Batheaston Playground Working Group

Briefing note to Batheaston Parish Council from the Playground Working Group

To be presented at Batheaston Parish Council Meeting on 19th July 2022

This note is by way of a brief update on upcoming plans to deliver Phase 2 of the playground redevelopment.

Progress to date

The Playground working group met on 11th July 2022 to review completion of Phase 1 and begin to outline a plan for Phase 2. Full minutes are available.

The group discussed the funds used for Phase 1 and what had been achieved. The improvements had been well received and some key health and safety issues had been addressed. It was felt that whilst Phase 1 was overall a success, Phase 2 would benefit from a more specialised contractor.

Phase 2

Consultation

Some consultation of Primary and Pre-school aged children has already been undertaken, however it is felt that wider consultation is needed.

A simple survey is being produced to capture what is most important to residents. People will be invited to complete the survey throughout August and up to mid-September. It will be available digitally and sent out via the Council's email update and social media. Visits will also be made to Scouting groups, youth club groups, football groups, during busy times at the playground and at the pop-up market.

In addition to this the aim is to hold a playground event on 17th September. This will form part of the consultation process and create an opportunity to engage with young residents. It will attempt to appeal directly to young people by including a graffiti workshop, breakdance workshop, DJ, BBQ and Ice cream van. A small budget will be required to deliver this event.

The group felt strongly that by building strong relationships with young residents and consulting with them about how best to meet their needs, then it would encourage young people to take more ownership of our recreational spaces and reduce misuse of them.

Funding

There is £27k of existing funding available to us from Enovert and the group was reminded at the meeting of the need to spend this as soon as possible.

Ideas were discussed as to how we can access additional funding and develop more ambitious plans for the redevelopment (with final decisions to be made by BPC regardless of funding source). To summarise the key ideas:

I. Via Grow Batheaston
II. Banes funding sources and direct discussion with Ward Councillors Kevin Guy and Sarah Warren
III. Curo (specifically regarding murals on garages)

IV. Awards for All Lottery funding
V. Community Infrastructure Levi
VI. High Sheriff Grant
VII. Volunteers to use natural resources to create natural play equipment (e.g., steppingstones and logs)
VIII. Investing in improving the court with an all-weather surface, with the expectation of some payback through rentals.

Development Ideas

The group discussed a range of suggestions for improving the playground and making it more interesting, encourage use from a wider age group and improve accessibility for all ages.

It was felt that this could be achieved with a combination of updating purpose-built play equipment, introducing more seating, improvements to existing equipment (e.g., welding to skate ramp), developing the wild area by the Brook, installing versatile equipment (such as a permanent ping pong table), approaching Wessex Water to provide a drinking water tap, installing basic gymnastic style equipment and consideration given to accessible play equipment.

It was felt that an accessible path from the yellow entrance gate (in the north corner) down to the lower part of the path was a priority.

Next Steps

The survey will be completed to begin the consultation by August.

Group members are exploring funding streams through contacts and banes list.

Group members are contacting people who could help support the Playground Event

The group aim to meet again to finalise plans for the Playground Event in early September.

A report will be presented to the Parish Council Meeting on 20th September with recommendations for the next steps including an initial financial plan.

Cllr Kate Skelton

19th July 2022