

WALTHAM ABBEY – OPEN SPACE AUDIT**JANUARY 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	Denny Avenue Allotment	Denny Avenue, Waltham Abbey	0.58	Waltham Abbey Town Council
AT2	Capershotts Allotment	Capershotts , Waltham Abbey	0.68	Waltham Abbey Town Council
AT3	Crooked Mile Allotment	Crooked Mile, Waltham Abbey	1.66	Privately Owned
AT4	Longfields Allotment	Abbotts Drive, Waltham Abbey	0.70	Waltham Abbey Town Council

DENNY AVENUE ALLOTMENT (AT1)

- 2.0** Situated to the east of Denny Avenue, this is a well used allotment which currently has all of its plots under cultivation. The site is accessible via a small non surfaced alleyway which runs along the back of the residential houses on Elm Close. The allotment offers two pedestrian entrances however there is no vehicular access with users wishing to drive to the site having to park on Elm Close, Denny Avenue or by the garages which lie between the road and the allotment. The site is surrounded by a chain link fence which appears to be in a reasonable condition whilst a new steel palisade fence has been erected on the boundary. Both of the entrances are padlocked when it is not in use and this has helped to restrict the levels of vandalism or littering in the site.



Denny Avenue Allotment, Site AT1

CAPERSHOTTS ALLOTMENT (AT2)

- 2.1** Located to the east of Sewardstone Road, to the south of Waltham Abbey Cemetery, this is a well used site with all of its plots under cultivation. Tall brambles appear to dominate parts of the southern and eastern perimeters of the allotment, and perhaps detract from its overall visual amenity. To the front of the eastern side lie two rather unattractive buildings with significant amounts of graffiti on them both of which belong to Waltham Abbey Football Club.
- 2.2** The main entrance gateway, which lies in between the two buildings, is very rusty and unattractive but is still functional, whilst the signage just beyond is clear, informative and in very good condition. Another smaller entrance gateway can be found to the north, however this has been padlocked shut. Access to the site is via the gravel car park, which is shared with the local football team whose stadium lies adjacent to the north east.



Capershotts Allotment, Site AT2

CROOKED MILE ALLOTMENT (AT3)

- 2.3** Found along a well hidden turn-off to the east of the Crooked Mile, this site is predominantly surrounded by agricultural land. The entire southern perimeter is defined by a drive way which allows access onto the site as well as access to a small user parking area. This driveway continues on past the boundary of the site, and allows access to the agricultural fields to the east. Unlike the other allotments in the parish, the site has no perimeter fencing, and is separated from Crooked Mile and the surrounding agricultural land by a

reasonably dense hedgerow and a number of small trees. There are no information signs present.

- 2.4** Approximately half the site is used, whilst the remaining plots have been left unmaintained and have grown wild. As a consequence there are a significant number of plots covered in high reaching brambles, limiting the sites internal accessibility. These overgrown areas have also been targeted for the dumping of rubbish, which significantly detracts from the overall visual amenity. A large amount of dog excrement can also be found nearby, whilst no bins of any sort are provided. There are a number of attractive trees and hedgerows which can be found to the north west.



Crooked Mile Allotment, Site AT3

LONGFIELDS ALLOTMENT (AT4)

- 2.5** Located to the west of Old Shire Lane in between two separate residential developments, this site is accessible from both the north and south. Potential sites users to the south of the allotment however can only access the site on foot via a number of footpaths. Those wishing to drive to the site from the south must instead drive back down to Honey Lane, and then up along Broomstick Hall Road and onto Ninefields before turning south onto Winters Way. This is a journey of approximately two miles, and could be avoided if vehicle access was available to the south of the allotment.
- 2.6** The northern entrance to the allotment requires users to pass through two metal gates. The first of these also prevents members of the public from

driving onto the small grassy area which sits in front of the northern boundary. The second of these gates allows access onto the site itself, and is rusty although still fully functional. Beyond this entrance, adequate signage is provided by two information signs, which are both instructive and in good condition. The wire mesh fencing which surrounds the entire site, however, is rusty and is weakening, whilst a significant amount of horticultural waste has been left throughout, despite the existence of a number of horticultural composters. To the west of the site lies an area of land which has been left to grow for the benefit of wildlife. If necessary, this site could be considered as part of an enlarged and improved allotment site.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- All the allotments in the parish are well used by members of the public.
- Some evidence of litter and horticultural waste is noticeable on some of the sites. To tackle this issue, horticultural composters and litter bins could be introduced.
- There are accessibility issues with Longfields Allotment (AT4) and Denny Avenue Allotment (AT1), where members of the public are inconvenienced by a lack of adequate access and parking facilities.
- The gateways which allow access onto Longfields Allotment (AT4), Capershotts Allotment (AT2) are rusty and unattractive.
- Waltham Abbey Town Council has not indicated a need for further new allotments in the parish although there is a waiting list for the allotments that already exist.

CHAPTER 3 - CEMETERIES AND GRAVEYARDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CG1	Waltham Abbey Cemetery (new site)	Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey	1.77	Waltham Abbey Town Council
CG2	Waltham Abbey Cemetery (old site)	Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey	1.98	Waltham Abbey Town Council
CG3	Waltham Abbey Garden of Rest	Church Street, Waltham Abbey	0.02	Chelmsford Diocese
CG4	Waltham Abbey Closed Churchyard	Church Street, Waltham Abbey	1.28	Chelmsford Diocese
CG5	Church of the Holy Innocents	Avey Lane, High Beach	0.43	Chelmsford Diocese
CG6	Waltham Abbey Jewish Cemetery	Upshire Hall Honey Lane Waltham Abbey	10.50	United Synagogue Burial Society

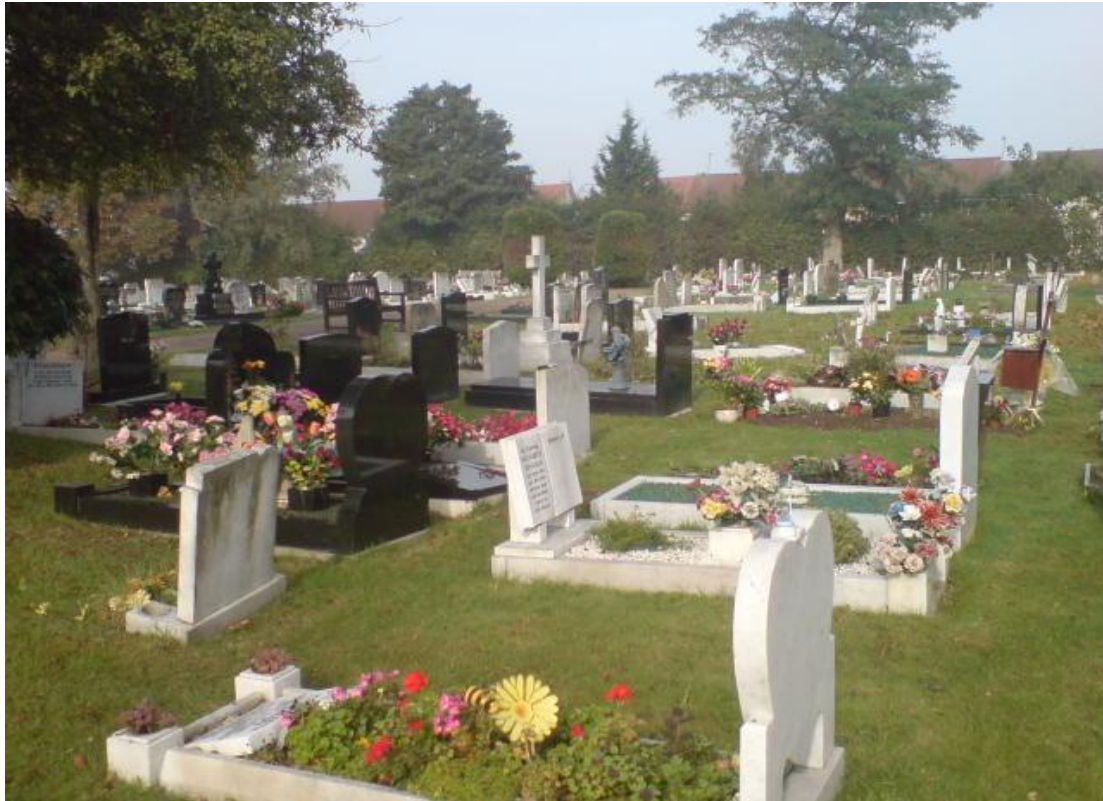
WALTHAM ABBEY CEMETERY (NEW SITE) (CG1)

- 3.0** Situated just south of the junction between Denny Avenue and Sewardstone Road, this site is well maintained and very attractive. The site is accessible to both able and disabled individuals, through a network of wide hard surface tracks, which also allow vehicular access.
- 3.1** There are an excellent number of well looked after bins and seats on hand, whilst the information sign at the main entrance is clear, informative and in good condition. The entire perimeter is surrounded by a grand brick and metal fence which adds to the visual amenity. There are also a number of attractive and well maintained trees of various size spread throughout, which too add significantly to the value of the site. Situated to the east of the site lies a further piece of land which has recently been cleared and will be used as an extension to the cemetery which is coming close to running out of burial space.

WALTHAM ABBEY CEMETERY (OLD SITE) (CG2)

- 3.2** This site, located to the west of Sewardstone Road, is situated directly opposite the new site of Waltham Abbey Cemetery to the east. It is well maintained and very attractive to look at, and has a variety of particularly outstanding trees which significantly add to its visual amenity. It contains both a lodge and a former chapel which clearly are of considerable age. Despite

this, they remain in reasonable repair, although some of the windows of the church have been broken by vandals. There is a network of hard surface tracks which allow vehicular access onto and around the site, as well as a small car park for 6-8 cars. There is also an adequate provision of bins and seating, whilst the information sign at the main entrance is clear, instructive and in good condition.



Waltham Abbey Cemetery, Site CG1

WALTHAM ABBEY GARDEN OF REST (CG3)

- 3.3** Maintained by Waltham Abbey Town Council and located just to the north of Church Street, this is a small area of land which has been separated from the remainder of Waltham Abbey Closed Churchyard. The northern and western perimeters of the site are formed from wooden fencing, whilst the southern perimeter is formed by the rear walls of the shops on Church Street. The site's most distinguishing feature, however, is the brick wall which makes up the eastern perimeter, and which is a dominant but attractive presence.
- 3.4** The only entrance is found to the north west corner, comprising a small wooden gate. This gate has incurred damage and as a result does not shut properly. There is a large information sign by the entrance which is in good condition, as is the litter bin in the north east corner. There are six benches present, all of which are in adequate condition. The site is immaculate in condition and appearance, and is clearly very well taken care of. One issue, however, regards the granite stones which are set into the ground leading up

to the entrance. These are very slippery when they are wet, and so caution must be taken when standing on these, particularly by those who are less mobile.



Waltham Abbey Garden Of Rest, Site CG3

WALTHAM ABBEY CLOSED CHURCHYARD (CG4)

- 3.5** Maintained by Waltham Abbey Town Council and situated just to the north of Church Street, this site forms the adjacent grounds to the west, south, east and north east of Waltham Abbey Church, whilst also encompassing the Garden of Rest to the south west. The site can be accessed from Highbridge Street and Church Street to the east and south respectively, as well as from Romeland to the north east. Cornmill Stream runs under the north eastern corner, whilst a network of internal pathways allow access to all these areas for disabled persons.
- 3.6** This site is very clean and tidy, although some of the wooden benches and bins have had graffiti drawn on the them. The site also features around 40 trees of varying species spread throughout, which add significantly to its overall amenity value.



Waltham Abbey Closed Churchyard, Site CG4

CHURCH OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS (CG5)

- 3.7** Situated just to the north of Avey Lane in High Beach, this is a very secluded site located within Epping Forest. The site is entirely surrounded by forest, which significantly adds to the beauty of the area, and gives it a very tranquil feel. The main entrance is situated to the east, and is made up of an old but attractive wooden gate and archway. A path runs from it to the entrance of the church itself, but it is extremely bumpy and uneven.
- 3.8** There is one large information sign by the main entrance which is in a decent condition, as are the benches present, although the site requires a litter bin as some rubbish is evident. Its boundaries are defined by a small concrete and steel fence which runs around its entirety. This low fencing however could be easily stepped over by a child, and this is potential hazard is made more serious by the fact that there are roads running past both the southern and eastern perimeters of the site. There is also a lack of adequate parking, with site users having to park on a small patch of land where no trees are present to the east of the site.

WALTHAM ABBEY JEWISH CEMETERY (CG6)

- 3.9** Located to the south of Honey Hill, this site is one of eleven owned by the United Synagogue Burial Society, and is designated by Greenfield Creations as an Eco Friendly Green Burial Site that offers 'Green' natural burial grounds

and facilities. It is privately owned and is therefore only open to members of the Jewish community and those who have friends or relatives buried there.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- All of the sites are very attractive, particularly in terms of the trees, hedgerows and other vegetation, which are maintained to a very high standard.
- There is ample seating in good condition on all of the sites.
- The site at the Church of the Holy Innocents (CG5) requires a bin to tackle the small amount of litter present.
- The low fencing at the site of the Church of the Holy Innocents (CG5) should be increased in height, particularly along the relatively busy road which runs to the south.
- Disabled access could be improved at the Garden of Rest (CG3) and Church of the Holy Innocents' (CG5) sites through the provision of hard surfaced, even and non-slippery pathways.
- The windows on the Church at Waltham Abbey Cemetery (CG2) need to be fixed, and measures should be taken to prevent this damage from reoccurring. One suggestion would be for an external wire mesh to be placed over the windows to deflect thrown objects.
- There is a need for adequate parking facilities to be provided at the Church of the Holy Innocents (CG5).
- Whilst there is no provision for this type of outdoor facility in the parish, beyond Waltham Abbey and High Beach, the Town Council has not indicated a need for any further provision.

CHAPTER 4 – FORMAL PLAYING PITCHES

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
FP1	Town Mead Leisure Park	Brooker Road, Waltham Abbey	18.46	Waltham Abbey Town Council
FP2	Larsen Recreation Ground	Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey	2.76	Waltham Abbey Town Council
FP3	Ninefields Recreation Area	Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey	3.38	Waltham Abbey Town Council
FP4	High Beach Cricket Club	Pepper Alley, Mott Street, High Beach	1.26	Privately Owned
FP5	King George V Playing Field	Off Roundhills, Waltham Abbey	6.32	Waltham Abbey Town Council

TOWN MEAD LEISURE PARK (FP1)

- 4.0** Situated to the north east of the crossing point of the M25 with Meridian Way, this site is largest source of outdoor recreational space in the parish. It offers a wide range of sports facilities including six football pitches, one all weather illuminated multi-use games area, one illuminated hard surfaced pitch offering tennis, netball, basketball and football training, a petanque piste and a six lane illuminated 400m grass athletic track. In addition there is also an adventure playground (CY1), a mini nature reserve, a lake, a picnic and barbecue area as well as Town Mead Sports and Social Club.
- 4.1** The site can be accessed from either Orchard Gardens or Brooker Road, although only the Brooker Road entrance provides on site car parking. The site is bordered by Meridian Way to the west and the M25 to the south. The north and east sides meanwhile border a combination of residential and industrial areas.
- 4.2** The site itself is clearly very well maintained and is pleasant to look at, with only small amounts of litter, graffiti and dog excrement observed. Adequate provision is made for litter bins, dog waste bins and seating, whilst the main entrance provides helpful and informative signage which is in good condition. A small network of footpaths allow easy access to various facilities present, including the all weather training pitches, the adventure playground and the Sports and Social Club. The north of the site, which contains the miniature nature reserve and lake, is particularly picturesque, whilst a number of attractive trees are spread throughout the entire park.



Town Mead Leisure Park, Site FP1

LARSEN RECREATION GROUND (FP2)

- 4.4** Situated to the south of the junction between Honey Lane and Broomstick Hall Lane, this is the second largest recreation ground within the parish. The site is accessible via a couple of footpaths off Rochford Avenue to the south and south west, which link to the King George V Playing Fields. Access can also be gained via a footpath from Farm Hill Road which travels down to the northern boundary, as well as via a footbridge off Honey Lane which passes over Cobbin's Brook to the north east of the site. The site offers a variety of facilities including two football pitches, three tennis courts, a children's playground (CY2), a putting green, a bowls club (used in conjunction with Larsen Sports and Social Club) and a disused paddling pool, whilst Larsen Social Club lies adjacent to the north.
- 4.5** The site itself is well looked after, and appears to be in a very good state although some isolated incidences of dog excrement, litter and graffiti were spotted. Adequate numbers of litter bins and dog waste bins have been provided, although there is only one bench at hand, and the signs located at each of the entrances have been covered in graffiti and are thus mostly illegible.
- 4.6** Another issue concerns the lack of any sort of car parking area. Potential users travelling by car must therefore find somewhere to park on one of the surrounding residential streets. One attractive feature of the site is the presence of trees and shrubs around the southern and eastern perimeters. This however leads to another issue, relating to Cobbin's Brook, which runs

down the eastern perimeter. The football pitches located on the site are particularly close to the brook, and where the pitches and brook are at their closest, there is only a narrow strip of brambles preventing users from falling down the brook's steep verges. Sports equipment could easily be lost to the brook.



Larsen Recreation Ground, Site FP2

NINEFIELDS RECREATION AREA (FP3)

- 4.7** Situated between Brickenden Court and Hillhouse, this is a particularly accessible site, whose boundaries have been determined by the network of hard surfaced footpaths surrounding it. From the north, the site can be accessed through a variety of footpaths leading from Cullings Court, whilst Hillhouse runs alongside the eastern perimeter. To the west, access can be gained from the network of footpaths from Brickenden Court and Mason Way. Vehicular access onto the site is also possible via Lucas Court. To the south, the site is accessible via a footbridge which crosses over Cobbin's Brook. The Brook runs along the entire southern boundary. This footbridge can be accessed from a network of footpaths which adjoin Shernbroke Road.
- 4.8** This site is predominantly a large area of grassy informal recreation space with two football pitches marked out within it. It is generally in a fair condition, although some litter and dog excrement is evident. Considering its fairly large size, there is also a lack of litter bins and dogs bins and as a result evidence of litter and dog excrement was noted, whilst no seating or information signs were provided at all. There are a number of attractive individual trees

scattered around the area, particularly to the west and south west of the site and alongside Hillhouse to the east.

HIGH BEACH CRICKET CLUB (FP4)

- 4.9** Located at the end of a small path named Pepper Alley, to the south of Mott Street, this site is privately owned by High Beach Cricket Club and is therefore only accessible when matches are taking place. The site is very pleasant and appears well looked after, whilst its location in the open countryside surrounded on three sides by dense hedgerows and trees gives it a very secluded feel. The site features a single cricket pitch which covers the majority of the site, whilst a cricket pavilion is located in the north west corner.



King George V Playing Field, Site FP5

KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD (FP5)

- 4.10** Situated between the M25 and Roundhills, this site provides a vital source of open space for the nearby residential estates to the north and south. There is a large grassy area to the east where two football pitches have been created, with room for a third. To the west, the site can be accessed by crossing the footbridge over Cobbin's Brook, via one of the many footpaths coming from Roundhills or via Caldbeck. To the north west, the site can be accessed from the footpaths adjoining Rochford Avenue and Honey Lane. These footpaths, despite being hard surfaced, are still very bumpy, and they terminate before they reach the footpath adjoining the footbridge over Cobbin's Brook. This

reduces the overall accessibility of the site, as it makes it more difficult for less able bodied persons to use.

- 4.11** To the north, the site can be accessed by another footpath from Roundhills, which also provides access to the local swimming pool or from Gilsland which leads off Roundhills. Access from the south, meanwhile, is provided by a footpath which travels from the swimming pool car park, under the M25 and terminates at Lodge Lane.
- 4.12** The perimeter is made up of a large number of mature trees and shrubs, which also divide the site lengthways into three separate sections. These trees and shrubs not only appear to make the site smaller than it is, but also help to hide the footpath which runs along the south western perimeter. This path leads to the local swimming pool, which is hidden from view when observed from the west of the site.
- 4.13** To the east, a similar line of trees divides up the site, leaving a large rectangular piece of land containing three football pitches, which can be accessed either from the swimming pool site or via the footbridge over the motorway to Lodge Lane. Furthermore there are no footpaths which link this section to the remainder of the site. Potential users would instead have to travel up Gilsland and onto Roundhills, before turning left into the swimming pool car park where the site's network of paths can be accessed.
- 4.14** Another issue is that there are no litter bins, dog waste bins or seating present anywhere. As a result, the western section of the site is particularly dirty, with widespread evidence of litter and dog excrement, especially leading up to Rochford Avenue. Walking up the footpath alongside Cobbin's Brook to the west, meanwhile, at the time of auditing, a large amount of litter had been dumped along the banks of the brook. Furthermore, just to the south of Rochford Avenue, there is an unusual area of fenced grassland which has been left to grow wild. The fencing around this small region, however, has been damaged through someone forcing entry into it. There is a large amount of litter within it, including a significant amount of broken glass.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There is a good amount of formal pitch provision for a variety of different sports within Waltham Abbey parish.
- Locals accessing either Ninefields Recreation Area (FP3) or Larsen Recreation Ground (FP2) by vehicle will need to park on the surrounding residential streets as neither site provides any car parking of its own.
- Some evidence of dog excrement and litter were found on Ninefields Recreation Area (FP3) and Larsen Recreation Ground (FP2) whilst evidence of graffiti was also found on both of these sites as well as Town Mead Leisure Park (FP1).
- Of all the sites however, none were as untidy as King George V Playing Field (FP5) where significant amounts of vandalism, graffiti and litter were found.

- Issues such as these could where necessary be addressed through the provision of some litter bins, and dog waste bins. The provision of some seating would also be beneficial to King George V Playing Field (FP5).
- The provision of security cameras if affordable, would also help to lower levels of vandalism within the site.
- The installation of security camera where affordable would also be beneficial in tackling local acts of vandalism and antisocial behaviour.
- Given the good amount of provision available in the parish the Town Council does not believe there to be a need for further provision within the parish.

CHAPTER 5 – ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR SPORT

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
AS1	West Essex Golf Club	Bury Road, Sewardstonebury, Chingford	47.92	Privately Owned
AS2	Lee Valley Campsite	Sewardstone Road, Chingford	7.82	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
AS3	The Elms Caravan and Camping Park	Lippitts Hill, High Beach, Loughton	5.88	Privately Owned
AS4	High Beach Golf Course	Wellington Hill, Loughton,	11.89	Privately Owned
AS5	High Beach Scout Camp	Church Road, High Beach	1.35	The Scout Association
AS6	Holyfield Lake	Stubbins Hall Lane	86.64	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
AS7	Friday Lake	Beaulieu Drive, Waltham Abbey	6.25	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

WEST ESSEX GOLF CLUB (AS1)

- 5.0** Situated to the east of Bury Road and directly opposite Gilwell Park, this privately owned golf club is groomed to a very high standard, and provides a modern clubhouse, a large driving range, practice bunkers and a green for pitching and chipping, as well as a 6,289 yard, 18 hole golf course.

LEE VALLEY CAMPSITE (AS2)

- 5.1** Found to the south west of the junction between Daws Hill and Sewardstone Road, this attractive and well cared for campsite is owned by the Lee Valley Park Regional Authority. It offers a range of campsite facilities, and provides a good opportunity to enjoy the countryside, whilst having the attractions of central London close by.

THE ELMS CARAVAN AND CAMPING PARK (AS3)

- 5.2** Situated to the east of Lippitt's Hill in High Beech, this privately run campsite is smart and well maintained, offering pitches for caravans, motor homes and tents. Site users also have the opportunity to stay in one of the on-site log cabins, cottages or caravans, whilst tents can also be hired.

HIGH BEACH GOLF COURSE (AS4)

- 5.3 Situated to the north of Wellington Hill on a large expanse of land predominantly sloping downwards from south to north, this is a very attractive site which is clearly very well maintained. The site is privately owned by High Beach Golf Club and therefore its use is restricted to only its members. This privacy is particularly well kept by the dense hedgerows and lines of trees which surround all but the entrance to the course. The site offers an eighteen hole golf course and driving range, as well as a small clubhouse to the south east.

HIGH BEACH SCOUT CAMP (AS5)

- 5.4 Found to the west of Church Road between High Beach Hall and Beech Oak Farm, this privately owned campsite is a predominantly grassy open space surrounded by trees to the north west and east. The site is semi-natural appearance, with much of it having been allowed to become rather wild. This very much adds to the charm of the camp, and helps give it a particularly secluded and picturesque atmosphere. To the north of the site lie three scout huts, which appear to be in fine condition, and which compliment the natural surroundings of the rest of the camp. One other particularly pleasant feature is the camp fire, which is surrounded by a number of wooden benches located underneath a large oak tree, to south west of the site.

HOLYFIELD LAKE (AS6)

- 5.5 Located two miles north of Waltham Abbey town, and within the Lee Valley Regional Park, Holyfield Lake is an 73 hectare open expanse of water, predominantly used by Fishers Green Sailing Club. The club caters for both dinghy sailing and sailboarding, and membership is available to the general public.

FRIDAY LAKE (AS7)

- 5.6 Situated in between Hall Marsh Scrape (SO6) and Hooks Marsh (SO7), to the north west of Waltham Abbey town, this site is a fishery, cared for and run by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. Day permits to fish at the lake can be obtained on site from the Regional Park Authority on most days of the year.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- The provision of alternate sites for sport within the parish is very good.

- This high level of provision however is largely down to the large size of the parish and the fact that Lea Valley Regional Park dominates the west of the parish.
- Many of the sites are very secluded, making their appearance particularly attractive. This in turn significantly increases their amenity value and encourages more people to visit them.
- All of these site are clean, tidy and well maintained.
- Some of the more rural sites are particularly difficult to locate and access however because they are predominantly used by locals this does not really appear to be an issue.
- Waltham Abbey Town Council does not believe there to be a current demand for the provision of further facilities of this type within the parish.

CHAPTER 6 – INFORMAL RECREATION GROUNDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
RG1	Gilwell Park	Bury Road, Sewardstonebury	34.00	The Scout Association

GILWELL PARK (RG1)

- 6.0** Located to the west of Bury Road in Sewardstonebury, this is a very attractive and well maintained park, predominantly used as an activity centre for Scout groups. Covering approximately 34 hectares, it is the only informal recreation ground in the parish but on occasion can be used for various outdoor sports activities in association with The Scout Association, and can accommodate up to 10,000 people.
- 6.1** The site contains camp fields designed to hold up to 1,200 people, as well as indoor accommodation, a number of historical sites, and provision for a wide range of activities suitable for all sections of the scouting movement. This includes activities such as grass sledging, pedal go-karts, canoeing, rifle shooting, crate stacking, wall climbing, revolving wall climbing, using a high rope course, rope swinging, rafting, horse riding, orienteering, hiking, pioneering tours, using obstacle courses and playing aero ball.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is the only site primarily used as a form of informal recreation within the parish.
- Town Mead Leisure Park (FP1), Larsen Recreation Ground (FP2) and Ninefields Recreation Area (FP3) and King George V Playing Fields (FP5) however all provide various amounts of informal recreation space, particularly when the formal playing pitches located on them are not in use.
- Overall therefore there is an good amount of informal recreation ground space within the parish.
- In addition to this, further provision is available in the neighbouring parish of Loughton as well as Waltham Cross to the west in Hertfordshire and to the south in the London Borough of Walthamstow.

CHAPTER 7 – CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUNDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CY1	Town Mead Playground	Brooker Road, Waltham Abbey	0.07	Waltham Abbey Town Council
CY2	Larsen Recreation Ground Playground	Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey	0.21	Waltham Abbey Town Council
CY3	Princesfield Road Playground	Princesfield Road, Waltham Abbey	0.02	Epping Forest District Council
CY4	Poplar Shaw Playground	Poplar Shaw, Waltham Abbey	0.11	Epping Forest District Council
CY5	Harold Crescent Playground	Harold Crescent, Waltham Abbey	0.09	Epping Forest District Council
CY6	Pynest Green Lane Playground	Pynest Green Lane, High Beach	0.22	Epping Forest District Council

TOWN MEAD PLAYGROUND (CY1)

- 7.0** Located within Town Mead Leisure Park (FP1), this playground is in excellent condition and is clearly very well looked after. The park is very clean and tidy, with no sign of any litter and only a small amount of noticeable graffiti. There is one main entrance to the east which is clearly indicated by two signs. These signs provide important information, and are in fine shape. The playground is entirely surrounded by good quality wooden fencing, making the site extremely secure. The only small issues arising are the need for the provision of some seating, and some litter bins, within the site. Accessibility, meanwhile, is somewhat reduced by the lack of a pathway leading to the entrance, forcing potential users to walk across the grass to reach it.

LARSEN RECREATION GROUND PLAYGROUND (CY2)

- 7.1** Located within Larsen Recreation Ground (FP2), this playground is adjacent to Cobbin’s Brook which runs along its northern boundary. An important safety issue here regards the site’s perimeter fencing facing the brook, which unlike the remaining perimeter fencing, is made of wood instead of metal. This wooden fencing has a number of holes in it, and there is therefore a danger that young children may try to go through it to reach the water.
- 7.2** The site itself is in relatively good condition, although at the time of auditing there was a significant amount of noticeable litter strewn around. The three benches and three information signs present, meanwhile, have been heavily covered in graffiti. The only available litter bin is very small; another should be added. Another issue regards the site’s accessibility. There is no hard standing pathway. Accessibility within the playground is also made difficult by

the fact that although the surfaces around the equipment are made of rubber, the rest of the playground is grass, which potentially makes the site more inconvenient to use during the colder and wetter times of the year.



Larsen Recreation Ground Playground, Site CY2

PRINCESFIELD ROAD PLAYGROUND (CY3)

- 7.3** Entirely surrounded by Princesfield Road and the surrounding housing estate, this playground is located on top of a small, but relatively steep grass mound, which slopes downwards from north to south. The playground is entirely surrounded by metal fencing, and has two entrances. However, there are no footpaths leading up to these entrance points, making access for parents or carers with pushchairs potentially very difficult. The southern entrance is particularly awkward to access, as potential users must walk up the grassy slope leading to the playground, which is quite slippery even when dry. This situation is made potentially more dangerous by the fact that there is a road at the bottom of the slope.
- 7.4** Within the site itself, all the pieces of equipment are surrounded by rubber surfacing, although the grass in between them is rather long. There is one information sign by the western entrance, and one seat and bin present, all of which are in a fair condition. There is however a significant amount of graffiti and litter visible, some of which is particularly unpleasant.



Princesfield Road Playground, Site CY3

POPLAR SHAW PLAYGROUND (CY4)

- 7.5** Located to the west of Poplar Shaw, this playground can be accessed directly from a small car park which serves local residents. From here a wide footpath leads east to the site itself, which is located next to an old scout hut adjacent to the east. To the south and west the playground backs onto residential gardens. The site is fenced on all but its northern perimeter, with the western and eastern perimeters consisting of a rather worn wire mesh fencing. The newer steel fencing along the southern perimeter forms the front of the playground, and provides adequate protection for the young children enjoying it.
- 7.6** The playground itself is located on a small area of grass overlooked by residential housing, and is in excellent condition. The site is very clean and tidy, and provides a standard range of children's facilities, along with seating and a litter bin, all of which are in good condition. The information sign at the main entrance to the south is rather small, but still provides adequate information and is in good order. The only slight issue with the site is the small amount of graffiti which can be found on the residential fencing around it.



Poplar Shaw Playground, Site CY4

HAROLD CRESCENT PLAYGROUND (CY5)

- 7.7** Located on a small grass area, entirely surrounded by Harold Crescent and Crooked Mile, this playground is overlooked on all sides by residential housing. The site has only one entrance, which is located to the south west corner, and can be accessed along a wood chipped path which leads onto Harold Crescent. Access to, and within, the playground is reasonably difficult for those with pushchairs, due to the lack of hard surfaced pathways. Although all the equipment has rubber surfacing surrounding it, the remainder of the site is grass. The entrance however is adequately gated in order to prevent dogs from entering.
- 7.8** The site itself is in good condition and appears to be well maintained. There is very little rubbish apparent, whilst areas of graffiti have been noticeably cleaned away. There is one bin present which appears to be in good order, although one of the two signs has been heavily vandalised and needs to be replaced. The children's facilities appear to be in decent condition. No seating is provided, however, whilst the overhanging tree by the main entrance is eye-catching but hinders entry onto the site.



Harold Crescent Playground, Site CY5

PYNEST GREEN LANE PLAYGROUND (CY6)

- 7.9** Situated between Beech Hall Gardens and Forest Close on the edge of Epping Forest, this site is the most rural of the playgrounds in the parish. Car users can access the site by parking on either Beech Hall Gardens or Forest Close. The site is predominantly grassland, whilst the south eastern corner is dominated by a number of large trees which significantly add to the visual amenity. The sites perimeter is defined by a low wire fence which is supplemented by a number of reasonably dense hedgerows and small trees, whilst the residential houses of Forest Close look over the site from the north west.
- 7.10** Between the site's two main entrances to the east and west, runs a hard surfaced footpath enabling easy access for those with pushchairs, although there are no footpath links to the children's facilities present. The site appears to be in good condition, with no apparent litter or graffiti. However it is by far the muddiest site in the parish, with many of its features covered in dirt, including the lone bench and litter bin. There are also no information signs at hand. There are two potential dangers that users should be aware of. The first of these regards the sub station to the north, which is currently surrounded by an tall metal fence. The second of these regards the site's proximity to a road with fast moving traffic, and the fact that a child could quite possibly step over the low perimeter fence and gain access to it.



Pynest Green Lane Playground, Site CY6

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- The external and internal accessibility of the playgrounds in the parish varies widely.
- Only Poplar Shaw Playground (CY4) and Pynest Green Lane Playground (CY6) have hard surface footpaths leading up to them.
- No playgrounds however provide hard surfaced paths to all of their children's facilities, which would make them fully accessible to all.
- All the playgrounds except that at Town Mead (CY1) are predominantly surfaced with grass, which in conjunction with the lack of footpaths to individual facilities, causes the potential sites to become muddy and slippery, particularly during colder and wetter periods.
- The levels of cleanliness throughout the playgrounds in the parish vary significantly. Town Mead Playground (CY1), Harold Crescent Playground (CY5) and Poplar Shaw Playground (CY4) clean and tidy, while in contrast, Princesfield Road Playground (CY3) and Larsen Recreation Ground Playground (CY2) at times have large amounts of litter throughout them.
- Even the most well looked after playgrounds still have some traces of graffiti.
- The perimeter fences of Larsen Recreation Ground Playground (CY2), and Pynest Green Lane Playground (CY6) could be made more secure.
- The range and condition of children's facilities is a particular strength of the playgrounds located in this particular parish.

- The provision of adequate bins and seating needs to be addressed in Harold Crescent Playground (CY5), Town Mead Playground (CY1) and Larsen Recreation Ground Playground (CY2).
- There is a need for new or replacement information signs in Harold Crescent Playground (CY5), Pynest Green Lane Playground (CY6) and Larsen Recreation Ground Playground (CY2)
- There is no current demand for further provision of this type of facility within the parish.

CHAPTER 8 – INDOOR FACILITIES FOR HIGH LEVELS OF USE

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
IF1	Waltham Abbey Sports Centre	Broomstick Hall Road, Waltham Abbey	0.24	Privately Owned
IF2	Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool	Roundhills, Waltham Abbey	0.59	Epping Forest District Council

WALTHAM ABBEY SPORTS CENTRE (IF1)

- 8.0** Situated towards the centre of Waltham Abbey town, this sports centre offers five badminton courts, a main sports hall, two squash courts, and two table tennis tables and a gym. In addition to this the sports hall also caters for a number of other sports including racketball, all year round indoor football leagues, indoor winter cricket facilities, basketball courts and netball courts. The site also runs summer holiday schemes for 5-11 year olds, and children's birthday parties and is open seven days a week.
- 8.1** Originally owned by the District Council, this ownership was passed over to King Harold school on the 18th January 2010 with the aim now to enable continued future use of the facility by the school and community. A decision by Council Members on whether to add a sports hall extension to Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool is due to be decided within the next few months with a planning application to be submitted shortly afterwards should the extension be approved.

WALTHAM ABBEY SWIMMING POOL (IF2)

- 8.2** Located to the south of Waltham Abbey town and adjacent to King George V Playing Fields, this site offers a main swimming pool, teaching pool, fitness suite and group exercise studio. Plans for an extension to the site are currently be considered but as yet have not reached planning application stage.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is the only parish in the district which currently offers two facilities of this type within its parish.
- Waltham Abbey Sports Hall has had its ownership transferred from Epping Forest District Council to King Harold School as of the 18th January 2010.
- A new facility is also being considered to the existing swimming pool site.

CHAPTER 9 – COMMUNITY CENTRES AND VILLAGE HALLS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CV1	Waltham Abbey Town Hall	Highbridge Street, Waltham Abbey	0.12	Waltham Abbey Town Council
CV2	Ninefields Community Centre	Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey	0.11	Waltham Abbey Town Council
CV3	Town Mead Sports and Social Club Suite	Town Mead Leisure Park	0.05	Town Mead Sports and Social Club

WALTHAM ABBEY TOWN HALL (CV1)

- 9.0** Situated on the corner of Highbridge Street facing Waltham Abbey itself to the north east, this is one of largest buildings of its type in the District and is not only the base for Waltham Abbey Town Council but is also used for a wide variety of events and meetings and activities. The main part of the town hall used for these is known as the Cornmill Suite, a multi use function room which is regularly hired out for dinner/dances, wedding receptions, private functions, stage show and concerts. The Suite is also used by a wide variety of clubs and societies who specialise in anything from mother and child groups to salsa dancing.

NINEFIELDS COMMUNITY CENTRE (CV2)

- 9.1** Situated to the south of Hillhouse and overlooking Ninefields Recreation Ground (FP3) to the west, this a good sized and well used local community centre. The Town Council have identified that the building is in need of refurbishment, and are currently pursuing a grant from the Criminal Justice board to facilitate this. In the mean time the centre remains in use for variety of different activities including dance, boxing, judo and in conjunction with Abbey Youth football team, the local team who use the playing pitches on Ninefields Recreation ground (FP3). The site is also the base for various societies such as the local senior citizens group and can also be hired out for private functions such as children's birthday parties.

TOWN MEAD SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB SUITE (CV3)

- 9.2** Located within Town Mead Sports and Social Club which overlooks Town Mead Leisure Park (FP1) to the west, this relatively small suite is used for a variety of different activities, some in association with the Sports and Social Club and some for private use. This includes karate lessons, dancing and singing events, various charity events, a local beer festival as well as for more formal meetings for groups such as Waltham Abbey Town Partnership and

other private firms and groups. On top of this the site is also used in conjunction with the various sports pitches and facilities located within Town Mead Leisure Park. The site appears to be in decent condition and is well maintained by those who use it. The quantity and quality of the nearby parking facilities which are shared with Town Mead Leisure Park (FP1) are also worthy of note.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- In addition to these sites, there are a number of sports and social clubs and other societies such as the Salvation Army who have their own facilities.
- These tend to be for members only however membership fees are usually very small or free.
- There is clearly a good level of provision of this type of facility within the parish which caters for a wide range of needs and demands.
- The Town Council has not indicated a need for further provision of any further facilities within the parish.
- Ninefields Community Centre (CV2) is in need of refurbishment or redevelopment. Should the latest bid for a grant to help make these improvements be accepted then work to achieve these will begin in the near future.

CHAPTER 10 - MANAGED OPEN SPACE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
MO1	Land to the north of Shernbroke Road	Shernbroke Road, Waltham Abbey	2.56	Epping Forest District Council
MO2	Land surrounded by Winters Way	Winters Way, Waltham Abbey	0.96	Epping Forest District Council
MO3	Land surrounded by Princesfield Road	Princesfield Road, Waltham Abbey	0.31	Epping Forest District Council
MO4	Land surrounded by Thaxted Way	Thaxted Way, Waltham Abbey	0.22	Epping Forest District Council
MO5	Waltham Abbey Market Square	Leverton Way, Waltham Abbey	0.07	Epping Forest District Council
MO6	Waltham Abbey Gardens	Abbeyview, Waltham Abbey	8.97	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
MO7	Hayes Hill Farm	Stubbins Hall Lane, Waltham Abbey	6.92	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
MO8	Land Opposite The Kings Oak Pub	Manor Road, Waltham Abbey	0.64	Corporation of London

LAND TO THE NORTH OF SHERNBROKE ROAD (MO1)

- 10.0** Located to the north of Shernbroke Road, this large area of amenity green space adjoins Ninefields Recreation Ground to the south east. The site is very accessible and can be accessed via a network of footpaths which join it from the north, south and west. These footpaths continue within it, enabling wheelchair and pushchair users to gain access through it. The south of the site is bordered by Cobbin's Brook, which runs along the entire southern perimeter. A footbridge linking to the network of footpaths provides the means to cross the Brook.
- 10.1** One issue that can be raised regards accessibility. No internal footpaths are provided to the east of the site. As a result of this, wheelchair and pushchair users, who can not travel across the grass as easily as most, must take a longer route around the site should they wish to travel between Shernbroke Road to the south and Abbott's Drive to north east. Anyone choosing to walk across the grass, meanwhile, must be aware of the fact that even during spells of good weather some areas can be particularly muddy, due to their proximity to the brook. Furthermore, the footpaths to the west are not lit, making them very difficult to walk along during the night.
- 10.2** The site itself is predominantly grassland, and is surrounded on all but its western side by trees and hedgerows, which give it a very secluded feel. It was formerly home to two playgrounds, one to the north west and one to the

east. Both of these playgrounds have been removed, although evidence of the eastern one is still noticeable, with some of its wood chipping and tarmac surfacing remaining. This is not particularly attractive, and detracts from the overall visual amenity of the site. Another issue is the fact the area is fairly large, it provides no seating, dog waste bins or litter bins. As a result, litter and dog excrement can be seen throughout, but particularly along the banks of the brook.



Land to the north of Shernbroke Road, Site MO1

LAND SURROUNDED BY WINTERS WAY (MO2)

- 10.3** This site is situated to the south of Ninefields, and is entirely surrounded by Winter's Way. This is a particularly accessible piece of amenity open space which is predominantly grassland, with a variety of small and medium sized trees spread throughout. It can be accessed on all sides by a variety of pathways which lead to, and travel around, the perimeter. There are however no pathways providing access through the site itself, which would enable wheelchairs and pushchairs to use it. It is attractive in appearance, and appears to be maintained to a high standard, although there is some evidence of litter and dog fouling. These issues could be tackled through the provision of a number of litter bins and dog waste bins.



Land Surrounded by Winters Way, Site MO2

LAND SURROUNDED BY PRINCESFIELD ROAD (MO3)

10.4 Found to the far north east of Waltham Abbey town, and entirely surrounded by Princesfield Road, this site is a sloping area of amenity open space, on top of which sits Princesfield Road Playground (CY3). The site is predominantly grass, with a number of young trees planted around the perimeter. The most obvious feature, however, is the slope of the area, which falls significantly from north to south. The grass surface of the site is therefore quite slippery to walk on, especially if the grass is wet. This is clearly a potential hazard to users. The site is relatively attractive, and is clean and tidy, although there is evidence that vehicles have been parked on its southern verges, which as a result have been significantly degraded.

LAND SURROUNDED BY THAXTED WAY (MO4)

10.5 Entirely encompassed by Thaxted Way, this site is a piece of open amenity space, predominantly covered with grass. Around twenty trees of varying age are spread throughout, as well as a number of flower beds. The site is pleasant in aspect, and is very well cared for, with no litter or dog fouling evident. The only minor issue regards the concrete bollard to the south west corner, which has been knocked down.



Land surrounded by Thaxted Way, MO4

WALTHAM ABBEY MARKET SQUARE (MO5)

- 10.6** Located between Church Street and Leverton Way, Waltham Abbey's Market Square offers locals and visitors alike the opportunity to view its historic 12th century Abbey and 16th century timber framed buildings, and to experience the town's twice weekly open market days. To the north, the Square directly adjoins Sun Street, the pedestrianised main street in the town centre, giving members of the public convenient access to a wide range of shops, with plenty of car parking conveniently close by. The site is clean and tidy, and provides adequate lighting, as well as ample seats and litter bins. One minor issue which needs addressing is the small amount of graffiti present, particularly on the seating.

WALTHAM ABBEY GARDENS (MO6)

- 10.7** Located to the north east of Waltham Abbey itself, Waltham Abbey Gardens is one of the most attractive and well maintained sites in the district, and is of important historical significance. It is reputed to be the burial place of King Harold following the battle of Hastings in 1066. Furthermore, remains of the Augustinian Abbey founded by King Henry II in 1177, which in its heyday was one of the largest abbeys in the country, are visible. Users of the site have the opportunity to further explore the history of the site through exploring the variety of art work dotted throughout. As well the site's historical offerings,

users can visit the Rose Gardens, which add significantly to the visual amenity of what is already a very beautiful area.

HAYES HILL FARM (MO7)

10.8 Located to the north of Holyfield Road just to the east of Holyfield Lake, this site is a traditional farm on seventeen acres. Opened in 1976, it was one of the first farms in the locality to be available for the general public to visit. It is home to a variety of different animals, including pigs, goats, rabbits, sheep, chickens and guinea pigs, as well as a number of reptiles and rare breed farm animals. The farm also offers an adventure playground, a sand pit and a tractor barn where children can ride mini tractors. From the site it is also possible to access Holyfield Hall Farm, a modern dairy and arable farm where visitors can explore the milking parlour and learn about the making of dairy products. The site is wheelchair and pushchair accessible, and can also make provision for members of the public with hearing difficulties.

LAND OPPOSITE THE KINGS OAK PUB (MO8)

10.9 Situated opposite the Kings Oak Pub in High Beach, this site is located deep within the woodland of Epping Forest. Its location within one of the most attractive parts of the district makes it a particularly. From here, visitors are able to access all parts of the nearby forest, either via the network of footpaths and bridleways which link up with the site, or by walking 'off the beaten track'.

10.10 This site itself is an attractive area in its own right, and is predominantly amenity green space. There is a particularly large mature tree located just north of the centre. Adequate provision of litter bins has been made, although no seating is offered. A reasonably large, free car park to the east provides adequate spaces for visitors, as well as public toilets, including a disabled toilet. Refreshments can be purchased either from the Kings Oak pub itself, or from the kiosk to the immediate north.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- All of the managed open spaces with public accessibility within the parish are very attractive and well looked after, and contribute positively to the adjoining townscape.
- All of the sites, excepting the Land to the north of Shernbroke Road (MO2) and the Land Surrounded by Winters Way (MO3), are clean and tidy, with few incidences of graffiti or litter.
- The land to the north of Shernbroke Road (MO2) and the Land Surrounded by Winter's Way (MO3), do not provide any litter bins or dog waste bins.

- The land to the north of Shernbroke Road (MO2), and the Land Opposite The Kings Oak Pub (MO9), which are both large enough to warrant seating, do not have any.
- Many of the sites are located adjacent to, or surrounded by, residential roads being used for parking. Around some sites these vehicles are travelling at reasonably fast speeds. Potential users of the Land Surrounded By Winters Way (MO3), Land Opposite the Kings Oak Pub (MO9), Waltham Abbey Market Square (MO6), Land Surrounded by Thaxted Way (MO5), Land Surrounded by Princesfield Road (MO4) should therefore take extra care.
- The accessibility of these sites is good, particularly for those which are larger and are therefore more likely to be used. The accessibility of land to the north of Shernbroke Road (MO2), however, could be improved by the implementation of a footpath providing direct access between the south and east of the site.
- The perimeter of the Land Surrounded By Princesfield Road (MO4) and the Land Surrounded By Thaxted Way (MO5) have been degraded by vehicles maneuvering around, and parking on, them.

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

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
SO1	Gunpowder Park	Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey	89.60	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
SO2	Cornmill Meadows Dragonfly Sanctuary	Crooked Mile, Waltham Abbey	22.74	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
SO3	Sewardstone Marsh	Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey	11.00	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
SO4	Knights Pts	Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey	4.48	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
SO5	Patty Pool Mead	Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey	7.05	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
SO6	Hall Marsh Scrape	Beaulieu Drive, Waltham Abbey	12.01	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
SO7	Hooks Marsh	Fishers Green Lane, Waltham Abbey	44.35	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
SO8	Fishers Green	Fishers Green Lane, Waltham Abbey	6.08	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
SO9	Waltham Abbey Tree Park	Crooked Mile, Waltham Abbey	35.20	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
SO10	Holyfield Hall Farm	Stubbins Hall Lane, Waltham Abbey	8.90	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
SO11	Epping Forest	Various areas throughout the parish	Around 2400 across district	Corporation of London

GUNPOWDER PARK (SO1)

11.0 Situated along Sewardstone Road, to the south west of Waltham Abbey town and to the north of Knights Pits (SO4), the Gunpowder Park is a relatively new site. It was reclaimed by the regeneration of land formerly used as a munitions testing facility. The site is now a country park, benefiting local residents, tourist visitors, wildlife and the arts. It also incorporates an environmentally friendly park centre. The park is highly accessible, offering a network of surfaced paths well-suited to use by walkers and cyclists at any time of year, as well as a bridleway which is

available during the summer months. The park has been designed with children in mind, and is set up in such a way as to ensure their safety.

- 11.1** The park centre hosts an initiative devoted to arts, science and nature projects, through yearly programmes which are developed and managed by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. Visitors are welcome to visit the centre at any time to view current exhibitions, and take part in any creative workshops or special events organised.

CORNILL MEADOWS DRAGONFLY SANCTUARY (SO2)

- 11.2** This site is located just to the north of Waltham Abbey Gardens (MO8) and west of Waltham Abbey Tree Park (SO9). It is regarded as the best single location to see dragonflies in the region and contains over half of Britain's native species. The site is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It offers slow flowing rivers and rich, fertile, abundant plant life which together provide the ideal habitat for many types of insect.

SEWARDSTONE MARSH (SO3)

- 11.3** Located to the south west of the parish in between Knights Pits (SO4) to the north and Patty Pool Mead (SO5) to the south, Sewardstone Marsh is an important local natural habitat containing marshland, a seasonally wet area, and two small lakes. It is home to a variety of important animal and plant species. The site is primarily formed from two individual areas; Knights Pits (SO4) and Patty Pool Mead (SO5), both of which have been audited separately below. The site is accessible via a network of footpaths which pass throughout. Along these pathways a number of benches, picnic tables and information signs can be found, enabling members of the public to enjoy the attractive scenery, discover the history of the site, and learn about species of flora and fauna which live in the area.

KNIGHTS PITS (SO4)

- 11.4** Situated to the north of Sewardstone Marshes (SO3), Knights Pits is formed from two pits, resulting from gravel extraction which took place on the site between 1940-1945. The site also offers a large wooded area, as well as regions of grassland and scrub. It is a very popular site for spotting dragonflies and various water birds, whilst the larger of the two pits is now an important local fishery. The water edges and wet woodland surrounding the pits, meanwhile, are home to around ninety different species of bird.

PATTY POOL MEAD (SO5)

- 11.5** This site is located to the south of Sewardstone Marshes (SO3) and is predominantly a grazing meadow, which regularly floods during winter and early spring. These conditions have proved ideal for a variety of birds, and work is

currently taking place to improve these wetlands further, in order to attract more species of bird.

HALL MARSH SCRAPE (SO6)

- 11.6** Situated to the north west of the town of Waltham Abbey and just south of Friday Lake (AS7), this site is a man-made wildlife refuge mimicking the conditions of a river flood meadow. It is predominantly an area of shallow water, with a number of shingle islands. The site has recently been re-profiled to allow water levels to be controlled by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, who own it.
- 11.7** The site offers a viewing area and an open backed hide, for nature enthusiasts to watch the variety of wild birds which visit the site during each season. The site has been designed to make provision for species of dragonfly, bat and otter, which have all been spotted there. The special viewing areas, devised to allow visitors to observe the wildlife, can be accessed via a network of paths which are suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. The site also offers public toilets, which are located directly adjacent to the car park at the entrance.

HOOKS MARSH (SO7)

- 11.8** Located to the west of Fishers Green (SO8), along the parish's border with Hertfordshire, Hook's Marsh is a Site of Special Scientific Interest which forms part of the River Lee Country Park. It features ten gravel pits which have recently been transformed through the planting of 25,000 reeds, which were planted to try to increase the network of reed beds nationwide. Several of these pits have extensive shorelines and associated areas of marsh, grassland, scrub and woodland.
- 11.9** Formerly a testing area for explosives, the site has undergone a variety of management works, and is now home to a diversity of important species of bird. To the south, it encompasses Horsemill Stream, which runs through a weir controlled by computerised radial gates. These play a vital role in ensuring that local settlements, including the town of Waltham Abbey, are protected from flooding.

FISHERS GREEN (SO8)

- 11.10** This site is located to the south west of Holyfield and to the east of Hooks Marsh (SO7) and forms part of the River Lee Country Park. It is principally made up of a number of flooded pits, which were created when the area was a key gravel extraction location. Within these pits, a number of wooded islands have formed, whilst the remainder of the site is a combination of grassland and scrub. This mixture provides a wide range of habitats, which have resulted in the presence of a rich diversity of flora and fauna.
- 11.11** The site is popular for walkers, cyclists and birdwatchers, the last of which can observe birds via the hide looking over much of the site. This hide is open on most weekends and was recently extended. Screens were erected, which project images

from a number of cameras installed at various points throughout the site. A network of hard surfaced paths, beginning at the car park, link the majority of site, making it accessible to both wheelchairs and pushchairs.

WALTHAM ABBEY TREE PARK (SO9)

11.12 This site is situated to the east of Cornmill Meadows (SO2) and directly north of the roundabout joining Abbeyview to Crooked Mile. The Park was once the Greater London Council's Arboretum. It also directly adjoins Cornmill Meadows Dragonfly Sanctuary to the north. Visitors can walk along the Meridian Line, which dissects the site.

HOLYFIELD HALL FARM (SO10)

11.13 Located in the very north western corner of the district, on the border with Hertfordshire, this site is situated directly adjacent to Holyfield Lake to the east and Hooks Marsh to the south. It is one of three areas of land within the Lee Valley Regional Park which are owned by the farm, although only two are located within the parish of Waltham Abbey, and only this site is publicly accessible. The site where the farm itself is located is only open to the farm workers. The site is predominantly relatively attractive open grassland, and is used by the landowners for grazing their sheep.

EPPING FOREST (SO11)

11.14 The most dominant open space within the parish is Epping Forest, which covers a significant proportion of the southern and eastern parts of the district, particularly along the parishes boundary with Loughton and the London Borough of Waltham Abbey. Epping Forest is the largest public open space in the London area, and the land designated as part of it found in Waltham Abbey forms just a small percentage of its 2,400 hectare total. As well as being a popular area for recreation, Epping Forest is also of national and international importance in terms of conservation, with around two thirds designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, or Special Area of Conservation.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- All of the sites in question within this parish are managed and maintained to an excellent level by Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. They range from being pleasantly attractive to outstandingly beautiful in appearance.
- All the sites play an important role in the conservation of important wild species and habitats, whilst also helping to encourage younger generations to learn and protect the environment for years to come.

- All of the sites are excellent areas of open space ideally suited for informal recreation. Efforts continue to further improve their safety for children.
- In addition to these sites, a variety of public footpaths and bridleways throughout the parish provide further opportunities for locals and visitors to access the open areas of countryside throughout the parish.

