



**Date:** 22 June 2026

**Subject:** Response by Ash Green Residents Association (AGRA) to Examiner's Question 3 – Green Spaces West of White Lane (LGS 35) – Ash Neighbourhood Plan (ANP)

Dear Ms. Kingaby and Guildford Borough Council planning policy team,

Ash Green Residents Association (AGRA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Examiner's extra questions, resulting from her site visit, in her letter from the 8 June 2026. In this case AGRA would like to comment on the Examiner's Question 3 concerning the proposed designation of Green Spaces West of White Lane (LGS 35).

AGRA strongly supports the retention of the designation and submits that the site satisfies the requirements of paragraphs 106 and 107 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In AGRA's view, the site is demonstrably special to the local community because of its beauty, tranquillity, richness of wildlife, contribution to local character and its importance to the rural setting and identity of Ash Green.

### **Importance to the Character and Identity of Ash Green**

The Green Spaces West of White Lane form an integral part of the distinctive character of Ash Green. The open land, mature trees, hedgerows and undeveloped appearance of the area create an important transition between the built-up settlement and the surrounding countryside.

For local residents, the significance of the site lies not simply in recreational use but in the contribution it makes to the appearance, character and identity of the village. The openness of the land is an important part of the rural setting of Ash Green and helps maintain the qualities that residents value and wish to preserve. The Ash Neighbourhood Plan identifies the importance of the rural approaches to the village and the setting of heritage assets within this area. The White Lane open space forms part of that landscape setting.

### **Supported by Guildford Borough Council's Evidence Base**

AGRA notes that Guildford Borough Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment (2017), which forms part of the evidence base for the Guildford Local Plan, recognises that open spaces perform a range of functions beyond formal recreation. The assessment adopts a multi-functional approach and recognises the contribution made by open spaces to biodiversity, visual amenity, landscape character, health, wellbeing and quality of life. The assessment further identifies that local communities place a particularly high value on countryside, woodland, wildlife areas and natural green spaces.

The White Lane open space exhibits precisely these characteristics. It provides visual amenity, contributes to local landscape character, supports biodiversity and forms part of the green

infrastructure network serving Ash Green. AGRA therefore considers that the proposed designation is fully consistent with Guildford Borough Council's own evidence base.

### **Public Access is Not a Requirement**

AGRA acknowledges that public access to the site is limited. However, neither the National Planning Policy Framework nor Planning Practice Guidance requires Local Green Space to be publicly accessible.

The value of the site derives from its contribution to visual amenity, openness, biodiversity, tranquillity and local character rather than from formal recreational use alone.

Importantly, the planning significance of this land has already been considered by an independent Planning Inspector.

In Appeal Ref APP/Y3615/W/23/3333200 concerning Middleton, White Lane, Ash Green, the Inspector acknowledged that the site was privately owned and that public access was limited. Nevertheless, the Inspector found that the land:  
*"contributes cumulatively toward a wider character of broadly open space behind the dwellings in this part of White Lane and this open space generates a positive sense of visual openness with amenity value."*

The Inspector also concluded that:

*"there is limited evidence before me to suggest the visual value of designated open space is defined by public views only."*

The Inspector attached significant weight to the harm that would arise from the erosion of this open space and dismissed the appeal.

AGRA considers these findings to be highly significant because they relate to the same White Lane open space that forms part of the proposed Local Green Space designation. They provide independent confirmation that the land possesses amenity value notwithstanding its private ownership and limited public accessibility.

### **Local Character and Relationship with LGS 21**

AGRA does not consider that LGS 35 should be regarded as an extensive tract of land. The site is local in character and closely related to the settlement of Ash Green. It possesses identifiable boundaries and a distinct function.

Whilst adjacent to Ash Green Meadows (LGS 21), the two areas perform different roles. Ash Green Meadows is primarily valued as a publicly accessible recreational and ecological resource.

The White Lane open space is valued principally for its visual amenity, landscape character, tranquillity, wildlife value and contribution to the rural setting of the village.

The fact that the two sites are adjacent should not prevent designation where each area independently satisfies the criteria for Local Green Space designation.

## **Conclusion**

AGRA respectfully submits that the evidence supporting LGS 35 is compelling. The proposed designation is supported by:

- The Ash Neighbourhood Plan evidence base;
- Guildford Borough Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment (2017);
- Evidence relating to biodiversity, landscape character and visual amenity;
- The findings of the Planning Inspector in Appeal Ref APP/Y3615/W/23/3333200 concerning the same White Lane open space.

Taken together, this evidence demonstrates that the site is demonstrably special to the local community, local in character and worthy of protection through designation as Local Green Space.

AGRA therefore respectfully requests that LGS 35 be retained within the Ash Neighbourhood Plan.

If AGRA can be of any further assistance on any of the points, please let us know.

Yours sincerely,  
Paul Finning

Ash Green Residents Association (AGRA) Chair