

STANFORD RIVERS – OPEN SPACE AUDIT**JUNE 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 no allotments located within Stanford Rivers.
- Despite the lack of allotment provision in the parish there appears to be no demand within the parish.
- This is largely due to the close proximity of Ongar parish where ample provision is located.
- Residents of the parish therefore require their own vehicles or access to public transport in order to access these facilities.

CHAPTER 3 - CEMETERIES AND GRAVEYARDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CG1	St Margaret's Church	School Road, Stanford Rivers	0.47	Diocese of Chelmsford

ST MARGARET'S CHURCH (SITE CG1)

- 3.0** This is a peaceful site, set in an attractive location to the north of the point where Mutton Row, Church Road, School Road and Old Rectory Road, meet to form a crossroads. It is set in a strongly rural area, with a farm lying adjacent to the north, and a few houses to the east being the only other noticeable buildings within the surrounding area. St Margaret's Church, at the heart of the site, is one of the oldest buildings in the eastern region, with parts of it dating back to the mid 12th century.
- 3.1** The main entrance to the site is located to the east of School Road, and is very clearly marked, although the wooden supporting structure which holds the sign is dilapidated and in need of repair. Spiked metal fencing forms the western perimeter facing towards the roadside, whilst the remaining edges are bordered with dense hedgerows and a variety of different species of tree. These trees, along with those which line the main pathway leading towards the church to the west, are the most dominant features of the churchyard, and significantly add its overall visual amenity.
- 3.2** One potential issue regards the lack of adequate parking should a significant number of people wish to use the church together. There are only a few vehicle spaces provided, with the only other options being to park on the limited amount of space opposite the main entrance to the west, or to park on the green located to the south. With no other alternatives available, visitors may have no alternative but to park on this green and thus damage it, and some may find it difficult to access the churchyard from here given the lack of any footpath. As the number of users is probably fairly low this may not be a major issue, but more local people could potentially choose to visit the site, especially given its historical appeal.
- 3.3** Access to the church itself is by way of a gravel track beginning at the main entranceway. Whilst the quality of the track is good, it is not hard surfaced, and so wheelchair users and those with pushchairs may find it difficult to negotiate. Despite these issues, it is important to stress that this site is evidently well cared for and forms an integral part of the community.



St Margaret's Church, Site CG1

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is a very peaceful, attractive and well maintained site.
- It has particular historical significance given the age of St Margaret's Church.
- There is no car park provided, and therefore users must park on, and consequently harm, the edges of the green to the south.
- The main pathway to the site, meanwhile, is not hard surfaced, and therefore some users may find access difficult.
- Site users may also find it inconvenient to have to travel across the green in order to access the churchyard.
- The local parish council has presently not received any complaints regarding the access within and leading up towards St Margaret's Church (CG1) and do not expect these circumstances to change in the short term.
- Stanford Rivers Parish Council also has not been presented with any requests for further provision of church facilities within the parish given its rural nature and hence small local population.

CHAPTER 4 - FORMAL PLAYING PITCHES

- There are no formal playing pitches in Stanford Rivers.
- Two former football pitches have been removed from the parish in recent years due to change of land ownership. One of these was located in Toot Hill to the north of the parish and the other was close to the works in Little End to the south of the parish.
- Since their removal there has been a steady increase in demand for the provision of such a facility once more in the parish.
- The Council however do not have the resources to implement such a facility as of yet nor has a suitable potential location been identified.
- Currently, those who seek to engage in pitch sports will therefore need to travel to neighbouring parishes such as Ongar, North Weald or even the London Borough of Redbridge to the south.

CHAPTER 5 – ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
AS1	Toot Hill Golf Club	School Road, Stanford Rivers	56.39	Privately Owned

TOOT HILL GOLF CLUB (AS1)

- 5.0** Found along School Road just to the north of Blake's Farm, Toot Hill Golf Club offers an 18 hole golf course. This is a very attractive site, which takes little away from its rural surroundings, and is discreetly hidden from the roadside.



Toot Hill Golf Club, Site AS1

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- Alternative sites for sport provision is very limited given the very rural nature of Stanford Rivers and hence its small local population.
- Residents looking to undertake other types of sport will therefore need to drive or use public transport to such sites in neighbouring parishes such as Ongar and North Weald
- Stanford Rivers Parish Council has not received any requests for further outdoor sports within the parish.

CHAPTER 6 – INFORMAL RECREATION GROUNDS

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There are no informal recreation grounds located within Stanford Rivers.
- Stanford Rivers Parish Council indicates that such an area is very much needed in the parish as there are no facilities for children of any age anywhere in the parish.
- A lack of resources however means that such a facility can not be provided for at this time.
- Locating such a facility would be difficult given that the local population is very spread out and such a facility should not favour any particular grouping by its location.
- Whilst there are currently no informal recreation grounds within the parish currently, the issue is at least partially tackled by the fact that many homes in the parish provide adequate amounts of their own private amenity space which can be used for recreation.
- 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 is no specific provision for children and young people within Stanford Rivers.
- Despite its rural location and relatively small local population, Stanford Rivers Parish Council is keen to point out that there is a need for such facilities in the parish, with only neighbouring parishes offering such facilities at present.
- The desire of Stanford Rivers Local Parish council for a new playground is born out of the fact that there are no facilities for children of any age within the parish.
- Those families who have no and very little private outdoor amenity space therefore need to travel out of the parish in order to reach such facilities in neighbouring parishes like Ongar.

CHAPTER 8 - INDOOR FACILITIES FOR HIGH LEVELS OF USE

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There are no indoor facilities for high levels of use within Stanford Rivers.
- Stanford Rivers Local Parish 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, Epping and Loughton where such facilities are provided.

CHAPTER 9 – COMMUNITY CENTRES AND VILLAGE HALLS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CV1	Toot Hill Village Hall	Toot Hill Road, Toot Hill, Stanford Rivers	0.19	Toot Hill Village Family Trust

TOOT HILL VILLAGE HALL (CV1)

- 9.0** Situated along Toot Hill Road, just before its junction with School Road, this village hall is extremely well used by the local population despite the fact that it is very small and in urgent need of some refurbishment. The site is used by a wide variety of clubs for a variety of activities ranging from flower arranging to dog training. The site is also frequently used for mother and babies groups, the Women’s Institute and is often hired out on the weekends for children’s parties. In addition to this the site is also used as the local polling station and as a venue for fund raising events.
- 9.1** Due to its high use, Stanford Rivers Local Parish are keen to upgrade the facilities within the site, particularly the toilets and the kitchen which are in urgent need of a revamp. In the past the Parish Council has attempted to buy the site from the Toot Hill Village Family Trust however these attempts have so far been unsuccessful. The Parish Council have however been successful in receiving two grants from the District Council during 2009. It is hoped that these will at least partially address the problems affecting the hall which has not been refurbished since it was first built in the 1970’s.
- 9.2** A previous attempt to build a new hall on a neutral site between Toot Hill and Stanford Rivers, close to Toot Hill Golf Club (AS1) roughly 5 years ago was abandoned after the British Legion who were heavily involved with the project decided to withdraw support. Since then a new village hall has been developed with their help in High Ongar. Stanford Rivers Local Parish however remains optimistic over their future options regarding the existing the village hall.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is the only facility of its type within the parish and it is well used by the local population.
- The hall however is in need of redevelopment or replacement, ideally in a more neutral location.
- Redevelopment of the current facility however is being hampered by the lack of willingness to sell from the current site owners and a lack of willingness from locals to aid the local parish council in maintaining it.

CHAPTER 10 - MANAGED OPEN SPACE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
MO1	Land to the west of Toot Hill Road	Toot Hill Road, Toot Hill	0.21	Unknown
MO2	Toot Hill Common	Epping Road, Toot Hill	0.19	Epping Forest District Council
MO3	Jubilee Green	London Road, Little End	0.18	Epping Forest District Council

LAND TO THE WEST OF TOOT HILL ROAD (MO1)

- 10.0** Formed predominantly from grassland, this site is an area of amenity green space located within the village of Toot Hill, to the west of Toot Hill Road. A footpath runs around the entire perimeter of the site, and also dissects it at the midway point from east to west. This then connects to the smaller footpaths leading to the residential houses to the west. Accessibility through MO1 from these houses is therefore very good, as all these footpaths are hard surfaced, and so are suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs.
- 10.1** To the east, a row of wooden bollards line the perimeter of the site, to prevent visitors from parking on the grass verges. The site does, however, lack any seats or litter bins, the installation of which would enable visitors to enjoy the surrounding village scenery in comfort, and would help to keep the site tidy.

TOOT HILL COMMON (MO2)

- 10.2** This triangular piece of amenity green space land is situated at the T-junction between Epping Road and School Road. Predominantly grassland, the site contains two medium sized trees towards the centre, which very much add to its amenity value. One bin, and a bench, are located to the north, with a village sign, charmingly surrounded by flowers, to the immediate south.
- 10.3** The site appears neat and clean, with no visible litter, although some dog excrement is present. This could easily be remedied through the provision of a dog waste bin. The position of the site, encircled by the roads mentioned above, means that any children using it should ideally be accompanied by an adult.



Toot Hill Common, Site MO2

JUBILEE GREEN (MO3)

- 10.4** Located to the north east of the junction between Church Road and London Road, this is an attractive area of amenity green space. The green holds much historical importance within the local area, as it is the former site of Stanford Rivers Congregational Chapel. Built in 1820 and destroyed by fire in 1927, the famous missionary and explorer David Livingstone used to preach here.
- 10.5** Today, a short brick wall which was a part of the Chapel remains. This is divided into two sections, with the village sign placed in the middle. Two engraved plaques on the wall give information on the green, and behind is a solitary gravestone, although it is too worn to read. To the west of the site, a very worn metal fence lines the perimeter, which needs to be repaired or replaced.
- 10.6** The site is dominated by a variety of established trees, which very much add to the overall beauty of the area. To the very east of the green is a wooden bench and a bus stop. The site does, however, lack any litter bins, the provision of which would help to ensure that the high standards of cleanliness are maintained.



Jubilee Green, Site MO3

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

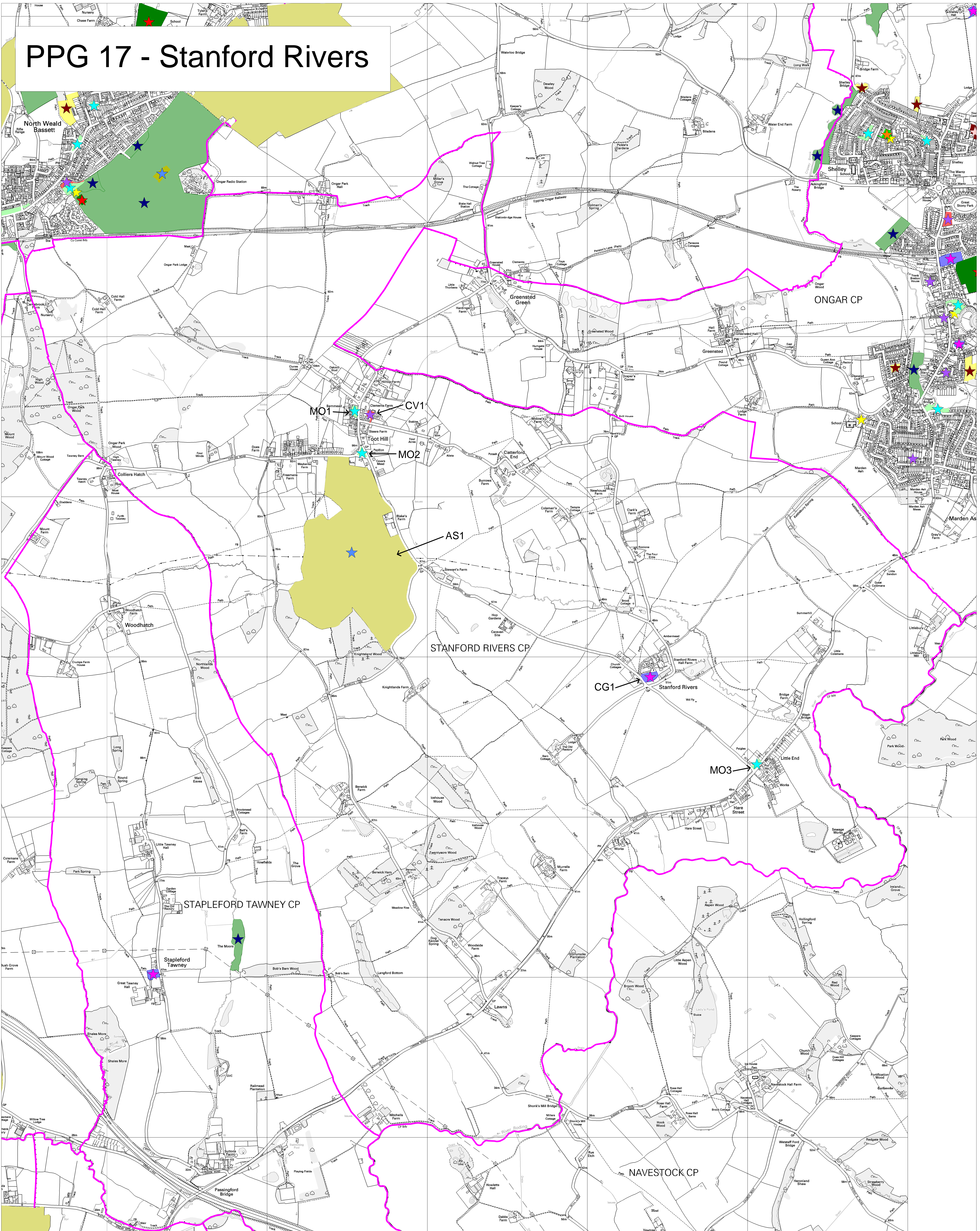
- All of these managed open spaces are clean, tidy and attractive, and seem very well kept.
- The Land To The West Of Toot Hill Road (MO1) could be improved through the provision of seating, whilst the installation of litter bins on all three sites would be highly beneficial in ensuring that their smart appearance is preserved.
- The cleanliness of Toot Hill Common, (MO2), meanwhile, could also be improved through the installation of a dog waste bin.
- The metal fencing on Jubilee Green (MO3) is in need of repair, or could be replaced completely.
- Given their small size, and their proximity to busy roads, none of these sites are ideal for any more than dog walking or enjoying the pleasant surroundings.
- No other managed open spaces are available throughout the rest of Stanford Rivers.
- There is no further demand for this type of open space within the parish according to the local parish council.

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

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- Despite the very rural nature of Stanford Rivers, there are no areas of publicly accessible woodland or semi-natural open space available.
- There are however a number of such facilities within neighbouring parishes particularly within Ongar parish to the north west and North Weald parish to the north east.
- Should residents wish to visit a site of this type, they will therefore need to use public transport or have access to their own transportation.

PPG 17 - Stanford Rivers



Parish: Stanford Rivers

Area: 1744 Hectares Scale: 1:75,000 @ 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