

APPENDIX 4

Local Open Areas

The first spinney and the second spinney on Thorpehill farmland (Map ref 1 and 2)

Two spinneys were planted by John Burton, a keen conservationist, with the intention of encouraging birdlife and wildlife onto his farmland. For the most part, the spinneys are left untouched, and the Burton Family ask that both be included in the Neighbourhood Plan so that they remain natural green areas in perpetuity.

The FIRST SPINNEY, nearest the farmhouse and seen to the right of the Leicestershire Round footpath as one walks towards Bruntingthorpe, was planted in 1980. It has a variety of indigenous trees including ash, sycamore, holly, poplar, larch, apple and oak. It is bounded by a thorn hedge and fencing to keep stock out, and as far as possible remains untouched to provide a good habitat for wild birds and other small creatures. On the south side, nearest the footpath three beehives are usually seen.

The SECOND SPINNEY, farthest away from the farmhouse, was planted in 1979, mostly with ash trees. There are also large willow trees at the side of the stream. This small area of woodland is to the left of the Leicestershire Round footpath immediately before the bridge over the stream, as one walks towards Bruntingthorpe. It is bounded by the stream on one side, and hedged and fenced to keep stock out.

A small area nearest the footpath and measuring about 30 metres by 20 metres, was underplanted with snowdrops and aconites, and makes for a beautiful sight in early spring. This spinney, left untouched provides habitat for a vast variety of wildlife. Tawny owls can be seen as well as a great variety of other birds, including woodpeckers, chaffinches, wrens and robins. Any dropped branches are left as they provide cover for small animals including rabbits, squirrels and hedgehogs.

Both spinneys are accessible to view from the Leicestershire Round which runs alongside them.

Shearsby Village East entrance from A5199 (Ref 3)

A green space both sides of Welford Road and south of Back Lane

A small area of grassed land and 2 strips of grass and hedging up to the A5199. The area is fully accessible to the public. It is well maintained by the village. It is the main entrance to the village and provides a natural and calming landscape on entering Shearsby. Bulbs and wildflowers flourish here in the spring. There are 2 benches for quiet reflection, an oasis of calm. The whole area is a wildlife heaven and adds greatly to the biodiversity of the village.

The field behind Elmsbrook at the top of Fenny lane and Bears' Hole (Ref 4)

The field at the top of Fenny Lane covers just over one acre and is very special to the village community.

It has two footpaths; one goes south up to Mill Lane, and one down to Bears' Hole and on to the Northeast side of the village where it connects with footpaths to Fleckney and beyond. These footpaths are the green, tranquil part of the circular village walk and are used daily by

many villagers. As well as the local people, the footpaths are used by walkers coming up from Bruntingthorpe on the Leicestershire Round and heading North or East towards Saddington, Fleckney or Arnesby.

This field was until recently, kept as a wild flower meadow, and no chemical fertilisers or weed-killers were used on it. We have a photograph showing this field in full bloom. It has been grazed by sheep for most of the time between March and November, but still supported a vast assortment of wild flowers including, lady smocks, violets, cowslips, primroses, buttercups, daisies, ox-eye daisies, foxgloves, vetches, and many more.

Despite its recent neglect, the meadow still supports many species of birds and other wild creatures. Birds seen daily include blackbirds, robins, blue tits, great tits, long-tailed tits, chaffinches, greenfinches, wrens, pied wagtails, starlings, sparrows, dunnocks and pigeons. Those seen are thrushes, sparrow hawks, fieldfares, goldfinches, green woodpeckers, great spotted woodpeckers and pheasants. Owls are heard rather than seen.

There is a colony of bats which are only seen on warm still evenings in summer which have been observed for many years.

Other wild creatures seen include hedgehogs, foxes, voles, moles, grass snakes, frogs, toads and newts.

Grassed triangle opposite Welford Road Bungalows (Ref 5)

This area is a quiet place, in spring bulbs grow under the 2 Rowan trees.

It is an area used by residents to sit out on in the summer in order to chat and pass the time of day. Walkers on their routes round the village or going to the Leicestershire Round pass by.

It is an oasis for wildlife passing through the village on the way to open fields.

The area adds to the biodiversity of the village.

The Old Road to the south of the A5199 (Ref 6)

This road is a walker/cycle link to Arnesby and Fleckney connecting us with the other footpaths in the area.

It is a haven for both flora and fauna. Rabbits, badgers foxes and other small mammals can be found here and a stream runs next to the road. Snowdrops, violets, cowslips bluebells and anemone flourish here. Trees bound the road including 5 oaks.

The area is quiet and has views across the village and countryside. It is one of the few areas within the village which has a number of trees.

It is of historical value as the old road leading towards Leicester.

The road is a great place to “stand and stare” to allow for contemplation and an opportunity to watch nature at work. A good way to stretch your legs and get some fresh air.