

**MORETON, BOBBINGWORTH AND THE LAVERS**  
**OPEN SPACE AUDIT**

**JULY 2009**

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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**

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
AT1	Garden Field	Harlow Road, Moreton	0.81	Privately Owned



Garden Field, Site AT1

### **GARDEN FIELD (AT1)**

- 2.0** Located along Harlow Road to the south of Lakeview Caravan Park, this site is a large area of land which is divided into a number of separate uses including two separate areas of allotment plots. To the south of the site lies the main allotment area which borders the rears of a number of houses facing southwards along Harlow Road. The site is accessible via a small gateway entirely concealed by the perimeter hedgerow which runs along the western perimeter of the site. This entrance therefore poses as a serious danger to pedestrians and drivers alike as the entrance is also close to a tight bend.
- 2.1** Once within the site a sloped grass entrance allows access into the site allotment which comprises of six separate plots and is clean, tidy and clearly well maintained with no visible overgrown areas. The allotment can also be accessed along its southern perimeter by a number of entrances which lead directly from each of the neighbouring three residential homes which back onto it.

- 2.2** To the north of this main section of allotment the land then changes to a more natural landscape dominated by large shrubs and bushes with a small areas of grassland. This section of the site has been allowed to naturalise for environmental diversity whilst the small area of grassland is used as a children's play area for the site owners family. To the very north western corner of the site, a second smaller allotment area can be found consisting of a single plot.
- 2.3** This allotment can be accessed either from a wooden gate to the north west corner of the site or via a small gap in the hedgerow along the sites western perimeter. This latter entrance is rather precarious as not only is it located at the top of a grassy sloped embankment but two pieces of wood cross the entrance gap at around thigh height which make the entrance difficult to use.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- This is a smart and attractive allotment which is very clean and tidy and very well maintained.
- Both western entrances to the site are awkward to access and are a potential hazard for pedestrian and vehicle drivers alike.
- Neither main entrance to the west of the site is signed.
- The Parish Council is unwilling to introduce further allotments in the parish as there are currently a couple of vacancies on the existing site which they anticipate will be taken up soon.

### **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 Mary's Church	Church Road, Moreton	0.73	Diocese of Chelmsford
CG2	St Germain's Church	Stony Lane, Bobbingworth	0.49	Diocese of Chelmsford
CG3	All Saint's Church	High Laver	0.51	Diocese of Chelmsford
CG4	St Mary Magdalen's Church	TileGate Road, Magdalen Laver	0.38	Diocese of Chelmsford



St Mary's Church, Site CG1

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

- 3.0** Situated along Church Road to the east of Moreton, the first feature of this churchyard to notice is that it is on a slope. Visitors wishing to access the church to the east of the site must therefore travel up the sloped gravel track which leads directly to its main entrance. This however may be particularly difficult for those members of the public with pushchairs or wheelchairs. Furthermore, despite the relatively large size of the churchyard, there appears to be no other footpaths crossing the site making it necessary to walk on the grass to access other parts of the site.
- 3.1** There is a car park to the south east corner of the site with room for at least fifteen vehicles, the grass surfacing of which, appears to have been gradually



worn down by the cars parking on it. The churchyard's perimeter consists of a variety of hedgerows and relatively large trees which screen much of the site from view. To the east, gaps in this boundary permit long views to the surrounding countryside.

- 3.2** The churchyard itself is clean, tidy and evidently well maintained. The main entrance to the site is well signed whilst the wide range of attractive trees on site very much add to the overall amenity value. One minor issue regarding the site is that no seating is provided for those that wish to enjoy the pleasant setting.



St Germain's Church, Site CG2

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

- 3.3** Located to the south of Stony Road in Bobbingworth, this is an attractive site which is bordered to the north by a wooden fence and a variety of trees and shrubs around its remaining sides. The site can be accessed via a small gate to the north east or from the main entrance located to the north west of the site. A gravel track, through the green to the north of the site, links the front entrance of the church to Stony Road.
- 3.4** A second gravel track to the east of the site provides space for visitors to park their cars when accessing the churchyard. These tracks, whilst not hard surfaced are still sufficient to allow both pushchair and wheelchair users to access the site. The main entrance to the churchyard is appropriately signed whilst seating can be seen around the site.



All Saint's Church, Site CG3

### **ALL SAINT'S CHURCH (CG3)**

- 3.5** Found to the west of the crossroads to the south of High Laver, this is a relatively small site which is very pleasant in appearance. The main metal gateway entrance is located to the south of the site opposite a small car park which contains enough space for approximately ten vehicles. From the main entrance, a relatively worn hard surfaced pathway allows visitors to access the church, the surrounding grounds and High Laver Hall which is situated to the north of the site.
- 3.6** The most striking feature of the surrounding grounds are the variety of large trees which dominate the sites border as well as other parts of the site, particularly to the south west and north east. In conjunction with the trees and other flora, the sites perimeter is defined by separate wooden and metal fencing which circles the entire site and appears to be in good condition. The site furthermore appears to be clean, tidy and well maintained, whilst adequate seating and signage are provided.



St Mary Magdalen's Church, Site CG4

### **ST MARY MAGDALEN'S CHURCH (CG4)**

- 3.7** Found at the end of an uneven track which turns off from Tilegate Road to the east of Magdalen Laver, this is a relatively isolated site which therefore has a tranquil feel. To the south of the site lies a triangular shaped gravel car park which offers space for parking for at least twenty vehicles. From the car park visitors can access the churchyard through a metal gateway.
- 3.8** Having entered the churchyard, visitors may then access the church located at the centre of the site via a hard surfaced pathway which leads straight to its main entrance and is suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. Another larger metal gateway to the south western corner of the site meanwhile allows maintenance vehicles to access the site. The churchyard is bordered by a combination of metal fencing which is most evident along the southern border and seems a little worn, as well as a variety of shrubs and various sized trees which effectively screen much of the site from external view.
- 3.9** Facing southwards however, visitors to the site will be able to enjoy the high quality long views of the open countryside. The churchyard appears to be very clean, tidy and well maintained and offers some seating. One minor issue is the lack of any informational signage by the main entrance.



## **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- The four churches provide plenty of locations for locals and visitors alike to enjoy this type of open space within the parish.
- All four of the sites are clean, tidy and attractive in appearance and offer pleasant and tranquil environments for visitors to enjoy.
- No seating is provided at St Mary's Church (CG1) preventing visitors from making the most of the enjoyable scenery which surrounds the site.
- There is a lack of adequate signage at St Germain's Church (CG2) and St Mary Magdalen's Church (CG4).
- All four sites can be accessed by wheelchair and pushchair users however access to St Mary's Church (CG1) is awkward as the main pathway is on a slight gradient.
- The track which leads up to St Mary Magdalen's Church (CG4) is very uneven and some vehicles may find it difficult to access. Ideally this track should be resurfaced to allow easier accessibility.

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

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no formal playing pitches located within Moreton and Bobbingworth.
- The 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 residential population, this lack of demand is not particularly surprising.
- Those who wish to engage in pitch sports will therefore need to travel to neighbouring parishes such as Ongar and North Weald.
- residents of the parish therefore need their own vehicles or to have access to public transport in order to access these sites.

## **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	Blakes Golf Club	Epping Road, North Weald	71.41	Privately Owned

### **BLAKES GOLF CLUB (AS1)**

- 5.0** Spread across North Weald and Moreton and Bobbingworth Parishes, this golf club offers a high quality eighteen hole inland links golf course as well as a modern three level clubhouse which overlooks the 18<sup>th</sup> hole. The site offers excellent views across rural Essex towards London and includes a restaurant and pro shop within it. The site is immaculately presented and offers some highly attractive scenery. The club is accessible via the A414 to the south of Moreton and Bobbingworth Parish which then travels southward back towards North Weald Parish where part of the site is located.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- The range of alternative sites for sport within Moreton and Bobbingworth is very limited.
- The Parish Council does not indicate a demand for this type of open space within the parish.
- Given the location of the parish close to Ongar and relatively close to Chelmsford, Harlow, there does not appear to be any demand for any further facilities of this nature locally.
- Residents of the parish however will need to have their own vehicles or access to public transport in order to access similar facilities in neighbouring parishes.

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

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no informal recreation grounds located within Moreton and Bobbingworth parish.
- Indeed there are no facilities of any type in the parish which cater for children and young people.
- This however is not unsurprising given the very rural nature of the parish and the small local population.
- Furthermore, most houses in the parish typically offer excellent amounts of private amenity space
- As a result the Parish Council does not indicate a demand for the provision of any informal recreation grounds here.
- Those wishing to access nearby sites of this type will need access to their own vehicles or good public transport.
- The closest areas which offer facilities of this nature are North Weald and Chipping Ongar parishes.

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

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no children’s playgrounds within Moreton and Bobbingworth.
- The Parish Council does not believe there is a demand for the provision of this type of facility within the local area.
- This is largely due to local residential homes in the parish having enough private amenity space for children’s play.

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

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no indoor facilities for high levels of use within Moreton and Bobbingworth.
- The 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**

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
CV1	Moreton Village Hall	Church Road, Moreton	0.05	Moreton Parish Council
CV2	Magdalen Laver Village Hall	Tilegate Road, Magdalen Laver	0.32	Privately Owned

### **MORETON VILLAGE HALL (CV1)**

**9.0** Situated along Church Road opposite Moreton Church of England Primary School, this is a very small village hall which appears to be rather old and worn down. The site is still well used, however the Parish Council have indicated that it would like to upgrade the site in future. Those groups using the hall include the local horticultural society and the local church society. The hall is also used as a meeting room and for special events such as children's birthday parties as well as some more unusual pastimes such as clog dancing.

### **MAGDALEN LAVER VILLAGE HALL (CV2)**

**9.1** Located along Tilegate Road to the south of Magdalen Laver village, this is a relatively new, and well maintained hall which is very well used by a variety of individuals, groups, clubs and societies. This includes the local section of the Women's Institute, the local youth club, horticultural club, indoor bowls club and table tennis club. The site is also used for shows by local entertainers, charity events, private functions and even as a polling station.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There is quite a significant difference between the two halls located in the parish in terms of their size, age and overall appearance.
- This however does not particularly affect their use however as both are used for a variety of different functions, events, clubs and classes.
- In the future the Parish Council would like to upgrade Moreton Village Hall however no timescale has been placed on this decision.

## **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	Land to the east of The Hoppitt	The Hoppitt, Moreton	0.06	Moreton and Bobbingworth Parish Council
MO2	Matching Green	Matching Green	6.18	Matching Parish Council



Land to the east of the Hoppitt, Site MO1

### **LAND TO THE EAST OF THE HOPPITT (MO1)**

- 10.0** Situated in between Harlow Road and The Hoppitt, this is a small area of amenity green space which is predominantly made up of grass. The only exception to this is the small concreted area to the south which has been established to provide residents on The Hoppitt with somewhere to park their cars. The site appears to be very well maintained and is clean, tidy and features a bench at its centre facing eastwards across Harlow Road. A small number of flowers have also been planted on the site and these very much add to the overall appearance of the site.

### **MATCHING GREEN (MO2)**

- 10.1** Found predominantly in Matching parish, but with a small section of the site located in Moreton and Bobbingworth parish, this is a large and predominantly open area of amenity green space which also serves as the location for 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 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. Furthermore it would seem that from time to time, vehicles go as far as to even drive onto the green, including onto the cricket ground located at its centre.

**10.3** These vehicle movements are clearly having a degrading effect on the site as some of its edges have been very badly cut up. Managing this issue seems potentially difficult however as there appears to be little room around the green for locals and site users to park their cars. As a result therefore, finding a solution to this issue may be potentially difficult.



Matching Green, Site MO2

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are only two areas of managed open space in Moreton and Bobbingworth Parish.
- Most of Matching Green (MO2) is located in an adjoining parish.

- Both areas of managed open space are clean, tidy and well maintained.
- Matching Green (MO2) is being degraded, particularly around its edges by cars parking and driving onto it.
- The small size of the land to the east of The Hoppitt (MO3) as well as its proximity to a road makes it unsuitable for young children to use unaccompanied.
- An adult should also accompany very young children on Matching Green (MO2) given that a network of roads surrounds it.
- Whilst these are the only two types of this open space in the parish, there is an abundance of public footpaths and bridleways providing locals with many excellent opportunities for exploring the rural surroundings.



## **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	Bobbingworth Parish Park	Moreton Bridge Road, Moreton	8.95	Epping Forest District Council

### **BOBBINGWORTH PARISH PARK (SO1)**

**11.0** Situated to the south of Moreton village beside Morton Bridge Road, this former gravel extraction site and landfill is currently in the process of being remediated to provide a new green open space and parkland just under 9 hectares in size. The site will be mainly low nutrient grassland whilst wildflowers will also be encouraged. In addition, a large number of trees and shrubs (in excess of 6000 plants) will be planted whilst some developed closed marshes and open water wetlands will also be developed. The restored site when finished in 2010 will develop as a nature conservation area with a diverse habitat and biodiversity.

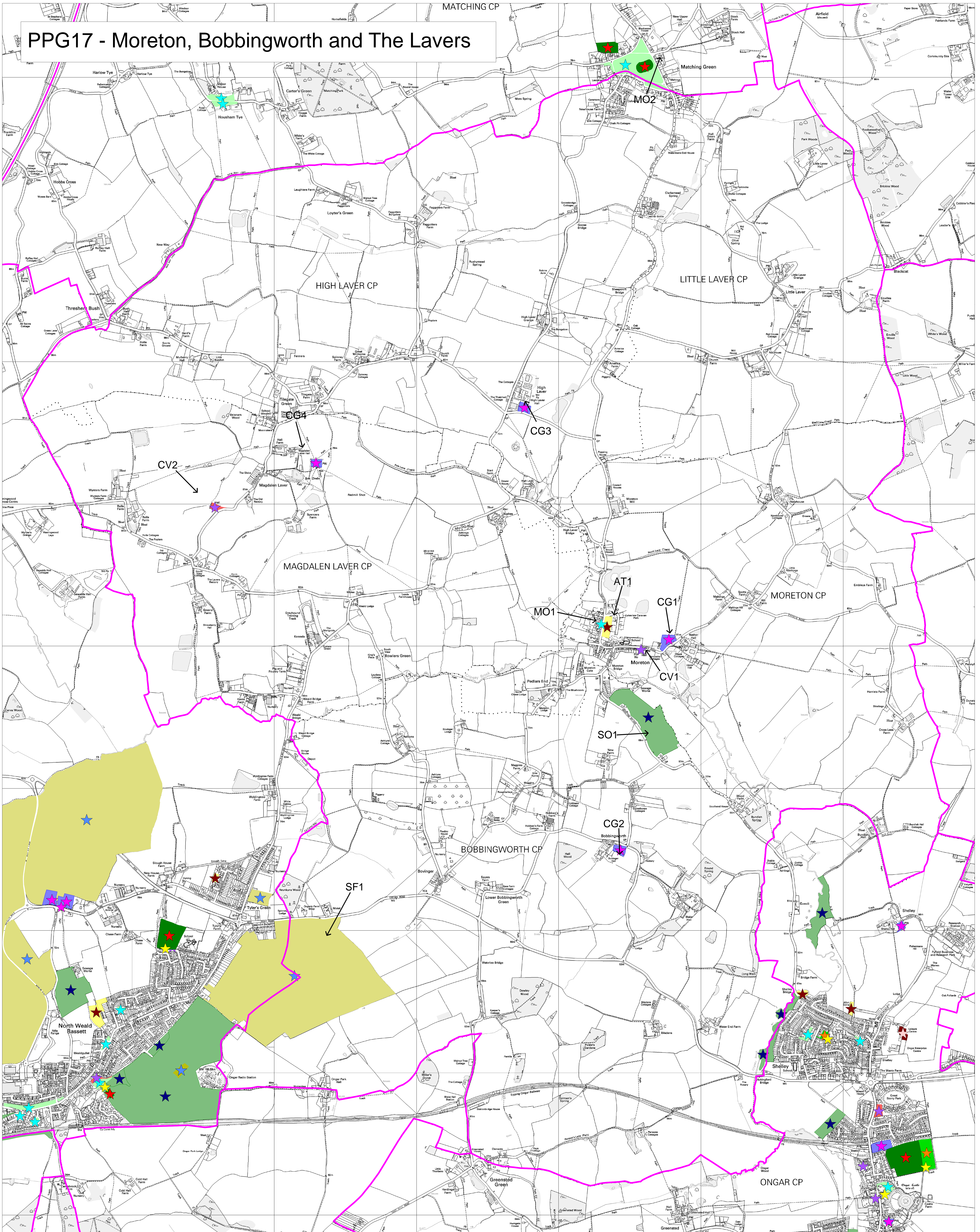
**11.1** Free public access will be available to the whole site and mown paths will be cut through the meadow. A local public footpath will also link to the site and new pedestrian entrances will be created to the north and the south. In addition a car park will be constructed at the southern.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- Despite the very rural nature of Moreton and Bobbingworth Parish, this is the only open space facility of its type in the local area.
- As previously mentioned however, there are a wide range of public footpaths and bridleways throughout the parish which enable residents and visitors alike the opportunity to explore the open countryside.



# PPG17 - Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers



Parish: Moreton and Bobbingworth

Area: 3354 Hectares      Scale: 1: 85,000 @ 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