

**EPPING TOWN – OPEN SPACE AUDIT****APRIL 2009****CONTENTS**

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## **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 districts 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**

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
AT1	Coopersale Allotment	Adjacent to Institute Road, Coopersale	0.64	Privately Owned
AT2	Lower Bury Lane Allotment	Land between Lower Bury Lane and Tower Road, Epping	0.82	Epping Town Council/Copped Hall Estate
AT3	Meadow Road Allotment	Meadow Road, Epping	1.51	Epping Town Council
AT4	Copped Hall Estate Allotment	Copped Hall Estate, Lindsey Street, Epping	0.40	Copped Hall Estate
AT5	Thornwood Road Allotment	Land to the north west of Thornwood Road, Epping	0.46	Copped Hall Estate
AT6	High Road Allotment	Adjacent to Griffin's Wood Cottages, High Road, Epping	0.23	Copped Hall Estate

### **COOPERSALE ALLOTMENT (AT1)**

- 2.0** Located to the north of Institute Road in Coopersale, this is a generally pleasant site which has neither any outstanding features, nor any major concerns about it in terms of quality. The site does however clearly suffer from under-use, as only around half is used and, according to one user, it is currently shared between only three people. The main entrance gate to the site off Institute Road, adjacent to the Village Hall, appears to be very new and is attractive, but a second metal gate behind this is in very poor condition. The small wooden gate entrance at the south west corner of the site accessed further west off Institute Road also appears to be in poor condition.



Lower Bury Lane Allotment, Site AT2

## **LOWER BURY LANE ALLOTMENT (AT2)**

- 2.1 Found between Tower Road and Lower Bury Lane, this site is one of the better utilised allotment gardens in Epping and is owned jointly by the Town Council and Copped Hall Estate. Whilst the vast majority of the site appears to be in use, sections of the allotment owned by the Copped Hall Estate have become overgrown owing to the Copped Hall Estate ceasing formal use of their section of the allotment. In these sections, brambles and weeds have therefore been allowed to reach over head height. The signs at the site's two main entrances to the north east off Tower Road and to the south west off Lower Bury Lane meanwhile are small and badly degraded.



Meadow Road Allotment, Site AT3

## **MEADOW ROAD ALLOTMENT (AT3)**

- 2.2 Located to the north of Meadow Road, this allotment garden, unlike others in the parish offers car parking provision for approximately 8 vehicles to help give allotment users better access to the site and to prevent (Meadow Road) from becoming congested with parked cars. The quality of the surface of this on-site car park however is poor, as it consists of gravel and is bumpy and uneven. There is also a need for a new bin as the current one is almost unusable due to general degradation. The site is probably the most well-used of all the allotments, as it contains no overgrown unused plots, with unused areas of the site kept as maintained grassland until they are turned into new allotments plots.

### **COPPED HALL ESTATE ALLOTMENT (AT4)**

- 2.3 Adjacent to Shaftesbury Farm on the south side of Lindsey Street, this site primarily suffers from a lack of adequate car parking facilities. The gravel track car park which doubles up as local resident car parking is extremely bumpy and uneven. Some parts of the site are extremely neglected and overgrown, and as a consequence of this it is unclear where the site boundaries are. Despite this, the site still has at least five plots in use with space to at least double this amount of provision if the site was properly cleared.

### **THORNWOOD ROAD ALLOTMENT (AT5)**

- 2.4 Located by Wintry Park Farm Cottages, this site differs to others in the parish as it has no entrance, but instead runs alongside an unnamed, unclassified road to its north-eastern boundary, which is fairly well used. There is no fencing separating the site from the road, which therefore presents a potential hazard to any person who wishes to use it. The single remaining plot that was located here appears to have fallen into disuse meaning that the whole site is now unused. As a consequence of this, it is probably the most overgrown of all the allotment gardens in the parish.

### **HIGH ROAD ALLOTMENT (AT6)**

- 2.5 This site is located to the southern end of the High Road to the north-west of Bell Common. Like many of the other allotments in the parish it suffers from neglect, with roughly a quarter of the site containing actively used plots. The remaining three quarters of the site are dominated by brambles well over head height. Such is the level of overgrown weeds and brambles on the site, coupled with a number of dead trees, that its pedestrian-only entrance to the south east off the B1393 is completely impassable.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- All allotments are very clean with little apparent litter or graffiti.
- Only Meadow Road Allotment (AT3) and Copped Hall Estate Allotment (AT4) offer any parking facilities. Users of all other sites must therefore park on nearby residential streets.
- Both existing car parks are gravel surfaced and are particularly bumpy to access raising the risk of damage to vehicles.
- Coopersale Allotment (AT1), Copped Hall Estate Allotment (AT4), Thornwood Road Allotment (AT5), and High Road Allotment (AT6) are all largely underused, and dominated by unmaintained grassland and invasive weeds such as brambles, detracting from their accessibility.
- In contrast, according to Epping Town Council there is a waiting list for plots at Lower Bury Lane Allotment (AT2).
- This imbalance in demand suggests that locals may prefer to use certain allotment sites over others.

- Epping Town Council also believes that the Copped Hall Estate may no longer be formally licensing their allotments. If so, transferring these plots to parish council ownership may help with putting these plots back into public use.
- There are no allotment sites on the south-east side of the High Road, and only sites Lower Bury Lane Allotment (AT2) and Meadow Road Allotment (AT3) are close to the main area of Epping's population.
- Despite this Epping Town Council does not believe there to be a demand for further provision of allotment sites in the parish.



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

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
CG1	Epping Cemetery	Epping Cemetery, Lower Bury Lane, Epping	2.50	Epping Town Council
CG2	The Old Rectory Cemetery	St Albans Church, Coopersale Common, Coopersale, Epping	0.36	Chelmsford Diocese

### **EPPING CEMETERY (CG1)**

- 3.0** This site, located west of Lower Bury Lane opposite St. John's Secondary School, is immaculate in appearance. It is easily accessible by car however given that it is slightly isolated from the town and the connecting road has no foot path, access for pedestrians is difficult. The small chapel on the site is used only very infrequently on special occasions (around 12 times a year) so the majority of services that take place on the site happen outdoors. A number of the wooden bench seats and litter bins look very old and worn and should be considered for repair or replacement. Overall this site is very well maintained and is clean, tidy and fits in suitably with the surrounding countryside.



Epping Cemetery, Site CG1

## **THE OLD RECTORY CEMETERY (CG2)**

- 3.1** This site, located at the northern end of Houblons Hill, opposite Ansons Farm to the south of Coopersale, is largely only used for services within the church rather than for events within the grounds itself, as there is little burial space in the cemetery grounds. The condition and appearance of this site is generally of a good standard.
- 3.2** There is a very limited amount of car parking available for uses of the site. As a result of this, there is evidence of cars being parked on the grass verge to the east along Houblons Hill, which as a consequence has been significantly degraded. The road is fairly busy and lies on the edge of the 30mph speed boundary, which means that parking to use the site could be dangerous.
- 3.3** As with the previous cemetery, there are also several wooden bench seats and wire mesh litter bins which look considerably old and worn. The sign at the pedestrian entrance to the site was found propped up against a wall and was not in good condition.



The Old Rectory Cemetery, Site CG2

## **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- Both sites are attractive, clean and tidy with no graffiti and are generally well maintained.
- Some of the benches and bins on the sites are in poor condition and could be considered for replacement although it is apparent that some of these may have been originally donated.



- The Old Rectory Cemetery (CG2) is not the most accessible of sites, in that it offers little provision for car parking with visitors instead having to park on the roadside where fast moving vehicles go past.
- Epping Town Council have not indicated a demand for further provision of this type of facility within the parish.

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

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
FP1	Stonards Hill Recreation Ground	Stonards Hill Recreational Ground, Stonards Hill, Epping	6.12	Epping Town Council
FP2	Epping Cricket/Bowls Club	Lower Bury Lane, Epping	2.32	Epping Cricket/Bowls Club
FP3	Coopersale Cricket Club	Coopersale Cricket Club, Theydon Garnon, Epping	1.11	Coopersale Cricket Club



Stonards Hill Recreation Ground, Site FP1

### **STONARDS HILL RECREATION GROUND (FP1)**

- 4.0** Found to the north-east of Stonards Hill, this site provides a wide variety of facilities including four football pitches, and is generally attractive in appearance. The site is in need of some improvements starting with the alternative entrance to the site from Tidy's Lane, and the car park that it enters onto. This is currently unused, and therefore does not look as well maintained as the rest of the site. The entrance track and car park are made of gravel which is extremely uneven, whilst at the time of auditing there were piles of sand and gravel dotted around the site, detracting from its appearance.

- 4.1 The site provides facilities for a variety of sports including basketball, bowls, skateboarding, five-a-side football, and tennis. There are also three football pitches, in addition to a fourth pitch to the north of the site which has a football terrace running along-side it to the north. This terrace is extremely run down and unattractive. Other improvements which could be made to the site include the repainting of the parking lines in the car park off Stonards Hill, and the replacement of some of the litter bins and park seating throughout the site, which are very worn and in some instances unusable. Epping Town Council believes that there is a need for a new all weather pitch, new floodlights, irrigation and new changing facilities at the site.

### **EPPING CRICKET/BOWLS CLUB (FP2)**

- 4.2 Located to the south of the junction between Lower Bury Lane and Bury Lane, this is a relatively tidy site which is set in an attractive green location and is easy to access. The site offers a range of sporting facilities including a pitch exclusively used for cricket, a bowling green and three tennis courts all of which appear to be in excellent condition. The main entrance and car park are very poorly surfaced with gravel, and have a significant number of deep holes, which could cause some damage to cars.



Epping Cricket/Bowls Club, Site FP2

### **COOPERSALE CRICKET CLUB (FP3)**

- 4.3 Situated to the south of the Parklands estate in Coopersale, this site also has a number of issues which need addressing, the foremost of which is the need for new seating around the cricket pitch. The existing seating has been vandalised and is no longer usable. The pavilion located on the site is run down, and detracts from its setting, adjacent to Gernon Bushes woodland (a Site of Special Scientific Interest). There is also no on-site provision for parking. On-street parking causes problems for residents on match days.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There is a good level of formal playing pitches for a variety of different sports within the parish.
- The quality and level of cleanliness of these pitches is generally excellent.
- Those sites which do offer formal playing pitch provision however do suffer from other problems.
- The quality of the car parks of Epping Cricket/Bowls Club (FP2) and Stonards Hill Recreation Ground (FP1) are poor in terms of their surfacing.
- Litter and dog waste bins are lacking in various parts of Stonards Hill Recreation Ground (FP1).
- Epping Town Council does not regard there to be a demand for further formal playing pitch provision anywhere in the parish at present.



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

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
AS1	Epping Golf Course	Flux's Lane, Epping	34.84	Epping Golf Course

### **EPPING GOLF COURSE (AS1)**

- 5.0** Situated to the east of Flux's Lane and south of Bower Hill, this site is privately owned and is therefore only available for use to members of the golf club. The site offers a full 18 holes golf course set in an secluded location which is attractive and maintained to a high standard.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- This is the only alternative site for sport in the parish although a couple of sites which offer formal playing pitches do also offer some provision of alternative sites for sport within them.
- Stonards Hill Recreation Ground (FP1) firstly offers two tennis courts and a small dirt track which can be used for a variety of activities including toy car racing.
- Epping Cricket/Bowls Club (FP2) secondly also offers three tennis court facilities.
- Epping Town Council does not believe there to be a local demand for further provision of any alternate sites for sport within the parish.

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

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
RG1	Frampton Road Recreational Ground	Land adjacent to the north of James Street, Epping	0.86	Epping Town Council
RG2	Lower Swaines Recreation Ground	Lower Swaines Recreation Ground, Lower Swaines, Epping	1.66	London Borough of Waltham Forest
RG3	Ivy Chimneys Recreation Ground	Ivy Chimneys Road, Ivy Chimneys, Epping	0.45	Epping Town Council
RG4	Brook Road Play Area	Flux's Lane, Theydon Bower, Epping	0.66	Privately Owned (Mr Richard Hunt)

### **FRAMPTON ROAD RECREATIONAL GROUND (RG1)**

- 6.0** Located to the north of James Street off Lindsey Street, this is one of the better sites of outdoor recreational facilities in the parish and is attractive in appearance. It is easily accessible, and the children's playground facilities within it (See CY5) are generally of a high standard. Despite its lack of car parking facilities, James Street to the south of the site is a relatively long road with potential for some on-street parking. One issue raised by the Epping Town Council regards the sites poor drainage which hampers its use for sports, particularly during colder wetter months. It is unlikely that any actions can be taken to address this issue without significant costs being incurred.

### **LOWER SWAINES RECREATION GROUND (RG2)**

- 6.1** Situated to the north west of Lower Swaines, this site offers a number of facilities including a basketball court, a children's playground and a large amount of informal open green space. The site however has suffered from some instances of graffiti, littering and general acts of vandalism, which has seen the degradation of some of its facilities, including within the children's playground. One particularly noticeable instance of this is the large information sign situated to the north of the site, which stands bare (in terms of information) and covered in graffiti. There is also a lack of seating on the site with only one bench located within the whole area.

### **IVY CHIMNEYS RECREATION GROUND (RG3)**

- 6.2** This site, located along Ivy Chimneys Road adjacent to Ivy Chimneys County Primary School, provides facilities for football and basketball as well as a children's playground, and is generally well maintained and in good condition. All of the facilities are reasonably new and in good condition, including the dog waste bin and information signs at the entrance to the south. Despite its good facilities however, the sites formal use is at least in part, restricted by its excessive slope north to south towards the road side. A grass public footpath runs through the site between the northern and southern boundaries. This

path is not immediately obvious as the sign post indicating its presence is very worn, and the path itself can not be clearly distinguished against the grass field it travels through.

### **BROOK ROAD PLAY AREA (RG4)**

- 6.3** Located off Brook Road on the southern boundary of Epping, this attractive site offers open space for informal recreation. Whilst some basic facilities are provided such as signage and litter bins, there are no specific children's or sports equipment facilities located on the site. Having such facilities implemented is made even more difficult by the fact that the site is privately owned and would require permission before such works could take place.
- 6.4** The site also lacks any nearby car parking with visitors using vehicles to access the site having to park along Flux's Lane, Bower Hill or Brook Road. Another issue regards the metal fencing around the site, which does not extend along the eastern boundary. This is also where the only entrance to the site is found and as a result, there is the potential risk of visitors, especially young children, having no protection from the stream which has relatively steep sides and runs along the northern and eastern perimeter of the site.



Brook Road Play Area, Site RG4

## **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There is a good level of informal recreation ground provision within the parish.
- In addition to these sites, the formal playing pitches at Stonards Hill Recreation Ground (FP1) can also be used for informal recreation when they are not in use for pitch sports.
- All the sites are well maintained and are generally clean and tidy although Lower Swaines Recreation Ground (RG2) does suffer from bouts of graffiti and littering from time to time. This perhaps could be at least in part addressed with the provision of further litter bins
- Epping Town Council states that Ivy Chimney's Recreation Ground (RG3) is reduced in its effectiveness as a play space by its excessive sloping from north to south towards the road side.
- Similarly, the Town Council regards the drainage issues at Frampton Road Recreational Ground (RG4) to be significant enough to hamper its use for more formal sports activities.
- Car parking is generally not an issue with these sites given that they are primarily used by residents who live close by. For those who do drive to such locations, small amounts of on-street car parking is available.
- Epping Town Council does not consider there is a current demand for further provision of similar facilities anywhere in the parish.



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

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
CY1	Stonards Hill Recreation Ground Playground	Stonards Hill Recreational Ground, Stonards Hill, Epping	0.06	Epping Town Council
CY2	Parklands Playground	Parklands Playground, Coopersale, Epping	0.04	Epping Forest District Council
CY3	Lower Swaines Recreation Ground Playground	Lower Swaines Recreational Ground, Lower Swaines, Epping	0.05	London Borough of Waltham Forest
CY4	Ivy Chimneys Playground	Ivy Chimneys Road, Ivy Chimneys, Epping	0.10	Epping Town Council
CY5	Frampton Road Recreational Ground Playground	Land adjacent to the north of James Street, Epping	0.01	Epping Town Council

### **STONARDS HILL RECREATION GROUND PLAYGROUND (CY1)**

- 7.0** Found immediately to the south of Stonards Hill Recreation Ground, this is one of the better playgrounds in the parish. The site is clean and tidy and offers a good selection of equipment, as well as other facilities such as a picnic table, a wooden bench and a litter bin, all of which are in good condition. Located within Stonards Hill Recreation Ground, the site is also easy to reach by car, whilst access is straightforward (even with a pushchair) despite there being no pathway from the car park to the entrance.



Stonards Hill Recreation Ground Playground, Site CY1

### **PARKLANDS PLAYGROUND (CY2)**

- 7.1 Found to the east of the Parklands estate in Coopersale, this site is generally in a good condition and has had some new equipment installed fairly recently. On the downside, the site is dominated by a large dead tree stump located in the centre, and looks rather unattractive, particularly when contrasted with the forest of Gernon Bushes Nature Reserve adjacent to the east. The site's sole litter bin is rusty and bent and in need of mending or replacement.

### **LOWER SWAINES PLAYGROUND (CY3)**

- 7.2 Located to the south west of Lower Swaines Recreation Ground, this site suffers from a number of problems. Both the swings on the site have been removed as a result of vandalism, whilst graffiti and litter are frequent throughout despite the presence of bins. Furthermore the wooden fencing around the playground is damaged in a number of places where some panels are missing. This could allow dogs to pass into the site, thereby creating a potential hazard for any children using it. The overgrown grass around its perimeter also detracts from its setting.

### **IVY CHIMNEYS PLAYGROUND (CY4)**

- 7.3 This site located to the south of Ivy Chimneys Recreation Ground, is generally well maintained and in good condition, and has no issues that require direct attention. Many of the facilities present are reasonably new, including the litter bins and information signs at the entrance which add to the overall appearance. Although the site is particularly close to Ivy Chimney's Road, which is fairly busy, it maintains a strong degree of safety by virtue of a secure and well maintained perimeter fence. The fence is tall enough to prevent young children climbing over, and also to keep out dogs.

### **FRAMPTON ROAD RECREATION GROUND PLAYGROUND (CY5)**

- 7.4 Situated to the northern corner of Frampton Road Recreation Ground, this very small playground offers a range of facilities including swings, a slide and a climbing frame, all of which have rubber surfacing around them. An issue of concern however is that none of these facilities are fenced, meaning that dogs could access the playground, thereby placing those children using the site at risk. Accessing the site during the colder wetter months is also not ideal given the lack of a hard surfaced pathway leading up to the playground and the fact that according to the Town Council the recreation ground suffers from poor drainage which make the grass particularly wet, muddy and slippery. Given the rural nature of the site, the implementation of such a pathway furthermore is unlikely to take place.

## **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- The standard of playgrounds in Epping parish is variable although with most sites providing attractive facilities which are in a good condition.
- All recreation grounds that have playgrounds are located within them have good pedestrian accessibility, which has the added bonus of encouraging locals to avoid using cars to access them.
- With the exception of Lower Swaines Playground (CY3) and Frampton Road Recreation Ground Playground (CY5), all the sites are very secure due to the fencing and gating which surround them.
- A small concern regards the graffiti which can be found in all of the sites to varying degrees.
- Ease of entry for disabled persons to Stonards Hill Recreation Ground Playground (CY1), Lower Swaines Playground (CY3) and Frampton Road Recreation Ground Playground (CY5) is not ideal due to a lack of hard surfaced footpaths leading up them.
- Epping Town Council does not believe there is a current demand for further playgrounds within the parish.

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

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
IF1	Epping Sports Centre	25 Hemnall Street, Epping	0.41	Epping Forest District Council

### **EPPING SPORTS CENTRE (IF1)**

- 8.0** Located along Hemnall Street to the east of Epping, this site consists of a main sports hall used for badminton, basketball, netball and football, 4 squash courts, a table tennis table, fitness studio and crèche. As well as catering for sports, the centre also offers kids activity sessions and coaching courses for children between 3-12 years old.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- This is one of only five parishes in the district which provides such a facility.
- Given the relatively small population of the parish and the fact that there are a number of similar centres located in neighbouring parishes, the local council does not believe there to be to a demand for further provision of this type of open space.



## **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	Epping Hall	St John's Road, Epping	0.25	Epping Forest Town Council
CV2	Jack Silley Pavillion	Tidy's Lane, Epping	0.15	Epping Forest Town Council

### **EPPING HALL (CV1)**

- 9.0** Situated along St John's Road opposite its junction with Bakers Lane, this a large attractive and very well maintained hall which was originally designed when built to cater for as diverse a range of needs and demands from the local population as possible. The site is used by a wide range of people for a variety of different events, clubs and social activities including private and public meetings, children's parties, church activities and wedding receptions. A wide variety of clubs also use the hall ranging from various dancing clubs to karate.

### **JACK SILLEY PAVILLION (CV2)**

- 9.1** Located to the north of Stonards Hill Recreation Ground (FP1) and accessible from Tidy's Lane, this is an older but nonetheless well looked after site which also caters for a variety of local needs and demands. The site is available for hire for a variety of different events including meetings and private parties but is also used by variety of clubs and societies for everything from church drama productions to dog training.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- Between them these two halls provide enough capacity to serve the local community.
- Both halls are attractive to view and appear to be very well looked after.
- Epping Town Council believes that demand for use of these halls is so strong that a third hall may eventually be required.
- As of yet however, no plan or timescale as to how and when this hall would be provided has been established.

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

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
MO1	Epping Green	Land between Hemnall Street and High Street, Epping	0.22	Epping Town Council
MO2	Epping Green	Land between Church Hill and High Street, Epping	0.77	Epping Town Council
MO3	Land opposite junction between Station Road and High Street, Epping	As site name	0.18	Copped Hall Estate
MO4	Theydon Grove Pond	Land between Theydon Grove and Hemnall Street, Epping	0.39	Epping Forest District Council
MO5	Land Surrounded By Beaconfield Avenue	Beaconsfield Way, Epping	0.15	Epping Forest District Council
MO6	Land surrounded by Beaconfield Road	Beaconfield Road, Epping	0.07	Epping Forest District Council
MO7	Land to the west of Coronation Hill	Coronation Hill, Epping	0.11	Epping Forest District Council
MO8	Land to the north of Lower Swaines	Lower Swaines, Epping	0.06	Epping Forest District Council
MO8	Land to the west of Broadoaks	Broadoaks, Epping	0.40	Epping Forest District Council
MO10	Land to the east of The Crescent	The Crescent, Epping	0.12	Epping Forest District Council
MO11	Land to south west of the junction between Western Avenue and Centre Drive	Western Avenue, Epping	0.10	Epping Forest District Council
MO12	Land to the north west of the junction between Western Avenue and Centre Drive	Western Avenue, Epping	0.23	Epping Forest District Council
MO13	Land to the north of Centre Green	Centre Green, Epping	0.24	Epping Forest District Council

### **EPPING GREEN (MO1)**

**10.0** This site, found to the south east of the Civic Offices, is pleasant in appearance and adds to the surrounding setting. It has need of some new seating and bins, as the current seating is badly degraded, and many of the bins have recently been vandalised. It is bordered by Grove Lane, High Street and Hemnall Street, which are all busy roads.



Epping Green, Site MO2

### **EPPING GREEN (MO2)**

- 10.1** Located adjacent to the north of the Civic Offices, this site is also predominantly made up of informal grassland, which is smart in appearance. The bins and benches on this site are in good condition. The only real issue concerns the two narrow roads which run through it. Many large vehicles appear to use these roads, and the edges of the grassland, particularly at the corners of the site, have been damaged.

### **LAND OPPOSITE JUNCTION BETWEEN STATION ROAD AND HIGH STREET EPPING (MO3)**

- 10.2** The grassy perimeter of the site has been severely degraded by people parking their cars along it. Some wooden posts have been erected around parts of the site to tackle this, but there is still evidence that this damage is occurring. The seating which is present, meanwhile, has been subjected to a large amount of graffiti. There is a fairly significant amount of litter on the site, despite the fact that there are already five bins in situ. The site is dominated by a number of large mature trees which significantly contribute to the beauty of not only the site itself, but also the surrounding townscape.



Theydon Grove Lake, Site MO4

### **THEYDON GROVE POND (MO4)**

- 10.3** This pond is on the east side of the High Street, opposite the Civic Offices. The site's perimeter fence is rather run down and very low in height. This raises an issue over safety, particularly concerning relatively young children who could easily step over the fencing and slip down the reasonably steep slopes which lead to the water. The seating around the pond meanwhile is slightly damaged however the site has recently undergone a thorough clean up and is also now adequately signed.

### **LAND SURROUNDED BY BEACONFIELD AVENUE (MO5)**

- 10.4** Entirely surrounded by Beaconfield Avenue, this site is a relatively large area of amenity green space predominantly made up of grass with a variety of relatively young trees planted evenly throughout it. The site is raised up from the roadside and slopes downwards from north to south. To the south west of the site lies a small hard surfaced residential car park suitable for approximately five cars. The site appears to be well maintained and is clean and tidy. One small issue with the site regards some of perimeter edges which appear to have been badly degraded by vehicles travelling around the site. The provision of some bollards would go some way to alleviating this problem. Whilst this a fairly large site, it is still not suitable for young children to play on given the sloped nature of the site and the fact that the site is surrounded by a road.





Land Surrounded by Beaconfield Avenue, Site MO5

### **LAND SURROUNDED BY BEACONFIELD ROAD (MO6)**

**10.5** Entirely surrounded by Beaconfield Road this site is entirely made up of well maintained grassland with a number of young trees to the north and a number of much larger mature trees to the south. The site has a gentle slope from east to west and appears to be clean with little traces of any visible litter. Given its relatively small size however, this site is not suitable for anything more than as a local visual amenity, and is not suited to use by children given its close proximity to a busy residential road.

### **LAND TO THE WEST OF CORONATION HILL (MO7)**

**10.6** Situated to the west of Coronation Hill, this site is predominantly covered in grass with three medium sized trees located towards the north of the site and a further two young trees towards the south. A pedestrian footpath runs around the entire perimeter to the site providing access to the residential homes which surround the site on three sides. To the east of the site a small hard surfaced car park has been built into the site providing spaces for around seven vehicles. The site seems to be well maintained and is clean, tidy and free of litter however given its small size it really only suitable for dog walking and as a local visual amenity.



### **LAND TO THE NORTH OF LOWER SWAINES (MO8)**

**10.7** Running along the western verge of Lower Swaines, this site comprises a relatively long narrow strip of grass divided into two sections by a footpath which encircles all but its southern perimeter and provides access to the residential dwellings which surround the site on these three sides. A single litter bin is located to the north of the site whilst three medium sized trees are equally dispersed across the site which significantly add to its overall visual amenity. The site appears to be well maintained and is clean, tidy and free of litter. Given its small size and proximity to a busy residential road however, the site is not suitable for anything more than as a local visual amenity.

### **LAND TO THE WEST OF BROADOAKS (MO9)**

**10.8** This fairly large L-shaped site is predominantly made up of grassland with a number of trees to the north of the site. On top of this, the site borders a small forest to the south whilst a fairly large pond is located to the west. Pathways dissect the site in a number of areas allowing pedestrians to access the residential houses on Broadoaks as well as Madells. Given the fairly large size of the site and the fact that the pond is quite an attractive feature, some seating by here perhaps would be beneficial, thereby allowing residents to enjoy the local scenery. Coupled with the fact that it runs alongside Broadoaks, much of the site, particularly to the north, slopes towards the roadside therefore making it unsuitable for anymore intensive recreational use.



Land to the East of The Crescent, Site MO10

### **LAND TO THE EAST OF THE CRESCENT (MO10)**

**10.9** Located between Centre Drive to the east and The Crescent to the west, this is a fairly long but thin site predominantly made up of grass with a medium sized hedgerow along its eastern perimeter. Throughout the site a number of large mature trees run along the site adding to the site's overall attractiveness. The site appears to be well maintained and is clean, tidy and free of any litter. Given its sloping nature from south to north and the fact that it is located next to a busy road, this site is not really suitable for anything more than as a piece of local attractive scenery.

### **LAND TO THE SOUTH WEST OF THE JUNCTION BETWEEN WESTERN AVENUE AND CENTRE DRIVE (MO11)**

**10.10** Entirely made up of well maintained grassland, this site's appearance is enhanced by two good sized trees positioned close to its north westerly and south easterly borders. Despite its fairly decent size the site itself has signage decreeing that ball games are not allowed. Given that the site is located next to two roads, one of which is relatively busy and has fast moving cars on it, this would seem appropriate as it will reduce the number of children using the site who would potentially be at risk if they did use it.



Land to the North West of the junction between Western Avenue and Centre Drive, Site MO12



**LAND TO THE NORTH WEST OF THE JUNCTION BETWEEN WESTERN AVENUE AND CENTRE DRIVE (MO12)**

**10.11** Consisting of well maintained grassland and predominantly open in nature, this site's visual amenity is emphasised by a number of various sized trees predominantly located to the east and a large hedgerow located along the site's northern boundary. The site appears to be clean and tidy although some of perimeter grassland appears to have been badly degraded by vehicles manoeuvring around the roads which surround the site on three sides. Whilst the site is fairly large, the presence of these roads also makes the site more dangerous for young children to use especially given as there is no perimeter fencing present.

**LAND TO THE NORTH OF CENTRE GREEN (MO13)**

**10.12** Entirely surrounded by Centre Drive to the west, Centre Green to the south and Centre Avenue to the north and east, this relatively large site is made up entirely of grassland with a number of trees located around its perimeter but particularly to the east. The site appears to be well maintained and is clean and tidy however as the site is surrounded on all sides by roads and has no perimeter fencing, its use as anything more than as a visual amenity is therefore restricted.



Land to the North of Centre Green, Site MO13

## **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- All of these sites contribute positively to the local parish townscape and act as 'green lungs' providing areas of green space in some of the more built up areas of the parish.
- All the sites in the parish under this category are clean, tidy and well looked after.
- The grassy perimeter edges of a number of sites including Epping Green (MO2), are being degraded by vehicles manoeuvring around them or parking on them.
- Whilst many of these sites may be attractive to children for recreational use, their size and close proximity to frequently busy roads makes them unsuitable for little more than informal recreation.

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

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
SO1	Gernon Bushes Nature Reserve	Gernon Bushes Nature Reserve, Coopersale, Epping	35.28	Essex Wildlife Trust / Forestry Commission
SO2	Swaines Green	Swaines Green, Lower Swaines, Epping	8.82	City Of London
SO3	Bell Common	Bell Common, Epping	13.95	City of London
SO4	Civic Offices Pond	High Street, Epping	0.07	Epping Forest District Council

### **GERNON BUSHES NATURE RESERVE (SO1)**

**11.0** Located to the east of Coopersale, this site is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is notable for its numerous veteran trees, wet springs and bogs. Owned and managed by Essex Wildlife Trust with the help of the District Council's Countrycare team the site has undergone a wide range of access and habitat improvement projects over the last 12 years. Openly accessible to the public and at over 35 hectares in size, it is one of the largest nature reserves in the district and is home to a number of important species of plant life and various animals and birds.

### **SWAINES GREEN (SO2)**

**11.1** Located to the north west of Epping, this site is essentially made up of four agricultural fields which have been left untouched since the early 1980's. Today, nature has taken over and the site is made up of a variety of open grassland, scrub and developing woodland. It is open to the public via a number of public footpaths and reserve entrances and forms a vital green corridor between the main section of Epping Forest and the Lower Forest to the north. It is bordered by Lower Swaines recreation ground (RG2) and residential housing to the south and by an impressive hedgerow and farmland along Bolt Cellar Lane to the north. The site is owned by the City of London but is managed by the Friends of Swaines Green and Epping Forest District Council's Countrycare team.

### **BELL COMMON (SO3)**

**11.2** Situated to the south of Epping and fully available for the public to access, this site is a designated piece of Forest land which provides an important transition in the landscape between Epping Forest and the built up area of



Epping. Formally known as 'Beacon Common' it is likely that the settlement of Epping Heath (Epping) was founded to maintain an ancient beacon located on this site.

- 11.3** Today, the common is no longer managed as a common and is consequently being rapidly overtaken by scrub and young woodland. A significant sized pond is located to the north east of the site as well as a much smaller pond further to the south. Two groups of attractive 19th century cottages run along the High Road to the north of the site whilst to the south are a variety of traditional weatherboarded houses dated between 17th to 19th century. A further grouping of cottages can be found to the north of the site close to the junction with Bury Lane some of which date back to the 16th century.

#### **CIVIC OFFICES POND (SO4)**

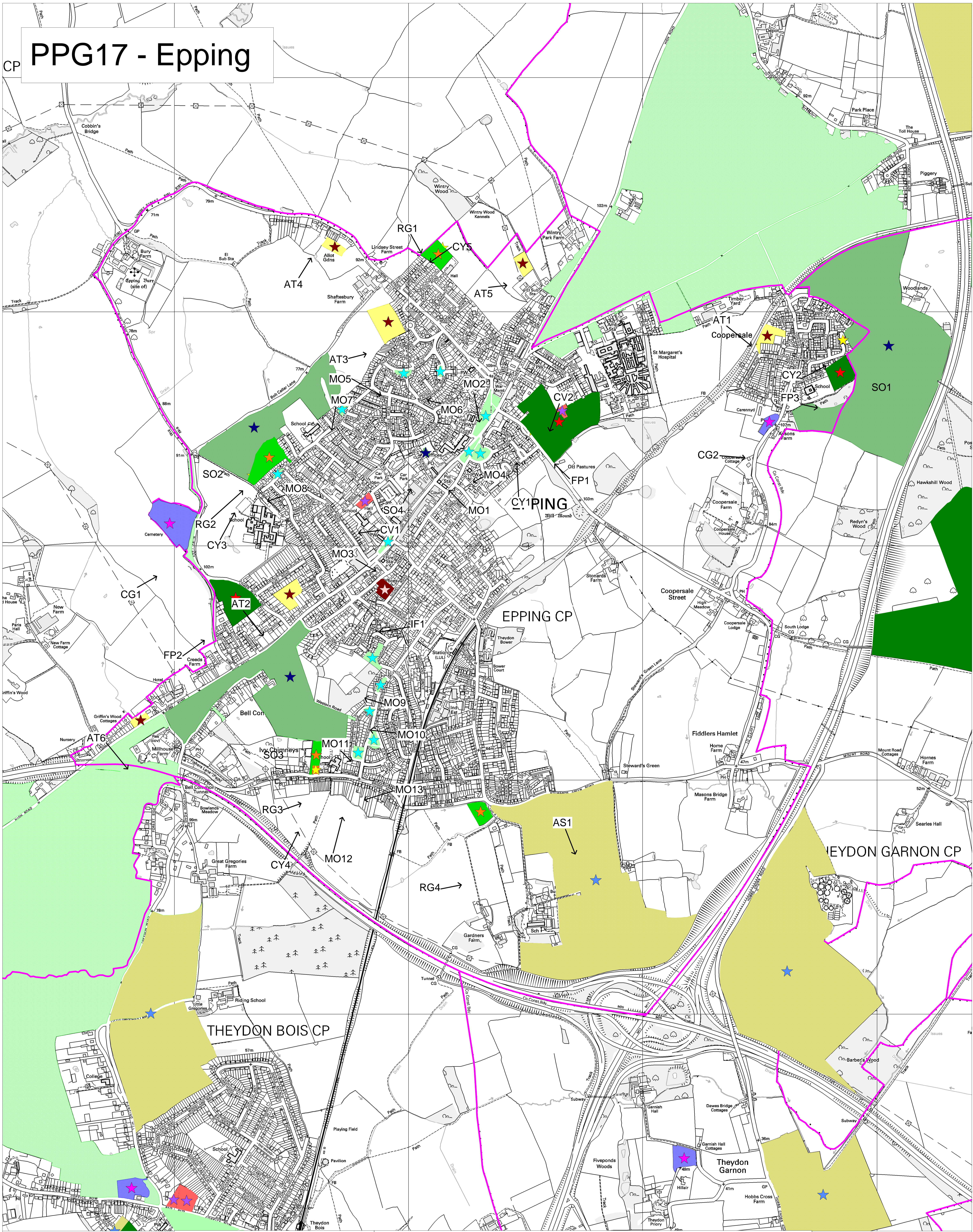
- 11.4** Situated within a walled enclosure to the rear of Epping Forest District Council Offices, this site has been under the management of the Council's Countrycare team since 1992 and is accessible by appointment only. At the start of the 20th century, ponds were common in Epping with about 20 on the northern side of the High Street alone. Among them was the Civic Offices pond which dates back before 1881. As of 1988 however, this site is now the last of those ponds with the others having all been developed over as Epping expanded northwards from the High Street.
- 11.5** The Civic Offices pond itself was allocated to be developed into a extension to the Civic Offices car park however the discovery of great crested newts amongst a variety of other species of insects and amphibians led to these plans being amended. Whilst the majority of the original site was lost, the pond and a small area of grassland around it were saved. The site was then enclosed by a wall except for the northwest corner where a wooden fence panel, open at the bottom, allows the newts to migrate in and out of the site before finally being planted with various trees and shrubs. This procedure is thought to have been successful, and there is now a good population of newts on the site.

#### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- Sites such as Gernon Bushes Nature Reserve (SO1) and Bell Common (SO3) offer invaluable access to areas of semi-natural open space for recreational means, and are therefore highly important to the local area.
- Whilst the Civic Offices Pond (SO4) is accessible by appointment only.
- In addition to these sites the main part of Epping Forest is located just to the south of the parish whilst a variety of public footpaths and bridleways provide public access to the parishes more rural areas.



# PPG17 - Epping




**Epping Forest District Council**

Parish: Epping

Area: 770.4 Hectares      Scale: 1:50,000 @ A0

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**Key**

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

Denotes Membership Only Facilities

**Date: 4th January 2010**