

**ABBESS BEAUCHAMP AND BERNERS RODING -  
OPEN SPACE AUDIT**

**JUNE 2009**

**CONTENTS**

Chapter 1 – Introduction	Page 2
Chapter 2 – Allotments	Page 3
Chapter 3 – Cemeteries And Graveyards	Page 4
Chapter 4 – Formal Playing Pitches	Page 7
Chapter 5 – Alternative Sites For Sport And Recreation	Page 8
Chapter 6 – Informal Recreation Grounds	Page 9
Chapter 7 – Children’s Playgrounds	Page 11
Chapter 8 – Indoor Facilities For High Levels Of Use	Page 11
Chapter 9 – Community Centres and Village Halls	Page 12
Chapter 10 – Managed Open Space With Public Access	Page 13
Chapter 11 – Woodland And Semi-Natural Open Space With public access	Page 13

## **CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION**

**1.0** The audit process, described in this report, is designed to generate comparative information on different sites across the district for the following purposes:

- to provide an overview of the quality and value of spaces and facilities within each of the district's parishes;
- to influence the production of new planning policies essential in determining planning applications, guiding new development and resolving conflicts of demand or use; and
- to enable the Council to demonstrate a continuous improvement in the quality of open spaces, sport and recreational facilities in its district.

**1.1** It is believed that all areas of open space, formal recreational space, and sports facilities have been identified by the audit. These have been surveyed and assessed, and conclusions reached on their value to the local community and the environment of the district.

**1.2** For convenience the audit is split into the following categories, although it is recognised that some of these allow for a range of uses:

- allotments (AT);
- cemeteries and graveyards (CG);
- formal playing pitches (FP);
- alternative sites for sport (AS) ;
- informal recreation grounds (RG);
- children's playgrounds (CY);
- indoor facilities for high levels of use (IF);
- community centres and village halls (CV);
- managed open space with public access (MO);
- semi-natural open space and woodland with public access (SO);

## **CHAPTER 2 – ALLOTMENTS**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no allotments located within the parish.
- The local parish council has not observed any demand for the provision of such a facility in the parish.
- Given the very rural nature of the parish, and its small resident population, this lack of demand is not surprising.
- Furthermore, many of the residential dwellings in the parish are situated on plots large enough for private horticulture to take place.

### **CHAPTER 3 - CEMETERIES AND GRAVEYARDS**

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
CG1	St Botolph's Church	Dunmow Road, Beauchamp Roding, Ongar	0.26	Diocese of Chelmsford
CG2	St Edmund's Church	Abbess Roding, Ongar	0.21	Diocese of Chelmsford



St Botolph's Church, Site CG1

#### **ST BOTOLPH'S CHURCH (CG1)**

- 3.0** Situated at the end of a gravel track off Dunmow Road, in the heart of the parish, this is an isolated church with no other buildings nearby. This is unquestionably to the advantage of the site, which is, as a result, very peaceful and calm. This tranquil feeling is further emphasised by the perimeter of trees and shrubs surrounding the churchyard, which mostly screen it from external view. Where small gaps do exist, visitors can appreciate broad and pleasant views of the surrounding open countryside.
- 3.1** Access is, however, a major issue. The gravel track which leads up to the church, is particularly uneven, and full of pot holes, making driving or cycling along it particularly bumpy and uncomfortable. Having reached the site, visitors with cars must park them on the grassy area to the north.

- 3.2** There is no path at all from this area to the main entrance, on a muddy slope, which in wetter weather may be very slippery. Furthermore, there are no pathways within the site itself, and so visitors must walk across the grass to reach the church's entrance to the south. Together, these issues make access particularly uncomfortable and difficult for visitors, especially those with wheelchairs or pushchairs.
- 3.3** The site could also be improved through the repair or replacement of the sign by the car park at the front, which appears to be run down, and is partially covered by overgrown plants. Furthermore, some seats would enable visitors to enjoy the attractive views.



St Edmund's Church, Site CG2

### **ST EDMUND'S CHURCH (CG2)**

- 3.4** Found directly south of Abbess Hall Farm, this is a pleasant site which appears neat, clean and very well cared for. Although it offers no dedicated parking within it, churchgoers can park on the opposite roadside, where there is space for approximately five vehicles. Beyond this area, the road broadens, and is wide enough to accommodate further cars without hindering passing traffic. The churchyard is surrounded by tall trees and dense shrubbery, creating a private and tranquil atmosphere.
- 3.5** A wooden and metal gate, with a sign, forms the main entrance. From this, a gravel track leads directly to the main entrance of the church itself. Although this path has not been hard surfaced, it is solid enough to enable adequate

access for wheelchair users and those with pushchairs. A further gateway to the west, meanwhile, leads straight into the back garden of a neighbouring residential property.

- 3.6** There is, however, no path within the churchyard leading to this western entrance, and the gate itself is partially hidden by the heavy vegetation encircling the whole site. The site could be improved through the provision of some seating.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- With three churches within Abbess, Beauchamp and Berners Roding, there is plenty of this type of open space within the parish.
- All three sites are attractive, and offer peaceful and pleasing environments for visitors.
- None of the three suffer from litter, graffiti or any other form of vandalism.
- The accessibility of St Botolph's Church (CG1) is poor as it offers no hard surfaced pathways to, or within, the churchyard.
- Given the very rural location of the site, coupled with small local population, it is unlikely that the site is used enough to warrant the cost of implementing such facilities.
- The gravel track leading up to St Botolph's Church (CG1) should be re-laid, as it very bumpy and uneven.
- There are a lack of signs at the St Botolph's Church (CG1) site whilst none of the three churchyards provide litter bins.
- The local parish council however is opposed to any further urban street furniture being situated in these sites.

## **CHAPTER 4 – FORMAL PLAYING PITCHES**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no formal playing pitches within the parish.
- The local parish council has not observed any demand for the provision of such a facility in the parish.
- Given the very rural nature of the parish, and its small resident population, this lack of demand is not particularly surprising.
- Those who seek to engage in pitch sports will therefore need to travel to neighbouring parishes such as Matching, Fyfield and Ongar.

## **CHAPTER 5 – ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR SPORT AND RECREATION**

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
AS1	Birds Green Fisheries	Tile House Farm, Birds Green, Ongar	10.86	Privately Owned

### **BIRDS GREEN FISHERIES (AS1)**

- 5.0** This fully managed fishery offers four fishing lakes with both day and night fishing available. Birds Green Fishery has a choice of fishing lakes, and range of fish species, to accommodate general coarse fishing, family day pleasure fishing, carp fishing or specimen fishing.
- 5.1** The site also offers a tackle shop, a café, showers and toilets, three car parks, and significant effort has been made to provide suitable access for those with disabilities. The improvements made include the introduction of ramps and wide entrances in all of the on site buildings, and the installation of a number of fishing platforms around one of the lakes.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- The range of alternative sites for sport within Abbess, Beauchamp and Berners Roding is very limited.
- The one facility which is located within the parish however is in good condition and is attractive in appearance.
- Given the very rural nature of the parish and its very small population it is not surprising that the local parish council have not identified any demand for further facilities of this variety within the parish.
- Those locals wishing to access further alternative sites for sport will need access to personal transportation or local public transport to reach neighbouring parishes such as Chipping Ongar where further facilities are provided.



## **CHAPTER 6 – INFORMAL RECREATION GROUNDS**

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
RG1	Land to the rear of Horsecroft	Horsecroft, Berners Roding	1.21	Epping Forest District Council



(Land To The Rear Of Horsecroft, Site RG1)

### **LAND TO THE REAR OF HORSECROFT (RG1)**

- 6.0** Located to the south of the village of Abbess Roding on a street which turns off from the main road heading south towards Little Laver, this triangular shaped area of informal recreation space is almost entirely made up of grassland and is overlooked to the west by the rears of the residential dwellings on Horsecroft. The southern and eastern boundaries to the site are made up of a perimeter of high standing hedgerows and trees which effectively screen the site from external view and help to create an attractive enclosed environment.
- 6.1** A set of goal posts are located towards the centre of the space whilst some children's swings with surrounding rubber surfacing are situated towards the north of the site. Just to the south of these swings can be found two wooden picnic tables and a single rubbish bin all of which appear to be in good condition. One issue to raise regards the gravel track which runs along the western perimeter of the site providing garage access for those houses located on Horsecroft. Neighbours driving along this track must therefore take

care when any children are using the site as there is no boundary fencing. Similarly, dog walkers using the site must be aware of any children which are using the site at the same time. The provision of dog bins meanwhile may also be beneficial to the site.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- The range of informal recreation grounds within Abbess, Beauchamp and Berners Roding is very limited.
- The facility which is located within the parish is in good condition and is attractive in appearance, however it is very secluded and is unlikely to draw visitors from outside the village.
- Given the very rural nature of the parish and its very small population it is not surprising that the local parish council have not identified any further demand for further facilities of this variety within the parish.
- Those locals wishing to access further informal recreation grounds will need access to personal transportation or local public transport to reach neighbouring parishes where such facilities are available.

## **CHAPTER 7 – CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUND**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- The only provision of any sort for children in the parish are the small swings provided by the parish council to the north of the land to the rear of Horsecroft (RG1).
- Given the rural nature of the parish and the small population of the local area it is unlikely that there is sufficient demand to warrant further children’s facilities being added here and a fully equipped playground being developed.
- Furthermore, many of the private residences in the parish are large enough to provide adequate safe play space for any children that may live in them.

## **CHAPTER 8 – INDOOR FACILITIES FOR HIGH LEVELS OF USE**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There is no indoor facilities for high levels of use within Theydon Mount.
- The local parish council has indicated that there is no demand for a facility of this type within the parish given its small population.
- Such a facility would require large turnover in terms of use in order for it to be profitable and given the very rural nature of this parish it is highly unlikely that such a facility would achieve this if it were located in the parish.
- Those locals wishing to access indoor facilities for high levels of use will need access to personal transportation or local public transport to reach neighbouring parishes such as Chipping Ongar and Epping and beyond the District where such facilities are provided.

## **CHAPTER 9 – COMMUNITY CENTRES AND VILLAGE HALLS**

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
CV1	The Room In The Rodings	Dunmow Road, Beauchamp Roding	0.26	Abbess, Beauchamp and Berners Roding Parish Council

### **THE ROOM IN THE RODINGS (CV1)**

**9.0** Situated just to the north of the junction of School Lane and Dunmow Road, this small hall has recently been leased to a private company who specialise in hosting wedding receptions and parties. When not in use for such events, the local parish council and others do have some access to the site for meetings and other activities such as indoor bowls, however this generally tends to be restricted to weekdays excluding Fridays when no events are taking place. Given its extensive use as a wedding function room, the site is very well maintained and is in excellent condition.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- This is the only site of its type within the parish.
- As it is now leased by a private business the use of the site for local community activities has become restricted.
- This however is not really a significant issue as the reason the site was leased out in the first place was because it was suffering from chronic underuse.
- The site is very well maintained and in excellent condition.

## **CHAPTER 10 - MANAGED OPEN SPACE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no managed open spaces in Abbess, Beauchamp and Berners Roding.
- Given the rural nature of the parish however there are plenty of byways, bridleways and public footpaths which can be accessed, including part of the Three Forests Way.

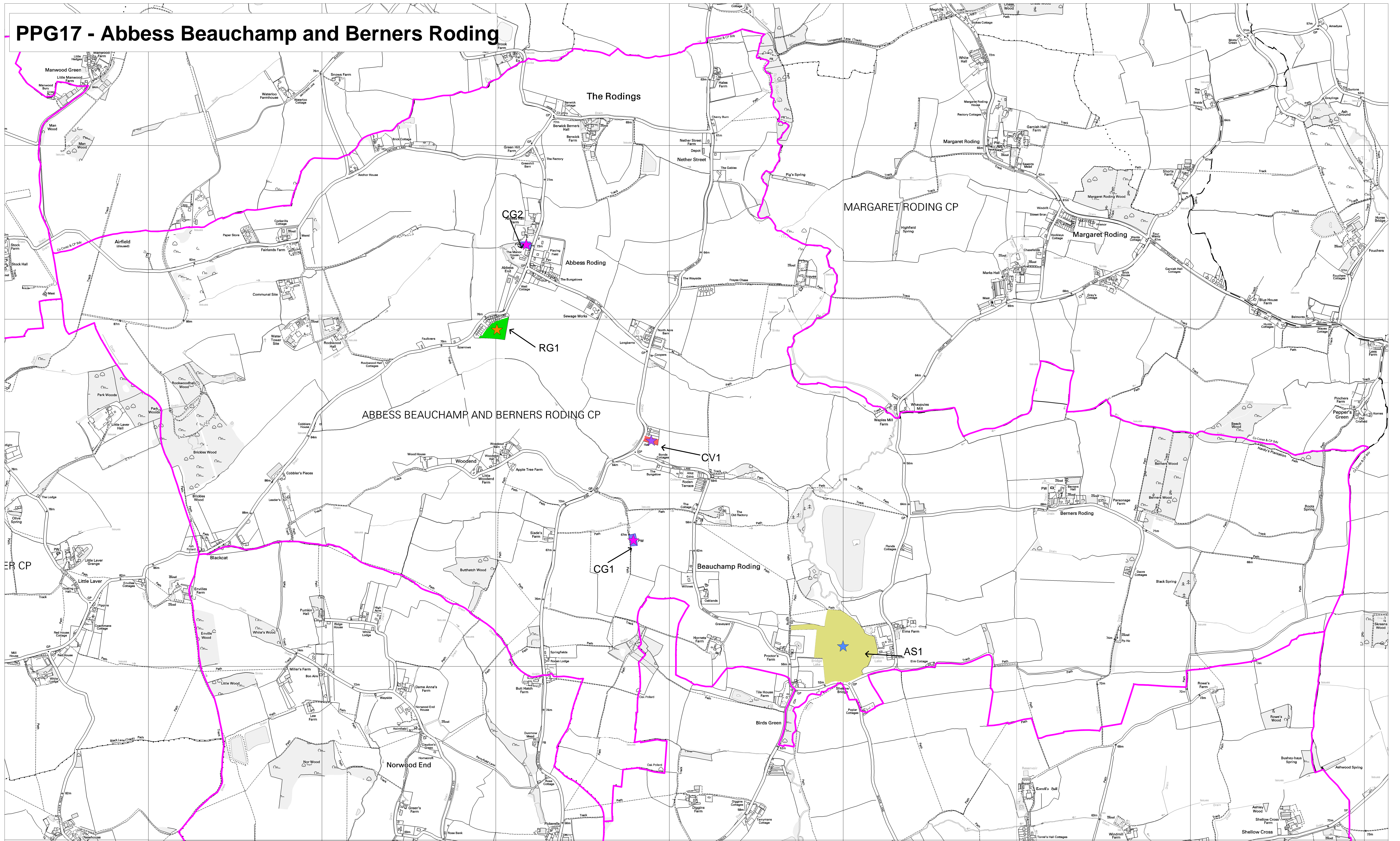
## **CHAPTER 11 - WOODLAND AND SEMI-NATURAL OPEN SPACE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- Despite the very rural nature of Abbess, Beauchamp and Berners Roding, there are no areas of publicly accessible woodland or semi-natural open space available.
- The local parish council however is keen to emphasise how well served the parish is with byways, bridle ways and footpaths including part of the Three Forests Way as previously mentioned which links Epping forest and Hatfield Forest.



# PPG17 - Abbess Beauchamp and Berners Roding



Parish: Abbess Beauchamp and Berners Roding

Area: 1596 Hectares

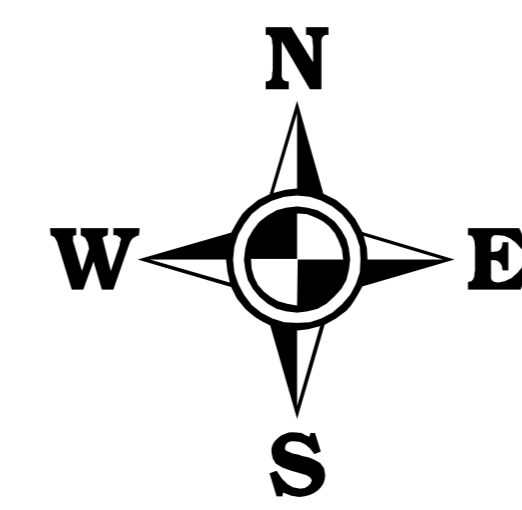
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### Key

- ★ Allotments (AT)
- ★ Cemeteries and Graveyards (CG)
- ★ Formal Playing Pitches (FP)
- ★ Alternative Sites For Sport (AS)
- ★ Informal Recreation Grounds (RG)
- ★ Children's Playgrounds (CY)
- ★ Indoor Facilities For High Levels Of Use (IF1)
- ★ Community Centres and Village Halls (CV)
- ★ Woodland and Semi-Natural Open Space with Public Access (SO)
- ★ Managed Open Space with Public Access (MO)
- ★ Epping Forest
- Parish Boundary
- ★ Denotes Membership Only Facilities



Date: 4th January 2010