

History and Development

The Recreation Ground (Rec) was set up in ca. 1967 under application SO/66/730 and was formerly a field. The bulk of the field is used as an open space, including use as a football field in season. It is bordered to the north by the River Granta with a footbridge crossing at the north-west corner and is surrounded by trees on all sides.

Constraints

The application site lies outside both Abington village development frameworks.

However, it is within the Conservation Area between the two parishes of Great and Little Abington, so all the trees have a statutory protection. In addition, Tree Preservation Orders exist on the site (ref:1 and 61). They seek to protect Elm, Ash, Horse Chestnut and Sycamore trees.

The church of St Mary, Great Abington (Grade 2* listed) is located close to the south-west corner. Several other listed buildings are also in the locality but mainly align the High Street, further south.

The site is within a Flood Zone 3 as defined on the Environment Agency's Flood Maps.

Impact of proposal

The ground to be used is located at the southern edge on land which is currently rough scrub land, with longer vegetation including nettles. There is some evidence of rabbits, which are not welcome in a sports field. It adjoins the school grounds and meadows used for grazing horses. The nearest house is at least 100 m distant. The church is to the west, but the intention is to leave a small clump of trees, including three large ones, to provide some shielding both from sight and from noise.

Justification

These works are for outdoor recreation in line with the existing use of the ground. Policy DP/7 'village frameworks' of the adopted Local Development Framework supports such developments. They were initially suggested, and are strongly supported by, the school and also have the support of many residents, as shown by consultation via the school and village newsletter.

The location was chosen for its juxtaposition with the school grounds, enabling easy access without going on the road. It is also the best available on the field, avoiding the football pitch.

Mitigation

A tree survey of the area has been carried out. Several are self-seeded elm with limited expected lifespan; one or two are already dying. It is intended to provide some replacement trees between the track and the remaining field and planting along the existing mesh fencing of the boundary.