

**HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of special meeting held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

**Present:**

Cllr. David Preedy (Chairman)  
 Cllr. Geoffrey Robb (Vice Chairman)  
 Cllr. Sarah Connolly  
 Cllr. Paul Furr  
 Cllr. Chrissie James  
 Cllr. Jane Pickard  
 Cllr. Erin Sheridan  
 Clerk - Gill Riggs

Also in attendance was Peter Riggs, to give advice and information having project managed a similar scheme.

This meeting was convened specifically to discuss Headley Playground and the designs and costings put forward by the Headley Playground Steering Group; and the way forward.

Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Preedy in respect of SMP Playgrounds.

The Chairman opened the meeting and suggested that discussion needed to focus on the following:-

1. Clarification of scope including inclusion of fencing and project management.
2. Design requirements of the Parish Council including:
  - a. Ease of maintenance
  - b. Design adequately addresses risk issues such as football and safety standards.
  - c. Appropriateness for village environment
3. Clarification of process requirements including:
  - a. Risk assessment completed; and to be reviewed by MVDC and insurers.
  - b. Availability of comparable quotations ensuring value for money.
  - c. Demonstration of how design supports survey results.
4. Review how designs compare, and recommendations for the Headley Playground Steering Group (HPSG).

Cllr. Preedy asked whether other Councillors had different points for discussion. Cllr. Connolly asked how quotations could be like-for-like when companies' vary in their designs. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council is obligated to obtain a minimum of three like-for-like quotations, and gave some background to how this would work in the playground situation, and that designs need to be comparable, rather than identical. It is accepted that some items i.e. swings or roundabouts are easy to directly compare, whereas items like multi-play units or trim trails are more difficult, but that this can be managed by specifying numbers of pieces and types of equipment for trim trails, and size/types of modules in the case of multi-play units etc.

Cllr. Robb explained that in any future plans, fencing and safety surfacing must be considered and quoted for. He also explained that football although popular and desirable, is potentially a problem when in an enclosed area with play equipment and that this must be checked out with the Council's insurers before it can be proceeded with - the Clerk explained that she has this in hand.

**ACTION: CLERK**

Cllr. Preedy expressed his concern regarding ongoing maintenance liabilities on the Parish Council and pointed out that any design being considered would need to be as maintenance free as possible and that there is a need to ensure that playground companies can supply spare parts for equipment. He commented that any company asked to provide a quotation needs to present a design where any risks are acceptable to the Parish Council's insurers. It was also pointed out that

any possible football facility could potentially be used by 17/18 year olds and that this would be outside of the Parish Council's control. Cllr. Preedy pointed out that there is a need to assess risks, as the playground is unattended, and there is a need to avoid the inclusion of any high risk equipment. Any specification needs to include safety surfacing for any items of equipment which require it. Cllr. Preedy also commented that any design being considered needs to be sympathetic to the surroundings and nearby properties and that it should not include any feature which dominates the Broome Close bungalows. These assurances need to also be taken into consideration where any items of bespoke equipment are being considered. Any company quoting must provide a risk assessment, including how the risks of football alongside play equipment would be mitigated; which will be reviewed by MVDC and the Parish Council's insurers.

Discussion took place regarding the safety matting donated to the group by the National Trust. It is unlikely that any company will guarantee its suitability and there may also not be enough for the project, resulting in a hotch potch of different types. It was agreed that this would not be used. Chipped bark safety surfacing was discussed and although aesthetically pleasing in a rural environment, Peter Riggs pointed out that it constantly needs replacing and tidying. The Clerk commented that wet pour is the best option although the most expensive, as it provides a seamless complete surface. Safety surfacing tiles are prone to lifting and being lifted.

Cllr. Robb asked Peter Riggs how far the Parish Council needed to go to demonstrate value for money. Peter explained that at any time the Parish Council and its accounts may be challenged by an elector or by government auditors and in the event of such a challenge, the Parish Council would need to be able to defend the decision to have chosen a particular piece of equipment or company over others available. There would be a need to demonstrate why other similar pieces of equipment or designs which were available had been discounted.

Cllr. Preedy suggested that there is a need for a core design, which must match the requirements of the village as demonstrated in the survey; and that a list of factors will need to be drawn up, by which any company invited to quote will be judged. Cllr. Preedy also talked about the need for compliance with European Standards of any equipment used within the playground. The Clerk will speak to Tony Wynne, Senior Parks Officer with MVDC, who is responsible for installing playgrounds. **ACTION: CLERK**

The Clerk pointed out that none of the designs and quotations provided so far could be considered in their current form as some were inappropriate and included equipment which had been discounted; some showed more than one design but the quotation was a mix of both; and one had not provided a proper quotation only a budget figure. It was also pointed out that very little of the designs and quotations on the whole largely matched the requirements of the village survey, which is wrong and is likely to be challenged by funding providers and possibly the village.

It was discussed and agreed that there needs to be further consideration of the companies being approached and that any quotation needs to match the requirements of the village survey. Peter Riggs suggested that a pre-tender questionnaire needs to be put together and the criteria issued to all companies being invited to quote. It was then agreed that the Clerk would compile a list of specific questions and requirements, to be put to any company prior to being invited to provide a quotation for a playground design, consisting of the following:-

1. Can they provide evidence of adopting best practice, standards, or guidelines for playgrounds.
2. How long the company has been in existence.
3. How risks are managed of any deposits being paid (pointing out disruption if the company ceases trading during the project).
4. Details of third party guarantee in the event of company collapse during the project or in the guarantee period.
5. Suppliers to be invited to propose how monies paid in advance are protected.
6. Provide a copy of the company's last report and accounts.
7. Details of any regulatory body covering all funds if the company ceases trading (as in ABTA for travel).
8. How Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations are met.

9. Proof of delivery of playgrounds to acceptable standards (as item 10).
10. Evidence of expertise in playground design (see item 10).
11. To provide details of a contact point for reference purposes of at least three sites where completion of supply and installation of playground equipment and/or safety surfacing to a similar size or larger (minimum of £45,000 excluding VAT) has taken place within the last year, acting as main contractor.

It was also agreed that the following criteria would be included in any quotation being provided. The list is not exhaustive and the Clerk will prepare both the pre-tender questionnaire and the contract invitation document, and will speak to Tony Wynne for examples used by MVDC.

**ACTION: CLERK**

1. Ease of maintenance.
2. Address any safety risks, including football.
3. Can they provide evidence of adopting best practice, standards, or guidelines for playgrounds.
4. Length of guarantee of equipment, including any bespoke equipment.
5. How long the company has been in existence.
6. How risks are managed of any deposits being paid (pointing out disruption if the company ceases trading during the project).
7. Details of third party guarantee in the event of company collapse during the project or in the guarantee period.
8. Suppliers to be invited to propose how monies paid in advance are protected.
9. Provide a copy of the company's last report and accounts.
10. Details of any regulatory body covering all funds if the company ceases trading (as in ABTA for travel).
11. Able to provide a design which blends into or enhances the village setting, and is not overbearing on neighbouring properties.
12. Give details of how waste is to be removed and disposed of, including foundations.
13. Give details of safety surfacing to be provided where needed and assurances that it confirms to all required standards.
14. Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations met.
15. How the risk of integration of football within the playground will be managed.
16. Details of site management including health and safety regulations and product liability.
17. Proof of delivery of playgrounds to acceptable standards (as item 18).
18. Evidence of expertise in playground design (see item 18).
19. To provide details of a contact point for reference purposes of at least three sites where completion of supply and installation of playground equipment and/or safety surfacing to a similar size or larger (minimum of £45,000 excluding VAT) has taken place within the last year, acting as main contractor.

It was agreed that all companies being approached would be given the pre-tender questionnaire. Cllr. Preedy mentioned that he could make an introduction if necessary to SMP Playgrounds although he declared an interest as a friend of his daughter is a Director of the company. Peter Riggs confirmed that SMP was one of the companies he had used for quotations and that they were very accommodating and professional. The Clerk said that she had given the playground group details of companies she had used previously in a scheme; and that she had also given them details of companies recommended by Tony Wynne, which were Playdale, Kompan, Lapsett and Russell Leisure. The Clerk then passed details of these companies on to Cllr. Pickard for her next meeting with HPSG.

Tony Wynne had also been approached regarding the football facility and whilst advising in writing against the combination of football and play equipment, he had explained that a small low-key football facility might be possible for very small children, if using low goals (under 2') and surrounding Panna fencing. Details of this had previously been given to the HPSG but do not appear to have been pursued. Cllr. Furr had recently looked at the playground layout and felt that it might be possible to cut out an area of sloping ground, which would separate the two facilities. The Clerk asked whether this would create any fall hazard.

The Clerk wished to record her concern regarding using any company not specifically experienced in installing playground equipment as their sole business. She was greatly concerned that one company who has already provided a design is a landscape design company specialising in stone walling and awkward gardens. She also expressed concern that this company was proposing mainly bespoke designs which were very expensive and that similar could be obtained cheaper elsewhere; and also reminded the Parish Council that the project is being paid for with public money and that it is normal local government procedure to invite tenders from companies experienced in the field being tendered for and that value for money must be considered at all times.

It was agreed that Cllr. Pickard would update the HPSG at its meeting this week and that the Clerk would draw up the pre-tender questionnaire and quotation criteria. **ACTION: JP/CLERK**

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Dated .....