

# LEISURE AND WELLBEING

The dispersed community of Fawkham has a number of **places in which it is able to meet:**

- Fawkham Village Hall
- The Rising Sun Inn
- St Mary's Church

There is **good provision of open space** serving the Parish: local amenity green space, natural and semi-natural open spaces, outdoor sports facilities and the tranquil churchyard at St. Mary's. In addition, there is a good network of **well used and popular Public Rights of Way** extending along and across the valleys. Residents highly value these open spaces, as demonstrated in the Fawkham Survey 2019, in which the **countryside and natural surroundings were the most frequently named benefits of living here.**

**Further indoor space** is provided at Corinthian Sports Club (indoor 3G ball court, suitable for 5/6 a side), The Boxing Stables Gym (hall equipped for boxing/training) and Brands Hatch Place Health Club (indoor pool, sauna, steam room, gym, exercise studio) which all serve a wider catchment area than the Parish.

We recognise the importance of community networks in Fawkham and seek to retain the village hall and public house as important social hubs. The church is protected through its designation as a Grade 1 listed building.

The importance of all types of open space is recognised, and the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect and enhance these areas and the public rights of way that connect them.

**We have prepared the following policies that would be applied by Sevenoaks Council whenever a planning application comes in on one of the meeting places, open spaces or public right of ways to make sure their decision conforms with the Neighbourhood Plan and so ultimately reflects what people in Fawkham think is important and needed.**

# LEISURE AND WELLBEING

## Fawkham Village Hall

This is a vital community resource for the Parish. It is used every week day by regular hirers with activities including adult dance, karate and furniture restoration. It is also used for Parish Council and other meetings, as a polling station when required, plus ad hoc hires for birthday parties and other events, especially at the weekends.

The hall's car park has 24 spaces (including one disabled space) and three cycle parking hoops, together with 14 spaces reserved for residents of 1-7 Six Acre Cottages. It generally provides sufficient parking for hall users and residents and is also used, by arrangement, for drop off and collection during school run times.

### Policy FNP11: Protection of Fawkham Village Hall

**The loss of the village hall community building will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that demand within the locality for the facility no longer exists and that suitable alternative provision is made elsewhere.**

*Let us know if you agree or disagree with this policy, or have suggestions as to how it should be changed, and why, via the questionnaire (Question 14).*

## Rising Sun Inn

The Rising Sun Inn is located next to the village green within the Fawkham Green cluster of development. It has a bar, restaurant and six guest rooms and is open every day. It is not accessed by footway but has a small car park with some on-street parking nearby. The landlord has advised there are no plans for any changes. The public house is important to the social and economic sustainability of the Parish and we will seek its retention unless it can be demonstrated that its operation is not financially viable.

### Policy FNP12: Protection of Public House

**The loss of The Rising Sun Inn public house will be resisted. Exceptions will be made where evidence is provided to the District Council to show that the operation of the facility is no longer financially viable and where there are no other realistic proposals for a public house use on the site.**

*Let us know if you agree or disagree with this policy, or have suggestions as to how it should be changed, and why, via the questionnaire (Question 15).*

## St Mary's Church

The Church is already protected as a Grade 1 listed building.

# LEISURE AND WELLBEING

## Open Spaces

The Environment section of the Plan attaches great importance to the protection of networks of green spaces which provide a wide range of **environmental benefits**. Open spaces also play an important part in the **character of the landscape and views**, as well as the **setting of built development**. They can also **provide health, wellbeing and social benefits**, acting as locations for community and social events, and many are used regularly for informal or formal recreation.

We undertook a quality audit in 2022 of open spaces, irrespective of ownership or the extent of public access. In accordance with the Government definition, agricultural land and paddocks were excluded.

The open spaces are shown on Map 9, with more detailed maps included in the Open Space Evidence Report.

## Amenity Green Spaces

The primary purposes of these are to provide opportunities for informal activities or to enhance the appearance of a residential area. The Parish has five such areas:

- A1 Baldwins Green
- A2 Footway verge/bank, Valley Road
- A3 Village Green
- A4 Small Grains
- A5 Rogers Wood Lane triangle

## Cemeteries and Churchyards

Aside from burials, the primary purpose of these is quiet contemplation, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity. The Parish has one churchyard:

- C1 St. Mary's Churchyard

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## Land Associated with Outdoor Sports Facilities

The primary purpose of these is participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports and golf. The Parish has two golf courses plus football pitches at Corinthian Sports Club which SDC's Playing Pitch Strategy states is a very impressive large site, hosting good football provision throughout. The Primary School has access to a 7 v 7 mini-football pitch on private land next to the school, and Steephill School has one too.

- S1 Corinthian (Fawkham Valley) Golf Course
- S2 Redlibbets Golf Course (part of)
- S3 Corinthian Sports Club: football pitches
- S4 Fawkham Primary sports field: 1 mini 7v7 football pitch
- S5 Steephill Independent School & PreSchool: 1 mini 7v7 football pitch

SDC's Playing Pitch Strategy, 2018 recommends the three football pitch sites be protected as playing pitches in the Local Plan, and SDC's Open Space Study, 2018 notes there is a need to ensure continued provision of quality facilities for football and golf.

## Natural and Semi-Natural Open Space

The primary purposes of these are wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness. Fawkham Parish contains many such areas:

N1 Church Meadow (part 1)	N15 Billet Wood
N2 Church Meadow (part 2)	N16 Gallows Wood
N3 Churchdown Wood	N17 Woodland besides Three Gates Road
N4 Saxten and Cages Woods	N18 Hatchfield Wood
N5 Wilmay Copse	N19 Parkfield Wood
N6 Loaves Wood	N20 Woodland at Hill Barn Farm
N7 Fawkham Valley woods	N21 Parefield Wood
N8 Cross House woodland	N22 Grove Wood
N9 Roger's Wood	N23 Hopkins Spring Wood
N10 Scudders Shaw	N24 Shortledge Wood
N11 Woodland East of Salts Farm	N25 Fawkham Primary Woodland/Forest School
N12 Pennis Wood	N26 Steephill School Orchard and Forest School
N13 Choaks Wood	N27 Church Downs grassland
N14 Horton Wood (part of)	N28 Brands Hatch grassland

Saxten's Wood, Cage's Wood and Wilmay Copse are owned and managed by the Woodland Trust, and are access land.

SDC's Open Space Study, 2018 recommends generally maintaining and improving the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space.

# LEISURE AND WELLBEING

**The wide benefits of the open spaces are highly valued by the local community**, and those with public access are well used. Our Countryside Survey, 2021 showed almost 50% of residents walk daily in the countryside. Although the football pitches and golf courses are used by some local residents, they serve a wider catchment as part of the district-wide sports provision.

The quality of our open spaces is generally good and we are keen to retain them.

## **Policy FNP13: Protection of open space, sport and recreation facilities**

**Open space, as defined on Map 9 and Appendix 2, will be retained and, where appropriate, enhanced. Development may exceptionally be allowed where replacement provision of at least equivalent value to the local community is provided.**

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*Let us know if you agree or disagree with this policy, or have suggestions as to how it should be changed, and why, via the questionnaire (Question 16).*

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## **Public Rights of Way and historic routeways**

A network of footpaths extends across Fawkham Parish as shown on Map 10. Many of these Public Rights of Way have been in existence for centuries, such as the hollow way which leads up behind Pennis House (path SD223).

Most are paths across/ around fields or through woodland, but occasionally they have become narrow passageways between garden fences (e.g. path SD221 leading from the western end of Castle Hill).

Their use as footpaths for leisure purposes can be limited by difficult-to-cross stiles and poor signposting.

In terms of outdoor leisure activities, over two thirds of respondents view wildlife daily and almost 50% walk daily in the countryside (Countryside Survey, 2021).

## **Policy FNP14: Protect existing Public Rights of Way and historic routeways**

**The alignment and character of existing public rights of way and historic routeways, as shown on Map 10, will be protected and enhanced.**

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*Let us know if you agree or disagree with this policy, or have suggestions as to how it should be changed, and why, via the questionnaire (Question 17).*

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