

ONGAR – OPEN SPACE AUDIT**OCTOBER 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

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
AT1	Moreton Road Allotment	Moreton Road, Shelley	0.29	Ongar Town Council
AT2	Moreton Road Private Allotment	Moreton Road, Shelley	0.25	Privately Owned
AT3	Castle Street Allotment	Castle Street, Chipping Ongar	0.93	Buxton Trust Family
AT4	Rodney Road Allotment	Rodney Road, Chipping Ongar	0.23	Privately Owned



Moreton Road Allotment, Site AT1

MORETON ROAD ALLOTMENT (AT1)

- 2.0** Running along Moreton Road, and located at the north westerly edge of Shelley, this allotment borders residential housing to the south east and Cripsey Brook to the north. The allotment is hidden from the roadside by a perimeter of tall standing hedgerows and trees but still provides views looking north towards Bridge Farm and the surrounding countryside for those within the site. The setting is complemented by the allotment itself which is very well maintained and has no unused or overgrown plots.

- 2.1 Access to the allotment can be gained via a wooden gate off Moreton Road. However, reaching this entrance gate is dangerous as there is no footpath leading up to it. As a result potential site users must walk along the road to gain access, at a point where the speed limit changes between 30mph to 60mph. This is obviously a safety concern. The allotment's entrance sign has been placed very high up by the main entrance to overlook the tall hedgerows which surround this part of the site, however a lack of maintenance at the time of auditing has seen these hedgerows grow to obscure the sign from view. The responsibility for ensuring the visibility of this sign therefore falls to Ongar Town Council.

MORETON ROAD PRIVATE ALLOTMENT (AT2)

- 2.2 Situated further to the east of Moreton Road, this allotment is just west of the junction of Moreton Road and Coles Close. It can be accessed from Moreton Road via a very narrow entranceway and public footpath, which then runs alongside its eastern boundary. The perimeter of AT2 is entirely marked out with wire mesh fencing, which is partly hidden from view by shrubs. Beyond are views of the open countryside to the north and west. The allotment itself appears in good order, and is attractive, with no apparent unused plots. The only issue regards the very narrow entranceway, which makes accessing the site rather awkward.



Moreton Road Private Allotment, Site AT2

CASTLE STREET ALLOTMENT (AT3)

- 2.3** Located via a short earth path to the south of Castle Street, this allotment is the largest in the parish. Some areas are well maintained but large areas are completely overgrown with nettles and various other weeds, this despite the fact the local town council has advised that all 26 plots are rented out. The surface of the allotment meanwhile is particularly undulating which makes negotiating the site difficult, especially for those less able bodied. Furthermore, the plot divisions appear rather haphazard, particularly to the east.
- 2.4** There is a significant amount of horticultural waste present in certain areas of the site, which detracts from its overall visual amenity. The wooden kissing gate which allowed entry into the site but was rather worn and overgrown with vegetation, has now been replaced with a brand new gate, thereby improving the site's overall accessibility. There is a lot of dog excrement on the pathway itself, which could easily be tackled through the provision of a dog waste bin.



Castle Street Allotment, Site AT3

RODNEY ROAD ALLOTMENT (AT4)

- 2.5** Regarded by the local town council as a privately owned allotment, this site is towards the rear of the residential housing on Rodney Road, Fairfield Road and Glebe Road and is accessible via a pathway from Rodney Road. This pathway is extremely well secured by barbed wired and gating to the point where it does not appear to be accessible. As a result it is likely that the only

way to access the site is from the rear gardens of the residential houses which surround the site instead. The site appears to be at least partly overgrown and has a tall perimeter of trees around it which help to further enclose it from external view.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- The accessibility of all three allotments is poor in certain areas, making entry difficult, and even dangerous, in places.
- Despite all of its plots being rented out, many plots in Castle Street Allotment (AT3) appears to suffer from under use, and careless horticultural dumping.
- If it is not already doing so, the Buxton Family Trust should monitor allotment plot use and consider redistributing unused plots to those people who will use them.
- The dumping issue could be alleviated by the installation of horticultural composters.
- Placing a dog waste bin along the pathways towards Castle Street Allotment (AT3) would reduce the amount of dog excrement.
- In October 2009, Ongar Town Council stated that a former privately owned allotment adjacent to Ongar Bridge was closed a few years ago due to the site being heavily neglected. The land owner asked the last few tenants to quit their plots and has since sold on the land.
- The privately owned allotment formerly located to the north of St Peter's Avenue in Shelley now appears to have been converted into an area of informal amenity green space (see site MO8).
- The waiting list for allotments in the parish is minimal according to the town council, however they themselves only own one of the four allotments in this parish and so locals may be turning to these sites instead.

CHAPTER 3 - CEMETERIES AND GRAVEYARDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CG1	Ongar Cemetery	Love Lane, Chipping Ongar	0.88	Ongar Town Council
CG2	St Peters Church	Church Lane, Shelley	0.25	Diocese of Chelmsford
CG3	St Martins Church	High Street, Ongar	0.21	Ongar Town Council



Ongar Cemetery, Site CG1

ONGAR CEMETERY (CG1)

- 3.0** Situated to the north of the junction between High Street and Love Lane, this cemetery is the parish's largest area of burial space. A perimeter of dense hedgerows screen it from roadside view and add to its peaceful setting. There are two main entrances, one to the south and one to the east, both of which link to an internal network of non-surfaced tracks allowing pedestrian and vehicle movement.
- 3.1** Accessibility via this network of paths, however, is not ideal for wheelchairs and pushchairs, due to its uneven nature, and relatively poor surfacing particularly throughout the older part of the graveyard. The town council has

indicated that it intends to address this issue in the near future although members are keen to keep these footpaths as natural looking as possible in order to maintain the sites character. Towards the centre of the cemetery is a small chapel which is well looked after, and adds to the visual interest of the site.

- 3.2** The variety of tall trees located throughout, and particularly towards the west, also add to the sites setting. The cemetery provides adequate seating, and litter bins, which all appear well-maintained. The signage installed at both main entrances is in good repair. Car parking is available either in Love Lane Recreation Ground car park, or on one of the nearby residential streets.



St Peter's Church, Site CG2

ST PETER'S CHURCH (CG2)

- 3.3** This churchyard is located in a rural setting off Church Lane, which in turn can be accessed from Fyfield Road to the north of the parish. A small area of informal car parking is available adjacent to the north of the churchyard. Access to the site is via a gated entrance facing this area of parking which leads to both the churchyard and a public footpath. This footpath leads to Moreton Road and Brookfields in Shelley.
- 3.4** The perimeter of the churchyard is predominantly formed from a variety of trees and shrubs of different sizes, which screen much of the site from view and help to give it a very peaceful feel. Overall the churchyard is very well

kept and offers good seating, with the only minor issue relating to the difficulty wheelchair and pushchair users may have using the footpaths.



St Martin's Church, Site CG3

ST MARTIN'S CHURCH (CG3)

- 3.5** Located to the south of St Martin's Mews which itself joins High Street to the west, this churchyard has been closed for burials for over 150 years but can still be enjoyed by those choosing to walk through its grounds. Access is via a metal-fenced hard-surfaced pathway which travels across the site from north to south and provides access into St Martin's Church suitable for those less physically mobile. Parts of the church date back as far as the 11th century and this building very much adds to the overall visual amenity of the site. The gardens are very well maintained and are free of any litter or vandalism such as graffiti therefore helping to create a very tranquil site.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- All three sites are well maintained.
- All the sites are also effectively screened from public view, adding to their relaxing atmosphere.
- Ongar Cemetery (CG1) and St Peter's Church (CG2) provide adequate seating and litter bins where necessary.
- Accessibility for wheelchairs and pushchairs could be improved with the provision of hard-surfaced pathways in Ongar Cemetery (CG1) and St

Peter's Churchyard (CG2), but only if it is deemed necessary and cost effective.

- There is no churchyard provision to the south of the parish, however Ongar Town Council has stated as of October 2009 that there is no demand for any further provision given the good supply already available.
- Ongar Town Council will not be seeking for further provision of this type of open space until local demand increases.

CHAPTER 4 – FORMAL PLAYING PITCHES

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
FP1	Ongar Sports and Social Club Field	Love Lane, Chipping Ongar	4.80	Ongar Town Council



Ongar Sports and Social Club Sports Field, Site FP1

ONGAR SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB SPORTS FIELD (FP1)

- 4.0** This site lies at the end of Love Lane, just north of the remains of Ongar Castle, and directly adjacent to the west of Love Lane Recreation Ground from which it is separated by trees and shrubs. The remaining sides of the site are also surrounded by trees and hedgerows.
- 4.1** A significant proportion of the site is used by Ongar Cricket Club, but there are also a number of small hockey pitches marked out. To the north is the Sports and Social Club Clubhouse whilst to the east of this is Ongar Tennis Club which offers four well maintained hard-surfaced tennis courts. A car park large enough for approximately 20-30 cars is located to the north west corner of the site. The site offers adequate seating, litter bins and dog waste bins whilst signage located around the site is clear and well presented.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is the only site containing formal playing pitches in the parish.
- When not in use, the playing pitches which form the majority of the site are used for informal recreation.
- The site is clean, tidy, accessible, very well maintained and visually attractive.
- The site provides adequate amounts of seating, litter bins and dog waste bins.
- According to Ongar Town Council, as of October 2009 there is currently no further demand for similar facilities elsewhere in the parish.

CHAPTER 5 – ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- Alternative sites for sport refer to those sites which are used for sporting activities but are not formal pitches or recreation grounds. Examples therefore include tennis courts, hard courts and golf courses.
- There are no sites within the parish which are specifically alternative sites for sport.
- Four hard court tennis courts belonging to Ongar Sports and Social Club however are available to the north of Ongar Sports and Social Club Sports Field.
- Ongar Town Council as of October 2009 is not aware of a demand for the provision of any new alternative sites for sport within the parish.
- Residents wishing to use other alternative sites for sport will therefore need to travel to neighbouring areas such as North Weald and Epping where such facilities are located.

CHAPTER 6 – INFORMAL RECREATION GROUNDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
RG1	Love Lane Recreation Ground	Love Lane, Chipping Ongar	1.83	Ongar Town Council
RG2	Shelley Park	St Peters Avenue, Shelley	0.27	Ongar Town Council



Love Lane Recreation Ground, Site RG1

LOVE LANE RECREATION GROUND (RG1)

- 6.0** Accessible via a long gravel pathway leading from Love Lane, this site is located directly to the east of Ongar Sports and Social Club Sports Field (FP1) and can also be reached from Onslow Gardens to the north and a countryside path heading into Castle Street to the south. The site is primarily made up of informal grass space and provides a number of facilities including a skateboard ramp, a set of goal posts which are rather run down, and a children's playground.
- 6.1** Despite the fact that some of the facilities are rather worn, and show evidence of graffiti, there are no signs of heavy vandalism, probably due to the CCTV

cameras that have been installed here. The site as a whole is clearly very well tended, and plenty of seating, litter bins and dog waste bins have been provided. Clear and instructive information signs are present at the entrance. One small issue, however, regards the fact that the site is used by both children and dog walkers, this therefore is potentially dangerous and both groups must therefore both remain vigilant to avoid any potential accidents.



Shelley Park, Site RG2

SHELLEY PARK (RG2)

- 6.2** Located just to the north of St Peter's Avenue at the heart of Shelley, this is a very recently refurbished park, which consequently has an excellent range of high quality facilities. It is surrounded by residential homes on all sides and can be accessed from the south west, south east and north west via Queensway, St Peter's Avenue and Shortlands Avenue respectively. The park is well cared for and is a significant local amenity.
- 6.3** The site provides a basketball court, a children's playground and a variety of other facilities such as swings and a climbing frame, as well as a small amount of informal grass space. Adequate provision of litter bins, seats and picnic tables has been made, and all three of the site's entrances are clearly gated and well signed. CCTV cameras have also been set.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There is a good level of provision of informal recreation grounds within the parish.
- In addition to these two sites, Ongar Sports and Social Club Sports Field can also be used for informal recreation when the formal pitches are not in use.
- Both sites are clean, tidy and well maintained and offer a good range of on site facilities, particularly Shelley Park (RG2) which provides a wide variety of alternative play equipment.
- Both sites provide adequate amounts of seating, litter bins and dog waste bins where necessary.
- Both sites are provided with excellent levels of security due to the presence of CCTV cameras.
- According to the Ongar Town Council, as of October 2009, there is currently no demand for any further provision of this type of facility within the parish.

CHAPTER 7 – CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUNDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CY1	Shelley Park Playground	St Peters Avenue, Shelley	0.02	Epping Forest District Council
CY2	Love Lane Recreation Ground Playground	Love Lane, Chipping Ongar	0.07	Ongar Town Council
CY3	Greensted Road, Playground	Greensted Road, Chipping Ongar	0.06	Epping Forest District Council
CY4	Cerizay Garden's Children's Play Area	High Street, Chipping Ongar	0.02	Epping Forest District Council



Shelley Park Playground, Site CY1

SHELLEY PARK PLAYGROUND (CY1)

- 7.0** This playground is in the south eastern corner of Shelley Park. It is very new, and accordingly offers a wide range of facilities for young children, all of which are in very good condition. These facilities are all surrounded by rubber surfacing covered with grass, whilst a hard path runs through the centre, allowing pushchair and wheelchair access.

7.1 Smart, brightly coloured metal fencing demarcates the site's perimeter. Both the fencing and the two main entranceways to the north west and south are tidy and in good order. A high mounted CCTV camera has been positioned in the south east of the playground, which looks over the entire site and provides enhanced security.

LOVE LANE RECREATION GROUND PLAYGROUND (CY2)

- 7.2 This playground lies in the south eastern corner of Love Lane Recreation Ground, and offers a reasonable range of children's facilities in relatively good condition. It is very secure, with wooden fencing forming the entire perimeter, and with a metal gate entrance on the west side. All the facilities are encircled by rubber surfaces, some of which have been overlaid with grass.
- 7.3 There are however, no hard surface pathways leading to these facilities, or to the site itself, which may make access for awkward wheelchair users, or those with pushchairs. The playground provides sufficient litter bins and seating, and is generally clean and tidy with comparatively few incidences of graffiti. Extra security is also given by a CCTV camera, which overlooks the playground and the entire recreation area surrounding it.



Love Lane Recreation Ground Playground (CY2)

GREENSTED ROAD PLAYGROUND (CY3)

- 7.4** This playground runs along a short turn off from Greensted Road, and is directly to the north of Chipping Ongar County Primary School. It is bordered by the school's metal perimeter fencing to the south and west, whilst the north is enclosed with wire mesh fencing. This northern edge is largely hidden by medium sized trees and shrubs, which conceal the playground from the road. The wire mesh fencing however been vandalised, and partly knocked down.
- 7.5** The eastern of the playground is open in nature, apart from two metal poles preventing vehicles from entering the site, which are placed at the pedestrian entrance. A good range of well-kept facilities are provided, all surrounded by rubber surfacing. There are however no hard standing pathways leading up to the facilities, whilst evidence of graffiti can be found on many of the playground features. There is no seating, and the single bin is becoming worn.



Greensted Road Playground (CY3)

CERIZAY GARDEN'S CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA (CY4)

- 7.6** Located to the east of Ongar Library, between High Street and Ongar Castle, this is a small playground with just a few facilities suitable for very young children. The playground is entirely bordered by wooden fencing, with one wooden gateway entrance to the north east. It appears clean, tidy and well cared for.

7.7 The southernmost two thirds of the site are rubber surfaced, to protect children using the playground equipment, whilst the remaining third is grass. The only exception is the main entrance area, where the gravel track extends slightly onto the site. The playground has one bench which appears to be in good condition, as do all the children's facilities. The only bin however, is worn and unattractive. As of October 2009, this playground is being considered for refurbishment by the Ongar Town Council.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- All the sites are secure, with damage to the perimeter fencing only evident at Greensted Road Playground (CY3).
- The accessibility of Cerizay Garden Children's Playground (CY4) and Love Lane Recreation Ground Playground (CY4) could be improved.
- All the playgrounds have adequate rubber surfacing around their play equipment, enabling children to play safely.
- Standards of cleanliness within the playgrounds are very high, with little evidence of litter or graffiti.
- The range and condition of the children's facilities available in the playgrounds are good, although Cerizay Garden Children's Play Area (CY4) is somewhat limited by its small size.
- Adequate provision of information signs, seating and bins are provided in three of the playgrounds. Greensted Road Playground (CY3) has no seating or signs.
- The litter bins in Greensted Road Playground (CY3) and Cerizay Garden Children's Play Area (CY4) will need to be replaced in the near future.
- With four playgrounds located in the parish, the Local Town Council, as of October 2009, has not signified a demand for further provision of this type of open space within the parish.

CHAPTER 8 - INDOOR FACILITIES FOR HIGH LEVELS OF USE

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
IF1	Ongar Leisure Centre	The Gables, Shelley	0.39	Privately Owned

ONGAR LEISURE CENTRE (IF1)

8.0 Situated in the north of the parish just to the east of Shelley and just north of the Essex Technology and Innovation Centre. Ongar Leisure Centre provides a variety of indoor and outdoor facilities including a swimming pool, fitness suite, sports hall, group exercise studios, crèche, and an outdoor court area which can be used for a variety of activities including football and tennis. In addition to these facilities the site also caters for other sports including karate, ju-jitsu, scuba diving and badminton. The site also caters for children's birthday parties, holiday activities for children and a sports school for children up to 15 years old.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is one of only five parishes in the district to provide such a facility.
- It is the only leisure centre in the eastern half of district and therefore has a wide catchment area.
- Given the very rural nature of much of the surrounding area, there is unlikely to be demand for the provision of a further facility in this part of the district however clarifying this will require further investigation.

CHAPTER 9 – COMMUNITY CENTRES AND VILLAGE HALLS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CV1	Council Building	Banson's Way, Ongar	0.03	Ongar Town Council
CV2	Budworth Hall	Banson's Lane, Ongar	0.04	Ongar Community Association
CV3	Great Stony Arts Centre	Great Stony Arts Centre, Ongar	0.40	Theatre Resource
CV4	St Martin's Church Rooms	High Street, Ongar	0.21	Ongar Town Council
CV5	St James Church Rooms	St James's Avenue	0.13	Diocese of Chelmsford
CV6	United Reform Church, Church Hall	High Street, Ongar	0.06	United Reform Church

COUNCIL BUILDING (CV1)

9.0 Located along Banson's Way, this building is the new office of Ongar Town Council replacing the old building found to the north west corner of Love Lane Recreation Ground. The site is well equipped with modern facilities and is suitable for meetings and conferences to serve local community organisations and businesses. Ongar Town Council who own the site however do not believe the site is suitable to be used to cater for private functions, activities and local clubs.

BUDWORTH HALL (CV2)

9.1 Found along Banson's Lane, just to the east of Sainsbury's superstore, this grade II listed building caters for a variety of events, private and public functions and is available for hire seven days a week. In recent years however the hall has struggled financially due to a decline in local bookings caused primarily by increased local competition. Ongar Community Association continues to look for support from the local population in terms of hiring the premises, as well as for grants or funding which may be available.

GREAT STONY ARTS CENTRE (CV3)

9.2 Situated just to the south west of Great Stony Park, along Ongar High Street, this site is the home of Theatre Resource, the largest professional arts organisation in the district which runs a range of activities focusing particularly on disabled people and other disadvantaged groups. It also manages the district's only full-time arts centre. In addition to this the site

also offers a variety of rooms which can be hired for various activities and events.

ST MARTIN'S CHURCH ROOMS (CV4)

9.3 Located to the south of St Martin's Mews which itself joins High Street to the west, the church contains a main hall which is available for community groups and private bookings ranging from private functions to local meetings to local activities such as those for mothers and babies, and elderly residents.

ST JAMES'S CHURCH ROOMS (CV5)

9.4 Located along St James' Avenue, this hall is located on the same site as the church itself although the two are not joined together but adjacent to the north/south of each other. The hall is used largely in conjunction with church events such as local charity events and meetings but is also used by local youth groups and a mums and toddlers group.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (CV6)

9.5 Situated to the north east of the junction between High Street and Stanley Place, this site also offers two halls in conjunction with the church. Both of these halls are available for public and private functions ranging from church events, to children's birthday parties to local public meetings.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There are a good number of community facilities within the parish.
- Most sites are located within or next to local churches and are therefore often run primarily with local church groups in mind.
- High competition amongst local halls in the area has meant that longer established halls such as Budworth Hall (CV2) have found it difficult in recent years to attract as much business, thereby risking closure.
- The close location of Ongar Leisure Centre (IF1) means that there is much less need for local activity clubs to locate themselves elsewhere.
- All of these sites appear to be in good condition currently, however older sites such as Budworth Hall require frequent maintenance.

CHAPTER 10 – MANAGED OPEN SPACE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
MO1	Land between Acres Avenue and Queensway	Acres Avenue, Shelley	0.31	Epping Forest District Council
MO2	Land to the north of St Peter's Avenue	St Peter's Avenue, Shelley	0.15	Epping Forest District Council
MO3	Land to the North of Longfields	Longfields, Chipping Ongar	0.39	Epping Forest District Council
MO4	Cerizay Gardens	High Street, Chipping Ongar	0.50	Epping Forest District Council



Land between Acres Avenue and Queensway, Site MO1

LAND BETWEEN ACRES AVENUE AND QUEENSWAY (MO1)

10.0 This mostly grassy area is a relatively large piece of amenity green space, with a couple of trees dotted around it. It is tidy, litter-free and generally in a good state. The goalposts which have been set up towards the centre suggest that ball games are played here. A number of pathways travel along and

through the site to the south and west, enabling pedestrians to walk between Acres Avenue and Queensway, and to reach the garages to the north and south. These pathways are suitably surfaced, and are therefore adequate for both wheelchair users and those with pushchairs. An application for the development of 12 residential homes with car parking on this site was accepted in October 2008 and therefore its use as an open space is drawing to a close.

LAND TO THE NORTH OF ST PETER'S AVENUE (MO2)

- 10.1** Formerly an allotment garden, this site, situated between the back gardens of residential homes located on St Peter's Avenue and Moreton Road, has been re-landscaped into an area of amenity green space. It is entirely grassland with a perimeter of trees, shrubs and flower beds, which help give it an particularly secluded feeling. One issue which needs addressing, however, is the area by the garages to the north west of the site, which seems to have been used as a dumping ground for items which require proper disposal.



Land to the North of St Peter's Avenue, Site MO2

LAND TO THE NORTH OF LONGFIELDS (MO3)

- 10.2** This site is dominated by a variety of young and older trees that are distributed evenly throughout. To the south and west, it borders Longfields until its junction with Coopers Hill, whilst to the north it borders Cripsey Brook,

which is screened from view by a variety of shrubs and bushes. Residential housing borders, and overlooks, the site from the east. This piece of land is well cared for, with only a small amount of litter present.

CERIZAY GARDEN'S (MO4)

10.3 Situated to the east of the High Street, adjacent to Ongar Library this site is an area of informal green space which faces Pleasance Car Park and features Cerizay Gardens Playground, a petanque court, and a small area of informal green space which is well signed and offers a number of seats to enjoy the local surroundings. The site offers good access and allows visitors the opportunity to walk around the wooded area where the 12th Century Ongar Castle once stood. The site is clearly well maintained and is clean, tidy and litter free.



Cerizay Garden's, Site MO4

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- The level of cleanliness within these sites is very good, with the sole exception of the Land To The North Of St Peter's Avenue (MO6) which has a clear rubbish dumping problem.
- Some of the sites, including the land to the north of Longfields (MO7), are located very near to busy roads. Pedestrians accessing these sites should therefore take particularly care when entering and leaving.

- An application for the land between Acres Avenue and Queensway to be converted into 12 residential units with parking was accepted in October 2008.
- Some sites which would benefit from the provision of seating and litter bin facilities include land to the north of Walter Mead Close (MO3), land between Acres Avenue and Queensway (MO4) and land to the North of Longfields (MO7).
- Whilst provision of this type of open space dominates the north of the parish the lack of this type of open space is countered elsewhere by the easy access locals have to the surrounding local countryside via various public footpaths and bridleways.

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

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
SO1	Shelley Common	Moreton Road, Shelley	3.41	Privately Owned
SO2	Bowes Field	Marks Avenue, Ongar	1.74	Privately Owned
SO3	River Meadow	Epping Road, Shelley	0.53	Epping Forest District Council
SO4	Land between River Meadow and Moreton Road	Epping Road, Shelley	1.95	Epping Forest District Council
SO5	Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve	Greensted Road, Chipping Ongar	1.50	Essex County Council
SO6	Hallsford Bridge Meadow	Stondon Road, Ongar	3.20	Epping Forest District Council

SHELLEY COMMON (SO1)

11.0 Located north of Shelley towards the northern boundary of the parish, this rural site is an area of grassland with a scattering of trees and hedgerows throughout. Its most dominant feature however, is Cripsey Brook, which bisects it from north to south. The Common can be accessed from Church Lane to the east or from Moreton Road to the west, from which site visitors can then reach the network of public footpaths which run across the site.

BOWES FIELD (SO2)

11.1 Situated to the end of Bowes Drive, this is an area of grassland which acts as a boundary between the urban edge of Ongar and the surrounding rural landscape. The site offers long-distance views over the local countryside. In order to protect its amenity value, Ongar Town Council as of October 2009, is awaiting a response to an application they made for this site to be registered as a Town Green in accordance with The Commons Act 2006 following the sites submission as a possible site for a new local housing development under the district councils call for sites exercise in 2008.



Shelley Common, Site SO1

RIVER MEADOW (SO3)

- 11.2** Situated to north of the A414, to the west of Shelley primary school, and bordering Cripsey Brook, this is a very well screened, secluded area of grassland which is used for informal recreation. The site's perimeter is entirely made up of medium sized trees and tall shrubs. Where the perimeter hedging is lower towards the north western corner of the site, this permits views of the adjoining countryside.
- 11.3** The grass appears to be regularly cut and the site is largely free of litter except by the perimeter vegetation particularly to the east. This does not detract heavily from its amenity value. The site is easily accessible to locals although those less mobile may find the site harder to reach.

LAND BETWEEN RIVER MEADOW AND MORETON ROAD (SO4)

- 11.4** Linking River Meadow (SO3) to Moreton Road, this linear site is a largely wooded area of land which runs alongside the eastern bank of Cripsey Brook all the way northwards to Moreton Road. A footpath runs directly through the site from north to south which adds significantly to the amenity value of the site.
- 11.5** To the west the site borders the open countryside whilst to the east the site adjoins the backs of the residential dwellings along Cripsey Avenue. A hard

surface driveway runs directly along the south eastern side of the site allowing local residents access to the rears of their homes. As a result, locals and particularly children wishing to access this site must be vigilant when crossing this driveway and similarly when they reach Moreton Road where traffic speed limit increases from 30mph to 60mph.



River Meadow, Site SO3

CRIPSEY BROOK NATURE RESERVE (SO5)

- 11.6** Designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 2007 this site is situated to the south west of Chipping Ongar Town Centre and occupies a thin strip of land between Cripsey Brook to the east and residential development to the west. The site is predominantly made up of grassland and is regarded as an important site close to the town centre. It is divided into two sections by fencing creating a northern and southern section. A public footpath runs through the southern section which offers access between High Street and Rodney Road.
- 11.7** The history and management of these two separate areas over the last 25 years has been quite different and this will remain for the next 5 years or so. The southern area to the High Street end will continue to have open public access whilst the land to the north will continue to be restricted. Discussions regarding the car park to the south-west corner of the site are currently underway as of October 2009 with the prospect of the car park being transferred to Ongar Town Council and incorporated into the nature reserve. Both the site itself and the car park are well screened by dense vegetation,

creating a sense of enclosure. The addition of the car park as part of the nature reserve will obviously extend the site and create opportunities for additional wildlife habitat.



Land Between River Meadow and Moreton Road, Site SO4

HALLSFORD BRIDGE MEADOW (SO6)

- 11.8** Located to the west of the River Roding and to the south east of Marden Ash on the edge of Epping Forest District, this is a fully accessible site with entry possible from Stondon Road to the north from which a public footpath directly crosses the site. Formerly the location of Ongar's sewage treatment works in the early 20th century, the site was cleared and put back to its original form in the 1950s and now consists of approximately 70% grassland and 30% scrub, whilst an ancient hedgerow forms the western boundary. The site is now managed for nature conservation through a combination of selective mowing and coppicing and is home to a variety of important plant species and invertebrates (particularly butterflies).

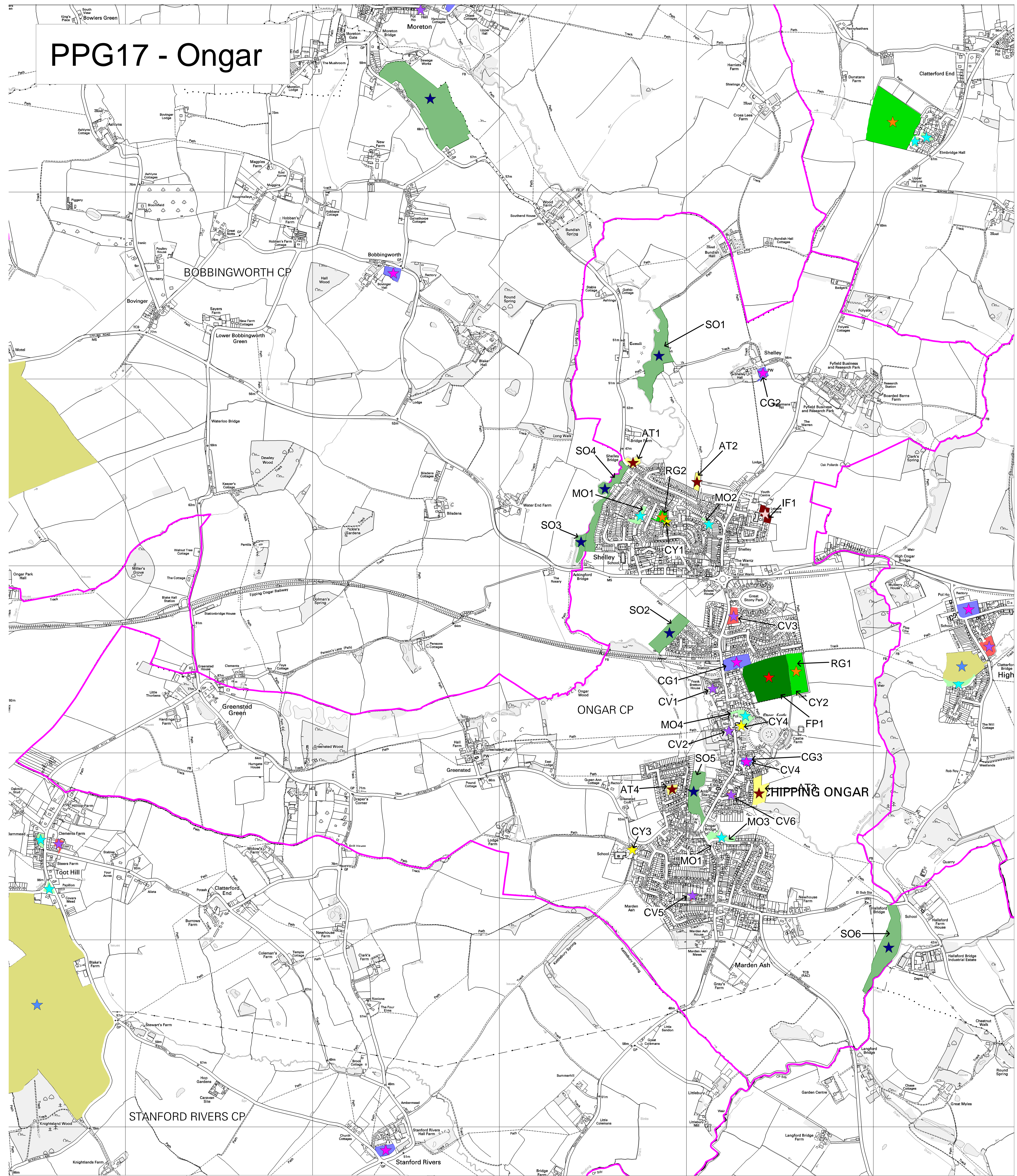


Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve, Site SO5

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There is a good number of sites of semi-natural open space within the parish.
- All sites are, well maintained and are a significant and important resource for the local population.
- In addition to these sites, a number of public footpaths and bridleways cross the parish offering locals and visitors alike further options to experience the local countryside.

PPG17 - Ongar



Parish: Ongar

Area: 898.50 Hectares

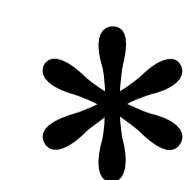
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Key

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



**Epping Forest
 District Council**

Date: 4th January 2010