

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Play Area Gates Report

1. Background - Play Inspections

- 1.1 West Swindon Parish Council undertakes a weekly inspection of its play areas except during August when this changes to daily inspection.
- 1.2 The Play Area team review the equipment as part of the inspection, clear any hazards such as broken glass and check gates and swings for any issues.
One of the challenges for the Parish Council is that there is open public access to play areas every day and so anything can occur between inspections. Each play area has Streetsmart contact details on the railings or gates to enable reports of any damage or concerns.
- 1.3 To date the contact from the public in relation to play areas has been to report long grass, poor ground conditions in wet weather, queries about equipment awaiting replacement and questions about the play area renewal programme.
- 1.4 All play equipment will have an element of risk. Most commonly this would relate to potential falls, trip, slips, finger entrapment, splinters and grazes. As play equipment ages, the risks are more likely, for example, play matting shrinks and rises.
- 1.5 The annual play inspection provides a detailed report identifying key risks and hazards. The most recent inspections were undertaken in December 2017. All major hazards and warnings were dealt with immediately.

2. Detail

- 2.1 Cllr Makofu has asked this Committee to review the play areas that have self closing gates. The standard test for a gate closure is to time how long the gate takes to close, from being held at a 90 degree angle.
- 2.2 Most play areas with gates are those that have been aimed at young/pre-school children and have a fenced-in play area for added safety. Others are open or with intermittent fencing/edging e.g. The Chesters, Whitehill Park. Of the twenty play areas in the Parish, fifteen have self closing gates. Of these, only one - Elm Ridge passed the closure test at the time of inspection. All play areas with gates as listed below have since been regularly checked:

- Bloomsbury Close
- Camden Close
- Clayhill Copse
- Clay Pits Toddler
- Eastleaze (Frampton Cl)
- Elm Ridge*
- Mead Park
- Middleleaze Park (Saltway)
- Oliver Close
- Shelfinch - gate missing/removed
- Sparcells

- The Holbeins
- Tumpy Field
- Uxbridge Road
- Westlea Park

2.3 All equipment including gates can be misused at any time. Even with regular testing, it is difficult for the Parish Council to fully avoid accidents. This can relate to a gate being slammed shut or pulled open too far and thereby closing faster. The Play Inspection Team are briefed and aware of the issues and continue to test and inspect accordingly.

3. Recommendations:

- 3.1 Councillors note the information in the report.
- 3.2 Councillors consider the risks associated with self closing gates.

Paula Harrison
Parish Manager

