

Compiled by Cllr Campbell

Brief Comments by the Clerk in red

Motion

“To discuss the inspection and response regimes at SPC concerning both play equipment and gym equipment; with particular regard to frequency and response times, contractors retained, and the provision of pertinent and timely information to councillors”.

“The safety of children on their playgrounds does not depend solely upon the initial design of the site and the selection of equipment.

Its continued management and the provision of high-quality inspection and maintenance programmes are essential if safe opportunities for children to play creatively are to be preserved. ...

... Playground managers have a legal and moral responsibility of care to children using the site - and at the same time they need to meet the expectations of parents. Inspections should be to EN1176, Part 7.”

*Frequency will vary with the site and local usage although **weekly should be seen as a minimum.**”*

“No inspection programme is worthwhile unless a structure exists for repairing faults and replacing parts.

A system should exist for recording and checking on repairs.” – RoSPA

We do have a system for recording and checking on repairs – what we need to establish is whether we need to spend more time, effort and expenditure on a more robust system.

The essential points are that

- 1 if our regular preventative maintenance work and inspections were working properly and if repair work identified was carried out promptly then the annual inspections of the gym equipment and play equipment would pick up little or nothing except the most minor of faults which had been left because of an active decision so to do having considered both risk and amenity. ***Looking at our annual inspections, one can see that there are relatively few faults reported and that those that are reported are generally minor.***
- 2 The necessary decisions about what to do about items posing different levels of risk would be greatly aided if we had a protocol by reference to the Risk Matrices in our annual reports and if the interim inspections used the same scoring. See point 8. ***Please consider whether adding another layer of administrative process is worthwhile***
- 3 In December 2022 we were provided with a spreadsheet showing what work had been identified by Wicksteed in their October 2022 report as needing attention. The spreadsheet changed the Wicksteed risk categories. The spreadsheet was not provided in February 2023. Keeping track on what has been done and what remains to be done, and how urgent it is, is thus made next to impossible for councillors. ***Historically the governance and administration of remedial works has been entrusted to the Clerk office. Please consider whether adding another layer of administrative process is worthwhile***

- 4 Children's Play Equipment and Adult Gym Equipment. We are supposed to get regular reports from our own operative and from HDC with reports from the Office by reference to them as to what is being done re issues raised. This was resolved on 6 May 2021, despite which we are simply not getting the reports with any regularity. ***Rather than to hear a report at every meeting when likely nothing needs to be reported I suggest we resolve to agree a quarterly report on this item***
- 5 We have been waiting for well over a year for Mr Fullbrook to advise us on "How to interpret Risk Assessments – Cllr Training exercise from the Clerk".
- 6 The Play Equipment Annual Report uses a matrix to differentiate the levels of risk Very Low(1-5), Low(6-10), Moderate (12-15), High(16-20) and Very High(25)
- 7 The gym equipment annual inspection uses a similar matrix to differentiate the levels of risk Low (Score 1 -5), Medium (6 -15) and High Risk (16 to 25).
- 8 I suggest that by reference to what these categories mean in terms of outcome, councillors should agree a protocol for what should be done and within what time scale. ***Please consider whether adding another layer of administrative process is worthwhile***
- 9 Rospa recommend that a visual recorded inspection is carried out on a weekly basis". I believe ours are monthly. ***As reported at last meeting we are currently inspecting PPM monthly and the HDC inspections are happening monthly which means there are two inspections per month. We could extend these inspections to weekly but there would be a cost involved that we have not budgeted for in the coming year. That is going to be approx. £1,500 to £2,000 annually. Also we do not have an operative who can currently perform this task for us - please consider this when or if deciding to make any decision***
- 10 Adult gym equipment also requires weekly, monthly and quarterly inspections/maintenance under the manufacturer's specification and warranty documents. We have only two of the four. ***We are inspecting once a month***
- 11 The frequency and nature of what is required for play equipment under the various manufacturers' specifications has not been disclosed. We need to be on top of this before we install a range of new kit. ***I agree that for new installations this ought to be discussed and agreed in future but that we need to maintain what is reasonable and practical given our limited resources***

There are other issues, but Mr Fullbrook has specified that this paper should not exceed 2 x A4.

Thanks to Cllr Campbell for putting this paper together for us.

Cllr Campbell

27 February 2023