



ABOVE SKETCH VIEW OF PROPOSED PLAYGROUND AT BELL MEADOW

Present: Councillor Joanna Symons, Councillor John Tompkins, Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk), Carolyn Filmer, Bob Jones, Pam Seear, Nigel Cornwell

01. Welcome

- Joanna welcomed those present to the meeting.

02. Apologies for absence

- Apologies were noted from Lisa Carter and Graham Bannerman.

03. Kerry Gentry, Regional Sales Manager, Infinite Playgrounds

Infinite Playgrounds make natural playscapes with timber (Robinia which is a hardwood). They have a workshop in Newcastle but cover the whole of the UK. She had designed a bespoke, natural scheme specifically for Bell Meadow which would appeal to ages from pre-school to early teens.

There are 3 pieces of equipment in the proposal.

- Younger – natural climbing with tower/ladder/slide/fireman's pole
- Older – natural climbing scramble beams (8 m long)
- Inclusive – basket swing

Infinite Playgrounds are not catalogue designed; they are adapted to individual needs.

Surfacing will be grass guard matting, although not essential for all equipment, her advice (and quote) was to have it for all equipment to protect the ground from wear and tear as well as for safety of users.

They have done playgrounds at Cudmore Grove (East Mersea), and Weald County park in Essex.

Suggest viewing video on website (which wouldn't work in hall).

<https://www.infiniteplaygrounds.co.uk/> Also lots of information to view on website.

Robinia is a hard wood from Europe. There are no straight lines – it is all natural. No chemical treatments needed. It is rot resistant and long lasting.

Guaranteed for 7 years on timber – extended to 15 years with metal feet (at extra cost).

Metal feet also protect against strimming.

Life expectancy is estimated at 20 years. Robinia is fast growing so more sustainable.

Lead time – varies but on average 7 weeks.

Foundations – in-situ concrete. Metal feet bolted. Structural engineer will detail.

Maintenance packages available. Probably sufficient for the likely usage for 1 x per year.

Installation is guaranteed for 1 year. After installation an independent check is required.

Installation takes approx. 8-10 days. The area will be Heras fenced off during works.

The slide is stainless steel and designed to not be south facing.

04: Stephanie Rogers, Area Sales Manager & Stuart Wetherall, Sales Director, Wicksteed Playgrounds

Wicksteed have been manufacturing playground equipment for over 100 years. Extensive guarantees. Financially stable. UK manufacturing. Spares manufactured and readily available from UK. Full service and maintenance UK support team. British owned family business. Payment terms 30 days following installation.

Wood is slow grown Scandinavian pine which is then kiln dried. It is treated with chemical compound which is driven into the wood. The process gets to the core of the wood.

On the towers, the roof etc are made of hard wood. They have done playgrounds at various sites around Essex including Danbury, Little Baddow and Great Dunmow.

Rope – steel core with nylon braided rope and aluminium clamps.

They can replace individual parts if required and they can respond quickly as they have reps all around the country who can respond.

- Tractor – bespoke design with high density plastic.
- Young Explorer – 2-5 years
- Climber – up to 10 years
- Trail – any age - good for core development, agility, balance, coordination.
- Cone Spinner – challenging
- Basket Swing – 1m diameter. Inclusive equipment. All ages and abilities.

Grass matting is suitable and grass is mowable. Laid to contours of the ground. More natural and cost effective. Low maintenance.

Colours – wood is natural. Rope comes in several colours – suggest green. Natural colour not available as the nylon rope has steel core which is essential for longevity. It is possible for natural colours for all wood, no need for any stains.

Lead time – approx. 10 weeks.

Installation - approx. 2 weeks (September or March are best times for grass matting installation).

Foundations – in-situ concrete.

Timber treated so metal feet are not required.

Guarantee 10 years on timber, extended to 15 years with metal feet.

Life expectancy is estimated at 20 years

Strimming – do need to be careful if metal feet are not fitted.

Dynamic loads – stress tests will have been done. Posts are installed 750mm into ground. Swing has a metre cube under posts.

Inspections – a manual is issued with references to equipment installed. Independent inspection is carried out after completion.

Maintenance – Annual inspection will be required. Inspectors will look and they can carry out any necessary work. They have various maintenance packages available.

Plastic slide – can have stainless steel (more expensive)

Graffiti – can be cleaned if action is taken quickly

Fire – fire resistant products.

Website for more information <https://wicksteed.co.uk/parish-and-community-councils/>

05: Tony Robinson, Sales Area Manager, Sovereign Play

He has been with the company. Local company based in Southend but they work nationally.

Payment Terms. 20% deposit and remaining 80% balance due within 30 days of completion.

Wood is slow grown pine and high pressure impregnated and guaranteed for 20 years.

- Jungle Climber – suitable from KS1 to young teen.
- Thumper Tower – triple deck suitable for KS1 & 2
- Rota Net – steel with nylon ropes. Up to young teens.
- Trim Trail – very popular. Does not require grass mat surfacing because it is low level.
- Basket swing – accessible and inclusive. Robust and strong.

Grass Guard – neoprene rubber.

Examples of sites Bicknacre, Woodham Ferrers, West Bergholt

Lead in – 6-8 weeks (10-12 Summer)

Manufactured in Southend

In house contractors

Installation – 2 weeks

Foundations – in-situ concrete. Kept to minimum size, no need for extensive amounts.

Dynamic Loads – tested by structural engineer who will detail.

Maintenance – 20 year guaranteed. Could consider a clear Ronseal treatment after 6-7 years.

Steel feet can be added as an extra item to help prevent damage by strimmer.

Maintenance info supplied. Monthly or annual payments from £200/year.

Rope – steel reinforced nylon.

Fixings – some stainless some nylon

Nets guaranteed for 5 years.

Happy to install in rolling programme, it doesn't need doing in one go (although additional costs for fencing etc).

Website has more information <https://www.sovereignplayequipment.co.uk/>

06: General Discussion

Initial thoughts – Infinite looks most attractive but more expensive and only 3 products for budget.

Wicksteed - very professional and get 6 pieces of equipment.

Sovereign - impression was that the wood treatment was inferior to Wicksteed. Only get 5 pieces of equipment, quote currently over the budget although indicated a willingness to negotiate this.

Metal feet seem like a sensible addition.

Slide – stainless steel more attractive

Agreed it would be a good idea for committee to view playgrounds to get a good understanding of the different options. See above for locations.

Also a good idea for members to visit websites. See above.

Consider September installation for optimum ground conditions.

Fundraising – ideas to be considered further. Jacky to report at next meeting.

Grants – Jo & Graham have been proceeding with research and will report at next meeting.

Supermarkets – Bob has found lots of information to report at next meeting.

Local Companies – Carolyn will look into this and report at next meeting.

07. Date of next meeting

Thursday 24th October at 7pm in Women's Club.

Meeting Closed at 9.20pm