

COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID

NOMINATION FORM

This Nomination Form is for groups interested in nominating an asset for inclusion on the list of assets of community value.

Under the terms of the Localism Act, 2012 all Nominations under the Community Right to Bid must be provided in writing. The Regulations accompanying the Act specify the information required in a Nomination, so it is important that you answer all the questions in this form as fully as possible and provide additional information where appropriate. Incomplete nominations will not be assessed.

An online version of this form is also available on the Council website.

You can contact the Council's Estate and Asset Management Team on 0161 218 1934 or EstateMGMT@stockport.gov.uk if you require advice or assistance before submitting your nomination.

PART A: INFORMATION ABOUT THE ASSET

1. Identification of Asset

To help us identify the asset being nominated please provide as much information as possible: Type of Asset	Please circle Building Land
Title of the Asset	Highfield Park
Address	Highfield Road Cheadle Hulme Stockport SK8 6EL
Any further information	Please see attached. Appendix 1: Plans

2. Asset Owners

Please provide details about the existing occupants (if relevant) and names and current or last known address of all those holding a freehold or leasehold estate in the asset

Occupant / Freeholder / Leaseholder	
Name(s)	Stockport County Council
Connection to the asset	Landowner
Address	Fred Perry House, Edward Street, Stockport, SK1 3UR
Phone number	0161 480 4949
Email	

3. Community Value

Under the Community Right to Bid regulations, an asset is of community value if:

- It is at least partly within the local authority's area.
- Its main use (i.e. not ancillary) has recently been or is presently being used to further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community and could reasonably do so in the future i.e. within the next 5 years
- It does not fall within one of the exemptions specified in Regulations.

Information about what is exempted from this definition can be found here.

Please provide reasons below why the asset you have identified qualifies as an asset of community value.

Please include, affix or provide links to any relevant supporting information.

Please see attached Appendices 1-4

PART B: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION

Nominations can be submitted by voluntary and community organisations with a local connection.

Relevant bodies include:

- a) Neighbourhood Forums
- b) Parish Councils
- c) Unincorporated bodies of named members
- d) A Charity
- e) Company Limited by Guarantee
- f) A society registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014

g) Community Interest Company

Please provide information about the nominating organisation:	
Name of organisation	Friends of Highfield Orchard
Type of organisation	Friends Group
Proof of eligibility to make a community nomination	Please see attached. Appendix 1: Plans of site. Appendix 2: Who are FOHO. Appendix 3: Community Signatures of support. Appendix 4: Green Flag Judges Report.

PART C: CONTACT DETAILS

We will need to contact you to respond to your application, please provide contact details for the person who is leading this Nomination.

Name:	Cheryl Biden
Address:	[REDACTED]
Telephone Number:	[REDACTED]
E-mail address:	[REDACTED]

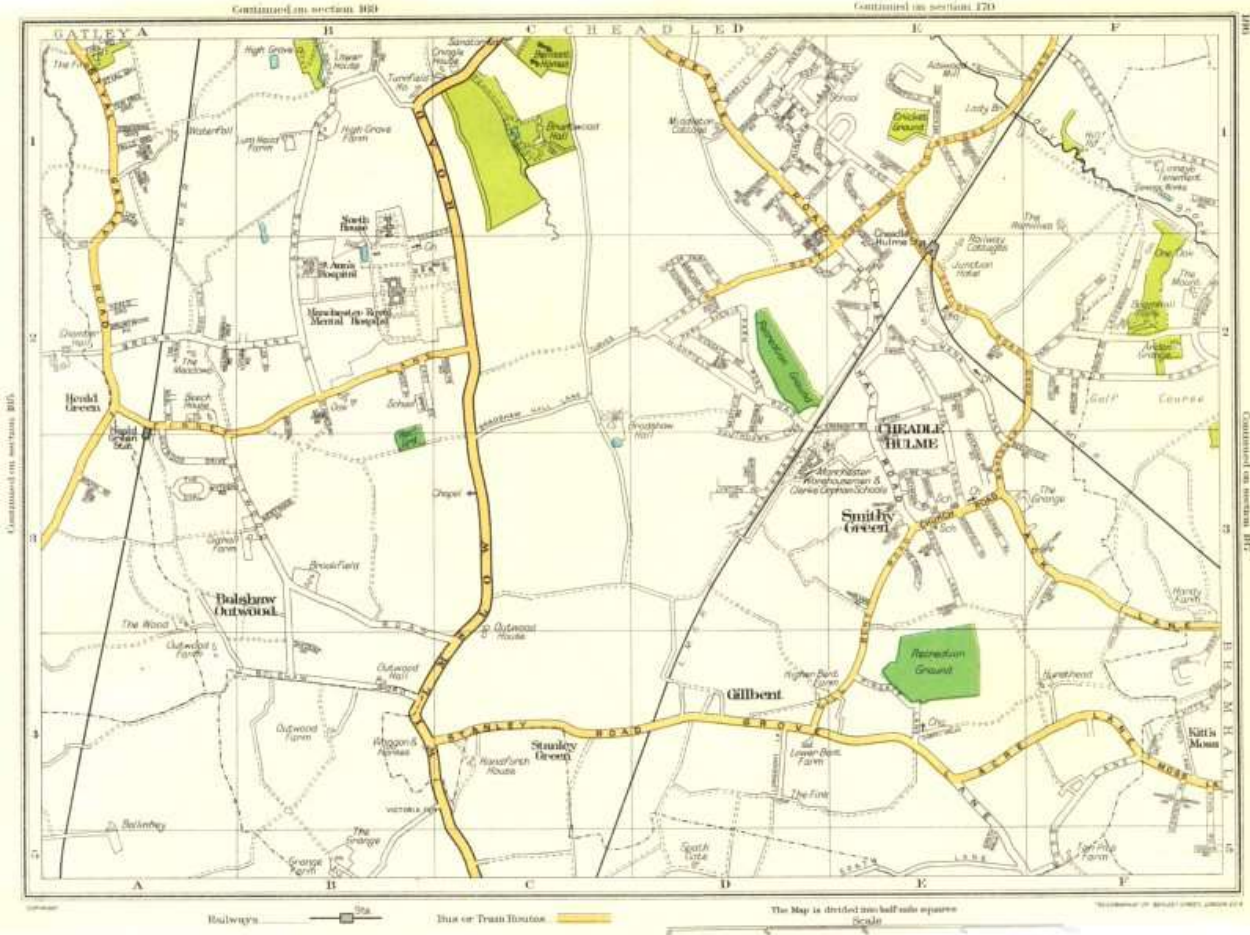
When completed, please return this form to;

*Community Right to Bid
Estate and Asset Management
Stockport MBC
2nd Floor Stopford House
Piccadilly
Stockport
SK1 3XE*

Or e-mail to EstateMGMT@stockport.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Plans





Map 1935



Map 1923

Appendix 2: Friends of Highfield Orchard Group

The constitution of Friends of Highfield Orchard (FOHO) states the group's Aims and Objectives are to protect and nurture fruit trees & wildlife within Highfield Road Recreation Park, promoting local community enjoyment, involvement and safety in the orchard's long-term health and development.

The park is owned by Stockport Council covering circa 9 acres. With a wholly volunteer friends group of local residents established Summer 2021 supporting the above constitution aim.

The site was historically farmland of Highfield Farm with the land being gifted to the people of Cheadle Hulme circa 1930 by the farmer to Cheadle & Gatley Council with his stipulation the park & neighbouring allotments and play area remain within the community as public spaces.

The group have requested a copy of the deeds and information filed with the council under a freedom of information request early Jul 24, but in the meantime Land Registry Title number MAN32219 records states –

A: Property Register

This register describes the land and estate comprised in the title.

GREATER MANCHESTER : STOCKPORT

1. (07.11.2005) *The Freehold land shown edged with red on the plan of the above Title filed at the Registry and being land on the north side of Highfield Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle.*
2. (08.01.2007) *The title plan has been amended.*

B: Proprietorship Register

This register specifies the class of title and identifies the owner. It contains any entries that affect the right of disposal.

Title absolute

1. (07.11.2005) **PROPRIETOR: THE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL OF STOCKPORT of Town Hall, Stockport, Cheshire SK1 3XE.**

C: Charges Register

This register contains any charges and other matters that affect the land.

1. (07.11.2005) *The land is subject to the rights granted by a Deed dated 23 October 1958 made between (1) The Urban District Council of Cheadle and Gatley and (2) Karl Christian Orsborn. NOTE: Copy filed.)*

Recent history of the orchard - About 15-20 years ago, the council planted about 200 fruit trees (apple, pear, meddler, plum, damson, greengage and cherry). Sadly, funding for maintenance was never secured of the orchard. In the following years the orchard was neglected, the fruit trees received no pruning or other care. But the park was still maintained but as central funding receded the brambles and scrub encroachment grew. By 2021 virtually every fruit tree had become choked and overrun with scrub, sucker trees, bramble, tall grass and nettle, with only about 155 remained alive. In addition, self-seeded oak and aspen had grown between the fruit trees, and many orchard areas had been overhung by boughs of other trees nearby. Many of the fruit trees were no longer fruiting, or if they did, they could not be accessed through the bramble and other unwanted growth in and around them.

The park then became a regular target for travelers and following on from the last occupations in 2018 / 2019 the site was drastically damaged removing vehicles from site. The Council then put in measures to minimise access to the site with new gates on Highfield Rd and United Utilities installing rubble mound and bollards blocking Billys Lane entrance to vehicles whilst still maintaining pedestrian access all round.

In June 2021 during the restrictions of Covid the Friends Group was established to restore and maintain the orchard and park, made up of volunteers who put in their own time to make it a fruitful, safe and enjoyable space for the public. Stockport Council initially supported the Friends group

practically and financially, along with several other organisations including the Co-op, Stockport Hydro, Manchester Airport Community Fund, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Stockport Greenspace, Forever Manchester and Cheadle Hulme Garden and Allotment Society we have put any funding received to good use procuring tools and a new notice board being installed (saving the council further funding pressures). In the 3 years, the group has delivered 1803 hours of on-site maintenance work (at point of submission and not taking into account administration time running the group, applying for funding etc). This has involved clearing the fruit trees of scrub, pruning, re-staking weaker trees, planting new trees (about 35 in 2024), mapping the site, and clearing paths and overgrown areas to improve lines of sight for park users (an important action to improve safety for everybody). In addition, work to increase biodiversity has included installation of bird and bat boxes, insect 'hotels', and hedgehog homes. This effort being rewarded with sighting of fox cubs on site this year. These improvements have led to the park being successfully awarded Green Flag Community Award for the last 3 years. One of thirty community sites (and only one of ten Friends Groups) in the North West & East Region to win this award for 24/25 season. This is a nationally recognised award of excellence with the award being won by larger groups such as the Canal & Rivers Trust or centralized Councils for their public green spaces. A huge achievement for a such a small team of volunteers and highlights nationally the recognition of the site.

We regularly undertake surveys by the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) since we mobilized and recently, we believe the central line of ditch and trees are endangered historically important Cheshire Hedge & Ditch something the group is looking to establish further following the site survey from this year's Green Flag Judge on site assessment. We have also been advised that the site is a good site for further biodiversity net gain opportunity site which would provide excellent kudos for any area in the current fight against climate change. The Green Flag judges report also references the site should be included within the Councils habitat banking sites. This I trust along with this application the Council will enact upon along with supporting any future Fields in Trust discussions.

The site is bordered by allotments, houses, schools and playground area. The site forms part of the areas flood defences again a increasing need for preventing flooding into the neighbourhood. Access points from Highfield Road and Billys Lane and adjoining Heathbank Park play area. We are close to Cheadle Hulme center with good road, train and bus links which all aids access to the parks use within the wider community.

The site



We share the site with much wildlife inc foxes, frogs, hedgehogs, many domestic animals and various bird species visiting the site regularly and house several mature historical boundary large trees.

Green space has always been popular, but since the pandemic the demand access to open space has been further appreciated by the population to facilitate –

- Social capital - combating loneliness.
- Mental wellbeing - case studies have shown being present in nature can prevent and/or alleviate mental ill health.
- Healthy activity - provide regular gentle exercise, maintain good gait and balance. It has also been shown to help with cognitive decline and an increase in vitamin levels.
- Sense of achievement.
- Contact with nature.

Local residents, many with their dogs have approached the volunteer team over the years to

thank us and comment on how much the site has improved, how they now feel safer using the park and would welcome further nature enhancements within a such a busy built-up area and value the asset on their doorsteps as a little oasis for their eyes, souls and physical health.

The site boasts a football pitch area which is well used by local residents for both football and cricket; a picnic bench is located near the Highfield entrances which is also used by local residents.

Community Involvement

The activity on site is beneficial for the health of the community, established since lockdown expanding the biodiversity on the site and is also good for the local environment. We keep interested parties up to date through the newly install by the group on-site noticeboard, AGM, and Email Communications. We had withheld from social media to avoid the site being targeted again by the travelling community but are taking steps to set a Facebook page to engage with the community far and wide further. We have established links with local schools supporting their curriculum activities providing access to physical and mental wellbeing for running events and mindfulness walks. Bulb planting days often draw in more family involvement and provide a sense of ownership by all ages and groups. This is something subject to further funding and procurement of native species we plan on doing in coming Autumns and beyond. A local child recently engaged with the team asking for us to provide a bike track as he's not allowed to go to the bigger parks in the area by himself due to his age. We are supporting his efforts to draw up a design to be added to the available space in the play area. This just shows a multi-generational appreciation of the green space we have available to the community and why it needs protecting for now and the future.

We are exploring further links to use the site for Duke of Edinburgh students; links to local health care trust providers to provide sessions supporting individuals' recovery post Covid and mental health concerns and we are currently exploring liaising with the Council to explore the use of Community Payback involvement on the site.

Future improvement plans subject to council funding / support are to restore the pond on site and remove rubbish and non-native invasive species inc skunk cabbage, Himalayan balsam with a view to encouraging kingfishers back on site as well as improving site conditions in that area of the park.

Below are several photos below showing site views and current team awards -



View from Billys Lane in early Spring noting the area of scrub to the left of oak cleared by the team



Volunteer team



Stockport Hydro Award Ceremony 2024



Volunteers celebrating our last three year's Green Flag Award, one for every year on site



Clearance of bramble line along the boundary

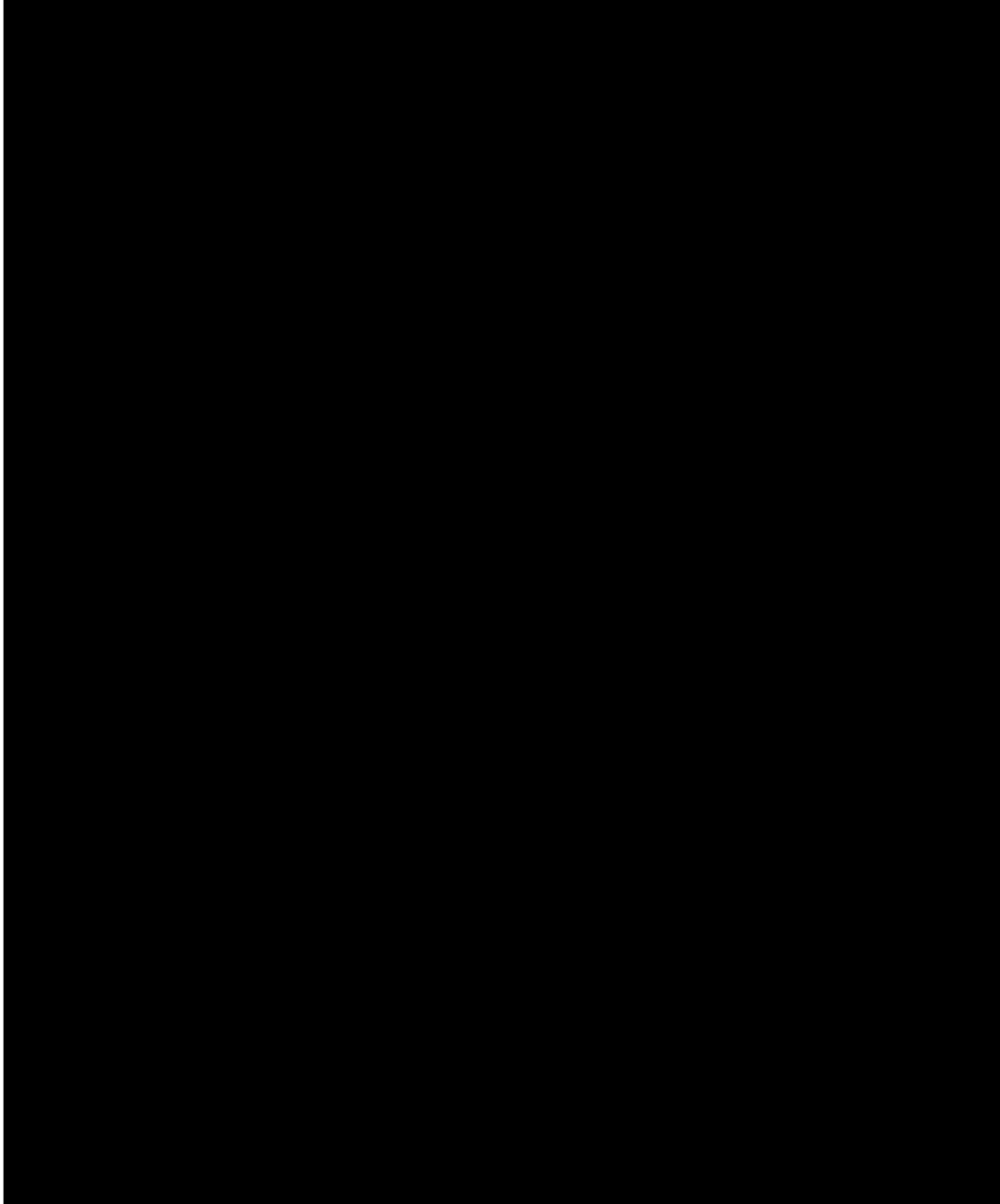


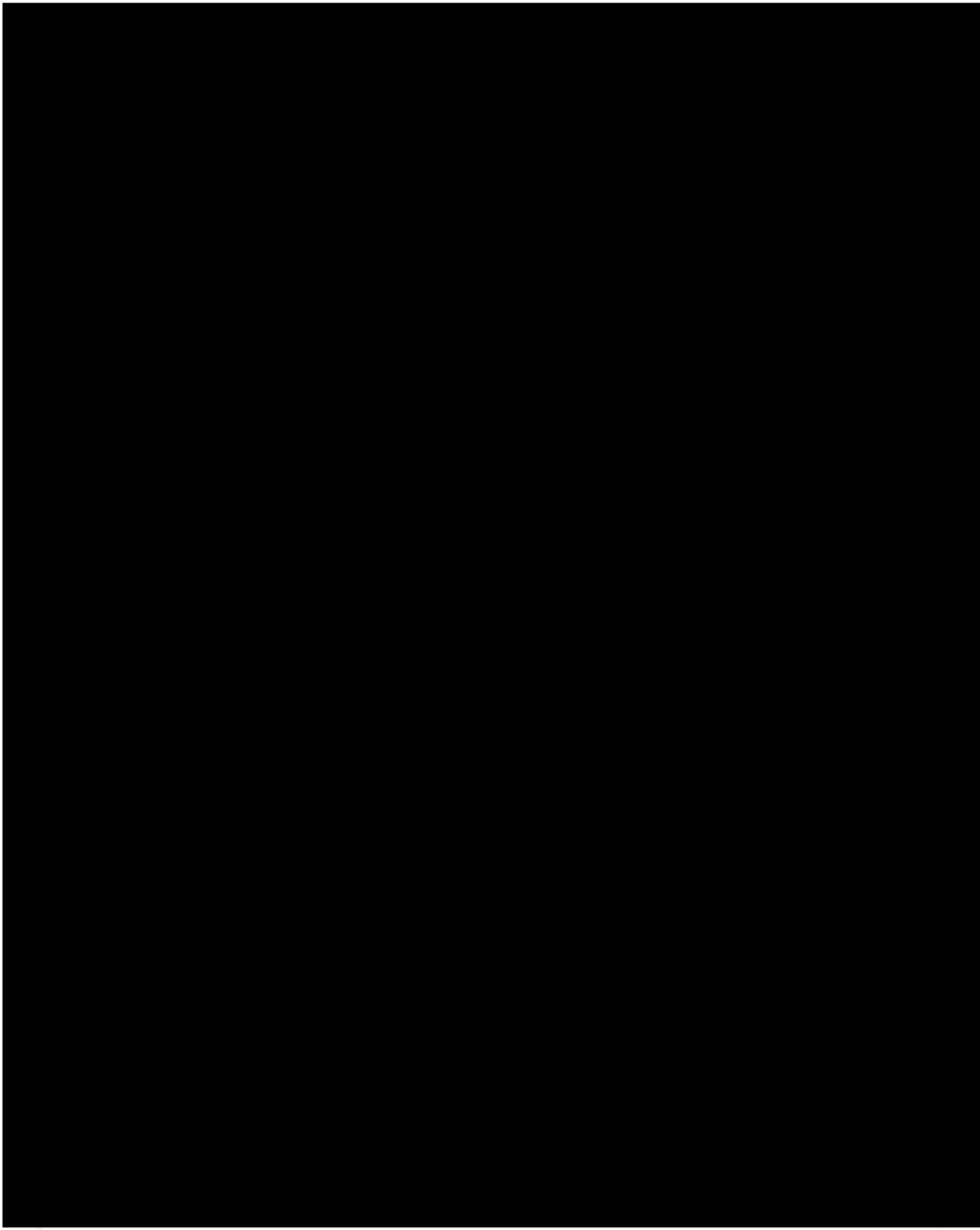
Some of the new trees planted 2024

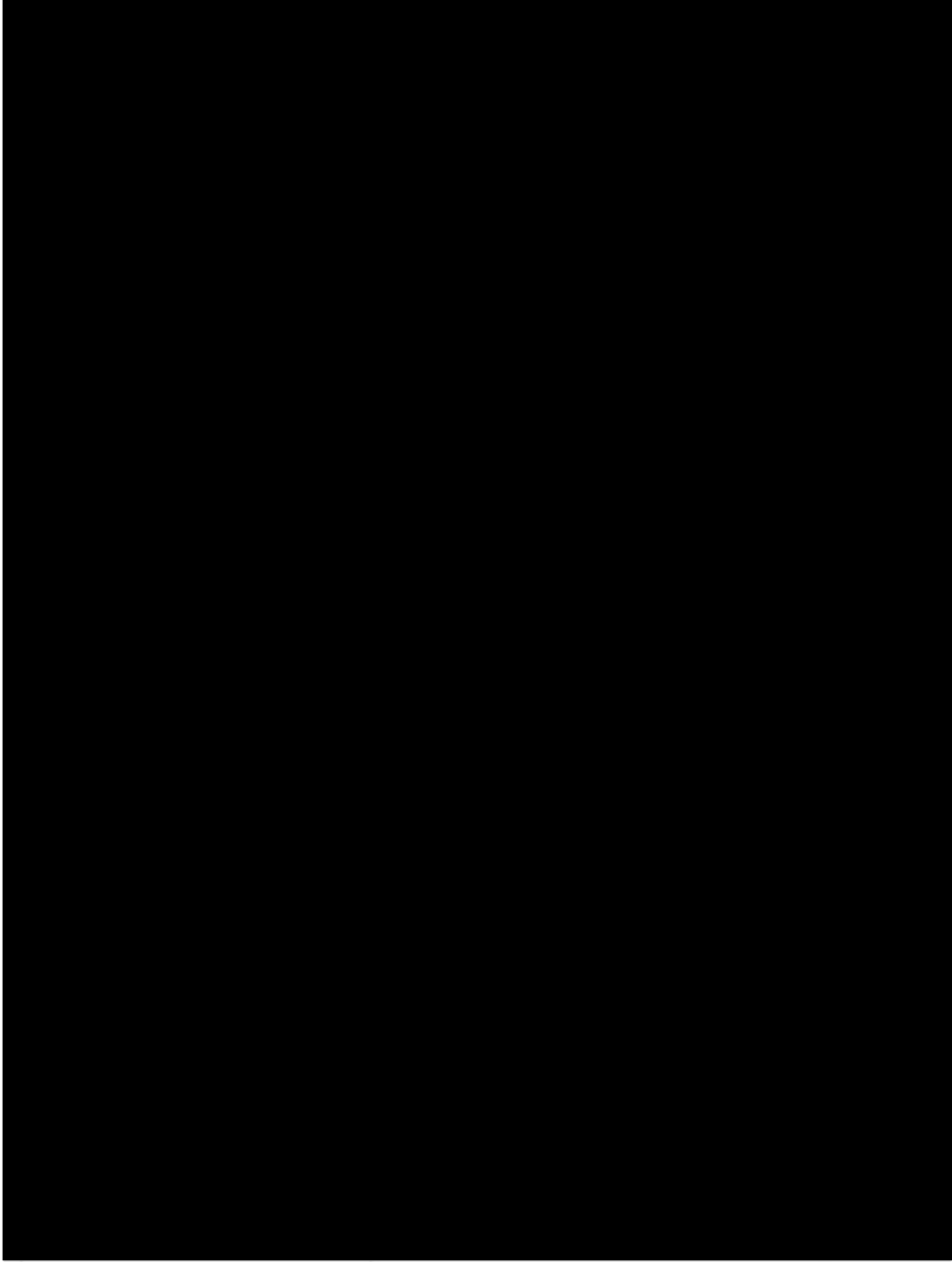
Appendix 3: Community Signatures of Support

Below are some of the residents supporting our work and the value of the park, signatures were obtained during our volunteer sessions on site in recent weeks.

If you wish to support our application as an Asset of Community Value and are on the electoral role, please add your information below in BLOCK CAPITALS:







Appendix 4: Green Flag Judges Report**Green Flag Community Award 2024-25****Name of Site: Highfield Park****Name of Community Group: Friends of Highfield Orchard****Field Assessment Comments**

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
A Welcoming Place		
Welcoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various entrances located across the site provide suitable accessibility – one has a fine new notice board with current/correct GFA certificate proudly displayed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current high standards and improve if resources allow. If funding/time allows a map/plan of the orchard could be included in the notice board.
Good and safe access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main mown paths within the site are clear from debris, wide and have clear sightlines on the majority of the paths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current standards and improve if resources allow. The Council should ensure paths continue to be maintained and kickabout area is mown regularly
Signage	There is a new notice board and an informative interpretive lectern on site and an explanatory note on the chippings pile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current standards and improve if resources allow. Lectern looks as though it needs cleaning, but it may be more deep-seated weathering.
Equal access for all	Access for all is limited to main paths except in very dry ground conditions – but is understandable due to the typology of the site and reduced mowing regimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current standards and improve if resources allow.
Healthy, Safe & Secure		
Appropriate level of facilities and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apart from the goal posts, bin, picnic table and bollards the site is primarily fruit trees, grass paths and natural area. It is a wonderful natural resource for the benefit of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current facilities and add more appropriate features eg seating if resources allow.
Safe equipment and facilities	The site facilities were safe and apart from the noticeboard should be the responsibility of the Council, but are adopted by the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current high standards and improve if resources allow.

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
Personal security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal security throughout the space is good, with wide paths and clear sightlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current high standards and improve if resources allow.
Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is well used with lots of dog walkers and mixed waste dog bin at main entrance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council should consider occasional dog warden visits but understanding limited funding and time restraints on this from the council.
Well maintained and Clean		
Litter and waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter is cleared up by Friends group volunteers where required (and disposed of in the bin on the site) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current activities and implement forward plan when resources allow
Overall standard of maintenance	<p>The park is generally clean and litter-free. The fruit trees, the main focus of the group were in the process of being cleared at the base, mulched, pruned and stakes/ ties adjusted, using bio-string where appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council should consider raising the standard/increasing the frequency of maintenance of paths and kickabout area to show appreciation for the efforts of the local community. Consider clearing some of the large areas of bramble etc. to create a better balance of different ground flora. This would need the resources of the Council. Introducing native wildflower seed or plants/ bulbs to newly flailed areas would create different habitats if resources allow
Graffiti and vandalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-social behaviour and vandalism sometimes occurs within the site, but the group have a suitable and practical operation in place to reduce cover and hiding places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current standards in dealing with ASB if resources allow.
Environmental Management		
Sustainable materials use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mulch chipping has been donated, bio-string is used to reduce need for plastic straps. Brash and debris used for chipping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current standards and improve if resources allow.
Waste recycling and minimisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apart from litter main waste product is pruning/brash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current standards and improve if resources allow
Chemical Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No chemicals are used on the site at the moment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If invasives are to be treated, this should be arranged by the Council.
Peat use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No peat use within the site currently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further actions required – ensure any imported compost/soil or trees/plants are peat free.
Biodiversity Landscape & Heritage		
Conservation of landscape & historic features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is a wonderful semi-natural green oasis in a busy suburban area. It is clearly an important part of the local natural heritage, which the community cherish. 	<p>Continue to maintain current activities and implement forward plan when resources allow</p>

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extensive number and variety of top fruit including unusual and heritage varieties is now part of the local culture and heritage. Trees are inspected and managed by the Councils tree team 	
Conservation of biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group put much effort into conserving the biodiversity, providing habitats and promoting wildlife. A local BTO expert has surveyed the site for birdlife recording species and their numbers. Some wildflower planting has taken place. Plans to install bird/ bat boxes, bug hotels etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current activities and implement forward plan when resources allow. If funding/volunteers allow further potential surveys could be considered to understand and track the progress/decline of biodiversity and species within the site. The whole site appears to have real potential as a Biodiversity Net Gain opportunity site to provide funding for improving species-poor areas and should be included in the Council's habitat banking sites.
Community Involvement		
Promotion of green space / project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is understood the locals widely known the site and use it regularly – but the group does not use social media or promote the site following an expensive and damaging incursion by travelers. The Friends have a strong WhatsApp group and contact each other by email. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion through the notice board at entrance can now be implemented to inform residents of activities and volunteer days. Consider use of social media if site is secured.
Links to the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenbank Primary School use the site for activities including mindfulness sessions. Pruning is assisted by Tree Station, a local social enterprise 	Continue to maintain current activities and implement forward plan when resources allow
Involvement in decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a small core group of around 9 or 10 with 4 or 5 attending volunteer days each time. All decisions are made with the committee group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current activities and implement forward plan when resources allow Try to expand the group and perhaps involve local councilors.
Involvement in operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone within the friends of group undertakes operations – tree work, as it is specialised is undertaken by the local council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current activities and improve if resources allow.
Appropriate provision for the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the topography of the site and being run by a Friends Group as a community orchard and nature site, there are no provisions for the community other than grass paths, a picnic table and goalposts, and hopefully an abundant harvest! There is play provision on the adjacent park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain current standards and improve if resources allow.

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
Management / Achievements		
Innovation and creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group is inventive in its fundraising having had a recent grant from the Manchester Airport community fund. 	Continue to maintain current activities and implement forward plan when resources allow
Resources secured / used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants are continually being applied for funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain your efforts to secure grants, donations and funding. Continue to maintain current activities and implement forward plan when resources allow
<p>Additional Comments:</p> <p>Highfield community orchard is an impressive and important local greenspace, planted with well over 100 fruit trees, many well-established. The cleared tree bases and pruning, staking and tying etc. shows the dedication and hard work which is put in by Cheryl and all members of the friends of group and volunteers,</p> <p>The Council is responsible for the site and provides very basic support to the group. With the park being used by all sorts of people, from local residents, children, young people and dog walkers the site needs regular litter picking and maintenance. There is real commitment shown by the group in careful pruning and maintaining the fruit trees and preserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the site. There was no-one representing the Council at judging, so it is difficult to assess why their involvement seems so disappointingly meagre. The Council's VCFSE Strategy commits to '<i>maximise opportunities for volunteering and value the contribution of local volunteers</i>' It is clear that the commitment shown by the Friends Group should be reciprocated by a reasonable level of support from the Council, even though it is going through austere times. The fact that much of the group's management plan is taken up with requests for improved Council support just for basic maintenance is telling. There should be an active liaison officer for such groups. Perhaps local Councilors could provide some support?</p> <p>The Friends Group should be very proud of their efforts to conserve this lovely natural space and the rich collection of fruit trees. It is a very special space that deserves to be developed and appreciated more fully.</p> <p>Congratulations and well done to everyone involved in the group.</p>		