

Dereham Town Council

Recreation Committee September 2024

Agenda Notes

5. Update on play areas

The land at Girling Road, Sandy Lane and Old Becclesgate is in the process of being transferred. Once there is some certainty on the transfer, an order for the play equipment can be placed. It would mean that the equipment could be installed when the ground is wet, but the only other option would be to delay installation until the spring.

With regards to Sandy Lane, there is an area at the Northern end which is a steep bank dominated by scrub and elms. The elms grow from their root stock, until they succumb to Dutch elm disease and die. The scrubbiness of the area has led to the area being an attractive fly tipping spot. It is felt that the area would benefit from clearing and a 900mm chain link fence constructed along the top of the bank. It is felt that if the area is managed to maintain greater visibility it would add to the attractiveness of the area as well as deterring fly tipping. Councillors are being asked to consider whether to progress with this as soon as the transfer takes place.



6. To consider Recreation Road play area (Toftwood)

When it was decided that the Pond Park open space should be refurbished as a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) there was thought given to the long term future of the small Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) on the Recreation ground at Recreation Road. The thinking at the time was to wait and see how much the LEAP is used/valued and not make a firm decision. The LEAP isn't the most attractive, the fencing is not very nice and it is in a location with limited passive surveillance.

The publicity around the refurbishment of other play areas has resulted in requests for this play area to receive some TLC. It does appear to be used by the community very close to it. Within the play area, the swings and the rocker still remain quite functional. The climbing frame however is getting to the end of its life and either needs replacing or removing.

Councillors are being asked to consider whether to replace or remove the climbing frame. The cost of replacing the climbing frame is around £28,000.

7. To discuss paving at Recreation Ground (Dereham).

The paths on the recreation ground were installed around 19 years ago. The construction of the paths is with large paving slabs laid on 5 dabs of concrete. This construction method has always created problems:

- If a crack occurs, the slab immediately causes a trip hazard due to the void beneath.
- If a vehicle drives over the slabs they break and collapse.
- The supporting dabs of concrete adjust to the drying out of the underlying ground, so that the slabs wobble.
- This wobble leads to the concrete dabs becoming unstable and breaking up.

Over the years, as slabs become broken or a trip hazard, they have been relayed on a bed of sand, but even with best efforts, it can be difficult to recreate a smooth surface. Due to the void below the repairs are often deemed as urgent, and due to the weight of the slabs this is really a 2 person task, but quite often one person has to complete the task.

Over the years it has been possible to keep on top of the breakages, but this summer larger sections of the pavement have started to show instability, which leads to concerns that the concrete dabs are starting to reach the end of their life. If this is the case then the amount time spent repairing could seriously impact on staff time.

The cost of relaying the paving slabs professionally, i.e. contracting professionals to relay sections, as they become unstable, would cost around £220 per m of paving. To relay all the slabs on a bed of sand/cement would cost around £164,000.

An alternative to relaying the slabs on sand/cement would be to replace the path with tarmac, tarmac would have the advantage over slabs on sand/cement in that it will not crack when a vehicle drives on it. The cost of relaying all the paths with tarmac would be £94 per m of paving or £70,000 for all the paths.

Councillors are being asked to discuss the issue and whether to request that Finance and Governance Committee make provision to make major repairs to the paving in the coming years.