



## Northlew Playground Routine Checks Policy

### Introduction

In 2010 Northlew Parish Council installed a children's playground on land gifted to them for recreational purposes in 1989. The playground area is situated next to the football pitch on the piece of land on the edge of the village on Crowden Road (EX20 3NJ).

The play area comprises several pieces of playground equipment including such things as swings, slides and wooden and rope climbing frames. The equipment is inspected by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) on an annual basis but there has not been any other formal protocol for checking the playground and equipment between the annual inspections by the outside agency.

This policy outlines a schedule of routine checks of the equipment to ensure that any deterioration in, or faults with, the equipment are noted at the earliest opportunity so that any maintenance required may be completed in a timely manner. This should also help to minimise any disruption to the use of the playground and also minimise maintenance costs as regular checks and maintenance should help preserve the longevity of the equipment.

To this end, one Parish Councillor has designated responsibility for the overview of the playground and will work with a newly formed Playground Working Party of interested parishioners where possible. Our overall aim is that the playground will be in as safe a condition as is reasonably practicable.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a framework for the Parish Council to identify or be informed of any damaged or faulty equipment that may become potentially dangerous within the play area
- ensure the Council has sufficient information to make decisions about play equipment condition and management
- enable play equipment damage to be identified in a reasonable time
- ensure that any identified dangerous equipment is properly dealt with and appropriate action taken in a timely fashion.

## **Routine checks of the play equipment**

The playground routine checks policy ensures that:

1. At each parish council meeting one Parish Councilor will be actioned to work alongside the Parish Councillor with designated responsibility for the playground to carry out a routine check before the next meeting and report back at the next meeting, or beforehand if required. This monthly routine check will be informed by the risk assessment supplied by ROSPA.
2. The findings of each monthly check will be recorded in the minutes and one new councillor will be actioned to carry out the check with the Parish Councillor with designated responsibility over the next month. This process will ensure consistency and will be implemented throughout the year until the ROSPA inspection is due.
3. If any routine check reveals any faults or damage that required attention then this should be reported immediately in writing to the clerk, copying in all the parish councillors by the parish councillors actioned that month to carry out the checks. .
4. Remedial action will then be organised and implemented as required by the Playground Working Party or the manufacturer of the equipment depending on the nature of the action required.
5. If any immediate remedial action is required e.g. closing a piece of equipment until the manufacturer is able to arrange to fix it, then a clear notice will be placed on the equipment alerting parishioners that it is no longer in use and notices will also be put on the website and the village notice boards.
6. The routine checks will be supplemented by any information provided by users of the playground. The Parish Council will ask all users to report any concerns about the condition of the playground equipment. This request will be made via Northlew News, the Parish website, the Parish notice board and by word of mouth.
7. Notification of any ongoing closure and/or maintenance must be posted on the Parish Council website and a notice put on the Parish notice board so that parishioners are made aware of the situation.
8. If immediate action is required due to safety reasons, it is agreed that it is reasonable that the action required can be agreed by a majority of councillors and the remedial actions implemented without waiting for them to be discussed at the next parish council meeting. The reasons why such action had to be taken without discussion at a parish council meeting must be reported at the next parish council meeting and recorded in the minutes.
9. It is hoped that regular routine checks will reduce the need to make decisions about remedial maintenance between parish council meetings thereby maintaining complete transparency with regards to decisions made.

## **Playground working party**

In addition to the regular checks of the playground equipment by the nominated Parish Councillors, it is also proposed to invite Parishioners to be part of a playground working party. Several parishioners have expressed an interest in being involved, with one agreeing to take care of the trees that have been planted in the recreational area, particularly the fruit trees. As previously stated, all parishioners are encouraged to actively report any issues with the play equipment or the surrounding area to the Councillors and/or the Clerk at [clerk@northlewparrishcouncil.org](mailto:clerk@northlewparrishcouncil.org).

## **Ratification of this proposal**

This proposal was ratified at the parish council meeting held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October. This playground check policy is being implemented by the Parish Councillor who agreed to lead this project at the meeting on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September. The creation of the parishioner led playground working party is ongoing and parishioners are encouraged to support this ongoing project by volunteering to help with the upkeep of the playground.