Inspections of Playground Equipment at Fremantle and Sandgate Parks.

This matter was last discussed by Resources Committee at the meeting on 22nd September

Presently as part of the cost of the annual Grounds Maintenance contract our Contractors Harmers (Vic Harmer holds a personal ROSPA inspection license and he does the inspections) undertake a monthly inspection of the play equipment in both parks. Tony Bates our Sandgate Park Caretaker inspects the play equipment in Sandgate Park on a weekly basis. We receive monthly reports of both checks which are circulated to you.

A communication was published by our Insurance Brokers (Came and Co) earlier this year which was advising that weekly equipment inspections should be undertaken.

Harmers advised that the inspections should be undertaken according to ROSPA guidance on a weekly basis. Offline they shared with the RFO that only one local Parish has weekly inspections because of cost implications. Harmers quoted £20 per week per park for them do undertake further visits for us.

At Resources Committee meeting on 22nd September this matter was discussed and the RFO was requested to contact FHDC for advice and consider alternative solutions in light of that advice.

The following is an email from Alastair Clifford at FHDC:

Good Morning Simon.

We undertake the following inspection regime;

Annual – by a specialist as per EN1176 (RFO Note see RFO Summary Below). We buy this in.

3 Monthly (operational inspections) – by our in house qualified staff which is a detailed inspection.

Weekly – visual inspection (this does not need to recorded, but how else do you prove you do it), does not need to be qualified, but should have suitable knowledge.

The laws do not define a schedule for inspection; effectively you must assess the risk. We have interpreted it as we have to have the annual and 3 monthly inspections and the weekly is best practice, but if you are not doing weekly inspections and there was an accident you would have to justify why. For instance parks like Radnor would be hard to defend due to the type of equipment and how many people use it. Such is type of equipment in the coastal park and the age we do it daily.  However, Megan close in Lydd is stainless steel, in immaculate condition and simple equipment, with minimal use, so you could argue it does need to be completed weekly.

ROSPA have some really useful information on their website, here is a link to their guidance  <https://www.rospa.com/play-safety/Advice/Code-of-Practice.aspx>

I would recommend you read the following;

<https://www.rospa.com/play-safety/Advice/Inspection-Maintenance.aspx>

Happy to chat through any questions or thoughts.

Best regards

Alastair Clifford *MSc, BEng (Hons)*Operations Manager

RFO summary:

This is an explanation of EN1176 as published by ROSPA:

EN1176 Playground equipment standard



Introduction

The British and European Standard for playground equipment and surfacing is BS EN 1176.

The Standard

The Standard (EN 1176) is published in seven parts:  
Part 1: General safety requirements and test methods  
Part 2: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for swings  
Part 3: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for slides  
Part 4: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for runways  
Part 5: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for carousels  
Part 6: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for rocking equipment  
Part 7: Guidance for installation, inspection, maintenance and operation  
Part 10: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for fully enclosed play equipment  
Part 11: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for spatial networks.

Vic Harmer has confirmed (confirmed by telephone 28/10/20) that he is operating in line with EN1176 requirement for our play equipment.

With regard to Tony Bates weekly inspections at Sandgate Park you will note from FHDC the requirements are:

*“does not need to be qualified, but should have suitable knowledge”.*

We could consider that Tony Bates has been inspecting the equipment for more than 3 years and should therefore have suitable knowledge. This could, in my view be challenged.

I have investigated the cost of attending a ROSPA course to obtain a formal licence to undertake routine inspections:

<https://www.rospa.com/Safety-Training/Play/Routine-Playground-Inspection-Course-One-Day.aspx>

# Routine Playground Inspection Course One-Day

This course is aimed at those who are responsible for routine (daily/weekly) inspections. The Register of Play Inspectors International (RPII) exam for routine Inspections can also be taken on the same day (extra charges apply).

A RoSPA Certificate of Training will be given to all participants who complete the course.

Syllabus

* Child development
* The Importance of Play
* Accidents, their type, frequency and severity
* Legal, the appropriate Acts of Parliament and how they may affect the operator and directly the inspector.
* EN1176 Part 7 and other relevant sections of EN1176
* Documentation, reporting and importance of record keeping
* A logical and systematic approach to inspecting including risk assessment
* Inspection of approaches to playground including signs, traffic, road barriers etc.
* Inspection of the immediate playground surroundings, vegetation, fences, gates etc.
* Inspection of the active playground area within the fenced surround, seats, litter bins, vegetation, lighting, other furniture and non-play items
* Inspection of specific play equipment or play features including surfacing.
* Common faults on popular items
* Practical site inspection

The cost of this course is £275 and is a one day training course. The closest location is Sittingbourne. No courses are currently being advertised (the last was earlier this month) so am assuming that this won’t happen until possibly early next year.

I have spoken with Tony Bates and he has indicated a willingness to attend the course. We will need to consider one day’s pay for attending the course and meeting reasonable travel costs.

A further consideration for discussion is the extension of the weekly equipment checks into Fremantle Park and possible adding into this some litter picking activity.