



Coleford Town Council

Amenities Committee Tuesday 22 January 2019 Minutes

**Attendees: Cllrs Lusty, Cox, Penny & C Elsmore
J Martin**

1. Apologies were noted from Cllrs Holloway, E Elsmore, Thompson & Allaway-Martin
2. There were no declarations of interest on items on the agenda
3. There were no dispensation requests
4. The minutes of 11 December 2019 were noted
Cllr Penny requested that telephones boxes are included on the next agenda
5. **To make recommendation re the remit of the committee**
Recommendation
That the attached remit is accepted with the inclusion of the appropriate NDP policy numbers
6. **To make recommendation re the works in the cemetery**
Recommendation
A bench is purchased and placed in the Natural Burial ground
A tree surgeon is to check the broken tree in the Natural Burial ground hedgerow
Quotes are obtained for the works on the Irish Yew trees (It was noted that funding could be available for this work and should be investigated)
A price is obtained for removing all the loose stone work of graves in the cemetery and any collapsed graves are made safe.
An land ecological management plan is devised for the cemetery
7. **To make recommendation re the Spirit of the Forest sculpture**
Recommendation
That instruction is given to commission the work on the receipt of a project time line noting the need to secure the planning permission within its time limits
8. **To make recommendation re a request for a bin at Bixhead Walk**
Recommendation
That the Forest of Dean District Council is asked to provide a waste bin in the area.
9. **To make recommendation re the analysis of the consultation of the Stepbridge play area.**
Mr Martin presented his report (attached). He was duly thanked for a very thorough piece of work
Recommendation
Further consultation is undertaken with some local youngsters to produce a draft scheme
Photographic support is provided of other types of play equipment and options
10. **To have an update on the installation of the vents at the KGV pavilion**
The Clerk reported that some of the problem was caused by the roof material lifting along the line of the joints
Recommendation
That the original supplier is asked to inspect the roof immediately



Coleford Town Council

Committee	No of members	Frequency
Amenities	5 members	Bi-monthly (Min 4 meetings / year)

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Responsibilities

This Committee has no decision-making responsibility and can only make recommendation to Full Council.

To develop the Town Council's strategy towards the use of public amenities including Town Council owned leisure facilities, the promotion of sport, and the provision for our youth and the Town Council owned cemetery in line with the Coleford Neighbourhood Development Plan and 4 year Plan.

The Town Council will provide a member of this committee as the Town Council representative on the Angus Buchanan Committee & the Christmas Lights Committee.

King George V (Pavilion and Playing Field):

1. To ensure that the KGV Playing Field and Pavilion are properly maintained and conform to all relevant legislation.
2. To ensure that adequate facilities are provided for the user groups.
3. To promote the use of the playing field by the community.
4. To provide a safe environment.
5. To generate income where appropriate.
6. To ensure the Town Council effectively manages the users of these facilities in accordance with appropriate terms and conditions.

Town Centre (inc Clock Tower):

1. To ensure that the Town Centre provides a ~~showpiece~~ positive focus for the Parish which enables everyone to have access, whilst maintaining the character of the town
2. To ensure that the Town Centre is properly maintained and conforms to all relevant legislation.
3. To promote the use of the Town Centre as ~~an~~ open performance space.
4. To ensure any works carried out in the Town Centre take due regard of the ~~ancient~~-heritage nature of the buildings and conform to listed building regulations, Conservation Area advice.
5. To ensure that the Town Centre is a safe environment.
6. To co-ordinate a working party to review current and future use of the Clock Tower.

Other Open Areas, including Local Green Spaces

1. To ensure that the Town Council protects open areas entrusted to its care for the benefit of the community.
 - To monitor and enhance Local Green Spaces as defined in CNDP and recommend and changes to Planning for review

Leisure & Play Areas:

2. To ensure that the Town Council provides imaginative play areas for young people of all ages.
3. To ensure that play areas are safe environments that conform to relevant legislation and that RoSPA checks are completed annually.
4. To work with partners, e.g. FoDDC, GCC and the Police.
5. To support local play areas provided by Trusts and Charities within the Parish.



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Infrastructure (e.g. Benches, Toilets and Bus Shelters):

6. To ensure appropriate measures are put in place to risk assess and adequately maintain all infrastructures (within our control) within the Parish.

7. To continually review the need for additional benches, dog waste and litter bins with the Parish.

Coleford Town Cemetery

1. To ensure that the Town Council's regulations relating to burials conform to the requirements of the Home Office as described in the paper "Burial Law and Policy in the 21st Century.

2. To ensure that memorials are kept within the sizes laid down by the Town Council and that their design and lettering is acceptable. The Town Council will reserve the right to insist that gravestones are to be brought to the Town Council office before installation so that the exact size may be checked.

3. To ensure that work to all memorials is carried out in accordance with the latest recommendations and Code of Practice of the National Association of Monumental Masons.

4. To ensure the provision of well-maintained and safe area for the benefit of visitors to the burial ground and to investigate any complaints made to the Town Clerk with reference to the Burial Ground and the access road leading to it.

5. To recommend adequate provision to comply with the Equality's Act requirements.

6. To ensure an adequate record is maintained of all burials and interment of ashes, also scattered remains.

Other provisions

1. To meet as necessary with any body or company making arrangements locally for the provision of crematoria or other similar services.

That the committee contribute to:

- the implementation of relevant aspects of CNDP, its review and production and implementation of the 4 year Town Council Plan
- and produce a recommended budget for the forth coming year for its account codes to be put before Finance and Office Committee at its October / November meeting.



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Part 1.

Project overview.

Brief.

The current play equipment at the Foxglove playground is coming to the end of its useful life. In this the available options regarding the future of the Foxglove playground site are presented and examined.

Location of site:

Proposal.

The reasons for this report are primarily, that although the play equipment at the Foxglove playground continued to pass Statutory inspections, it is over 30 years old. The likelihood that the site will fail inspections in the years ahead is high. Moreover, the predicted costs of maintaining the minimum standards of the site are expected to increase as the equipment continues to age and deteriorate. In anticipation of change the council needs to plan medium and long-term strategy and budget.

This report will present options to solve or reduce the above issue.

Site Report.

The Foxglove playground site was constructed over 20 years ago as part of the wider construction of the adjacent estate. It was apparently created under a s.106 T&CPA 1990 between the Council and the developer. This duty has long since been discharged as the developer has completed the construction of the playground.

see plans.

see maps.

The site is situated within a housing estate bounded by a road on two sides, a footpath and gated entrance onto the cycle path which runs from Coleford, Old Station way to Station Road.

In general, the site consists of a play area separated from a wider recreational field by a wooden fence. Within this there is a 'lookout' with a slide attached. A seesaw, and obstacle course comprised of various climbing props. All of which are constructed out of wood. There is also a bench.

see site photos.

The author is not an inspector and an appraisal of the site is not the purpose of this report.

However, in layman's terms the sight has no obvious major damage, associated dangers and is reasonably clean.

See ROSPA report 2017.

Legal.

Essentially, the council has the power to create and maintain recreation facilities but is under no direct duty to do so.

There are tortious obligations to keep the site safe and control the people who enter via visible signs. There differing levels of responsibility owed depending on the classification of the person on the site i.e. visitors are those who use the site at the correct time for the correct purpose, whereas trespassers are those who do not adhere to these rules. Generally, the council will have fewer safety obligations towards trespassers.

At present, there are no warning or instruction signs present at the site. They are suspected to have been removed.

Council policy.

However, the policy reflecting Coleford Town Council's is found at the Council's website, and as of 6/10/2018 is detailed below;



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Leisure & Play Areas

- To ensure that the Town Council provides imaginative play areas for young people of all ages.
- To ensure that play areas are safe environments that conform to relevant legislation and that RoSPA checks are completed annually.
- To work with partners, e.g. FoDDC, GCC and the Police.
- To support local play areas provided by Trusts and Charities within the Parish.

Method.

- 1). The site in question will be found on contemporary maps for reference.
- 2). The playground will be examined visually with images taken of the site in context.
- 3). Legal questions will then be investigated, namely if the site was constructed via a s.106 T&CPA 1990 agreement, and then whether any trees are covered by a s.198 T&CPA 1990.
- 4). A questionnaire will be created for local residence to complete.
- 5). Options for the future of the site will be deduced from both the legal requirements and the completed questionnaires.
- 6). Statistical breakdown of the results.
- 7). The options will be examined for reusability and price.

First phase of the Consultation.

This will take the form of a questionnaire, and depending on the outcome will inform future work.

Options.

There are three main options available to the council.

- 1). Do absolutely nothing, other than the barest minimum to pass statutory inspections.
- 2). Replace the aging play equipment with new items yet keep the function of the site the same.
- 3). Change the facilities to appeal to a different age group, i.e. chessboard, boules, miniature golf etc.
- 4). Repurpose the site entirely. Remove the play equipment. For example; car park, land for housing, allotments etc.

The questionnaire will be constructed around these three main options to see which the residents proffer.

Authorisation.

During the October 9th 2018 Amenities committee the above proposal was communicated to the Councillors present. A copy of the minutes of this meeting are found in Appendix XX.

In article 6 of the minutes for this meeting it was recommended that;

- A questionnaire is delivered to the whole estate and either returned to the Council offices or collected by councillors door knocking the area
- That Mr Martin (The report author) work with the Clerk to produce a questionnaire that collects demographic information as well as wants of the community. All the green spaces are considered during the consultation.
- The outcomes are presented at a public meeting.

Part 2.

Questionnaire feedback and analysis.

Background.

Copies of the finalised and used cover letter and questionnaire are found in page XX of the appendix.

Around 100 questionnaires were delivered by hand in the last week of November and by December 11, 22 had been returned by members of the public.



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The information from the questionnaire can be broken down into two types. The first being simple multiple-choice answers, the second being detailed personal statements in response to questions.

First part analysis.

Background Questions.

Common remarks and themes from the questions on what the residents like/dislike about the recreation ground.

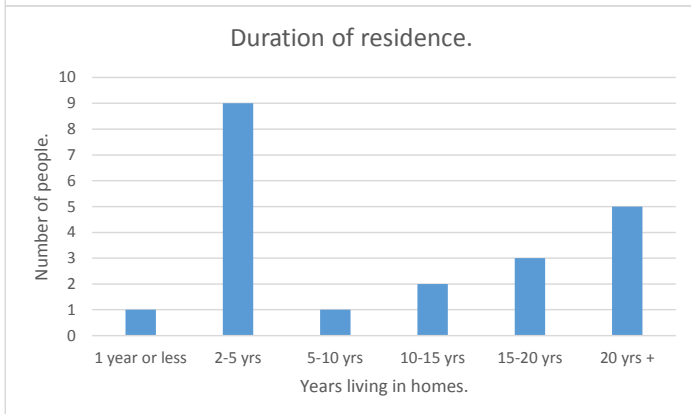
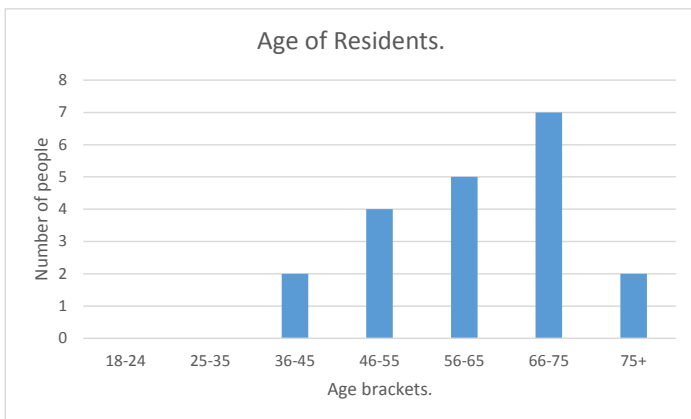
What residents like about the site;

Open space. Encourages safe play. Close. Natural space. Well maintained. Enjoyed by young children.

What residents dislike about the site;

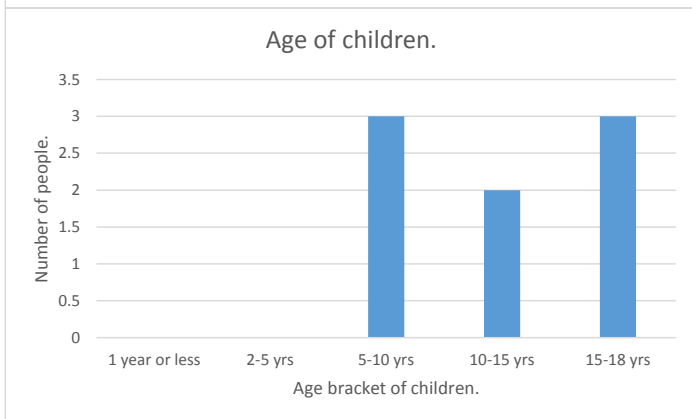
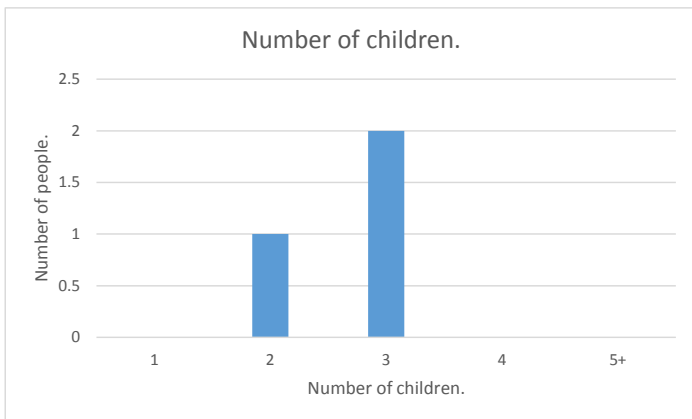
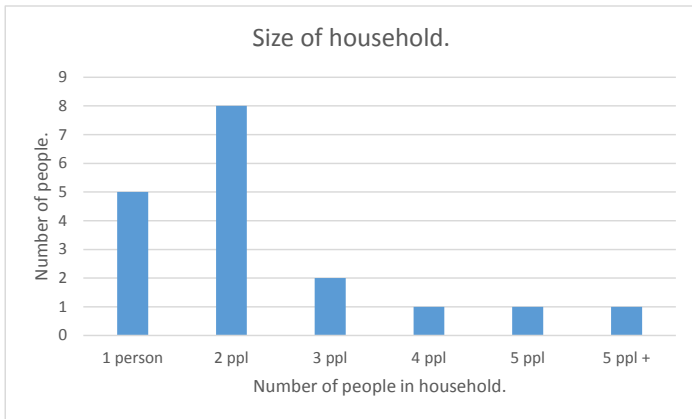
Children and visitors from outside the estate using the site. Damage to facilities and trees by older children. Aging and wear of the equipment. Grassy area is sometimes 'boggy'. Noise. Dog excrement.

The following background information on the nature of the residents is expressed via bar chart.



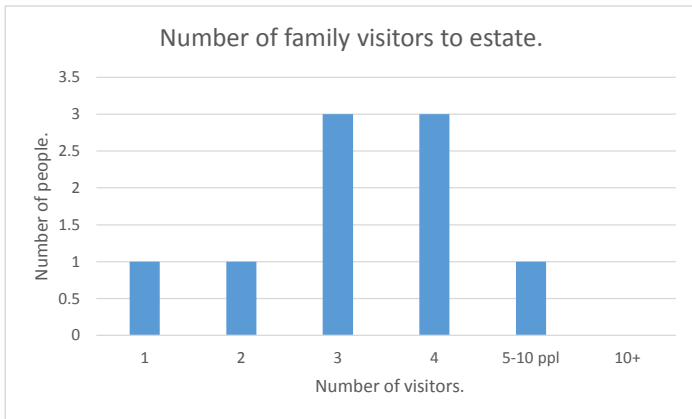


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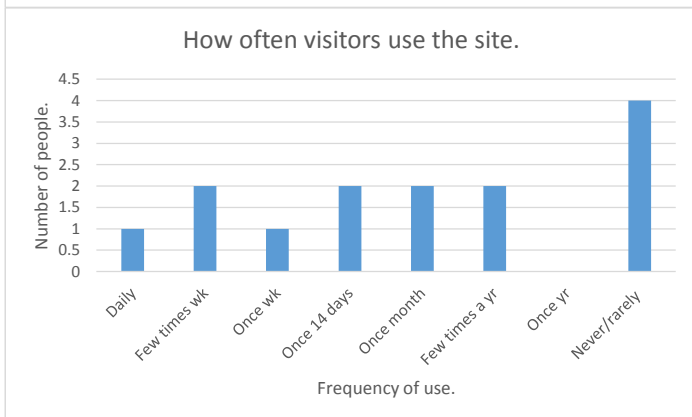
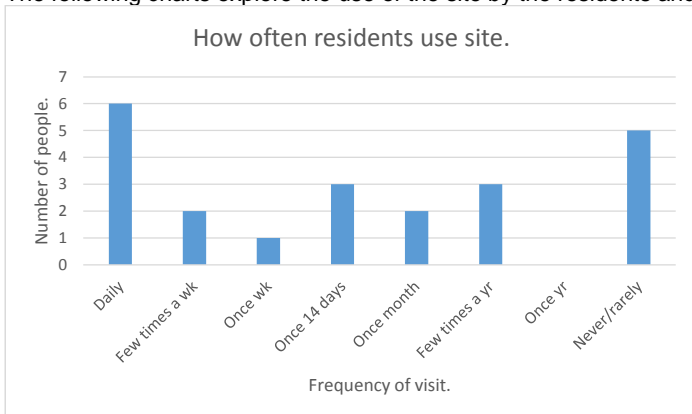




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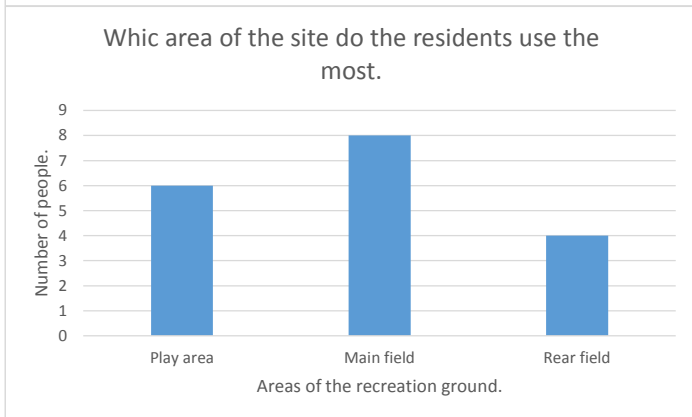
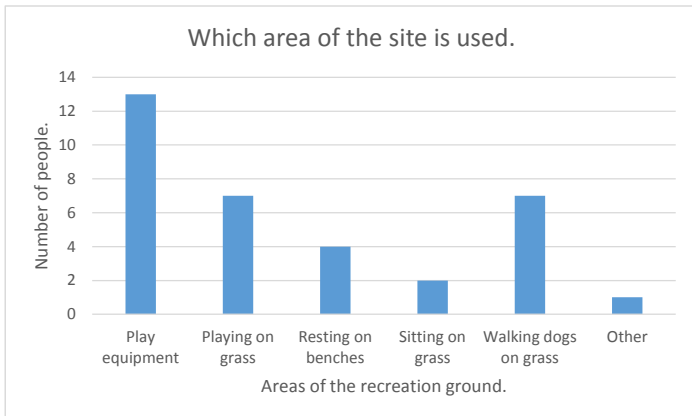


The following charts explore the use of the site by the residents and their visitors.

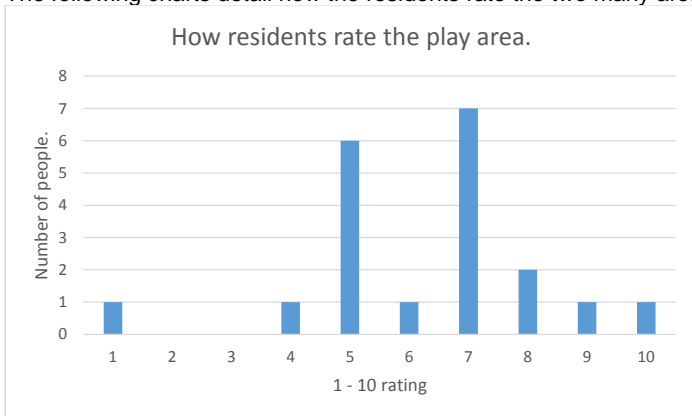




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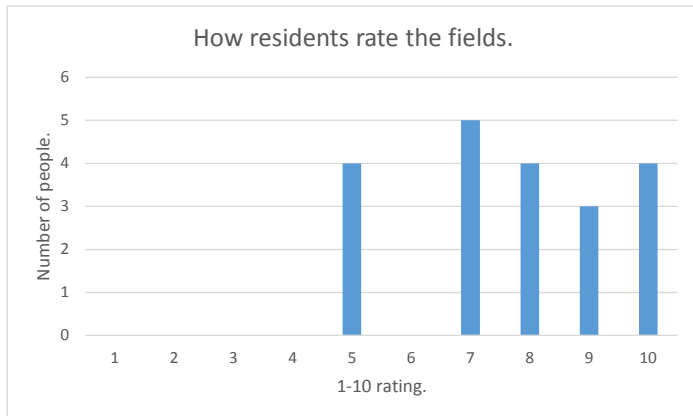


The following charts detail how the residents rate the two many areas of the site.

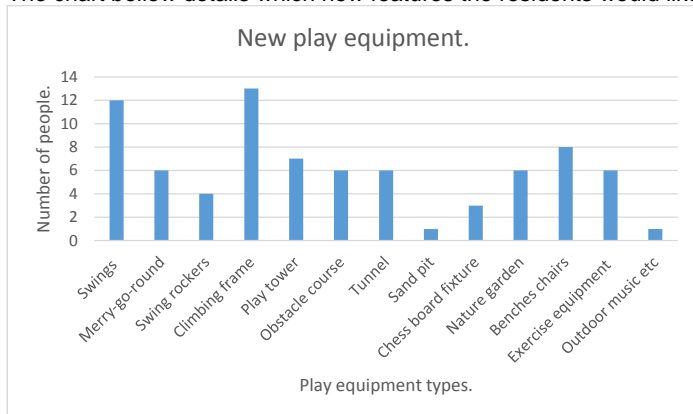




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The chart below details which new features the residents would like to be added to the site.



Here, common remarks and themes from the questions on what the residents would like improved and added to the recreation ground are collected.

Improvements to the site;

Wooden sculptures. Nature garden. Trimming of the nearby trees.

Other items to be added;

Nature garden. Flower garden. Tarmacked area for bikes etc. Football posts. Additional parking for cars.

What residents would not like to be added;

Removal of the open space. No attractions that would draw in outsiders. No more houses. Anything that creates extra noise. Sandpit.

Summary of the gathered data.

Summary of residents.

- Most of the responders were senior, being over 55 years of age.
- Most were newcomers to the estate, having only been resident for 2-5 years.



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- Most households only had 2 to 1 residents.
- Very few reported having children resident. The ones that did, were generally older, i.e. above 10 years.
- Not many reported the presence of grandchildren and other external family using the site.

Summary of recreation site use.

- Most reported use was daily.
- Little use by external family.
- Most reported use was of the play equipment.
- However, the open field spaces were also heavily used.
- The average rating for the play area and the field was high, i.e. around 7/10.

Summary of the suggested improvements to the recreation site.

- Most chosen were climbing frames and swings.
- Secondary selections were benches and a play tower.

Summary of general comments and themes.

- Residents were unhappy with anything that brought outside or older children onto the reg ground.
- Residents did not desire the removal of the recreation ground or its replacement with new housing.
- Some concern over the water-logged ground and the general hygiene of the site, i.e dog excreta.

Conclusions.

Should Coleford town council decided to modify the Floxglove playgrounds, it is recommended that new play equipment should be constructed at the site. This should be swings, a climbing frame and more benches for sitting.

Due to high resident satisfaction with the current use of the land and statements expressing as such, it is further recommended that the site be maintained as a green open space, with no addition of further houses.

Ancillary problems to be addressed, perhaps beyond the scope of this report, would be preventing older children and teenagers from abusing the recreation ground as well as investigating alleged drainage issues on the field.