

Harberton Childrens' Playground Site Meeting and Action Plan based on Allianz Report 28 April 2020

10 June 2020 Harberton Playing Field Committee (HPFA)

Present:- Roger Hands, Phil Sheardown, Flip Williams

Background :- The Allianz report on safety has been gone through on site and information / action noted below. The Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents codes have been checked and it is particularly noted that they do not expect playgrounds to be risk-free: indeed some measure of risk is part of what is intended . They also note that location and finance may affect works done . HPFA group have reviewed the risks and actual accidents known to have happened over the last 40 years (none significant of which they are aware) and considered the nature of the usage within the village context, but with occasional visitors, , and the relationship of the playground to the highway .

Some matters are necessarily matters of opinion rather than fact and since HPC is ultimately responsible some items have been referred back to them to consider whether they choose to respond differently to the three people who have prepared this advice note.

No Category A defects reported

Playground Site Survey

1. Support posts for 'no dogs' sign at gated entrance corroded.

Risk/comments :- Unsightly, sharp where rusty and unnecessary

Plan:- A 'no dogs' sign already in situ at pedestrian entrance from road.

Posts to be cut, just beneath ground level, and posts and old sign to be disposed of.

2, Fence along pedestrian pathway and along bottom of play area in poor condition.

Risk/comments :- If child climbs on fence, it could collapse as timber rotten in places. In event of fall, child would land on natural ground/vegetation. No steep drops and natural vegetation forms substantial barrier behind most. Not adjacent to highway.

Plan:- HPFA will get quote from Wicks Fencing, Buckfastleigh, for new stock-type fencing along bottom of playground with half round rails at top. The path fence is doing little and to be modified to provide safe handrail only This would deter children climbing on it and also provide a handrail down the path. **Refer to Harberton Parish Council (HPC)**. In the short-term the middle fence bar could be removed to deter climbing and strengthening work done.

3. Signage lacking

Risk/comments :- Emergency contact information should be provided.

Plan:- The only information HPFA consider necessary is - 'operator contact details'; emergency services contacts. **Refer to HPC.**

4. Access Gate

Risk/comments:- Report states 'gates should open outwards away from play area' HPFA consider this an increased risk for small children running out of playground unsupervised. Should be suitable clearance (60mm to 110mm) beneath gate and anti-finger trapping clearance. Hard standing should be provided for 1m either side of gate. Gate should be painted a conspicuous colour.

Plan:- Playground gate is new and opens inwards. Its swing is limited by the natural slope of the ground. Its colour contrasts with the fence and vegetation. Bright paint is considered unnecessary and inappropriate.

There is greater than recommended clearance at bottom of gate so a horizontal timber will be fitted to rectify this, as will a wood block to prevent finger-trapping between gate and post.

There is grass immediately above gate. HPFA consider that concrete would increase trip hazard

5. Fencing around Playground

Risk/comments:- Dogs accessing playground and possible fouling. HPF is a dog-free area. There are a number of 'no dog' signs around the site.

There is a gate at the access to the pedestrian path and a barrier at the end of path to deter children running onto highway. Above and to the side of the playground are extensive areas of grass. HPFA does not consider a fence around the playground is necessary as risks are low. **Refer to HPC**

Playground Equipment

6. Rocking Horses

Risk/comments:- Horse nearest boundary - 'Corrosion evident at base of main support' On examination there is some wasting of the metal, but horse remains very robust.

Also some sharp edges to woodwork. Damaged corners of safety matting. These could cause scratches

Plan:- Metalwork of horse mechanism to be kept under review. Sharp edges on woodwork to be removed. Safety matting to be repaired with matting repair compound (already obtained) to cover exposed concrete.

Rocking horse furthest from boundary is covered and awaiting refurbishment. Allianz to inspect when work complete.

7. Cradle Swing set

Risk/comments:- Report states 'The support foundation concrete is exposed at ground level on end of diagonal support'. There is a tiny patch of concrete exposed at the base of one pole that is flush with surrounding grass. HPFA consider that this poses very low risk. Swing barriers around swing set should be considered. As level of use is low, therefore risk is low. **Refer to HPC.**

Safety matting has gaps. Safety surface insufficient in length. As adjacent surface is grass HPFA consider risk of injury is low and a larger surface unnecessary. **Refer to HPC.**

Plan:- The safety surface is presently being relayed/replaced as necessary, removing the gaps referred to in report.

8. Open Swing set

Risk/comments:- Report states 'one top suspension shackle pivot inset missing and others worn. Several suspension chains twisted' Safety matting worn. Swing barriers around swing set should be considered. As level of use is low, therefore risk is low.

Refer to HPC.

Plan:- Enquiries to be made to ascertain whether shackle pivot inserts are still available. Twisted chains - problem rectified.

The safety surface is presently being relayed/replaced as necessary, removing the gaps referred to in report.

9. Igloo Climbing Frame

Risk/comments:- Safety surface contaminated with grass, moss and tree debris. Whilst not posing appreciable risk, this is exacerbated by overhanging tree branches which make climbing parts of the equipment difficult.

Sharp edges on flaking paint and rust around structural joints could cause minor injuries.

Plan:- Trees adjacent to equipment to be trimmed back. Safety surface to be cleaned/weeded. Climbing frame to be cleaned, rust treated and repainted (order placed)

10. Embankment Slide

Risk/comments:- 'Ground to side of slide surface is worn away' HPFA could find no evidence of this occurring or causing any significant risk.

Trapping point evident at slide top edge to platform. HPFA concurred that this could cause risk of entrapment.

Platform handrails ends are unexpected obstacles - low risk of clothing getting caught.

Plan:- Timber to be inserted between top of slide and platform to fill gap. Extended ends to top bars around platform to be cut back. Encroaching vegetation to be cut back to give wider thoroughfare between it and slide.

11. Horizontal Agility Bars

Risk/comments:- ‘High bar end support loose in ground.’ HPFA considers that, although loose through being bent, it is not unsafe.

Grass in safety surface. Safety surface of insufficient size.

HPFA consider that as bar is surrounded by grass the size of matting is sufficient.

Refer to HPC

Plan:- Safety surface to be cleaned/weeded. Climbing frame to be cleaned, rust treated and repainted.

12. Roundabout

Risk/comments:- Report states ‘ Safety clearance beneath the roundabout structure and the safety surface is insufficient’ This has not changed since the roundabout was installed by Wicksteed.

Possibly specifications have changed in the 10 years since it was purchased?

‘The gaps in the safety surface tiles are excessive’

Plan:- HPFA will contact Wicksteed to ascertain what can be done to ensure that the roundabout complies with regulations.

The safety surface is presently being relayed/replaced as necessary, removing the gaps referred to in report.

13. Basketball goal

Risk/comments:- ‘Basketball court surface uneven’. Grass and weeds on basket ball court. Corrosion to post. Backboard is delaminating. Basketball post, hoop, net and court in poor condition although risk of injury is low at present. To keep under review.

Plan:- Replacement post, back board and hoop and net are available to be installed when basketball court is resurfaced. Quote has been received from White Rose Tarmacadam. Next project to be undertaken after Safety Matting work.