



Report to Play Area Working Party 2023 08

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1.0 Background

The Community Council would like to improve facilities at Far Cotton Recreation Ground. Improving the play area is considered a priority, but the council recognised the importance of creating a master plan for the recreation ground as a whole.

A play area working group was formed and objectives were agreed as:

- To engage with West Northamptonshire Council to seek agreement in principle to implement any improvements.
- To identify potential funding streams to meet identified costs of improvement.
- To hold a series of consultation events to establish which improvements (if any) would be popular.
- To engage with playground manufacturers to present a range of cost options to implement improvements identified.
- To identify and investigate sites which could also be brought into the scope of the project.
- To compile a detailed report of findings to present to a future meeting of the council.

This report summarises the progress made to date and includes a proposed action plan.

2.0 Engagement with West Northamptonshire Council

The Recreation Ground is owned by WNC and any improvements will need to be approved by WNC.

FCDCC has discussed the possible improvements with Peter Hackett Environmental Countryside and Parks Manager of WNC. He is happy for FCDCC to undertake improvements to the park. There is also the potential for funding from the parks budget to support the project.

3.0 Project Funding

3.1 Summary of Funding available

Funding Source	Amount	Status
Council Reserves	£50,000	Held by FCDCC
CIL Funds	£4,425.98	Held by FCDCC
Section 106 Funds	£31,777 + indexation	Agreement in principle from WNC
External Funders	£300-£100,000	TBC

3.2 Council Reserves

FCDCC has £50,000 in reserve for the project.

3.3 Developer Funding

CIL Funding The council has received £4,426 in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding. This is money that developers must pay to support infrastructure and

community facilities when development takes place. The CIL funding relates to the former Tivoli site and could be used for this project.

[S106 Funding](#) The council should be able to access a further £31,777 of S106 money, again relating to the Tivoli site. WNC have indicated that FCDCC can draw on these funds, but an agreed scheme of improvements will need to be in place first. And the email below details when this funding will become available.

Good Afternoon Kate

My apologies that you have had to chase a response in respect of the above.

The Section 106 Agreement dated 30th April 2021 in respect of the most recent planning application for the site, reference N/2020/1409, includes an obligation for an Off-site open space contribution of £31,777 plus Indexation required as below:

3. The Off Site Open Space Contribution

- 3.1 Prior to Occupation of the 13th Market Housing Unit to pay 50% (fifty per cent) of the Off Site Open Space Contribution to the Council
- 3.2 Not to permit first Occupation of the 14th Market Housing Unit until fifty per cent of the Off Site Open Space Contribution has been paid to the Council
- 3.3 Prior to Occupation of 100% (one hundred per cent) of the Market Housing Units to pay the remaining 50% (fifty per cent) of the Off Site Open Space Contribution to the Council
- 3.4 Not to permit Occupation of 100% (one hundred per cent) of the Market Housing Units until the remaining fifty per cent of the Off Site Open Space Contribution has been paid to the Council

The development is currently under construction and therefore the monies are not currently due or available as occupation has not reached the above trigger for payment.

I hope the above clarifies the current situation.

Kind Regards

Nicky Scaife
Development Management Team Leader

[3.4 Grant Funding](#)-A range of grant funding could be available to the council. We would need to overcome some challenges to access grant funding as we do not own or hold a lease for the Rec. Funders usually want you to own, or hold a lease for the land, with the length of the lease dependent on the amount of funding being applied for. However some lottery funding or landfill tax could be available.

4.0 Consultation and Evidence

FCDCC has established an evidence base to ensure that any improvements meet local needs and aspirations.

The evidence base:

- Workshops with local primary school children (Delapre Primary School and Queen Eleanor Primary Academy, Feedback from Staff at Gloucester Nursery) – March 2023
- Community questionnaire - April -May 2023
- Working party meetings and site visits – Various Dates – see minutes
- Findings from the contextual safeguarding review – January 2023
- Social media posts and comments – February 2023
- FCDCC residents forum and informal feedback from residents -June 2023
- WNC feedback from regarding youth shelter at Far Cotton Rec.-June 2023
- WNC Draft wellbeing strategy – ambition three “Opportunities to be fit and well” -August 2023

4.1 Summary of Findings

The Rec is important to people in Far Cotton and Delapre.

People appreciate having a green space and play area close to their homes. But they also feel the play equipment is outdated and needs improving. There needs to be better provision for older residents and teens, this might include providing outdoor gym equipment.

Respondents to the community questionnaire frequently referred to litter, dog poo, fly tipping and anti-social behaviour these all negatively impact people's view of the Rec.

The MUGA needs improvements (although this has been re-lined since the survey was carried out).

Other comments people raised included a lack of things to do at the Rec, people would like to see more events and community activities at the Rec. A community garden, café, public toilets and bike racks were all mentioned.

4.2 School Workshops

Children taking part in the workshops were from years 3-6. (Children age 7-11 years of age) The children were invited to take part in junk modelling and make their perfect piece of play equipment, or make a collage of their favourite pieces of equipment from a range of play catalogues.



The most popular pieces of equipment mentioned by the children were:

- Basket Swing
- Zip Wire
- Climbing Frame
- Climbing Wall
- Trampoline
- Gym Equipment-even younger children supported this
- Natural Equipment – climbing rocks / Tunnel /Stepping Stones

4.3 Community Questionnaire

The Community questionnaire took place throughout April and May 2023, the full report is attached.

There were 66 responses to the questionnaire and of those respondents:

- 52 visit the Rec primarily to use the play area
- 53 visit at least once a week
- 54 take less than 10 minutes to get there
- 60 usually walk
- 48 visit with children or grandchildren
- 50 usually stay for less than an hour
- 46 would stay longer if there was better play equipment

We asked people:

a) **“What do you like about the Rec”**

Item	Frequency of response
Locality /close proximity to homes	14
Green Space	15
Play area	8
People / Community	3

b) “What do you dislike about the Rec”

Item	Frequency of response
outdated / poor play equipment	14
litter and fly posting	11
not much to do	2
dog poo	5
Paths and lack of seating	5
Anti-social behaviour / don't feel safe	3
Bike Storage	1

c) Any other comments

Item	Frequency of response
Better play equipment including a basket swing	3
more bins or dog bins	2
public toilets	2
picnic area	1
more equipment for teenagers	2
community garden	1
more community activities	5
CCTV	1
cafe	2

4.4 Contextual Safeguarding review

This review is being led by WNC. A meeting of stakeholders took place in January 2023 and the Rec was described as below:

The Rec has historically had a range of activities on offer; currently Delpare Dragons use it for football. It is visible to the community and enhances the sense of community. There is a well used pizza van on the Rec. It is supported by the community council and school nursing have a service from the community space.

There is antisocial behaviour on the Rec; there is a lack of activities and there is a concern of child exploitation in the space.

The context has additional vulnerability as there is poor lighting in winter months; housing is overcrowded in the area.

There needs to be an increase of activity and subsequent guardianship during the evening and weekends.

4.5 Other evidence

Refurbishing the play area well received at Forum


Proposal for youth shelter was very negatively received

5.0 Proposed Action Plan

Key

Priority	Timescale	Notes
Priority 1	6 months	
Priority 2	6-12 months	
Priority 3	12 months	
Priority 4	tbc	

Item	Description	Priority	Next Steps
Play Equipment	Improve Play Equipment	1	<p>1) Create a brief for play area: Incorporate items from children's workshops Basket Swing and exciting and challenging climbing area. Look outside fenced area to include opportunities for natural play items, stepping stones, climbing rocks, tunnels. (Zip wire / trampoline??) Accessible / Inclusive</p> <p>2) Discuss brief with WNC 3) Go to play companies</p>
Outdoor gym equipment	Install outdoor gym equipment	2	<p>1) Discuss with WNC is this possible 2) Cost and funding feasibility</p>
Events and Activities	Increase activities available at the Rec	2	<p>Create a program of events including regular activities and one off events. Sport n talk Summer activities 2024 Community Events</p>
Community Garden	Create a community garden	3	<p>1) Discuss with WNC is this possible 2) Cost and funding feasibility</p>

Toilets	Provide toilet facilities at Rec	3	Consider feasibility – opening existing toilets has a risk of antisocial behaviour – could standalone Pod be a long term solution https://www.healthmatic.com/public-toilets/
Café	Provision of café / food outlet	3	This could be a long term goal, but could a concession van be on site more regularly – pizza van and ice cream van already popular. Encourage additional concessions at peak times
Bins and dog bins	Provide additional dog bins and litter bins	2	Map existing bins Monitor Spray dog poo Establish future need
Paths	Provide additional / better paths	3	More detailed consultation needed
Seating	Provide additional seating	4	Benches and seating very sensitive/ note feedback regarding youth shelter
Litter and Fly posting	Reduce litter and ASB	2	Monitor /increase bins
Anti-social behaviour		2	Work with partners, wardens, police, could CCTV be extended
Bike Storage	Provide bike storage	2	 <p>Provide a rack without shelter, to avoid anti-social behaviour</p>