

DRAFT Back Paper about the Significance of Green Spaces in the Consett Area

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1) The Importance of Living Near and Accessing Woodland in the Consett Area - Social and Environmental Impact

Social Impact

Walking in the woods can have a powerful impact on mental health. There are measurable psychological and physiological benefits.

Here's why it matters:

1.1 Reduces Stress Hormones

Spending time in natural environments lowers cortisol (the stress hormone), blood pressure, and heart rate. Studies on forest exposure — often called “forest bathing” (from Japan’s practice of Shinrin-yoku) — show significant reductions in stress compared to urban environments.

1.2. Calms the Overstimulated Brain

Cities and towns bombard us with noise, screens, traffic, and constant decision-making. Woods provide:

- Fewer demands on attention
- Gentle, repetitive sensory input (wind, birds, leaves)
- Natural patterns (fractals) that the brain finds soothing

This gives your prefrontal cortex — the part responsible for focus and decision-making — a chance to recover.

1.3. Reduces Anxiety and Rumination

Research shows that walking in nature decreases activity in the brain area linked to rumination (repetitive negative thinking). People report:

- Fewer intrusive thoughts
- Improved mood
- Less anxiety

Nature seems to interrupt the mental loops we get stuck in indoors.

1.4. Restores Attention and Focus

According to Attention Restoration Theory:

- Directed attention (used for work/screens) gets fatigued
- Nature engages “soft fascination” — attention without effort

After time in the woods, people often experience:

- Better concentration
- Improved memory
- Clearer thinking

1.5. Boosts Mood and Emotional Regulation

Nature exposure increases feelings of:

- Calm
- Awe
- Gratitude
- Connection

It can also reduce symptoms of mild to moderate depression when done regularly.

1.6. Movement + Nature = Double Benefit

Walking itself:

- Releases endorphins
- Improves sleep
- Regulates nervous system balance

When combined with nature, the mental health benefits are amplified.

1.7. Creates Perspective and Meaning

Being in the woods can:

- Reduce self-focus
- Increase feelings of connection to something larger
- Help people process difficult emotions more gently

Even brief exposure (20–30 minutes) can make a measurable difference. Ultimately, this is why we feel it is essential to maintain our green and wooded areas within the Consett Area,

Environmental Impact

1.8 Protecting Biodiversity

Woodlands in NW Durham — including areas near the [River Derwent](#) and parts of the [North Pennines](#) — provide habitats for a wide range of species. Native trees such as oak, ash, and birch support:

- Birds like tawny owls and woodpeckers

- Mammals such as red squirrels and bats
- Pollinators and woodland wildflowers

Ancient and semi-natural woodlands are particularly valuable because they have developed complex ecosystems over centuries that cannot simply be recreated.

1.9. Combating Climate Change

Woodlands act as natural carbon sinks. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and store it in their trunks, roots, and soil. In a region historically shaped by coal mining and heavy industry, woodland regeneration plays a meaningful role in:

- Offsetting carbon emissions
- Improving air quality
- Supporting regional climate resilience

Mature woodland stores significantly more carbon than newly planted areas, making preservation as important as new planting.

1.10. Flood Prevention and Water Quality

Consett Area's landscape includes upland areas and river valleys. Woodland helps by:

- Slowing rainfall runoff
- Reducing soil erosion
- Improving water filtration before it reaches rivers

This is particularly important in protecting downstream communities from flooding and maintaining water quality in river systems.

1.11. Landscape and Cultural Heritage

Woodland is part of our area's identity. Former colliery and steel industrial lands have been reclaimed and reforested, transforming industrial scars into green spaces. Areas managed by organisations such as [Durham Wildlife Trust](#) show how woodland restoration supports both heritage and conservation.

These landscapes reflect the region's transition from mining and steel, to environmental recovery.

1.12. Community Wellbeing and Recreation

Local woodlands provide:

- Walking and cycling routes
- Outdoor learning spaces for schools
- Quiet areas that support mental health

Access to nearby nature has been shown to reduce stress, improve physical health, and strengthen community ties — especially important in rural and post-industrial communities.

1.13. Supporting Sustainable Local Economies

Well-managed woodland can contribute to:

- Sustainable timber production
- Eco-tourism
- Conservation jobs

This helps create long-term, environmentally responsible economic opportunities in the region.

Ultimately, our aim is to preserve local woodland in the Consett Area, as it is not just about protecting trees — it's about safeguarding biodiversity, reducing climate impacts, managing flood risks, honouring cultural heritage, and improving quality of life for local communities. In a landscape shaped by industrial history, woodland conservation represents resilience, recovery, and a sustainable future. We want to preserve these areas for current and future communities.

2) Redevelopment of Former Industrial Land in Consett

While we recognise the importance of regeneration and the potential benefits of brownfield development, we strongly believe that not all former industrial land should be redeveloped. A balanced and sustainable approach is essential to protect the long-term environmental, social, and economic wellbeing of the town.

2.1. Environmental Sustainability and Flood Risk

Many former industrial sites have naturally regenerated over time and now function as valuable green spaces. These areas:

- Absorb rainfall and reduce surface water runoff
- Help mitigate flood risk in a high-rainfall area
- Improve air quality
- Provide natural cooling during warmer periods
- Support biodiversity and wildlife habitats

Replacing permeable green land with large-scale housing or hard surfaces would increase pressure on drainage infrastructure and reduce the town's environmental resilience.

2.2. Community Health and Wellbeing

Lots of our open land has rewilded and remained undeveloped and has become informal recreational space for residents. These areas are used for:

- Walking and exercise
- Dog walking
- Informal play
- Quiet reflection

They are now extremely important to residents.

Access to green space is closely linked to improved mental and physical health. In communities where not all households have private gardens, maintaining accessible open space is particularly important.

2.3. Infrastructure Capacity

Further large-scale redevelopment may place additional strain on:

- Local road networks and traffic flow
- GP surgeries and healthcare provision
- School capacity

- Public services and amenities

We believe that development should only proceed where infrastructure improvements are guaranteed and delivered in advance or alongside housing growth.

2.4. Heritage and Identity

Consett's identity is undoubtedly deeply rooted in its industrial history, particularly the legacy of the [Consett Iron Company](#). Former industrial sites form part of that story.

Redeveloping all such land risks erasing visible connections to the town's past.

Sensitive planning should preserve elements of industrial heritage where possible and incorporate interpretation or memorialisation into regeneration plans.

2.5. Long-Term Planning and Flexibility

Once land is fully built upon, opportunities for:

- Green infrastructure
- Community facilities
- Employment land
- Recreational space

Retaining some former industrial land as green space or strategic reserve land ensures flexibility for future generations.

Conclusion

Regeneration is important. However, a strategy that seeks to redevelop every available brownfield site risks overdevelopment and may undermine environmental resilience, public wellbeing, infrastructure capacity, and local identity.

Therefore our aim is to adopt a balanced approach that:

- Prioritises sustainable development
- Retains key areas as green infrastructure
- Protects biodiversity
- Safeguards infrastructure capacity
- Preserves Consett's industrial heritage

Thoughtful, phased, and proportionate development will better serve both current residents and future generations

3) The Importance of Green Spaces Near our Housing in the Consett Area

3.1. Everyday Stress Relief

When parks, woods, or trails are within walking distance, people are more likely to:

- Take short restorative breaks
- Walk after work
- Spend time outside without planning a trip

Even 15–20 minutes in a green setting can lower stress and improve mood. If nature requires a long drive, most people use it far less.

3.2. Better Physical Health

Living near green spaces is associated with:

- Lower rates of heart disease
- Reduced obesity levels
- Better sleep
- More regular physical activity

Having a green space nearby makes movement part of daily life instead of a separate task.

3.3. Lower Anxiety and Depression Rates

Research consistently shows that neighbourhoods with more tree cover and parks have:

- Lower levels of depression
- Reduced anxiety
- Better overall life satisfaction

Regular exposure, even passive (seeing trees from a window), has measurable effects.

3.4. Healthier Child Development

Children who grow up near green spaces show:

- Better attention spans
- Lower ADHD symptoms
- More creative play
- Improved emotional regulation

Outdoor environments support cognitive and social development in ways indoor spaces cannot.

3.5. Stronger Communities

Parks and green spaces:

- Encourage casual social interaction
- Increase sense of belonging
- Reduce loneliness
- Can even lower crime rates in some areas

Shared outdoor spaces strengthen social cohesion.

3.6. Environmental and Climate Benefits

Local green spaces:

- Improve air quality
- Reduce heat (urban heat island effect)
- Manage stormwater
- Support biodiversity

This directly impacts residents' comfort and long-term health.

3.7. Equity and Public Health

Access to nature is a public health issue. Neighbourhoods with limited green space often experience:

- Higher stress levels
- Worse physical health outcomes
- Greater health inequalities

Ensuring access to green space supports mental health at a population level, not just individually.

Why “near where you live” specifically matters

Convenience determines behaviour. If green space is:

- Within a 5–10 minute walk → it becomes routine
- A 20–30 minute drive away → it becomes occasional

Daily micro-exposures to nature add up over time. *This is why we feel it is essential to preserve our green spaces near to our housing developments.*

4) Importance of Smaller Green Plots Next to Housing

Smaller plots of green space next to housing are often overlooked, but in [Consett, County Durham](#), they play a vital role in supporting healthy, sustainable neighbourhoods.

These spaces may not be large parks, but their impact is significant.

4.1. Everyday Access to Nature

Not every resident can easily travel to larger parks. Small green plots:

- Provide immediate access to outdoor space
- Offer safe places for children to play close to home
- Allow older residents to sit and socialise nearby
- Support short daily walks for wellbeing

When green space is within sight of homes, it is used more frequently and benefits more people.

4.2. Mental Health and Community Wellbeing

Even modest areas of grass, trees, or planting:

- Reduce stress and improve mood
- Break up dense housing layouts
- Make estates feel less overcrowded

In areas of higher housing density, these “breathing spaces” prevent neighbourhoods from feeling dominated by concrete and tarmac.

4.3. Climate and Drainage Benefits

Consett experiences significant rainfall due to its elevation. Small green areas:

- Absorb surface water
- Reduce pressure on drains and sewers
- Lower local flood risk
- Help cool streets during warmer weather

When these plots are lost to infill development, surface runoff increases and infrastructure strain grows.

4.4. Biodiversity Corridors

Even small patches of grass, shrubs, and trees:

- Provide habitats for birds and pollinators
- Create stepping-stone corridors between larger green spaces
- Increase urban biodiversity

Collectively, small plots form part of a wider ecological network across the town.

4.5. Safer, Stronger Communities

Green areas next to housing often become informal community spaces where:

- Neighbours meet and build relationships
- Children play under passive supervision
- Community pride is fostered

Removing these spaces can reduce opportunities for positive social interaction and weaken neighbourhood cohesion.

4.6. Long-Term Planning Balance

Once small green plots are built on, they are rarely replaced. While each individual site may seem minor, the cumulative loss over time can significantly reduce overall green provision in Consett.

Good planning recognises that sustainable towns require:

- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Employment space
- And accessible green infrastructure at all scales

Conclusion

Smaller green spaces next to housing in Consett are not redundant land. They are:

- Everyday wellbeing spaces
- Natural drainage systems
- Biodiversity links
- Community meeting points
- Visual relief within residential areas
- Protecting them ensures Consett Area neighbourhoods remain liveable, healthy, and resilient — both now and for future generations.

5) The Importance of Allotments in the Consett Area

The Consett Area community have identified a whole series of allotments that they feel need to be protected. They are very important to the community and to the environment for the following reasons:

5.1. Better Physical & Mental Health

- Gardening is gentle exercise that improves strength, mobility, and heart health.
- Being outdoors reduces stress and anxiety.
- Spending time in green spaces is linked to improved mood and wellbeing.

5.2. Access to Fresh, Healthy Food

- You can grow your own fruit and vegetables, often organic and chemical-free.
- Freshly picked produce tastes better and retains more nutrients.
- It can help reduce grocery bills over time.

5.3. Environmental Benefits

- Growing your own food reduces food miles (transport emissions).
- Encourages biodiversity—flowers attract pollinators like bees and butterflies.
- Composting reduces household waste.

5.4. Community & Social Connection

- Allotments bring people together from different backgrounds.
- Sharing seeds, advice, and harvests builds strong community ties.
- Many of our allotment sites have long histories tied to local communities

5.5. Skill Building & Self-Sufficiency

- Teaches practical skills like planting, composting, and seasonal planning.
- Builds resilience and independence.
- Encourages patience and responsibility.

5.6. Educational Value

- Great way for children to learn where food comes from.
- Teaches sustainability and environmental awareness.

In short, an allotment isn't just about growing vegetables—it's about health, sustainability, learning, and community. Within this context, we want to protect our allotments in the Consett Area.

6) Environmental and Economic Importance of the Derwent Walk and the C2C

6.1. Tourism and Visitor Economy

The Coast to Coast route attracts cyclists from across the UK and internationally. Visitors:

- Stay in local accommodation
- Use cafés, pubs, and shops
- Access bike services and repairs

This steady tourism stream supports small businesses in Consett and surrounding villages.

6.2. Regeneration and Place-Making

The Derwent Walk transforms former industrial infrastructure into a valuable asset. It:

- Enhances the attractiveness of the area for residents and investors
- Raises property desirability near greenways
- Demonstrates successful post-industrial regeneration

Green routes increase quality of life — a key factor in retaining and attracting residents.

6.3. Health and Productivity

By encouraging regular physical activity, these routes:

- Improve physical and mental health
- Reduce long-term healthcare pressures
- Support a healthier working population

A healthier community strengthens the local economy over time.

6.4 Social and Strategic Value

These routes also:

- Provide safe, traffic-free paths for families
- Link communities across Derwentside
- Connect Consett to the wider regional cycling network

They represent sustainable infrastructure that cannot easily be replaced once compromised.

Conclusion

The Derwent Walk and Coast to Coast route are not surplus land or optional amenities. They are:

- Ecological corridors
- Climate resilience assets
- Tourism drivers
- Sustainable transport links
- Symbols of successful regeneration

Protecting and investing in these routes strengthens Consett's environmental framework and underpins its economic future.

6.5. Green Corridor and Biodiversity

The Derwent Walk, following the former railway line, has become a continuous wildlife corridor. It

- Connects woodland, farmland, and open spaces
- Supports birds, pollinators, and small mammals
- Protects biodiversity within an increasingly developed landscape

Linear green routes like this are particularly valuable because they link fragmented habitats.

6.6. Climate Resilience and Flood Mitigation

These routes provide extensive permeable green land that:

- Absorbs rainfall
- Reduces surface water runoff
- Supports natural drainage systems

Given Consett's elevation and exposure to heavy rainfall, retaining green corridors strengthens the town's resilience to flooding and extreme weather.

6.7. Low-Carbon Transport

The Coast to Coast route, one of the UK's most well-known long-distance cycling routes, enables:

- Commuting by bike
- School and leisure cycling
- Reduced car dependency

By supporting active travel, these routes contribute to lower carbon emissions and improved air quality.

7) The Importance of Consett Area's Sport, Venues and Facilities

Keeping Consett's rugby, football, cricket, and golf clubs going is vital for the health, identity, and future of [Consett](#), [County Durham](#). These clubs are far more than sports venues — they are community institutions.

7.1. Physical Health and Active Lifestyles

Local clubs provide structured, affordable access to sport for:

- Children and young people
- Adults of all ages
- Veterans and older residents

Regular participation in rugby, football, cricket, and golf improves cardiovascular health, strength, coordination, and mental wellbeing. Without local clubs, access to organised sport becomes harder — especially for families without transport.

7.2. Youth Development and Opportunity

Sports clubs:

- Teach teamwork, discipline, and leadership
- Provide positive role models and mentors
- Offer safe environments outside school hours
- Create pathways into county and national competition

For many young people, clubs are where confidence is built and lifelong friendships are formed.

7.3. Community Identity and Pride

Consett has a strong sporting tradition tied to its industrial heritage. Institutions like [Consett A.F.C.](#) and [Consett RFC](#) are part of the town's identity.

Match days bring people together across generations. Supporting local teams fosters civic pride and keeps community spirit strong.

7.4. Social Inclusion and Mental Health

Clubs are social hubs. They:

- Reduce isolation, particularly among older residents
- Support mental health through connection and routine
- Provide inclusive environments for people from different backgrounds

Sport creates belonging — something especially important in post-industrial towns navigating change.

7.5. Economic and Regeneration Value

Local sports clubs:

- Attract visitors for matches and tournaments
- Support local pubs, shops, and services
- Provide employment and volunteering opportunities

Thriving clubs contribute to the wider local economy and make the town more attractive to new residents.

7.6. Protecting Green Infrastructure

Rugby pitches, football grounds, cricket fields, and golf courses:

- Act as large green spaces
- Absorb rainfall and reduce flooding
- Improve air quality
- Provide wildlife habitat

If clubs decline and land is lost to development, these environmental benefits disappear permanently.

Conclusion

Keeping Consett's rugby, football, cricket, and golf clubs going is not just about sport. It is about:

- Public health
- Youth opportunity
- Community cohesion
- Economic resilience
- Environmental protection
- Strong clubs help build a strong town. Supporting and sustaining them ensures that Consett remains active, proud, and connected for generations to come.

8) Protection and Free Access to Playing Fields in the Consett Area

FREE access to playing fields in [Consett, County Durham](#), is essential for public health, youth development, and the long-term wellbeing of the community. In a town shaped by industrial heritage and ongoing growth, protecting and maintaining playing fields is a practical investment in people.

8.1. Physical Health and Active Lifestyles

Playing fields provide safe, accessible space for:

- Football, rugby, cricket and athletics
- Informal games and free play
- School sports days and PE
- Walking and fitness activities

Regular physical activity reduces obesity, improves heart health, strengthens muscles and bones, and supports lifelong healthy habits. Without accessible fields, participation in sport can decline — especially for families who cannot travel elsewhere. There are numerous playing fields across the Consett Area, and we believe that they should be protected and continue to be free to use for the public.

8.2. Children and Young People's Development

For children and teenagers, playing fields are more than grassed areas — they are places to:

- Build teamwork and leadership skills
- Develop confidence and resilience
- Socialise in positive, structured environments

Access to local sports facilities reduces the risk of antisocial behaviour by providing constructive outlets for energy and community engagement.

8.3. Mental Health and Wellbeing

Outdoor sport and recreation:

- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Improve concentration and mood
- Strengthen social connections

Green, open fields also provide restorative environments for people of all ages, not just organised sports participants.

8.4. Community Cohesion

Playing fields often host:

- Local league matches
- School competitions
- Charity tournaments
- Community events

These activities bring residents together and strengthen community identity. In towns like Consett, shared spaces are important for maintaining strong neighbourhood ties.

8.5. Environmental and Climate Benefits

Beyond recreation, playing fields:

- Absorb rainfall and reduce flood risk
- Improve air quality
- Provide habitat for birds and insects
- Reduce the heat impact of built-up areas

If fields are replaced with hard surfaces or housing, these benefits are permanently lost.

8.6. Long-Term Planning and Fair Access

Once playing fields are built on, they are rarely replaced. Protecting them ensures:

- Future generations have equal access to sport
- Schools have adequate outdoor space
- Community clubs can continue to operate
- Housing growth does not outpace recreational provision

Balanced development must include protected recreational land to maintain a healthy town.

Conclusion - Access to playing fields in Consett is not a luxury — it is essential infrastructure that supports:

- Physical and mental health
- Youth development
- Community cohesion
- Environmental resilience

Protecting these spaces ensures that as Consett grows, it remains an active, healthy, and connected community for generations to come.

9) Protecting Our Consett Area Children's School Fields as Green Spaces

Protecting children's play areas as Green spaces in the Consett Area ensures that future generations grow up healthier, happier, and more connected to their community. Preserving green land for schools in the [Consett](#) Area is especially important for children, students, families, and the long-term health of the community. As a former industrial town that has worked hard to regenerate and improve quality of life, protecting open space around schools supports both educational outcomes and community wellbeing.

9.1. Physical Health & Outdoor Learning

Active Play and Sports

Green land provides space for:

- Football, rugby, and athletics
- Informal play at break and lunch
- After-school clubs

Regular access to outdoor activity helps reduce childhood obesity and improves cardiovascular health.

Outdoor Education

Natural areas allow schools to:

- Teach science and ecology hands-on
- Support forest school programmes
- Encourage environmental awareness

Outdoor learning has been shown to improve concentration and engagement.

9.2. Mental Health & Wellbeing

Children benefit significantly from daily contact with nature. Green spaces:

- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Improve focus and behaviour
- Support emotional regulation

In areas where families may not all have private gardens, school green land becomes even more vital.

9.3. Environmental Benefits

Flood Prevention

Consett sits at a higher elevation and experiences significant rainfall. Preserved green land:

- Absorbs rainwater
- Reduces surface runoff
- Helps prevent localised flooding

Air Quality & Climate Resilience - Trees and grassed areas:

- Improve air quality
- Lower surrounding temperatures
- Capture carbon

This contributes to healthier school environments.

9.4. Community & Social Value

School fields often serve wider community purposes

- Sports days and local matches
- Community events
- Safe gathering spaces

Protecting this land strengthens community ties in [County Durham](#) and ensures future generations have shared spaces to connect.

9.5. Long-Term Educational Investment

Once green land is built on, it is extremely difficult to replace. Preserving it:

- Protects future expansion space for schools
- Maintains high-quality learning environments
- Signals commitment to children's wellbeing over short-term development gains

In Summary

Protecting green land for Consett Area schools supports:

- Health
- Education
- Environmental resilience
- Community cohesion

It is not just open space — it is essential infrastructure for children's development and the town's sustainable future.

10) Protecting Consett Area's War Memorials as Green Spaces

War memorials, where possible, should retain their green space setting in the [Consett](#) area because the landscape around them is not incidental — it is part of their meaning, dignity, and function within the community.

10.1. Respect, Dignity and Atmosphere

War memorials are places of remembrance, reflection, and ceremony. Their surrounding green space:

- Creates a calm and respectful atmosphere
- Provides visual separation from traffic and development
- Allows space for wreath-laying and Remembrance services
- Preserves sightlines so the memorial remains prominent and solemn

If surrounded by dense development or hard landscaping, the memorial can lose the quiet setting that gives it emotional weight.

10.2. Space for Community Commemoration

War memorials are not static monuments — they are active civic spaces used for:

- Remembrance Sunday services
- School visits
- Armed Forces Day events
- Informal acts of remembrance

Green space allows residents to gather safely and comfortably. Without adequate open space, commemorative events may become restricted or less accessible.

10.3. Heritage and Historic Integrity

The setting of a memorial is often considered part of its heritage value. Planning policy recognises that:

- The context of a heritage asset contributes to its significance
- Altering the surrounding environment can diminish its character

In a town shaped by its industrial past, including the legacy of the [Consett Iron Company](#), war memorials form part of the shared historical narrative. Preserving their green setting protects that historic integrity.

10.4. Community Identity and Shared Memory

War memorials represent collective sacrifice across generations. Their green surroundings:

- Offer a neutral, inclusive space for all
- Symbolise peace and renewal
- Provide a visible reminder of community history

Building too closely around them risks reducing their presence and symbolic importance within the town.

10.5. Environmental and Practical Benefits

Maintaining green space around memorials also:

- Improves drainage and reduces surface water
- Enhances biodiversity
- Contributes to overall townscape quality

These practical benefits complement the cultural importance of the site.

Conclusion

A war memorial's setting is not "spare land." It is part of the memorial itself — shaping how it is seen, experienced, and respected.

In Consett, retaining green space around war memorials:

- Protects dignity and solemnity
- Safeguards heritage significance
- Supports community gatherings
- Maintains environmental quality

Preserving these spaces demonstrates that remembrance remains a living and valued part of the town's identity.

11) The Importance of Cemeteries in the Consett Area

Preserving cemeteries as green spaces in the Consett Area offers environmental, cultural, and community benefits that are especially important as the area continues to grow.

11.1. Environmental Benefits

Urban Tree Canopy & Air Quality

Our cemeteries contain mature trees and open landscapes that help:

- Absorb carbon dioxide
- Filter air pollutants
- Reduce urban heat island effects
- Improve overall air quality

In rapidly developing areas of the Consett Area, maintaining these green pockets helps balance new construction with natural infrastructure.

Stormwater Management

Undeveloped cemetery land absorbs rainwater naturally, reducing:

- Flooding risks
- Runoff into creeks and streams
- Strain on stormwater systems

This is particularly valuable in neighbourhoods experiencing increased impervious surfaces from roads and housing.

Wildlife Habitat

Cemeteries function as quiet refuges for:

- Birds
- Pollinators
- Small mammals

They create ecological corridors that connect other green areas, supporting biodiversity within the Consett Area.

11.2. Cultural & Historical Preservation

Protecting Local History

Many cemeteries in the Consett Area contain graves dating back generations.

Preserving them:

- honours ancestors
- Protects genealogical records
- Maintains tangible links to our area's past

They are part of the broader historical fabric that includes key landmarks, in particular linked to our industrial past, and our links to the world wars.

Community Identity

In the Consett Area cemeteries reflect:

- Church communities
- Rural family histories
- Our industrial heritage

Preservation ensures that redevelopment does not erase culturally significant spaces.

11.3. Public Health & Community Well-Being

Quiet Recreational Space

While not parks in the traditional sense, cemeteries provide:

- Peaceful walking spaces
- Reflection areas
- Stress-reducing natural environments

Green spaces are strongly linked to improved mental health and lower stress levels.

Equitable Access to Green Space

As the Consett Area grows, access to green space can become uneven. Preserved cemeteries can:

- Serve neighbourhoods with limited park access
- Act as buffer zones between dense development

This is particularly relevant as housing density increases in parts of NW Durham.

11.4. Smart Growth & Sustainable Planning

Preserving cemeteries aligns with:

- Smart growth principles
- Climate resilience planning
- Historic preservation initiatives

Rather than viewing them as “unused land,” they can be integrated into:

- Greenway networks
- Tree canopy preservation strategies
- Conservation overlays

This approach supports County Durham’s long-term sustainability goals.

Conclusion

Cemeteries in the Consett Area are more than burial grounds — they are:

- Environmental assets
- Historical archives
- Community anchors
- Natural green infrastructure

Protecting them ensures that growth in [the Consett Area](#) remains balanced, equitable, and respectful of both people and place.