

Rushton Recreation Ground

Report for RPC Meeting on the 18th March 2026 prepared by Mike Brightman. Agenda Item 28/26



General

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

Repairs required

Ongoing work is taking place to level and raise the ground beneath both goalposts and the slide landing areas, as outlined in the report dated 21st January 2026. These sections now require grass seed to be applied to the exposed patches.

Moles

There is currently no mole activity within the recreation ground at this time.

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

Our application to NCF for funding to enable the pruning of several large trees and the trimming of perimeter hedges within the recreation ground has been approved. This work is scheduled to commence on 18th March 2026.

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.

I have been reviewing our proposed options and the requirements for maintaining the recreation ground equipment. I am currently drafting the Rushton Parish Council Policy relating to the inspection, maintenance, and repair of the recreation ground and its equipment, in order to fulfil our legal obligations from April 2027 onwards.

Upon careful consideration, I do not believe that entering into a formal Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the NNC for these services is the most suitable option. Instead, I recommend that Rushton Parish Council take direct responsibility for the management and upkeep of the park. By doing so, the Parish Council would be better positioned to oversee inspection and maintenance activities potentially resulting in a substantial reduction in associated costs for the parish.

We need to respond with our decision to NNC by the 1st April 2026.