

Landscape (and settlement) character assessment: the Green Ring 1 (includes area 32 Lower Lane Berry Hill - North Coleford; parts of 29 Bakers Hill, 24 Foxs Lane/Poolway Road, 21 Bells Place, 19 Lords Hill/Coalway Road.)

Location

The Green Ring 1 lies around the town of Coleford to the north and east: it is the green area which separates settlements surrounding from the town centre. The bowl within which the town is sited rises to the north, adjoining Berry Hill (in West Dean) and the eastern arc in Coleford parish.

To the south, Gorsty Knoll has its own green character, and Milkwall enclosure is also part of Green Ring 3 which completes the circuit of green round the town. (see map of character assessments)

Views to show its rural nature, the trees, and differing uses, follow the numbers round the ring



1. Sunny Bank over the north west toward Highmeadow Woods and the AONB



2. The Gorse to Lower Lane in the north



4. From the rough, view down the valley toward the Welsh Hills from further south



3. From Broadwell looking to the rim above Coleford, with green below the skyline

Landscape

This whole area is either agricultural or grassland, either used for pasture/ crops, or for leisure – with two golf courses taking up a large proportion. Some fields are arable, mainly toward the top of the northern rim of the bowl, joining to Five Acres/ Mile End/ Broadwell.

Toward the centre, the bowl is shallower, with lower slopes; toward the outer settlements, the steepness increases, and the skyline is abrupt to the north to north-east in particular. There is a wide sweep of green behind Poolway toward Lower Lane through the Forest Hills Golf Course and some agricultural land, with only one farmhouse evident.



5. The view from Poolway (edge of Coleford Town) toward Lower Lane, with skyline.



6. The view from Lower Lane over Forest Hills Golf Course toward Poolway and Coleford town in the background

The ring varies in width, and reaches to its rim at the north before buildings can be seen (5). At other points it narrows where the settlement has grown, and brims the rise, such as at Broadwell (7)



7 At Broadwell the edge of the settlement is just on the ridge, as seen here from a footpath crossing by an old tram road from Bakers Hill

Bells Field, which is now owned by Coleford Town Council, is the narrowest green space between Coleford and Coalway, on the signposted holiday route. It is planned for leisure/recreational use.

To the extreme east of Bells Field is Poppyfield a site for 46 dwellings recently constructed. This will adjoin Wynols estate, and add to the eastern arc.



8. Bells Field behind a high wall on Coalway Rd with the town to the rear. Its name derives from the school, where it comprised some of the playing field

The golf courses which are marked on the map and their hotels/ clubhouses give leisure facilities as well as keeping the green ring, green. There are lakes on both, and water is managed: stored and attenuated. In both cases historic streams flowed toward the town, meeting near the traffic lights at Gloucester Road. While they are evident in places on the course, they are culverted before they reach the centre. (In times of intense rain, the manhole in Lords Hill rises where the water backs up.)



9 Water is managed as a feature, and for use on the golf courses, adding to the habitat



Where there are fields, they are large and bounded by hedges with trees, or some fenced: some have both. There are historic hedges, with different species: blackthorn and holly, elder and hawthorn are evident. Bramble, nettles, and wildflowers like king cups are present to a greater or lesser extent depending on the farming use. In places, hedges have been removed (see 3 above) leaving individual trees. Much wildlife uses the edges/ boundaries of the fields.

The key roads from Gloucester run through the Green Ring acting as gateways to the centre.



10 Coalway to Broadwell, with house on B4226 gateway in



11 Coalway Rd gateway in the background (holiday route), golf course to the fore



12 Lower Lane where the parish boundary is north of the A4136, the other side of this field, adjoining Berry Hill



13 Stiles and footpaths cross the green ring, and are often signposted rights of way leading around and into the town.

Key views

As above

Key features:

- Forest Hills Golf Course
- Bell's Golf Course
- Bells Field
- the green-ness itself
- number of footpaths

Positive features and special qualities

- Separating Berry Hill, Mile End, Broadwell, Coalway and Palmers Flat from the town centre
- Completing the green circuit around Coleford
- Grassland managed for leisure (significantly golf) and agriculture
- Breathing space of rural surroundings appreciated by residents and visitors

Negative features and detracting elements

- Narrowing of the green space through development eg Coalway Rd

Looking ahead

- Maintaining the separateness of Eastern Arc and Berry Hill from Coleford Town
- Enhancing the green area with relevant uses eg for leisure
- Potential for further water management