

## Norwood Gardens Play Area

It is gratifying that the bulk of the new equipment for the Norwood Gardens Play Area has now been installed. However, during several visits to the facility over the late Summer and early Autumn at times when it might be expected to be used, I was struck by how little it was patronised.. Admittedly these are unusual times but seeing only one child and one adult there during these visits suggests that more needs to be done to increase its usage.

It is all too easy to assume that all families in the vicinity are aware of its existence but there is a distinct lack of signage to emphasize that fact. The only sign I did see was immediately adjacent to the play area at the end of the pathway from Norwood Gardens, meaning it could not serve the purpose of guiding users to the facility. Furthermore, the sign states that it is the Norwood Gardens Play Area, which potential patrons might take to mean that it was exclusively for families living on that estate. I am not aware of any additional signage that is being considered, but at the risk of advocating something that has already been agreed, I would suggest that signs to the children's play area be erected at the start of the path on Lower Kirklington Road opposite Springfield Road leading to the Southwell Trail, and also at the Southwell Trail end of this path.

I also wondered whether additional seating for the play area has been scheduled. There are currently two picnic tables with integrated seating and one bench. Were more than three or four family groups seeking to use the facility at any one time, lack of seating could become an issue.

I understand that additional equipment remains to be installed (a basketball/football facility?). Again I may be repeating something that has already been agreed but if something is worth saying, it is worth saying twice. It would seem to me that the best site for such a facility would be the North West corner of the site, so that the small copse between it and The Ridgeway might act as a noise baffle between it and the back gardens of The Ridgeway. Finally, is the unattractive boundary at the western end, with concrete slabs, angle iron, and high link fencing still to remain? It is more reminiscent of a prison camp than of a recreational facility.

The remainder of the western end of the play area strikes me as being too steep for ball games. Nevertheless, the Town Council mows this area when the grass on the more frequented parts of the site is cut. Should consideration not be given to wilding the western area or to a tree planting programme here?

Would there be any merit or support for having a site meeting on the area to review progress to date?

Cllr Stuart Thompstone