

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – MARCH 9TH 2021

ITEM NO: 12 – Playground Inspection – Operational Maintenance Inspection Report / Summary of members Visual Inspections

This report notes the Operational Maintenance Inspection carried out in February 2021. It also provides the information summary on the Visual Inspections carried out by the Parish Council Team since January 1st 2021.

Information

The latest Annual Inspection was carried out by N W Adams Engineering Design Services (Nick Adams), on February 4th 2021 and I received his report on February 8th 2021. A copy of the report is attached.

Also included in this report is a summary of the Parish Council Visual Inspection findings over the past 2 months, for information and in relation to the actions which have been or are planned to be undertaken.

Operational Inspection Findings

A foreword to the report (numbered page 1) covers the reported issue of stray footballs entering the playground from the nearby Sports Wall/Hall Field. Reference is also made to the wear/erosion to the grass on both sides of the Sports Wall.

Resolutions suggested are a separate field goal some distance away from the play area and an additional gate to deter use of the existing through route.

These matters are separately covered in a separate report to Council (and the Parish Hall Committee) which is being presented by Cllr. Jackie Rhodes as Item 13 on today's agenda.

Numbered pages 2 to 5 provide a summary of potential issues identified with actions suggested by Nick Adams in actions *in italics* and planned actions in response in **bold**:-

1. Access Pathway – Soil Erosion creating a Trip Hazard – Medium Risk *Make up flush with topsoil & re-grass in the appropriate season* **This work will form part of the recommendations detailed in Item 13 on today's agenda**
2. Play area boundary fencing – Decayed timber – *Programme/budget to replace.* **This is a Parish Hall issue and they have been advised again to undertake this work.**
3. Litter Bin – Loose on concrete base – *Monitor for problems/secure concrete base to rear fence.* **Monitoring in place**
4. Signs (on panels around fence) – Plywood support panels showing signs of delaminating/weathering – *Recommend treating the plywood and fitting timber capping as is common practice with timber fencing.* **Suggested actions to be undertaken**
5. Multi Use Games Area – Excess erosion of playing surface (Soil and grass) – *Suggest an alternative route (separate gate) is provided to avoid the through route. Make up playing service level & flush with topsoil and re-grass in the appropriate season.* **This work will form part of the recommendations detailed in Item xx on today's agenda**
6. Basketball post & ring – Support post loose in ground – *Monitor closely for further loosening/programme to re-concrete.* **Monitoring in place via weekly visual inspections**
7. Ground around Basketball Post – Some erosion & unevenness of playing surface (soil & grass) *Make up playing service level & flush with topsoil and re-grass in appropriate season.* **This work will form part of the recommendations detailed in Item 13 on today's agenda**
8. Flat Seat Swing/Cradle Seat – Missing recess caps (4) – *Replace missing caps/infill with bathroom silicone sealer is suggested.* **Suggested actions to be undertaken**

9. Flat Seat Swing/Cradle Seats – *Untwist chains to extend their life (there is some evidence of early chain wear at the chain ‘Y’ fork point. Suggested actions to be undertaken*
10. Carousel – Some abnormal noise from the hub when rotated in either direction - *Monitor. This noise is now reported as having ceased (Nick Adams thinks that likely cause was small piece of grit or similar which has now gone/been worn away).*
11. Trampoline – Minor Litter visible beneath the rebound surface - *Programme to remove, contact supplier regarding advice on access for cleansing. Supplier to be contacted as suggested.*
12. Multi-unit – Loose steering wheel hub fixing – *Tighten Suggested actions to be undertaken*
13. Multi-unit – Loosened vertical climber & cable bridge cable and connections – *Remove timber covers, tighten using the special tool & re-fit timber pieces (this work should be carried out asap to avoid enlarging the bore of each hole. Suggested actions to be undertaken*
14. Multi-unit – *Recommend an additional feature panel board to the lowest part of the highest platform to provide additional rigidity/stabilise this part of the structure/refer to supplier Supplier to be contacted as suggested.*
15. Multi-unit – Missing hand grip bolt caps (2) above the vertical access net – *Replace*

Visual Inspections Summary

Below, in no particular order, is a table of the Visual Inspection findings, some of which are also covered in the listing above.

	Issue	Comments / Referral
1	Grass abutting the path near gate worn	See 1. above
2	Rumble beneath carousel	See 10. above
3	Ground erosion on both side of multi games wall	See 5. above
4	Waste bin in playground area needs emptying on occasions	Emptied regularly
5	Litter under trampoline	See 11. above
6	Waste and dog waste bin adjacent to basketball frame needs emptying on occasions	Emptied regularly
7	Basketball net post leans slightly	See 6. above
8	Loose screws on rope bridge (previously reported as loose)	Checked weekly, no issues, ongoing monitor
9	Backboards panels to signs on fence delaminating	See 4. above
10	Missing screw caps to cradle seat	See 8. above

Recommendations

1. That the report and any action planning is noted
2. Additional councillors/and the Clerk to be trained on visual inspections (course expected April, COVID regs allowing).
3. Continued use of Nick Adams to undertake annual inspection and operational inspection (6 months apart)
4. A Working party is established during March 2021 to undertake minor works repairs and changes, for which volunteers are sought.
5. An updating report will be provided in September 2021

David Rigby

Clerk to Copythorne Parish Council

February 20th 2021

N. W. Adams

Engineering Design Services

Operational Maintenance Inspection Report of the Play & Sports facilities
at Pollards Moor Road, Copythorne

for Copythorne Parish Council



Register of Play Inspectors
International Certificate No.1023A

N. W. Adams. IEng.,
19, Liddel Way,
Valley Park,
Chandler's Ford,
Hants. SO53 4QF

Tel. No. (023) 80255237
Mobile No. 07702 006686
Email: info@engineering-design-services.co.uk
Web: www.engineering-design-services.co.uk

4th February 2021

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

1. *The inspection covers;*

Site safety

Condition of ancillary items

Condition of equipment and safer surfacing

Reports indicate the condition of the play area at the time of inspection. Subsequent events such as weather conditions, usage, or vandalism etc may affect the condition of the facilities (e.g. some surfaces may become slippery when damp). Regular inspections should be undertaken by the operator to monitor the effects of these.

2. *Wear to shackle pins and bushes on swings is difficult to detect on non-dismantling inspections. Checks are made to identify excessive movement in the „D“ shackle and where dry bearings are obvious. Whilst this action can often identify serious defects it does not preclude the possibility of shackle pin failure in rare circumstances. It is recommended that random inspection by removal of the „D“ shackle and pin is carried out on a regular maintenance feature in the site owner“s work programme.*
3. *Inspection shall be undertaken without dismantling or destruction. Where it is felt that removal of parts for assessment is required, this will be indicated. There can be problems with assessing ground decay where synthetic surfaces have been installed. While every care is taken to check ground decay and corrosion in supports, this cannot be done fully without removal and destruction of the surface.*
4. *Many items of play equipment are manufactured using timber. Small splinters are known in rare cases to develop to a projection upon contact and cause injury. Such splinters are very difficult to detect. Checks are made to identify obvious splinters but does not preclude the possibility of these circumstances occurring.*
5. *Where there is a fault, this is briefly noted and normally a risk assessment is made. Where it is believed action is required this is indicated as a medium or high risk. Low risk items should be monitored and if accidents occur, remedial action will be required. These items will continue to be monitored generally and, if necessary, indicate action on subsequent reports.*
6. *Where there are trees within falling distance of the play area it is recommended that a report on the integrity of the trees are obtained from a competent arboricultural expert (see www.trees.org.uk for list of qualified consultants)*
7. *A risk assessment of faults is given in terms of low, medium or high. As a general principle items marked as “low” only require monitoring. Items marked as “medium” require appropriate action within resources and individual site assessment. **Items marked as “high” require urgent action.** In rare cases where an item is likely to result in major injury or death, the operator or appropriate representative will be notified from the site by telephone. This will be indicated in the report.*
8. *Items marked “monitor” should be included for the following inspections as defined in EN1176-1 and appropriate action should be taken when required;*
 - (a) *routine visual inspections*
9. *For ease of use, revised or new items relative to the previous quarterly inspection when work is required are highlighted in scripted type.*

Engineering Design Services
Operational Maintenance Inspection Report

Site

Copythorne Parish Hall Play & Sports facilities.

Date & time of inspection

4.2.2021 completed at 01.22.

Foreword

Local knowledge has identified the occasional conflict between stray sports balls from the adjacent MUGA and the play area.

The inspection revealed advanced wear/erosion to the playing surface of the north eastern side of the ball screen, irrespective of the current puddling, has encouraged the south western side having a relatively even surface side to be used instead.

The erosion is made worse by the use of either gaps at the side of the ball screen as a route through to the playing field behind.

I understand from the Parish Clerk that a separate goal some distance away from the play area is to be provided in this playing field and secondly an additional gate to deter use of the existing through route.

Finally, the improvements to the playing surface highlighted in the Annual Inspection Report dated 4th August 2020 and again in this Report under the heading 'Multi Use Games Area' below should help to encourage a return to use of the ball screen from the north eastern side.

In my opinion, if these measures are introduced they should reduce the risk of stray sports ball conflict by directing them in the first place, away from the adjacent children's play area, however, the situation should continue to be monitored and further measures taken e.g. protective netting if considered necessary.

Access pathway

Soil erosion abutting the PCC edging creating a trip hazard (this is partially due to wheel & push chair user having to step aside the gate arc to gain access).

Make up flush with topsoil & re-grass in the appropriate season, if erosion & puddles remain a problem, the provision of slabs or a durable surface similar to play equipment grass mats laid on mesh/geotextile material on an even surface, chased into the soil at the edges to avoid sharp gradients (<1:5) & trip zones is suggested (photo 1). Medium risk



photo 1

Play area boundary fencing

Some decay to the horizontal half round timber rails. Programme/budget to replace (photo 2).



photo 2

Pedestrian gate (1)

Pedestrian gate with a proprietary controller fitted. Return closure rate satisfactory.

Seats (William Lashmar & The Wright Family)

Both satisfactory.

Litter bin (1)

Loose litter bin on a concrete flag base.

Monitor for problems/secure concrete base to rear fence to avoid tipping particularly when full is suggested.

General surface/safer surfacing

Satisfactory.

Signs (50)

North fence panel with dedication signs attached of various dimensions (21).

South fence panel with dedication signs attached of various dimensions (41).

The rear plywood support panel is showing signs of delamination/weathering. Recommend treating the plywood and fitting a timber capping as is common practice with timber fencing.

'Please shut the gate' attached to the pedestrian gate (1).

'Parents & guardians' attached to the pedestrian gate (1).

'Toilets closed' sign attached to fence (1).

'Playground rules' sign attached to fence (1).

'CCTV' warning sign attached to fence (1).

'Paultons Park' advertisement sign attached to fence (1).

'NFDC' sign attached to fence (1).

'QR' signs attached to fence (3).

Playground 'dedication' sign attached to fence (1).

'Welcome to Copythorne playground sign attached to fence (1).

Temporary 'Covid 19 guidance/reminder' with contact signs attached to fence (4).

'Use of equipment guidance' signs (trampoline & carousel) attached to fence (2).

'Use of equipment guidance' signs (swings) attached to swing frames (2).

'Children's play area No dogs allowed' attached to the MUGA frame (1).

Cleanliness and tidiness

Satisfactory.

Equipment and Surfacing

1. Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

See "Foreword" above.

Excessive erosion of playing surface (soil & grass) partially to the north eastern side and made worse by footfall in the open pedestrian through route.

Suggest an alternative route (separate gate) is provided to avoid the through route.

Make up playing surface level & flush with topsoil & re-grass in the appropriate season, if erosion, ruts & puddles remain a problem, programme for the provision of a durable artificial surface is recommended for consideration (photos 3 & 4).



photo 3 (N.E. side)



photo 4 (S.W. side)

2. Basketball post & ring Support post loose in ground.

Monitor closely for further loosening/programme to re-concrete.

Some erosion & unevenness of the playing surface (soil & grass).

Make up playing surface level & flush with topsoil & re-grass in the appropriate season, if erosion & puddles remain a problem, programme for the provision of a durable artificial surface is recommended for consideration.

3. 2.38m maximum, 1 flat/1 cradle seat swing (Creative Play)

Missing recess caps (4) to the upper crotch strap fixings.

Replace missing caps/infill with bathroom silicone sealer is suggested.

Untwist chains to extend their life (there is some evidence of early chain wear at the chain 'Y' fork point).

4. 2.36m maximum 1 bay, 1 group seat swing (Creative Play)

Satisfactory.

5. Carousel

Some abnormal noise from the hub when rotated in either direction. Monitor.

6. Trampoline (1.44m x 1.44m) (EuroTramp)

Minor litter visible beneath the rebound surface. Programme to remove, contact supplier regarding advice on access for cleansing.

7. Multi-unit

Loose steering wheel hub fixing.

Loosened vertical climber & cable bridge cable end connections. *Remove timber covers, tighten using the special tool & re-fit timber pieces (this work should be carried out as soon as possible to avoid enlarging the bore of each hole).*

Recommend an additional feature panel board to the lower part of the highest platform to provide additional rigidity/stabilize this part of the structure/refer to Supplier.

Replace missing hand grip bolt caps (2) above the vertical access net.

8. Challenge trail

Satisfactory.