

WILLINGALE - 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

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
AT1	Willingale Parish Allotment	The Street, Willingale	0.08	Diocese of Chelmsford



Willingale Parish Allotments, Site AT1

WILLINGALE PARISH ALLOTMENTS (AT1)

- 2.0** This small allotment lies to the north of St Christopher's Church, and can be reached via a turn off from The Street, or via an adjoining pathway from St Christopher's Church. A small car park lies to the north, which has space for approximately three or four vehicles although its primary function is to serve the residents living on Mann's Yard. Accessibility within the allotment site could be improved, as the main path providing access from north to south, is not hard surfaced.
- 2.1** This is especially the case if visitors should choose to access the site from St Christopher's Church, as they would have to cross the grass behind the church to reach the allotments. These grassy pathways would be difficult for those with wheelchairs to negotiate, however given that the pathway is not a public footpath, it is for the Diocese of Chelmsford to address the issue.

2.2 To the north lies a further entrance, from which a gate leads out into open countryside. This gate however has been locked for many years to prevent access onto the farmland beyond, and is therefore unavailable as a method of accessing the site. Medium sized hedgerows meanwhile encircle the entire site, forming its perimeter, although the low level of this planting retains its open character. However, it is largely screened from the various residential buildings which face it from the north and east. The allotment appears to be well used, with no areas apparently neglected. It also seems clean and tidy, with little horticultural waste or rubbish present.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This site is well used, and is clearly maintained to a high standard by those who use it.
- Whilst the site does have some unused plots, these too are kept in good condition and are ready to be taken on by a local resident.
- The allotment appears tidy and neat, with only small amounts of horticultural waste and litter noticeable.
- Accessibility is adequate, however, potential users who are less mobile would be unlikely to be able to use the site. The improvement in the accessibility of the allotment is the responsibility of The Diocese of Chelmsford who own the site, including the access way.
- Willingale Parish Council suggests that whilst demand for allotment plots in the parish is growing, further evidence would be required in order to begin looking at funding a second allotment site in the parish.
- Given the rural location and small population of the parish, a significant number of people would have to come forward to Willingale Parish Council to make the provision of a new allotment site viable.

CHAPTER 3 - CEMETERIES AND GRAVEYARDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CG1	St Christopher's and St Andrew and All Saints Churchyard	The Street, Willingale	0.48	Diocese of Chelmsford



St Christopher's and St Andrew's and All Saints Churchyard, Site CG1

ST CHRISTOPHER'S AND ST ANDREW'S AND ALL SAINTS CHURCHYARD (CG1)

- 3.0** Located along The Street, to the west of Willingale playing fields, this is a rather unusual churchyard, as it contains two separate churches. To the north is St Christopher's Church, and to the south is St Andrew's. Both were built before the 1500s, and in former times, both were used separately, with their own congregations. St. Christopher's was the parish church of the former area of Willingale Doe, and St Andrew's Church was that of the former area of Willingale Spain. Visitors can also access the allotment gardens (site AT1) to the north of the churchyard, from this site.
- 3.1** A single gravel track leads from the roadside to the east of the churchyard, meeting at the front entrances to both churches, and offering suitable access to all visitors, including those with wheelchairs or pushchairs. To the north and south, the churchyard borders neighbouring homes, whilst to the west it site faces open countryside. The churchyard's eastern perimeter is a red brick wall, and a combination of various species of tree, bush and

shrub, form the other three. These trees very much add to the overall amenity, and screen much of the area from external view, enhancing the tranquil feeling of the site.

- 3.2** The churchyard is extremely clean and well kept, and also offers good signage. It could be enhanced further through the provision of some seats and litter bins, which enable visitors to admire the beautiful surroundings in comfort, and help ensure that the area remains tidy.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is an agreeable and very smartly presented site.
- The visual amenity is greatly enhanced by a variety of medium and large sized trees which are spread throughout, particularly along the perimeter.
- Accessibility to both of the churches is good.
- Access to Willingale Parish Allotment (AT1), to the north of the site would be difficult for those with pushchairs or wheelchairs as pathway is not hard surfaced. Any improvement to the pathway is the responsibility of The Diocese of Chelmsford.
- As mentioned in Chapter 2, the surfacing of this pathway is the responsibility of The Diocese of Chelmsford who own it.
- The provision of some seats and litter bins would benefit the churchyard.
- This is the only facility of its kind within the parish and whilst Willingale parish Council would welcome a new churchyard, questions regarding its location and funding would still have to be tackled.

CHAPTER 4 – FORMAL PLAYING PITCHES

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
FP1	Willingale Playing Fields	The Street, Willingale	2.52	Diocese of Chelmsford



Willingale Playing Fields, Site FP1

WILLINGALE PLAYING FIELDS (FP1)

- 4.0** Situated to the east of The Street, this site is predominantly made open grassland, set against an attractive background of trees, shrubs and well maintained hedgerows, forming its perimeter. A dominating feature, visible before reaching the playing fields, is the very tall mature tree to the west, which contributes to the pleasant visual amenity.
- 4.1** The southern half of the site is covered by a large cricket pitch and nets, which are used by the village team. A clubhouse lies in the south western corner. The remainder of the area is used as an informal recreational space, apart from a small area to the east which has a number of children's facilities (see CY1). The site can be accessed via three separate entrances to the west, one of which is wide enough to allow access to maintenance vehicles. To the east, another entrance facilitates access to the surrounding farmland.
- 4.2** The playing fields site does provide some seating, as well as some litter bins and dog waste bins, although more of each seem to be required,

particularly given the relatively high level of rubbish present. Some evidence of vandalism can also be found, where some former cricket nets appear to have been damaged and dumped near the eastern perimeter. Furthermore, no hard surfaced paths have been laid down here, which would improve accessibility throughout for wheelchair users or those with pushchairs.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- Willingale Playing Fields (FP1) is the only formal playing pitch site within the whole of the parish.
- Whilst this site only specifically caters for cricket at present it could easily be used seasonally to cater for other sporting needs if desired by the local population.
- The site is well maintained, and is set in very attractive grounds.
- Accessibility is possible but difficult for those with wheelchairs or pushchairs, as there are no hard surfaced pathways present.
- Access for parents with pushchairs wishing to access the children's playground to the east may have the most difficulty.
- The implementation of such pathways however would carry significant cost and could only be justified if demand was high enough locally.
- The provision of further litter bins could help to reduce the amount of litter found on the site.
- Willingale Parish Council state there is no current local demand for any further facilities of this variety.

CHAPTER 5 – ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR SPORT

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

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

CHAPTER 6 – INFORMAL RECREATION GROUNDS

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There are no outright informal recreation grounds located within Willingale although Willingale Playing Fields (FP1) can be used as such when not in use by the local cricket team.
- Given the very rural nature of the parish and the small local population, Willingale Parish Council does not indicate a demand for the provision of any informal recreation grounds here.
- This is at least partially due to the large amount of private amenity space that most homes have in the parish.
- Those wishing to access other nearby sites of this type will need access to their own vehicles.
- The closest areas which offer further facilities of this nature are Fyfield, Ongar and North Weald.

CHAPTER 7 – CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUNDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CY1	Willingale Playing Field Children’s Playground	The Street, Willingale	0.05	Willingale Parish Council



Willingale Playing Field Children’s Playground, Site CY1

WILLINGALE PLAYING FIELD CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUND (CY1)

- 7.0** Found to the east of Willingale Playing Field, this playground lacks any perimeter fencing. This makes the site potentially dangerous for young children to use, especially as the play area is next to the eastern playing field entrance, which is commonly used by people walking dogs.
- 7.1** The playground lies on the far side of the playing field, with no hard surfaced footpaths leading towards it. This makes accessing it particularly difficult for visitors with pushchairs or wheelchairs, particularly during wetter weather.
- 7.2** Vandalism appears to be a problem at this site, as all the play equipment shows signs of graffiti and damage. There also appears to be a litter problem, with traces of broken glass visible in places. A lack of any bins in the near vicinity may have exacerbated this issue. Finally, no signs have been erected to advise users.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- A variety of issues have been identified, including multiple incidences of litter, graffiti and vandalism.
- Accessibility is poor, given that potential visitors must cross the grass to reach the site.
- No fencing has been installed, thus young children risk coming into contact with dogs being walked nearby. Having fencing around such facilities would help to create an environment which would be much safer for children to enjoy.
- No signs or litter bins are provided in close proximity.
- This is the only specific children's facility within the parish.
- Willingale parish Council state there is no current demand for further facilities of this variety given the rural nature of the parish and the consequent small population of the local area.

CHAPTER 8 - INDOOR FACILITIES FOR HIGH LEVELS OF USE

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There are no indoor facilities for high levels of use within Willingale.
- Willingale parish Council has indicated that there is no demand for a facility of this type within the parish given its rural nature and small local population.
- Such a facility would require large turnover in terms of use in order for it to be profitable and would not be sustainable if situated in such a rural location.
- Those residents wishing to access indoor facilities for high levels of use will need access to personal transportation or 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	Willingale Village Hall	Beech Road, Willingale	0.15	Willingale Parish Council

WILLINGALE VILLAGE HALL (CV1)

- 9.0** Situated along The Street to the north of Willingale village, this village hall was originally built in 1938 mainly to play badminton but also to act as the local centre for the community. In the 1960's an extension was built to the site including a new kitchen and indoor toilet facilities. By the end of the 20th century however the hall was once more in poor condition and so in 2000 an application was made for a lottery grant (now Community Fund) which resulted in £85,000 being awarded to upgrade the facility.
- 9.1** Today, the village hall is a well maintained site offering excellent facilities all of which are still relatively new and in excellent condition. The hall caters for a variety of different local needs providing a location for the local badminton club, local history club, and book club whilst also hosting local quiz nights, public meetings and private parties and events.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is the only site of its type within the parish.
- The site is in a very good condition and is well maintained by those locals entrusted to do so.
- The site is extremely popular amongst the local population and is particularly well managed by its trustees.
- Given how much time and investment has gone into the site coupled with how rural the parish is and consequently how small the local population is, it is highly unlikely that another facility of this type will be required in the parish in the near future.

CHAPTER 10 - MANAGED OPEN SPACE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
MO1	Wall's Green	Silver Lane, Willingale	0.33	Epping Forest District Council



Wall's Green, MO1

WALL'S GREEN (MO1)

10.0 Located at the western end of Silver Lane, this site is an attractive area of amenity green space, predominantly of well maintained grassland to the west and woodland to the east. The green appears well cared for, and is clean and tidy, with no sign of litter. The only facility present is a, traditional red telephone box, which appears to be still operational. The site is bordered by a tall hedgerow to the south, which screens it from view from this direction. Given the green's small size, it is unlikely that it is used for anything more than dog walking and enjoying the scenery, particularly from the small number of houses which face it, to the north.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is a small but pleasant site, which is smart and tidy.
- The variety of trees which can be found here very much add to the overall visual amenity.

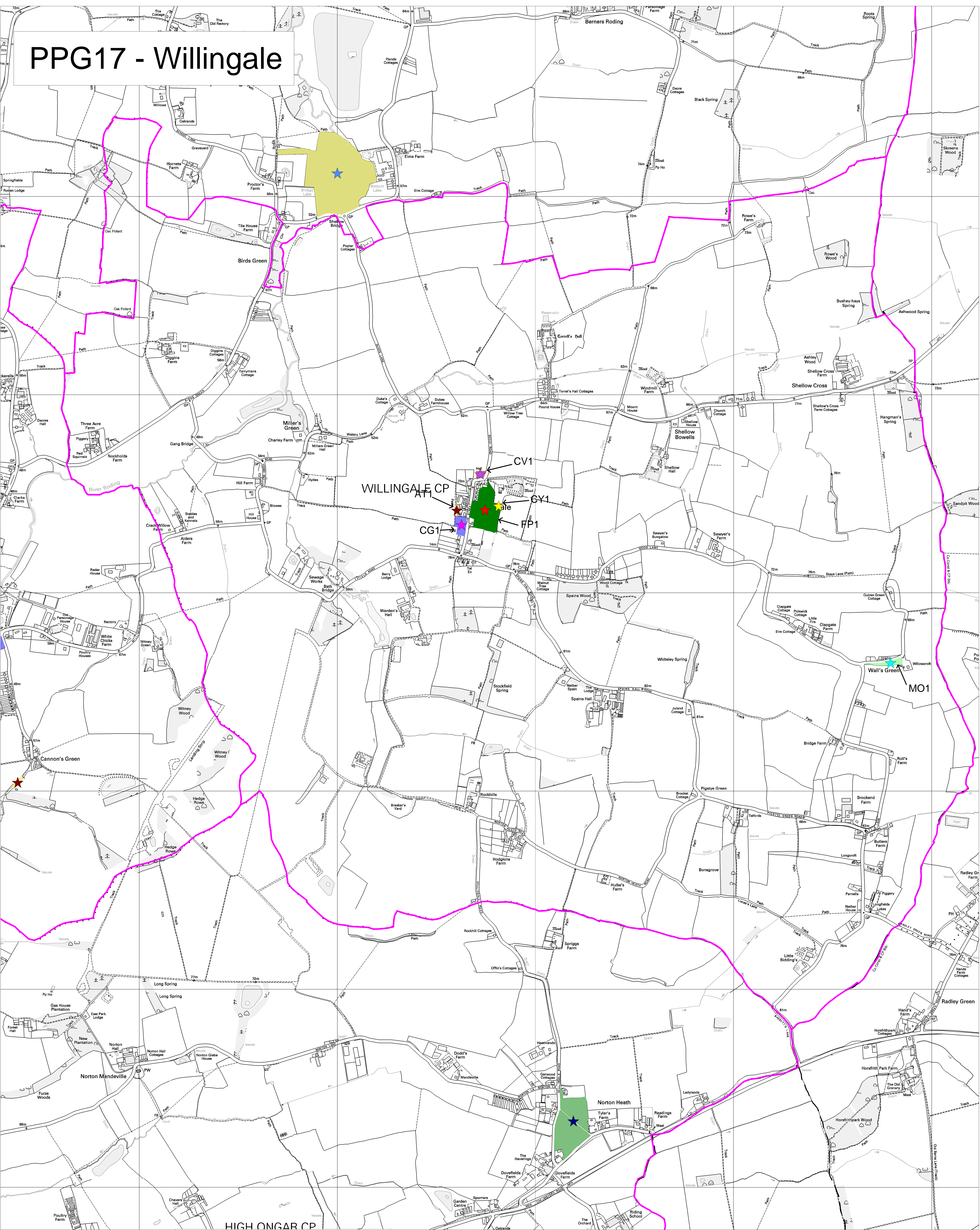
- The small size of the green necessarily restricts the ways in which it can be used.
- This the only area of managed open space within the parish, although given the very rural nature of the parish, there are plenty of public footpaths which members of the public can use to access the surrounding countryside.
- According to the Willingale Parish Council, there is currently no demand for further provision of this type of facility.

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

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- Despite the very rural nature of the Willingale, there are no areas of publicly accessible woodland or semi-natural open space in the area.
- There are however a number of such facilities within neighbouring areas such as Ongar parish to south west and Chelmsford to the east.
- As previously mentioned, the parish is also criss-crossed with multiple public footpaths giving members of the public access to the open countryside.

PPG17 - Willingale



Parish: Willingale

Area: 1394 Hectares Scale: 1:60,000 @ 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



Epping Forest District Council

Date: 4th January 2010