

The Community gazebo sited on Cheswick Green recreation ground

The Parish Council does not normally respond to matters in public but prefers to resolve concerns between parties. However, in this instance the Council will respond due to our villagers and others signing petitions without possession of all the facts.

As far as we are concerned there are two issues, the repair/renewal of the community gazebo and the way in which we have treated Mr & Mrs Jay.

Repair/renewal

The community gazebo was a depreciating asset from the day it was built and had a lifetime of 20 years, before renewal could be considered necessary. The community gazebo has lasted longer than that following two repairs, the last repair was in 2022.

There have been comments on social media that call for the community gazebo to be repaired rather than a new structure be erected. We are aware of those views; however, we cannot ignore the structural reports that we have received. The RoSPA report informs us that four of the six posts on which the structure sits are rotten and must be repaired. The only way this can be achieved is to dismantle the whole structure to remove those posts. Following repair, we do not believe the community gazebo would be fit for purpose for a further 20 years.

We did not merely accept the findings of the RoSPA report, we sent two further emails regarding aspects of the report to clarify matters further.

The Parish Council is liable for the safety of the community and this is paramount in our decision making. Indeed, the RoSPA report confirms our view.

The Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that monies spent raised from the precept, are spent wisely. The precept is a local tax that residents of Cheswick Green Parish pay for services that are not the responsibility of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

The precept is raised not only from Cheswick Green Village residents but also Cheswick Place, Blythe Valley and other pockets of housing to whom we have the same duty. These responsibilities and duties are undertaken wherever possible for the benefit of the whole community.

It is the Council's decision that it is not economically viable to repair the community gazebo. We need to ensure that all aspects of the community gazebo structure will last another 20 years.

The Council's decision is final and not open for discussion now or in future via correspondence or at the Parish Council meetings held every month.

The treatment of Mr & Mrs Jay.

Following the decision to renew, we decided that Mr & Mrs Jay should be contacted before anyone else and before the community gazebo was fenced off on grounds of health and safety.

Below is a copy of the correspondence delivered by hand to Mr & Mrs Jay on the 25th November 2024, prior to comments from residents. We believe the content is appropriate given the circumstances.

Mr. & Mrs. Jay - By hand

25th November 2024

Dear Mr & Mrs Jay,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Parish Council to inform you about an important matter concerning the youth shelter in our local park.

The shelter is inspected annually by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), as part of the Recreation Ground safety inspection. The shelter has been deemed a high-risk structure. Ensuring the safety of our community is our utmost priority, and therefore, we must take necessary actions to address this issue. However, rather than take immediate action, we inspected the shelter ourselves and contacted RoSPA on a further two occasions, to ensure that there was no doubt that the structure is high risk.

We understand the deep emotional significance that the shelter holds for your family, therefore, with the utmost respect for your feelings, we have planned the following timeline:

1. November/December 2024

- signs will be added to the outside of the structure informing it is unstable and herras fencing will be placed around the shelter to make the structure secure.

2. January 2025:

- The existing shelter will need to be carefully removed.
- The land will be restored to turf by the end of January to ensure the area remains safe and accessible.

3. Replacement Plans:

- Over the next six months, we will engage with the community to discuss and agree upon a suitable replacement for the shelter. We aim to have a new structure in place by mid-2025.

Please rest assured that we will handle this transition with the greatest sensitivity and care. We are committed to ensuring that the new structure will continue serving the needs of our community into the future.

We appreciate your understanding and co-operation during this difficult time. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. We value your input and are here to support you through this process.

Yours sincerely,



Clerk, Cheswick Green Parish Council