

Orchard Park

a) Closure of Toddler Area

Councillors Moskwa and Williams inspected site on the evening of 20 July 2020 following reports on social media that the safer surfacing within the toddler area was secreting an oily black substance onto children's shoes. The toddler area was closed on 21 July 2020 and remains closed. The play park provider, Proludic, came on-site to inspect on 22 July 2020 and referred the concerns to their safer surfacing contractor. Following their inspection, the information returned was that the rubber mulch surfacing will create a certain amount of carbon black colour, however this colour is normally lost within the standard everyday use of the play area, and is not usually an issue, and hadn't been an issue previously.

The amount of carbon black colour on site did seem slightly higher than expected in this case. The safer surfacing contractor has concluded that a combination of factors appear to have contributed to this issue including the lockdown earlier in the year, whereby for a number of months the play area had been closed, and taking into account the hot weather conditions at this time, the carbon black had built up on the surface. The safer surfacing supplier is confident that the levels should return to normal as the play area is used.

The Council wants to understand any health and safety implications from the secretion of the carbon black colouring, what remedial work needs to be undertaken to ensure the toddler area is safe to re-open and whether any checks should be included as part of the play park inspection regime conducted by Bingham Town Council Groundsmen. It also wishes to progress other secondary surfacing concerns. The safe re-opening of the toddler area has stalled, due in part to a combination of factors, relating to the availability of officer resource.

b) Delegated Authority

Therefore, to facilitate the safe re-opening of the toddler area, it is RECOMMENDED that delegated authority is granted to a group of at least 3 Councillors (to include both the Chair and Vice Chair of Recreation and Amenities) to progress discussions with Proludic and its safer surfacing contractor and if necessary, to seek professional advice from a 3rd party.

c) Local Residents

A number of residents on the eastern boundary to Orchard Park are experiencing anti-social behaviour from young people. These intrusions are affecting residents' homelife, and pre-date the Covid 19 lifting of restrictions which more recently other parish and towns have experienced during spring/summer 2020. The intrusions take the form of young people meeting at the play park sometimes until late into the night, using certain pieces of play equipment to create a nuisance value, playing music loudly, swearing and using play equipment not designed for their age. Residents should feel at home in their own house and garden and not be uncomfortable in their own surroundings.

d) Delegated Authority to proceed with Site Security

Several different ideas have been suggested, and discussions have included the Police, unfortunately, there is no ideal solution. The Town Council is seeking to progress site security at Orchard Park by restricting access to the open space outside of certain hours by introducing a height appropriate fencing and lockable gates. To facilitate site security, it is RECOMMENDED that delegated authority is granted to a group of at least 3 Councillors (to include both the Chair and Vice Chair of Recreation and Amenities) to talk with residents and open space users, to seek planning advice and to progress discussions with suppliers. Budgetary provision of £5,000 has already been set aside from the recreation reserve to improve open space site security.