

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Report

Subject: Play Equipment Consultation

Date: 18th June 2021

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1. Report Summary

This report provides the responses to the playground consultation and an analysis of the items proposed by residents for installation and removal. It does not provide any recommendations. This should be read in conjunction with the Playground Equipment and Replacement Plan which provides information on current equipment and life expectancy. The funding available, which is currently held by Wiltshire Council, is £70k.

2. Responses to Playground Consultation April-May 2021

The following responses were received:

1. A resident of Charlton carried out a survey amongst parents last year with a view to finding new equipment for the Memorial Gardens. Here is a link to the responses from the survey although I haven't been able to download all of them:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-59KZHYPB7/>

She says 'Because of the time since it was created, you can only see the first 40 responses for some reason but at the bottom of the page are suggestions for play equipment. The total results were 87 responses. Please do come back to me if you require any further information. Many thanks'.

2. I just wanted to give input about the park next to the memorial hall. The things my children enjoy most at other parks attend that we don't currently have are:

- Roundabouts
- Big tyre swing
- A better big slide – i.e with alternative ways to climb up to it/fireman pool/climbing walls etc
- The big floor trampoline that have in Wilton.

Old equipment that I think could be removed:

- The big metal rocket that terrifies me its going to knock out my children's teeth!
- The big slide (but only if was to be replaced with a better one)

3. I'm emailing with reference to suggestions for equipment etc for the playgrounds in Downton. We do not live in Downton but my child goes to school there and my family also use the Borough Dental practice so we spend a great deal of time there! The playground we use the most is beside the Primary School. I feel that a sunken trampoline/trampolines would be well utilised by all age ranges as would a zipwire. Another suggestion would be a simple assault course with stepping logs/balance beam

etc. I feel that the shelter that is at the front of the play park is rather grotty and never gets any use. That could be removed and perhaps some picnic benches with a wooden roof to provide cover from the rain would be much nicer and would enable picnics or drinks to be consumed. Equally it could be removed to make way for more equipment. I do realise you do not have a bottomless pit of money!

4. I would love to see improvements made to the memorial gardens park.
I have a 6, 4 and 2 year old so we use the park very regularly but having visited other parks recently namely Landford, Nomansland and Woodfalls we noticed how dated the park in the memorial gardens was.
I think you could remove the seesaw, rocket and big slide. It would be great to have a new seesaw, a basket swing, wooden climbing apparatus including a slide suitable for older children, a trampoline, and a zip wire. My children also love the small play train and carriages in the toddler park at Moors valley.
Many thanks

5. I would vote for Moot Lane Recreation Ground to be updated.
Downton Moot is an attraction to both villagers and visitors, providing access to a pleasant walk along the river to Millennium Green.
In my opinion, updating the play area, skate park and basketball court would be beneficial not only to villagers but also to those visiting the Moot and Millennium Green.
Currently, the playground doesn't flow well. It doesn't appear to cater for any particular age group, let alone a variety of age groups. Personally, I feel this area lets the village down and should be the priority for change.
Adding some of the following to cater for a wider range of ages and challenge both younger and older children:
Zip Wire
Adventure Trail / climbing frame
Jigsaw or Woodland Tower
Imaginative play equipment
Overhead ladder
Sports target panels
Ground trampoline
Revolver swing
Basketball court update to a Multi use games area
Adding some picnic benches for families to bring picnics and enjoy the area.

6. I would like to suggest the possibility of an update for the Charlton all Saints playground which is looking somewhat tired nowadays. There is plenty of space for a small concrete 'mini-ramp' which I am sure would be very popular with some of the younger (and older!) local residents.
I believe a company called Maverick skateparks have done a lot of work in Wiltshire and would be worth approaching.

7. We would love a zip wire in moot lane rec and it really needs a re-vamp, perhaps a net swing. The roundabout is always broken so perhaps take that out.

8. I'm emailing with regards to the subject of my email, and it's great it's being looked in to, particularly after I mentioned it on a previous parish council meeting.

As a mum and also a member of staff at the school, I feel one main play area is what the village needs. Situated in the memorial gardens seems like the most logical space for it considering its location next to the school and preschool, and the coop and cafe for those much needed treats after a park visit!

We often travel outside the village to visit a park due to the lack of play equipment it currently has. While I don't wish to compare, the park situated at Woodfalls adjacent to the football pitches is incredibly popular for its fantastic range of play equipment, including its recent installation of a zip wire! I think the other big difference is that (apologies for the rubbish description!) rubbery tarmac they have which prevents the play area getting muddy and makes it more usable in poor weather conditions. As we know, the memorial gardens suffers in poor weather and becomes very muddy, which in turn makes the play equipment dirty and quite unsightly.

I personally don't feel spreading funding across all play areas is a good investment of the money, as it means less to spend on play equipment and potentially things that wouldn't add great value in terms of appeal to children. As a previous resident of West Wick, I'm not sure that can be described as a play area that they have as it has nothing there and would be disappointed if any money was spent on it as it would need a lot to improve it.

I think a well-equipped play area is exactly what the village needs and we can be like neighbouring villages and attract visitors from outside the village too.

Thanks for taking the time to read this and I look forward to hearing and seeing the plans going forward!

9. I saw that you were looking for suggestions for local parks.

As more people seem to be enjoying picnicking, it would be nice to use some of the space at the Downton park (or others) for a nice seating and garden area. Perhaps some nice flowers and trees.

The sunflower garden was such a hit last year, maybe some sort of permanent garden area would be nice.

Regarding things for the children, the shelter at Downton park is always a hazard unfortunately. Personally I think it should be removed.

It would be nice for that park to have a freshen up. A small sunken trampoline and/or sandpit would be lovely.

10. My five year old is at DPS and we're moving to the village in June. I love the park but having lived in Salisbury for 15 years have seen a few items that could make really good additions to the equipment.

Zip lines are always popular as are roundabouts. Having spent A LOT of time in downtown park through the pandemic it strikes me that the rocket doesn't get used much and I wonder if that could be exchanged for something else. The large spinning "Titan" swing in Elizabeth gardens is great but the best park I have been to with my son recently is in macklin gardens. I've attached some photos of the type of swing that they

have and my son loves as well as the Titan. Many thanks - looking forward to seeing how the park develops!

I am writing this letter because I would like to introduce to you some ideas on how to use Parish funds to improve recreation parks .

I have been a resident of Downton for a few years now together with my 12 year old son.

As a mother of a nearly teenage boy I noticed there is a lack of recreation parks in Downton for older kids / teenagers . There is a huge recreation park by Moot Lane but very poorly equipped. There is a very tiny and very old skate ramp (pic 8), a basketball net on the concrete square (I can not call it a basketball court) and a few swings. Lots of children come here to have a bit of fun on a skate place but it is simply too small for everyone .

I would like to put my offer for your consideration to create a proper **big skate park** for older children . I downloaded a few pictures with skateparks and how they look now in other council areas ; Pictures 1 -4. The single graffiti wall could be probably removed to make space for new equipment in a big skatepark.

Also the **bike track** is a fantastic idea for children who like to have some fun on bikes (what child doesn't ?!) . Skate park and bike track very often come along together specially there is so much free space in the park in Moot Lane. Please see the attached pictures 5 - 6.

There is also that small basketball place to play in Moot Lane park that could be updated because it is not a great place to play basketball. It is concrete (if you fell on your ankle/leg you can break the bone) and it is not levelled (there is a big concavity where there is always water even on sunny days), please see the pic attached nr 9. If that could be levelled up and covered with a softer material which is used for a basketball court that would make more usage. Or that could be transformed into a proper **basketball court** with gates surroundings - see the picture nr 7.

There are quite a few places for small children to play in Downton but nothing for older ones. . Please have a thought about them, they are already in difficult age (teenagers) and they definitely need some places where they can safely play and socialise. I think creating nice and modern places like a big skate park, bike track and /or basketball court would be fantastic ideas and could be in use for many, many years.

Thank you for reading my letter and I hope some of my ideas can be put in realistic use.

11. I would like to put forward the following for consideration

The Memorial Gardens would be my priority for updating some of the existing equipment. The Gardens are used extensively by children at Downton Preschool and Downton Primary.

Some of the equipment is old and frankly bordering on dangerous. The large metal slide needs replacing, not only are the steps metal and cause grazes and cuts, but the slide itself becomes incredibly hot in summer.

It is also the type that has been targeted to have razor blades installed.

The moon rocket swing is also old and not used that often.

I would recommend removing both of these to install a new piece of equipment in their place. A tower with slide, a zip line, climbing bars etc would be ideal.

My own children would like inset mini trampolines

The infant swings also need attention, simply painting and replacing the chairs would go a long way to improving them.

Thank you for your attention. Please feel free to contact me if necessary.

12. Opinions below on improvements to the parks within Downton.

Memorial garden park and Moot Lane Park requires rubber matting around the play equipment as currently it's a mud bath following heavy rain.

Both parks could be improved with better climbing equipment suitable for older children, of the type available at the Woodfalls park or Sky tower. Different types of a swings, trampoline, trim trail/ outdoor gym, and zip line would also be a welcome addition.

Some picnic tables at the Memorial Park would also be nice.

Removal of the rocker from the Memorial Park. Removal of motorbike and roundabout from the Moot lane park.

13. As requested, I'd like to share feedback and suggestion on additional investment into the parks infrastructure.

As a father of two young children, my current perspective is that the community would benefit from extended facilities which target preschool and younger age groups (eg up to age 4).

The existing swings and apparatus in the memorial gardens I believe needs a good refurb and a review of the surrounding surfaces to ensure they meet H&S guidance for fall heights.

Creating new facilities which support more interactive play (ie musical, building, sand etc) would be fantastic too.

Creating zones that are more purpose fit for different age categories with enhanced seating facilities would be great.

14. Playground near village hall in Downton needs a lot of updating. This is a very busy, well used park and serves as a hub for families in the village - this would be an excellent use of council funds.

The area of scrub next to the hall extension has been fenced off since the building work a few yrs ago and really needs landscaping. Equipment needs replacing including swings and slide.

See saw and pyramid are fine.

Some additional equipment would be much appreciated... perhaps a zip wire, sunken trampoline, tyre swing and additional climbing frame which would add a level of challenge for older children. Wood falls park and Landford parks are excellent - these should serve as a model for Downton.

15. I vaguely remember seeing a request for suggestions for playground equipment and hope I'm not too late.

I live in Charlton all Saints and my grandson really enjoys the play equipment at Redlynch cricket ground. Anything from there, except the zip wire (!), would be a useful addition to our meagre facilities.

I think all the equipment in Charlton is original having been installed when the playground was created about 33 years ago. It is all looking rather tired and I think the 'arched ladder' could be removed.

Several families with small children have recently moved to the village and I'm sure they would appreciate some new equipment.

16. Regarding the Downton playground consultation- I feel that the park could really use some investment, as the equipment is mostly very old and no longer fit for purpose. Some of it simply needs to be removed, like the seesaw. Another climbing frame would be great, and a better seesaw. A roundabout would also be good. There was a basket swing which was temporarily moved when the memorial hall was extended but it was never replaced. Would love to have it back.
17. Sorry I'm late to the party in sharing ideas in regards to the above, but just wanted to put a few forward myself. I live near moot lane park and feel that now it's no longer used as a football pitch, there is soooo much space that could be utilised.

I think it would be a fab idea to:

- Create a proper mini football pitch or 2 with goals either end
- Have a climbing apparatus similar to the one the memorial park, but at moot lane park- but bigger!
- create a play trail around the perimeter of moot lane park with a path connecting it together where children can cycle or scoot on.
- HAVE A ZIP LINE!!!!!!! Moot lane park has plenty of space for one of these!!
- Have a play apparatus with rope ladders and platforms with a slide
- mini inset trampolines (like the ones at Fordingbridge park)

Whatever gets chosen, I'm sure it will be amazing for the children.

Thank you 😊

3. Analysis

The graph below is based on a categorisation using key words of the responses and also includes 40 responses from the survey carried out by a resident last year. The left hand side (in green) shows items preferred/wanting to be added. The right hand side (in red) shows items to be removed.

The equipment to be considered for removal is: the see-saw, slide, rocket, roundabout, graffiti wall and shelter. The top 5 pieces to be considered for installation are: trampoline, swings of all types, climbing apparatus of all types, zip wire and roundabout.

Note: the responses also highlight many useful comments, suggestions and wider factors to be considered.

Play Equipment Survey



