

Slade Road Woodland Business Case



Document History

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07.09.22		Lin Sargent	Initial Draft for review
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Distribution

Name	Organisation
Portishead Town Councillors	Portishead Town Council
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1 Background and Summary

Earlier this year, Portishead Town Council (PTC) undertook a consultation about the two parcels of land known as Slade Road Play Area owned by PTC and Slade Road Playing Field owned by North Somerset Council (NSC). 306 people responded.

Regarding the Woodland Play Area: 97.4% of respondents did not want any development of this land and a large majority wanted to see a Nature/Play area in a woodland setting.

As a result, PTC commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) report which looked at creating outdoor forest school features, clearance of non-native invasive plants whilst increasing native and tree shrub planting, plus adding bat and bird boxes.

PTC is now planning to implement these features as well as restoring part of the site as a Play Area with inclusive equipment in-keeping with the woodland setting.

Some work to improve the site has already been done with a Litter pick recently carried out by local volunteers organised by Turn-The-Tide which resulted in about 10 bags of rubbish being recovered.

Planning is underway to clear parts of the site to allow for the re-creation of a Play Area. This work will be supervised by local nature experts.

In terms of the Play Area, four companies tendered to provide a new Play Area and Forest school facilities. Key requirements were a solution that was in keeping with the woodland setting, that would provide an interesting play experience for as wide an age range as possible and would be inclusive, long lasting and sustainable.

The tenders were reviewed by a selection panel of Lin Sargent (PTC project manager) and Cllrs Tim Snaden, Nicola Holland and Paul Gardner using a scoring matrix considering design, quality, price and other criteria. The views of local residents and forest schoolteachers were also input into the process

We asked for bespoke designs and a lot of interesting ideas were received. We did not request like for like quotes as we were more interested in how the companies would best make use of the area with its woodland, hilly and flat areas.

Roundwood Play was unanimously scored the highest. It was particularly liked that their play area design is interwoven around the trees and uses the hill. The bank slide in the old play area was well loved and used so it was great to see the new slide in their proposed design. The proposed basket swing would be great for all children to use including those with the disabilities.

The cost of £24,500 ex VAT is within the budget allocated in the 2022-23 PTC budget and very similar in pricing to the other suppliers. The aim is to install the new Play Area before Christmas 2022.

2 Community Support and fit with PTC strategy

Leaflets were created and distributed to residents in the immediate area. Contact was also made with a resident's group. This has led to several residents getting involved in the project and offering to help in different ways.

Turn The Tide is engaged as our Litter Pick Partners. The first event has already happened, and it was a really good turnout, with over 10 large bags of litter lifted.

PTC will be working alongside the local conservation community group, Wild Portishead. Wild Portishead are going to be the environmental advisor when it comes to carrying out the recommendations in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report (PEAR). We will contract grounds maintenance (Glendale) to undertake the necessary clearing of the site alongside Wild Portishead.

See Appendix 7.1 for PEAR.

In addition, posts will be created on social media to ask for volunteers specifically to help with the clearing. We hope to hold community events as the work progresses, to make use of the wood that needs to be removed. For example, there is a lot of Hazel that needs coppicing, and we could hold a basket weaving event. A management plan will be created that will have several main focus points, the woodland itself, the play area and the community engagement in the management of it.

Creating a management policy in this way would be fully in line with the PTC published strategy which has as its central theme a focus on developing a **sustainable** town, which includes;

Wellbeing: a flourishing and active community of people and organisations working together.

Environmental sustainability: covering the attractiveness, variety and accessibility of the town's green spaces with a focus on renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and community transport

3 Financial Considerations

3.1 Creation of a Woodland Play Amenity

We carried out a tender process for contractors to propose, design and install the woodland play area.

We had set of requirements that the suppliers were pre-assessed against, and the output of this captured.

The four suppliers' quotes are as follows:

- Green Play Project £20,761
- TouchWood Play £22,151
- Round Wood Play £24,500*
- Discovery Timber Play £21,212

All Figures are excluding VAT.

*Original quote was £20,000. PTC requested that a basket swing be added to the proposal

3.2 Costs of Hedging and associated items

This has been estimated as follows:

- Hedging Trees (200 bare root stock at £3 each)
50% hawthorn, 25% blackthorn, 15% field maple, 2% privet, 2% bird cherry, 2% sweet cherry, 2% guelder rose, 1% crab apple, and 1% holly): £600.00
- Scrub Plants: £500.00
- Stakes (200 stake at £3 each): £600.00
- Tree Guards (Biodegradable ones. Box of 220 Spiral): £250.00
- **Total £2,350.00**

3.3 Future costs

Ongoing Maintenance

There will be a need for regular safety inspections of the play equipment and to undertake any maintenance required. This is estimated at £2,000.00 per year.

In addition, ongoing maintenance will be needed in the woodland. This is estimated at between £3,000 to £5,000 per year which would include the cost of regular tree surveys, tree surgery work, fence and boundary maintenance. For comparison, £5000 is the budget cost for the two allotments that maintained by PTC. Additional security measures may be required in the future.

The land is covered under our existing insurance Policy. There will be a small incremental cost to cover the new play equipment.

A budget allocation of between £5000 to £7,000 for future years is suggested.

3.4 Budget

There is £30,000.00 allocated to the Slade Road Woodland play area in the 2022-23 budget. Approximately £2000 has been spent so far leaving £28,000 to fund the Play Area equipment, Hedging and ancillary costs. It is recommended to proceed to use these funds and seek to allocate £7,000.00 for annual maintenance annually on an ongoing basis.

3.5 Benefits

Building this area back will be a great asset to the local community as proven by the consultation results. It has been greatly missed by residents. A management plan and ongoing maintenance investment by Portishead Town Council will protect it for generations to come.

This is an opportunity to evolve the area in collaboration with the local community so it may be enjoyed by as many people as possible. This aligns with the PTC strategic objective to improve people's wellbeing.

The plan will also support the PTC objective of conserving the environment.

4 Tender Process

We identified Companies that could meet our requirements. Lin Sargent & Tim Snaden reviewed all the identified companies and invited 5 to a site visit and requested a design to be submitted that would meet the budget.

Four Companies met the submission date, and were invited to present and discuss their offering, with an opportunity for the reviewers to ask more questions.

The designs have been shared with members of the community who expressed an interest in getting involved with the project.

From this, the companies were scored on a number of criteria including design, quality, price and other criteria and further comments captured.

It was clear from the end to end process that Round Wood Play is the best partner of choice for PTC, due to; full compliance with the project brief, adherence to the budget, the project timescales, their ideas for creating a sensory woodland (reminding the team that the woodland itself is a sensory experience, and the play experience is about guiding the child through this) their flexibility about adapting the submission and their commitment to deliver the project quickly.

5 Risks and Obligations

At the time of writing, there is draft risk assessment relating to Litter Picks. Signing this off is relatively simple and will not be a blocker. The risk assessment will need to be altered for community conservation work. This will not be a blocker.

The current plan has a target date for completion of the project in its entirety by Christmas 2022. There is a risk that the chosen supplier may not be able to complete in time. However, Round Wood Play have clearly stated that they are in a position to meet this timescale.

Longer term the ongoing maintenance will mean a new ongoing obligation for PTC. The Council is well used to maintaining land and working with local people and groups to achieve this, the allotments being a good example.

Recommendation:

To approve the selection of Roundwood Play to provide play equipment to the Slade Road Woodland Play Area site and the associated costs up to £24,500 ex vat, and to delegate authority to the Town Council Project Manager and Cllrs Snaden, Holland and Gardner to manage the installation.

6 7. Appendices

7.1 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report (PEAR)



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