

The Grove and Eastward Ho Assets of Community Value



25 March 2025

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Motivation

The Grove woodland, shown in Figure 1, and the Eastward Ho playing fields, shown in Figure 2, are adjacent sites at the northern end of Felixstowe where the town meets the countryside, see Figure 3 and Figure 4.

The Grove and Eastward Ho have been important recreational amenities to the residents of Felixstowe for over one hundred years. The Grove was an early tourist attraction depicted on postcards and referenced in travel guides of the time whilst Eastward Ho was an 18 hole golf course. Nowadays both the Grove and Eastward Ho continue to contribute significantly to the social well being of the Felixstowe community through provision of space for recreation, community events, environmental education and the preservation of local wildlife. This can help social cohesion, physical and mental health, and encourage an appreciation of the natural environment all without having to leave our own town.

However, The Grove and Eastward Ho are now within the middle of land earmarked for the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood. This is a development of 2000 new homes. The public have been told by East Suffolk Council and their members that there will be no development on The Grove and Eastward Ho. A few example statements are:

“The protection and enhancement of the Grove woodland and Eastward Ho! is central to the master-planning process” [1].

‘East Suffolk councillor David Beavan, the cabinet member with responsibility for housing, said no homes would be built on the playing fields, while a primary school mooted for the site would only be built on part of the playing field if there was a need for it’ [2].

“The Grove...and Eastward Ho are well protected...Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 12, 3 North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood Policy” [3].

However, as shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6 the development consultants employed by East Suffolk Council, namely LDA Design, have published plans to the contrary. These show that as well as the construction of thousands of homes in the immediate surrounding area there could also be housing, road infrastructure and other development on the Eastward Ho playing fields, threatening both its very existence and a way of life for our community. Over 8500 local people signed a petition entitled “SAVE THE GROVE/EASTWARD HO PLAYING FIELDS” in response to the plans [4]. This demonstrates the concern and value placed by the town residents on this asset.

A successful nomination of The Grove and Eastward Ho to the status of Asset of Community Value (ACV) would reassure residents and provide some degree of protection from development both current and hereafter.

Felixstowe Town Council are an organisation eligible to nominate an ACV. Looking through agendas and meeting minutes it can be seen that Felixstowe Town Council have shown a keen interest in supporting nominations for ACVs.



Figure 1: Wild garlic in The Grove woodland



Figure 2: Football pitches at Eastward Ho

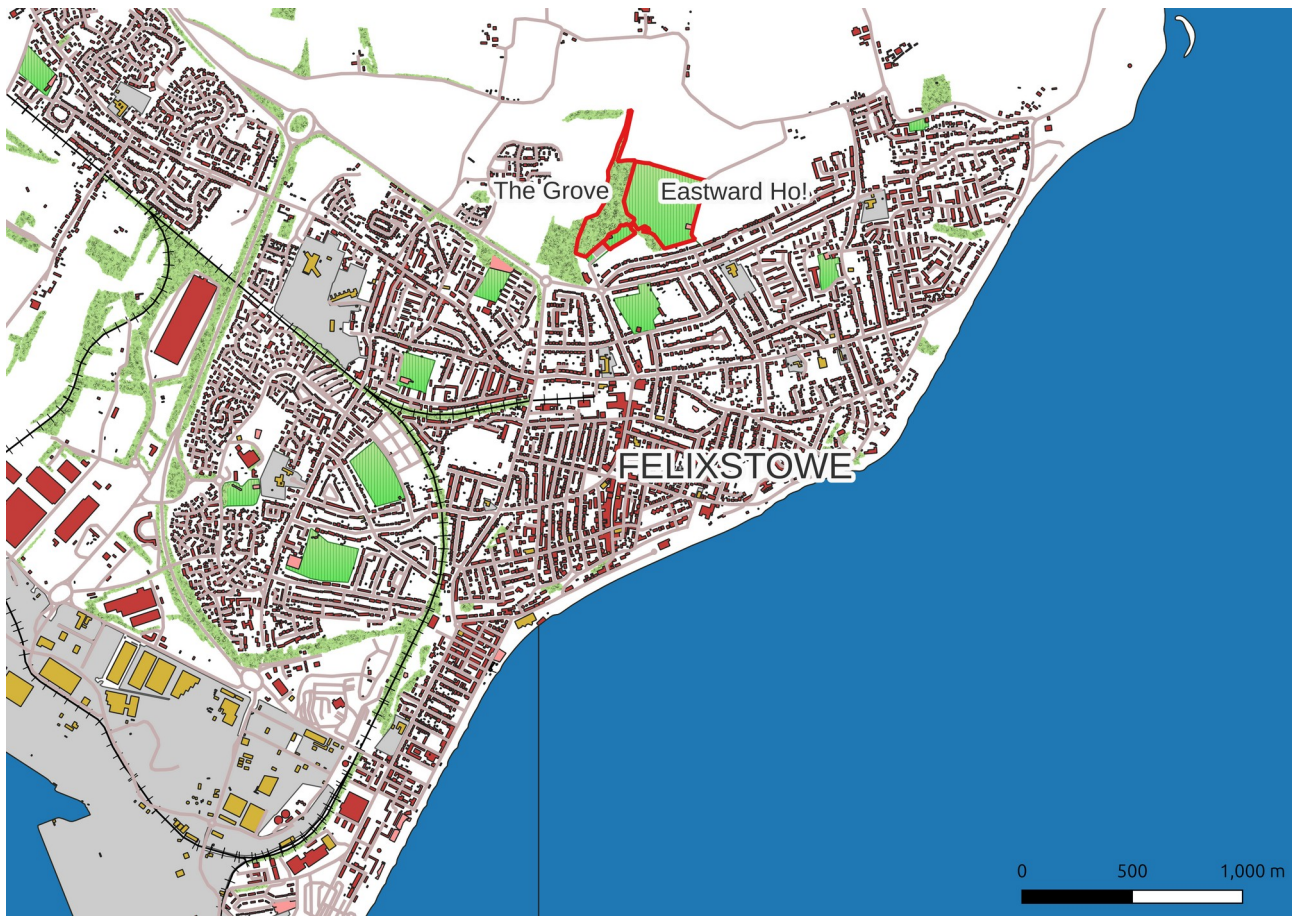


Figure 3: The Grove and Eastward Ho situated on the northern edge of Felixstowe

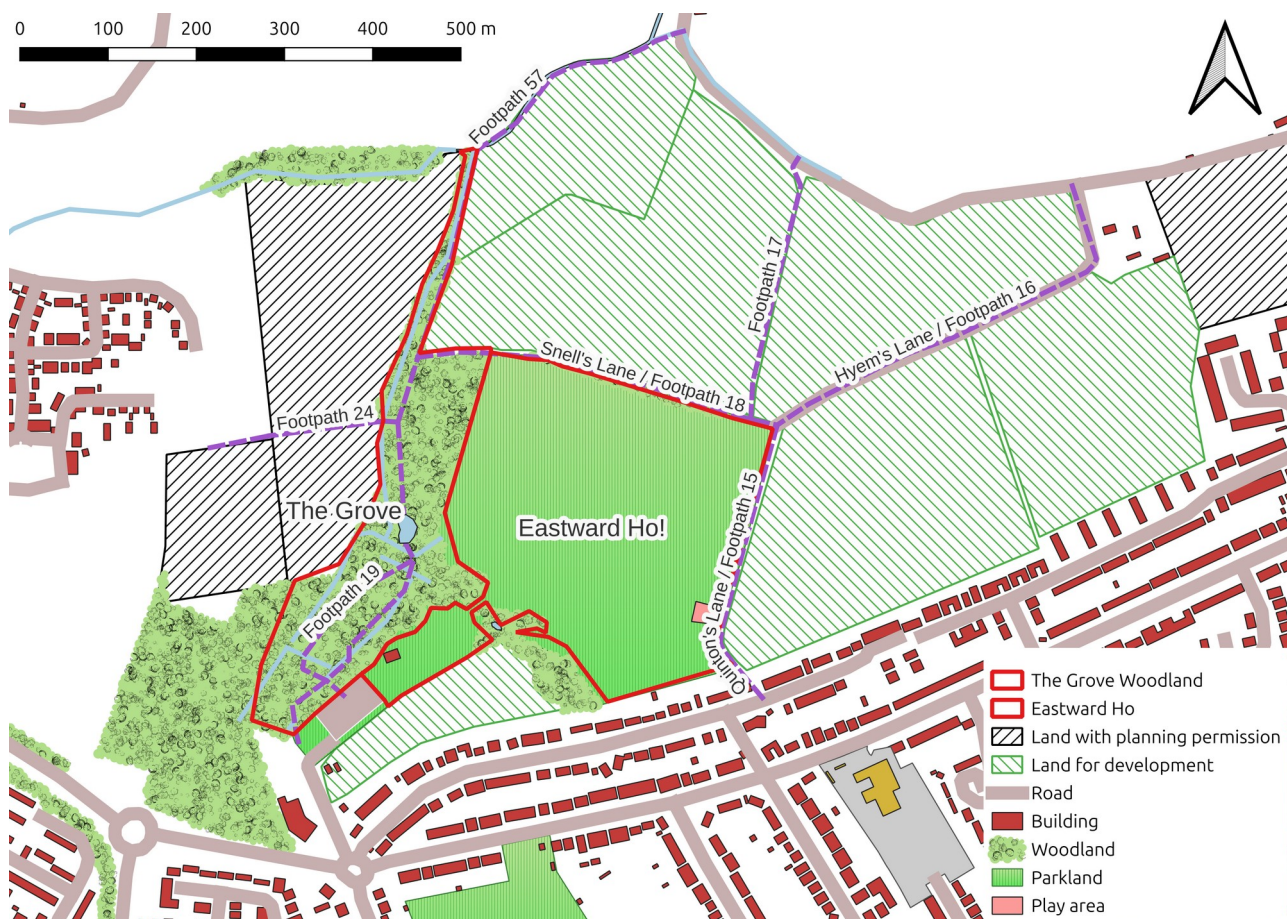


Figure 4: The Grove and Eastward Ho site plan



Figure 5: Summary of North Felixstowe Citizens Panel Workshop 4, LDA Design, 2024. Eastward Ho development area highlighted in red. The proposed housing density is shown as Dwellings Per Hectare (DPH).

14. Draft Illustrative Masterplan

The North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood is intended to be designed for 'people, place and planet'. It is in a unique urban/ rural setting on the northern edge of Felixstowe and will deliver a distinctive, sustainable, enjoyable, safe place for new and existing residents of Felixstowe alike. New facilities will foster a sense of stewardship and community, healthy lifestyles will be possible for anyone of any age, and the wealth of existing nature, places, and connections will be protected and enhanced. Our vision for the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood targets 'net zero carbon' and will contribute to a climate-friendly future in East Suffolk.



Figure 6: 14. Draft Illustrative Masterplan, LDA Design, 2024. Eastward Ho development area highlighted in red.

Asset of Community Value

Under the Localism Act 2011 an Asset of Community Value (ACV) is land or property of importance to a local community with some level of protection from development. Examples of ACVs include playing fields, shops, pubs and garages.

There are three main points:

- The local planning authority and Planning Inspectorate could use the ACV status as a reason to refuse planning permission for the partial/full change of use or demolition of an asset. *There is no legal obligation for refusal.*
- The sale of an ACV could be delayed by up to six months to allow the local community time to raise funds and submit an offer to purchase the property. *There is no obligation for the owner to accept the offer.*
- A building registered as an ACV and under threat of being lost to the community can be compulsorily purchased by the local authority or council.

Only groups locally connected to the area can nominate an asset. A group may be:

- A community group such as a society
- Parish/town council
- Neighbourhood forum
- Not for profit organisation or a group of at least 21 individuals

The register and approval of ACV nominations is the responsibility of East Suffolk Council in this area. A successful application lasts for 5 years and has to be renewed thereafter. There is no cost or charge for applications or renewals.

Local Case Studies

Local nominations for Assets of Community Value are provided below as case studies. These are Langley Avenue Sports Field, the White Horse Public House and the Half Moon Public House.

Langley Avenue Sports Field

Langley Avenue Sports Field in Felixstowe, shown in Figure 7, is situated opposite the town cemetery in Langley Avenue. The field was acquired in 1958 for Felixstowe Grammar School which went on to become Deben High School [5]. The school closed in 2013 and the responsibility for the land, owned by Suffolk County Council, transferred to Felixstowe Academy.

A successful application was made in 2014 by Felixstowe Town Council to nominate the field for ACV status. One reason for this appears to be strategic to prevent the land from being sold “without the Town Council’s prior knowledge given its proximate location next to the Cemetery” [6].

The ACV has since been renewed by Felixstowe Town Council in 2019 [7] and most recently in 2024 [8]. Figure 10, Figure 11 and Figure 12 show the ACV nomination form for this asset.

The site was neglected during the COVID pandemic and remedial work had to be undertaken in 2022 by Felixstowe Town Council, East Suffolk Council and the land owner Suffolk County Council [9]. The councils working in conjunction with Felixstowe Academy and Felixstowe & Walton United Football Club restored the football pitches and repaired fences “which had allowed encroachment by dog walkers”. The field is currently used by the aforementioned football club for their youth section matches. Figure 8 shows a padlocked entrance and signage shown in Figure 9 states that there is “no public access without prior approval”.



Figure 7: Langley Avenue Sports Field



Figure 8: Langley Avenue Sports Field entrance



Figure 9: Langley Avenue Sports Field notice



Nomination for listing as an Asset of Community Value

Please refer to the '**Guidance notes for voluntary and community groups interested in nominating assets of community value**', when completing your nomination.

<p>Part 1 – Nominated Asset</p> <p>Please describe the nominated asset / land including its proposed boundaries and exact location, address, postcode. A plan should also be attachment as per guidance notes.</p>	<p>Langley Avenue Playing Fields (Formerly playing fields of Felixstowe Academy Maidstone Campus) Langley Avenue Felixstowe IP11 2ND</p>
<p>Part 2 - Ownership</p> <p>Please state all the information you have on:</p> <p>(i) the names of current occupants of the land, and</p> <p>(ii) the names and current or last-known addresses of all those holding a freehold or leasehold estate in the land;</p> <p>Please include a copy of the land registry entry or if the land is not registered at the land registry please provide copies of the documents providing title of current owners</p>	<p>Felixstowe Academy High Street Felixstowe Suffolk IP11 9QR</p> <p>Suffolk County Council County Hall Ipswich</p>

Figure 10: Nomination for listing as an Asset of Community Value, Langley Avenue (page 1)

<p>Part 3 - Community Value</p> <p>Your reasons for thinking that the council should conclude that the land is of 'community value', having regard to the definition in the Localism Act</p> <p>Remember to include details of how the community have benefitted from this asset in the past and will continue to do so in the future, as stated in the guidance notes.</p> <p>Additional documents can be submitted if required.</p>	<p>These premises have been used for many years to provide services to Felixstowe residents, including, at present, sporting facilities for schoolchildren.</p> <p>The proposal is to both continue this use and perhaps modify it by way of providing additional play facilities, allotments, and further burial grounds, all community uses.</p>
<p>Part 4 - Eligibility to Nominate</p> <p>Please provide evidence that you meet the definition of a community nominator as set out in the regulations (i.e. a parish council or voluntary or community body with a local connection).</p> <p>You must state how many members you have, which is especially important if you are an unincorporated group which needs to include at least 21 individuals who are on the local electoral register.</p>	<p>This application is submitted by Felixstowe Town Council</p>

Figure 11: Nomination for listing as an Asset of Community Value, Langley Avenue (page 2)

Part 5 - Your details

Parish	Felixstowe
Community Area	
Your Organisation	Felixstowe Town Council
Contact name	Ash Tadjrishi
Position held	Town Clerk
Address	Town Hall Felixstowe
Postcode	IP11 2AG
Telephone	01394282086
Email	townclerk@felixstowe.gov.uk

Part 6 – Declaration

I confirm that all information provided is accurate and complete

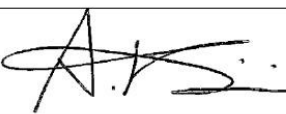
Name	Ash Tadjrishi
Signature	
Date	xxxxxx

Figure 12: Nomination for listing as an Asset of Community Value, Langley Avenue (page 3)

White Horse Public House

Plans to demolish the White Horse Public House on Church Road, Felixstowe, and replacing it with a convenience store, apartments and bungalows were submitted in 2021. These were discussed at the Planning and Environment Committee Meeting of Felixstowe Town Council [10]. At this meeting a member of the public requested to speak in support of ACV status for the White Horse.

Described by the committee as having “amenity value to the residents in North Felixstowe” and “the amenity is of great value to not only existing properties in the region but also the projected new developments within the town” it was agreed that the town council would submit an application to include the White Horse on the Community Asset Register [10]. Figure 13 shows notes used for the nomination. The nomination was successful.

Half Moon Public House

The Half Moon Public House in Walton was put up for sale by the owner. A group known as the Friends Of The Half Moon has campaigned to secure the status of the building as an ACV and therefore “providing a degree of protection from rapid redevelopment” [11]. Felixstowe Town Council supported the application [12].

**WHITE HORSE PUB, CHURCH ROAD, FELIXSTOWE
APPLICATION FOR LISTING AS AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE**

ATTACHMENT 1 - Part 3 Community Value notes

1. The local community need and value this public house: as demonstrated by over 350 formal objections to the Planning Application to demolish the building. Over 540 local people signed a petition and a number of people attended the Felixstowe Town Council meeting in person or via Zoom to lodge objections. There is also a Facebook page: Save The White Horse with 562 members.
2. The pub has been successful for many years: it was forced to close during Covid, during which time the tenants paid full rent to Punch.
3. The new tenants are keen to succeed. They canvassed local opinion and have other successful pubs in Suffolk; they provided takeaways during the Covid lockdown.
4. The pub has been used for: beer, cider and sausage festivals, and a music venue. Private parties are often held there including “wakes” after a funeral at the church opposite. Previous tenants have run it as a gastro pub with great success. It is a popular hostelry for many local residents. Dog walkers often meet there.
5. The pub is a key community asset which is appropriate for the area. The Campaign for Pubs state that pubs play a vital role in establishing a community spirit and provide a source of information and assistance for residents, while also helping to reduce mental health issues related to loneliness and isolation. The Felixstowe Town Council state that the building has social and communal value. It is part of the local identity and has been for more than a century.
6. The White Horse is the only such venue in the area: the nearest ones are the Grosvenor (1.2 miles) and the Ferryboat Inn (1.8 miles). The Fludyers Hotel is nearer (0.6 miles) but is a hotel and restaurant without a local pub atmosphere. The White Horse is also within the catchment area of the new housing developments at Ferry Road and Gulpher Road. Over 200 houses are being constructed in the initial development.
7. The pub is part of a local village-type community outside the main town of Felixstowe: nearby is a park, a Grade 2* listed church, and the Old Felixstowe Community Association with tennis courts.
8. The building has strong aesthetic value: it was designed in the “arts and crafts” style by local architect Thomas Cotman for Messrs Cobbold & Co and constructed in 1904. The original drawings are held by the Suffolk Records Office. Cotman’s contribution to the townscape of Felixstowe is significant; he designed many of the town’s most important buildings. Cotman died in 1925 and is buried in the church opposite the building.
9. There has been a pub on this site since the 1700s and in this building since 1904. The outbuildings were formerly riding stables and the names of horses kept there are still inscribed on the walls.
10. The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (2020) sets out to protect community facilities (SECTION 8.6) Its guidance is as follows: consult local community, consider if there is access to similar services, and is there demonstrably a community need.

Figure 13: White Horse Pub application for listing as an Asset of Community Value [13]

Community Value

The other local ACV applications shown in this document have set a very high bar to the level of community value. However, The Grove and Eastward Ho not only match these but also offer so much more value to so much more of the community. Gaining the status should be a literal walk in the park. For starters there are no restrictions to access or cost of usage and they are used for more than niche activities. There is something for everybody from nature, sports, socialising or just being out in the open countryside. It was not left neglected during COVID and remained open to play a vital role in both the physical and mental well being of everybody during those times.

The following notes are suggestions for a potential ACV application and are by no means exhaustive. Please feel free to amend.

The Grove

- The Grove is a 15 acre deciduous woodland at the northern boundary of Felixstowe.
- The land is owned by East Suffolk Council (asset numbers 100217, 100236 and 100236).
- Maps from the Ordnance Survey Six Inch First Edition circa 1840-1880 show The Grove woodland dates back to at least the 19th century.
 - There has been continuous public access to the site for recreational use for more than a hundred years.
 - Referenced in “Ward, Lock & Co's Illustrated Guide Book to Felixstowe and The Suffolk Coast” circa 1920 edition. The circa 1940 edition describes The Grove as “so peaceful and so seemingly remote” and that visitors could imagine themselves as “the world forgetting, by the world forgot”. Suggested walking routes are included in both editions.
 - Various postcards from the early 1900s feature The Grove as shown in Figure 18.
- The woodland is within a short walking distance to residents of north Felixstowe and a large free car park adjoins the site.
- Public footpaths 18, 19, 24 and 57 intersect through the woodland providing year round access. The footpaths are level, well used and in good condition. Except during very wet weather the ground may be suitable for use by people with wheelchairs, mobility scooters and pushchairs.
- Preservation of The Grove contributes to the protection of local wildlife as the woods are home to various species of plants, birds and small mammals.
 - Tree species include oak and sycamore. Two veteran sweet chestnut trees feature on the ancient tree register [14][15].
 - Snowdrops, garlic and bluebells adorn the ground during springtime. See Figure 1. An abundance of cherries, apples, plums and berries are produced throughout the summer months.
 - It is a haven for animals. woodpeckers, owls, buzzards and so many more birds can be found around the woodland. Bats, badgers, foxes, deer and mice can also be seen, see Figure 14 and Figure 15.
 - A stream supplied with fresh water from nearby springs passes throughout the entire length of the site before flowing into Kingsfleet and in turn the River Deben.
 - The Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a short distance away.
- The Grove contributes significantly to the social well being of the Felixstowe community through provision of space for recreation, community events, environmental education and the preservation of local wildlife. This can help social cohesion, physical and mental health, and encourage an appreciation of the natural environment.
 - The woodland is a popular destination for the community to engage in activities such as walking, jogging and exploring nature. The Visit Felixstowe tourism website suggests various walking routes [16].
 - Schools and local educational groups have used The Grove for outdoor environmental learning.
 - Recreational spaces like these are crucial for encouraging a healthy lifestyle. It is an accessible and zero cost choice for physical activity, stress relief and outdoor enjoyment.
- The woodland is located in the centre of land earmarked for a 2000 home development, known as the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood. Approximately 500 of these homes are currently under construction on what was formerly meadowland on the western side of the woodland for a development known as Trelawny Place. Drainage, road infrastructure and the foundations of a pumping station now reach the boundary as shown in Figure 16 and

Figure 17. Plans for the remainder of the housing allocation and the future of The Grove have not been finalised.

- Over 8500 local people signed a petition entitled “SAVE THE GROVE/EASTWARD HO PLAYING FIELDS” in response to development plans in the immediate and surrounding area [4]. This demonstrates the value placed by the community on this asset.
- As an Asset of Community Value it would be vital to preserve The Grove for its current use. This is important as development in the immediate area for the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood will reduce the supply of existing recreational space and wildlife habitat as farmland is turned over to urban streets. At the same time the new housing will result in a massive fold increase in the size of the local community.
- There would be a consequential need for an expansion of conservation efforts and programmes to help with the loss of local habitat. Environmental stewardship in the form of tree planting, woodland maintenance, and making and installing nesting boxes would be an opportunity to engage with the local community.
- Upgrading the surface of footpaths to cope with all weather conditions would make The Grove more accessible to more of the community all year round. Recently a wider replacement boardwalk and bridge have been installed.
- Encouraging local clubs or youth groups to host their own events like nature walks would give people a sense of ownership over the space.
- Collaborating with local schools, conservation groups, and environmental organisations to offer workshops, outdoor classrooms, and nature themed courses could help young people recognise and connect with the valuable work of nature.



Figure 14: Muntjac deer roaming The Grove



Figure 15: Badger roaming The Grove



Figure 16: Trelawny Place development visible through a section of The Grove



Figure 17: Trelawny Place infrastructure at the western edge of The Grove



Figure 18: A selection of postcards depicting The Grove from circa 1900.

Eastward Ho

- The land was first used for recreation over 100 years ago when in 1920 the Eastward Ho Golf Club was established with an 18 hole course.
- The land is owned by East Suffolk Council (asset numbers 100217, 100236 and 100236).
- A large free car park is available next to the site and it is within a short walking distance to residents of north Felixstowe.
- Public footpaths 15, 16, 17 and 18 surround the perimeter of the site and provide all year round public access.
- Preservation of Eastward Ho contributes to the protection of local wildlife as the fields are important to various species of plants, birds and small mammals.
 - The site adjoins The Grove on the western edge and is surrounded by trees on the northern, eastern and southern sides with species including cherry, oak, rowan and spindle. These are all valuable to wildlife.
 - Springs from the playing fields hydrate the neighbouring Grove woodland, which in turn supplies Kingsfleet and the River Deben.
 - Masses of frog spawn appear in the pond during early spring. See Figure 19.
 - Small mammals use the fields and the perimeter trees as a corridor to move between The Grove woodland and beyond. Deer graze on the edges of the fields and bats feed around the trees.
 - A section of the fields formed part of East Suffolk Council's "Pardon the Weeds Campaign" where wildlife was encouraged to thrive by removing these areas from the mowing programme [17]. Unfortunately the fields do not feature in the 2025 "Nature at Work" campaign [18].
- The Eastward Ho playing fields contribute significantly to the social well being of the Felixstowe community through provision of space for recreation, community events, environmental education and the preservation of local wildlife. This can help social cohesion, physical and mental health, and encourage an appreciation of the natural environment.
 - Four full size football pitches are available for hire, used mainly at weekends and summer evenings, with space for a further four. These are shown in Figure 2. There are also changing room facilities.
 - All year round the fields are used for walking, jogging, sports and other recreational activities.
 - During the summer evenings numerous groups utilise the facilities for football training, running and fitness classes.
 - After school clubs and school sports events make use of the fields.
 - An enclosed children's play area, shown in Figure 21, and outdoor gym facilities are available.
 - Benches around the field encourage people to spend more time outdoors and meet with others.
 - In 2024 the Eastward Ho playing fields hosted the Suffolk Football Association Grassroots festival, a two day annual community football event [19]. 173 teams visited from across the county. This was the first time a venue outside of Ipswich had ever been used. See Figure 20,
 - The Eastward Ho playing fields feature in the official music video of the local singer and songwriter Ed Sheeran's song "Castle On The Hill" at timings 3:47 [20] and 4:15 [21]. On YouTube alone this has amassed over 550 million views.
 - Trees on the northern and eastern perimeter were planted by local school children several decades ago.

- Recreational spaces like these are crucial for encouraging a healthy lifestyle. It is important to keep large open areas for families and the public to meet and play without having to pre-book or spend money to access facilities for physical activity, stress relief and outdoor enjoyment.
- The playing fields are located in the centre of land earmarked for a 2000 home development, known as the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood. Plans for roads, housing, a school and many other buildings have appeared on early draft plans for Eastward Ho, shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6, but these have not yet been finalised.
- Over 8500 local people signed a petition entitled “SAVE THE GROVE/EASTWARD HO PLAYING FIELDS” in response to the development plans in the immediate and surrounding area [4]. This demonstrates the value placed by the community on this asset.
- As an Asset of Community Value it would be vital to preserve Eastward Ho for its current use. This is important as development in the immediate area will reduce the supply of existing recreational space and wildlife habitat as farmland is turned over to urban streets. At the same time the new housing will result in a massive fold increase in the size of the local community.
- There would be a consequential need for an expansion of conservation efforts and programmes to help with local habitat loss. Environmental stewardship in the form of tree planting, tree management and rewilding of areas of the field would be an opportunity to engage with the local community.
- Local clubs and organisations could be encouraged to host their own events at Eastward Ho, giving people a sense of ownership over the space. The Suffolk FA have confirmed that the fields will be the venue for another Grassroots Festival in 2025 [22].
- Different sports and leisure infrastructure, such as a running track or improvements to the existing play area and outdoor gym equipment would increase the appeal and value to an even wider reach of the community.



Figure 19: Frog spawn in the Eastward Ho pond



Figure 20: A panoramic view of the Suffolk FA Grassroots Festival 2024 at Eastward Ho



Figure 21: The Eastward Ho play area

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