

MATCHING - OPEN SPACE AUDIT**MAY 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 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 currently no allotments located within the parish.
- According to the Matching Parish Council the nearest allotments are situated in Harlow 5 miles away and it is not believed that there is any local demand for allotments in the parish.
- Those wishing for their own allotments will therefore require their own transport as there is only one bus journey a day between Matching Green/Matching Tye and Harlow.
- This is largely because of the rural nature of parish and the fact that most properties in the parish already have large gardens.

CHAPTER 3 - CEMETERIES AND GRAVEYARDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CG1	St Mary the Virgin Church	Church Green, Matching	0.52	Diocese of Chelmsford



St Mary the Virgin Church, Site CG1

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH (CG1)

- 3.0** Situated directly to the north of Matching Hall, this highly attractive site is very well maintained. It can be accessed from either of two entrances, to the south west and east. The eastern entrance however is viewed as the main entrance as the local farmer owns the access way to the south west of the site as well as all the land is this direction. There is a good relationship between the farmer and the church and parking space is usually available in the farmyard for events.
- 3.1** A hard stone path runs between the southern and eastern entrances, providing access in and out of the site as well as into the church itself. The accessibility of the site is good although those visitors using wheelchairs and pushchairs may find it difficult using the south western entrance where the land leading up to the gateway is uneven and surfaced with grass. The entrance to the east, however, is much more accessible, as a hard surfaced road ends directly opposite here.

3.2 Accessibility within much of the site can again be difficult for those with wheelchairs or pushchairs, as the only other paths present are grassy. There are no seats within the site although a single bench is located close by on Church Green for locals to use and enjoy the view, whilst signs have also been installed asking visitors not to leave any litter. Overall, the site's appearance is pleasant, largely down to its excellent maintenance and the variety of trees which are scattered around, adding to the tranquil presence.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is an agreeable and very smartly presented site.
- It is clean and tidy, with no evidence of litter or vandalism.
- The visual amenity here is greatly enhanced by a variety of medium and large trees spread throughout.
- The churchyard's accessibility is good, although it could be improved on, particularly with regard to access to the south western entrance, and to the internal network of paths.
- The provision of nearby seating allows visitors to enjoy the surrounding view.
- This is the only facility of its kind within the parish and Matching Parish Council has recorded no demand for further provision of this type of facility.

CHAPTER 4 - FORMAL PLAYING PITCHES

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
FP1	Matching Green Cricket Ground	Matching Green	0.82	Matching Parish Council
FP2	Matching Green Football Ground	Matching Green	1.07	Privately Owned



Matching Green Cricket Ground, Site FP1

MATCHING GREEN CRICKET GROUND (FP1)

- 4.0** The village green at the heart of Matching Green is a particularly open site, which can be viewed from all sides, from the network of roads that surround it. The cricket ground, like the rest of the Green, appears well cared for. To the north of the ground lies a small cricket pavilion, which does not detract from the overall visual amenity.
- 4.1** Access onto the cricket ground appears relatively straightforward for pedestrians, who may simply walk across the Green, although this may be more difficult for those with pushchairs or wheelchairs. As the site is a designated Village Green, hard surfaced footpaths or any official parking are not allowed on the site. Despite this, those using the cricket club often drive onto the grass to the west of the site for ease of unloading their cricket equipment. This unfortunately however is wearing down the grass and this therefore questions whether measures should be taken to prevent further damage.

MATCHING GREEN FOOTBALL GROUND (FP2)

- 4.2** Located on the north west outskirts of Matching Green, this site is predominantly grassy. It consists of a solitary football pitch with goal posts erected at either end. To the west there is a small changing room, which is in need of repair. The east and west of the ground is bordered by tall trees, which add to the overall setting. To the south, the site faces the rear gardens of neighbouring homes.
- 4.3** The key issue with the site is its accessibility, which warrants some improvement. Firstly, the small pathway leading onto the ground is not immediately obvious. Secondly, this pathway is particularly narrow, and is not hard surfaced, which must make it rather difficult to negotiate, particularly during wet weather.



Matching Green Football Field, Site FP2

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There appears to be a good range of formal playing pitches within the parish, considering its rural nature.
- Both sites are set in attractive rural surroundings and provide adequate seats and litter bins where necessary.
- One issue affecting both sites however regards their accessibility. Those with wheelchairs or pushchairs may find the sites particularly difficult to use, as they lack hard surfaced footpaths.

- Whilst no footpaths or car parking are allowed to be built on Matching Green (MO2) in conjunction with Matching Green Cricket Ground (FP1), due to its Village Green designation, it seems counter productive to then allow cars to drive onto the site anyway, thereby degrading the quality of the green.
- According to Matching Parish Council there is no current demand for any further facilities of this type within the parish, but this position continues to be monitored.

CHAPTER 5 – ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR SPORT

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

CHAPTER 6 – INFORMAL RECREATION GROUNDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
RG1	Jubilee Green	Matching Tye	1.22	Matching Parish Council



Jubilee Green, Site RG1

JUBILEE GREEN (RG1)

- 6.0** This long and relatively narrow recreation ground lies in the southern outskirts of Matching Tye. It is well kept, and offers a wide variety of children's facilities, including an all weather hard court, a skating ramp, a football pitch and a small playground. Matching Park borders the site to the south, and Parkside runs along the northern perimeter of the site which links between Harlow and Matching Green.
- 6.1** The main entrance to the recreation ground lies towards the north eastern corner, and is accessed via a short wooden bridge that crosses a small ditch marking out the northern perimeter. Once visitors have crossed this bridge, they can take advantage of the seating offered to the east. A number of more formal planted areas have been laid out here, adding to the pleasing surroundings.

- 6.2** Whilst the site appears to offer a good range of facilities, some of the equipment in the playground has been prone to vandalism in the past and has recently been repaired. The implementation of CCTV as used in some other parishes would be beneficial if this were an affordable option for the Parish Council in future. Furthermore, accessibility could be improved as there are no hard surfaced footpaths within the site beyond the children's playground to the east. This could potentially make access much more difficult for wheelchair users and those with pushchairs, particularly during the colder, wetter times of year.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is the only designated informal recreation ground in the parish although Matching Common (MO2) including the area used by Matching Cricket Ground (FP1) can also be used for similar informal activities.
- The range of facilities on Jubilee Green (RG1) is excellent although some of the children's play equipment appears to have been vandalised.
- A lack of hard surfaced footpaths travelling through the site makes it slightly more difficult for those with pushchairs and wheelchairs to access, therefore decreasing its overall accessibility.
- Adequate provisions of seating and litter bins are provided on the site which help to ensure its tidiness.
- According to Matching Parish Council there is currently a demand for any further facilities of this type within the parish. However, should a demand be identified then Parish Council will seek to meet this demand.

CHAPTER 7 – CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUNDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CY1	Jubilee Field Playground	Jubilee Field, Matching Tye	0.03	Matching Parish Council



Jubilee Field Playground, Site CY1

JUBLIEE FIELD PLAYGROUND (CY1)

- 7.0** This playground is positioned within Jubilee Field, to the south of the village of Matching Tye. It has a very attractive location adjacent to Matching Park. The playground’s perimeter is in excellent condition, and the two entrances to the east and west are brightly coloured and therefore highly visible. A small pathway allows members of the public to access the eastern entrance, although there is no pathway leading up to the western entry.
- 7.1** A variety of children’s playground equipment has been installed. All of the playground equipment is surrounded with appropriate rubber surfacing, which protects young children who might fall, and which makes it easier for pushchairs and wheelchairs to negotiate. Plenty of litter bins and seats have been provided, and are in good order whilst the site is also adequately signed. Some of the playground equipment which showed damage following initial audit of the site has now been repaired according to Matching Parish Council.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- The playground is easily accessible, whilst its security is excellent.
- Accessibility could be improved further by linking the western entrance to the small network of hard surfaced pathways found in Jubilee Green (RG1).
- The playground itself is clearly well looked after, and is generally well preserved, despite some evidence of vandalism to the play equipment.
- Plenty of seats and litter bins are provided, which are also in good order.
- There are signs at the site's boundaries.
- There is only one children's playground in the parish, although given the rural nature of Matching this could be argued to be a quite reasonable provision.
- Matching Parish Council state there is a demand for another children's playground in Matching. It is intended to construct a facility in Matching Green once funds are available, the exact potential siting of which is yet to be disclosed.

CHAPTER 8 - INDOOR FACILITIES FOR HIGH LEVELS OF USE

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There are no indoor facilities for high levels of use within Matching.
- Matching 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 sustainable given the very rural nature of this parish.
- 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 Epping and Ongar as well as Harlow where such facilities are provided.

CHAPTER 9 – COMMUNITY CENTRES AND VILLAGE HALLS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CV1	Matching Tye Village Hall	Matching Tye, Harlow	0.18	Matching Parish Council

MATCHING TYE VILLAGE HALL (CV1)

- 9.0** Situated along an unnamed road which runs through Matching Tye, to the very east of the village, this distinctive wooden hall was originally built in 1920 and adds significantly to the local heritage conservation site within which it is located. Since its original construction, the hall has been undergone major improvements to modernise its facilities and since then it has continued to be an ideal site for various events, functions, and meetings.
- 9.1** The hall is available for a wide variety of uses including children’s parties, wedding receptions, business meetings, and various charity events. The site is also used by a number of societies including the Women’s Institute, senior citizens club, and pre-school groups. The hall also caters for a variety of different clubs ranging from dog training to line dancing classes. The site appears to be in very good condition, especially considering its age, offers a good amount of parking and is clearly well very maintained by those who use it.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is the only site of its type within the parish.
- The site caters adequately with all locals needs and appears to be well maintained and in good condition, especially given its age.
- Matching Parish Council does not anticipate a need for further facilities of this type within the parish.

CHAPTER 10 - MANAGED OPEN SPACE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
MO1	Land to the south of Manor House	Housham Tye	0.68	Matching Parish Council
MO2	Matching Green	Matching Green	6.18	Matching Parish Council
MO3	Land to the south of Housham Tye	Housham Tye	0.55	Matching Parish Council

LAND TO THE SOUTH OF MANOR HOUSE (MO1)

10.0 Located to the north of the unnamed road in Housham Tye, this is a relatively small area of grassland which is surrounded to the north, east and west by trees. To the south of the site runs a small ditch beyond which runs the unnamed road which overlooks the site. Given its overall setting, this is a particularly pleasant site which generates a very secluded feel. Bearing in mind its very rural location and small size this site is not really suitable for anything more than dog walking and as a visual amenity.



Land to the south of Manor House, Site MO1

MATCHING GREEN (MO2)

- 10.1** Found at the heart of the village of Matching Green, this is a large and predominantly open area of amenity green space which also serves as the local cricket ground. Three ponds are also located on the site along its eastern side, the biggest of which sits directly north of the cricket ground and is partially screened from view by a number of medium and small sized trees which are located around its perimeter.
- 10.2** Although generally the site looks to be clean, tidy, in good condition and is well maintained it clearly suffers from one major problem and this relates to large numbers of vehicles parking around its edges and cutting up the grass in these areas. The council is currently in the process of erecting kerbing around the perimeter of the Green to try and stop this problem and are trying to encourage locals living around the green to park in their driveways and garages where possible.
- 10.3** As mentioned previously, vehicles do have access onto the green as granted by the previous owner of the Green before it was designated a Village Green. As long as this continues there is a danger that the green will be badly eroded and there appears to be no solution to this problem at present.
- 10.4** Whether this is deemed acceptable is unclear however the influence of cars is clearly having a degrading effect on the site as some of its edges have been very badly cut up by vehicle movements. There appears to be little room where locals can park their cars. As a result, finding a solution to this issue may be potentially difficult.

LAND TO THE SOUTH OF HOUSHAM TYE (MO3)

- 10.5** Situated on the opposite side of road to the land to the south of Manor Road (MO1), this site is another small area of grassland which is managed by Matching Parish Council. The site is a particularly pleasant given its largely enclosed nature surrounded by attractive trees and bushes. Due to its small size and proximity to a road however, it is only really suitable for walking and as a local visual amenity.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- All four of these sites are clean, tidy and well maintained.
- The close proximity to the road of the land to the south of Housham Tye (MO3) makes them unsuitable for young children to use unaccompanied.
- Very young children should also be accompanied by an adult on Matching Green (MO2) given that it is surrounded by a network of roads.

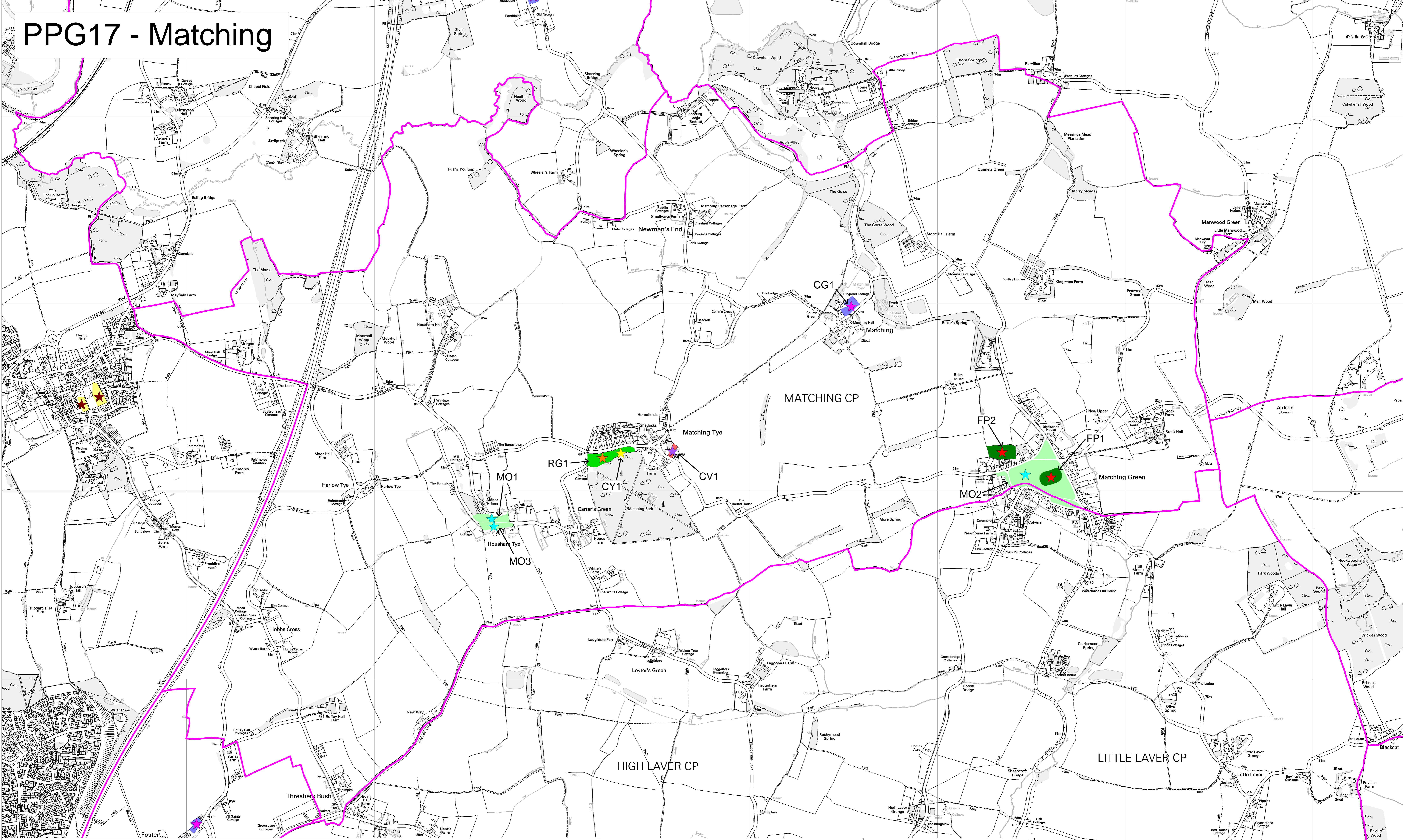
- The very rural location of the land to the South of Manor House (MO1) and the land to the south of Housham Tye (MO3) has a restrictive influence on the number of people who may wish to use them.
- One major issue regarding Matching Green (MO2) is the fact that it is being degraded, particularly around its edges by cars parking and driving onto it.
- The Council are aware of this issue but it is a particularly difficult situation
- Matching Parish Council are not aware of any further managed open spaces within the parish.

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

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- Despite the very rural nature of the Matching, there are no areas of publicly accessible woodland or semi-natural open space in the parish.
- There are however a significant number of public footpaths and bridleways which run throughout the local countryside offering residents good access in the most rural areas.

PPG17 - Matching



Parish: Matching

Area: 1257 Hectares Scale: 1:65,000 @ A0

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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