

Hungerford is well served for open space and recreation areas and is fortunate that ancient rights and practices have preserved significant open space around the town. The major open spaces enjoyed by the public are Portdown Common to the east of the town and Freeman's Marsh to the west. Both are owned and managed by the Town and Manor of Hungerford which is a registered charity. These areas are regularly grazed by cattle and serve as open access space. A number of commoners exercise their grazing and fishing rights alongside general recreational use of the land. This helps give the rural atmosphere so popular with many residents. The area of marshland opposite the church is managed as a Nature Reserve by BBOWT (Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust). More formal recreation space is available around the town including football and cricket pitches and the Triangle Field along with smaller spaces elsewhere. Children and young people are further served by four equipped playgrounds, a skatepark and other informal open spaces such as the Croft, Atherton Crescent and the Shalbourne Close play area. The all-weather, floodlit sports facility at the John O'Gaunt College

offers many further sporting opportunities. Although Hungerford is well served for sports clubs they each act independently leaving much scope for co-operation and co-ordination of events. Hungerford benefits from two Leisure Centres with swimming pools and fitness centres providing a wide range of sporting and leisure opportunities.

Both the Common and Freeman's Marsh are greatly appreciated by the residents and must be preserved. Formal recreation space is maintained by a flourishing series of sports clubs and this is likely to continue. There is a need for new or extended facilities for the football, cricket and rugby clubs.

The children's play areas vary in age, with the older ones being poorly designed and in need of a complete update. They require a comprehensive re-design in line with modern thinking and practice to cater for today's young people.

Policies

Provide and develop high quality indoor and outdoor sporting facilities to encourage sport for all.

Support the work of the Town and Manor to protect and preserve the Common, the Marsh and the Croft.

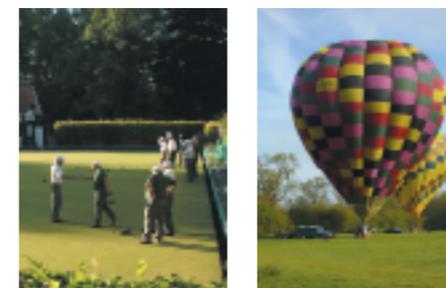
Encourage co-operation between the town's sports clubs.

Encourage full use of all sporting facilities by shared usage and resist any moves to convert existing sports grounds for other purposes.

Provide high quality childrens' play areas.

Ensure that all public open spaces are well maintained, tidy and free of litter.

Keep all public benches well maintained.



Key Actions

- Maintain and improve the play areas and parks by renewing and extending the equipment available.
- Establish a new representative body to co-ordinate sporting activities in the town. Aim for a co-ordinated sporting calendar, joint events and effective publicity.
- Improve the club houses and facilities at the football and cricket clubs, perhaps combining them.
- Encourage the use by local people of the new floodlit sports facility at John O'Gaunt.
- Develop a youth rugby team and junior coaching sessions.
- Ensure the public swimming pool facilities continue to be maintained to a high standard and that swimming lessons are available.
- Retain the Triangle Field for sporting events and support Hungerford Rugby Club in its plans to develop a self-funded clubhouse on the site.
- Work with the Town Council, West Berkshire and all involved with sports and recreation to maintain facilities to a high standard and minimise litter.
- Preserve the town's allotments and resist any development plans.