


**Leisure & Amenities Committee**

**Play Area Maintenance Update**

<b>1</b>	<b>PROPOSAL</b>
1.1	To give an update on maintenance and renewal of the Parish Council's play areas this year.
<b>2</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
2.1	The Parish Council has 20 play areas some of which have more than one play area on the site.
2.2	The Independent Annual Play Area Inspection is underway and we should receive a final report on its findings by the end of the year. These reports are helpful checks on the condition of the equipment and help prioritise actions.
2.3	This year has been a busy year for the team. It has provided once weekly inspections October to March and then twice weekly inspections April to mid October. Work on maintenance is taken throughout the year as a result of these inspections. Details are set out below.
<b>3</b>	<b>MAINTENANCE</b>
3.1	The Parish Council has already completed significant refurbishment on 11 out of 20 play areas. This generally reduces the level of replacement and repair work however, all sites still need regular maintenance.
3.2	<p><u>Play Woodchip</u></p> <p>In 2021, the Parish Council invested in 100 cubic metres of play woodchip and filled up most of the bark pit areas. Historically we have used bark which is around 50% more expensive, however, the woodchip has weathered well and is more readily available. We probably need to repeat the same quantity again however this will need to wait for warmer, drier weather when the vehicles can get on grass safely.</p> <p>If we top up on an annual basis thereafter, we should need significantly less.</p>
	
3.3	<p><u>Specific Maintenance:</u></p> <p><b>Oliver Close</b></p> <p>This small toddler play area has had replacement body work, a good clean and clear out and the units have been repainted.</p>

3.4	<p><b>Westlea Park</b></p> <p>The main focus has been the toddler play area. The team have renewed fencing and an additional pathway was created. Rockers repaired twice. Flooring on the multi unit fully replaced. The roundabout was removed due to disrepair.</p> <p><i>To Do:</i> A small spinning piece is planned as a replacement to the roundabout.</p>
3.5	<p><b>Whitehill Park</b></p> <p>Double swing removed – challenges securing a replacement. Fixed walking planks. Newer equipment is showing higher signs of wear and tear than older pieces.</p> <p><i>To Do:</i> Replace double swings. Replace net on multi play unit. Consider piecemeal refurbishment.</p>
3.6	<p><b>Camden Close</b></p> <p><i>To Do:</i> Floor under the aerial runway needs soil and grass mats.</p>
3.7	<p><b>Shaw Ridge</b></p> <p>Rebuilt retaining wall with steels and sleepers. Removed old logs.</p> <p><i>To Do:</i> Consider refurbishment</p>
3.8	<p><b>Plattes Close</b></p> <p>Toddler train unit flooring replaced.</p> <p><i>To Do:</i> Consider refurbishment</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>
4.1	<p>West Swindon Parish Council must maintain its play areas. Given the number of play areas within the Parish, there could be a strategy to rationalize the number of play areas over time as they cease to be maintainable, however, public opinion is usually quite vocal against losing a play area.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
5.1	<p>Possible implications.</p> <p>The Parish Council also £12,000 general maintenance of which £9,272 has been spent to date on play maintenance. Another order of woodchip is likely to fully spend the budget.</p> <p>The Parish Council has £91,000 in its annual play renewal budget of which there is around £20-29,000 of unallocated funds for 2021-22.</p>

<b>6</b>	<b>FINANCIAL &amp; OTHER IMPLICATIONS</b>
6.1	Play and recreation is a key priority for the Parish Council. Maintaining play areas well is important for the Parish Council in order to provide safe and secure facilities.
<b>7.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
7.1	That the Council notes the information in this report.

Paula Harrison,  
Parish Manager