

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY MARCH 9TH 2021

Item 13 - Revised proposal for the Field Access, Sports Wall and Playground Issues

At the Parish Council meeting on the 12th January 2021, the Clerk offered to seek advice from Nick Adams (our external Playground Inspector) regarding ways to reduce the risks of people being struck by a football whilst in the playground.

While carrying out an Operational Maintenance Inspection on the playground on the 4th February 2021 Nick Adams suggested that football should be encouraged to be played from the front (North) side of the wall. He suggested that repairing the eroded area in front and beside the north of the wall would encourage play from this side. A new access to the back field would reduce the footfall beside the wall resulting in less erosion with no need for cycle bars. His opinion is *'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'*.

The Clerk also communicated with Liz Young, a New Forest National Park Authority Planning Officer. Her initial thought was that *'..a height of 4 metres would be fairly significant and would have the potential to result in an urbanising impact upon the predominantly rural character of the area. A height of 2 metres would be more likely to reach a favourable outcome. As discussed previously any means of enclosure which exceeds 2 metres in height will require planning permission.'*

Following this information, the proposal for the way forward has been reviewed:

1. Field Access

Proposed solution/recommendations

- **The posts either side of the small oak tree have already been erected so we propose that the wire fencing is now attached to these posts leaving an open area for access to the field.**
- **We also propose that this new access area should be reviewed yearly and if felt necessary due to ground erosion, that another access area could be opened up at a different point in the same stretch of fencing.**



2. Sports Wall



Proposed solutions/recommendation

- As an alternative to the wall, erect a goal in the back field, situated about half way down and in line with the sports wall.
- Encourage the use of the sports wall from the North side by re-turfing the eroded area in front of the goal as well as the paths either side of the wall
- Consider the use of crating beneath the new turf
- Review the situation periodically to ensure the safety of the public

3. Playground Fencing Protection

Proposed solution

- Given the advice/suggested solutions contained in the Operational Planning Inspection and from the NFNPA it is proposed that no further action is taken with regards to fencing or netting at this time but that the Parish Council continues to maintain its monitoring of the reports of "stray balls" after the other proposals, if accepted, are implemented.
- Should this monitoring identify that the issue of "stray balls" has not gone away then re-consider possible options.

Report prepared by:

For Coppythorne Parish Council - Councillor Jackie Rhodes

For Coppythorne Parish Hall Committee - Paul Hayward

February 23rd 2021