

# **STAPLEFORD TAWNEY – OPEN SPACE AUDIT**

**JUNE 2009**

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## **CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION**

**1.0** The audit process, described in this report, is designed to generate comparative information on different sites across the district for the following purposes:

- to provide an overview of the quality and value of spaces and facilities within each of the district's parishes;
- to influence the production of new planning policies essential in determining planning applications, guiding new development and resolving conflicts of demand or use; and
- to enable the Council to demonstrate a continuous improvement in the quality of open spaces, sport and recreational facilities in its district.

**1.1** It is believed that all areas of open space, formal recreational space, and sports facilities have been identified by the audit. These have been surveyed and assessed, and conclusions reached on their value to the local community and the environment of the district.

**1.2** For convenience the audit is split into the following categories, although it is recognised that some of these allow for a range of uses:

- allotments (AT);
- cemeteries and graveyards (CG);
- formal playing pitches (FP);
- alternative sites for sport (AS) ;
- informal recreation grounds (RG);
- children's playgrounds (CY);
- indoor facilities for high levels of use (IF);
- community centres and village halls (CV);
- managed open space with public access (MO);
- semi-natural open space and woodland with public access (SO);

## **CHAPTER 2 – ALLOTMENTS**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no allotments located within Stapleford Tawney.
- Despite the lack of allotment provision in the parish there appears to be no demand within the parish according to Stapleford Tawney Parish Council.
- This is largely due to the fact that this is a very rural parish and consequently has only a very small local population.
- Furthermore, many of the plot dwellings in the parish are large enough for private horticulture to take place.

## **CHAPTER 3 - CEMETERIES AND GRAVEYARDS**

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
CG1	St Mary's Church	Tawney Lane, Stapleford Tawney	0.39	Stapleford Tawney Parish Council



St Mary's Church, Site CG1

### **ST MARY'S CHURCH (CG1)**

- 3.0** Situated along Tawney Lane just north of Tawney Hall, this is a small but very pleasant site surrounded by a wide expanse of arable farmland. The well signed main entrance can be accessed via a large wooden gate, which leads onto a gravel track running towards the site. Although it may be possible for vehicles to enter through this gate, there is no space to park except for on the track itself, therefore entry and exit for multiple vehicles would be particularly difficult. The only alternative would be to park alongside Tawney Lane, which has enough space for a few vehicles. Given the small scale of the church and the very rural nature of the parish, however, it is unlikely that there would be a need for extensive parking facilities.
- 3.1** A public footpath runs from east to west through the site and into the open countryside, although it is only a roughly marked out grass path and so is not clearly defined. The site is edged by well kept wooden fencing to the south

and east, and by equally well maintained hedgerows, shrubs and medium sized trees to the north and west.

- 3.2** The site is clean and tidy with no sign of litter or vandalism, whilst a good variety of trees spread throughout add to its overall visual amenity. Adequate provision of good quality seating and litter bins has been made. Access to the church itself via the gravel track, which may make access for wheelchair users and those with pushchairs difficult.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- This site is clean, smart and well maintained.
- Access into the church along the gravel path is not ideal for wheelchair and pushchair users. This path should therefore be made hard surfaced.
- Whilst parking for the site is limited, the level of use of the site currently negates any need for parking provision to be improved on the site.

## **CHAPTER 4 – FORMAL PLAYING PITCHES**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no formal playing pitches located within Stapleford Tawney.
- This is the only parish in the district with no formal outdoor sports provision of any variety (formal playing pitches, alternative sites for sport or informal recreation grounds).
- Given the location of the parish, neighbouring Ongar Parish as well as the London Borough of Redbridge, there does not appear to be a demand for any formal playing pitches within Stapleford Tawney.
- Residents of the parish therefore need their own vehicles or to have access to public transport in order to access these sites.

## **CHAPTER 5 – ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR SPORT AND RECREATION**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

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

## **CHAPTER 6 – INFORMAL RECREATION GROUNDS**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no informal recreation grounds located within Stapleford Tawney.
- Given the very rural nature of the parish and the small local population, Stapleford Tawney 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 nearby sites of this type will need access to their own vehicles or good public transport.
- The closest areas which offer facilities of this nature are Lambourne, Epping, North Weald and Chipping Ongar.

## **CHAPTER 7 – CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUNDS**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no children’s playgrounds within Stapleford Tawney.
- Given the very rural location of the parish and hence its very small local population, it is unsurprising that there is no provision or demand for this type of facility here.
- Furthermore, many of the private residences in the parish are large enough to provide adequate amounts of safe play space for any children that may live in them.

## **CHAPTER 8 - INDOOR FACILITIES FOR HIGH LEVELS OF USE**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There are no indoor facilities for high levels of use within Stapleford Tawney.
- Stapleford Tawney 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.
- Residents wishing to access indoor facilities for high levels of use will need access to personal transportation or local public transport to reach neighbouring parishes such as Chipping Ongar, Epping and Loughton where such facilities are provided.

## **CHAPTER 9 – COMMUNITY CENTRES AND VILLAGE HALLS**

- There are no community centres or village halls within the parish.
- Stapleford Tawney Parish Council does not indicate any demand for a facility of this type in the parish.
- This is due to the fact that the parish is very small and very rural in nature and therefore there is only a very small local population who would use such a facility.

## **CHAPTER 10 - MANAGED OPEN SPACE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS**

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- There is no provision of any managed open spaces throughout Stapleford Tawney, despite its strong rural character.
- This lack of provision is more than adequately countered by the very rural nature of the parish and the fact that there are a large number of public footpaths which can be accessed throughout the whole parish.



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

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
SO1	Hawksmere Spring	Tawney Lane, Stapleford Tawney	1.86	Essex Wildlife Trust

### **HAWKSMERE SPRING (SO1)**

- 11.0** Accessible via a signed footpath from Tawney Lane roughly 400 metres east of Little Tawney Hall, this small nature reserve is made up of mostly ancient unimproved pasture. Of this pasture, some of it is marshy, serving as a tiny remnant of the ancient damp woodland that used to dominate the area. The reserve is extremely rich in flowers and is also home to significant quantities of butterflies and migrating birds during the summer months. The meadows are periodically grazed by sheep to keep them in optimum condition for wild flowers. Parking along Tawney Lane is possible, however care should be taken at all time whilst the access is unsuitable for those wheelchairs and those with walking difficulties.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

- Despite the very rural nature of the parish, Hawksmere Spring (SO1) is the only publicly accessible woodland or semi-natural open space available in the parish.
- This lack of provision however is more than adequately countered by the fact that there are a large number of accessible public footpaths spread throughout the whole parish.

