

# RIVENHALL

## VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

[Part of the Rivenhall Parish Plan Process]



Prepared by & Printed for the Rivenhall Parish Plan Steering Group

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## **1 - INTRODUCTION**

### **The Purpose of the Visual Design Statement (VDS)**

The VDS is a record of how the inhabitants of Rivenhall saw their Parish in 2003, plus some background of the way the Parish developed to 2003. It also expresses the views of the community as to the types of changes they would want, would accept or would not want to occur in the Parish. This document is part of the Rivenhall Parish Plan process. A separate document (Parish Plan) comprising an Action Plan for addressing the needs, wants and concerns expressed in the Parish Appraisal (late 2003) with regard to services, facilities and amenities available to Parishioners, has also been produced.

### **Scope of the VDS**

The VDS is intended to : -

- \* **Manage change not prevent it**
- \* **Assist property owners and developers in adopting designs acceptable to the local community**
- \* **Help protect visually important buildings and their settings**
- \* **Improve and protect the local character and appearance including the use of open spaces**
- \* **Assist the local planning authority in the determination of local planning applications**
- \* **Ensure the valued physical qualities and characteristics of the parish are conserved and protected**

### **How the VDS was Developed**

In July 2002, the Parish Council decided that a Parish Plan should be developed including a section comprising a VDS. A Chairman was then appointed to form a Steering Group and carry out the project.

Emphasis was put on consulting the whole community and opinions were gathered at the Village Fete and an Exhibition held in 2002, from a public workshop (February 2003) held to introduce the project, from parishioners via conversations, plus an opinion gathering exercise carried out at the village Primary School and by fact gathering by the Group members. Another public workshop weekend held at the two Parish halls (July 2003) presented the information gathered up to that time, including many photos of the Parish and sought further opinions from those attending.

## Document Status

The aim is for this document to be approved by Rivenhall Parish Council & approved as a material planning consideration by Braintree District Council

Information gathered from the above was used to prepare two questionnaires for a Parish Appraisal, the first of which was based on the visual character of the Parish including all questions on housing and new developments included in the Appraisal and thus included many questions appropriate to a VDS and the results are reflected in this document.

## **2 - HISTORIC BACKGROUND**

Rivenhall Parish is situated about 10 miles north east of Chelmsford and 11 miles south west of Colchester and 7 miles south east of Braintree. It is bordered by the parishes of Witham, Kelvedon, Silver End and Great Braxted and Little Braxted. It has a population of approximately 730 living in a total of just over 300 homes.

The main village referred to as Rivenhall Main in this document, is situated about a mile from the A12 which cuts directly through the 2nd main settlement of Rivenhall End. A third sizeable settlement exists along Rickstones Road between Witham and Rivenhall Main and is identified in this document as Rickstones End. There are other areas of ribbon development and isolated houses and farms located on or near the main roads through the Parish. It is a rural parish with an agricultural landscape, mostly arable land with areas of woodland and small areas of pasture. A sizeable area of arable land has in recent years been converted to a golf course and now forms the largest green area in the Parish. An area of countryside exists between Witham and Rivenhall, except where the industrial estate by the A12 has been extended into Rivenhall End from Witham.

Rivenhall has been inhabited for many centuries. Bronze age ring ditches have been identified at Rivenhall End and a Romano Villa and other buildings identified in Rivenhall Main. The Parish Church – St Mary's and All Saints - is built above the site of the villa. In the Domesday Book Rivenhall featured in 5 entries. There were 4 Manors and a Mill. [One of these manors is now in Cressing Parish, part of a land transfer in 1888]. The Parish was formerly much larger, but the hamlet of Silver End was built into a separate and larger village in the late 1920s and 1930s by the Crittall family. It has its own Parish Church, Parish Council, etc., and is not now regarded as Rivenhall Parish and hence is not covered by this document.

Initially, most settlement areas were small groups of isolated housing near farmsteads and few large manor houses that existed in the Parish. A small roadside hamlet, the first sizeable Parish settlement had developed in Rivenhall End by the late 18th century

## **GUIDELINES –**

- \* Future developments should be within the village envelope**
- \* Any future developments should be small scale developments to ensure the rural character is preserved, including the uncrowded characteristics**
- \* The operation of at least one general shop & Post Office & one Public House should be encouraged & supported in whatever way is possible**

## **2 - HISTORIC BACKGROUND**

- around the crossroads area formed by the London Road (now the A12) being met by Oak and Braxted Roads. An inn (formerly the manor of Godsalves) called the Foxes existed here from the 18th century until burnt down and replaced by the current Fox around 1930.

A smithy, wheelwrights and other businesses including farmsteads were sited here along with domestic dwellings. When the A12 was dualled in the 1960s many of the older properties were demolished but newer housing built along and off Oak Road and the Henry Dixon Road since the late 1950s has increased the number of properties in this part of the Parish. The railway built in the 1840s separates Rivenhall End from the remainder of the Parish.

In the main part of Rivenhall Parish, there was no sizeable hamlet until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when a number of properties were built on the roadside waste between the 'Oak' junction and Hoo Hall cottages along the upper part of Oak Road. The building of the Village School next to the Church in the 1850s formed a focal point for later 20<sup>th</sup> century developments. Council housing erected in the 1920s along Church and Rickstones roads helped define the boundaries for further council building of the 'New Estate' in the 1950s, plus some bungalows near the Oak, providing a main village for the Parish. Some later private housing built along Church Road between the Church and the Rectory has been the only addition to the main village since and the earlier Oak Road hamlet was demolished in the 1940s to 1950s.

Other Council building in the 1920s was for some roadside housing along the middle part of Oak Road, an isolated row of 12 houses, plus a few houses along the middle part of Rickstones Road. Between Stoverns Hall and Rickstones Farm in the 1920s further private housing was built along the roadside augmenting the few farm cottages and 4 council houses there, to form a small hamlet of around 30 houses. This hamlet is referred to in this document as Rickstones End.

Along and off the other main roads in the parish there are only some scattered and isolated houses and farmsteads.

## **GUIDELINES**

- \* Any future changes to the Village Envelope should be the subject of careful consideration in order to prevent large scale developments & to protect the rural character of the Parish**

## **3 - The Village Envelope**

The Village envelopes are the officially designated area to which new developments are limited and the current envelope greatly limits the possibilities of new developments such as additional housing. They are drawn tightly around the existing houses & gardens in the Rivenhall Main & Rivenhall End settlement areas. The dispersed Rickstones End settlement is not within the village envelope, to protect this area between Rivenhall and Witham from further development. There is therefore little room for any new housing in either of these envelopes. However, all such envelopes are subject to periodic review and cannot be assumed to be permanently set at the current limits.

Areas outside the Village envelopes are countryside and will be protected by restricting new uses to those required to support agriculture, forestry or other rural uses.

Future sizeable housing development applications, other than for house extensions, are only likely if the current Parish Envelope changes. The guidelines in this document are meant to apply throughout the Parish whether for developments inside or outside the current designated Parish Envelope.

Note: Low cost housing applications may possibly obtain planning permission on land adjacent to but outside the Parish Envelope.



Oak Road Rivenhall End around 1900



London Road Rivenhall End (now the A12) in the early 1900's



### 3 - Village Envelope



The part of the Village Envelope around Rivenhall Main

The sharp black line marks the edges of the envelope. The area to the right of the School also marked by a sharp black line containing the letter M is an ancient monument site where no ploughing of the land is allowed. The area covered is that of the existing housing in Church Road between the Rectory and the Primary School, the whole of the 'New Estate' including the greens, the bungalows near the Oak off Rickstones Road and that part of Rickstones Road from the Oak to the last house in Rivenhall Main village.

### 3 - Village Envelope



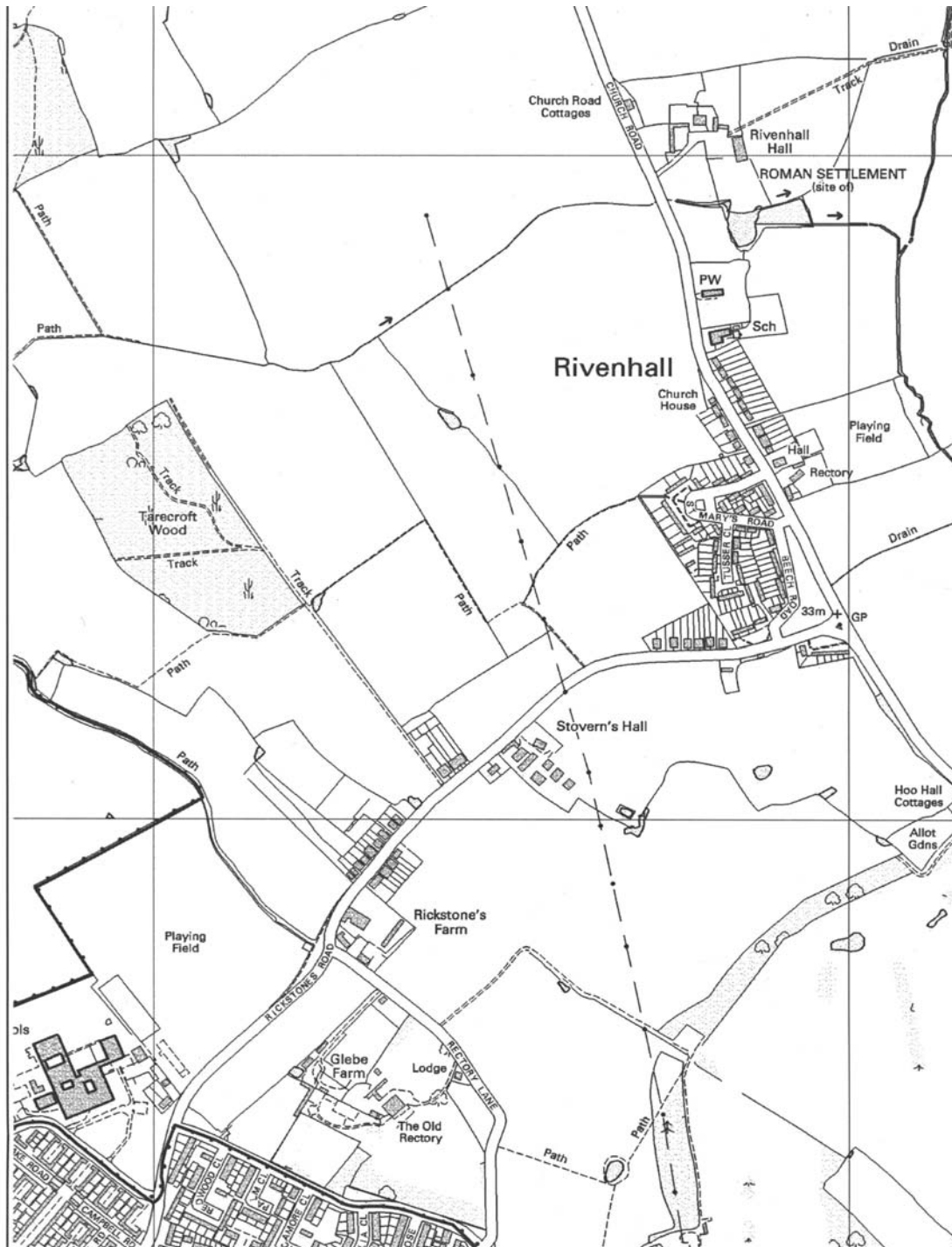
The part of the Village Envelope around Rivenhall End

The sharp black line shows the limits of the envelope between the railway line shown on the right hand corner and the A12, top left hand corner. It is tightly set around the Foxden/Foxmead housing and the housing in Oak Road (up to the railway line) housing on the Oak Road side of Henry Dixon Road, plus the Fox Inn at the junction of Oak Road and the A12. As with the envelope around Rivenhall Main, there is not much land available to erect new dwellings in this envelope. The conclusion must be that the number of dwellings in the Parish is unlikely to be greatly increased whilst the current envelopes, recently set, remain in force. In the bottom half of the plan, the area marked by parallel lines shows the flood plain for the brook which appears in the bottom left hand corner of the plan.



#### 4 - RIVENHALL PARISH Settlement Areas

Rivenhall Main & Rickstones End Settlements & surrounds including Footpaths



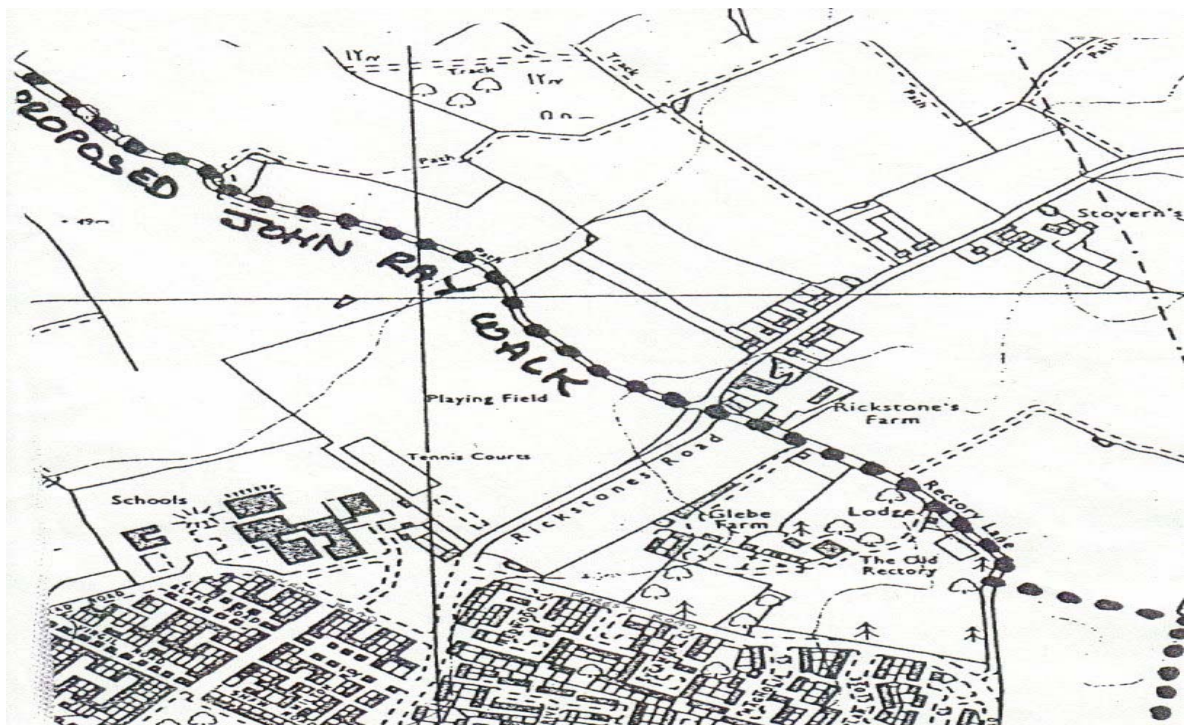
(Map supplied by Braintree District Council)



#### 4 - RIVENHALL PARISH Settlement Areas



RIVENHALL END an aerial view



RICKSTONES END (From the Ordnance Survey Map)



#### 4 - RIVENHALL PARISH Settlement Areas

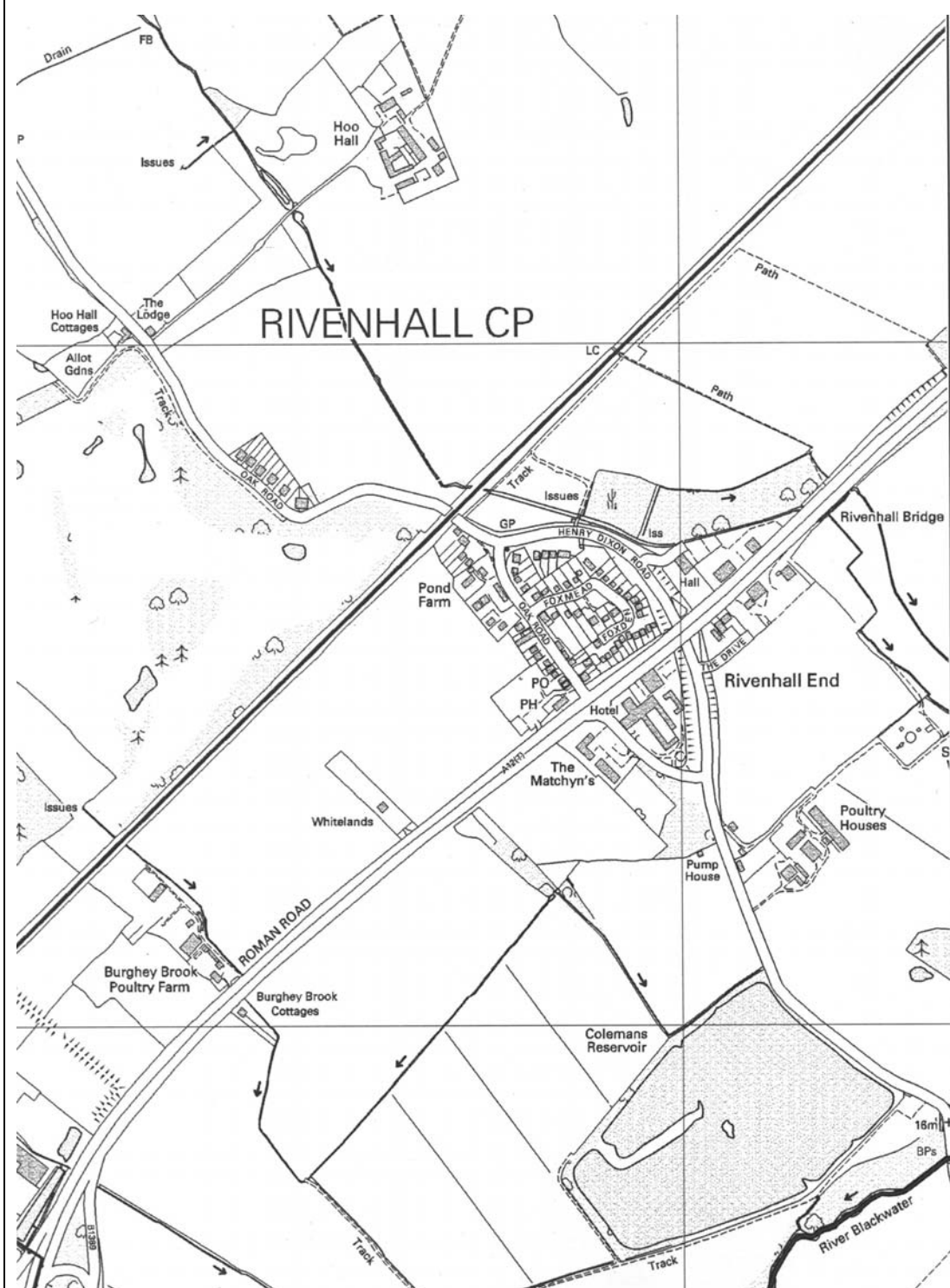


RIVENHALL MAIN from the air and from the top of the Church Tower



#### 4 - RIVENHALL PARISH Settlement Areas

Rivenhall End Settlement (to right of Rail Line) & surrounds including Footpaths



(Map supplied by Braintree District Council)



## GUIDELINES

### 5 - RIVENHALL MAIN – The ‘New Estate’

This estate was built by the local Council in the 1950s .

\* **Any new housing to contribute to an open & green setting**

Types of Housing – The estate consists of typical Council housing of the 1950s (much of which has passed into the private ownership of the occupiers since the 1970s). It contains 2 or 3 bedroomed houses either in pairs or terraces of 4 or 5, plus areas of 2 bedroomed bungalows mostly in pairs. There are no detached houses on the estate and the bungalows and houses are on separate sides of roads and not side by side.

\* **All housing to be fronted by footways**

\* **Adjoining terraces & pairs of houses to be differentiated by colour of bricks or rendering**

All properties have front and rear gardens, the houses having quite large rear gardens. The buildings are built of either red or yellow sandfaced fletton bricks, some being rendered, with painted wooden doors, tiled roofs and windows with either wood or metal frames. Adjoining terraces are generally differentiated from each other by means of rendering or colour of bricks. Chimneys are all above the rooflines. Properties are all connected to the usual services, mains, electric, gas and are all fronted by footways bordering their front gardens. A few houses with side gardens have had garages built separately or as part of a house extension added to them. Most front gardens contain a lawn, but there is no standard type of border, there are a variety of walls, fences, hedges or no bordering element. No bordering wall, hedge or fence exists above at most a metre tall, most being less. In general front garden parking is not allowed or practiced though a few houses in Tusser Close have had their gardens concreted for this purpose. Where houses have the rendering painted, light colours are used. There are occasional side extensions and many of the houses have the porch area enclosed and conservatories at the rear are common.

\* **Chimneys to all be above rooflines**

\* **Front walls/fences to be no more than 1 metre high**

House Settings - The estate is built off the corner areas of Rickstones and Church Roads and contains 3 estate roads – Beech, St Mary’s and Tusser Close (a cul de sac). The village green fronts Beech Road and is bordered by that and Rickstones and Church roads and smaller greens are found in the Rickstones and St Mary’s Road areas. In Tusser Close only a small area of green remains, the rest having being grasscreted due to the parking problems experienced in that road. All estate roads are covered by the 30 mph limit and are well lit. Most properties have front or rear views of the arable countryside. There are 2 areas of Council garaging with a total of 53 garages for rental and much road parking.

\* **Extensions to fit in with the rest of the property**



## **GUIDELINES**

- \* Green areas near housing to remain a characteristic**
- \* All green areas to be preserved from developments other than the addition of items of equipment such as play equipment, benches, bins & planting of trees & flowers**

## **5 - RIVENHALL MAIN – The ‘New Estate’**

The main village green is reasonably large and has white posts and chains fencing the sides not bordering the houses in Beech Road and contains a seat, litter and dog bins. Trees including 2 large oaks stand near the edges of the green where it abuts Rickstones and Church Roads. There is a play area with some apparatus in St Mary’s Road. Where there is a green fronting front gardens, parking in front gardens or on greens is not allowed. The greens are owned and regularly cut by the District Council and some additional cutting is done on the smaller green areas by volunteers insured by the Parish Council. The green areas, in particular the main village green are seen as visually attractive features and also great assets to the parish for use as safe play areas for children close by housing. They contribute to the rural character of space rather than overcrowding in the Parish. The main village green contains the Rivenhall village sign.



Typical bungalows in Rivenhall Main



1950's Council Building with green areas fronting the houses



Housing on ‘New Estate’ – chimneys above roofline & terraces rendered differently



Village Green fronting the ‘New Estate’ in Rivenhall Main (built 1950’s)

## GUIDELINES

- \* **Access from road sides for parking should be over dropped kerbs to avoid damage to footways & kerbs**

- \* **Any new buildings or extensions to use similar materials to the existing & adjoining properties**

## 5 - RIVENHALL MAIN – Church Road

The part of Church Road that is included in the Rivenhall Main area runs from the Oak junction of Church, Oak and Rickstones Roads as far as the Church and contains ribbon development of a mix of housing types. With the exception of the Church, School and 2 old cottages, the buildings were all erected in the twentieth century. The other housing is a mix of Council housing erected in the 1920s (now mainly privately owned) consisting of 6 pairs of 3 bedroomed brickbuilt (sand faced flettons) houses with sizeable front and rear gardens and tiled roofs. Many have pale cream rendering, all have wooden doors and any replacement windows are the same size as the originals.

There are also private 3/4 bedroomed detached houses erected in the 1960s and 1970s on either side of the road again built of brick (sand faced flettons) all of which have garages with dropped kerb access and tiled roofs and 3 bungalows. All houses are fronted by pathways. The village shop is also sited in this stretch and was built at the same time, using the same materials as the 'New Estate'. It is fronted by a layby for the use of car parking customers and buses. . The Village Hall (built in 1924) and its carpark stand next to the Rectory which is a handsome 3 storied building set back from the road. The 2 old cottages along this road are the only ones with very narrow front gardens between them and the road and they are no longer separate from the other housing as their garden areas have largely been built on.

Housing Setting – The houses front a busy well lit road within the 30mph limit. Street parking is not conducive to road safety and front garden parking on concreted drives/bases is quite common. The front views are largely of the houses opposite, but most have pleasing aspects to open countryside at the rear. Behind the Village hall and adjoining houses is Basketball Court and a large playing field with some childrens play equipment in a corner of the field. Car parks exist by the Village Hall and the Playing Field.



Older housing in Church Road with newer housing in between



Mixed Housing in Church Road

## GUIDELINES

\* **The area behind the thatched cottages should remain undeveloped to preserve their natural setting**

\* **All new housing to have front & rear gardens**

\* **Any new building should include off road parking**

## 5 - RIVENHALL MAIN – Rickstones Road

Excluding the housing belonging to the 'New Estate', there are some 1920s Council erected pairs of houses along the estate side of the road which adjoin the small green at the start of the estate houses. These are brick built (flettons) grey tiled roof houses with sizeable front and rear gardens and in many cases, side gardens. Several have garages or off road drives for car parking.

There are 8 bungalows in pairs near the Oak end of the road, set back from the road with a sloping green in front accessed by steps from Rickstones Road and a path from Oak Road. Erected by the Council around 1960 they are brick built with tiled roofs and all have small front and rear gardens. Two old thatched cottages the only remaining thatched cottages in the Parish, stand apart from the other houses on the opposite side of the road to the 'New Estate' and the older Council houses.

House Settings – The bungalows face across their small green to the larger village green and back onto arable farmland. The older council houses mostly face and back onto arable farmland. The thatched cottages with their original gardens back onto arable farmland also. The thatched cottages are a valued feature of the Parish and provide a focal point..



Inter War Council built housing in Rickstones Road



One of the thatched cottages in Rickstones Road  
– a valued focal point in the Parish

## **6 - RICKSTONES END –Rickstones Road**

### **GUIDELINES**

- \* Any new building should include off road parking**
- \* Access from road sides for parking should be over dropped kerbs to avoid damage to footways & kerbs**
- \* Any new housing to have front & rear gardens**

The area of Rivenhall identified in this document as Rickstones End is the stretch of Rickstones Road from Stoverns Hall farm to the former Rickstones farmhouse at the junction with Rectory Lane. Apart from the two farm buildings and a few cottages for the farm workers, there was no housing here until the 1920s when the roadside between these farms was largely built on with private housing and 4 council houses, forming a small hamlet of approximately 30 homes.

The housing is a mix of detached houses (2/4 bedroomed) and bungalows, pairs of 3 bedroomed houses and a terrace of 3 older farm cottages, plus the 2 farmhouses and their attendant buildings. Stoverns Hall farmhouse much altered in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries still contains parts of the original medieval timber framed dwelling. The former Rickstones farmhouse is an attractive timber framed 16<sup>th</sup> century building standing facing Rickstones Road at the junction with Rectory Lane. It is a visual feature for those entering the Parish from Witham. In part of the former farmyard, a small industrial site now exists, accessed from Rickstones Road. All houses have sizeable to large rear gardens, front gardens, many have offstreet parking and all are fronted by footways except Rickstones Farmhouse. Street parking is a problem where no offroad parking exists.

Housing Settings – The houses front a busy and well lit road covered by a 30 mph limit. The houses on one side of the road back onto arable farmland and on the other side overlook the golf course. Rickstones End does not have a Village envelope meaning that new development here, apart from rural countryside uses, would not be permissible.



**Rickstones End**



**Larger Housing at Rickstones End**



## GUIDELINES

**\* The countryside between Rivenhall Main Village Envelope & Witham Town Development Boundary should be protected from development to retain the rural character of this area**

**\* Rectory Lane should be preserved in it's current dimensions**

**\* Efforts should be made to ensure that traffic levels along the lane do not increase in order to preserve the safety of pedestrians & the quiet nature of this area of the Parish**

## 7 - RECTORY LANE

This ancient lane runs from the junction with Rickstones Road to a junction with Forest Road (a border between Rivenhall and Witham). The lane originally ran much further but building in the later 1960s as part of Witham 's expansion destroyed part of it's original length. There are few houses along here, after Rickstones Farmhouse and a neighbouring recent conversion (barn to house) there are only 2 properties alongside the lane and two properties , The Old Rectory and the former Glebe farmhouse are accessed by drives leading from Rectory Lane. Apart from Rickstones farmhouse and the barn conversion, all the properties lie in the area of countryside known as 'Rectory Triangle'. The old Rectory (superceded as the parish rectory around 1930) is a large handsome house part 16<sup>th</sup> century and part Georgian which stands in an area of private parkland and gardens and forms an attractive feature in this part of the Parish. Glebe farmhouse is an 18<sup>th</sup> century building. Behind the farmhouse, accessed from Forest Road is a small industrial site – a builders yard., well screened from view.

House Settings – Rectory Lane is 'an oasis of peace and old world charm' reflecting the rural character of the Parish. It is a favoured area for pedestrians with little motor traffic and is only single lane width. It is bordered by tall hedges and ditches which screen it effectively. The Old Rectory and it's parkland are a focal point, enhancing and emphasising the rural nature and setting. On the other side of the lane is arable farmland, part of the countryside and accentuating the rural aspect of this area. The lane is part of the John Ray Nature walk. One remaining arable field forms a border with Rickstones Road and effectively distinguishes the separation of the 2 parishes along this road.



Rectory Lane – Quiet & Peaceful



The Old Rectory set in an area of parkland

## Recommendations

**\* The green space between Conrad Road & the School & the houses actually in Rivenhall Parish be preserved from development to act as a buffer zone between the two parishes**

**\* The School Playing Field to remain undeveloped as part of the countryside**

## 8 - Rickstones School

Rickstones School (for 11 to 18 year olds) is sited mainly in Rivenhall Parish but is practically contiguous with Witham and most of it's pupils come from outside Rivenhall. The School is accessed off Conrad Road (A boundary between Witham and Rivenhall) with a green area between the road and the School and a small group of houses including 2 bungalows which are in Rivenhall Parish and accessed from Rickstones Road (which originates in Witham and extends less than 1mile into Rivenhall).

The school playing field alongside Rickstones Road on the opposite side to the 'Rectory Triangle' is also part of the countryside between the housing areas of the 2 parishes. The end of the playing field borders the 'Green Lane' which is part of the 'John Ray Walk'.



The green fronting Rickstones School buildings & the first houses in Rivenhall Parish

## GUIDELINES

- \* **The current rural characteristic of space & isolation of the housing should be preserved in this part of the Parish.**
- \* **Any new development should include off road parking**
- \* **Any new Parish roads should include green verges either side of any footways to allow for regular cutting & the planting of such plants as may be considered suitable.**
- \* **Where possible any new roads in the Parish that border agricultural land should be separated from this land by hedgerows**

## 9 - Silver End Road - Church & Park roads

This comprises the area from the Church along Church Road to the end of Park Road at it's junction with Western Road. It is a sparsely populated area dotted with isolated housing with 3 farms, Rivenhall Hall, Ford (both accessed by longish drives) and Park farm along it's length. Also The major country house in the Parish – Rivenhall Place, with a second large house (stables conversion close by. There are also a wooden cottage (formerly a 3 cottage terrace) near Rivenhall Hall farm which is a listed building, a few former farm cottages and a few larger detached houses along the approximately 1 mile long road. All have sizeable gardens and are surrounded by farmland.

Rivenhall Place is a large country house, part Tudor with a Georgian façade. It stands in a parkland area with a large lake in front and was for 200 years, an eye catching focal point for all approaching/leaving Rivenhall by road. Sadly, bordering trees planted in the 1980s are now so high that the house, lake and lands are hidden from roadside sight. Ford Farm is not visible from the road, but is a 15<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse. Rivenhall Hall close to the Church is a fine 16<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse which with it's farm buildings and the nearby wooden roadside cottage, forms an attractive rural entrance/exit to Rivenhall Main.

Housing Settings – All stand in a typically rural setting, being surrounded by farmland with the characteristic of space and isolation. They are accessed from a busy road, with a current 60 mph limit (lower speed limits are sought), no street lighting and no footways or roadside parking available. The homes do not have mains gas.



Old Cottages in Church Road (Silver End Road) presenting an attractive entrance to Rivenhall Main

## GUIDELINES

- \* **Any new housing to have front & rear gardens**
- \* **Any new development should include off road parking**

## 10 - Oak Road

A large stretch of Oak Road lies beyond the Rivenhall End stretch and runs for about half a mile to the Oak junction with Rickstones and Church Roads. There are 2 groups of housing along this stretch, 12 council erected (1920s) brick built with tiled roof's, houses in 6 pairs, with offstreet parking in most cases and a group of 3 cottages (18<sup>th</sup> century or earlier) opposite the drive to Hoo Hall (former farmhouse) plus a much altered wooden house (formerly small gatehouse) at the drive entrance. The former council houses face the Oaks golfcourse (created in the 1980s) and back onto arable farmland. The other cottages all back onto farmland.

Much of the original housing in Rivenhall Main stood alongside the road between the cottages opposite Hoo Hall drive and the Oak junction. A total of about 13 cottages including a shop all built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were demolished in the 1940s and 1950s, leaving a brownfield site of wasteland that still exists as roadside wasteland fifty years on. It was identified in the Parish Appraisal (late 2003) as an area the Parishioners felt most suitable for new affordable housing.



Part of a group of isolated old cottages along Oak Road between Rivenhall Main & Rivenhall End



Row of isolated Council built houses facing the Golf Course and with arable land to sides & rear



## GUIDELINES

## 11 - Rivenhall End

- \* **Any new housing to include offstreet parking**

- \* **Green spaces to be created near any new housing where possible**

- \* **Extensions to be in character with the property & also neighbouring properties**

- \* **Older properties add to the character of the area & any alterations should ensure the original features are preserved.**

- \* **New housing to be in character with adjoining properties**

- \* **Any new housing to contribute to an open & green setting**

This part of the parish (roughly a rectangular area) comprises all parish land to the East of the Rail Line and is bordered by the river Blackwater (Great Braxted parish is the other side of the river) running parallel to the rail line and adjoins the parishes of Witham and Kelvedon at the two ends of this 'rectangle'. It is a bit less than 2 miles long by a mile to a mile and a half wide. The A12 (London Road) runs parallel to the Rail line and effectively splits Rivenhall End in two. The original settlement at Rivenhall End was centred on the crossroads where London road met Oak and Braxted roads, with dwellings and business's (Inns and Smithy and farms) along the London Road and on the parts of Oak and Braxted roads near the crossroads. Many of these buildings were demolished in the early 1960s when London Road was dualled.

Some older housing from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century including the old Smithy (built 1796) still survives along Oak Road, plus Pond Farm farmhouse 15<sup>th</sup> century and it's barns , now all converted to houses. The stretch of Oak Road in Rivenhall End also contains newer housing from the 1960s and 1970s consisting of mostly detached 3 and 4 bedroomed houses and some bungalows, all brickbuilt with tiled roofs, all with off road parking and front/rear gardens. The houses are built on both sides of the road with one side backing onto arable farmland and the other backing onto the Foxmead/Foxden estate. There is a small green area near the junction of Oak and Henry Dixon roads where the village sign for Rivenhall End is sited.

When London Road was dualled in the 1960s, direct access from Oak to Braxted Roads across the old London Road was made impossible, so a new road linking the two via an underpass below the A12 was created, Henry Dixon Road and some housing was created on one side of this road, again detached 3 and 4 bedroomed brickbuilt houses. These face a playing field and open farmland. Between Oak and Henry Dixon roads is the Foxmead/Foxden estate accessed from Oak Road and built in the late 1950s (Foxden added around 1990). Again the dwellings are detached brick built 3 and 4 bedroomed houses (plus some bungalows). There is a small green on the Foxmead estate. All housing in Rivenhall End has offroad parking, plus front/rear gardens. There is no Council housing in Rivenhall End.

Alongside the A12 in one corner of the former crossroads is the Village 'Pub', the Fox, (current building dates from the late 1920s) an inn has stood on this site for approximately 300 years. In other corners are the former Springholds farm (now a motel) and a much extended House now used by various commercial enterprises as offices.

## 11 - Rivenhall End

### GUIDELINES

- \* **Any barn conversions should be made in such a way that the original elements are retained**

A petrol station with Little Chef restaurant (last before the M25) is sited on the A12 in this area, also a few houses that survived the dualing in the 1960s including the former Congregational Chapel, now converted to a house (the previous Chapel, replaced in the 1870s, is now, much altered, the dining room of the motel). The Northbound Filling Station has now been replaced by a commercial vehicles sales business. The former 'Durwards Hall' now renamed Kelvedon Park, is a handsome country house (built 1850) in a small parkland area. This building, partly in Kelvedon Parish, has now had additional buildings erected and is owned and run as a Seed Firm industrial business.

Along the further reaches of the A12 and off Braxted Road and Braxted lane there are isolated housing units, farms, in mainly arable farmland settings.



Housing on Foxden Estate Rivenhall End



Oak Road Rivenhall End – compare to earlier picture of this road



Rivenhall End contains a mix of 3 to 5 bedroomed houses, detached or semi-detached



Some older housing off Oak Road Rivenhall End (19<sup>th</sup> Century)

## GUIDELINES

**\* The Church & Churchyard are an attractive feature of the Parish & great care should be taken with any proposed changes to them**

### 12 - Saint Mary & All Saints Church

There has been a Church on this site since Anglo-Saxon times and the Church and Churchyard are built on the site of an earlier Roman villa complex which is an ancient monument. Part of the Churchyard is now a protected area and cannot be used for graves.

The Church has been much altered over the centuries and the current building reflects the various restoration works of the Victorian period. Beneath the external stucco and interior plaster, much of the walls is Saxon and the building contains elements from the succeeding centuries up to the 1970s vestry addition. There is glass dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> century in the Church, the 12<sup>th</sup> century east window was brought from France in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most impressive internal monument is a 17<sup>th</sup> century memorial to Sir Ralph Wiseman and his wife.

The Churchyard is large for a parish with a population as small as Rivenhall has had over the centuries. Although many of the larger more impressive trees have been lost in the last twenty years due to storms and disease, there are still a reasonable number remaining. Also contained in the Churchyard is the Parish War Memorial, re sited here in the 1960s due to dualing of the A12 where it was previously located.



St Mary's & All Saints Church Rivenhall with the Parish War Memorial – a focal point in the Parish



The Church forms a background to an age old pastoral scene



## GUIDELINES

### 13 - Rivenhall Primary School

- \* **Any additions and or, alterations made to the school should not adversely affect the listed Victorian buildings**

Built in the 1850's as a Church school, standing alongside the Church. Although additions have been made (most recently in 2002), the original Victorian building still fronts the school buildings and forms , along with the Church next to it, a focal point for the Parish. The school faces and backs onto agricultural land (arable to the front, pasture to the rear) visually emphasising that this is a rural school.



Rivenhall Primary School – main buildings date from 1855



Farmland facing & to rear of school emphasises that this is a village school in a pleasant & healthy rural setting

## **GUIDELINES**

- \* Any new roads should include footways that link settlement areas within the Parish**
- \* Any new roads should be well lit within settlement areas, or linking them, using environment friendly lighting**
- \* Any new roads should be sited to avoid the demolition of existing properties where possible**
- \* Any expansion of the A12 should avoid the demolition of any existing housing**
- \* Any new roads should be constructed to provide parking facilities to enable roadside parking in areas of housing & prevent such parking becoming a road hazard**
- \* The bridge over the Blackwater at the Parish boundary is an attractive focal point and should not be substantially altered, but preserved in its current form**

## **14 - Roads & Infrastructure**

Rivenhall is a mainly rural parish traversed by several busy roads, the A12 dual carriageway, Rickstones Road, Oak Road, Church and Park Roads, Braxted Road and Henry Dixon Road. There are some minor roads, Braxted Lane, Rectory Lane and various estate roads. The A12 is extremely busy at most hours, has substandard slip roads, is the site of many road accidents/incidents and is lit the whole length that it passes through the Parish. It has a cycle/footway along its length on one side of the dual carriageway (not separated from the A12 by any safety fence). When built in the 1960s, incorporating the old London Road, many houses and other properties were destroyed as it passed through the settlement area rather than bypassing it as in other villages. The amount of traffic using this road is such that active consideration is being given to widening it to 3 lanes on the current route or building a new carriage way on a parallel route.

Oak and Braxted roads form access/exit roads to the A12 and as feeder roads also carry much traffic, including heavy lorries for which these narrow roads are not suited. A weight ban exists on part of Oak Road which is spanned by a low rail bridge at one point. Braxted road also crosses the river Blackwater over an ancient (1701) bridge which is the boundary between the parishes of Rivenhall and Braxted and is an attractive focal point which the Parish wishes to preserve. It is unsuitable for large vehicles and subject to traffic flow signed control.

Rickstones, Church and Park Roads are on the main bus route from Braintree to Witham. Henry Dixon Road links Oak and Braxted Roads. Speeding traffic is a concern to parishioners even though speed limits exist along Rickstones, Oak, Henry Dixon and part of Church Road (and all estate roads) with limits varying from 30 to 40 mph. All roads covered by sub 40mph limits are well lit and their surfaces generally well maintained. A few low lying places are subject to a degree of flooding following heavy rainfalls. Verges and hedges are maintained to a degree, but in areas where there are no volunteers to cut them, can become overgrown periodically. Footways run alongside all roads in the main settlement areas, but not along most of Church Road or alongside Braxted or Park Roads, nor the lanes. In the main settlement areas some planting of spring flowers (mainly daffodils) in recent times has been appreciated by parishioners who want this to continue as it improves the visual image of the Parish.

## GUIDELINES

- \* **Industrial units should have safe access points which do not pose any potential problem to other road traffic**
- \* **Industrial units should be screened to reduce visual & audible impact**
- \* **Industrial & Commercial units should have lighting restricted to the area of the units to reduce the levels of light pollution**
- \* **Proposals for new Industrial or Commercial sites likely to lead to an increase of heavy goods vehicles through the Parish should be discouraged in order to protect the narrow roads & verges in the Parish**

## 15 - Industrial Units

There are 3 main industrial sites in the Parish, a small site in Rickstones Road behind the former Rickstones farmhouse. This site has a small and potentially dangerous roadside access from the road and being close to housing has caused noise problems at times. Another larger site in the 'Rectory Triangle' accessed from Forest Road (Witham), both sites are well screened from the road visually. There is a major industrial site between the rail line and the A12 at Rivenhall End, being an extension of the Witham Industrial Estate into Rivenhall Parish. These units are large, with some generally ineffective screening measures. They are accessed by roads in Witham and the roads within the industrial estate itself. Lighting from these units spilling onto the A12 has been considered a possible safety hazard.

Elsewhere a Commercial unit is sited at the junction of the A12 and Braxted Road, consisting of a large unit of offices. A Motel is directly opposite it on the other side of Braxted Road and incorporates a public sports centre. The village Public House, the Fox is also sited alongside the A12 next to Oak Road. Also on the A12 are the 'Kelvedon Park' site used by a seed firm business which is partly in Rivenhall Parish and partly in Kelvedon Parish. Also on the A12 is a 'Little Chef' restaurant and a Filling Station on one side with a Car Sales Business on the Northbound side (which has recently replaced one Filling Station).



One of the large industrial units on the industrial estate alongside the A12 which extends from Witham into Rivenhall Parish



The A12 tends to dominate Rivenhall End. A very busy road with inadequate access slip roads & very visible lighting the length of its passage through the Parish.



## **GUIDELINES**

- \* Sites with rare wild habitats should be preserved from development**
- \* Existing woodland & native hedges should be preserved from destruction**
- \* More native hedge & tree planting should be encouraged both near roadsides & around the fields in the Parish**
- \* Pylons are not present in the Parish & their introduction would adversely affect the visual character of the Parish. Therefore, wherever possible any additional power lines should be sited underground**
- \* Mobile phone masts are not currently present in the Parish, the siting & the appearance of any masts introduced to the Parish should be such as to minimise the loss of visual character**

## **16 - The Rural Environment**

Outside and surrounding the settlement areas, the Parish consists mostly of arable farmland. Some pasture remains along the course of the Cressing Brook near Rivenhall Place, Rivenhall Hall Farm and the former farm of Hoo Hall. The largest green area is formed by the Oaks golfcourse (converted from arable farmland since the late 1980s). There are several wooded areas, three sizeable woods – The Thicks, Tarecroft and Barrowfield, plus some smaller woodland, spinneys, copses and willow plantations around the Parish.

Although much reduced in recent years through field amalgamation and by the methods of mechanical hedge slashing, there are still quite a number of fieldside hedgerows, trees and ditches in the Parish. The larger woods are all ancient coppiced woodlands and contain a variety of trees including Hornbeam, Ash, Maple, Hazel, Small Leafed Lime, Elm, some Oaks, Elder and woodland Hawthorn. The hedgerows also contain much Hawthorn, Whitethorn, Elder, Hazel, Maple, Blackthorn and Alder, plus many brambles, sloe trees and crab apples. Some large trees such as Oaks and Chestnuts are scattered around hedgerows still.

### **Plants and Wildlife**

The woods, trees and hedgerows (and attendant ditches) are home to much wildlife, many types of birds, bats, hares, squirrels, foxes, rabbits and occasional deer. They are also home to much plantlife, some rare such as bluebells, primroses, cow and oxslips. Footpaths cross the Parish enabling walkers to enjoy the country scenes as they change over the seasons. The main crops are wheat and barley ensuring that harvest is a season that still plays a large part in preserving the rural character of the Parish.

The pastured areas especially around the Rivenhall Hall Farm and the nearby Church are used mainly for sheep and the pastoral scenes that remain are welcome reminders of the historic rural character of this parish. Any developments in these areas would severely impact upon the rural character.

The local ‘Tree Warden’ may prove a useful source of information as to the types of trees suitable for planting in specific locations.



Arable & Pasture – An agricultural environment



View along one of Rivenhall's many public footpaths



Rivenhall Hall farm – one of several in the Parish



The bridge separating Rivenhall from Braxted (built 1701)



Peaceful scenes on the Blackwater that forms a Parish boundary



The Cressing Brook runs the length of the Parish

## GUIDELINES

- \* Existing water features should be well maintained.
- \* Ditches should be well maintained to prevent flooding
- \* Footpaths to be well signed & maintained
- \* Any developments affecting footpath locations, must take the needs & rights of footpath users into consideration
- \* Roadside verges & hedgerows should be protected from encroachment & the planting of lost or thinning hedgerows be encouraged

## 16 - Rural Environment-Water Features

There are various water features in the Parish, a number of ponds, some winter ponds and some all year ponds, the Cressing Brook and some smaller streamlets and water holding ditches, a reservoir, lake and the river Blackwater. All are home to a degree of wildlife, various waterfowl, water rodents, fish and are frequented by a variety of birdlife, including kingfishers and herons. They form attractive features in the rural character of the Parish and are prized as such.

The largest green area in the Parish is formed by the Oaks golfcourse, a relatively recent development of previously arable farmland. As well as golfers, it is enjoyed by walkers. Containing several ponds, hedges and trees, mostly quite young, it is home to a variety of wildlife, swans/ducks, moorhens on the ponds, much birdlife including skylarks plus the inevitable rabbits.

The John Ray Nature Walk passes through part of the Parish, passing along Rectory Lane and the 'Green Lane' as well as through the fields via footpaths. It is well used by both local walkers and those from outside the Parish.



Footpath in Tarecroft Wood  
one of several Parish woods



One of the many ponds found over  
the fields in Rivenhall Parish



## **GUIDELINES**

- \* New buildings should respect the existing scales & forms of other housing in the vicinity of the new buildings**
- \* Any new major & strategic roads built in the Parish should be screened as far as possible in order to limit the adverse effects on the visual character of the Parish**

## **17 - Housing - Future Prospects**

(From views expressed in the 2003 Parish Appraisal)

Although most parishioners do not want large scale housing developments in the Parish, there is generally felt to be a shortage in the Parish of housing for first time buyers and those wishing to rent. This means most young people wishing to set up homes of their own, have to leave the Parish whether they wish to or not. Much housing in the Parish, in particular in Rivenhall Main, was initially rented Council Housing. Whilst many properties remain in this category, a large percentage have been purchased by tenants under the 'Right To Buy' schemes since the 1970s, whilst no new Council housing has been built in that period, thus reducing the rental opportunities.

There are currently no 'Affordable Housing' schemes operating in the Parish which could enable first time buyers from within the Parish to purchase either full or part ownership of homes in the Parish (although one such scheme is likely in the near future). There is also a perceived need for more two bedroomed bungalows in the Parish for the older residents who want to downsize whilst remaining in the Parish. Some demand has been expressed for some 'Sheltered Accommodation' in the Parish (none currently exists) for those no longer able to manage in general housing types, but who wish to remain in the Parish instead of having to move out as at present. Finally, there is an acknowledged need to bring 'new blood' into the aging parish and a need for some 2/3 bedroomed housing for young families has also been expressed. There was little support for additional larger housing.

If new housing was spread around the Parish (but not near the Parish boundaries) in small scale schemes, then the perceived needs could be met without any real adverse effects on the visual character of the Parish, but, there is little room in the current Parish envelope to meet the perceived extra housing needs in the Parish. The use of housing trusts to provide (in conjunction with local Councils) 'Affordable Housing' next to Parish envelope land might solve one perceived aspect of need, **if** they meet the guidelines contained in this document.



Rivenhall Oak –Parishioners want this preserved while healthy



Bluebells in spring – Parishioners want sites with rare wild plants protected from development



The Railway forms a border between Rivenhall End & the rest of the Parish



Cowslips (Peggles) another rare plant



The Fox junction – where Oak Road meets the A12



Barn conversion one of several in Rivenhall

## 18 - RIVENHALL Parish Miscellany



Sheep graze peacefully near the Parish Church



One of only 2 thatched cottages remaining in the Parish



Pleasant views along one of Rivenhall's many Footpaths

### Credits

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