

**Minutes of the Playground Working Group meeting
Held at 6.45 p.m. on 1st December 2011
in Tanyard Hall, 30 Station Road, Gomshall**

Present: Councillors C. Brooke (Chairman of the Playground Committee), B. Cohen, S. Nielson, Residents Mrs O. Jila, Mr S. Martin, Mr. C. Nunn and two local youngsters.

Apologies for absence – apologies were submitted on behalf of Parish Councillor R. Andrews, K. Childs, Mrs. L. Pettibone, Mrs. P. Foster.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2011 were approved as a correct record following the inclusion of the following additional clause – the possibility of renting skateboard equipment for a short term trial was discussed and will be considered further.

The Chairman advised all those present that the Parish Council's website now had a new link at the bottom of the homepage entitled 'Playground Working Group – Web Report' which she hoped people would find useful.

Mr Spencer summarised as follows the information that he had obtained re a scooter, skateboard and Bmx facility:

Mediums to be considered – wood, metal, concrete.

Budget – budget for wood is realistic at £25,000 (similar to that built at Rudgwick).

Budget for metal – no indication given by firms approached as this material has not been promoted by any of the companies.

Budget for concrete – between £40,000 and £80,000.

Maintenance

Wood will require regular maintenance but it is cheap to provide a facility initially.

Metal – not promoted.

Concrete – no maintenance and lasts for 20 – 30 years.

Noise – all companies have promoted use of the same medium from ramp to flat ground – same for wood, metal or concrete. An observation was made at the meeting that concrete sites are normally the only ones with a continuous medium and therefore likely to be quieter.

Size – all companies have stated that 25m long by 10m wide is a good starting point (250 – 400 sq.m).

Funding – several companies promoted involvement of landfill sites and related companies e.g. SITA, Biffa.

Site aesthetics and surroundings – several companies have pointed out that concrete parks are very good for blending in with surrounding area as you are able to dig down (depending on the water table) and also to bank soil against it without rotting which also allows the planting of shrubs and grass.

The Chairman had also made enquiries and highlighted the following:

SKATEBOARD EQUIPMENT – METAL, CONCRETE OR WOOD?

General Points

BMX users need ‘more air’ i.e. more height above ground for tricks. Skateboarders and roller-bladers prefer ‘freeflow’ and would choose concrete, although indoor ‘extreme’ ramps are often wood or Skatelite pro. BMX and scooters prefer linear features with obstacles and ‘more vert’ (elevation).

METAL POSITIVES - Low maintenance. Can move and add to.

METAL NEGATIVES - Very slippery when wet and prone to condensation. Can get very hot in Summer and cause burns. Noisy.

METAL COMPOSITE POSITIVES – Low maintenance. Can modify or move site. 25 year guarantee on metal framework, 5 years on ‘Skatelite pro’. Relatively quiet. Skatelite pro shatter proof, does not burn. Dries quickly.

METAL COMPOSITE NEGATIVES

Replacement required after approximately 10 years.

CONCRETE POSITIVES - Endless design possibilities. Can be sunken below ground unless high water table. Low maintenance. Long life-span. Relatively quiet. 10yr guarantee for framework, 20 years guarantee for concrete.

CONCRETE NEGATIVES – Very hard landing! Sunken features expensive because of excavation and drainage. Cannot relocate or modify.

WOOD POSITIVES – can modify and move. Relatively quiet. Softer landing.

WOOD NEGATIVES – Requires more maintenance (e.g. 7.5% of installation cost in 4 years). 10 year guarantee for frame, 1 year guarantee for wood surface.

The Working Group felt that the equipment erected on the Rudgwick site comprised of a perfect balance regarding location, visibility, other activities taking place in the vicinity, element of safety, easy access. It was agreed, however, that any planting around the edge of a facility should not be high enough to obscure the view of the base of the equipment in order that members of the public could view a youngster who required assistance.

Location – the list of locations was considered against the criteria set at the last meeting. Three sites were considered most suitable and these will be investigated further in order of preference.

Police input – due to the absence of the local Neighbourhood Police Officer arrangements had been made for the Community Support Officer to visit the Clerk in order that she could obtain his views on the three suggested locations.

Temporary skateboard facility – this was put on hold for the time being as it was felt that there was no suitable site.

Decision of the Working Group:

1. That the Working Group recommend a facility similar to that installed at Rudgwick.
2. That the Chairman make further enquiries regarding the No. 1 preferred site and report back to the next meeting of the Working Group.
3. That Mr Martin make enquiries regarding the rough price of a Rudgwick type facility in concrete.