

POOLES LANE RECREATION GROUND PROPOSED ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' agreement to the installation of two picnic benches adjacent to the Pooles Lane playspace on the recreation ground, with the works funded by Hullbridge Parish Council and via grants.
- 1.2 The report also seeks Members' agreement to the terms and conditions for the acceptance of equipment, paid for through grants obtained by Hullbridge Parish Council, and their own funding.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A report was submitted to Community Services Committee on 1 September 2005, seeking agreement for Hullbridge Parish Council to provide additional equipment to expand the Playspace on the recreation ground. This was agreed, with conditions on ownership and maintenance. (min.no.322/05)
- 2.2 Hullbridge Parish Council now seeks to provide and install two new steel picnic benches adjacent to the playspace, with the remainder of the funding from the Friends of Fun for our Young grant initiative, after the expansion of the playspace in 2005.

3 PROPOSAL BY HULLBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

- 3.1 A proposal has now been forwarded to Rochford District Council from Hullbridge Parish Council, providing funding for provision of two steel picnic benches on District Council land. The letter submitted by the Parish is included as Appendix A.
- 3.2 This proposal is for the Parish Council to fund the additional works, subject to the District Council agreement to this provision
- 3.3 Discussion has been ongoing with Officers at the District Council on the technical requirements for equipment and the space provided, to ensure that the proposal would be acceptable on technical grounds. It has been made clear that formal agreement would be required from the District Council for this proposal on the recreation ground.
- 3.4 Equipment supplied by HAGS (a national manufacturer of playground equipment) is acceptable to the District Council and should conform to all necessary British and European safety standards. This is a reputable company who have tendered for playspace equipment for the Council in the past.

- 3.5 Finance, installation costs and purchase will be managed by the Parish Council.
- 3.6 Inspection, maintenance, responsibility for dismantling, disposal, and reinstatement at end of the equipment's useful life is a more contentious area. Unlike the playspace equipment that Members agreed to be maintained under the Grounds Maintenance Contract, it is suggested that maintenance of the picnic benches is less problematic and is carried out by the Parish Council.
- 3.7 Pooles Lane playspace was considered during the Play Space Sub Committee's review of playspaces, as a strategic playspace which provided local usage and also attracted visitors to the District due to its location.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Following a petition from residents in Hullbridge, much work has been carried out to raise and secure funding, in partnership with the Parish, for this additional equipment. The District Council could create a reputational risk should it not support this project
- 4.2 Inspection and maintenance, if agreed as suggested, would require the Parish Council to regularly inspect and maintain the picnic benches and be subject to the annual NPFA inspection of all playground equipment.

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The provision of benches has always been a difficult area in that whilst they may be well used during the day, there is a tendency for youths to gather at such locations in the evening and at night, which is often seen by others as a nuisance.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In terms of the life expectancy of the equipment, most equipment will last a minimum of ten years, possibly up to fifteen. The Parish Council will be responsible for removal of the picnic benches and reinstatement of the ground at the end of their useful life and so there are no financial implications for the District Council as a result of this report.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 By accepting the proposal, the District Council would not be taking on the legal responsibility for the equipment. The Parish Council would need to agree to a regular schedule of inspection to protect the District Council.

8 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This proposal would demonstrate a good degree of partnership working with the Parish, if agreed.

9 RECOMMENDATION

9.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

To agree the use of Rochford District land for the two picnic benches, with them being funded by the Parish Council and grants that they have secured, with maintenance and ownership to be the responsibility of Hullbridge Parish Council.

Graham Woolhouse
Corporate Director (External Services)

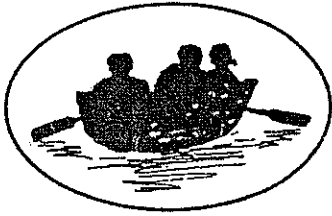
Background Papers:-

None

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HULLBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

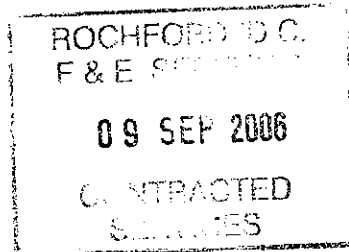
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Mrs. L. Cowan – Clerk to the Council

Ref: 068150

8th September 2006

Mr. D. Timson,
Rochford District Council,
South Street,
Rochford, Essex,
SS4 1BW



Dear David,

Proposed Picnic tables and benches - Pooles Lane recreation ground

As you know Friends of Fun For Our Young raised a great deal of money towards the new playground equipment that was sited in the extended play area of Pooles Lane recreation ground.

Although the group has now disbanded there is a surplus of finance available which has been handed to this Council and it is hoped, will be used for the provision of picnic tables and benches.

A design manufactured by HAGS of hollow boxed steel that is galvanized and powder coated has been identified as a suitable design. The manufacturer advises the structure is virtually indestructible and the design has only one centre leg which gives easy access to those with disabilities.

The specification and design has been submitted to Richard T-B who has given his approval providing they are fixed on a concrete base. I am, therefore, officially requesting permission for this Council to supply and fit one, possibly two of these tables and benches near to the children's play area.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Cowan
Clerk to the Council

Copy: Richard T-B