



## POLICY / MISSION STATEMENT RE JOAN'S FIELD

### Background

The piece of ground known now as Joan's Field was given to the Parish at the time Kestrel Way was built by Robert Hitchins Homes. The land had been used as a dumping/waste ground during the building period leaving it very uneven and in a state that only allowed limited use.

A loved and well known resident of Northway - Joan Sallis was the 'lollipop' lady for many years in Northway and after she passed away the Council felt it was fitting to name the field after her. Joan also had a love of wildlife so the ground was designated by Ashchurch Parish Council as a Conservation Area. (Joan's family still live in Northway).

Over the years various groups have been responsible for assisting with Conservation, from school groups to individuals who volunteered and other individuals who were contracted to look after it. The ground was not accessible by vehicles other than tractors and a large trench was also dug the other side of the gate to ensure no unwanted visitors could access the ground.

In around 2004 a group of residents from Sallis Close lobbied the Council to make an area of the field accessible for young people to have a levelled area so they could play football and other games. There was an entrance directly from Sallis Close and Kestrel Way making this very suitable for such a use (Kestrel Way access has since been closed). The Council considered the request and agreed to have a section levelled and mowed to make the field more beneficial to the parish. At that time the trench had to be filled in to allow grass cutters to maintain the grassed area in the centre.

As a result of smoothing out the access (but retaining a locked metal gate) the field attracted traveller encampments in 2011, 2015 and 2016. After this, NCV created mounds inside the entrance, these allowed access for contractors but restricted access for larger vehicles/caravans.

A policy relating to Traveller Encampments has been made and can be viewed if requested. (Adopted GP/84/15).

Also, during this period the local resident's association Northway Area Residents and Homeowners Association (NARHA) now called Northway Community Volunteers (NCV) became more involved with volunteering and looking after the field and the Council permitted them to undertake various maintenance / planting.

Countrywide Grounds Maintenance made comments during a meeting in 2014 that the field was over pruned and suggested that there should be no further cutting back of bramble etc as this was the habitat of not only nesting birds but many other species of wildlife. They believed the clearance of brambles round trees needed only to be undertaken once a year in September/October.

In July 2014, Giant Hogweed was found on Joan's Field. The field is now regularly inspected by the Council for Hogweed (previously with the help of the EA)

24.6.2015 (GP/84/15) The General Purposes Committee agreed to stop maintaining the brambles that ran along the back of Sallis Close in Joan's Field at the request of residents following traveller encampment. They believed this would protect their properties. The Council wrote to all the residents in Sallis Close backing on to Joan's Field to inform them that this was what had been requested and as a result any further maintenance of the brambles encroaching into their gardens would need to be undertaken by residents. (GP/106/15 refers) The Council received no objections to this.

Requests for disabled access investigated but not feasible at this time.

Discussions were had in 2020/21 and funding was obtained towards installation of a wooden bridge access into Joan's Field as well as a path into the field which would make it more accessible. This work was completed by Josh Williams (contractor) in December 2022.

## POLICY - MISSION STATEMENT FOR JOAN'S FIELD

*Joan's Field is a field under the stewardship of Northway Parish Council and is designated as a Conservation Area. Within this responsibility the Council have to consider the benefits of the land for the whole of the Parish and not just a few. The field will continue to be maintained as a conservation area with the benefit of a section of ground in the centre regularly mown to promote resident activities. The brambles will be maintained from the field side to ensure they do not encroach onto the mown area but allowed to grow up to residents' fences (at their request) with them maintaining any over hang from their side.*

*As long as the local volunteer group (Northway Community Volunteers) are willing they will be allowed to continue to maintain flower barrels in the field.*

*On the day that Travellers arrive on Parish Council owned land - they should be served with a 'Notice of Trespass' giving them five days to leave the site. On the same day instruct Solicitors to make an application to the Court to secure a court date for an eviction notice to be served in the event of them not leaving within the specified time.*

*From the point that the travellers leave the site, whether or not they have gained access, the Council will keep all entry gates secure for a period of three days following the day of departure.*

*This policy will apply even if there is evidence to suggest that the travellers have left the area. The Clerk has delegated authority to extend this period depending on any further intelligence that may have been received.*

*Updated April 2024*