

Derry Hill and Studley Play area

Introduction

Following requests from members of the public, the Parish Council meeting of 13th March 2023 established a Working Group to investigate the feasibility of developing a play area in Derry Hill. The purpose of this paper is to report back to Council with recommendations for further progression of the project.

History

In December 2020 the Parish Council canvassed local opinion on proceeding with a feasibility study into introducing playground and fitness equipment in Petty's Acre. There was a large majority (103 of the 130 respondents) in favour of a playground although the council did not proceed to the feasibility study because only 3 of the 14 responses from properties adjoining Petty's Acre were in support.

Discussion – Play provision

Whilst there is a playground in Studley Gardens there is no play equipment on the Derry Hill side of the A4. Following discussion regarding potential sites for the development of a play area within Derry Hill it was felt that the area around the two mounds on Petty's Acre would be the most suitable. It was thought that a conventional playground with swings, slides, roundabouts etc. was very likely to meet with opposition. Whereas simple rustic play equipment aimed at the under-fives would enhance the mounds, the current focus of play for young children, and add to their play potential and was unlikely to create too much contention.



A picnic bench would provide seating and if positioned away from the boundary it should not cause too much dispute.

Wooden play equipment, very similar to the structures in the Studley Gardens play area would be in keeping with the Petty's Acre environment.

The two photographs show the Studley Gardens play area.

This consists of posts with climbing holes attached (far left in top photo), a pole to walk along and stumps to step across (far right). One of the main reasons for the previous opposition to having a play area was that it would encourage teenagers to "hang out" and for this reason it was felt that a swing was not appropriate.



The steps to a small slide could be an alternative to having a tube slide contoured to the side of one of the mounds. The small round structure is an offset seat that spins around.



All these structures would enhance the village and provide some much-needed play equipment.

To serve the needs of slightly older children a single wooden structure (similar in style to the one in the Lansdowne Hall play area - shown below) sited on the green space on Petty Lane was thought to be the most suitable solution.



Recommendation

That we seek agreement to the proposed works from the Bowood Estate (Land Owners) and Wiltshire Council who's Streetscene contractors maintain the open space.

Should the Bowood Estate and Wiltshire Council have no objections then we recommend that the Council should seek quotations from suitably qualified playground consultants for the development of a concept design for playground equipment as set out in the previous section.

Discussion - Health and Safety, and maintenance issues pertaining to the mounds and goal posts.

The two mounds on Petty's Acre consist of building rubble left over after the building of Redhill Close. They were covered in soil and grassed over. They now suffer from erosion and concrete blocks are exposed. Wiltshire council do not accept that this forms a hazard and will take no action. The working group would like CWPC to consider funding the work to resurface the tops of the mounds with additional soil and turf or seed in order to safeguard the very young.

Examples of areas of exposed concrete and rubble



It is difficult to see in the third photograph but the mossy area is actually concrete.

The two sets of goal posts that are concreted into the ground are also suffering badly from erosion and remedial work is required to either restore the ground level or move the posts.

Recommendation

That the Council should seek quotations from suitably qualified landscapers to restore the humps and the ground in front of the goalposts.

Or

The council does the work ourselves with the aid of volunteers to a maximum budget of £250. (For costs of top soil, seed and a post and tape barricade.)

Appendix A

The working group also established its Terms of Reference which we would like to submit.

Calne Without Parish Council Derry Hill Play Area Working Group

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Derry Hill Play Area Working Group was established by Calne Without Parish Council on 13th March 2023.

2. Membership

The Working Group has been set up with the following membership: Councillors Todd, Rees, McInnes and Turton. The Working Group may also include members of the public and specialists. All additions and changes to the Group are to be approved by the Parish Council.

3. Aims and Objectives

The Working Group has been set up with the following aims and objectives.

3.1 Aims

To investigate the provision of a Play Area in Derry Hill and make a recommendation to the Council.

3.2 Objectives

- Investigate options for the provision of a Play Area for children in Derry Hill, considering location, age range, style and access.
- Develop a costed proposal for the provision of a Play Area.
- Subject to approval from the Council, undertake a consultation to gauge public support for a proposal.
- Submit a recommendation to the Council. This may be a costed recommendation to proceed with a defined scheme, or a recommendation not to further proceed.

4. Timescales

The Working Group shall remain in existence until such time as it considers the objectives set out above to be complete. The continuing existence of the Working Group and its Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by the full Council on an annual basis.

5. Reporting

The Working Group shall submit regular reports as required by the Strategic Planning Committee.