

NORTH WEALD - OPEN SPACE AUDIT

JUNE 2009

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CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

1.0 The audit process, described in this draft 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	Thornwood Common Allotment	Weald Hall Lane, Thornwood	0.64	North Weald Parish Council
AT2	Hastingwood Allotment	Hastingwood Road, Hastingwood	0.86	North Weald Parish Council
AT3	North Weald Allotment	High Road, North Weald	1.39	North Weald Parish Council
AT4	St Andrews Close Allotment	St Andrews Close, North Weald	0.20	Epping Forest District Council



Thornwood Common Allotment, Site AT1

THORNWOOD COMMON ALLOTMENT (AT1)

- 2.0** Situated to the north of Weald Hall Lane, this allotment is bordered by Thornwood Common Recreation Ground to the west, farmland to the north and residential housing to the east. Access to the site is available via a gravel car park to the south which is predominantly filled by users of the village hall which is located directly to the south west of the allotment. This car park is not gated and is therefore accessible at all times.
- 2.1** From the car park, allotment users must then pass through a wooden gate which leads into an area of grass in the middle of which sits the allotment,

entirely surrounded by wooden fencing. Access is also available onto the neighbouring recreation ground via a wooden gate to the north west corner of the site. Wooden gates in the fencing around the allotment lead onto clearly defined grass paths which allow individuals to access specific plots on the allotment.

- 2.2** The site is clean, tidy and is clearly very well maintained by users. There appear to be no areas which are neglected and overgrown and all horticultural waste has been placed in a designated area to the north of the site outside of the fenced off allotment area.
- 2.3** This is clearly a very well organised allotment and this is further emphasised by an allotment public notice board located on the village hall next to the main entrance of the site. However there are no hard surfaced paths entering or within the site and this makes access difficult for wheelchair users or those who are less mobile that may wish to use the allotments.



Hastingwood Allotment, Site AT2

HASTINGWOOD ALLOTMENT (AT2)

- 2.4** Located opposite the junction between Hastingwood Road and Glovers Lane, the first issue which becomes immediately obvious with this site is the lack of adequate parking. Site users who chose to drive to the site can park on a small lay-by on Hastingwood Road to the south of the site or along a small track to the east which leads onto the surrounding farmland to the north. Parking on this track however restricts access onto this farmland whilst the

lay-by to the south of the allotment is only large enough for a few vehicles to park.

- 2.5** The site is surrounded by medium sized bushes and trees which largely screen it from external view and creates a secluded feel. The only entrance is via a large signed metal gate to the south of the site facing the lay-by. When the allotments are not in use this gate is locked with individual plots owners possessing their own key.
- 2.6** Beyond the gate the site is made up of open grassland with a number of fenced off plots dotted around the site. Much of the site remains unused as allotment plots however the remaining grassland is clean and well maintained. As well as helping to keep the allotment attractive this also makes it easier for those people who are less mobile to use the site.



North Weald Allotment, Site AT3

NORTH WEALD ALLOTMENT (AT3)

- 2.7** Found to the north of High Road this irregular shaped allotment can be accessed along a gravel track which has a large black metal gate at its entrance. Beyond the gate the pathway runs alongside a small stream as it heads northwards before reaching a small grass area where allotment users can park their vehicles.

- 2.8** The allotment itself lies adjacent to the car park and is separated by a wire mesh fence. The remainder of the site is bordered by tall trees and bushes. These screen much of the site from external view including from the garages directly to the east.
- 2.9** Entry into the site itself is via a very rusty metal gate the signage on which is also badly worn and is in need of replacing. Beyond this gate, a mud track travels up the middle of the site from north to south. The track allows allotment users vehicle access onto the site. From this track numerous grass paths lead off towards the allotments plots located throughout the site. Despite this however, much of the site is unused and significant proportions of the site, particularly to the north east have been allowed to grow wild.
- 2.10** Despite these areas, the site is attractive in appearance and maintains a high degree of cleanliness with little evidence of litter or horticultural waste on display. Those members of the public with pushchairs, wheelchairs or mobility issues may find the site difficult to access given its relatively uneven terrain.

ST ANDREWS CLOSE ALLOTMENT (AT4)

- 2.11** Located to the south west corner of the district, this site is accessible via a short narrow pathway between the residential houses of St Andrews Close. The site itself lies to the rear of the residential dwellings along both Bluemans and St Andrews Close, which overlook it, and give a measure of natural surveillance. This is especially helpful given that the main entrance to the site is not gated, and the hedgerow running along the left hand side of the path is extremely low.
- 2.12** Within the allotment itself, there appear to be a number of unused or disused plots which have become slightly overgrown. These however do not really detract from the natural setting, which overall appears clean, tidy and free of noticeable vandalism. The western perimeter is lined with medium sized trees and shrubs, which add to the attractive setting. The only potential drawback from the site overall, is that it is not very accessible to potential users who are less mobile, especially wheelchair users who would not be able to access the site given the narrowness of the entrance pathway.



St Andrews Close Allotment, Site AT4

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- All four allotment sites in the parish are clean and tidy, with little litter or horticultural waste visible, and are well maintained.
- The accessibility of all four sites is good, although wheelchair users or those with mobility problems may find North Weald Allotment (AT3), Hastingwood Allotment (AT2) and St Andrews Close (AT4) particularly difficult to navigate due to its uneven nature.
- All four sites are well sign-posted where necessary.
- The gateway by the entrance of North Weald Allotment (AT3) is very rusty and may need to be replaced in the near future.
- According to North Weald Parish Council, a recent upsurge in local demand has now meant that there is a waiting list for some allotment sites in the parish.
- North Weald Parish Council, are considering ways to improve parking options for users of Hastingwood allotment (AT2).

CHAPTER 3 - CEMETERIES AND GRAVEYARDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CG1	St Andrew's Church	Vicarage Lane, North Weald	0.91	Chelmsford Diocese
CG2	North Weald Burial Ground	Vicarage Lane, North Weald	0.86	North Weald Parish Council
CG3	Foster Street Non-Conformist Burial Ground	Foster Street, North Weald	0.27	Baptist Union of Great Britain
CG4	Cemetery Annex, Rear of St Andrews Church	Vicarage Lane, North Weald	0.03	North Weald Parish Council

ST ANDREWS CHURCH (CG1)

- 3.0** Situated along Vicarage Road, this churchyard is set in a largely wooded area which screens much of the site from external view. Further screening is provided by the perimeter hedgerow which surrounds the whole site and together with the woodland creates a very tranquil setting for visitors.
- 3.1** The main entrance is to the south facing Vicarage Road and is made up of a large stone and wooden roofed entrance gateway. A network of hard surfaced footpaths provides adequate access to all parts of the site including the church. The condition of these pathways is good enough for users with wheelchairs or pushchairs to navigate. However there are some areas of pathway which are starting to suffer from encroachment by grass and weeds and this should be controlled to maintain access.
- 3.2** Directly alongside the main entrance is a secondary metal gateway just beyond which to the left is a small fenced off area of flat open ground entirely segregated from the rest of the site by trees and tall standing bushes. During the warmer months of the year this area is filled with various outdoor children's toys and is used as a small informal play area. Beyond this it is possible to access the main network of footpaths which travel throughout the site. The pathways leading from this secondary entranceway however are not hard surfaced unlike the footpaths throughout the remainder of the site. As a result those users who are less mobile may find accessing this part of the churchyard more difficult.
- 3.3** Overall this is a very pleasant site which is very scenic in appearance, clean, tidy and obviously well maintained. The site offers good signage whilst there is adequate provision of seating and litter bins. Parking is available to the south across the other side of Vicarage Road where a small gravel car park for about fifteen cars is located. Users of this car park must therefore be careful when crossing the road to reach the churchyard as the road is relatively busy and with fast moving traffic.



St Andrews Church, Site CG1

NORTH WEALD BURIAL GROUND (CG2)

- 3.4** Located directly to the west of St Andrews Church, this burial ground is predominantly open in nature and relies upon a very tall perimeter hedgerow to screen it from external view. Vehicle access is via a large metal gateway to the south of the site facing Vicarage Road. Once through these gates, parking for at least fifteen cars is available to the east of the site. Further parking for a few cars is available via the lay-by along Vicarage Road which is located directly outside of the site.
- 3.5** Pedestrian access is via a small wooden gate located to the west of the main entranceway. From here a pathway adjoins a small network of paths which also link to the car park to the east of the site. These footpaths then travel to the north and west of the site where the burial grounds can be found along with a range of attractive garden features. The surfacing of these footpaths may make negotiating the site very difficult for those members of the public with wheelchairs or pushchairs.
- 3.6** Overall the burial ground is visually appealing, clean, tidy and maintained to a very high level. Adequate seating facilities appear to be available for visitors to enjoy the pleasant surroundings whilst appropriate signage is located towards the main entrance of the site. There is however a need for a better dispersal of litter bins throughout the site which would help to ensure that it remains in a clean and tidy condition.



North Weald Burial Ground, Site CG2

FOSTER STREET NON-CONFORMIST BURIAL GROUND (CG3)

- 3.7** Found just to the west of the junction between Green Lane and Foster Street, this grave yard is almost totally made up of woodland which screens it very well from external view. The site is owned by Fore Street Baptist Church which belongs to the Baptist Union of Great Britain although the Church itself is located over two miles away to the north.
- 3.8** There is a lack of appropriate areas for car parking. The only real options are to either park on the verge of Foster Street or in the small dirt lay-by on Green Lane close to its junction with Foster Street. Neither of these are particularly safe places to park and therefore those who do park here to use the site should be very careful of oncoming traffic. However this is sufficient car parking space for the seemingly small amount of people accessing the site although the location is not ideal.
- 3.9** The site itself can be accessed via a white wooden gate to its south east corner which faces Foster Street. There are a lack of any hard surfaced footpaths with the site completely surfaced by grass and wild vegetation. This makes accessing the site difficult for any able bodied members of the public let alone for anyone who is less mobile.
- 3.10** Whilst the accessibility of the burial ground is poor, its appearance is particularly peaceful and attractive with scattered gravestones dispersed between a variety of different species of tree. The burial ground furthermore

appears to be clean and tidy. However there are no litter bins or seating whilst the signage located within the site is badly degraded and is in need of replacing.



Foster Street Non Conformist Burial Ground, Site CG3

CEMETERY ANNEX REAR OF ST ANDREW'S CHURCH (CG4)

3.11 Situated to the south western corner of St Andrew's Church, adjacent to its main entrance, this small annex has been created to provide a play space for young children. The site is entirely surrounded by trees, which help create a relaxing inward-facing setting, and is securely surrounded by a perimeter of wooden fencing. The annex is carpeted with leaves from the surrounding trees, with a variety of children's toys spread throughout. The annex is clearly very well maintained and is free from any litter or vandalism.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- All three of these sites are clean, tidy and free from any litter or graffiti.
- St Andrew's Church (CG1) and North Weald Burial Ground (CG2) are both very well maintained and are very pleasant in appearance.
- Foster Street Non-Conformist Burial Ground (CG3) has been largely allowed to grow wild. Whilst this enhances the attractiveness of the site, it also severely detracts from its accessibility, which is emphasised by the lack of any hard surfaced paths within the site.

- Accessibility could also be improved in North Weald Burial Ground (CG2), where the surfacing of the paths, although attractive in appearance, creates problems for those with wheelchairs or pushchairs.
- The better dispersal of litter bins in North Weald Burial Ground (CG2) would also help to ensure that it remains clean, tidy and free of litter.
- All three sites are very well screened from external view, through the provision of a boundary of tall hedgerows and trees which add to the very enclosed feel to all of them.
- Those members of the public with wheelchairs and pushchairs may find it difficult to use the smaller pedestrian access in St Andrew's Church (CG1), due to the lack of hard a surfaced footpath directly beyond this entrance.
- Signage in both St Andrew's Church (CG1) and North Weald Burial Ground (CG2) is good, although the signage in Foster Street Non-Conformist Burial Ground (CG3) is rather degraded and is in need of replacing.

CHAPTER 4 - FORMAL PLAYING PITCHES

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
FP1	Upper Clapton Rugby Club	Upland Road, Thornwood	5.31	Privately Owned
FP2	Memorial Playing Field	School Green Lane, North Weald	3.04	Queens Hall Charity
FP3	Weald Common Playing Field	Weald Common	0.23	Parish Council

UPPER CLAPTON RUGBY CLUB (FP1)

- 4.0** Located along Upland Road to the north west of Thornwood Common, this site is the home of Upper Clapton Rugby Club and consists of four full sized rugby pitches, one of which is floodlit, as well as a large clubhouse and changing room facilities. The main entrance is located towards the north east corner of Upland Road, entry through which leads into a large car park with spaces for around 85 vehicles. The site is clean, tidy and clearly very well maintained by the club and this helps to maintain it as an attractive outdoor site which also provides people of all ages with the opportunity to participate in sporting activity.



Upper Clapton Rugby Club, Site FP1

MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELD (FP2)

- 4.1** Located to the north of School Green Lane this site is essentially divided into two sections. To the south east of the recreation ground there is a tennis court which has been converted to a basketball court. Close to this there is also a children's playground (CY2). These facilities appear to be in generally good condition although it is not clear whether the single tennis court is used, given the lack of a tennis net or surrounding perimeter fence around the court.
- 4.2** The remainder of the site is predominantly used by North Weald Cricket Club and consists of a single large cricket pitch, a clubhouse and car park located to the south and south west of the site. The car park is split into two parts on either side of the clubhouse with the smaller car park to the west being hard surfaced and the larger car park to the east being gravel surfaced. The entire recreation ground is surrounded by a perimeter of tall standing shrubs and trees which effectively screen the site from external view and help to create an attractive, enclosed area of open space.
- 4.3** The site appears to be clean, tidy, well signed and well managed. However the site would benefit from more litter bins and dog waste bins. These would ensure the site remains clean and tidy. Extra seating facilities would also give visitors a chance to make the most of the scenery which the recreation ground offers.



Memorial Playing Field, Site FP2

WEALD COMMON PLAYING FIELD (FP3)

- 4.4 Situated to the south west of Weald Common, this site contains a single informal football pitch with goal posts, which has been cut out of the longer grass which dominates the surrounding common. It appears well kept, and is clean, tidy and easily accessible via a mown grass footpath leading from the unnamed road that runs behind the village hall. Access is also available from further up this unnamed road, from Higham View residential estate. There are no litter bins, however there was only a small amount of litter present on the site at the time of auditing. Another potential issue is that the site is very popular with dog walkers and there is nothing in place on the site to separate this group and users of the football pitch.



Weald Common Playing Field, Site FP3

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There appears to be a good amount of playing pitch provision within the parish for a variety of different sports.
- Football pitches are generally the most sought after type of pitch however there is only one located in the whole parish.
- North Weald Parish Council however have not indicated a need for further football pitch provision within the parish.
- Those sites containing formal pitches are clean, tidy and well maintained.
- In addition to the formal pitches they provide, two sites also have additional open space features.

- Weald Common (FP3) is predominantly a semi natural common which is very popular with walkers and dog walkers.
- Memorial Playing Field (FP2) meanwhile also offers a basketball court and a children's playground (CY2).
- Memorial Playing Field (FP2) would benefit from the provision of seating, litter bins and dog waste bins whilst Weald Common Playing Field (FP3) would benefit from the provision of a litter bin.
- The accessibility of Memorial Playing Field (FP2) could be improved through the implementation of more hard surfaced footpaths.
- Young children using Weald Common Playing Field (FP3) must be very careful given that the site is frequently used by dog walkers, and there is no protection to separate the two groups from each other.
- North Weald Parish Council does not believe there to be a demand for further provision of this facility within the parish.

CHAPTER 5 – ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR SPORT

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
AS1	North Weald Airfield	Merlin Way, North Weald	137.80	Epping Forest District Council
AS2	North Weald Par Three Golf Course	Epping Road, North Weald	6.27	Privately Owned
AS3	North Weald Golf Course	Rayley Lane, North Weald	73.21	Privately Owned
AS4	North Weald Airfield Golf Driving Range	Merlin Way, North Weald	8.63	Privately Owned
AS5	Blakes Golf Club	Epping Road, North Weald	71.41	Privately Owned
AS6	North Weald Wireless Station Bowls Club	Weald Common	0.49	Privately Owned
AS7	Bantham and Ongar Bowls Club	Wealdbridge Road, North Weald	1.32	Privately Owned

NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD (AS1)

- 5.0** Located to the south of North Weald parish and to the west of North Weald village. The airfield was originally founded in the summer of 1916 during the First World War and went on to serve as a military airbase for the RAF, British Army and Royal Navy. The Ministry of Defence sold the air field to Epping Forest District Council in 1979. In 2005 one of the hangars built in 1927 and the former Officers mess were granted listed building status.
- 5.1** Today the airfield continues to be very active and is home to a variety of veteran aircraft and early military jets. The site has also been used for a range of other activities including cycling, sports car racing, archery, classic car shows, model plane flying, stock car racing, and music concerts. In addition there is a large Saturday market based on the airfield which draws crowds from Essex and North London.

NORTH WEALD PAR THREE GOLF COURSE (AS2)

- 5.2** Situated off Epping Road to the west of North Weald, this golf course is clean, tidy and clearly very well maintained. The main entrance leads to a gravel car park for visitors. The car park surrounds the main clubhouse and offers space for 30 vehicles. Overall this is an attractive pay and play 9-hole golf course which offers some very pleasant surroundings particularly within the wooded area to the south of the site.

NORTH WEALD GOLF COURSE (AS3)

- 5.3 Located to the north east of North Weald Airfield and dissected by the A414, this par 71, eighteen hole golf course is also features a large modern clubhouse with a wide variety of facilities. The main entrance to the golf course can be accessed from Rayley Lane to the west of the site. The course itself is clean, tidy and maintained to a very high level which in turn therefore makes it a very pleasant site for visitors.

NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD GOLF DRIVING RANGE (AS4)

- 5.4 Situated to the south of North Weald Cemetery between Merlin Way and Church Lane. The driving range is accessible via a turn off from Merlin Way to the west of the site. The driving range offers 24 bays. Unlike all of the other golfing sites in the parish, the driving range is rather unattractive in its appearance given that many parts have been concreted over whilst other parts have been left to grow wild.

BLAKES GOLF CLUB (AS5)

- 5.5 Located on the border between North Weald and Moreton and Bobbingworth parishes, this golf club offers a high quality eighteen hole inland links golf course as well as a modern three level clubhouse which overlooks the 18th hole and offers excellent views across rural Essex towards London. The clubhouse includes a restaurant and pro shop. The golf course is immaculately presented and offers some highly attractive scenery. The club is accessible via Epping Road to the south of Moreton and Bobbingworth parish which then travels southward back towards North Weald parish where part of the site is located.

NORTH WEALD WIRELESS STATION BOWLS CLUB (AS6)

- 5.6 Located at the heart of Weald Common, this site is accessible via an unnamed road which turns off from the High Road, and runs behind the village and into Weald Common. It comprises a small clubhouse to the west, from which a small footpath leads to a large single bowling green to the north east. The entire site is screened from external view by a perimeter of medium sized trees and shrubs, which gives this site a peaceful feeling. The main entrance is gated to prevent trespassers from accessing the site, whilst beyond this a small area of short grass acts as a car park. Overall the site appears to be very well looked after and is neat and free from any obvious litter or vandalism.

BANTHAM AND ONGAR BOWLS CLUB (AS7)

- 5.7 Situated close to the eastern border of the parish, this site lies just to the north east of the village of North Weald. It is accessible via a turn off from Weald Bridge Road, just opposite its junction with Hows Mead. The main entrance consists of a large metal gate, which adequately secures the site from potential trespassers, with excellent signage situated close by. Through this entrance, visitors can access the car park, which is large enough for 20-25 cars. Directly to the east of the car park lies a small clubhouse and a single bowling green, which both appear in very good condition. The site is well screened by a perimeter of medium sized trees and shrubs, which help enclose it and generate a peaceful atmosphere. This site overall is clearly well maintained and appears to be clean, tidy and free from any vandalism or litter.



Bantham and Ongar Bowls Club, Site AS7

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There are a number of alternative sites for sport within the parish, which are generally in a good condition.
- All of the sites appear to be well maintained, although parts of North Weald Airfield Golf Driving Range (AS4) have been allowed to become pending a decision on the future use of the site.
- All of the golf courses in particular in the parish are set in very attractive surroundings which add to their visual amenity.

CHAPTER 6 – INFORMAL RECREATION GROUNDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
RG1	Thornwood Common Recreation Ground	Weald Hall Lane, Thornwood Common	1.12	North Weald Parish Council



Thornwood Common Recreation Ground, Site RG1

THORNWOOD COMMON RECREATION GROUND (RG1)

- 6.0** Situated to the north of the village of Thornwood, this recreation ground is a large area of grass surrounded by a relatively tall perimeter hedgerow which encompasses the whole site. A number of trees can also be found around the perimeter, very much adding to the overall visual amenity of the recreation ground. The site can be accessed from a number of different entrances including five entrances along the south side, one to the north west and one to the north east corner. These entrances are suitably gated and two of the entrances to the south are large enough to allow for maintenance vehicle access. In the south east corner of the site is Thornwood Common Recreation Ground Playground (CY1).
- 6.1** Throughout the site there is a good range of litter bins, dog waste bins and seating. There are informative signs about the site and the local area including Thornwood Common Nature Area (SO2), located directly to the north east. The site appears to be clean and tidy although some evidence of

litter and dog excrement was still noticeable. Overall the recreation ground is attractive in appearance and is clearly very well maintained.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- This is the only facility of its type within the district although Weald Common (SO4) is popular for various forms of informal recreational activities such as football and walking.
- Similarly, Memorial Playing Field (FP2) in North Weald village itself also offers a good amount of informal recreation space when the cricket pitch is not in use.
- The recreation ground itself is well maintained and is clean, tidy and in good condition.
- The site provides adequate amounts of seating and litter bins and is also well signed.
- North Weald Parish Council does not believe there to be a current demand for further provision of this type of facility within the parish.

CHAPTER 7 – CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUNDS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CY1	Thornwood Recreation Ground Playground	Weald Hall Lane, Thornwood Common	0.06	North Weald Parish Council
CY2	North Weald Recreation Ground Playground	School Green Lane, North Weald	0.04	Queens Hall Charity
CY3	Weald Common Playground	Weald Common, North Weald	0.04	North Weald Parish Council



Thornwood Recreation Ground Playground, Site CY1

THORNWOOD RECREATION GROUND PLAYGROUND (CY1)

- 7.0** Situated within Thornwood Recreation Ground to the north of Weald Hall Lane, this playground offers a decent range of children’s equipment which is in a good condition. The playground can be accessed from two separate gated entrances, one to the south and one to the west whilst the remainder of the site is surrounded by well maintained metal fencing. From these two entrances there is a network of hard surfaced paths providing easy access for pushchair and wheelchair users. Some of these hard surfaced paths appear to be very worn and are in need of being resurfaced particularly to the north of the site.
- 7.1** All of the children’s playground facilities have appropriate rubber surfacing around them, and the site is clean and tidy. There is sufficient provision of seating and litter bins and all of these are in good condition. A single large

tree towards the centre of the playground adds to the overall visual amenity. This is further enhanced by the playground's location along the eastern perimeter of the recreation ground where large hedgerows and further smaller trees overlook the site and give it a more natural feel. The site also provides excellent signage although some of these signs appear to have been placed very low on the perimeter fencing which may make it quite awkward for some people to read. Some facilities within the playground appear to have been removed. According to the North Weald Parish Council, these will be replaced by a range of facilities including a kick wall and a youth shelter.



North Weald Recreation Ground Playground, Site CY2

NORTH WEALD RECREATION GROUND PLAYGROUND (CY2)

- 7.2** Found to the south of North Weald Recreation Ground this L-shaped playground offers a good range of children's play equipment which is in a good condition. The site is surrounded by adequate metal fencing with two gated entrances located to the north eastern and south eastern corners, both of which are signed. The sign by the north east entrance has fallen off the fence and needs to be reattached.
- 7.3** There are no hard surfaced footpaths making access more difficult for those with pushchairs and wheelchairs. A hard surface would also make the playground more accessible during wetter periods of the year. Litter bins are provided although there still appears to be an issue with litter and even

instances of dumping. Further litter bin provision may help to address this issue. The playground would also benefit from some seating being provided.



Weald Common Playground, Site CY3

WEALD COMMON PLAYGROUND (CY3)

- 7.4** This playground lies to the south western corner of Weald Common, just to the south east of North Weald Village Hall (CV3). It is only visible from Weald Common, as the trees and hedgerows which surround it on three sides screen it from external view. The playground itself is accessible via a metal gateway, whilst a perimeter of well kept wooden fencing helps secure it, making it safer for young children to use. The playground is well signposted, although the sign is slightly worn, and parts of it are illegible. There are no hard surfaced pathways leading up to the main entrance, which may limit its accessibility, particularly during the colder, wetter months.
- 7.5** Inside, the playground is surfaced with grass, which again may make the site unsuitable for use during colder, wetter months, as it may become muddy. The playground offers a good range of children's facilities, as well as adequate seats and litter bins, which are all in very good condition. The playground appears very well kept, with no signs of vandalism, although a fair amount of litter was noticeable at the time of auditing.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- All of the playgrounds within the parish offer a good range of children's facilities which appear to be in good condition.
- The accessibility of both playgrounds could be improved, particularly within North Weald Recreation Ground Playground (CY2) and Weald Common Playground (CY3), where a lack of hard surfaced paths could make access more difficult for some users.
- Further litter bins are required in North Weald Recreation Ground Playground (CY2), where there appears to be an issue with littering.
- The provision of better seating facilities is also required in North Weald Recreation Ground Playground (CY2).
- All three sites are well signposted, although there is a need to ensure that these are located in accessible locations and are firmly attached to the fencing.
- The fencing at Weald Common Playground (CY3) is fairly worn and may need to be repaired in the near future.
- North Weald Parish Council have not indicated a local demand for any further provision of this type of facility within the parish.

CHAPTER 8 – INDOOR FACILITIES FOR HIGH LEVELS OF USE

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There are no indoor facilities for high levels of use within North Weald Parish and the Parish Council has indicated that there is no current demand for a facility of this type within the parish given that it is situated close to Ongar and Epping parishes which both offer provision of this type of facility.
- Those wishing to access indoor facilities for high levels of use should find doing so relatively easy regardless of whether or not they have a car, given the good public transport in the local area.

CHAPTER 9 – COMMUNITY CENTRES AND VILLAGE HALLS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
CV1	Thornwood Village Hall	Weald Hall Lane, Thornwood	0.20	North Weald Parish Council
CV2	Queens Hall Community Centre	School Green Lane, North Weald	0.22	Queens Hall Charity
CV3	North Weald Village Hall	High Road, North Weald	0.24	North Weald Hall Management Committee
CV4	Hastingwood Village Hall	Glovers Lane, Hastingwood	0.13	Hastingwood Village Hall management Committee

THORNWOOD VILLAGE HALL (CV1)

- 9.0** Situated along Weald Hall Lane just to the west of its junction with Brookfield, this is small but well used hall which acts as a very important focal point for Thornwood. A range of activities take place here including mums and tots sessions, a local spiritualist, archery, bowls and flower arranging whilst the hall is used by a variety of other societies including the local seniors group, and Essex Bridge Club. The hall can also be hired out for various events such as children's parties, local charity events and public meetings. The hall, whilst being fairly old, appears to still be in good condition and is well maintained by the locals who use it.

QUEENS HALL COMMUNITY CENTRE (CV2)

- 9.1** Located at the end of School Green Lane just to the north of its junction with The Pavilions, this is another popular village hall which is well used for a variety of different activities. The hall runs a range of different clubs including dance lessons, indoor bowls, Tai Chi lessons and football and cricket training in relation to the facilities located in Memorial Playing Fields adjacent to the north of the site. The site can also be hired out for various occasions including children's parties and charity events. The site appears to be well maintained and the overall condition of the hall seems to be very good.

NORTH WEALD VILLAGE HALL (CV3)

- 9.2** Found along High Road, this village hall is accessible via a turn off in between Dukes Close and Bassett Gardens which then heads into Weald Common (SO4). The hall itself is relatively big and offers sufficient number of nearby car parking spaces. Inside, the hall is used for a wide variety of activities including line dancing, karate, and darts.

9.3 The hall is also used by a diverse range of groups and societies including the British Legion, local cycling club, two separate branches of the Women's Institute, pre school group, senior citizens club and Epping Forest Bagpipe Club. In addition to this the site is also frequently hired out for wedding receptions, children's parties and general local events such a fund raising days and quiz evenings. This is clearly a very well used site and its importance to the local community is evident. Given its frequent use, the hall appears to be in very good condition and must therefore be very well maintained by those who use it.

HASTINGWOOD VILLAGE HALL (CV4)

9.4 Found along Glovers Lane shortly after it turns off from Hastingwood Road, this is a relatively small village hall which appears to be well maintained and in excellent condition. Despite its good appearance, Hastingwood Village Hall Management Board are keen to bid for another grant to add to the one that was given in 2004 to help ensure that the hall continues to be maintained to a high standard. The hall is very popular and is also regularly used by those from nearby Harlow. Amongst the various activities that are run in the hall are dog training sessions, Friends Forever Club for people with Arthritis and judo lessons. The site is also used for public meetings and as a local polling station and can also be hired out for private events such as children's parties and charity events.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- There appears to be an excellent amount of provision of this type of facility within the parish.
- All of the sites are very well used for a varied range of activities, events and functions.
- Hastingwood Village Hall (CV4) management board are keen to gain funding in order to carry out improvements to their village hall.
- Despite this perceived need however, the hall, and all of the others in the parish appear to be in good condition and are maintained to a good standard.

CHAPTER 10 – MANAGED OPEN SPACE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
MO1	Land to the north of Epping Road	Epping Road, North Weald	1.07	Epping Forest District Council
MO2	Land between Epping Road and Pike Way	Pike Way, North Weald	0.12	Epping Forest District Council
MO3	Land to the south of Park Close	Park Close, North Weald	0.18	Epping Forest District Council
MO4	Land to the west of High Road	High Road, North Weald	0.18	Epping Forest District Council
MO5	Land to the Rear of the Village Hall	High Road, North Weald	0.52	Epping Forest District Council
MO6	Land to the south of Queens Road	Queens Road, North Weald	0.17	Epping Forest District Council



Land to the North of Epping Road, Site MO1

LAND TO THE NORTH OF EPPING ROAD (MO1)

10.0 Located along the northern verge of Epping Road between its junctions with Hurricane Way and Wellington Road. This site is a relatively large, linear and well maintained area of amenity green space. To the south is a medium sized hedgerow, providing a screen from the roadside view. To the north is residential housing. A number of various sized trees are located throughout the site, adding to the overall visual amenity value. Beyond the hedgerow to the south, a number of wooden benches provide pedestrians walking along the road with somewhere to rest.

10.1 Running through the site from north to south and east to west is a network of hard surfaced footpaths. These enable pedestrians to take shortcuts between High Road and York Road. The footpaths also allow pedestrians to enjoy more attractive and natural surroundings when walking along High Road. Overall the site appears to be very well maintained. However there is a problem with noticeable amounts of litter. Providing litter bins along some of the footpaths could reduce this problem.

LAND BETWEEN EPPING ROAD AND PIKE WAY (MO2)

10.2 Situated to the west of Park Close, this is a small area of amenity green space. It is predominantly open in nature except to the north where a large hedgerow and a variety of medium sized trees screen the view from the High Road. One further medium sized tree is located to the east of the site. A small perimeter hedgerow to the west of the site backs onto a neighbouring residential dwelling. The site appears to be clean, tidy and in good condition. However its small size makes it unsuitable for little more than dog walking and general amenity. Furthermore, given its open nature and proximity to a busy road there may be risks in allowing children to play here.

LAND TO THE SOUTH OF PARK CLOSE (MO3)

10.3 Entirely encircled by Park Close, this is an area of amenity green space. It is open on three sides except along the northern perimeter. Here a large row of bushes, shrubbery and small trees acts as a screen between the residential housing on either side of the road. A few smaller trees are located around the remaining perimeter. The site looks very clean, tidy and well maintained. Owing to its very small size and relatively restricted uses there are no litter bins or seating. The site acts predominantly as a local visual amenity.

LAND TO THE WEST OF HIGH ROAD (MO4)

10.4 Found between Wheeler Farm Gardens and Harrison Drive this site is a relatively big area of amenity green space. It is predominantly made up of grass land with a small area of shrubs and trees in the centre. There are a few smaller individual trees to the southern and northern ends of the site. Located to the north of the site are the town sign, flag pole bearing the Union Jack and an information sign along with a new wooden seat and litter bin all of which appear to be in a good condition. Provision of a hard surfaced footpath would allow wheelchair users to view the information sign. The site appears to be clean, tidy and very well maintained.

LAND TO THE REAR OF THE VILLAGE HALL (MO5)

10.5 Located just off the High Road in North Weald village, this irregular shaped site is predominantly grassland, with a perimeter of medium sized trees and

shrubs. It is neat and tidy, and is frequently used in conjunction with events held in the village hall. An unnamed road leading from the High Road runs past the northern perimeter, leading to Ongar Radio Station, whilst a public right of way runs across the north eastern perimeter providing access to Weald Common. North Weald village hall itself lies to the north, whilst the village hall car park is adjacent to the north east.



Land to the Rear of the Village Hall, Site MO5

LAND TO THE SOUTH OF QUEENS ROAD (MO6)

10.6 Lying off the westernmost cul-de-sac of Queens Road, this site is used by local scouts. It is accessible via a small hard surfaced footpath, leading to a metal entrance gate which is locked when the site is not in use. The site is predominantly grassland, with one large and one small shed to the south western corner, and a further shed to the south eastern corner. The perimeter is largely a combination of residential fencing and vegetation, with a number of medium sized trees and shrubs. One key issue appears to be the presence of litter, and dumping, despite the existence of numerous signs.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- All the sites in the parish under this category are clean, tidy and well looked after.
- Whilst many of these sites may be attractive to children for recreational use, the nature of their size and close proximity to frequently busy roads makes them unsuitable.
- The Land to the South of Queens Road (MO6) appears to have a issue with dumping.
- Those sites which are large enough to warrant having litter bins and seats, such as The Land to the North of Epping Road (MO1) and The Land to the West of High Road (MO4) do so, and these appear to be in a good condition.
- A hard surfaced path would allow wheelchair users to view the information sign at The Land to the West of High Road (MO4).

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

Site Number	Site Name	Address	Area (Hectares)	Ownership
SO1	Epping Forest	Various locations throughout the Parish	Around 2400 across District	Corporation of London
SO2	Harlow Common	Mill Street, North Weald	4.99	Epping Forest District Council
SO3	Thornwood Common Nature Area	Weald Hall Lane, Thornwood Common	0.39	Epping Forest District Council
SO4	Weald Common	Weald Common	43.48	North Weald Parish Council
SO5	Roughtalleys Wood Nature Reserve	Pike Way, North Weald	3.43	Epping Forest District Council
SO6	Church Lane Flood Meadow Nature Reserve	Church Lane, North Weald	5.75	Epping Forest District Council
SO7	Weald Common Local Nature Reserve	Weald Common	2.92	North Weald Parish Council
SO8	Epping Forest Burial Park	Kiln Road, North Weald	25.71	Gaynes Park Estate
SO9	Gernon Bushes Nature Reserve	Gernon Bushes Nature Reserve, Coopersale, Epping	35.28	Essex Wildlife Trust / Forestry Commission

EPPING FOREST (SO1)

- 11.0** The largest areas of Woodland and Semi-Natural open space within North Weald parish are part of Epping Forest. These areas are primarily located towards the south eastern corner of the parish. Separated from the remainder of the forest by Epping, this area of Epping Forest is known as The Lower Forest and include such parts as Epping Plain and Wintry Wood. Together with many other sites spread across the District and beyond, Epping Forest forms the largest area of public open space in the London region. The designated forest land located within this parish, therefore, forms just a small percentage of the 2428 acres of Epping Forest.
- 11.1** As well as being a popular area for recreation, Epping Forest is of national and international importance in terms of conservation. Around two thirds of Epping Forest is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest or a Special Area of Conservation. Epping Forest is carefully managed by the Corporation of London, and is fully publicly accessible.



Epping Forest, Site SO1

HARLOW COMMON (SO2)

- 11.2** The site is situated to the north of the parish and is largely located in Harlow district. It is the second biggest area of Woodland and Semi-Natural open space in Epping Forest district. Made up of a number of separate sites, Harlow Common covers an area which runs to the north of Harlow Common (road), and then south along the western and eastern verges of Mill Street before ending just before its junction with Hastingwood Road. Predominantly made up of semi-wild grassland much of these areas are used as grazing for horses and ponies.
- 11.3** The largest area of Harlow Common, to the north of Harlow Common (road), is frequently used by members of the public travelling between Harlow Common (road) and residential streets to the north within Harlow. The site is also popular with dog walkers and other members of the public enjoying other various types of informal recreational activity. The most prominent feature of Harlow Common is also located in this area in the form of a relatively large pond surrounded on its northern and western sides by dense woodland. This area adds to the overall visual amenity. Harlow Common appears to be well looked after by the members of public who use it with minimal rubbish or dog fouling noticeable.



Harlow Common, Site SO2

THORNWOOD COMMON NATURE AREA (SO3)

11.4 Found to the north of Thornwood Common Allotment, this small site can be accessed by either passing through the allotment gardens, or through Thornwood Common Recreation Ground to the south west. It is predominantly long grass, with a variety of shrubs and various sized trees. These dominate the rest of the site, particularly to the north and around the borders. Close to the main entrance to the south east corner is a helpful information sign. This describes the rare insects and plants which can be found on the site, including Bee Orchids and Roesel's Bush Cricket.

WEALD COMMON (SO4)

11.5 This large area of periodically maintained common land lies to the east of North Weald village to the east of the parish. It is accessible to members of the public via a variety of roads and public footpaths. Weald Common Flood Meadow Local Nature Reserve (SO7) is close to the south western corner, as well as Weald Common Playground (CY3) to the south west. Just to the south east of the playground lies Weald Common Playing Field (FP3), which has been cut out of the longer grass dominating the site. Towards the centre of the lies North Weald Wireless Bowls Club (AS6), whilst Blakes Golf Club is to the north (AS5).

11.6 The site is particularly popular with walkers, and dog walkers, however on auditing this appears to have resulted in the fairly frequent occurrence of dog fouling throughout, despite the presence of litter bins. As a way of perhaps addressing this issue, it may be beneficial to introduce some signs warning against this. Other than this, the site is very clean and well maintained, and provides locals and visitors alike with an excellent opportunity to enjoy the attractive surrounding countryside.



Weald Common, Site SO4

ROUGHTALLEYS WOOD NATURE RESERVE (SO5)

- 11.7** Openly accessible to the public, this nature reserve can be accessed on foot from Pike Way in North Weald village. No designated car parking is provided, so parking is restricted to anywhere possible along the road. Roughtalley's Wood in its entirety is a large ancient woodland covering 25 hectares. Originally a single piece of woodland, it was divided unequally into two by the creation of the Eastern Counties Railway Epping to Ongar Line extension. The largest section of the wood lies to the south of the railway and is privately owned by Gaynes Park Estate. Until the early 1990's it was managed for commercial timber, where much of the original wood was removed and replanted. Today this section of the woodland is used as the district's first green burial site known as Epping Forest Burial Park (SO8).
- 11.8** A much smaller section of Roughtalley's Wood lies to the north of the railway and is owned by Epping Forest District Council, and was declared as a Local Nature Reserve in 2000. The site can now be divided into two distinct areas.

The first area is made up of ancient woodland and is a remnant of the large semi-natural ancient woodland which still exists south of the railway line. The ground flora in this section of woodland is generally poor, due to a lack of recent management, with brambles tending to dominate. In the more open glades however, some rarer species of flower can be found on occasion.

11.9 The second part of the nature reserve lies to the north of Pike Way and the large ditch which runs through the nature reserve. This area was once dominated by a variety of tree which were planted by the ministry of defence as cover for RAF North Weald during World War II. However in 1987 and 1990, the area was extensively damaged by storms, and in most cases the large trees were destroyed. Today this part of the site consists of a mixture of open grassy areas, some quite wet, with dense areas of bramble and some trees which have been planted since 1991. The site continues to be managed by the District Council's Countryside team and volunteer projects to improve the site further continue to take place. Recent works since 2000 include the creation of a 650 metre pathway to improve site access, new bridges and the installation of a 50 metre section of boardwalk.



Roughalley's Wood Nature Reserve, Site SO5

CHURCH LANE FLOOD MEADOW NATURE RESERVE (SO6)

- 11.10** Openly accessible to the public via a variety of public footpaths, this site has no designated car park. Those wishing to access it by vehicle must therefore park their cars on Vicarage Lane, which runs along the western perimeter. The site was created in 1989 as a major engineering program to reduce the risk of flooding to the village of North Weald, whilst creating a nature reserve which now harbours over 180 species of wild flower, as well as a diverse array of birds, butterflies and dragonflies.
- 11.11** The site centres on a wet grassland meadow and large stream fed pond created within the confines of a flood bowl. Around the outside, over 2,500 native deciduous trees have been planted, which are slowly developing as hedgerows, small woodland strips and hedges. The site is managed as a flood defence by the District Council's Land Drainage Section, but is also managed as a site of nature conservation by the District Council's Countrycare team. In 1992, the meadow was entered in to the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, under a 10 year management agreement. This is now supervised by DEFRA and a new agreement was signed in 2002 which runs until 2012. In June 1999, the meadow was designated as a Local Wildlife Site by Essex Wildlife Trust and in May 2002, it was declared a statutory Local Nature Reserve by the District Council.



Church Lane Flood Meadow Nature Reserve, Site SO6

WEALD COMMON LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (SO7)

- 11.12** Situated to the south west of Weald Common, pedestrian access into this nature reserve is via gated access points from Weald Common. Created in 1996 and consisting of two meadows, only the meadow nearest the village is openly accessible to the public, whilst the furthest meadow is restricted for safety reasons. The sites were created as part of a new flood defence system to protect North Weald village. Whilst this has been their primary function, since their creation the sites have been continuously worked on to maximise their biodiversity.
- 11.13** A wet meadow has been created within the bowls of the meadows, and this has quickly established itself with a variety of species of flower and amphibian now living and breeding in the meadows, ponds and ditches. Lizards, snakes and birds have also been noted within the site, which continues to undergo enhancements. Since its conception, over 3,000 trees have been planted around the site, forming over 1km of new hedgerows, whilst a hedge laying program is also underway.



Weald Common Local Nature Reserve, Site SO7

EPPING FOREST BURIAL PARK (SO8)

- 11.14** Situated predominantly within Theydon Garnon parish just to the south of North Weald village, Epping Forest Burial Park is the larger of two areas of woodland which remain of a former large ancient woodland. This woodland used to cover the local area, but was split in two by the construction of the Eastern Counties Railway Epping to Ongar Line extension.

11.15 The northern section of remaining woodland is now known as Roughtalley's Wood Nature Reserve (SO5), whilst this section of woodland, to the south of the railway, is privately owned by Gaynes Park Estate. It is used as the district's first green burial site. Up until the 1990's, the site was managed for commercial timber, where much of the original wood was removed and replanted with non-local species. Following the creation of the Burial Park, work is now underway with the help of the local district council's Countrycare team, to oversee the implementation of more natural species back into this woodland.



Epping Forest Burial Park, SO8

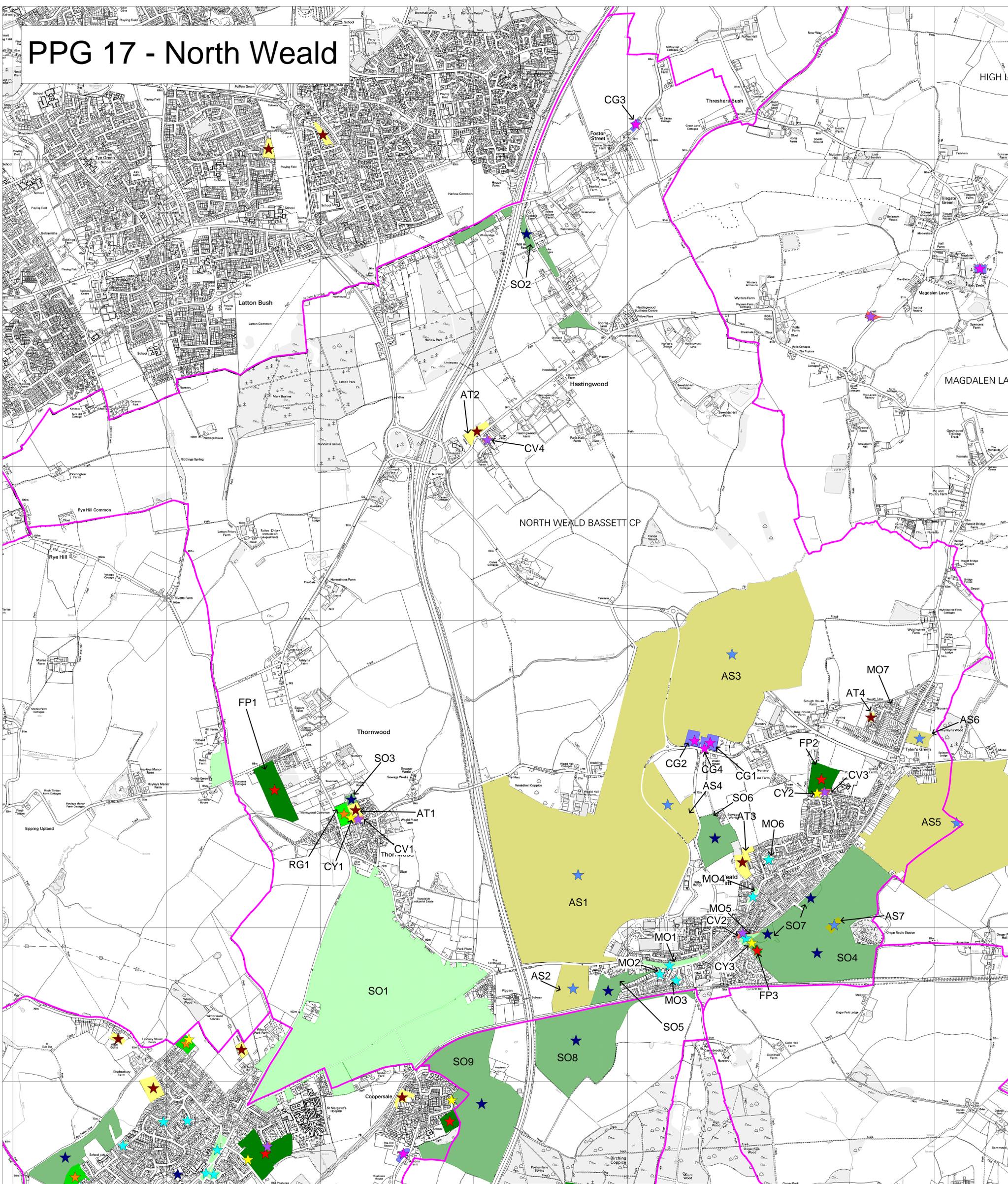
GERNON BUSHES NATURE RESERVE (SO9)

11.16 Located to the east of Coopersale, and found predominantly in Theydon Garnon Parish but also partly in Epping and North Weald parishes, this site is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is notable for its numerous veteran trees, wet springs and bogs. Owned and managed by Essex Wildlife Trust with the help of the District Council's Countrycare team the site has undergone a wide range of access and habitat improvement projects over the last 12 years. Openly accessible to the public and at over 35 hectares in size, it is one of the largest nature reserves in the district and is home to a number of important species of plant life and various animals and birds.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- The various sites in the parish which fall under this category provide excellent opportunities for locals to access some of the District's most important and attractive areas of open space.
- Visiting such sites can help locals and visitors alike to learn about the specific habitats and local species of flora and fauna.
- These sites also provide excellent areas for informal recreation such as walking, cycling and picnics.
- Parking is restricted for some of these sites and so potential visitors must ensure they do not cause any obstructions when visiting the sites.

PPG 17 - North Weald



Parish: North Weald
 Area: 2271 Hectares
 Scale: 1:80,000 @ 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