

Rushton Recreation Ground

Report for RPC Meeting on the 21st January 2026 prepared by Mike Brightman. Agenda Item 10-26



General

Weekly inspections continue to take place to check the equipment and clearing up litter.

Repairs required

The ground beneath both goal posts has become significantly worn. This deterioration of the playing surface poses potential safety risks and affects the overall usability of the area.

The ground beneath the slide landing areas is also badly worn. As a result, the drop from the end of the slide to the ground surface now exceeds the recommended regulation safety distance, increasing the risk of injury to children using the slide.

A load of topsoil has been given to the recreation ground, which is suitable for levelling the ground both between the goal posts and at the slide landing areas. The cost of labour required to carry out these repairs has been included as an item within the grant application for tree pruning.

Moles

There has been an increasing amount of new mole activity a quotation for mole removal has been received for £180.00. It is recommended that this work is carried out at the end of January to February 2026 prior to their mating season reducing future numbers.

Dogs

As always! There have been incidents over the last month of inconsiderate dog owners not cleaning up after their dogs. This is unacceptable in a children play area.

Trees

An application has been submitted to NCF for the pruning of some of the large trees and perimeter hedges within the recreation ground. These trees are located within the conservation area therefore a planning application has been made to carry out the works.

Inspection and Maintenance - NCF Correspondence

Following correspondence in response to the initial letter from NNC dated 22nd August, NNC have now confirmed that they will continue to inspect and maintain the play equipment until 31st March 2027. This service will be provided under the following terms and conditions:

- The equipment is considered the property of Rushton Parish Council, as it is situated on land owned by the Council.
- The Council will be responsible for maintaining the equipment to a safe standard, including carrying out regular inspections and undertaking necessary repairs.
- If any equipment is deemed beyond economic repair, it may be removed and not replaced.
- Annual inspection and maintenance records will be supplied to the Parish Council for their review.

Historically, Kettering Borough Council entered into an informal arrangement with Rushton Parish Council to assist with the procurement, installation, servicing, and maintenance of play equipment. This arrangement arose due to the Parish Councils' lack of resources to provide these services independently.

Despite this long-standing arrangement, no written agreement or correspondence has been found to support the original agreement.

After 31st March 2027, the Parish Council will need to consider the following options for the ongoing management of the play equipment:

- Close the park and remove the equipment, especially as 75% of visitors do not reside within the parish. However, maintenance costs for the land would still be incurred.
- Make independent arrangements for inspection, maintenance, and replacement of all play equipment by entering into an agreement with a commercial provider for these services.
- Enter into a formal Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Council to ensure continued provision of these services.

We are currently awaiting further information regarding the costs associated with taking on the responsibility for the inspection and maintenance of the play equipment. This information will enable councillors to make an informed decision about the most appropriate course of action for the future management of Rushton Recreation Ground.