

QUESTIONS – JANET MARTON

Questions for Alice Park Trust Sub-Committee, Wednesday, 3rd February 2021

I submitted a series of questions to the sub-committee's last meeting on 7 December 2020. Some of the responses lacked detail and were incomplete.

Skate Park

1. Response to previous question

Question 4 on 7 December 2020 was as follows:

“The design of the skate park appears to be different from the plans and located in a different place, dangerously close to the children’s sand pit. Please provide a copy of the risk assessment that was done for the final location and the design constructed, together with details of actions to mitigate risk.”

Response

This issue will be reviewed, and a report will be brought to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

***Why is this being done near the end of the project?
When will this report be available and at which meeting will it be reviewed?***

Response

It is not known which sub-committee meeting this will be presented to, due to Covid-19 resources this has meant that timelines have slipped.

2. Age of skate park users in Alice Park.

- a) When the scope of this project was decided, it was intended for young people 14 years old and under. It was referred to by one councillor / sub-committee member in the February edition of the “Local Look” magazine as a new play opportunity.

What precise reasons do the committee have for not limiting the age of users in accordance with the original scope to ensure that this is a safe play opportunity for young people

- b) I have been unable to find in any minutes any decision by a quorate committee regarding allowing access to the skate park to those over 14 years of age.

If the sub-committee decided not to accept the original scope, where and when was this decision taken and recorded in the minutes?

- c) There is a risk of young children being prevented from using the skate park by adults and older teenagers if there is no control over access. As an absolute minimum, to help protect and safeguard young children, a sign board should be erected to say priority **must** be given to younger children.

Will the subcommittee implement this very basic safeguarding measure?

Response

There was a desire for some to restrict the use of the facility to 14 years and under, this is not practical to enforce, and the facility will be used by older children and based on ability. We will encourage inclusion and awareness to younger users

3. Risk Assessment for skate park

- a) I asked for a copy of the risk assessment for the final design and location of the skate park in my questions to the committee on 7 December 2020. I understand this was requested from the project manager, but I have not received a copy of this to date. I have now submitted a formal freedom of information request to the Council. As the council was responsible for the construction contract a risk assessment must have been done.

Does the council have a copy of a formal risk assessment for the current design and location of the skate park? If so, in what sub-meeting was this considered by the sub-committee?

- b) ***Was a formal risk assessment also carried out by the Alice Park Trust Sub-Committee in advance of the building of the final design of the skate park in its current location?***
- c) ***Was this risk assessment documented?***
- d) ***What was the date of the document and when was it discussed by the sub-committee?***
- e) ***If so, may we have a copy of the risk assessment and minutes?***

Response

The sub-committee would not have conducted a separate risk assessment, and this would be undertaken by the Council whose project this is.

4. Fencing and planting

- a) I see in the "Local Look" magazine that fencing around the skate park is scheduled to be installed at the end of January.
When is soft planting to be carried out and any noise reduction measures put in place?
- b) The committee mentioned a soft opening, and this was also mentioned in the "Local Look".
What exactly is meant by a soft opening?

Response

Ground repair and planting is now underway. A “soft opening” is a removal of construction fencing allowing use without any formal declaration. A more formal opening will occur later in the year where funders and partners can be recognised together with those many in the community that have lobbied and welcome this facility. I will ensure that you are invited.

Barbecues

At the last meeting the sub-committee discussed whether to allow barbecues in the park. There seemed to be a view that they might be allowed, if they were in officially set aside barbecue areas. In other parks in B&NES they are mostly not allowed and I think this is much easier to enforce. There is already some annoyance from smoke and cinders in private gardens from barbecues in the park near residential property in summer.

If barbecue areas are to be set up, please will you site them away from residential properties, trees and hedges to prevent fire risk and public nuisance?

Response

At the last sub-committee meeting on 3 February it was decided to ban the use of barbecues with the exception of allowing the community garden and the forest school activity to have a small open fire in a designated site, granted by way of written permission.

Trees and flowers

The park is no longer as pretty as it once was. A number of trees have been felled and the hedges severely cut right back. Apart from the spring daffodils there are few flowers. The idea of a protected green space is to provide fresh air and pleasure to those who use it, and this park is much neglected compared with others such as Sydney Gardens and Victoria Park.

Will the sub-committee in its role as trustee, consider planting some more trees, shrubs and flowers to enhance the park for all?

Response

The sub-committee is mindful of the need for additional planting etc, but also mindful of the need to pay for them. They would be happy to consider any ideas that you may have.