

A New Play Area for Shipton Let's Hear It for the Kids!



Back in June 2009 we were hoping to raise £50,000 to rebuild the play area on the recreation field at Shipton. Prices were soaring and there were endless extra costs to consider, so was this figure going to be sufficient? After completing up to 14 pages per grant application, supported by over 70 pages of plans, drawings and other documents we have more than reached our target; in fact we have surpassed our wildest dreams! So now the real work begins.

Spinning

Over the past few years, Jo Cook and I have tried so many swings, slides and roundabouts that our heads were spinning. Time to recruit some younger blood. Max Askew, a landscape architect, has joined our team and his new ideas and detailed drawings have proved invaluable. Debbie Whitehouse and Lisa Munro, who both have young children, were able to steer us towards what the youngsters really want.

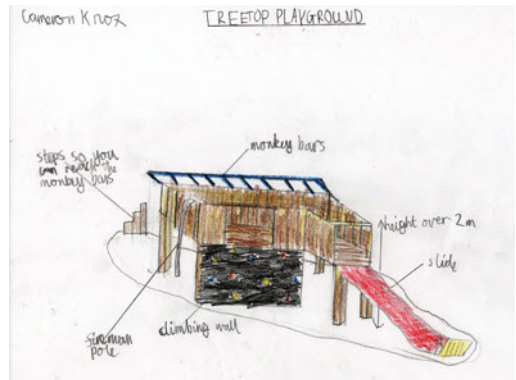
The world of children's play has changed. No longer is it just about play but more to do with wider experiences and social

interaction between the young and the older generations. Alongside the ample play equipment, there will be places to sit; be it on boulders, tree trunks or picnic tables and seats.

Kid's Play

Many of the grant applications required proof that we had involved potential users in the planning. We certainly have done that, with questionnaires filled in, ideas modelled in sand and photographs of favourite pastimes.

More than 50 children drew plans of their dream playground.



We managed to involve 240 village people in this planning - and guess what? Their dream lists included most of the equipment that we already had in mind ourselves.

Some of that equipment has already been ordered; a banister slide, two climbing poles, a two metre tunnel under the mound and a supernova. You don't know what that is - well just you wait and see; you'll be amazed. With mounds to run over, one climbing frame with nets and

one made from tree trunks, a large sandpit, a zip wire, spinning zigzag pole and bowl, a stand-up see-saw and a bird's nest basket, there really will be something for everyone. There will be not one, but four different ways to enter this paradise, one especially designed for parents pushing baby buggies.

Fences and Hedges

But it does not stop there. Please encourage your children to join us on a small committee of play area users, aged 6 to 18. With their help we will plant shrubs and fruit bushes to form hedges. The area will be landscaped with rocks and stones to clamber over, a timber shelter in case of rain, a two-storey playhouse and, my personal favourite. You'll never guess what it does! If the money stretches far enough we hope to create a separate, gated area, fenced with willow and dogwood, to keep the very young safe from harm.

When can I Take my First Swing?

The question I am asked the most is 'when will it be ready?' There is still a huge amount to be done, including essential drainage, but our schedule suggests that the equipment will all be in place by mid-September. Remember though that schedules are always optimistic and there could yet be many minor hold-ups. There will be a whole



month when the play area will be cordoned off while the work is completed, but we are sure it will be well worth the wait.

Once the list of equipment has been finalised a plan will be posted on the village website:
www.shiptonunderwychwood.org
so watch this space.

When all the work is completed and the children are enjoying themselves we will be relying on you to tell us if there are any problems with the equipment. If you or your children would like to join us on our planning committee please contact me on: 01993 830742 or email me at: malcolm@mcochrane.co.uk

Malcolm Cochrane

Setting the Record Straight

Ever since it became known that the PCT had granted permission for a pharmacy to open in the Wychwoods and its consequent effect on the Wychwood Surgery I have been asked by many of my customers if I am planning to allow my shop to be used. Whilst Shipton Post Office is on the market, there are no buyers at present and I would like to make it quite clear to the people of the village that I have nothing to do with any proposal to open a pharmacy. **Chirag Patel**