

Improvements at The Bourne Local Park

The Bourne Local Park is an open space which is a large green finger enclosed by the surrounding houses of a residential area in the north of Ware. It has a watercourse running through it, which is banked by mature trees and open grass areas with a play area and a kick about area.

In recent years residents were consulted on plans to improve the open space following major works on site by Thames Water to upgrade local utilities. The project was divided into two phases. Phase 1 of the project was completed in March 2015 and Phase 2 in the summer of 2016.

Phase 1 improvements - 2015:



These were the main things successfully included in Phase 1 of the project:

- A new play area which enhances the play value, functionality and attractiveness of the space. The design includes some natural features using the existing gradients of the site and small low level grass mounds. We included some of the things that young people asked for such as swings, a child friendly seating area and a ground level trampoline.
- The new play area was located further away from resident's properties than the old one. The equipment is highly visible and designed mostly to attract and provide play value for younger children to help minimise anti-social behaviour.
- Additional seats, litter bins and dog waste bins.
- A small seating area for older children to the south of the stream to encourage them away from the area for younger children. This was constructed of natural materials including recycled trees from the park which were diseased and had to be felled due to the potential risk of them falling. Some of the woodland areas were thinned to improve sight lines

across to this area. This has discouraged anti-social behaviour and make the park easier to police.

- The upgrade of an existing footpath running east across the northern side of the brook. This is now a hard surface making it much easier to get across the park without getting muddy.
- A hard standing area was retained from the pipe works to create an area for service vehicles to access and park without causing damage to the grass. A new 250 metre hedge line along the northern boundary of the park behind properties in Milton Road.
- A new footpath linking the access from Milton Road down to the bridge across the stream. This provides a much safer route down the slope.
- Additional hand rails to both sides of the bridge to make access easier and safer
- A new footpath linking across the top of the play area west from the Milton Road access point to the lane running down the side of the woodland where we also removed a redundant barrier.
- New trees in this area to provide a screen for residents living to the north of the play area and to enhance the landscape around the play area.
- A bark path across the bottom of the play area which has been upgraded with some drainage to remove standing water.
- A new kissing gate style entrance at the bottom of the path in from Milton Road and a removable bollard at the top. This greatly improves access for the emergency services and our contractors. It also helps to control any issues with motorcycles and slows down cyclists as they enter the park and the play space.
- A lamp column which lights up both the bridge and some of the play area. This helps to improve access across the park over the winter period and also helps with surveillance during the summer evenings. The light comes on automatically at dusk and is set to turn off at the same time as the surrounding streetlights or earlier in the evening if necessary.
- The grass cutting regime has been altered to provide more areas of long grass around the park which will create wildlife habitats and soften the landscape.

Phase 2 - New older children's play area - Summer 2016

Construction of phase 2 of The Bourne Open Space Improvements project was undertaken in 2016 with the work to install the new older children's play area completed in the summer.

As part of the phase 2 consultation on our initial ideas for the new play area, we wrote to all residents who live near the park in September 2015 outlining the project and asking for feedback. We also spoke to people on site and received some written comments. This consultation and the feedback we received helped us to brief some specialist play equipment suppliers who were asked to submit designs for the new play area.

Having evaluated the submitted designs we have appointed Jupiter Play to complete phase 2. They are an innovative play equipment manufacturer who have more than 15 years' experience in the industry. Their design includes a challenging agility trail for older children along with a bespoke decked area on the bank. There are also flat seat swings, a spinning cone and some more traditional seating to provide something for everyone. See photo below:



The new older children's play area is located away from the existing phase 1 play area on the eastern side of the brook, but still central in the park and visible for the police to patrol easily. The new social seating area for older children (located by the brook as part of phase 1 of the project) has already proved popular and has been used with respect for other park users. See location plan below:

The new play area is openly accessible and is designed specifically for older children. This age group prefer to play in open sites where they can integrate with others and use the space around the equipment to its fullest extent. The play area is not fenced and makes use of the natural contours of the site to increase play value. This is very much in line with other successful play areas we have across the district and with expert advice from play professionals.

The new footpath installed earlier has proved popular with local residents completing the all-weather circuit around the park. We have also been able to repair the deck to the bridge. We will install some linking footpaths to the equipment where necessary to make access as easy as possible.