

Swingfield Report. - 2024

Syresham swingfield is located in the centre of the village on a piece of land which is leased by the Parish Council from the George Timms Charity Trust. The Parish Council aim to provide a safe and interesting play area, within well managed grounds, for the younger members of the community. Monthly inspections are carried out by all parish councillors on a rota basis, and every 3rd month by two councillors who have attended a course on safety and maintenance in playgrounds. This involves checking not only the play equipment itself but also the condition of fences, condition of trees, length of grass, signs of misuse of play equipment, condition of signs and safety notices and the general appearance of the site. An annual inspection of play equipment, as legally required, is carried out by ROSPA., with any recommendations being reported to, and implemented by, the Parish Council.

The 2018 ROSPA report highlighted the fact that several of the wooden structures are showing signs of rot and gave a remaining life expectancy of approx. 30 months. Anybody now using the swingfield will have noticed that new play equipment has been installed. This includes an inclusive round-about, a slide, a rope climbing frame and bridge and a good selection of pre-school equipment for the younger users. Existing non- wooden play equipment has been relocated within the site to provide separation for differing age group users. This new equipment, and the safe feeling of the swingfield has drawn in not only children from Syresham but also the surrounding area with picnics on the benches becoming more popular. With this increased usage in mind it was decided that an additional litter bin be purchased and positioned in the far end of the park.

The very wet and cold weather at the beginning of this year made mowing the swingfield impossible and at some stages the grass became very long, thankfully our mowing contractor has in recent weeks been able to carry out cuts and maintain the grass length. The muddy conditions had made the equipment very dirty and it was decided that this year we would employ a specialist cleaning firm to pressure wash the equipment and perimeter fence. This was carried out during April. The concrete apron at the swingfield entrance has been completed and should make access much safer, and the installation of a new information board has also been carried out.

The Parish Council are now in the latter stages of purchasing a piece of equipment to replace the climbing tower – the only remaining wooden structure, and this will hopefully be carried out shortly.

The surface water run-off is still a problem, even more so with the wet conditions we have experienced for the last 6 months. The parish council have reported this and we are assured that the necessary work to resolve the issue will be completed no later than July.

The entire swingfield is covered by a Public Spaces Protection Order – this makes it an offence to smoke anywhere within this area.

Moles often make an unwelcome appearance in the swingfield, these are professionally removed by Heyford moles (pest control)

There is, fortunately very rarely, evidence of deliberate misuse of the play equipment. We would ask all users to take notice of any warning signs around items of equipment. Anyone noticing suspicious behaviour in the swingfield should contact the local police and report any damage to our Parish Clerk. (01280 851178)

David Green

