

Agenda 8: REPORT ON PLAY AREA FROM JOHN BEWS

I have spoken to Mila Yearley at ROSPA about my suggestions for the restoration of the village play area equipment, while she claimed to be in favour of the idea, she doubted the longevity of the timbers due to them decaying from the inside. I can find no evidence of the internal decay. However, the Inspector has pointed out that it is more than likely for the timbers to fail as they are 20-25 years old.

I was asked to look at the likely costs of replacing the existing items with perhaps a few additions to accommodate older children, the younger children already enjoy the excellent playground at Poole's Meadow. I can only estimate a costing based on my experience of the play-park in Middle Barton Oxfordshire. This was a much larger area and had many more features than we have room for here. The £75k costs of that project were funded from a Central Government Initiative, WODC. the Parish Council, village fund raising activities and generous support from two prominent local family trusts.

A second project at Middle Barton, a MUGA Court costing £140k was funded with grants from the National Lottery, Sport England, Viridor Landfill Credits and all the previously mentioned contributors. There might be similar sources of funding in this locale, however, the Central Government Initiative ceased in 2010.

We would need to have a detailed plan and estimates from possibly three companies for an accurate idea of the costs involved. Looking at various items which are priced on some websites, we would need to raise £20k-£30k for a fairly modest play-area, bearing in mind that a safety ground covering would be required for any new equipment.

There are sixty children in our village aged up to sixteen years, it may well be that only twenty children would benefit from this investment. Grants are usually dependant on predicted usage. With such a meagre precept available, I would recommend a public consultation to enlist more support for any project of this scale.

Finally, what were the build costs and where did the funding come from and who is responsible for the inspection costs and maintenance of the play-area at Poole's Meadow?