

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council
A report from the Clerks on the removal of play equipment on Stirling Rd Alfred Road.

Background

Residents were dismayed to see that the remaining play equipment at this site was removed without any public notification or explanation, nor any guidance as to whether the equipment would be replaced. This action also fell right in the middle of the school holidays. Neither the 2 Ward Councillors for the area or the Community Council were advised this was going to take place.

This caused strong feeling as the playground has been well used for many years and residents have previously highlighted to the SWANCC that they would like to keep it and see it invested in. Residents initially believed responsibility lay with the Community Council and were prompt to comment on social media and contact the Clerks to complain.

The Chair of the Community Council wrote to the officers to complain that no notice or consultation had been given as to the removal of the play equipment, and that residents were laying the responsibility with us. In response ABC published notices at the site to advise they had removed the play equipment and wrote to 62 neighbouring residents.

Further investigation by the Ward Cllrs and the Clerk found that the decision to remove the play equipment was made by Aspire on the grounds of health of safety and the equipment was removed promptly for this reason.

It was then learnt from discussion with the Ward Cllrs and the Officers at ABC that a review of whether to replace the play equipment was intended by ABC when the play equipment failed and consideration of whether to renew it was not yet planned. This is in light of the investment at nearby Bullied Place. ABC advised that it considered at present that Bulleid is in a much better location for use, footfall, safety, with equipment that meets the current European Standards and within walking distance of local properties providing a much wider benefit than Stirling Road can offer.

The Clerks and the Chair and the Ward Cllrs highlighted the need for consultation on this matter and the need for residents to be considered.

As a result

- 1) A meeting is now planned 11th September 2021, between ABC, the 2 Ward Cllrs, and SWANCC to discuss the proposal.
- 2) ABC have written to 62 residents to explain the decisions taken and the intention to consider whether to replace the equipment. They have advised they are interested to see response they receive to this before the September meeting.
- 3) An update has been put on social media to advise of this.

Recommendations .

- It is essential that residents respond to the consultation, therefore local Cllrs and interested residents to rally a response from local residents.
- For SWANCC to write a response to the letter and ensure our views on behalf of the residents are recorded.
- Longer term To note the need to progress the proposed business case to transfer the assets of play equipment to and to argue the need to endow the SWANCC with a budget to do this.



