

WSLNF – Proposed green sites – Marsh Wood – No 21

Site Details (complete this form for each site to be proposed for designation)

Local Green Space Assessment for: Marsh Wood	
Date of assessment: Desk Assessment 30.12.24. Subsequent information from Anna Sabin 17 th February 2025	
Assessors: Jim Boot, Community Planner	
Site Name and Address (location)	Grid Ref:
Marsh Wood part of Combe Valley Countryside Park	TQ 78008 10234
Site owner (if known)	Hastings Borough Council and Daejean Developments Ltd
Have they been informed / discussed? No	If yes date:
Description and purpose / current use	
Extensive area of ancient woodland slightly elevated above the very wet Combe Haven valley and winter lake. The wood's growth is young with a few very large and ancient oaks and its soundscape is mostly natural with little engine noise apart from trains passing. It runs north-south alongside the railway with paths through it which are often impassably muddy. It is used by dog walkers and wildlife enthusiasts when dry enough but, because of mud and unhelpful access, is under-used by the local residents living in estates to the west.	
Statutory designations (eg SSSI¹)	Other designations (eg LNR²)
Part of the Coombe Haven Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Close to Filsham Reedbed LNR
Site allocations in Local Plan	
No	
Planning permission	
No	

¹ Site of Special Scientific Interest

² Local Nature Reserve

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Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves (in meters)	
Popular green space bordering new estates but cut off from them by the railway line and inadequate crossings. There are only two, difficult, access points along its length within West St. Leonards - the level crossing for very able-bodied walkers by Hollington and Dogkennel Wood and from the Harley Shute road bridge - where access is steep and ligament-wreckingly muddy. This Harley Shute road crossing is insanely dangerous with blind bends to left and right and no infrastructure like road narrowing or pelican crossings to make it safer.	
List any public rights of way to or across the site:	
Surrounded on four sides by public footpaths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HAS/22/3 • HAS/22/1 • HAS/30/1 – Harley Shute Walk • HAS/29/1 	
Which of the following criteria does it meet?	<u>F</u> ully / <u>P</u> artially / <u>N</u> ot (if <u>F</u> or <u>P</u> provide details)
• Beauty	Fully – ancient woodland
• Historic significance / heritage	Not known
• Recreational value	Partial - Its recreational value will only be fully realised when an all-season surface is given to the north-south path following the railway line with wheel-friendly access points. Then a much wider range of people could enter the wood for recreation and travel - even though the unsurfaced paths into the deeper valley would still require higher levels of fitness and waterproof boots.
• Tranquillity	Fully – separated from nearby estates to the north by railway line. Housing south of the line have better access, through Heron Close and on Harley Shute Road by the railway bridge.
• Wildlife	Fully – ancient woodland
Local in character – how would you describe for this statement?	
Currently popular with local residents after work and at weekends. Could be part daily Active Travel for thousands of people living alongside if it were signposted, surfaced and had wheel-friendly access points. It shares the local characteristic of not having any authority with the will to make its magic more available to more people. Maybe too extensive an area to qualify as a LGS. Other protections (SSSI / ancient woodland) may make the designation unnecessary.	
Area (in hectares)	28.9 h

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Photograph

**Looking over the
Combe Haven
Countryside Park
from Marsh Wood**



**Entrance from the level
crossing**



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Aerial photo map or plan showing accurate boundary of site.



Adapted from Locality Local Green Spaces, 2019:

<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/>