

Project report: Play Area for Stocking Pelham

Objective: Build a new play area for children of the village and surrounding area, to improve their health and wellbeing and encourage social interaction. The play area will be in place for early summer 2021.

Background:

Stocking Pelham is a small village in East Herts which has limited resources and community facilities. There is a village hall which is used for a preschool nursery and does have occasional evening events for the community. There is also a village recreation ground which is used for about 7 cricket matches a year (plus practices). There used to be some limited children's play equipment sited on site, but this became dangerous and had to be removed. There is currently no children's play equipment in the village, and the nearest play areas require a car ride to access.

This project is designed to create a play area on the edge of the recreation ground next to a small, wooded copse. It is intended that the play area will cater for children from infants to young teens. We will also create a woodland walk and glade in the adjacent wooded area.

By providing this play area we will aim to benefit the children of the village develop physically, and also be an area where they can meet up with other village children and interact socially. They will also be able to explore the wooded area and learn about the wildlife in the wood.

The location of the play area will also be accessible to children attending the preschool nursery in the village hall and will be a facility that children from other nearby villages that have no facilities (e.g. Brent Pelham) can use.

The equipment to be installed will be expected to last for at least 20 years or more before replacement is required.

Community engagement:

A survey was conducted on the village community Facebook site and all the responses were very positive. It also clarified that the park will also be used by visiting grandchildren and other relatives of the village community.

Sixteen letters of support have also been received from staff and parents of children that attend the pre-school group. It is clear that the playground would also be used by children from this group during the week.

It is intended that when the project begins, we will have some volunteer work parties to clear the scrub around the site and to create a woodland path and glade in the adjacent copse.

Funding

Initial estimates suggest the cost of the playground equipment will be in the range £15 - 20K.

We have applied for and received a grant for £8,000 from East Herts and have received support from Clarion Housing, including the load of a rotavator for levelling off the ground.

It is anticipated that the rest of the funding will be provided from the village hall funds and from the Parish council.

Proposed equipment:

The intention is to create the play area near the pavilion and small wooded area at the eastern end of the recreation ground.

The play area will have two swings for older children near the pavilion and then a multi-use climbing/slide structure for young children away from the pavilion, but near the entrance to the woodland glade. There will be a swing appropriate for young children in the center.

The swings will need a rubber mat over the grass to prevent excess wear and for safety of the children.

An artist's impression of the equipment that will be installed is shown below.



We will also create a new path through the woodland, incorporating a woodland glade with some seating where children can play in the summer and it will allow them to interact with nature.

Progress to date:

After initially meeting with suppliers in November, we applied for and were awarded a grant by East Herts which allowed the project to proceed and an order to be placed.

The early part of the year has involved clearing the site and levelling it off to enable the equipment to be installed.

The area is being turfed on the weekend of the 22nd/23rd May to ensure that the safety mats can be securely positioned.

The equipment is to be installed at the beginning of June and it will be officially opened on the 17th July at the celebration of the cricket club's centenary.