Local Green Spaces in Coleford Parish have been identified in policy CC3 in this NDP as 'areas for special protection'. See Appendix H for list of spaces, reasons for designation and size of area.

N.B. Local Green Spaces follow the definition in the NPPF above, and are different from the Green Ring (see Map 10 adjacent to policy CNE2).

5.4.12 One example of enhanced Local Green Space, is the Town Council's purchase of Bells Field, and their 2015 consultation on its use for the community in terms of leisure and recreation. The current design document (Map 9) is on page 45. Following NDP consultation 2016, further comments on that valued design were forwarded to the Town Council separately.

Coalway Recreation Ground Play Area



43

Coleford Cinema in Town Centre



Policy CC3 Local Green Spaces

The following areas as shown on Map 8 are designated as Local Green Spaces.

Recreation fields

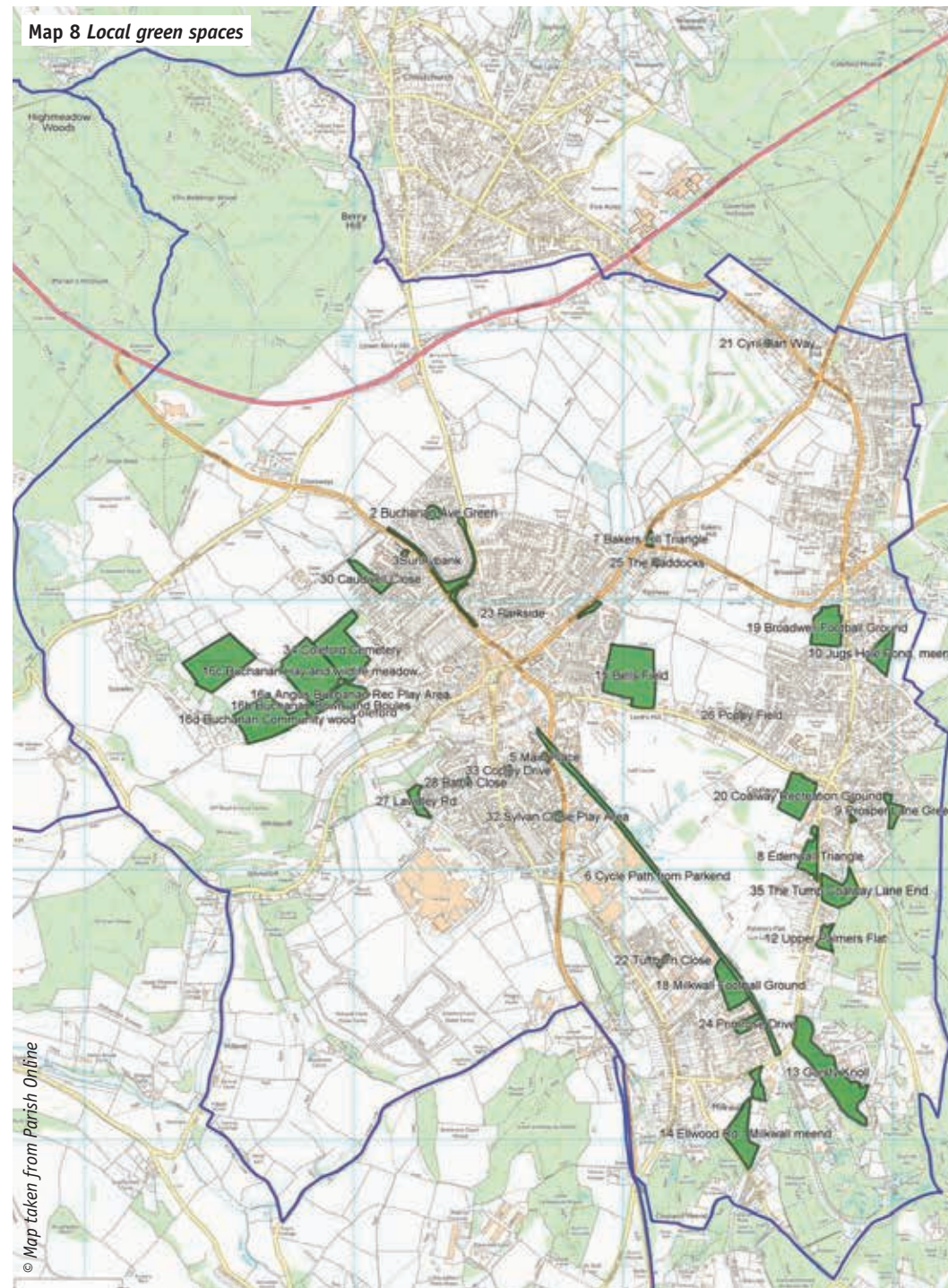
Play areas

44

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Sunnybank east gateway | 16d Buchanan Community Wood |
| 2 Buchanan Ave green | 17 King George V field |
| 3 Sunnybank Staunton road green bank | 18 Milkwall Football Ground |
| 4 Eastbourne Estate,
green entry on gateway | 19 Broadwell FC |
| 5 Main Place green area | 20 Coalway Recreation Ground |
| 6 Cycle path Gateway avenue
in main car park to Milkwall | 21 Cyril Hart Way play area, Mile End |
| 7 Bakers Hill triangle | 22 Tufthorn Close Play Area/Garden |
| 8 Edenwall triangle | 23 Parkside |
| 9 Prosper Lane green Coalway | 24 Primrose Drive Play area |
| 10 Jugs Hole Pond & meend | 25 The Paddocks Play area |
| 11 Parkend Walk community oak & green | 26 Poppy Field Play area |
| 12 Upper Palmers Flat fringe | 27 Lawdley Rd Play area |
| 13 Gorsty Knoll Meend | 28 Battle Close Play area |
| 14 Ellwood Rd - Milkwall meend | 29 Inwood Drive Play area |
| 15 Bells Field | 30 Caudwell Close |
| 16a Angus Buchanan Recreation
Ground Play area | 31 Walnut Close |
| 16b Buchanan Bowls and Boules | 32 Sylvan Close Play Area |
| 16c Buchanan Hay & Wildlife Meadow | 33 Copley Drive |
| | 34 Coleford Cemetery |
| | 35 The Tump, Coalway Lane End |

New development will not be supported on land designated as local green space except in very special circumstances.

Map 8 Local green spaces



Map 8. Coleford Local Green Spaces
Larger scale map available at
www.colefordtownplan.com/maps

Local Green Space



Coleford Parish Boundary



© Crown copyright and database rights 2017
Ordnance Survey 100019102
Scale 1:13300 14 December 2017

Map 9 Bells field



Map 9. Bells Field Design

Larger scale maps available at www.colefordtownplan.com/maps

Character Assessments

5.4.13 Character Assessments of areas within Coleford were undertaken by the Steering Group in 2015. The whole of the Parish was split into 38 segments which were walked, and photographs taken to illustrate the assessments, completed according to the Place Studio template, and issued by Forest of Dean District Council. These details were aggregated into distinctive areas, with some variation within them. The different Character Areas were as follows (shown in Map 10):

- Coleford town: Town Centre and Conservation Area; industrial areas; residential areas
- Eastern Arc
- Seven gateways into the town
- Southern Arc

Green Ring:

- 1 to east and north separating Coleford town from surrounding settlements
- 2 to west separating Coleford town from the AONB to the west
- 3 to south between southern and eastern arcs, and Statutory Forest which also has heritage features around Gorsty Knoll

5.4.14 The Character Assessments identify positive features and special qualities, negative features and detracting elements, and ideas for improvements ('Looking Ahead'). They describe interesting buildings, materials, form and character of each area and the key features that contribute to each area's distinctive identity. It is important that any new development considers these character assessments and is designed and laid out to enhance the existing character.

Policy CC4 Maintaining the Separation and Distinctive Identity of Settlements

Development in all of Coleford town's surrounding settlements should seek to retain and, where possible, reinforce the distinct identity of the settlement(s) as shown in the character assessments. Development proposals in the area should:

- Retain and enhance existing green infrastructure that maintains the separation from Coleford town
- Maintain the green space between the Eastern and Southern Arcs
- Retain and enhance existing green areas within the settlements, such as recreation areas and the meends
- Use appropriate building styles and materials²⁸
- Minimise traffic impact on the area
- Improve opportunities for walking and cycling

Development will have to be compatible with other NDP policies (NB design policies, open areas, local green spaces, key views as in Map 13, green areas protected by the NDP and on sites allocated for other purposes).

²⁸ Note FoDDC Design Guide (or any update. Also, see FoDDC AP AP4 Design of Development and AP5 Style and Materials of the Allocations Plan). Also, Coleford Conservation Appraisal and para 5.3.18 following.