

Play parks and Covid 19

At a special meeting last evening the Parish Council agreed to re open the Play park. As you are aware the park was closed in March due to the pandemic.

Unfortunately it would appear some heard the Government announcement saying that parks 'may' re open 4th July but seemed to be unaware that this was not 'must'.

During the lockdown a number of signs were in place and barrier tape after a series of incidents of people going into the park anyway when it was 'closed' and this was agreed with the Police and the RCC. Now unfortunately due to the same people perhaps removing the signs and the strong winds these have gradually disappeared, and many took this to assume the park was open.

The reason for the delay for many authorities has been the ambiguous information received and Clerks of the Rutland parishes had to be guided by the Rutland County Council who found it all equally confusing.

There are a number of requirements to ensure the safety of all users and until these are fulfilled playparks must remain closed. It is disappointing that members of the public are just acting as if nothing has happened. We are told the virus can stay on hard surfaces for many hours and therefore some form of disinfecting is required. This is difficult enough for large town parks but for small parishes this is practically impossible when the site does not have staff patrolling all day with all the required equipment to do this.

Exton will be using the same methods as many other small villages and signage will advise users to bring their own sanitising 'wipes' or similar to use before and after play. The sign will take approximately 14 days to arrive as there is currently high demand.

The skateboard ramp is in grave need of repair and at the moment must not be used. It has signs and barrier tape to remind you. Hopefully this will be rectified in 10 days or so.

While this piece of equipment is enjoyed by many of the younger generation, residents should be aware that it is incredibly expensive to maintain and has caused the Parish Council to wonder at the feasibility of retaining it. Those of you who enjoy it and the rest of the playpark really need to consider if you can help with some fund raising. The Parish Council has a duty of care to all members of the parish, all ages and interests. This latest repair is nearly £2000!

Nobody on the Parish Council wishes to see the legacy of PAGE disappear but we have to be realistic and bear in mind running costs.

There has been a great deal of expenditure recently needed on the Town Pump [a listed building], still needing roof repairs, cleaning of the War Memorial [also listed], and the Councillors have to remember the effect on the Precept.

The much loved slide in the toddler area has, as you know, recently been vandalised with air rifle pellets. Why? With all the space around this village, areas where a row of tin cans could be set up as target – why would you think to go to the slide? Does anybody have any skills that could repair this to a professional level? It is hoped the culprit realises the seriousness of this vandalism. Not to mention how disheartening it is to those of us trying to make this a nice place to visit.

The removal of one springer had already been planned due to disrepair and now sadly the second has also deteriorated to such a degree it too needs removing. I believe Mick Mills made these originally in his shed at home and he and Puggy Langstone restored them a few years back. It is such a shame but health and safety is paramount.

The surrounding hedge and fence to the play park are constantly under repair and are not helped by people trying to take short cuts through them. We are required to keep the play park fenced off for safety reasons and please remember dogs should always be on leads for the safety and comfort of other users.

Visitors are requested not to leave any rubbish behind including used wipes, please take all your rubbish home. Do not eat and or drink in the park, it is not wise at present, and do remember to ensure all members of the family who have visited wash their hands on returning home.

If others are using equipment your family members wish to use, please remember the social distancing advised, step back and use something else.

The promised Eco Trail, new springer and bench are all ready to be delivered but will not arrive for around 8-10 weeks. These were purchased with the monies from the Healthy Rutland grant received.

Please note the playpark cannot be re opened until the sign is in place, the ramp repaired and the springer removed. Hopefully this should be before end of the month. It will then be closed later when the new equipment is being installed for possibly 2 days.

I know all this sounds very regimental but it is in the best interests of everybody and the Parish Council has to abide by the Government advice and Healthy and Safety regulations.

We want to keep you safe and allow you to enjoy the facilities in the Exton play park.

Annette, Clerk