

FYFIELD – OPEN SPACE AUDIT**JULY 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 6
Chapter 5 – Alternative Sites For Sport	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 13
Chapter 9 – Community Centres and Village Halls	Page 14
Chapter 10 – Managed Open Space With Public Access	Page 16
Chapter 11 – Woodland And Semi-Natural Open Space With public access	Page 18

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

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
AT1	Cannons Lane Allotment	Cannons Lane, Fyfield	0.08	Privately Owned

CANNONS LANE ALLOTMENT (AT1)

2.0 Located at the end of Cannons Lane, this allotment is accessible via a dirt track which is well screened by vegetation on either side. The allotment site itself appears to fallen into disuse and is entirely overgrown with no sign of any plots currently in use. According to the Fyfield Parish Council, plans are being formalised to take over this site and rent plots to residents. An alternative proposal meanwhile is for a new allotment to be set up behind the village hall on Queen Street so that the facility is closer to the centre of the village.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There is a single allotment site in the parish.
- The site is at the extremity of Fyfield village, has poor access and is currently under private ownership and in disuse.
- Fyfield Parish Council intends to either take over the site or set up a new allotment site behind the village hall although no formal timescale for this has been set.
- It is anticipated that a single allotment site in the parish would be enough to cater for any local demand for this type of facility.

CHAPTER 3 - CEMETERIES AND GRAVEYARDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CG1	St Nicholas's Church	Willingale Road, Fyfield	0.72	Chelmsford Diocese



St Nicholas's Church, Site CG1

ST NICHOLAS'S CHURCH (CG1)

- 3.0** Located along Willingale Road, to the east of Fyfield village, this is a clean, tidy and peaceful site which is open in character and predominantly covered with grass. Access is gained via a metal gateway at the roadside entrance, which is well signposted. This leads onto a hard surfaced path that guides visitors to the church itself. The church, at the centre of the site, was originally built in the 12th century, and was rebuilt in 1851. It is clearly well cared for, along with the rest of the site.
- 3.1** The site is edged by a combination of brickwork, dense hedgerows and small trees, which partially screen it from much of the road. Where it faces the open countryside however, this boundary is much lower, so as to allow users to enjoy the views of the surrounding rural landscape. Whilst the site does not offer any specific parking, there are adequate spaces along Willingale Road, which is paved, therefore allowing all pedestrians, including those with pushchairs and using wheelchairs, to access the churchyard easily.

3.2 A considerable number of graves are somewhat randomly scattered throughout the site. This, however, adds to the charm of the churchyard, as well as indicating its age and historical significance. There is however, a lack of any seats or litter bins. The implementation of these would help to keep this area clean, and would allow church goers and visitors to enjoy the countryside views, particularly to the south, in comfort.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is an open, neat site which is well presented and maintained.
- Whilst no car park is provided, suitable parking is available along Willingale Road.
- Accessibility within the site is facilitated by the hard standing pathway leading up to the entrance of the church.
- No provision of seating or litter bins has been made.
- Given the rural nature of the parish and its small population, there does not appear to be a demand for any further provision for this type of facility within the parish.

CHAPTER 4 - FORMAL PLAYING PITCHES

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
FP1	Fyfield Sports Field	Walker Avenue, Fyfield	2.88	Fyfield Parish Council



Fyfield Sports Field, Site FP1

FYFIELD SPORTS FIELD (FP1)

- 4.0** Situated to the south of Walker Avenue, this is a large, well tended recreation ground which offers two football pitches, a cricket pitch, a basketball court with nearby seating area, and a children's playground, as well as a significant amount of informal open space when these pitches are not in use. FP1 is predominantly an open grassy space, with a perimeter of dense hedgerows and medium sized trees which effectively screen it from external view.
- 4.1** Access to the site, for both pedestrians and vehicles, is via Houchin Drive, which leads into a gravel car park to the north west. Just to the south of this car park lies a relatively new extension to the village hall which abuts the sports field. A further access is available to pedestrians via a turn off from Walker Avenue, which passes a number of garages to the east before emerging close to the car park to the north west. Adequate provision of seating, litter bins and dog waste bins has been made throughout, whilst adequate signage is on display at the main entrances.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is the only outdoor open space of its type within the parish.
- It is in good working order is clearly maintained to a very high degree, and offers a wide range of sporting options.
- Fyfield Parish Council does not indicate any demand for further facilities of this type within the local area.
- Those looking for alternative sporting facilities require personal or public transport to reach the more built up areas such as Epping, North Weald or even Chelmsford to the east.

CHAPTER 5 – ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR SPORT

- There are no alternative sites for sport located within Fyfield.
- Given its very rural nature and small local population, the Fyfield Parish Council does not indicate a demand for the provision of any new alternative sites for sport within the parish.
- Residents wishing to use sites of this type of open space will need access to their own vehicles or public transport to travel to the neighbouring parishes such as Ongar and North Weald, where such facilities are located.

CHAPTER 6 – INFORMAL RECREATION GROUNDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
RG1	Elmsbridge Open Space	Forest Drive	6.34	Privately Owned

ELMSBRIDGE OPEN SPACE (RG1)

- 6.0** Situated to the west of the Elmsbridge Gate residential development, this site is a relatively large sized area of informal grass space which was formerly used for football and cricket. A clubhouse to the south of the site, and a set of goal posts remain. The site can be accessed directly from the roadside via a gravel track which leads into a small gravel car park large enough for around 10-15 vehicles.
- 6.1** The site is bordered by a perimeter of medium sized bushes and trees which largely screen it from external view and help create a secluded feel. The site does not provide any seating, litter bins, dog bins or signage and is not gated at its entrance.



Elmsbridge Open Space, Site RG1

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is the only site of its type located within the parish.
- The site appears to fallen into some state of disrepair and it is unclear as to what its private owners intend to do with it in the future.
- For the time being the site is used by the local population as an informal recreation ground.
- Should the site be closed for redevelopment, residents would be forced to travel to neighbouring parishes such as North Weald and Ongar in order to access similar facilities.

CHAPTER 7 – CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUNDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CY1	Fyfield Sports Field Playground	Walker Avenue, Fyfield	0.02	Fyfield Parish Council



Fyfield Sports Field Playground, Site CY1

FYFIELD SPORTS FIELD PLAYGROUND (CY1)

- 7.0** Located to the east of Fyfield Sports Field, this children’s playground offers a variety of facilities for children aged up to 16. It offers a range of play equipment, all of which appears to be in good condition. One concern however, is that the playground is not fenced off from the surrounding recreation ground. As the site is also popular with dog walkers, this increases the potential danger of very young children coming into close contact with dogs. Installation of perimeter fencing would remove this risk.
- 7.1** Furthermore, visitors must cross the entirely grassy recreation ground in order to reach the playground, which may be difficult for wheelchair users and those with pushchairs, especially during wetter periods. The play equipment itself is surrounded by grass, which although providing soft ground to cushion a child’s fall, may further detract from the level of accessibility for some users.
- 7.2** The installation of a hard standing footpath leading up to CY1, together with the surfacing of the areas surrounding the play equipment with something more durable and soft, such as rubber, would address these problems.

Adequate provision of seats and litter bins has been made, although there is a complete lack of signage, which needs to be addressed.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- The playground's accessibility is poor, however this could be improved through the provision of a footpath leading up to the entrance, and the appropriate surfacing of areas within the site itself.
- The implementation of a perimeter fence and rubber surfacing around each individual piece of equipment, would make the playground safer and more secure for children to use.
- This is the only facility of its type in the parish.
- Fyfield Parish Council has not indicated a need for any further provision of this type of facility within the parish.
- This may largely be down to the rural location of the parish and the fact that the local population is small.

CHAPTER 8 - INDOOR FACILITIES FOR HIGH LEVELS OF USE

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There are no indoor facilities for high levels of use within Fyfield.
- Fyfield Parish Council has indicated that there is no demand for a facility of this type within the parish given its rural nature and small local population.
- Such a facility would require large turnover in terms of use in order for it to be profitable and would not be sustainable if situated in such a rural location.
- Those residents 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 where such facilities are provided.

CHAPTER 9 – COMMUNITY CENTRES AND VILLAGE HALLS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CV1	Fyfield Village Hall	Houchin Drive, Fyfield	0.14	Fyfield Parish Council

FYFIELD VILLAGE HALL (CV1)

- 9.0** Accessed from Houchin Drive this village hall is located in the same building as the sports centre used in conjunction with Fyfield Playing Fields (FP1) directly adjacent to the east. Also a part of this site is the local scout hut which is directly accessible from the sports centre and village hall building next door. The hall itself clearly forms a very important part of local community life as it is extensively used by a variety of groups for a number of different activities.
- 9.1** Of the activities that take place inside the hall itself include, dance classes, carpet bowls, bridge club, flower arranging classes and the local art group. The hall can also be hired out and is used for parties, charity events and wedding receptions. The hall is also used by Fyfield Parish Council for private and public meetings as well as other groups wishing to do the same. To cope with increasing demand and to ensure the good standard of the facilities is maintained, the hall was extended in 2008. Consequently the hall and the remainder of the site are all in excellent condition.



Fyfield Village Hall, Site CV1

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is the only facility of its type in the parish.
- The hall is used in conjunction with the local sports centre, playing fields (FP1), and local scout hut.
- The site has recently been extended and upgraded to cope with increasing local demand and is therefore in excellent condition.
- The local parish council has not indicated a local demand for further provision of this sort of facility within the parish.

CHAPTER 10 - MANAGED OPEN SPACE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
MO1	Land to north of Elmbridge Hall	Forest Drive, Fyfield	0.13	Epping Forest District Council
MO2	Land to the east of Elmbridge Hall	Forest Drive, Fyfield	0.11	Epping Forest District Council

LAND TO THE NORTH OF ELMBRIDGE HALL (MO1)

10.0 This area of amenity green space lies along Forest Drive to the north of Elmbridge Hall. It is predominantly grassy, with a number of young trees lining the southern perimeter. A few small hedgerows are scattered throughout, predominantly to the north and centre. The site is easily accessible, thanks to several hard surfaced pathways which surround and bisect it. The site is tidy, clean and clearly well maintained, although given its relatively small size and proximity to the roadside, it is only really suitable for informal use. It is nonetheless, a very pleasant area to look upon.



Land to the north of Elmbridge Hall, Site MO1

LAND TO THE EAST OF ELMBRIDGE HALL (MO2)

10.1 Located towards the southern end of Forest Drive, to the east of Elmbridge Hall, this is another area of amenity green space. It is predominantly grassy, with two pleasant medium sized trees at the centre which very much add to the overall view. Well preserved hedgerows mark the entire site perimeter, with the hedgerows to the west being much shorter than the rest, allowing those driving along Forest Drive to enjoy the attractive scenery within. Given its small size and proximity to the roadside, this site is only suitable for informal uses.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

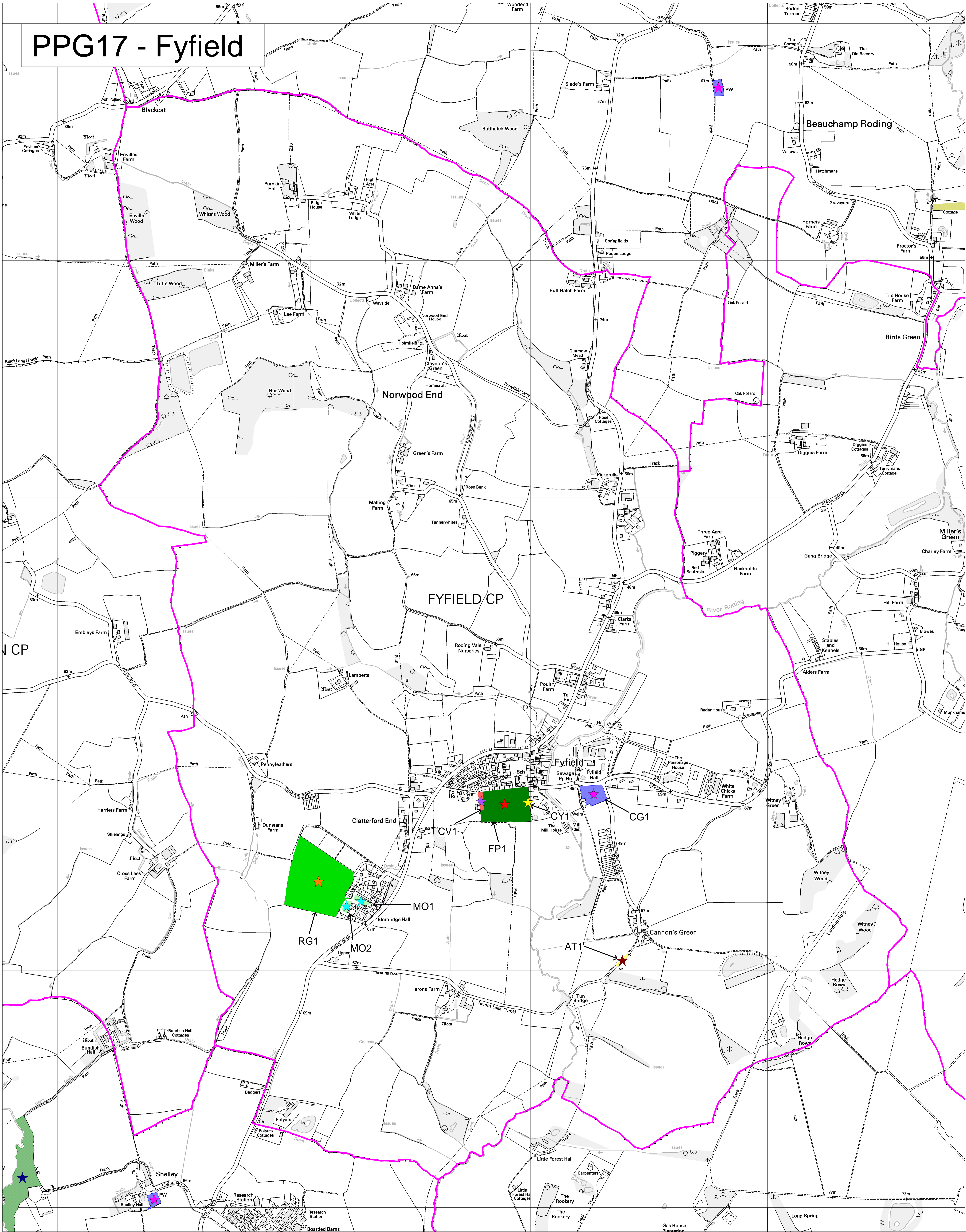
- Both of these managed open spaces are agreeably neat and well tended to.
- Given their small size and their proximity to busy roads, however, neither are ideal for anything more than walking dogs or enjoying the surroundings.
- No other managed open spaces are available throughout the rest of the Fyfield.
- Given the rural nature of the local area and the significant number of public footpaths which can be accessed throughout it, there appears to be no demand for any further provision of this facility within the parish.

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

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- Despite the very rural nature of Fyfield, there are no areas of publicly accessible woodland or semi-natural open space available in the parish.
- This lack of provision however is more than adequately countered by the large number of public footpaths spread throughout the whole parish.

PPG17 - Fyfield




Epping Forest District Council

Parish: Fyfield

Area: 987 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