



Professional Planning and Development
Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute



Supporting Planning Statement

**Proposal: extension of existing footpath through to
the northern edge of the Nature Reserve**

Applicant: Primrose Community Nature Trust

April 2026

1. The Site & Surroundings

- 1.1 Primrose Mill Lodge lies between Whalley Road and Woone Lane in Clitheroe. Primrose Lodge comprises a former mill lodge, Mearley Brook and semi-natural broadleaved woodland situated south of Clitheroe town centre. Within the surrounding landscape are built up urban areas located adjacent to the site boundaries and extend west and north-east of the site.
- 1.2 The site is approximately 0.18 ha in area and the section of proposed new footpath extends approximately 340m. The start of the path extension starts at the bridge within the reserve (see photo 1) and will end on the back street of Woone Lane (photo 5).

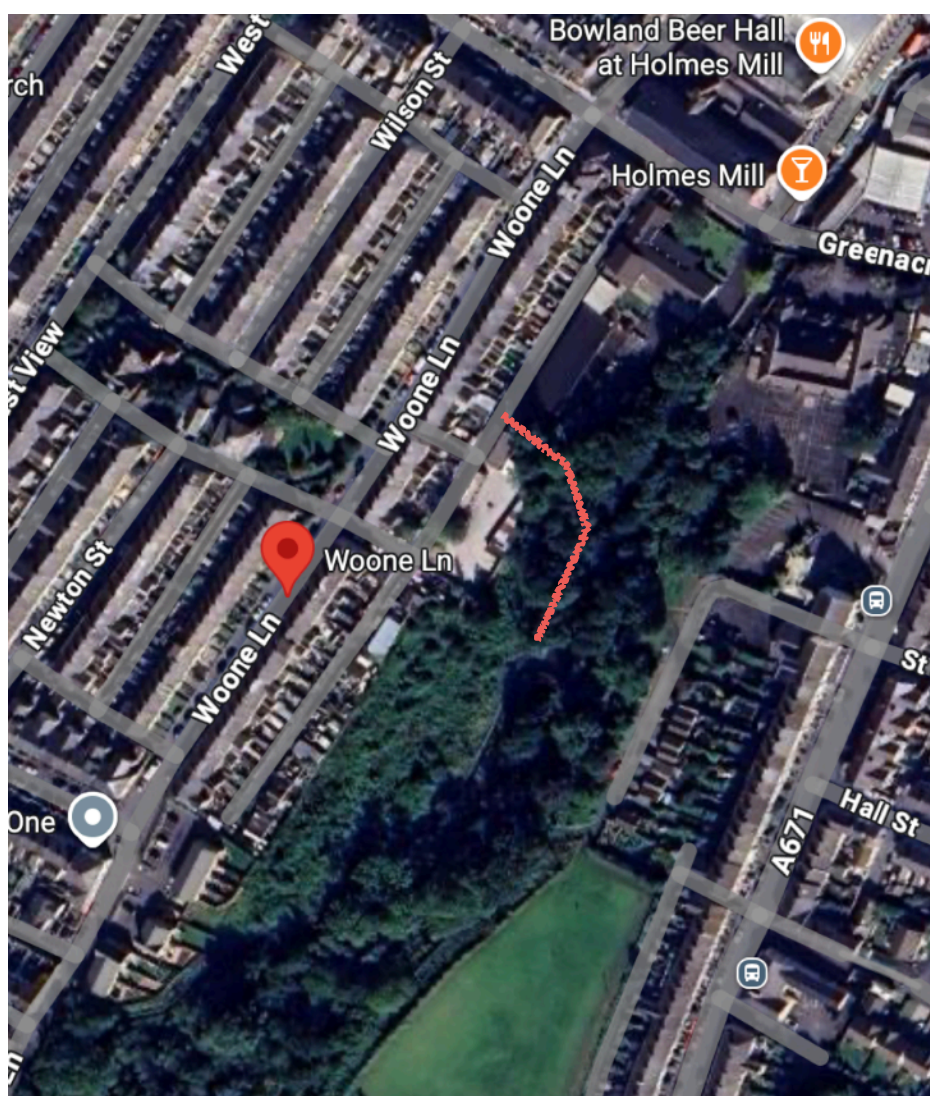


Image 1: source www.google.com aerial image of the site and approximate route of the path

1.3 Relevant photos of the site



Photo 1 : the path will start at the this section near to the existing footbridge



Photo 2 : the path will follow the river before cutting in north eastwards



Photo 3: existing footpath leading to the bridge.



Photo 4: the path will cut through the existing wall of the school



Photo 5: the end of the footpath will be on the back street of Woone Lane at the side of the new nursery building

2.0 Relevant site history

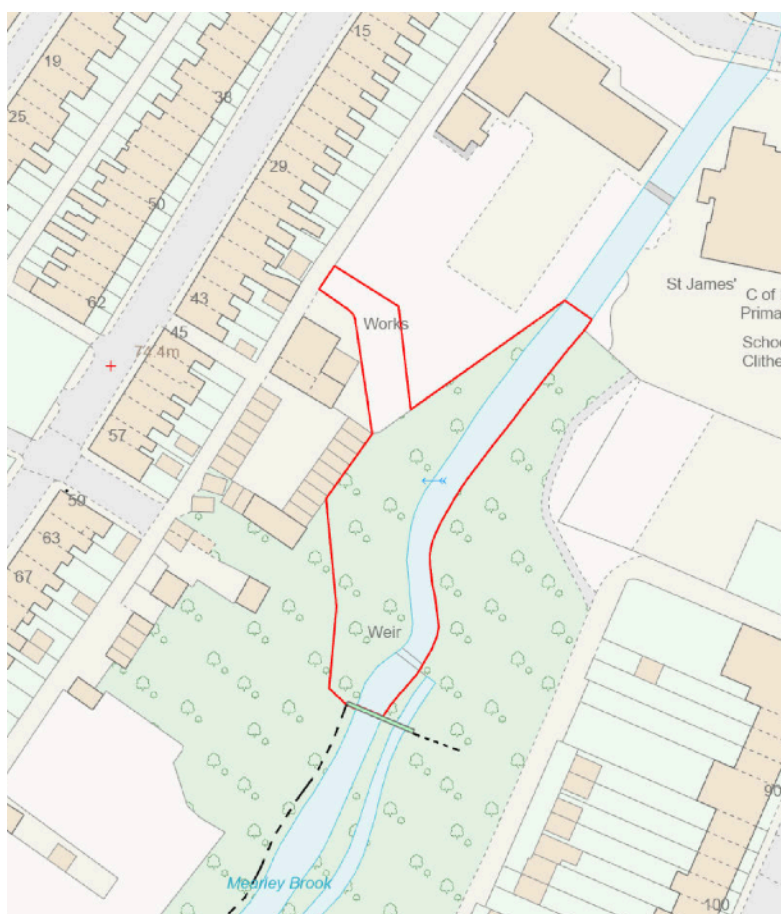
3/2021/1052 - Proposal to increase the amount of public access to the nature reserve through creation of additional footpaths and a second bridge crossing to create a mini-circular walk (Approved 9/12/21)

3/2020/0004- Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans), 4 (footpath entrance) and 5 (Flood Risk Assessment) from planning permission 3/2019/0388 to allow changes to design, footpath entrance and flood risk assessment. (Approved 16/3/20)

3/2019/0388- Restoration and enhancement of Primrose Lodge to change the former mill lodge into a public open space. To include de-silting 3000 square metres of the lodge to create permanent open water habitat with varying depths, planting the margins with suitable marginal pond vegetation; construction of an Alaskan A Fish Pass and creation of a footpath through the site (Approved 9/7/19)

3.0 The Proposals

- 3.1 A full planning submission is sought for the extension of the existing footpath. This is the third extension through the reserve and has been put forward for the reasons set out below from the Trust.



Plan extract: red edge boundary

The application is supported with a specification document detailing all the proposed construction method and materials of the pathway. In general:

- the pathway will be 1.5m in width
- finish material of the pathway bitmac (natural grey or as specified)
- cast concrete edging
- permeable
- fencing; 2.4m high mesh close to the school
- post and rail fencing

3.2 The objectives and benefits of the extended pathway

A third footpath access point to the Primrose Community Nature Trust (PCNT), close to Clitheroe town centre can deliver notable benefits in terms of carbon footprint reduction, energy efficiency, and increased visitor numbers.

Reducing Carbon Footprint

Encourages walking over driving: A new, central access point makes it easier for residents to visit on foot, reducing reliance on cars and the associated CO₂ emissions.

Supports sustainable transport: Visitors are more likely to walk, cycle, or use public transport if access is more direct and convenient.

Less need for car parking infrastructure: Reducing the demand for car access lowers the environmental impact from road and car park construction and maintenance.

Energy Efficiency Savings

Minimizes transport energy use: Walking or cycling to the reserve requires zero fuel or electricity, making it the most energy-efficient travel method.

Supports local journeys: Shorter, direct access routes mean fewer long detours by car or bus, cutting unnecessary energy consumption.

Lower operational burden: With more visitors arriving sustainably, there's less need for maintenance and energy use associated with vehicle facilities (lighting, surfacing, etc.).

Increasing Visitor Numbers: not just to the reserve but to combine with trips to the town centre and beyond

Improved accessibility: A new entrance from the town centre removes barriers for residents and tourists, particularly those without cars (e.g., children, elderly, low-income families).

Boosts casual and spontaneous visits: Proximity encourages more frequent, short visits from local residents—lunch breaks, dog walks, or school trips.

Integrates with town life: Better connectivity links the reserve to shops, cafes, and public transport, making it a more attractive destination within local routines.

3.3 Design and Appearance

Refer to specification document

3.4 Biodiversity

The application is supported with a full range of BNG documents:

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) March 2026
Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment April 2026 Rev c
Mearley Brook Baseline enhancement
Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition July 2025
Rev C Statutory Metric

3.5 Trees

The application is supported with the following documents:

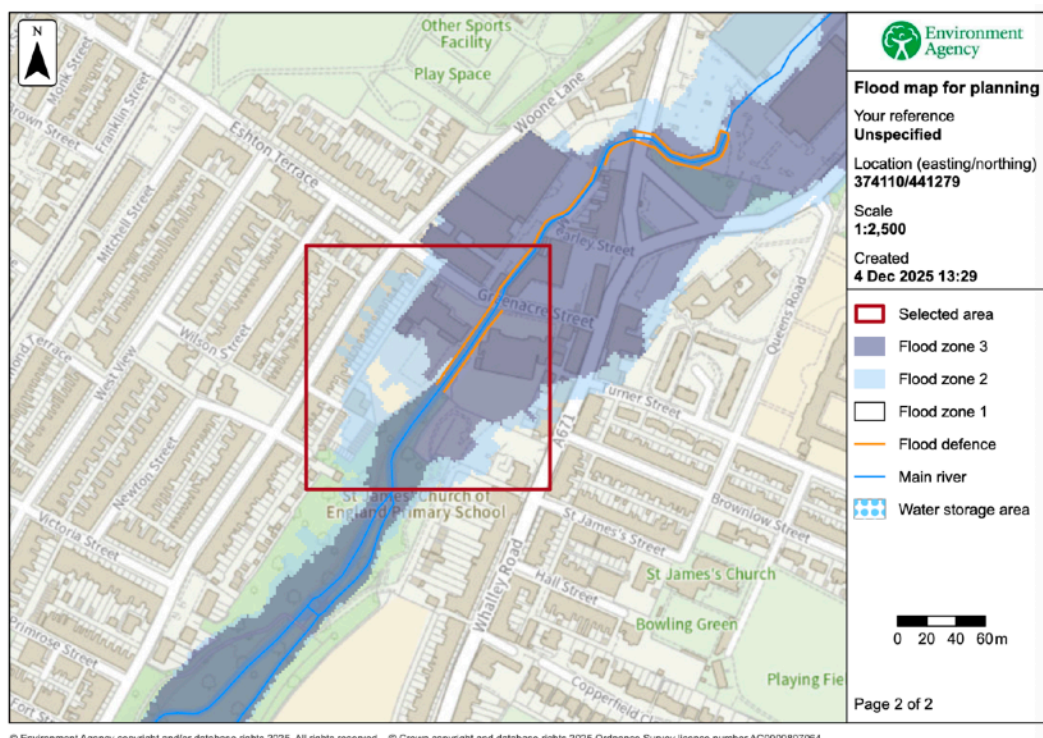
Tree survey (Lakeland Tree Consultancy Jan 2026)
Arboricultural Impact Assessment Lakeland Tree Consultancy

Assessment of the proposal indicates that construction of the development will require the removal of four small, low quality trees and an approximately 200m2 area of scrub.

3.5 Flood Risk (please refer to FRA)

The application is supported with Flood Risk Assessment (PSA Design) April 2026

The site is located within Flood zone 2 and part 3 .



4.0 National and Local Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the following:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024
- National Planning Practice Guidance
- Ribble Valley Core Strategy

4.1 NPPF 2024

Para 103 Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

Para 105 Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

4.2 Ribble Valley Core Strategy

Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy
 Key Statement EN3- Sustainable Development and Climate change
 Key Statement EN4-Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 Key Statement EN5-Heritage Assets
 Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
 Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations

5.0 Planning Appraisal

5.1 The principle of development

As already stated in this statement, this is the third application to increase access within the existing Nature Reserve.

The UK government is increasingly prioritizing healthy living through improved access to the outdoors, treating nature as essential public infrastructure for mental and physical health. This strategy, led by agencies like Natural England, focuses on reducing NHS pressures, improving wellbeing, and addressing health inequalities.

Natural England has recently produced a document 'Healthy Outdoors' working with across government partners from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Sport England, Active Travel England and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. A wider stakeholder advisory group has also contributed valuable insight from the public health, environmental, voluntary and community sectors.

'Outdoor interventions in green or blue spaces can have a significant positive impact on human health and wellbeing (Wang, Feng and Wang, 2025). These benefits include improving wellbeing, increasing physical activity, and fostering social connections. By outdoor interventions, we mean planned activities taking place outdoors, e.g. walking or gardening, as well as activity to increase the quality or quantity of accessible green and blue spaces'.

The area is widely used and appreciated by locals and visitors to the town which is a short walk to Clitheroe's main shops and services.

5.2 Design and Appearance

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

5.3 Trees

The application is supported by a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

5.4 Flood Risk and Drainage - please refer to the supporting FRA

5.5 Ecology and Biodiversity

The application is supported with:

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

MoRPH River Survey

BNG Metric

Section 187 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

In England, Biodiversity Net Gain is now mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better quality natural habitat than there was before development.

6.0 Conclusions

The site is an established nature reserve. A third footpath access point near Clitheroe town centre enhances sustainable access to PCNT. The pathway encourages eco-friendly travel cuts down on energy consumption, increases community engagement and footfall. Ultimately, it aligns with broader goals of environmental sustainability, public health, and urban greening, making both the nature reserve and the town centre more vibrant and connected.