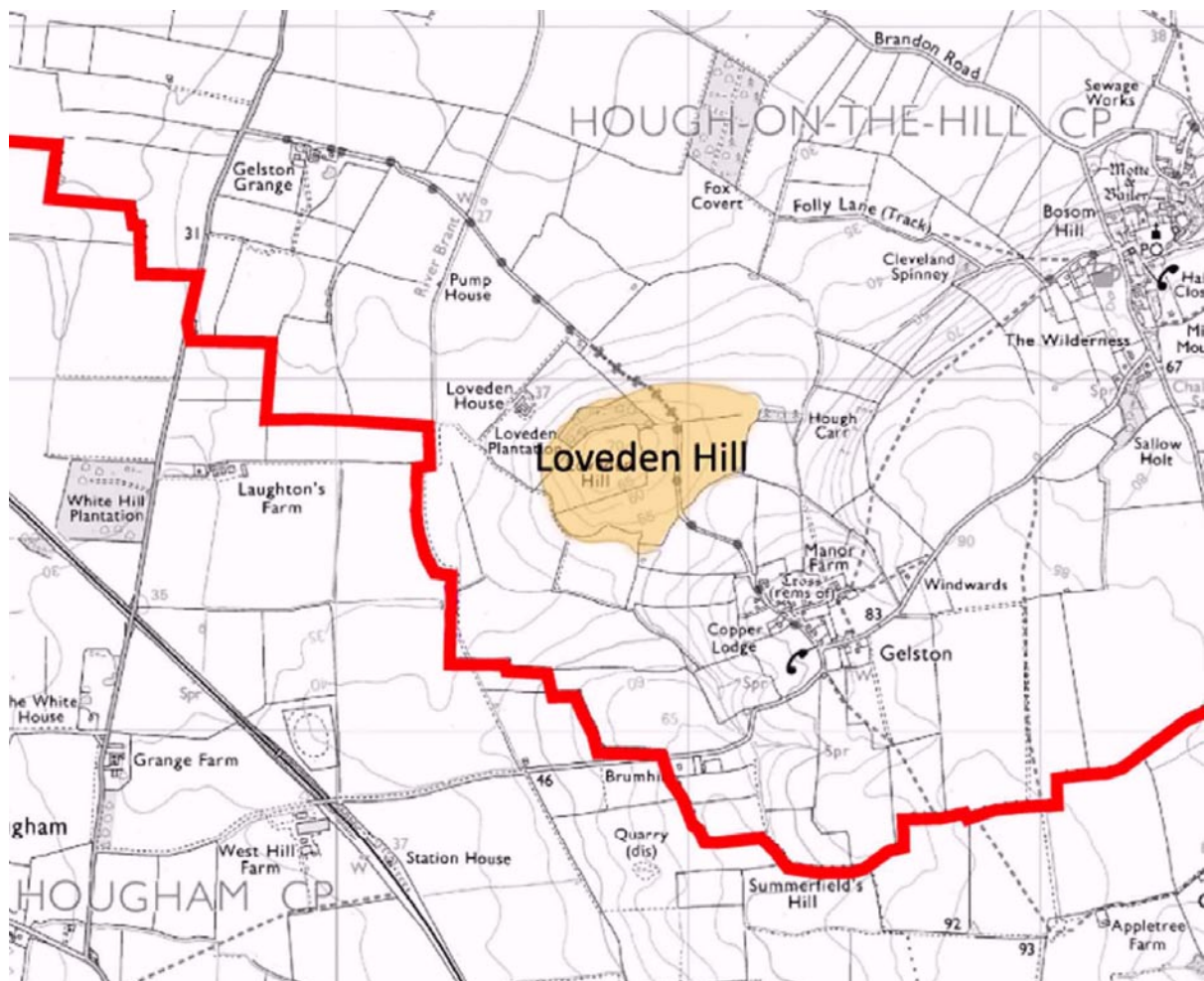


PROPOSAL FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATION OF LOVEDEN HILL

Justification Statement

Loveden Hill: A Local Heritage Asset

The elevated, wooded slopes known as Loveden Hill rise just to the north west of Gelston, as indicated on the following map:



Loveden Hill Local Green Space Proposal (the area shown from the 50m contour line)

Loveden Hill is the site of an extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery, featuring both inhumations and cremations. It is one of the largest such sites in England, suggesting that the site was important to

the Anglo Saxons. It covers about 1.2 acres and has a date range from the fifth to the seventh century with over 1700 cremations and 45 inhumations. Many of the finds from site excavations are in Lincoln's Art & Archaeology Museum and others are in the British Museum, as well as museums at Grantham, Newark, Nottingham and Scunthorpe.

Loveden Hill was at the centre of Loveden Wapentake (the Danelaw equivalent to the "Hundred" in Anglo-Saxon England). The court is likely to have met monthly at Loveden Hill. The word Wapentake means "show your weapon". The idea was that all in favour of a resolution would raise their sword etc. to show agreement.

Loveden Hill: An Important Feature in the Local Landscape

During consultation with residents in the Parish one of the main issues to emerge was the significance and importance of Loveden Hill as a loved and valued feature in the local landscape. The hill dominates the topology of the area, and a walk round the hill affords a breathtaking panorama across the Trent Valley and beyond. This ancient hill has always been a significant place, and many people have commented that they feel the power of it even today.

The Hough on the Hill Landscape Character Assessment (October 2013) carried out as part of the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan (see Appendix 1) concluded that Loveden Hill plays a special role in the local landscape character, dominating views and providing significant heritage value.



Photo shows Loveden Hill in the Background (January 2014)

Loveden Hill: Current Stewardship

The current owner of the land that includes the summit of Loveden Hill is a local farmer who provides excellent stewardship and who has taken several initiatives over recent years to both protect and enhance its important heritage and landscape significance, several utilising funding available under current Agri-Environment schemes. For example, hedgerows have been improved and the large field on the western slope of the hill has been sown with wild bird seed to encourage lapwings (with significant success).

The landowner also currently operates a Permissive Bridleway which connects from the Gelston Road round to the Byway, allowing improved access to the countryside around the hill. (NB The funding the farmer receives to support the operation of this Permissive Bridleway will cease in 2017; funding replacement arrangements are not yet clear and so the longterm status of this valued access arrangement is insecure.)

Local Green Space Designation

When local people made clear how much this local heritage asset and landscape feature was valued, they asked why the hill was not a Scheduled Ancient Monument, or designated in some way to give it the status many believe it deserves. The Neighbourhood Planning Project Team therefore made enquiries (through the Conservation Team at SKDC) to English Heritage regarding its potential inclusion as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, seeking both recognition and protection of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery it contains, and for the burial mound itself. However, English Heritage advised that previous excavations and ploughing activity within the area have damaged the site, and it is not considered appropriate for listing in this way, although it is mentioned in the Historic Environment Record.

The Neighbourhood Planning Team therefore explored other possibilities. ‘Local Green Space’ is a new designation introduced in The Localism Act 2011 for use in Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans as a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

The designation should only be used in particular circumstances, and the following table lists those circumstances and indicates why Loveden Hill is felt to meet these requirements:

Designation Requirements	Justification
<p>The green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.</p>	<p>Loveden Hill is sited very close to Gelston, is in easy walking distance from everywhere within the Parish, and visually dominant to everyone as a substantial landscape feature. The top of the hill itself is not accessible to the public, but there is a ‘Byway Open to All Traffic that winds around the slopes to the east and cuts across part of the area proposed for Local Green Space designation. The current landowner also provides a permissive bridleway which gives opens up access around the hill, connecting through from Gelston Road to the Byway.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The importance of Loveden Hill as both a heritage asset (being one of the largest Anglo-Saxon cemetery sites in England) and as a loved, prominent feature within the local landscape was raised by many people during consultation (see the October 2013 Landscape Character Assessment at Appendix 1). A specific request was made that the Neighbourhood</p>

	Planning Team should explore the possibility of securing a special status or designation in order to give expression to its importance, and to protect it into the future.
The green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.	Loveden Hill is a valued feature within the local landscape. The area proposed for Local Green Space designation is that which lies above the 50M contour line, as shown on the map at Figure 7 above.

Publicity and Consultation

The proposal for designation of the Local Green Space has been notified to SKDC who have raised no objection. The proposal has been included in the Neighbourhood Plan consultations (and was publicised in the Grantham Journal local newspaper) and has received widespread support.

All known landowners in and around Loveden Hill (six in total) who may be affected by the designation were sent letters notifying them of the proposal and seeking views. Support was received from one of these landowners, and an enquiry from the agent for another. The landowner responsible for most of the site proposed for designation was initially concerned about the proposal’s impact on his working farm operation. Following liaison and a site meeting, he has agreed that the proposal should proceed on the understanding that the Parish Council will keep the legislation and its impact on his business under review, with his involvement. Arrangements for carrying out such reviews are proposed at 5-yearly intervals within the Delivery Strategy contained in Section 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan.