



BUCKLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Renewal of Play Equipment Project

Report prepared for **Bucklesham Parish Council** by Ruth Johnson,
Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council

Brief: To obtain quotes and research available grants for the renewal of the Play Equipment on the Playing Field, Levington Lane.

Introduction

This report has been written following a request from Bucklesham Parish Council (BPC) to ascertain the implications of the renewal of the Play Equipment on the Playing Field.

David Bracey Play Inspections, have indicated that several pieces are nearing the end of their life and should be considered for renewal. Some pieces have already been removed for safety reasons.

The Play Equipment was originally purchased by the Parish Council in 2004 and was manufactured and installed by Playdale Playgrounds Ltd. It is inspected four times a year by David Bracey, with a RoSPA inspection annually. All pieces had a Lifetime Guarantee (15 years), which expired in 2019.

The purchase of the original Play Equipment was possible thanks to a Biffa Award, grants from the County and District Councillors, five smaller grants, and fundraising efforts by parents of children in the village.

The Third Party Funder to release the original Biffa Award was the Bucklesham Community Council. The Community Council was used to secure some of the smaller grants that would not fund Parish Council projects. This was possible as the Community Council's Constitution states that they were formed to:

'provide adequate recreational facilities, playing field and playground for the benefit of the community residing in Bucklesham'.

The Parish Council have a duty to provide play areas and have the powers to do so under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19.

Action Points

It will be necessary:

- To obtain at least 3 quotes from different play equipment companies – **completed**
- To research the possibility of available Grants – **completed**
- To show evidence of need: Safety Reports, letters/emails from parents and carers in village – **in hand**
- To gain written support from District and County Councillors – **received from Cllr Ninnmey and Reeves, nothing from Cllr Mulcahy**
- To gain the support of the Community Council – **completed**
- To have a formal consultation of the village with plans on display and an opportunity for parents, carers and children to have their say over the designs – **organised to take place in Village Hall on 29th March from 10am to 12pm.**
- For at least 2 Councillors to take on the role of 'Councillor rep' to aid the Clerk in management of the project along with 3 members of the village – **on March agenda**
- To undertake fundraising events to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the project – **in conjunction with the Community Council**

Play Equipment Companies who have been asked to quote

Company Name	Contact	Notes on Quotes	Recommended
Playquip Ltd	Brian Longman	Did not include many sensory pieces as requested, listened to our ideas	Installed our Roundabout so we have an existing relationship
NGF Play	John Reader	Listened to brief, quoted for 4 swings as requested (other quotes are only for 2), includes 2 large sensory areas as requested, overall quote is more expensive but with many more pieces so better value for money (piece by piece is cheaper than others), safety surface is more expensive than other quotes but is for bonded mulch not grass matting	Recommended by Ufford and Melton PC Clerk, also installed our Nest Swing so we have an existing relationship
Timotay Landscapes Ltd	Steve Cooling	Gym trail lacks a variety of pieces unlike other quotes	recommended by resident as seen at Thetford Forrest
Caloo Ltd	Adam Murray	quote is for 30m of Trim Trail not 50m as requested, Monkey bars are additional cost to Trim Trail, Cone Spinner is 1m toddler frame (others are 3m), quoted for Nest Swing which we already have	unknown
Handmade Places	Andy Kerr	Asked to quote for sensory pieces only (expertise) very expensive compared to other quotes, instantly offered a discount so didn't give best quote initially	recommended by resident as seen at Needham Market

Please see Appendix A for detailed breakdown of individual quotes and how they compare. **Abby Knight and I are recommending NGF** – they are local, we have worked with them before so have got an existing excellent relationship, they offer a wider variety of equipment, their sensory pieces are excellent, and they are the most competitive when comparing to the others. Abby and I felt that John really listened to us and gave us what we wanted not what he wanted to sell us.

Available Grants

Grant Name	Amount available	Notes	Outcome
Enabling Communities Budget (ECB)	£1,000	Cllr Reeves and Ninnmey have agreed to the application for £1,000. Application successful and money promised.	Successfully awarded £1,000
SCC Cllrs Locality Budget	Various (usually £1,000)	Cllr Mulcahy has been contacted on 6 occasions to request support from her Locality Budget but no reply received	No reply
The Rope Trust	Various amounts (usually £1,000)	Application form completed and sent, successful in first round,	Successfully awarded £1,500
Awards For All	£20,000	Awaiting PC decision before applying	
Tarmac	£30,000	Awaiting PC decision before applying	
CIL Play Fund	£50,000	Awaiting PC decision before applying	
Nationwide Colleagues Fund	£10,000	Awaiting next round (details from Kat's husband)	
Bernard Sunley Trust	Up to £100,000	Application form completed	Not successful
Co-op	£5,000	Application form completed	Not successful

Evidence of Need

Quarterly Safety inspections from David Bracey Play Inspections have noted severe deterioration in many pieces of the equipment. These have been flagged as needing urgent replacement. Many have already been removed and others are nearing the need for removal.

The Parish Council have asked the Friends Of the Playing Field (FOPS), frequent users of the Field, and nearby neighbours, if they feel the Parish Council should replace the existing equipment or remove and not replace. A number of replies have been received so far (see Appendix B) with all responders in favour of replacement. A Bugle Bulletin seeking opinions of the residents of the village will be sent to the wider community after the PC meeting if Councillors agree.

A consultation of the whole village is planned for 29th March in the Village Hall from 10am to 12pm.

This will allow all residents to view brochures detailing equipment available and then to give opinions and share preferences. The Consultation morning will be advertised in the Spring Bugle and on a Bugle Bulletin to ensure that all residents are informed. Support has been provided by Cllrs Reeves and Ninnmey, but no response from Cllr Mulcahy. A request for support has been made to the Bucklesham Community Council. Verbal support has been offered but this is needed in writing.

Formation of a Management Committee

It will be necessary to form a small Committee to oversee the project. Abby Knight, a resident and parent of children who will use the equipment has been present with me at every meeting with the Play Equipment companies and is happy to serve on a Committee. Abby is an expert in sensory equipment having a child with autism so her input is invaluable. I have asked David Riddleston, Playing Field Manager, to join the Committee and thankfully he has agreed and is very supportive of the project. Heather Owen, Chair of the Village Hall committee and former Parish Councillor is also willing to help - Heather will bring a wealth of experience having successfully completed the original play equipment project with me in 2004. I suggest at least 2 Councillors also join this Management Committee. This will ensure that all decisions made are not solely that of the Clerk and that this is a collaborative project with different stakeholders involved.

Fundraising

Many available grants require the applicants to show evidence of fundraising themselves. This should be done in collaboration with the Bucklesham Community Council. It is not necessary for that fundraising to reach a specific amount, but more to show willingness to help ourselves and not just ask for funding from others.

I would suggest that the first event should be in conjunction with parents and children who will use the equipment and would recommend an event such as a Sponsored Bounce which we have done before and was very successful.

A bouncy castle would be situated on the Playing Field for a substantial period of time (10 to 12 hours). Village children would volunteer to bounce continuously in their allocated time slot ensuring that the bouncing continues for the full duration of the event. The children would seek sponsorship for their minutes of continual bouncing. The bouncing would be in relay and well organised to ensure that there was always someone supervising and all safety measures were in place. This was a very successful event in 2004 when we fundraised for the original equipment and there are now far more children in the village so this is likely to be very successful again. It is novel so will draw attention to the project, enjoyable for the children, not expensive to organise, and could be very lucrative. I would suggest a day in the May as it will be warmer 😊

Conclusion

I would recommend that the Council strongly consider the replacement of the Play Equipment on the Playing Field. There is a proven need, grants are available, and the Council can contribute with CIL funds. I would not request overtime for the extra work involved and I am happy to undertake this project if the Parish Council agree.

Ruth Johnson

Clerk to Bucklesham Parish Council, March 2025