

## **Beadnell Parish Council**

### **Report on Playground off Meadow Lane & Longbeach Drive Play Area**

**July 2017**

#### **Introduction**

The Beadnell Parish Council took over responsibility for the playground off Meadow Lane in 2007 and the Longbeach Drive play area in 2016.

The village is right to be proud of these playgrounds as they offer vital facilities for young residents and visitors.

There was a marathon effort in 2007 and 2008 by many in the village to raise the funds to purchase the current equipment and safety surfaces found in the playground off Meadow Lane. This extraordinary fundraising effort financed the purchase of equipment to the tune of approximately £69,000 plus installation costs.

Many in the community have continued to contribute one way or another over the years including those with green fingers who have planted and tended the plants and shrubs. Last year the attractive new playground sign on Meadow Lane was donated by Beadnell Community Volunteers/ Beadnell in Bloom.

As a result of this community commitment, numerous children over the past nine years have enjoyed this excellently equipped playground – and it is the Parish Council's intention to ensure this continues for many years to come.

The Parish Council is responsible for seeing the equipment is safe in both playgrounds and they are professionally inspected on a weekly basis under a service contract with the NCC/ Northumberland County Council and there is an independent annual report.

The Council is also responsible for insurance cover (loss, damage and liability), maintenance, repair and replacement of all equipment, safety surfaces, signs, some fences and gates and grass-cutting.

Most equipment is now nine years old and repair costs are increasing, as they will do until the equipment is uneconomic to repair. In the next five to six years, it is likely all equipment will need to be replaced. The cost will almost certainly exceed £100,000.

In this report we set out to identify what steps we can consider taking as a Council to manage the situation and options that can be explored to address the shortfall in funding.

Chair Jennifer Hall

## Background

### A) Longbeach Drive Play Area

This is a 67 sq m fenced area for small children with a safety surface throughout. The equipment was installed in ca 2007.

The land and play facilities were originally transferred from developers to the NCC under an S106 Agreement and then responsibility passed to the Parish Council in 2016 under an S101 Agreement.

### B) Playground off Meadow Lane

This playground is situated on land originally gifted by the Kennedy family and is currently leased by the Parish Council from the NCC. The transfer of the freehold to the Parish Council is on hold until the NCC have clarified the situation involving a planning breach by a property adjoining the playground. It is hoped this will be resolved and the freehold transferred this year.

This is a well-equipped playground in pleasant surroundings with grass and some safety surfaces. It caters for a wider age group and includes a basketball net and goal post. Most of the equipment is original from 2007/ 2008 with a recent new addition last month of a double swing for an adult and young child.

## Life Expectancy of Equipment

At a site meeting in June with the NCC Green Spaces Officers and Inspection Team and representatives from BCV the Council was advised as follows –

- Depending on local conditions, equipment can last 15 years. Proximity to the coast and level of maintenance may reduce this.
- The NCC replace some equipment that is only 9 years old
- Guarantees on equipment are usually for 10 years max.

## Running Costs – 2017

Precept 2016 £8,829

	<b>2017 net</b>
NCC Safety Inspections 2017 – 2018	£1,379.97
Independent Annual Report	£175
Insurance (liability and property) / playgrounds	£250 +
Repairs	£1,500 - £2,000
Maintenance	?
Grass-cutting	£650
Replacement equipment & installation	---
Total	£4,000 - £5,750

## **Recommendations**

To cost and/ or consider by the next meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

- i) **Replacement of Equipment** – obtain 3 estimates for replacement and installation
- ii) **Repairs** – set up contact with firms recommended by NCC for short notice call outs
- iii) **Minor Repairs/ Maintenance** – lubricate, replace small worn items, small bearings, swing seats and chains and so on.  
Until 1<sup>st</sup> April 17 this was covered by the Service Level Agreement with the NCC. Contact the NCC and ask if cover can continue until March 2018 while the Council seeks alternatives. They are unlikely to agree.  
Consider alternative solutions.
- iv) **Financing Repairs & Replacement**

## **Additional Playground Signs**

For safety and insurance reasons, these should be installed at each gate in 2017. Follow NCC advice and consider content.

Obtain 3 quotes for metal or hard plastic signs.