

Boreham Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base

EB6 Community and Leisure V2

1. Sports and Recreation

There are several open spaces in Boreham for sports and recreation. These are well used throughout the year by dog walkers, children (particularly during school holidays and at weekends) and sports teams.

Recreation Ground

The main recreation ground between Main Road and Plantation Road is used for cricket and football, has two areas of swings and climbing frames for children and toddlers, an outdoor table tennis table and includes the Village Hall, Sports and Social Club and the nearby Scout and Guide HQ. There is a toddler play area on the grounds adjacent to the village hall. The recreation ground also contains a portacabin which is temporarily housing the Boreham Parish Council office until permanent accommodation can be created. The Recreation Ground has been renamed the John Galley Memorial Ground in honour of the late Mayor of Chelmsford and city and parish councillor, John Galley.

The edges of the recreation ground are dotted with mature trees. Its appearance is somewhat marred by the boundary chain link fence and concrete posts particularly along Main Road side.

There are many football fixtures in the autumn and winter and a local cricket team uses the ground during the summer. Boreham also has a village cricket team currently playing from another location outside the village. In summer the recreation ground is also used for Play in the Park sessions for local young children.

Chase Field

Boreham Parish Council rents Chase Field at the southeast edge of the village from Chelmsford City Council. Chase Field has skateboarding and a play area. The remainder of the field to its east is currently an area of mown grass. There is potential to improve the amenity value of this field. The existing play equipment is moderately well used by villagers living around and along the Chase and by local dog owners. It is adjacent to footpaths on two sides and these lead out to open countryside. The Parish Council is considering potential improvements to the amenities at Chase Field once a new lease is agreed.

River Chelmer

Many people use the River Chelmer for boating, paddle boarding, open water swimming and fishing. The Chelmer Valley is a good place to spot wildlife and to walk. It is part of the Chelmer Blackwater Navigation, a privately owned waterway which goes from the centre of Chelmsford to the west and Heybridge Basin/Maldon to the east. There is a path along the entire 14 miles of the waterway. The waterway is also used by narrow boats and other small craft. Lately, the use of the Chelmer at Boreham for recreation purposes has expanded considerably and this may need to be managed in the future.

Lakes

There are a number of lakes along Waltham Road as a result of past gravel extraction activities. The lakes are mainly privately owned by various fishing clubs and are fenced off with members only access. Much of the fencing is unsightly.

On Church Road there is another privately owned lake (Trifarm) which is used as a training centre for triathletes and for open water swimming. It has a cycling and running track around its perimeter. This facility operates from May to August.

Chantry Field and Bowling Green

There is a Bowling green in Waltham Road which is owned by Chelmsford City Council and leased to the Bowls club under an arrangement initiated by Seabrook's Fruit Farms at Chantry Lane. There is an active bowls club which regularly uses this site and it is well maintained. Boreham Parish Council is in the process of acquiring this site from Chelmsford City Council with a view to increasing its amenity value and to exploit synergies between this site and the adjacent Chantry Field.

Chantry Field, previously a cricket field for Seabrook Farms has an area of approximately 5 acres. It was bought by the Parish Council to augment recreation space in 1997. There was a local referendum for ideas on how to use the field. At the moment it is unused meadow which is mown on a yearly basis and has for the last 4 years been developed as a small nature reserve. The field includes a Seabrooks Heritage Community Orchard with approximately 40 trees (some of which are registered on the Queen's Green Canopy).

The Parish Council is currently considering other options for use of the site as an additional village amenity.

2. St. Andrew's Church

St. Andrew's Church was overwhelmingly picked out by village residents as the heart of the village when the Boreham Village Design Statement was completed. It has seen additions and alterations from the 11th Century onwards which give us the Grade 1 listed building as it is today. It has a central Norman tower, square on plan, which has 8 bells (increased from 6 bells in 1913), a clock, a pyramid shaped roof, sundial and a weather vane. The tower is visible from outside the village from the west, south and east. The church forms the focal point of the Boreham – Church Road Conservation Area. Its walls are flint and brick and its roof has warm red tiles. It still retains some Saxon features and includes a memorial chapel to the Earls of Sussex. A lych gate and covered ambulatory leading to the church were built in the 1920s. The churchyard makes an excellent setting with a brick wall, old headstones and mature trees. It is softly floodlit at night.

The Church hosts various activities. The Edward Bear Group is a group for babies and pre-school children and is held every Tuesday morning. It also hosts a Community Coffee and Chat session on every Wednesday morning. This is for all members of the community to meet and exchange ideas and to informally discuss matters with the vicar and a parish councillor. There are also regular fetes and other seasonal activities throughout the year.

Recently the Church has fallen into a poor state of repair and is in need of extensive roof work and renovation. The Church has had a successful application for grant funding through the National Lottery to restore the fabric of the building. This will also allow remodeling of the interior to develop the

Church into an asset for the use of the entire community as well as those who worship there. There are regular social events at the church.

The churchyard and extension graveyard are currently being tended and maintained by a team of volunteers and the Payback team, supported by some funding from the Parish Council. It is going to be managed as a biodiverse space, in line with the Church's Eco Church Bronze status.

3. Allotments

There are allotments at Church Field in Waltham Road which are owned by Chelmsford Diocese. There are no vacancies at these allotments.

In addition, Boreham Parish Council leases an area which supports a further 12, smaller allotments at the Lion Inn. There are no vacant allotments at this location and there is a waiting list.

4. Shopping Facilities

There is a 1960s parade of shops with flats above in Butterfield Road comprising a mini supermarket/convenience store, a Chinese takeaway, a Post Office/newsagent, a Farleigh Hospice charity shop and a hairdresser/barber. This area suffers from litter problems and may require additional litter bins. It also has suffered some vandalism because many people, especially young people, gather there. Window frames in the flats have been replaced in an ad hoc way resulting in a haphazard appearance. The appearance of this area has improved recently with the upgrading of the supermarket as a Spar store.

At the corner of Main Road and Plantation Road is a long established butcher's shop that blends in well with the surrounding houses and is very well used. At the Main Road/Church Road junction are a second barber's shop and a beauty business. On the south side of this corner is a gun shop occupying a flat-roofed building. It is not in keeping with the style of surrounding properties. There is a tyre-fitting business on the east side of the junction.

Further east on the north side of Main Road is a Co Op supermarket with small car-park. This is well used. There is also a blacksmith and small garden centre at the B1137 and Damases Lane east of Boreham village.

5. Primary Healthcare Facilities

The Laurels surgery was purpose built in 1984 to replace the previous one. It has recently been enlarged. Like the Post Office, it is a focal point of the village. It is a dispensing practice and has reached full capacity in patient numbers because some come from outside the parish. The building, with a pitched grey tiled roof and prominent windows, fits sympathetically into the Conservation Area. It is set back from the road and is flanked by several mature trees.

6. Schools

Boreham Primary School

Boreham Primary School built in 1968 to replace the Victorian building opposite the church, is located in the 1960s built Garden Village. It caters for about 210 children aged from 4 to 11 with a single class per year. Other village primary school children travel to school in neighbouring communities including Beaulieu Park. The school has an interesting feature in the form of a dragon (Susan) faced with mosaic, which was built as a joint project by an artist, children and local people to celebrate the Millennium.

The school is a flat-roofed building of glass, brick and white weather boarding and is considerably softened by a planting of light feathery trees in front. Secondary school children travel out of the village to Broomfield or other schools.

New Hall School

New Hall School is located in the New Hall, a Tudor grade 1 listed building previously owned by Thomas Boleyn, Henry the eight and Oliver Cromwell (amongst others). It is a Catholic independent boarding & day school for girls and boys aged 1-18 situated on the outskirts of Chelmsford within the parish of Boreham. Previously a girl's school, the Senior School added a Boys' Division (11-16) and a co-educational Sixth Form in 2005. There are now equal numbers of boys and girls from ages 11-18 with two boys' boarding houses and two girls' boarding houses. The school has circa 1270 students, a Nursery and a Reception class.

New Hall won the National Independent Schools Award for Outstanding Strategic Initiative in 2011, in recognition of the pioneering and innovative move to establish a diamond model school and success in doubling the school roll and raising standards of academic and co-curricular achievements. In 2016, it was recognized as the TES Independent School of Year. The School also received the Initiative of the Year Award for the New Hall Green Travel and Transport Strategy, securing funding from local property developers, and the co-operation of Chelmsford City Council, to help fund a bypass road to the school, easing local congestion.

In 2025, New Hall School acquired Boreham House and is converting these premises into a new preparatory school for New Hall.

4. Meeting Places

The Village Hall

The Village Hall was purpose built in 1993 helped by some money from Pioneer Concrete Holdings (now Hanson plc), who also agreed to contribute substantial running costs for 30 years. It has three meeting rooms, the largest holding 200 people. This room, at the back of the building, is double height to accommodate badminton (giving a more interesting outside roofline) and has been decorated with mosaics depicting local features to celebrate the year 2000. The building sits starkly in its setting. It is in constant use for meetings, wedding receptions, parties, a weekly village indoor market, by the Parish Council and by a large number of organisations and groups, as can be seen from the Boreham Community Guide.

The Village Hall is also used for activities such as yoga classes, carpet bowls club and dance classes. Boreham Art Circle and Gardening Club also operate from the Village Hall and it is a polling site for elections. Recently, the hall has been upgraded with the addition of solar panels on the roof.

The Pelly Room

The Pelly Room which is beside the church in the vicarage drive was originally converted stables but was badly damaged by fire in January 2004. It has since been rebuilt in traditional East Anglian boarded building style with improved facilities. Whilst owned by the church it is also available for hire for meetings and events. The Pelly Room is sometimes used to show films. It is also one of 2 polling station sites in the village.

Pubs

There are four public houses/restaurants in the village, which are at present in use and serve food attracting customers from outside the village as well as local residents. The Six Bells pub/restaurant was originally 3 cottages and is located in the Boreham conservation area on Main Road, opposite the junction of Plantation Road. The Queen's Head pub is next to the church in the conservation area at the centre of the village. Parts of the pub building date from the 16th century. The Lion Inn (previously the Red Lion pub) is a pub with a restaurant and a small hotel. It is located on Main Road at the west end of the village.

The Grange pub/restaurant and a Premier Inn are both located at the far west of the village at Boreham Interchange Generals Roundabout. These purpose built facilities are opposite Boreham House and cater to passing trade and visitors to the area as well as locals.

The Scout and Guide HQ

The Scout & Guide HQ is a 1990s one storey building tucked behind the Village Hall and behind a strong wooden fence. As well as scout, beaver and squirrel meetings it can be used for other educational activities e.g. Children's Holiday Club and Twinning events. It has a secure outside space and has been built on part of the Recreation Ground. Boreham has four active scout groups for boys and girls of different ages: Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Squirrels.

The Sports & Social Club

This flat roofed building with exposed water tank was enlarged in the eighties and nineties from a smaller green wooden clubhouse and has served many generations of footballers and cricketers. Other games such as cribbage and darts are played and there is a bar for members and visitors at the end of games, matches or for social events.

When the opportunity arises the owner or tenant is encouraged to replace the Sports and Social Club building with a new sports pavilion with a pitched roof in keeping with the Village Hall. There is also a suggestion that a suitable tree is planted between the Sports and Social Club and the Village Hall. It could be placed so as not to interfere with underground services. This could be a conifer which could also serve as the village Xmas tree.

5. Public Rights of Way

There are several footpaths, bridle paths and minor roads in Boreham parish that present excellent opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding in attractive rural surroundings. There is an extensive network of footpaths to the south of the village which link to the river path which follows the entire length of the Chelmer Blackwater Navigation from Chelmsford's Springfield Basin all the way to Heybridge Basin/Maldon. This is a distance of 14 miles. The network of footpaths crosses the entire Parish but is disrupted by the A12 and the railway line, which together form a barrier which prevents navigation between the north and south portions of the village except via two very busy junctions, namely Boreham Interchange and Waltham Road.

Footpaths to the north of the village link Boreham to Terling and Hatfield Peverel and also take in local beauty spots such as Toppinghoe Hall Wood. In recent times this northerly network has been marred by industrial activity and the historic vistas over open countryside are now greatly reduced due to National Grid infrastructure and gravel extraction. The amenity afforded by the northerly network is also reduced due to the fact it can only be accessed from Waltham Road. This is a very busy road with

narrow verges, no pavements and very little parking. This means users of these footpaths are required to walk along the roadway. This deters some users, but, even so, the footpaths are quite well used by riders, dog walkers and ramblers.

There would be community value in ensuring better way markings on the footpath network and encouraging regular maintenance of these footpaths throughout the year. There would also be benefit in increasing the number of dog waste receptacles at appropriate collection points.

6. Special Events

Boreham in Bloom

Boreham has an active gardening club. Every two years about 30 private gardens and the church are open for “Boreham In Bloom”. Proceeds go to church funds. For this event parking is allowed at Old Hall, the school and doctor’s surgery.

Twinning

Boreham is twinned with Ploubalay in Brittany, France. Exchange (individual and group) visits between the two villages are usually arranged each year. Golfing, football and musical events have been organised as part of the twinning.

Scarecrow Trail

This event was introduced during the Covid pandemic and is a regular activity held during the school half term in October. Villagers enter their scarecrows into a village wide display.

Village Fairs

Boreham held a very large celebration to mark Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee. Since then, there has been a May Fair which is likely to become a regular event supported by the Parish Council.