

PETITION FROM RESIDENTS REGARDING YOUTH PROBLEMS AT DOGGETTS PLAYSPLACE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report presents a petition from residents of Stilwells and Stambridge Road in relation to social problems experienced since the refurbishment and upgrading of Doggetts Playspace in December 1999. Doggetts playspace has been in existence for over 20 years and was in need of these works to make it attractive to children again.
- 1.2. The new aerial runway has been the gathering point for youths at unsociable hours and particularly late at night.
- 1.3. The petitioners object to the position of the aerial runway and request its removal to a different location away from their properties. The petition wording is included as Appendix A to the report.
- 1.4. The petition is from the residents of 6 properties adjacent to Doggetts Play space and has been signed by 9 people.
- 1.5. A plan of Doggetts Play space is attached as Appendix B to the Report.
- 1.6. The residents have written to Sir.Teddy Taylor M.P. who has visited the site and has written to Rochford District Council suggesting that the playspace be locked up at night to prevent the nuisance. He proposed this solution as a compromise in balancing the needs of children and the concerns of the residents. He was also complimentary in respect of the equipment and of the children he observed enjoying themselves in the play space.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As part of the Playspace Rolling programme for 1999/2000, Doggetts was one of three Playspaces to be refurbished. The Aerial runway was situated along the boundary in order to provide safe distances from other equipment and to prevent the playspace being divided by its presence.
- 2.2. Refurbishment consisted of introduction of new equipment to upgrade the "play value" of Doggetts playspace, and upgrading of existing equipment and safety surfaces to conform with current standards.
- 2.3 Works for the programme were substantially complete before Christmas 1999, with the equipment and/or playspace secured until a full Risk Assessment was carried out by the National Playing Fields

Association Inspector on 21 January 2000. Following this inspection all the playspaces were opened for use.

3 NEW EQUIPMENT AND PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED

- 3.1 The new equipment at Doggetts Playspace included an aerial runway located near the boundary adjacent to the road opposite Stilwells . This piece of equipment has become the gathering place of youths at unsociable hours affecting the residents of these bungalows.
- 3.2 This piece of equipment consists of two towers approximately 3650mm high and 3350mm high and a platform 600mm above ground level. The towers consist of two posts and a cross bar with a wire rope between the two towers. It is situated approximately 16metres from the front boundary of the properties at Stilwells. The location is shown on Appendix B.
- 3.3 Where this type of equipment has been installed at other playspaces no long term problems of this type have been encountered. At each location including Althorne Way Canewdon, King George's Rayleigh, and Betts Wood Hockley, there was an initial upsurge of interest and high level of activity that gradually diminished to the more normal level of activity for the play space. It is anticipated that this will also be the case at Doggetts play space.

4 MEASURES TAKEN BY OFFICERS TO DATE IN RESPONSE TO RESIDENTS COMPLAINTS

- 4.1 The initial complaint from Residents was about the visual effect of the runway. Officers met some of the residents on 7 December 1999 and in consideration agreed to provide some planting and have subsequently planted 20 trees within the playspace, mainly on the boundary opposite Stilwells to reduce the visual impact of the towers. Although not very effective at the moment, but in the summer will be more effective, this is a longer term solution. Dense planting would not be undertaken as passive surveillance of the play space would be reduced. Passive surveillance is essential for safety where young children are playing.
- 4.2 Officers have been looking at the alternatives for securing the play space and/or equipment. Doggetts play space is currently not locked and never has been as the chain link fencing is vulnerable and easily damaged if people are determined to gain entry. Officers have therefore sought to arrange for securing the runway outside normal play hours to remove the effect of noise at unsociable hours.

- 4.3 As stated the play space is not normally locked, but when secured over Christmas before the NPFA inspection, fencing was damaged to gain entry, and the securing chain and lock on the runway was stolen.
- 4.4 In terms of locking there is not the budget to pay a contractor to lock the runway, and there may have to be a compromise of opening hours for the runway by arranging for Council staff to lock the runway before 5.00pm and unlock it after 08.30am, which will have cost implications for locking at weekends when staff have to come in to lock the equipment.
- 4.5 Officers have met with the petitioners at the request of the Ward Councillor on 15 February, to try and resolve the issues. Their concerns were discussed and it was explained to them that the decision whether to move the equipment lies with the Council Members and that the petition would be subject to this report for Members consideration.
- 4.6 Residents also raised issues at this meeting about problems including additional rubbish, the noise of the youths, and the foul language used by the youths. The litter problem has already been addressed, However the Council can not deal with the issue of foul language.

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is generally accepted that good quality play provision reduces problems associated with children. Doggetts playspace is within Rochford Roche Ward , a ward identified in the Crime and Disorder Strategy as having a high percentage of young people, some of whom have benefited from the improvement of play facilities at Rochford Recreation Ground. It was anticipated that the refurbishment of Doggetts Playspace would complement this strategy.
- 5.2 The disturbances by youths have been reported to the Police by Council Staff on a number of occasions. A response by the Police as to the number of actual complaints is still awaited. It is hoped that this information can be provided at the committee.
- 5.3 The Council's Community Safety Officer and the Police Crime Prevention Officer were consulted on the programme for the play spaces. No adverse comments were made relating to the equipment.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is not considered that the refurbishment has had any environmental effect on the area, although the additional planting of trees will be of benefit in the longer term as there is a lack of trees in the immediate vicinity.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The petitioners request the removal of the aerial runway. The cost of removing and reinstalling at a different location is approximately £6,000 - £8,000 depending on the number of pieces of other equipment that have to be relocated to accommodate the runway. This includes the cost of installing a new safety surface under the runway and reinstating the existing position. There is currently no budget available for this work.
- 7.2 The cost of locking the runway by the Contractor is in the order of £17k per year for seven day locking and unlocking at varying times, for which no budget is available
- 7.3 The cost of locking and unlocking during normal office hours which compromises the availability of the aerial runway especially during the summer months would be £3,000 - £5,000 for weekend overtime, for which there is no identified budget.

8 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Parish was consulted by RDC staff by letter dated 27 May 1999 on the type of equipment to be installed on this site, although no plan of the site was provided. Following Parish Council consideration a response to Rochford District Council dated 25 June 1999, suggested no change to the list of equipment to be provided, although the Parish did ask to be kept informed. However no further consultation by RDC staff was undertaken with the Parish before the new equipment was installed following the decision at F&GP on 12 October on the tender returns for the play spaces meant the works could proceed.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS**:
1. That the petition from The Residents of Stilwells be noted
 2. That Members either:
 - a. Agree to the locking of the aerial runway at night and unlocking in the morning, and the situation monitored, and a further monitoring report be submitted after a six month period.
 - or
 - b. Agree to locking of the equipment by the Contractor, and a further monitoring report be submitted after a six month period
 - or
 - c. Members agree to do nothing and a further monitoring report be submitted after a six month period.

2. That should Members agree to an option with Resources implications a. or b. above then this report be referred to F&GP to identify funding from Contingencies.

Tony Galloway

Head of Leisure & Client Services

Background Papers:

None

For further information please contact David Timson on (01702) 546366

APPENDIX A

Wording of the Petition typed for clarity

F.A.O. Mr. Timson

The Residents of Stilwells strongly object to the Ariel Runway opposite the Bungalows and we weren't informed.

- (1) Because it causes a disturbance that we should'nt have to put up with.
- (2) Its an eyesore, who in their right mind wants this outside their windows.
- (3) The abuse the older children give us.
- (4) The awful swearing
- (5) The noise it creates when there are lots of older children using the ariel runway, also the annoyance of it going to and fro across the windows.
- (6) It's no good locking up the Play Area, the older children get in. it's the Ariel Runway that wants immobilizing to prevent use in the late evening.

Mrs. J.E.Peters	9 Stilwells
Mr. H. Whipps	7 Stilwells
Mr.Mrs.Sawyer	8 Stilwells
Mrs.Berry	6 Stilwells
E.J.Berry	6 Stilwells
J.Overton	35 Stambridge Road
G.Overton	35 Stambridge Road
E.E.Patching	10 Stilwells

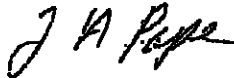


20, Bobbing Close,
Rochford,
Essex.
SS4

Dear Councillor,

Please find enclosed a petition signed by ⁹⁵ ~~92~~ residence against the removal of the
Aerial Runway at the playspace at Doggetts Close, Rochford.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs J Pope

CC Mr D Ford (Ward Councillor)

Mrs M Vince (St. Andrews Ward Councillor)

Tony Galloway (Head of Leisure & Client Services)

10 March 2000

To all Councillors of Rochford District Council,

We the undersigned, being parents, guardians, carers and Grandparents, are opposed to the removal of the Aerial Runway from the playspace at Doggetts Close, Rochford, for the following reasons:-

Children need a stimulating environment – the aerial runway provides this.

Children need to experience safe excitement – the aerial runway provides this.

It has attracted more children to use the playspace.

We feel that two months use is not long enough to allow for an informative decision to be made on the removal of the runway, and agree with Tony Galloway (Head of Leisure & Client Services), to allow an extension on the time (six months would be more acceptable) and/or the closure of the runway in the evenings.

We sympathise with the views of the eight residence who petitioned for the closure, but do not accept that this facility should be removed to the detriment of many children.

In an area which is growing in population, with housing to accommodate and encourage young families, this District Council should be looking to expanding play facilities and not closing them.

Please take our views into consideration when making your final decision at full Council on 18 April 2000.

NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
Clare Nightingale	27, 8c Marks Field	Clare Nightingale
A T Nightingale	" " Rochford	A T Nightingale
V Nash.	Nanny "	V Nash

NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
P. Boul	10. Bobbing Cls	P. Boul
M. Boul	" "	M. Boul
S HARRIS	29 St MARKS FIELD	S Harris
L Appleton	82 St clare meadow	L. Appleton
C. Appleton.	110 GARDEN WAY	C. Appleton
T Gillespie	54 St clare meadow	T Gillespie
G. Neave-Houghting	" " "	G. Neave-Houghting
J Westgate	29 Chignal House	J M Westgate
Ann King	25 Tylney Ave	Ann King
Amanda Boyd	12 Tylney Ave	Amanda Boyd
LISA KING	25 Tylney Ave	LISA KING
Lewis Burrows	3 Cagefield Cott	Lewis Burrows
Angela Burrows	3 Cagefield Cott	Angela Burrows
Mark Burrows	3 Cagefield Cott	Mark Burrows
D. CROSS	34 WARMEDUNE	D. Cross
M. Reed	3 Puffins Close	M. Reed
R. King	25 Tylney Ave	R. King
Cheryl Mundy	18 Scotts Hall	Cheryl Mundy
DARREN CAMPION	-11-	Darren Campion
Lisa Long	23 east street.	Lisa Long
Josie King	33 Golden X. Rd.	Josie King
K. Ayres	Holt farm way	K. Ayres
Rosie Campion	3 Barbours Close Rochford	Rosie Campion

NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
MRS. T. MASON	25 St Marks Field Rochford	
MRS. T. MASON	" "	
MRS. J. A. PAPER	20, Bobbing close	
J. King	3 Bobbing close	J. King
E. Kitch	" " "	E. Kitch
N. SPEARMAN	16 MIDDLE MEAD	N. Spearman
D. SPEARMAN	16 MIDDLE MEAD	D. Spearman
C. GARRETT	30 MIDDLE MEAD	C. Garrett
A. Webb	28 ST MARKS FIELD	A. Webb
G. Webb	" "	G. Webb
T. ROSE	44 Malting Villads Road.	T. Rose
A JACKSON	30 ST CLARE MEADOW.	
S. L. STURGE	48 Malting Villads Rd.	S. L. Sturge
T. Addison	1 ST CLARE MEADOW	T. Addison
C. LAUNN	596N CREDENS	C. Launn
T. PEELE	103 st clare MEADOW	T. Peela
T. THORN	" "	
C. Thorn	" "	
L. WOOD	57. St clare Meadow	L. Wood
S. WOOD	" " " "	

NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
S. Rossi	1A Golden Cross	S. Rossi
S Cosker	11, Rochford Gardens Way	S Cosker
S Ebery	28 Mannington Ave. Rochford	S Ebery
K. Reed	30 Rochford garden way	K. Reed
A. Barker	140 " " "	A Barker
R MANN.	Showerham Rockhall way	R Mann
PA Mann.	Showerham " "	PA Mann
S TAYLOR	72 Rochford G. way	S Taylor
M TAYLOR	" " "	M Taylor
A. GREENWOOD	36 St Clare Meadow	A Greenwood
H. DAVIS	71 WARWICK DRIVE	H. Davis
S JONES	166 ROCKFORDSON way	S Jones
L. PETTITT	58 ST CLAUZE MEADOW	L Pettitt
R. PETTITT	" " "	R Pettitt
G. Williams	3 CHERRY ORCHARD	G Williams
S. Batt	34 Heritage Way	S Batt
I. Wood.	35 St Clare Meadow	I Wood
L Ralph	75 St Clare Meadow	L Ralph
K NOBES.	152 Rochford SON way	K Nobes
D. King.	68 St Clare meadow. Rochford	D King
S. Codling	61 " " "	S Codling
L. Boulh	47 MILLVIEW MEADOWS	L Boulh
MRS CROME	12 ST MARKS FIELD	Mrs Crome
MR CROME	" " " "	Mr Crome
K COTTIS	47 MILLVIEW MEADOWS	K Cottis

NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
T. Street D Coobie D S G	21 EAST WAY Garden Way St Clare	Tom Chad Coobie D S G
L. Mansfield S Pettitt T. GIBBINSON W Moss	83 ST CLARE - 58 MALTING VILASIES 11 ST. MARKS FIELD 8 Somerset Ave	L. Mansfield S Pettitt W Moss W Moss
A Collett L Currell	7 ^B Somerset Ave 52 Chaffield Rd	A Collett L Currell
J Boosey	25 Keller Lane	J Boosey
K. Hierons	100 ROCHFORD 901 WAY	K. Hierons
M. Birby N Brown	6 EAST WAY ROCHFORD 251 ROCHFORD 901 WAY	M. Birby N Brown
K Smith	47 ST CLARE MEADOW	K Smith
T. BENTLEY	48 ST CLARE MEADOW	T. Bentley
M J Bentley	48 St Clare	M J Bentley
MR KING	14 Bobbing Close	MR KING
MISS CAREY	14, BOBBING CLOSE	MISS CAREY
MRS Y. Carey	14, Bobbing Close.	Y.C. Carey
Mrs E Sack	11, Prentice Close	Mrs E Sack
M. V SACK	" " " "	M. V Sack
MRS J. McEVOY	55 The Drain	MRS J. McEVOY
MRS. P. STACEY	115 R.G.W.	MRS. P. STACEY

mrs m kamba 64 R G W

mrs m kamba

16 Doggetts Close
Rochford
Essex SS4
Tel 531334

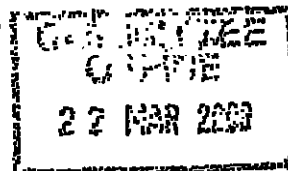
Rochford District Council
South Street
Rochford

To Whom It May Concern

it has been brought to my notice that a decision will be taken at the next meeting of Finance and General Purposes whether or not to spend money removing an item of play equipment from Doggetts Close play Space. Please find my petition to oppose that.


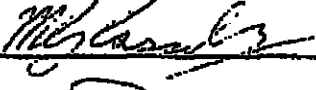

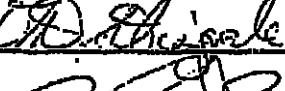





Yours Faithfully

Kathleen Leach



Petition to save our play equipment

Because 4 people have complained about children enjoying themselves Rochford Council is going to remove the ARIEL SLIDE from Doggetts Play Space. We want to keep it. Please sign below in support of NOT REMOVING IT.

Name.	Signed.	Address.
KATELEACH		DOGGETTS CLOSE
M. CRESSBALL		WEST STREET
J. PANTREY		9 BEAVERBROOK MEWS,
P. HENWOOD	P. Henwood	—
C. NUTTINGALE		27 ST MARKS
J. READE		—
D. JOSEPH		—
J. COOMBS	J. Coombs	—
L. HUGGINS		2 Doggetts Close
S. BEN		—
D. PRESTON		Partlandals, Rochford.
L. BELL	L Bell	1 Doggetts Close Rochford
Lauren	—	—
Ruby	Ruby Wilford	6 Doggetts Close

Petition to save our play equipment

Because 4 people have complained about children enjoying themselves Rochford Council is going to remove the ARIEL SLIDE from Doggetts Play Space. We want to keep it. Please sign below in support of **NOT REMOVING IT.**

Name.	Signed.	Address.
Alan Cole		
Mark Glenister		
Bicky Sullivan		
Martin Wainch		
SAMITHELL	AD MALTING VILLAS RD	ROCHFORD
Kayleigh Mitchell		
Sophie Mitchell		
Cassio in Evers.		
T Richards	42 nd	WARWICK DR ROCHFORD.
Sally Battley	23	MILBURN COURT ROCHFORD.
Gardienne Harris	27	ST MARKS FIELD
P. J. Ford		
Sarah		
Lewis		
Charlotte Pallett	40	CAGE FIELD ROAD

Petition to save our play equipment

Because 4 people have complained about children enjoying themselves Rochford Council is going to remove the ARIEL SLIDE from Doggetts Play Space. We want to keep it. Please sign below in support of **NOT REMOVING IT.**

Name of Person Signed Address

24 Doggetts Close Rochford

Gavin Greenfield

Chloe Marshall

BLAGO-HART. 19, WARWICK DRIVE

305 h in a Lago Hare

J. Gouther 18 Longfield Rd Sturbridge

M. Price, M. Price Doggetts Close.

M. M. N. LEACH 53 WESTBURY, ROCHFORD

M. M. L. AWLIX 14 JOHNSON COURT

L. Wilkin L. WILKIN 30 WARWICK DRIVE

Richardson P. RICHARDSON "

Richardson J. RICHARDSON "

M. Hull M. HULL 9 Nansen Ave.

T. Hull T. HULL 6 WESTBURY

Mandy Hill 51 Millview MEADOWS

L. Wilkin L. WILKIN 14 JOHNSON COURT

MARGARET WIGGS 98 HILCOMVILLE DR M.S. WELLS
W-6.3 1987

WHEGGETT 11 Jubilee cotts L. Hoggatt
Paglesham

P. Schrader 11 Jubilee cotts P. Schrader
Paglesham

J. Hart 22 Hogarth Drive J. Hart
Shackington

Robyn 13 Doggetts Close

Dean Boyser

Aaron Boyser

Jordan Boyser

Codie - Doggetts Close, Rodeford

Joshua Pearman

Luke Botley 23 Milbourne Court Rodeford

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 MARCH
2000**

**Minute 74 – Petition from Residents regarding Youth Problems at
Doggetts Playspace**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Leisure & Client Services on a petition received from residents of Stillwells and Stambridge Road in relation to social problems experienced since the refurbishment and upgrading of Doggetts Playspace in December 1999.

In noting the background to the upgrading of the facilities for this Playspace, Members expressed concern at the lack of public and Ward Member consultation which had taken place. The Committee was divided as to support for either the removal and re-siting of the play equipment or its retention with locking at night. On a Motion put by Councillor D M Ford and seconded by Councillor Mrs M A Weir it was:-

RESOLVED

- (1) That the aerial runway installed at Doggetts Playspace be removed and re-sited to a suitable alternative location.
- (2) That the matter be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to seek funding. (HLCS)

Note: A copy of the original report from the Head of Leisure and Client Services is attached, together with additional information to aid Members consideration of this matter.

Andrew Smith

Head of Administrative & Member Services

1. COUNTER PETITIONS

- 1.1 Following publication of the resolution passed at Community Services on 1 March 2000 to relocate the aerial runway, Officers have received a large number of representations in the form of two further petitions (Appendix A and B, one containing 95 signatories and the second containing 52 signatories) seeking to have the runway retained in its present position in Doggetts Playspace.

2 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 If Members are minded to remove and relocate the aerial runway, the cost for removal and reinstallation is estimated at between £6,000 and £8,000. If Members are minded to adopt this option the funding would either need to be drawn from the General Contingency Provision or off-set against the 2000/2001 Capital Programme for Playspace upgrade, as that would more likely provide the best possible use of the original runway equipment.
- 2.2 If Members are minded to retain the facility and lock up the runway each night to prevent unsociable use by youths, the cost of employing an external contractor is in the region of £17k per year for seven day locking and unlocking throughout the year. There is no identified budget for this purpose. This sum at present would need to be drawn from the Contingency Provision.
- 2.3 The cost of locking and unlocking the aerial runway during office hours, which compromises its availability especially during the summer months, would be between £3,000 and £5,000 for weekend overtime, for which there is no identified budget. This sum at present would need to be drawn from the Contingency Provision.