

PLAYPARK WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of a meeting of the Playpark Working Group held on Thursday 28th September 2023 at 19:30, via Zoom.

Present Cllr. Paul Jordan (Chair of the Parish Council); Cllr. Sarah Denyer; Cllr. Doug Brown and Catherine Nutting (Clerk & RFO).

PP/23/001 Apologies for absence & housekeeping
None

<p>PP/23/002</p>	<p>Disclosure of Interests None received.</p>	
<p>PP/23/003</p>	<p>Ifold play area</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Letter to neighbours (feedback)</u> No responses have been received following the delivery of 24 letters (appendix A) to the neighbouring properties of the Kelsey Hall. 2. <u>Lease (solicitor meeting 02.10.23)</u> The Clerk will ascertain what documents are required from the Council and Kelsey Hall to draft the lease and updated costs. 3. <u>Newsletter article</u> The wording should be clear that the project is ‘work in progress’ and delivery is not imminent to manage community expectations. 4. <u>Facebook updates</u> The consensus was not to post too much too soon, as this would raise expectations. Recommendation: Facebook posts should be used to communicate tangible updates e.g., the lease has been 	<p>Actions: Clerk / Cllr. Denyer</p>

	<p>signed, or promote consultations, key timescales, and decisions, rather than general information (which can be found in minutes and on the website / in the newsletter).</p> <p>Cllr. Denyer to support Facebook posts when they are needed.</p> <p>5. <u>Meeting with the Kelsey Hall & IEL</u> Recommendation: schedule a face-to-face meeting at the Kelsey Hall once the lease has been prepared in draft form. This will allow both parties to consider the draft lease and agree any amendments prior to its execution.</p>	
	Lady Hope Play Park	
PP/23/004	<p>Redlynch Leisure</p> <p>1. <u>Closure of playpark & inspection rota</u> The inspection rota is in place until Tuesday 3rd October, when Redlynch Leisure will attend to address the protruding metal. Depending on how quickly they can make the play park safe will determine if the closure and rota will continue.</p> <p>This is the 3rd closure since June 2023 due to protruding metal.</p> <p>The bits of metal (from the old play equipment) have become exposed because the ground has shrunk in the warm weather (Weald (Sussex) clay). Redlynch Leisure have advised that it is standard practice to cut the old equipment down to ground level and then hammer underground. Their error was not burying the residual equipment deep enough.</p> <p>2. <u>3rd October 2023</u> Cllr. Denyer can meet Redlynch Leisure on site, along with Mr. Peters, Health & Safety Governor from Plaistow & Kirdford Primary School.</p> <p>3. <u>Outstanding issues to be addressed (roundabout safety surface / spinner / zipwire)</u> The Clerk will email Redlynch Leisure setting out the</p>	<p>Actions: Clerk / Cllr. Denyer</p>

	<p>Council's expectations of the work to be completed on 3rd October, which includes outstanding matters from the 2021, 2022 and 2023 ROSPA safety inspection reports.</p>	
<p>PP/23/005</p>	<p>ROSPA report (on website here)</p> <p>The meeting considered the July 2023 ROSPA report and discussed the works raised by the inspector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Gates (finger crushing) pgs. A2 and A5</u> Recommendation: Cllr. Brown to consider what is required to make safe, purchase the materials (rubber buffers) and undertake the works. The Council is advised that the 'Playpark Repairs and Maintenance budget' stands at £1,001 at the end of quarter 2 (September 2023). • <u>Entrance matting (trip hazard)</u> The mat is there to prevent the entrance to the playpark from becoming muddy and slippery a due to heavy footfall, particularly in winter. Gnarled ground will dry in warmer weather, and similarly present a trip hazard. The ground has receded away from the mat in the summer months due to the nature of Weald clay. Recommendation: Monitor over winter, when the ground will rehydrate, and see how it marries back up with the matting. The monthly playground inspection includes checking the entrance mats. If the issue persists, consider grass grid matting as an alternative. • <u>Fencing (neck entrapment)</u> Recommendation: Cllr. Brown to find out about the CEN technical report CEN/TR 16879:2016, clause 4.3.4 which advises that fencing close to playgrounds should comply with the entrapment requirements of EN 1176-1. The meeting considered fitting a length of timber along the top of the fence to reduce the neck entrapment. However, this could impact the aesthetics of the fencing. • <u>Bench (moss)</u> Recommendation: Moss removal to be included as an activity in the biannual litter pick / Community Action Day. 	<p>Actions: Clerk / Cllr. Brown</p>

- Trees (overhanging)

The meeting discussed how the trees provide shade for playpark users in warm weather, which is a benefit.

The trees on the Plaistow village green, including those within and around the playpark, are surveyed by an arboriculture consultant every 3 years in accordance with recommendations. The most recent survey was undertaken in October 2022. The identified works, which included the removal of deadwood from the two trees which overhang the play area, was undertaken in April 2023. The next inspection will be in 2025 in accordance with the arboriculture consultant's advice.

Recommendation: to continue with the inspection regime.

- Grass (holes / tree roots trip hazard)

The meeting discussed how the holes are made by children; the practicalities of sowing grass seed (birds / footfall) and the risk that covering tree roots with grass could conceal the trip hazard and exacerbate the issue. The ground is Weald clay and dries out in the summer months. The area has relatively good drainage and it would be inappropriate to cover the whole area in safety matting – the community value its natural aesthetic.

Also discussed was the possibility of installing a sandpit – a popular play item for all ages and would prevent children digging the ground. The meeting discussed how to manage wild animal fouling and health and safety.

Recommendation: the Clerk to gather management information from other Councils with sandpits and feed back for future consideration. NB/. *If* the fencing needs changing, to consider animal grade fencing for the future.

- Zipwire (damaged seat and chain cover)

Recommendation: to purchase replacement items and arrange these to be fitted. The Council is advised that the 'Playpark Repairs and Maintenance budget' stands at £1,001 at the end of quarter 2 (September 2023).

The meeting disused their disappointment at the ROSPA report. Some of the comments are unclear and the required actions

	<p>unfeasible e.g., to refit the roundabout to remedy the clearance between the carousel and the safety matting. Did the inspector take into consideration the natural undulation of the ground?</p> <p>The meeting agreed that many of the comments are ill-conceived and/or generic and do not reflect a common-sense approach.</p> <p>Recommendation: the Clerk to contact ROSPA and ask for clarification regarding the clearance level and what practical action is necessary.</p> <p>The meeting agreed that asking the school's Health and Safety Governor for his input regarding the ROSPA report was helpful.</p> <p>Recommendation: the Clerk to share the report (which is in the public domain via the website).</p>	
<p>PP/23/006</p>	<p>Inspections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Rota & frequency (weekly/monthly)</u> Recommendation: monthly inspections remain adequate. Signage has the Council's contact information so the public can raise any issues. - <u>Safety kit list</u> Recommendation: To ensure that there is a stocked 'closure kit' in the Pavilion back cupboard, including laminated signs. To purchase safety tape and zip ties. Those responsible for closing the playpark should take a photo and send to the Clerk and kept on record. - <u>Training</u> The meeting considered information about the Routine Training Course for those who undertake regular inspections of play areas (daily/weekly/monthly). See appendix B. Recommendation: Subject to the views of the Council's insurance company (pending) training is not necessary. It is expensive; lasts for 3 years and then needs re-taking and the trained Councillor(s) may not remain in post. <p>The Clerk advised that many Councils employ trained inspectors to discharge this duty.</p>	

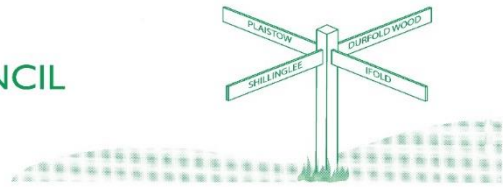
	<p>- <u>Bi-annual or quarterly operational inspections (3rd party)</u></p> <p>The meeting agreed that it was unhappy with the standard and usefulness of the ROSPA reports. Once the report is issued, it becomes a public record of 'issues' which may be generic and/or not consider any common-sense thinking. Many of the required works are impractical, could exacerbate an issue and expensive.</p> <p>Recommendation: to undertake biannual safety/operational inspections*. To consider other companies such as The Play Inspection Company and seek quotes for the Council to consider.</p> <p>*This will require the annual playground budget to be increased.</p> <p>To approach the Northern Parishes to ascertain their views/recommendations regarding inspection companies they instruct.</p>	
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There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:55

Appendix A – Letter to Kelsey Hall neighbours

PLAISTOW AND IFOLD PARISH COUNCIL

September 2023



Dear Resident,

Re: Play equipment at Kelsey Hall

I write to update you with the results of the public consultation regarding installing play equipment at the Kelsey Hall.

Information about the online survey was delivered to 500 houses in Ifold, as well as publicised on Facebook and the Parish Council's website. The response rate was 19.2%, with 77% of respondents being in favour of a play area. Survey response rates between 5% - 30% are typical; therefore, the Parish Council is heartened by this respectable level of engagement, which can be trusted to provide an accurate indication of project support.

Nevertheless, the Parish Council understands that not everyone will welcome the idea and as a direct neighbour of the hall, the Council wishes to ensure that you have had every opportunity to provide your feedback and have any concerns addressed. Therefore, please do contact the Parish Council with your thoughts and comments: clerk@plaistowandifold-pc.gov.uk

I encourage you to visit the Parish Council's designated webpage for the project, where the survey results can be found, along with information about the concerns raised and how these will be mitigated – you may find that your concerns / comments have already been raised, considered and addressed: - https://www.plaistowandifold-pc.gov.uk/ifold_playarea

The Parish Council agrees that the space is small and, as such, will have limitations. However, Ifold is highly unusual being a large residential settlement without any designated public space for children. Prohibitive land costs mean that identifying an alternative site in Ifold is not an option; therefore, the Parish Council is grateful to the Kelsey Hall for permitting play equipment to be installed.

The Parish Council understands that many in Ifold have the luxury of a large garden; however, the results show that residents seek a public play area, within walking distance, where they can meet other families. Isolation is a key issue for those with childcare responsibilities. Having somewhere 'to go' is paramount for community cohesion and the mental wellbeing of children and their caregivers, as borne out in studies from the Pandemic.

Parking concerns have been raised, and of course there may be some who will drive to the hall to use the play equipment in contravention of permission. However, the survey results demonstrate that

accessing the area on foot or by bike will be integral to the overall enjoyment of the space and those who may drive will be a minority.

Noise and appeal / frequency of use are other key issues which have been raised. The age appeal of the equipment will be predominantly 5 years and under. As such, the use times - including noise generation - will be very similar to that which was experienced when Little Acorns Preschool was in operation between 1974 – 2022.

However, from experience, the preferred play equipment borne out in the survey (climbing and balance apparatus, slide, small playhouse, and seesaw) will also appeal to slightly older children (7 – 8 years), thereby maximising the overall use/appeal of the area. The site has been assessed by a play equipment company and can accommodate between 3 – 6 items of equipment, depending on their size. Some equipment can be combined e.g., a playhouse incorporating a slide. For comparison, the park at Plaistow has 8 pieces of equipment, including a zipwire and large multi-play climbing frame.

Preserving the rural, wooded feel of the area is key. None of the existing trees will be felled to accommodate play equipment. As one respondent commented, *“make it an adventure worth going on...”* therefore, the Parish Council will endeavour to prioritise equipment not usually found in private gardens. This montage illustrates the sought after equipment and ‘feel’ of the area. The Parish Council will ask the Ifold community to choose which area design they prefer once various playpark companies have submitted their scheme.



The Parish Council seeks to create an enjoyable public space for children and those with childcare responsibilities, which supports this demographic of Ifold’s community. Kelsey Hall is a busy and well used Community Centre at the heart of Ifold. Introducing a play area at the site will support the hall to continue to offer an integral service to all residents.

Additionally, the Parish Council wishes to take into consideration the views of immediate neighbours of the Kelsey Hall to ensure, as much as possible, the area does not cause unnecessary concern. Where possible, the Council will address all reasonable matters.

Yours sincerely

Appendix B - PP/23/006 – Training

The Play Inspection Company

We mainly run two courses, and these are a one day RPII Routine Course and a two day RPII Operational Course.

We would come to you to carry out the training and we would therefore need you to provide a training room and organise three play areas that each have at least the following equipment:

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Swings
Rockers
Roundabout or Rotating Equipment
Slide
Climbing Frame/Multiplay
Fencing and Gates

The price would be as follows: -

RPII Routine Training Course – One Day

Training and Examiners Fee - £950.00excl.VAT (total price)

RPII Routine Examination - £120.00excl.VAT (per candidate)

RPII Operational Training Course – Two Days

Training and Examiners Fee - £1,795.00excl.VAT (total price)

RPII Operational Examination - £245.00excl.VAT (per candidate)

Maximum number of candidates on each course would be 12 – there is no minimum.

If exams are not required, then the Play Inspection Company would be able to issue Certificates of Attendance at an additional cost of £10 per certificate.

The RPII accreditation is valid for three years and after this a renewal would be required – this would only take a couple of hours in a morning or afternoon.

The RPII issue a Certificate and an ID Card for Operational Inspectors and a Certificate only for Routine Inspectors.

[Clerk's Comments](#)

The 2-day operational course would not be appropriate for our needs. The cost could be split between parish councils if Kirdford / Wisborough Green and Loxwood were interested in attending (up to a max of 12).

The pros are: -

- held on a day that suits you
- specific to our play area (the other sites would be made up of Loxwood / Kirdford and Wisborough Green)
- can benefit other Councils

The cons are: -

- it is expensive if only P&I want to attend
- cannot make other councils join the training and chip in

The Play Inspection Company also offer Site Specific training for £495.00excl.VAT. The training would start at 9.30am and would take 2 – 3 hours and would all take place on-site.

The pros are: -

- held on a day that suits you
- shorter time
- cheaper

The cons are: -

- it is not a recognised / accredited course (as it is site specific)
- cannot offer other councils to join the training as its site specific
- it won't be transferable when the council has an Ifold play area to inspect

Horsham District Council

Offer the one-day RPII Routine Training Course on 14th November 2023.

Training and Examiners Fee - £950.00excl.VAT (total price)

RPII Routine Examination - £120.00excl.VAT (per candidate)

[Clerk's Comments](#)

There is a maximum of 12 attendees and the £950 is split between all attendees. Currently there are 8 on the attendance list (one of whom is a provisional person from P&I). If 12 people attend the cost per person is £ 79.16 – therefore the max cost to P&I to train all three of you would be £237.50. It would be more if only 8 attends (or less).

The 'exam' (on either course) is not mandatory – although one person is recommended to get the official certificate. It is a practical assessment at the end of the day. Anyone who takes the exam costs an additional £120pp.

Horsham Council had said ...

It's not really an exam is more of a test.

During the course, the tutor will explain what you should look for when you inspect a play area visually. For example, you would check the chain of a swing to see if the links are worn more than 00% or if the gate closes within the timescale they propose (normally count to 5).

A piece of paper is handed, and they have to tick and make small notes on any defects that they may find.

Regarding the notes – for example if they make a note about the surface not being safe -trip hazard. Depending on the surface you may say either low risk monitor or high risk take action.

DRAFT