

Summary Descriptions for Kington Town Green Spaces

The green space areas for Kington Town Parish can be split approximately into 5 main groupings, based on their geography.

a) The river Arrow corridor through the town is extensive (65 Ha) but can be seen as the collection of smaller sites, each of differing character, function and visual appearance. Collectively they form a highly valuable link for biodiversity and amenity to the town community with some potential for natural flood alleviation to surrounding developed sites.

The River Arrow is a special wildlife noted as “A fast flowing river with a rocky substrate in its upper reaches. There is a good margin of mostly alder, willow, holly and more notably black poplar. Aquatic and marginal plants include yellow water-lily, marsh speedwell and purple loosestrife. Various bryophytes grow on the rocks. The site is good for birds, heron, sand martin and kingfisher being amongst those recorded. Otter is known to frequent the river.”

From the downstream end, adjoining is Hatton Gardens (14), also a special wildlife site, noted as “An unimproved floodplain meadow adjacent to the River Arrow. The flora includes crested dogs tail and yellow oat grasses, lady’s mantle, catsear and birds foot trefoil.” It is sheep grazed and noted for the presence of an unusually mature Wych Elm just outside of its northern boundary. The site is bounded by the river to the south and east with an historic hedgerow within.

The adjoining bypass is bounded either side (sites 20 and 21) by a corridor of semi-improved, coarse grassland with scattered, planted trees which will have value for plants, small mammals and invertebrates and provide some linkage to habitats on the opposite (town) side of the road. The corridor provides a visual and sound screening of traffic noise from the road to adjoining neighbourhoods.

On the town side adjoining the river are sites 6 and 7. Both are relatively species poor pastures, have been historically sheep grazed and being historically within the River Arrow flood plain, do not retain a wealth of biodiversity or archaeology well in the grassland. However they do provide a river corridor into the town and characterise the landscape of the river arrow through Kington. Site 6 on the Headbrook side, fringes into the town conservation area has several historically interesting buildings on the western extreme.

The river banks provide a range of habitats with scattered and mature trees of several species including alder, willow and oak. The hedges within are mainly thorn, elder and oak and where timber has been allowed to fall and been left, a habitat for invertebrates. The improved nature of the grassland however has encouraged tall ruderal species to establish which are valuable food plants for invertebrates.

Site 26 is a historically interesting island set between the river and a mill leat/drain from Kington Mill, the River Arrow and fed by a mill pond. A small fragment of traditional orchard remains giving a valuable mix of wildlife habitats within the confines of the town.

On the southern side of the river, is farmland around Newburn Farm (which is within an environmental stewardship scheme). Sites 28 is sown and cut for hay and has been sheep grazed . It fringe onto the river and offers visual connectivity into southern edge of the town centre. Site 29 again includes part of a field which has been historically cultivated/grazed, but also has areas of valuable grassland, old hedgerows and ancient woodland, a possible remnant of Kingswood hunting forest. There is connectivity to surrounding woodland on the southern side of the river making it of high biodiversity value.

On the opposite side of the River Arrow to Site 29, is the ground known as "Tattymore" (13). Part of this site includes Hergest Mill. The historic features relating to this and other mill history in the town are well preserved (pond, leat etc.) and offer a context to listed buildings on the site. An ephemeral pond/wet area in a grazed field may be situated within a post-glacial hollow feature. There is a also a small meadow of high biodiversity and notable old hedgerows and deciduous woodland habitat.

Adjoining this are the largely amenity grassland of the School Playing Fields (5) and the Recreation Ground (4). The former includes a line of number of mature, open grown oak trees whilst the latter benefits from a range of formally planted ornamental trees, some of which have veteran features making them valuable for habitat. The recreation areas are valued by the community for annual events, recreation sports and as green space for town residents.

Adjoining this is the football ground (15) and camping site (11). Both are largely amenity grasslands but again provide amenity and visual greenspace into the town, as well as some buffering from potential flooding from the River Arrow. Finally Bath Cottage Lane (23) is a small meadow now grazed by horses, surrounded by mature hedgerows. It comprises a mixed grassland habitat – some coarse and some fine and may provide a more diversity for wildlife compared to the amenity grassland around.

b) This group of sites is located in the historically older part of the town, behind the church and site of the town's castle. Site 2 comprises a small area of grazing land set amongst the older houses of the town and may have been the site of the castle "bailey". Site 3 adjoining, backs onto the castle mound and includes an area of protected, mature trees that overlook and link to the greens paces along "Back Brook" (19).

c) On the northern edge of Kington Town Parish is Back Brook (19), historically a supply source of water for the town foundry and other associated industry around Sunset. The water course has high biodiversity value with its associated secondary woodland and evidence of a ancient woodland flora in places. It will provide a wildlife corridor linkage to the River Arrow and Sunset special wildlife sites. Efforts have been made to improve the quality of the watercourse to benefit fish migration. There is industrial archaeological evidence along the brook and the old tramway. The surrounding sloping ground shows some geologically interesting formations, whilst tree preservation orders protect the established woodland including some maturing elm trees.

Site 8 is known as the "Crooked Well Meadow" a site which is referenced in historic maps but now provides amenity value, a sport pitch and play

areas for children. The site also has areas of more coarse and unimproved grassland and recent fruit tree planting

Equally as important, the Back Brook, its woodland and the Bypass (22) corridors give visual and sound screening of the town from the bypass itself and to surrounding countryside to the north.

d) Within the town residential setting, are several green spaces and amenity grassland. Site 17 is known as “Kington Park” and provides safe play areas for children, living in the adjacent residential areas as well as some biodiversity in the grassland by not being mown frequently. Sites 9 and 30 are areas of amenity grassland with occasionally planted ornamental trees. The sites provide an open aspect to/from nearby housing and views to surrounding hills.

Site 12 is a replanted, community orchard, which has a variety of flora and fauna using it including slow worms and bats. Site 30 is an amenity play area and open space with the Morgans Orchard residential setting. The Wesleyan Chapel orchard (1) is a largely overgrown garden alongside the chapel which due to its central location behind the town high street, would make a valuable public site for green space within the town centre.

e) On the periphery and outside of the parish are several more extensive areas of green space. Site 24 consists of farmland between the eastern side of the Eardisley Road (A4111) and Lyonsall Road (A44). Much of this site is grazed farmland, rather than cultivated due to it being situated alongside a small brook feeding into the River Arrow. The historic environment in the site comprises archaeological suggestion of an prehistoric enclosure.