

INFORMATION NOTE: WALSWORTH COMMON PLAY AREA

THE HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

Work, which began in September 2014 to renovate and enhance Walsworth Common play area, has been halted temporarily.

The delay follows a recent discovery by the Council that a Section 38 (Commons Act 2006) application to the Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), is needed for the refurbishment to continue. Part of Walsworth Common is registered as Common land, giving it special statutory protection and therefore consent must be obtained to carry out these works.

The Planning Inspectorate has advised that providing they receive no objections the application process should be concluded in approximately three months. However, if objections are raised the process the application would need to be heard by a Planning Inspector and this can take in excess of a year.

In that the proposals were developed through public consultation we would hope that no one objects to the scheme and the new play area (which is a replacement and not a new 'structure') can be completed ready for spring 2015. Notices and a media release have been circulated apologising for the delay and outlining the steps we are taking to resolve the situation. Details of the longer term approach for the management of Walsworth Common are outlined in a separate report to your Committee.

Meanwhile, renovation of the play area at Ransoms Recreation Ground in Hitchin, is nearing completion and includes the addition of a 'mega tyre swing' and climbing wall.

For further information contact:

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