

Shotley Parish Council
Play Provision Working Group
Project Plan - 2023

History:

Following a recommendation from the Responsible Financial Officer in 2006, the Parish Council put funds aside in an earmarked reserve for a time when the play equipment would need to be replaced, as the capital investment would be considerable. A total of £25,000 has been earmarked for this purpose.

Further funding applied for by the RFO resulted in an additional £10,000 “pot”, which was also earmarked for play provision. The Parish Council currently holds £24,908 in Community Infrastructure Levy, which, if the Council was minded to, could be put towards the project, reaching a grand total of £59,908, which is a positive position to be in, in terms of match funding.

The two existing play areas (Kingsland and Lloyd Road) are over twenty years old, are not inclusive, some parts no longer meet current standards, and may not make the best use of available space and resources. Both will require considerably more investment than that available from the Parish Council due to the rise in costs, therefore the Parish Council would still need to apply to additional sources, such as Babergh District Council’s S106 and CIL funding “pots”, or from third parties, like the Lottery, Babergh Communities, and Sports England.

From the new Council formed in June 2023, we now have a new Working Group which will work towards the delivery of new play provision, and it will ultimately be for the Parish Council to decide whether the same amount will be spent on both, or whether a calculation “per capita” will be needed in case the number of children in Shotley Gate is considerably higher than that at the Kingsland site. This applies the principle of *“expenditure being commensurate with the number of parishioners who benefit from it”*. In any case, both areas will be refurbished in due course and should include provision of equipment for children with disabilities, as well as older children and adults, like an outdoor gym trail, a zip wire, a nature trail, etc.

The successful delivery of this project will depend on the strength and commitment of this Group, engagement with the local community, support from the local authorities, and successful fundraising.

Initial steps will include an initial appeal for more members, an agreement on regular meeting dates and times (following consultation with members), allocation of tasks, and submission of monthly reports to the Parish Council.

Current members: Cllrs R Wrinch, T Ingram, P Hillier, C Smith and the Parish Clerk.

Objective: To establish and execute a comprehensive plan for the installation of new play equipment in Shotley, ensuring a safe and engaging recreational space for the community.

1. Formation of the working group:

- identify and recruit members for the working group, including representatives from the community and relevant stakeholders.
- Advertise the formation of the Group on media platforms and publish meeting dates and times.
- Assign specific roles and responsibilities to each member based on their availability, expertise and interests.

2. Community engagement:

- conduct a survey and hold community meetings to gather input on preferred play equipment and features.
- establish a dedicated communication channel (e.g., website, social media) to keep the community informed and engaged throughout the process.

3. Site assessment:

- collaborate with local authorities to conduct a thorough assessment of potential play equipment locations, considering safety, accessibility, and community preferences.
- ensure compliance with regulations and obtain necessary permits (this will involve getting written confirmation from Babergh Planning, Public Realms, Environment Agency, Suffolk County Council, Police, etc.).

4. Budget planning:

- develop a detailed budget, including costs for equipment purchase, installation, removal and clearance, safety measures, and ongoing maintenance.
- explore funding opportunities such as grants, sponsorships, and community fundraising events. The Parish Council has a healthy reserve and existing CIL funds, which will serve as match funding for larger bids, such as CIL and National Lottery.

5. Contractor selection:

- research reputable play equipment suppliers and obtain quotes (minimum of three) based on the results of initial surveys and budget availability.
- finalise the design based on community input, safety considerations, budget constraints and relevant permits.

6. Design approval:

- present potential play equipment designs to the community for feedback.
- finalise the design based on community inputs, safety considerations, budget constraints, and final approval by the parish council.

7. Fundraising:

- nominate 1/ 2 members who will actively research funding opportunities and complete funding applications.
- explore partnerships with local businesses and organisations and apply for any available grants. This could include partnerships with fitness type/social inclusion activity providers.

8. Project timeline:

- develop a detailed project timeline outlining key milestones, deadlines, and dependencies.
- regularly update the community on progress and any adjustments to the timeline.

9. Installation and safety compliance:

- coordinate with contractors the initial clearance of the site, the new equipment delivery and installation, and initial inspection, taking note of any access issues or site availability (i.e., avoid work during school holidays).
- keep existing contractors, such as grass cutting and warden) informed of installation dates.
- conduct safety inspections (Rospa accredited) and ensure compliance with relevant safety standards.

10. Grand opening celebration:

- plan a community event to celebrate the completion of the project.
- Invite residents, businesses, stakeholders and funders to join in the unveiling of the new play equipment.

11. Ongoing maintenance:

- establish a maintenance schedule to ensure the ongoing safety and functionality of the play equipment (i.e. include it in the Warden's weekly checklist and inspect it annually by an accredited provider).
- Encourage a sense of ownership by users throughout the process and encourage community members to report any issues promptly.

12. Documentation and reporting:

- maintain detailed records of the project, including financial documents, contractors' agreements/guarantees and community feedback.
- prepare a comprehensive report for the parish council summarising the project's development and outcomes (item to be included by the Clerk on every agenda for the provision of an update report).
- inform the Clerk (no later than seven days before a meeting is due) if there is any item of expenditure to be considered by Councillors. Unless clearly stated as a motion and approved, capital expenditure may not be incurred.

13. Sustainability planning:

- explore options for ongoing sustainability, including potential partnerships, community engagement initiatives, and long-term plans.
- Include recommendations to the full council for the allocation of maintenance funds at budget-setting times.

14. Post-implementation evaluation:

- assess the success of the project and identify lessons learned for future initiatives.

Prepared by: D Bedwell (Shotley Parish Clerk).

Date:9th November 2023.

Adopted by the Shotley Parish Council