

REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRINCIPAL OF THE FORMATION OF A STOCKS FIELD PARISH COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES FACILITIES ADVISORY GROUP.

Until May 2013 Stocksfield Parish Council operated with a number of advisory groups. These groups met from time to time to discuss relevant topics and to make recommendations to the Parish Council. The meetings were not open to the public. Two groups, however, also had sub groups whose membership was made up of Parish Councillors and included the general public and outside bodies. There are general Terms of Reference for the Advisory groups on governance.

The Children and Young peoples facilities advisory group met quarterly and reported back to the Parish Council. The Parish Council remained the decision-making body. The TORS were

- a. To monitor the use of the play areas and to make recommendations to the Parish Council.
- b. To review the annual play area inspection reports and make recommendations to the Parish Council.
- c. To consider what other facilities are available for young people in the Parish and to make recommendations to the Parish Council as to possible development of other facilities.

There was a sub group which looked at the recreational areas and possible regeneration projects.

Brief background information.

Stocksfield Parish Council owns the land at Branch End and rents the land from Allendale Estates at Kate's Plain. Kate's Plain was originally developed as the play park for the children of Guessburn in particular but also the surrounding area.

The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of these areas including the play equipment, benches, flower beds, plants, grass cutting, etc. The Parish Council is also responsible for monitoring, managing and assessing any risks pertaining to the play equipment and land and ensure that all risks are properly managed for the safety of the users.

There is an individual budget heading for the maintenance of play areas which is part of the Parish precept. No funding is ring-fenced in the reserves for Capital Play equipment improvements.

In approximately 1998 Kate's Plain play area was totally renewed and likewise in 2006 a new play area was provided at Branch End for young children. Capital funding for both projects was provided by Northumberland County Council, Stocksfield Parish Council and from 106 funding available at the time. Funding was also sourced from Awards for All, local funders and local charities.

The development of these play areas was managed by a sub group of the Stocksfield Parish Council Children and Young Peoples Facilities advisory group which included Councillors, residents of the village, the school and the children of the village. It was important that the users had a strong input into the choice of equipment within the limits of the funding available. All minutes of these meetings were forwarded to the Parish Council.

The final decisions were taken by the Parish Council.

2025 AND BEYOND

A Planned approach.

It is recognised that in the near future Kate's Plain requires a new approach to ascertain the use of the area and the needs of the children especially in that area of Stocksfield, including Guessburn. The Parish Council will need to recognise that capital funding could be required however this is dependent on working with and consulting with the users, parents, carers, young people of all ages of the play area in the first instance. This work would be undertaken by a sub group of the Children and Young Peoples Facilities Advisory Group. A planned approach could be taken forward and any funding requirements will be considered by the Parish Council.

In approximately 5 years time a similar planned approach will be required to look at the future development and improvements to Branch End play area equipment.

Also there is a need to improve the environment of the play area land at Branch End, the planters require renewal, the footpath requires work, etc. The Sub group could undertake this work with residents and interested groups from the village.

Financial implications.

A planned approach would help to identify capital funding requirements for future years and 'oven-ready projects' to be used should further 106 funding or indeed any other grant funding become available.

Councillor Anne Dale,
Parish Councillor.

19th November, 2024