

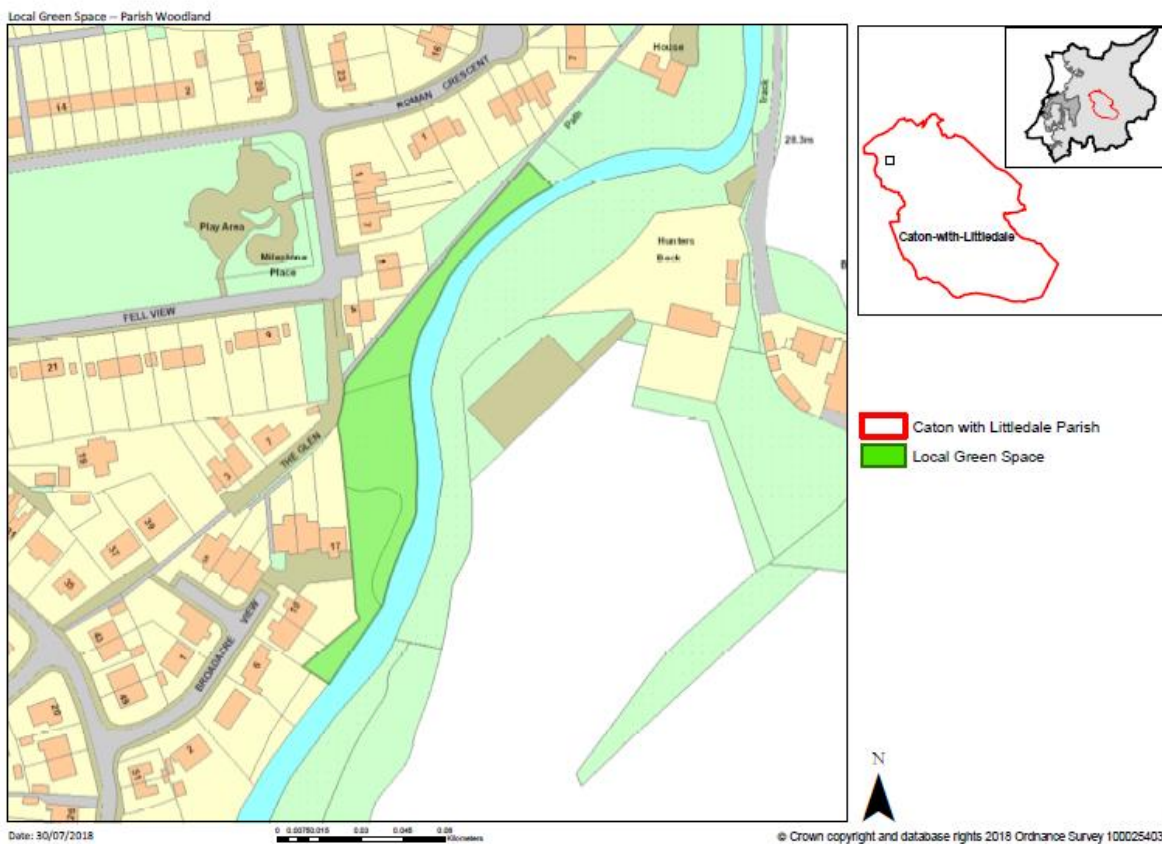
# LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATION: PARISH WOODLAND



## Parish Woodland description

The boundaries of this area of natural woodland form an elongated shape around the flow of the Artlebeck (see map), and is mainly low lying, just above the Artlebeck. It is prone to occasional flooding, and below by about 20 ft below the adjacent road and properties. It is entered by a latched gate at road level and a steep descent partly paved and partly gravel.

## Location and boundaries



## Aerial image



The main summer feature of the Parish Woodland is the dense canopy of trees, which almost totally obscure the boundaries; the paths (with one faint trace of the path from the entrance down the slope centre image); and Artlebeck running through from left to right with a hint of a gap for the watercourse in the canopy. It shows, however, the proximity to the local community (houses and gardens to bottom left and right). Importantly, it illustrates the seclusion and how tranquil is the local green space, which underlies why it is of such so special significance.

### The Parish Woodland is local in character, not an extensive tract of land

### The Parish Woodland is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves

Located on the boundary of Caton and across the Area of Separation from Brookhouse.

### Dimensions

Grid ref 532 642

Area: 0.281 hectares; 0.694 acres

Perimeter of 4.4430 km; 0.23 miles

### Ownership

The Parish Woodland is owned by Lancashire County Council, which provided a design for special informal leisure and recreational use with willow planting appropriate for an area prone to flooding from the Artlebeck.

### Maintenance

The woodland is an unmaintained natural habitat in a stable condition. A variety of established trees survive or do well in this location. A variety of self-seeded shrubs and plants which thrive in woodland and shaded areas are present. The informal recreational use is in evidence from the very well-worn tracks and paths both restricting intrusive growth and allowing light to fall, and there is no immediate need for maintenance. Low lying and fallen trunks, soil, rocks have been variously used by young people for natural constructions.

## Boundaries

The parish woodland is bounded:

- by the Artlebeck along the south eastern edge, marked by very substantial mature trees and nearer the water, lengths of exposed tree roots where the watercourse has flooded to unusually high levels (storm Desmond; Nov 22nd 2017).



- on the opposite side of the Artlebeck is an area of woodland, and behind it open fields - the Area of Separation between the villages of Brookhouse and Caton - and Bridge End farmhouse, a traditional stone built farm which has until recently been farmed by the Whitehouse family.
- along the boundary, to the north west, there is a wooden fence between the parish woodland and the properties of Milestone crescent, the Glen, a relatively new development on Broadacre. The fence is partially hidden along the entire boundary by trees near the boundary, and undergrowth of small trees, shrubs, and other growth.
- each end is marked by a narrow pocket of undergrowth of nettles and docks just beyond the well-trodden paths.

A track - apparently along the boundary of the Parish Woodland - is ancient (probably to roman times) and is recorded on historic maps. For example, it is shown as a dual bounded path wide enough for farm equipment on the map of 1847 below (National Library of Scotland), continuing the track from the north between the new main road (now A683) and Artlebeck bridge across Brookhouse Road to the south.

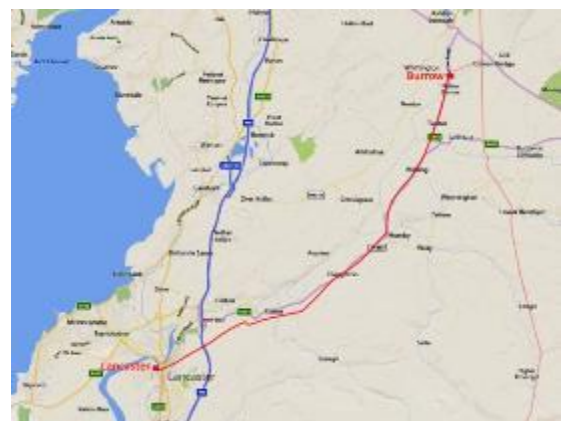


### **Why the Parish Woodland is demonstrably special: NPPF Criteria**

Summary: The main criterion for the parish woodland to be demonstrably special to our local community is informal recreation for in a wild space for the whole community but importantly it has a long history of use by older young people. Beauty, tranquillity and wildlife form an inseparable part of the special value of the parish woodland. Our local community cherishes our claim to fame in our roman legacy, marked by the strategic find of the Artlebeck milestone in the beck bounded by the Parish Woodland. This led to a critical reassessment of the route of the road, and a flyover video of the likely path of the roman road through Caton up the Lune Valley is available online.

### **Historical significance**

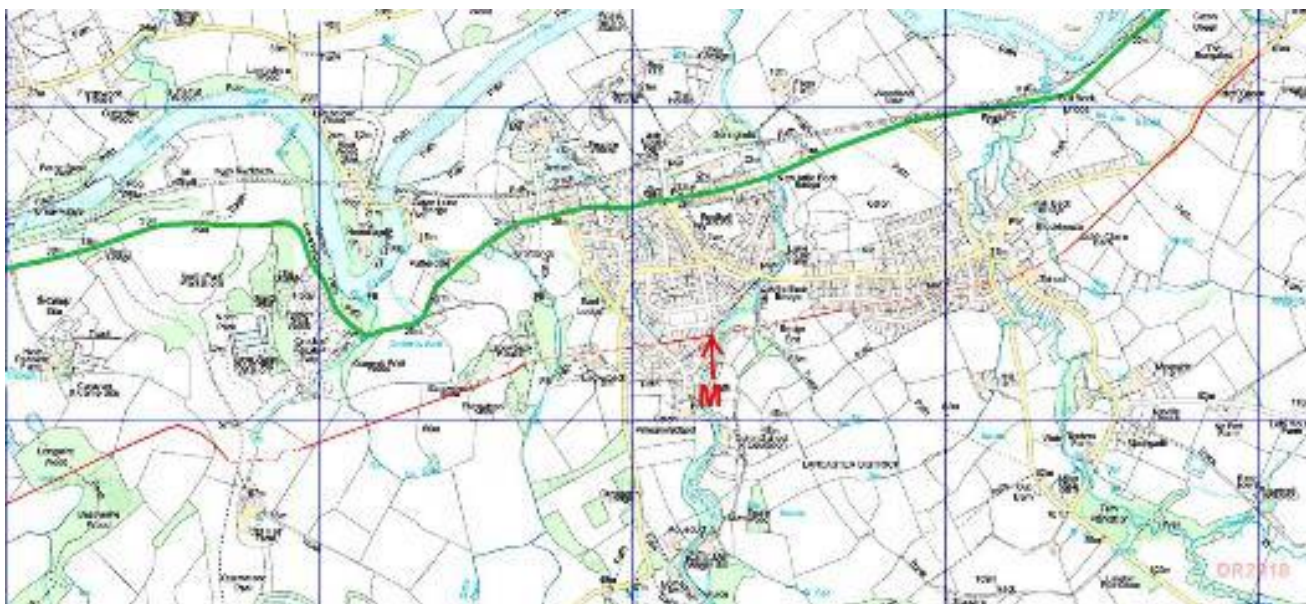
It is a matter of considerable local pride and intrigue - and widespread knowledge - that A Roman milestone in exceptionally good condition was found in Artlebeck, a find of importance in locating the route of the roman road between Lancaster and Burrow (although exact route is still debated). The likely to route is shown on the map below. For a 'fly over' video of road see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkuHJNgMXbA>



For information about local traces of the road in Caton see:

[http://lahs.archaeologyuk.org/Contrebis/19\\_46\\_Potts.pdf#page=1&zoom=auto,-211](http://lahs.archaeologyuk.org/Contrebis/19_46_Potts.pdf#page=1&zoom=auto,-211),

Some old maps show the location of the milestone in the Artlebeck about halfway along the Parish Woodland - quite a claim to fame.



Milestone Place beside the Parish Woodland is named after the milestone. The stone was found in the beck see OS mark on map. The exact location where it stood according to Andrew White is also shown on the map below. The find spot was in the vicinity of Milestone Place, Caton. However, historical research by Andrew White placed the find spot at SD53256427 at 245 yards upstream of bridge (Contrebis 1992). This is a little further south-west than shown on the OS map - see later.





**The inscription on the milestone is:**

**IMP CAES TR HADRIANO AVG P M T P COS III P P L... M P IIII**

"Imperator Caesar Traianus Hadrianus Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, with tribunician power, consul three times,<sup>1</sup> Father of the Fatherland,<sup>2</sup> four thousand paces from *Lunium*.<sup>3</sup>"

**(RIB 2272; milestone; 128-38AD)**

The importance of the Artlebeck milestone is explained by Margary (705)

*'Crucial to the discovery of the route was the milestone found at Artle Beck, Caton. Not only did it indicate there was a road but it placed strict limitations as to the route it must have taken from Lancaster.....The good condition of the milestone indicates that it must have been very close to its original location as if it had been subject to much river movement it would surely have been damaged, which is clearly not the case. The important clue is that the milestone records the distance as 4 (Roman) miles - presumably from Lancaster. The straight line distance to Lancaster fort's eastern gate is approximately 6250 metres or just over 4 Roman miles. The initial route out of Lancaster to Caton must therefore have been very direct.'*

Documentary evidence from the records that the parish woodland is demonstrably special to our community is kept in the historical archives of Caton with Littledale Parish Council and Lancashire County Council.

### **Recreational value**

There is one formal entrance from Milestone Place and the Glen through a country style wooden gate. The only other access is by wading along or across the Artlebeck.



The well-worn pattern of paths throughout the woodland and along Artlebeck, provide evidence of regular and continued use throughout the year.



Link to google photos

[https://photos.google.com/album/AF1QipM2O9YXtRhrQ3kBkFW7KL2R\\_j6lwUlspkqsk2Qy](https://photos.google.com/album/AF1QipM2O9YXtRhrQ3kBkFW7KL2R_j6lwUlspkqsk2Qy)

A well-used path leads along the Artlebeck bank in both directions for the length of the Parish Woodland, with other paths leading to it from the path along the middle of the woodland and parallel to it. There are several points of access to Artlebeck across stones to the water's edge, and an opportunity to observe fish (the Artlebeck has not been known to dry up) and riverbank birds.



Path leading to Artlebeck



**The Parish Woodland is a unique place for informal recreation for all of the community.**

**Meeting the needs of young people from our local community**

The Parish Woodland is unique within the parish in accommodating the informal recreational activities of 'older young people'. The REAL survey and the Neighbourhood planning surveys conducted enquiries which could reveal the extent of need for activities for this age group. The 'REAL' survey found that a lack of 'facilities for young people' in the community was accorded highest priority of all local needs - higher than better public transport' in a priority exercise.

Church and uniformed groups for older young people, which are organised and formal, are well established. But since the closure of the youth club, there is now a conspicuous lack of facilities for informal social activities. There have been intermittent proposals, for a skate park, and for a youth shelter, offered by Caton with Littledale Parish Council, however, these have never come to fruition.

The Parish Woodland, however, is a little known, 'tucked away', informal wild space where older young people clearly feel safe to go.



A wild place yet not far from home



The Parish Woodland lies below the level of the adjacent residential area





A natural hideaway



What is left of the bmx ramp - what message does this have for older young people?



Full of natural materials for constructing hideouts



Natural climbing and balance challenges

The seclusion has made the parish woodland exceptionally attractive to older young people seeking an area where they could be undisturbed by adults, and which they could make their own, and create their own structures and activities to enjoy. **The young people themselves have shown, by their actions and their initiatives in using the woodland, the special value of the parish woodland.**

1. Easy access, the lack of cultivation and low lying position of the woodland enabled unwanted materials such as corrugated iron sheets and other waste building materials to be taken or just left there, enabling young people to construct dens, some quite sophisticated, by and for young people (in the 1980's and 90's). There is still evidence from this period, from corrugated iron sheeting in the water of Artlebeck.



Rare evidence of litter spot the red packet!



Under the waters the outline of corrugated iron used for den construction

2. Young people continued to use the parish woodland for creative leisure. A group of them designed and built with considerable skill a bmx trail suited to the terrain, with a carefully planned ramp that was constructed with considerable expertise. A group of residents, shortly afterwards, asked Caton with Littledale Parish Council to remove the earthworks which the young people had created, and a request to do so was reluctantly complied with by Lancaster City Council. No alternative location was proposed.

3. Young people have continued to use the parish woodland. This came to the attention of the Parish Council after barbecues were organised, and groups of young people began to camp there overnight. A group of residents complained again to the Parish Council, and asked for the activities to be stopped. Again the request was complied with. No alternative location was proposed.

4. It is currently clear from the paths, barbecue site, scrambling rocks, and other indications of continued use that young people continue to use the parish woodland as a unique outdoor venue in the parish which is available as a public space and - not least because of the seclusion and natural wild character - where they feel relaxed and able to meet and use as their creative space, in different ways over time. The lack of facilities for older young people in the parish is longstanding and well documented and this provides an outstanding green space for them.

## 5. Safety

A well-used path leads along the Artlebeck bank in both directions, with other paths leading to it from the path along the middle of the woodland and parallel to it.



There are several points of access to Artlebeck, across stones to the water's edge, and an opportunity to observe fish (the Artlebeck has not been known to dry up) and riverbank birds. The river is stony and shallow along the length of the Parish Woodland, with minimal risk of drowning regardless of dense or prolonged rainfall.



### **Beauty**

Clearly the wild river site which has remained untouched for decades and more is beautiful, and this is part of the attraction, but the aspects of beauty are listed under other headings.

### **Tranquillity**

The seclusion of the Parish Woodland, in spite of the proximity of Roman Crescent, Fell View, Milestone Place and the Glen, and more recently Broadacre View, is because the land lies well below the houses and gardens, roughly level with the Artlebeck banks. So, it is always tranquil and peaceful. Street and domestic noise does not reach it from the surrounding area, the overwhelming sound is of the water in Artlebeck which runs rapidly over the stone bed. The overwhelming sense is of being surrounded by nature, despite the proximity to houses.

The sense of having a secluded place to themselves appears one of the attractions to everyone who is aware of this Local Green Space, but especially for young people who meet there.

### **Environmental value - Richness of Wildlife**

#### **Fish**

In the waters of Artlebeck have been recorded (from LERN data from 1965, applicable because fish swim along Artlebeck) Brown Trout, Sea Trout, Atlantic Salmon, Bull Head, European Eel. The long path besides the watercourse offer a unique opportunity, because of public access, to observe them.

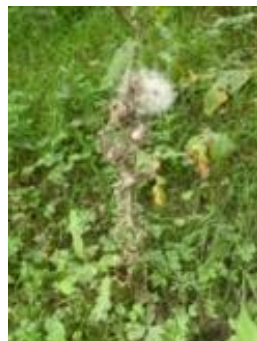
There is nowhere else in the parish which offers such easy public access to the waters edge from a public place to view fish. The Parish Woodland is unique to local people in this respect.



### Wild 'mixed' habitats

A resident wrote: *'The greatest value of green spaces for wildlife comes when they have **a mix of habitats** - including short/mown grass, grazing pasture, flower meadows not mown till autumn, bramble patches/understorey, hedges, dry stone walls(insects) and trees of different sizes. They all add together. The Parish Woods by Artle Beck behind Fell View have a good mix.'*

The wild character features many mature and maturing trees and saplings, including oak, elder, alder, ash, beech, sycamore, silver birch, and one substantial crab apple, makes it very beautiful while the central area is covered by low vegetation and shade loving plants, including nettles, docks, plaintain, avons, wild raspberry and bramble..... (too small an area for official data recordings to be extracted with statistical validity).





The consequence of this diversity of plants and trees and the seasonal availability of flowers and seeds offers a rich habitat for other wildlife, especially birds and invertebrates.

### **Future maintenance**

There is at present no regular maintenance of the parish woodland, but the character appears to be stable so that intervention is not obviously required. The relative steepness of the entry path would deter some less able people, but there is future potential for some informal form of exploratory trail within the woodland for family use without compromising the special value to older young people.

### **Sustainability**

*Green spaces contribute to quality of place. Quality of place is a key factor in attracting investment, jobs and growth to an area. It is also important in making an area an attractive place to live, work and spend leisure time. So green spaces have real economic value to the surrounding area, in addition to creating community well-being.*

*'Locality toolkit'*

The evidence supports the contribution of the Parish Woodland as a Local Green Space to achieve sustainable development, providing economic, social and environmental gains jointly and simultaneously through the neighbourhood plan as part of the planning system. It is especially important to the local community because of the historical significance of the roman milestone; and important to the health and wellbeing and economic future through creativity and design, of those local young people for whom there is no provision at present.