

# Malpas Recreation Ground Trust Annual report

1st April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

## Chairs Report 2023-2024

### Trustee Actions

In the reporting period, the Trust owned 4-bedroom property on Hughes Lane has continued to be let out to the existing tenant through, the Denton Clark Rentals and Thornley Groves property management companies.

### Risk Management

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed in particular those related to the operations and finances and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to major risks.

### Site Usage Review

Between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2023, the site was given free of charge to allow Malpas Community Links to stage part of the village celebrations for the coronation celebrations of his Majesty King Charles III.

The site was still being used by the Malpas Alport Primary School children for their weekly games and annual sports event.

In addition the facility continues to prove popular for after school gatherings for the older children from the Bishop Heber High School.

The site is also used on a regular basis at weekends when many village residents and visitors to the area make use of the facilities.

### Play Equipment Maintenance and Inspection

Weekly checks of the equipment continued throughout the year, with major issues being identified, and the existing play equipment has remained in good condition.

October 2023 saw the site being subjected to some vandalism. Obscene graffiti was found on the Shelter, the Swing Horse and the spinning disc. In addition, the entrance to one of the tunnel supporting entrance had been damaged.

Cheshire West Council responded initially to remove the graffiti in the Shelter and from off the Swing Horse.

On inspection of the site by the Chairman, it was found that the Graffiti on the spinning disc had not been cleared and the Swing Horse paintwork had been damaged by the use of a wire brush to remove the marker pen text.

In the course of the next two days the Chairman cleaned the spinning disc and repaired to tunnel entrance.

However, the culprits had repeated the obscene graffiti on the shelter. The Chairman painted out the text and installed a notice warning that if damage continued then, the shelter would be removed.

**Complaints:**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> October, two parish councillors requested an agenda item about safety on the site. The Parish Council Chairman and Clerk decided that the full council should discuss the matter, rather than advising the chairman of their perceived problems or issues as per the proper complaints handling procedure.

A report which included various errors and inaccuracies, produced by one councillor was presented to support the discussions, at which the chairman of the trust management committee was denied the right of response.

The Parish Council meeting resolved to write to the Trustees to request sight of the following documents:

Management Structure

Complaints handling Procedure

Risk Assessment

Financial situation

Conflicts of Interest policy

Copies of all Annual Safety Inspections of the play equipment.

In addition, the Council decided to instruct ROSPA to carry out an independent inspection of the play equipment. The cost of this exercise was £275 plus VAT. The subsequent report highlighted only minor risk issues which were exactly the same as the Trusts own annual independent safety report. (Cost £54)

This was done contrary to the complaint's procedure whereby complaints in the first instance, should have been addressed to the Chair of the Management Committee.

In response to the letter received by the Trustees, a decision was taken to close off the children's play area until such time as the Parish Council were prepared to resolve the matter.

**Ground / Asset enhancements:**

During the reporting period the trust has purchased some temporary fencing. (Hurdles)

The objective being to support the Village Fairs with pedestrian safety barriers and also for use by the primary school children during their weekly games activities.

**Weekly Safety Inspections**

Any defects identified on the play equipment are remedied within appropriate timescales, or reported to the appropriate responsible body. Visits, issues and actions followed up, are recorded in a site log book.

Whilst there have been no equipment defects observed within the reporting period, litter on the site does remain a major issue.

**Management Committee**

Currently there are only 6 committee members including the Chairman, some 6 members short of a full complement.

Despite efforts over the past two-three years, it has proved impossible to recruit more volunteers to join the Management Committee, so very few full committee meetings have taken place.

A business meeting of the management committee was conducted on Monday 27th November, and regular meetings with the Trustees to provide them with updates over the reporting period have taken place.

### **Future Strategy and Plans**

There are plans in place to utilise the site as a location for the Malpas Village fair in July 2024 and for the 80th Anniversary of the end of World War 2 in Europe in May 2025.

The longer-term strategy is to maintain the unique manner of the site with emphasis on a park with open green space available for use by residents and village community events.

Chris Whitehurst  
Chair Malpas Recreation Ground Management Committee

31st March 2024