

## **AN UPDATE ON TOWNFIELD LANE PLAY AREA**

### **Background**

The lease on the land at Townfield Lane expired at the end of 2016. The Lessor wanted a significant increase in rent with the renewal of the lease. Before committing to any long-term financial commitments, FTC decided to hold a public consultation.

The community overwhelmingly opted to renew the lease at Townfield Lane and replace the equipment. During the consultation, the Lessor offered to forego the increase in rent for 10 years.

### **The new lease**

FTC and the Lessor have agreed terms for a new 25-year lease and it is in the hands of our respective legal advisors.

### **Replacing the equipment**

A small working group was set up to develop a plan for the play area. The majority view seems to be that the children like what they have now and the group are not seeking major changes. Some work is a priority and needs to be tackled as soon as possible, other aspirations could be dealt with in stages. The following changes have been identified:-

1. Replace the two toddler swings with two new toddler swings
2. Replace the standard swings (already removed) with standard swings and a nest swing
3. Replace the safety matting under all play equipment
4. The small slide, the rocket climbing frame and the goal post should remain and need nothing more than a safety check, repainting, and safety matting where appropriate
5. Remove/repurpose the rectangular concrete slab (used to be a climbing frame on it)
6. Repair or replace the two seats and level the ground around them
7. Add a second slide to the big slide, or add a double slide (to allow races)
8. Add a natural play feature e.g. sculptured tree trunk or wooden obstacle course
9. Remove or repair the safety circle area
10. Consider any further additional play equipment

### **Stage 1**

Items 1 to 7 are a priority and should be done as soon as possible. See Appendix 1 for photos of the swings, preferred replacements and low maintenance safety matting.

### **Stage 2**

Items 8 and 9 are desirable and a longer-term aim of the working group. more research is needed.

### **Funding the improvements**

During the 2017-18 budget setting process FTC agreed to earmark £35,388 (Includes the S106 grant of £5,388) for the Townfield Lane Play Area, or it's replacement. Additionally, in the 2017-18 Budget Capital Programme there is an earmarked reserve for play areas of £36,000.

FTC are asked to:-

- Fully fund items 1 to 6.
- Seek grant funding/public donations for items 7 to 9

### **Next Steps**

As sufficient funds have been earmarked for Stage 1 of the TFPA project, Council is asked to agree to it being taken forward to liaise with play equipment companies and seek quotes.

The working group will continue to research options for additional play equipment and availability of grants.

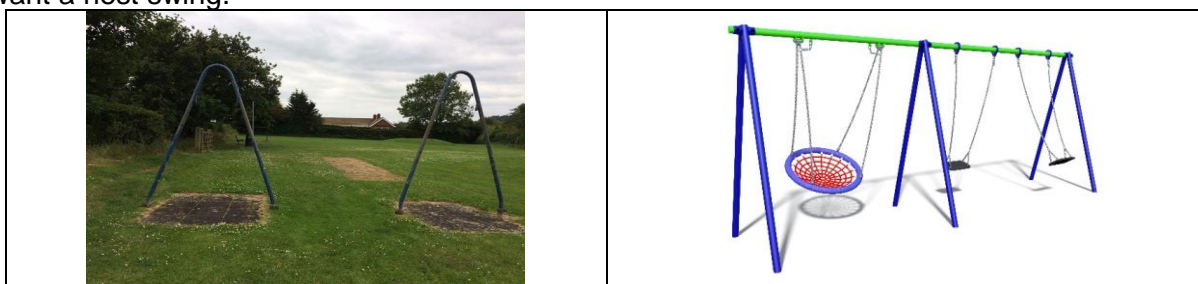
### **THE TODDLER SWINGS**

The toddler swings are in a very poor state. Refurbishment is likely to be difficult due to imperial v metric dimensions and is expected to be costly. As a long-term investment, replacement with new equipment is considered better value for money.



## THE STANDARD SWINGS

Due to the very poor state of these swings the seats have been removed for safety reasons. Refurbishment is likely to be difficult due to imperial v metric dimensions and is expected to be costly. As a long-term investment, replacement with new equipment is considered better value for money. The children also want a nest swing.



*The pictures of the new swings are taken from the Wicksteed website and are for illustrative purposes only*

## SAFETY SURFACES

The safety matting is old and, in places, in a poor state or non-existent. At the Churchfields play area there has been wear and tear problems with the 'wet pour' matting.

For the new equipment in Castle Park a different type of matting has been used. It seems to be holding up well. The working group would prefer to use the same type of product. This is a product offered by Wicksteed. It is low maintenance.

	<h3>Playground Safety Grass</h3>	<p>The mats measure 1.5m x 1m with a thickness of 23mm. Each mat weighs 19kg and is supplied with galvanised securing pins and cable ties. A ground stabilising mesh is also available for soft, boggy sites or when the addition of topsoil is necessary.</p>
	<p>Playground Safety Grass is a honeycomb matting that is installed onto grass to provide impact-absorbing protection. It is easy to install, competitively priced and unobtrusive. Once installed it virtually disappears as the turf grows through its cells, whilst continuing to provide impact-absorbing protection.</p>	<p>A critical fall height of 3.0m is achieved when tested under ideal conditions, i.e. installed onto well maintained grass, with a topsoil sub-base free of stones and other hard materials. Generally Wicksteed recommends that this product is only used for applications with a free fall height of 2.5m and under, where the grass can be maintained to a good standard with continual natural growth.</p>
	<h3>Material and specification</h3>	<h3>Maintenance</h3>
	<p>Manufactured from recycled rubber. Playground Safety Grass requires no base works and is suitable for flat or contoured sites. Resistant to all weathers and temperatures, it wears extremely well.</p>	<p>Playground Safety Grass is maintenance-free and allows the grass to be cut with a conventional mower.</p>