

## 1.8A. Development guidance for Spaces and Places

None of these spaces offer a village green or square, yet the accumulation of smaller, linked, secondary spaces offers opportunity for gentle, creative intervention and better amenity for the village:

- The small woodland area, illustrated on this page, may allow public access already. With minimal intervention and maintenance, it could be a preferred footpath, cutting off the corner whilst offering a short trail amongst the trees.
- The bridge, and small green, north of the bridge, might provide space for example, for a seat and perhaps a modest landmark sculpture, and with small track to the river's edge.
- The centre of the village, outside the community centre and church could be marked with a new public space to define more effectively the centre. The unusually wide road offers the opportunity for combining wider footpaths and cycleway
- The old school, should it take on a new, active use, already provides open space, and might be linked by footpath along the river to the bridge to develop the amenity value of the village by using a riverside footpath along the whole of its length.
- The bus stop area, a pleasant departure and arrival point, might be improved with better ground treatment, and possibly a bus shelter.
- Access on foot or bicycle to the new school, directly from Church Road, would be more convenient and less tortuous.







**Spaces and Places in Rowlestown:** Looking southwards down the lane, **F** on aerial photo, p 44, which passes Rowlestown House, with the small green space on the corner **5** on aerial photo p 44, and left turn onto Church Lane. Very minor adjustment to this small space could make it more attractive, such as re-locating poles and traffic sign.



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# Section 2

## A Vision for the Future

### 2.1 Opportunities ahead for the Village

The analysis in Section 1 has identified a range of opportunities to transform the village whilst confirming its unique quality as inseparable from its local landscape. They are summarised below, and described in some detail in this Section to show their role and contribution to long term sustainability.

**Projects to Strengthen the Village Centre** are proposed, to establish a sense of place, where residents and visitors will feel comfortable and safe.

**Making a Village Square** is based on the idea that ‘every village should have one’; a space where there is room to stand around, sit, play, meet, with the sense of a shared place for all the village. In Rowlestown the optimum place would seem to be outside the church, connected by paving across the road, and surrounded by new activity.

**Making a Main Street**, combining mixed housing, social, educational, retail uses, even in a small village, increases the attractiveness of place, bringing together different activities accessed from the same street, rather than spread out around the village.

**Linking in the School** is about seeking to have a pedestrian friendly entrance to the school from the Main Street as well as the convenient drop-off point for vehicles. To maintain security within the school grounds, gates from this entrance can be controlled to limit access to arrival and departure times. Combined with a good footpath and cycleway it may succeed in persuading children and parents that cycling, or walking at least some of the way, is more enjoyable, as well as increasing use and enjoyment of the proposed village square.

**Reconciling Pedestrians, cyclists and motorists** is a suggestion to make the wide street in front of the church and community centre much more pleasant to use for pedestrians and less likely to be driven on at speed, by reallocating more space to people on foot.

**Keeping the village character - conservation, trees, views;** the gradual erosion of landscape is not inevitable, yet it needs strong regulation to ensure that the hedges, trees and views, as well as the vernacular buildings in the area are managed and conserved, as an essential part of the Framework Plan.





**Broadmeadow River as healthy recreation resource and natural reserve** is an aspiration to make the most of the gift of a river running through the centre of the village, until now largely ignored and previously drained in an aggressive way. Several projects combined would generate a remarkable amenity.

**Footpath along the river** would transform the enjoyment of the river, and help to tie in a loop walk which would use Sycamor, Church Road, and link up at Lispopple bridge. The cooperation of owners along the river would be essential, and it may be necessary to phase the project over time whilst making the most of access possibilities.

**Active recreation centre proposal, including “healthy hubs”:** play and outdoor exercise have become much more prevalent in recent times. The idea of commuting to Swords for exercise is less attractive than being able to use indoor space in the village in combination with an outdoor exercise regime. This might be integrated with the Community Centre, or as part of the Old National School complex.

**Retention ponds and picnic area as amenity** is an idea deriving from the need to maintain a 30 m riparian zone on either side of the river and to ensure that possible flooding is mitigated whilst providing a beneficial community use for the lands.

**River as nature reserve: biodiversity and protection of natural environment.** Whilst exploring amenity use for the community, this should not be at the expense of adequate protection of the natural environment

**Extension of River amenity as Broadmeadow Regional Valley Park.** This proposal is to extend the amenity of the river, to the extent possible along the whole length of the river as far as the Estuary to create not only a biodiversity corridor, but also a long term recreational amenity in parallel with the Ward River Valley Regional Park.

**Conservation and New Uses for Old Buildings, and Buildings at Risk** is an overall policy of conserving the best and proposing a sustainable approach to keeping heritage buildings in use, such as *The Old School Site, The Old Mill Site, Rowlestown House Demesne, and vernacular buildings including agricultural outbuildings.*

**Landscape and New Housing** are proposed as inseparable issues to ensure that **protecting the Rural Countryside and Broadmeadow River** is made compatible with the need for creation of **a New Landscape, fully integrated with New Housing**.

**Village Entrances Improvement** is primarily concerned with reconciling the difficulties of the R125, passing through the village, with a focus on the entrances from *Swords and M1* and *Ashbourne*. The local roads from the **North** and **East** have some problems with speeding traffic; the introduction of a ‘**green lane**’ status is proposed, to favour pedestrians and cyclists along both roads.

**Spaces and Places** is an examination of the potential for designed improvement of **Spaces** and **Footpaths** in the village.

**Village Development Framework Plan, VDFP,** is a summary of proposed housing areas with illustrative design solutions and an accompanying design code. These act together to promote and control new housing schemes with carefully considered rules about landscaping, scale and distribution of houses which fit in with the local identity of the village.

