

Play Area Improvement Survey – The Oaks, Masham

North Yorkshire Council is working to improve the quality of The Oaks play area in Masham. This survey aimed to gather opinions from local residents and park users to help us decide on a new piece of equipment for the play area.

The money (£47,564.63) for this project would come from the S106 money (Commutated Sums) and Capital funding from the former Harrogate district. Commuted Sums is money paid to North Yorkshire Council by property developers when providing residential properties within the council area.

The online survey was open from Thursday 21 May 2026 until Thursday 2 July 2026, available on North Yorkshire Council's consultations web page. Posters were put up locally and paper copies were available at the local community hub.

Headline Results

- 35 respondents took part in the survey.
- The majority of respondents were female, with the largest age group being 61 to 70 years.
- The most common activities selected were climbing, swinging, balancing and exploring.
- The most requested play equipment was climbing frames or mini climbing walls/boulders, followed by swings and slides.
- Benches and seating were the most popular supporting feature, followed by picnic tables.

Feedback highlighted a strong support for enhancing the play area. The majority of respondents supported improvements and highlighted the importance of the site as a valued community space for children, families and local residents. The play area is regularly used, with most respondents visiting weekly or more often and typically spending between one and two hours there.

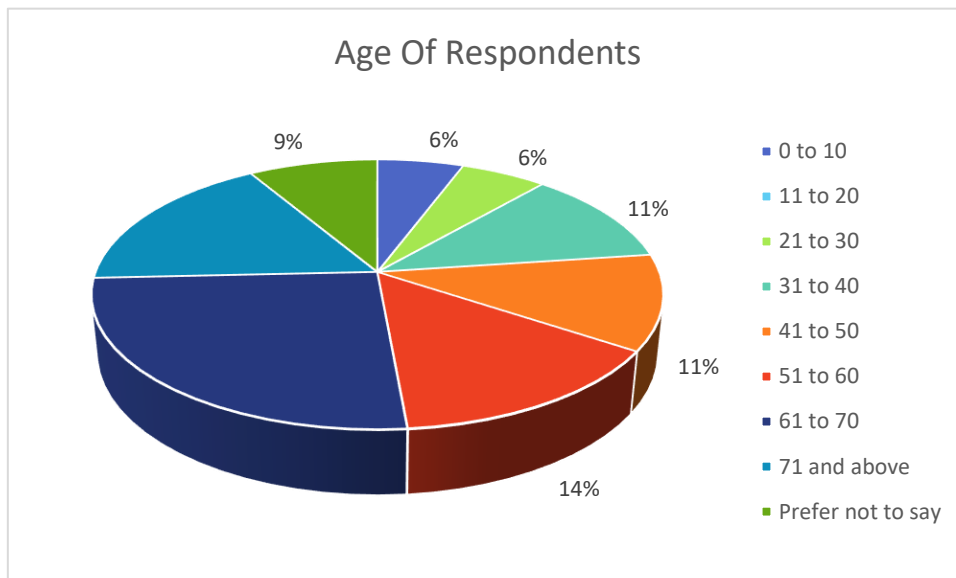
Respondents also identified the importance of supporting facilities, with benches and seating and picnic tables receiving the strongest support. Improvements to pathways, accessibility, litter bins and the overall appearance of the site were also suggested.

A recurring theme throughout the consultation was the need for ongoing maintenance, including improved surfacing, regular grass cutting, equipment inspections and general upkeep. Several respondents emphasised that the play area is a valuable community asset and should continue to provide a safe and attractive environment for outdoor play.

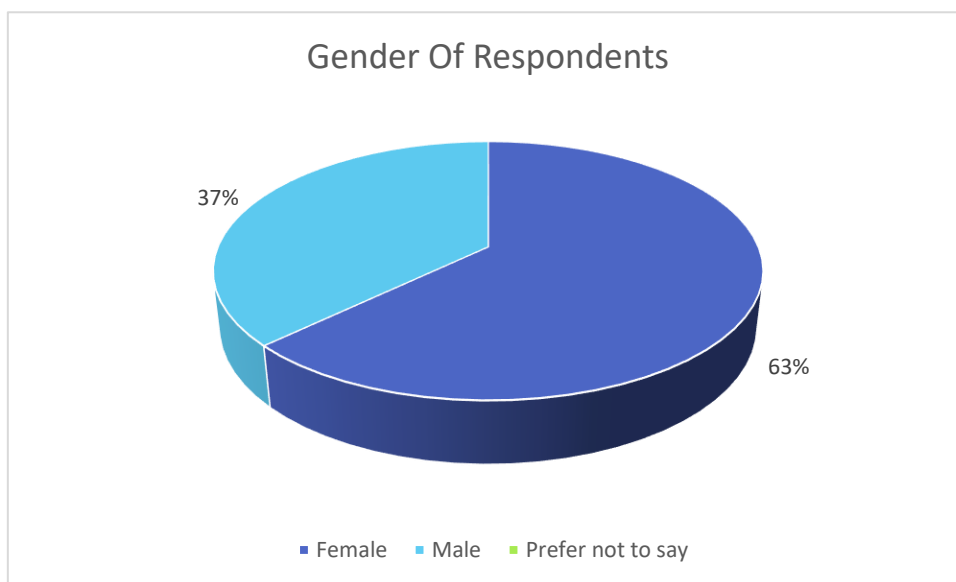
While most feedback was positive, a small number of respondents raised concerns about potential noise, parking pressures and the suitability of certain proposed facilities. Overall, the results indicate strong support for investment in the play area, particularly enhancements that provide more challenging play opportunities and cater for a wider age range of children.

About the respondents

Of the 35 respondents, the largest age group is 61 to 70, with 9 respondents (26%), 71 or more years 6 respondents (17%), 51 to 60 years 5 respondents (14%). 31 to 40 years 4 respondents (11%), 41 to 50 years 4 respondents (11%), I prefer not to say 3 respondents (9%), 0 to 10 years 2 respondents (6%). 21 to 30 years 2 respondents (6%).

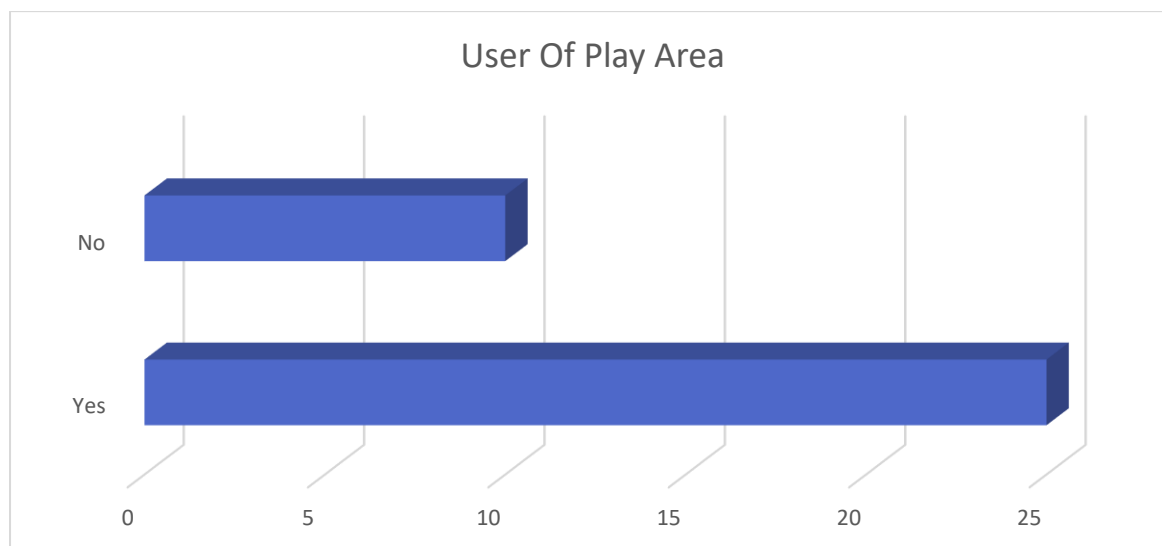


Of the 35 respondents, 63% were female (22), 37% were male (13).



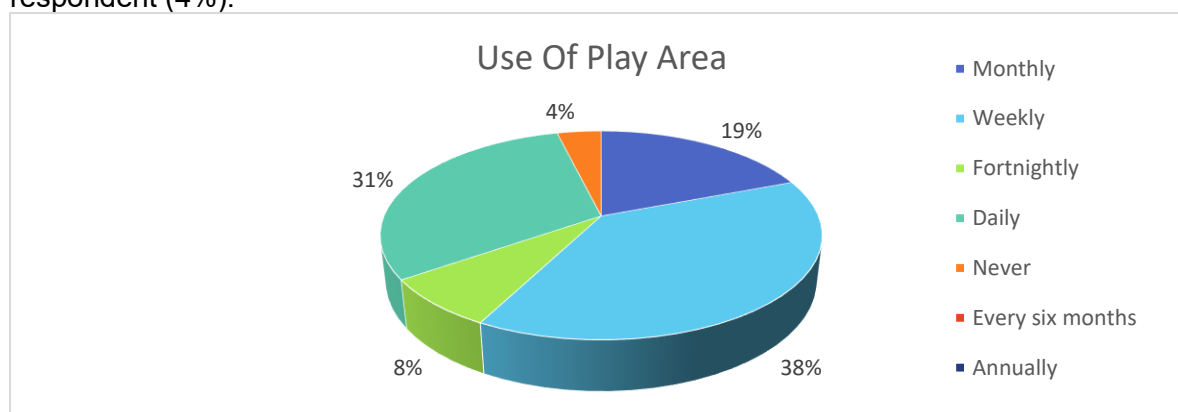
Are you a local resident or user of this play area?

Of the 35 respondents who answered this question, the majority 25 (71%) answered "Yes", while 10 (29%) answered "No".



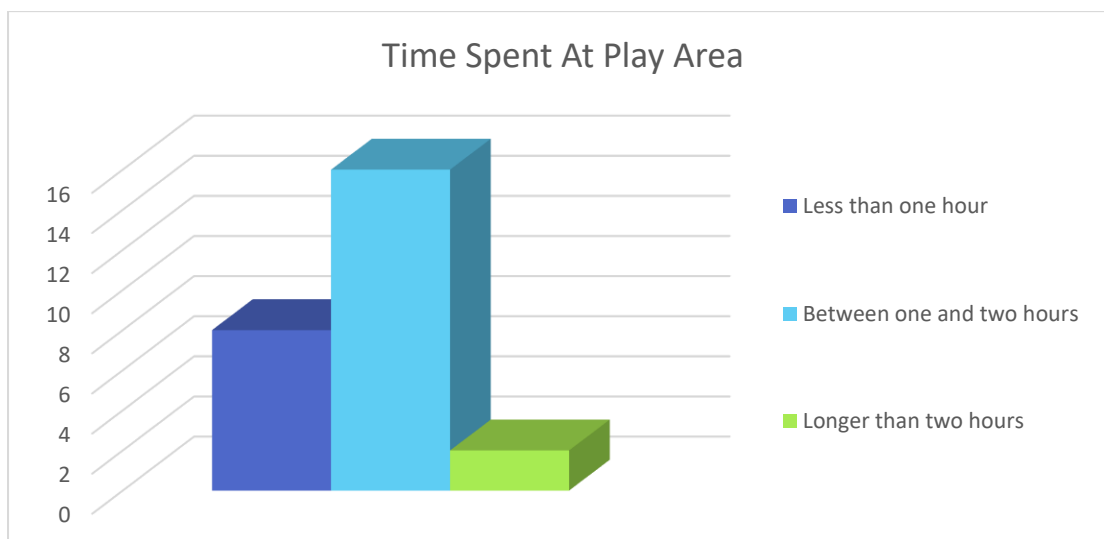
How often do you use the play area?

Of the 26 respondents, Weekly was the most common response with 10 respondents (38%). Daily 8 respondents (31%), monthly 5 respondents (19%). Fortnightly 2 respondents (8%) and never 1 respondent (4%).



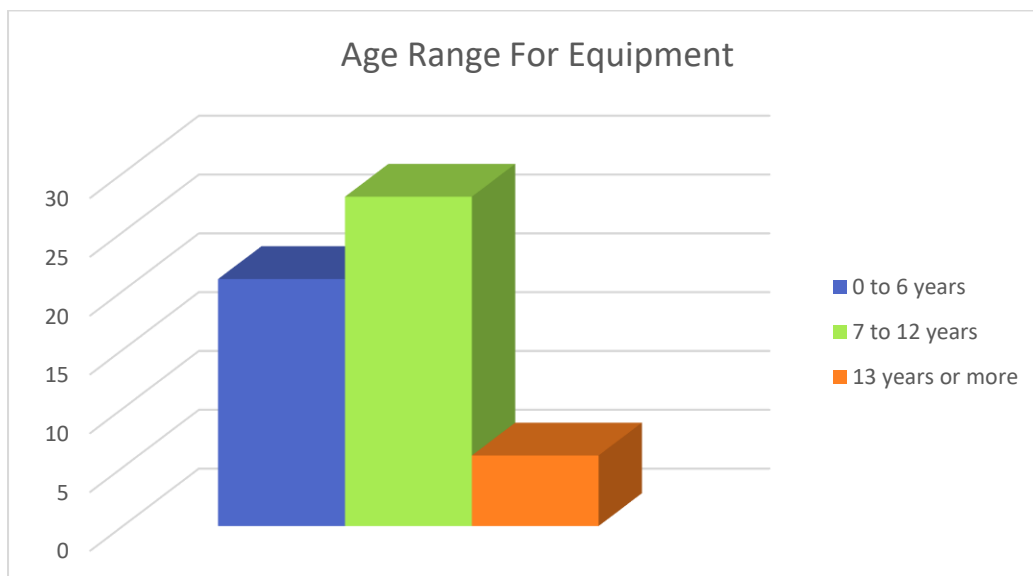
How long do you spend in the play area?

Of the 26 respondents, the majority (62%) reported spending between one and two hours at the play area. A further 31% spent less than one hour, while only 8% spent longer than two hours.



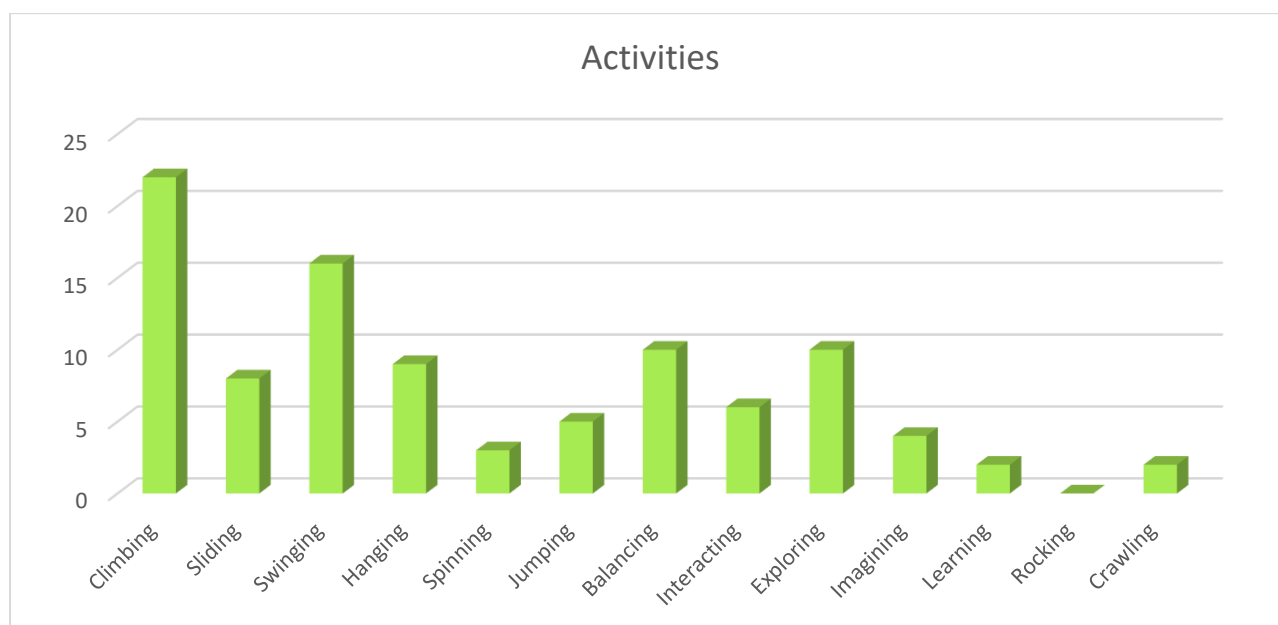
What age range do you think the equipment should be suitable for?

Of the 35 respondents, the most commonly represented age group was 7 to 12 years, selected by 80% of respondents. This was followed by 0 to 6 years, which was selected by 60% of respondents. 17% of respondents selected 13 years or more.



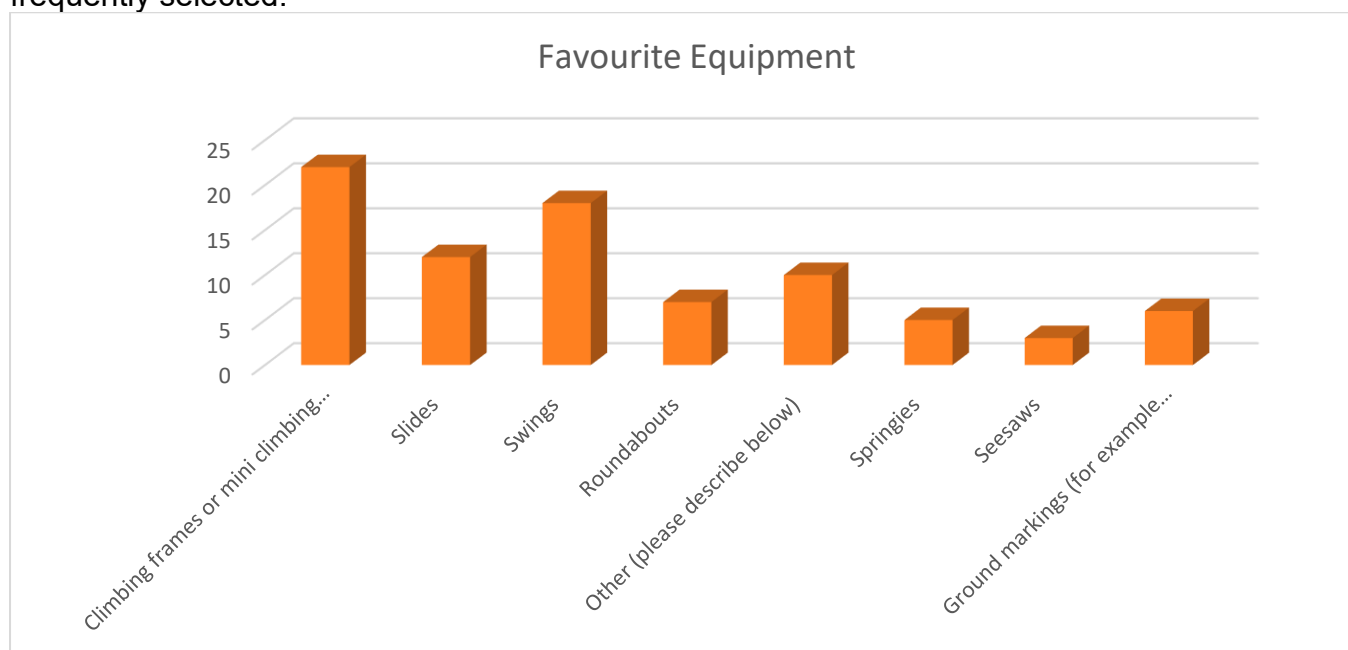
What activities do you like best?

Climbing was the most popular activity, selected by 22 respondents (67%). Swinging was the second most popular activity, selected by 16 respondents (48%). Balancing and Exploring were each selected by 10 respondents (30%). Hanging 9 respondents (27%). Sliding 8 respondents (24%). Interacting 6 respondents (18%). Jumping 5 respondents (15%). Imagining 4 respondents (12%). Spinning 3 respondents (9%). Crawling and Learning were the least selected activities, each chosen by 2 respondents (6%).



What play equipment do you like best?

The most popular equipment was, Climbing Frames (63%), Swings (51%), and Slides (34%). 29% (10 respondents) selected Other. 20 respondents (57%) selected either Swings or Slides. Features such as Ground Markings (17%), Springies (14%), and Seesaws (9%) were less frequently selected.



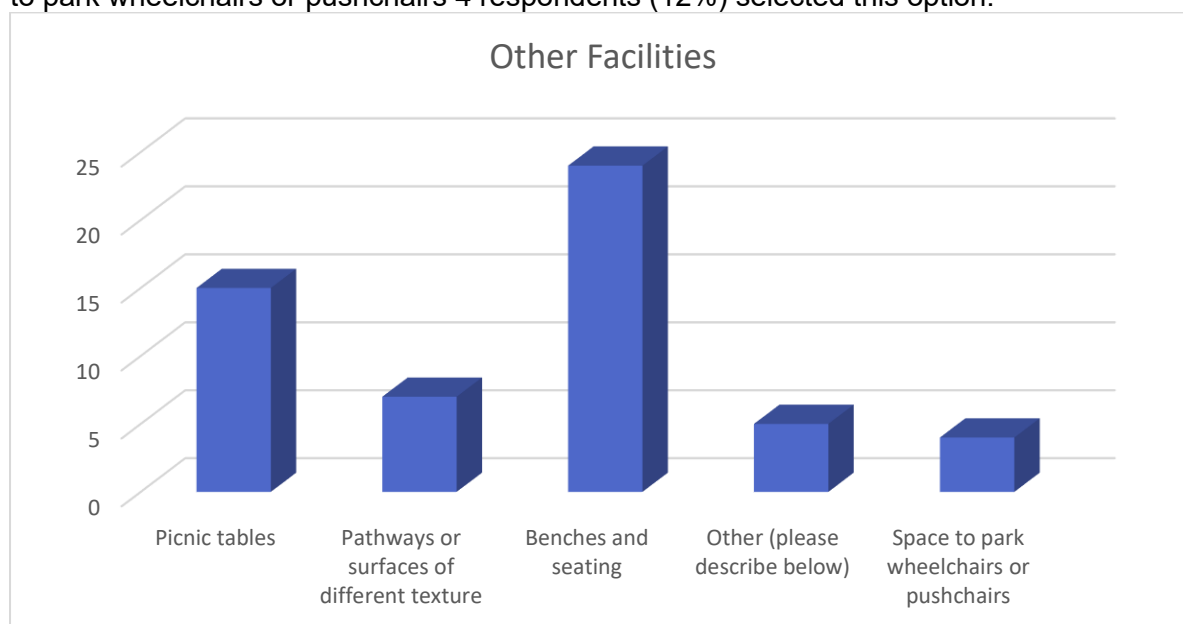
Other suggestions were...

Football nets for the children
Paddling pool, zip line
Would be good to get things for older kids to play - goals, basketball/netball hoops, bike track, pump track, more seating
In ground trampoline, monkey bars & we really need some football goals on the grass opposite
Monkey bars, climbing nets,
Football goals, monkey bars, trampoline

A built in trampoline in the floor A fitness area for adults with kids as I can't work out with my kids so be good for somewhere to workout
Assault course
Big Pirate ship or swinging boats suitable for older kids
Adult gym equipment
Football, cricket

Would you like us to include any other facilities in the play area?

Benches and seating 24 respondents (73%) selected this option, making it the most popular feature. Picnic tables 15 respondents (45%) selected this option. Pathways or surfaces of different texture 7 respondents (21%) selected this option. Other, please describe below 5 respondents (15%) selected this option. Space to park wheelchairs or pushchairs 4 respondents (12%) selected this option.



Other suggestions were...

Mini football pitch or mini MUGA
Litter bins
Football goals with nets would get a huge amount of use
Football goals on the grassed area (big ones with nets) skate park / scooter / bike trail & a bike rack / basketball hoop
Adult gym equipment

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for the play area?

More parks should include equipment for children with physical disabilities, such as a wheelchair-accessible swing. Every child deserves the opportunity to play alongside their peers, and inclusive equipment would make a significant difference to families who currently have limited access to suitable play opportunities.
Simple, engaging information boards placed around the park could help parents understand how everyday play supports their child's development while providing ideas to encourage interaction and conversation. For example:

5 things you can see (visual), 4 things you can touch (tactile), 3 things you can hear (auditory), 2 emotions you feel while at the park (interoception and emotional awareness), 1 movement you enjoyed today (vestibular)
The design of the equipment, choice of materials and impact-absorbing surfaces all play an important role in helping children to take appropriate risks safely. Children learn through appropriately managed risk, and well-designed play environments encourage them to develop balance, coordination, strength, resilience, confidence and problem-solving skills while giving parents reassurance that they can explore within an environment that has been thoughtfully designed with safety in mind.
A climbing frame that allows all ages to climb on would be a good suggestion for this play area
The commuted sums money has been available since October 2025 so prompt action is needed to avoid the money being devalued. Masham has 3 play area, youngest children at Westholme park, oldest at the main recreation area next to the sports field so I feel the Oaks should be for the middle age group, say 5 to 12 years. I don't feel that the existing equipment is in poor condition so adding to the equipment would be the best approach. I feel a climbing frame would be of best value to most children, though if money allowed, now or in the future, perhaps a zip wire along the far side would be fantastic. There are a number of children on the new Oaklands estate as well as those from the Oaks and wider areas so progress on this facility would be really beneficial. I hope that we have some progress and I would be more than happy to help in any way possible, either via the Parish Council or with local residents.
This play area is hugely popular. Children of ages up to 12 use it not only for playing but for meeting and chatting. There is quite a large unused space within the play park and this could be utilised for extra equipment. Parents and grandparents rely on this park to allow their children to play outside in a safe environment.
It needs to include equipment and facilities for all ages. We rarely use the play park area however love to play football/cricket/tennis etc on the large grassed area adjacent to the play park.
These questions are aimed at children not adults who are affected by play areas. Badly worded. Is there an identified demand for spending more money on play equipment in this area? Are there enough children who would use them? Have you considered the noise impact on residents already living in the area? This is a quiet rural area and it obviously doesn't need this kind of money thrown at it. A waste of ratepayers "money which could reduce the quality of life for those living nearby. There are plenty of playground facilities already in the town in the park a short distance away which are in a Proper sports area not a residential area right next to houses.
This area is constantly used by local children for a variety of activities. Ball games (cricket, football, rugby) and a host of other games which they enjoy by using their imagination. It is a pleasure to see what use to which they put this area. The are well behaved and courteous to other members of the public. It is also used by dog walkers and as a general area for a chat and time for relaxation. It is well maintained by the local authority. It is a huge asset for the area. I understand that there is some proposal to turn it into a bike pump track. I know the children who currently use it are concerned that older children would dominate it and would exclude the younger ones. I am conversant with similar pump tracks. Generally they are used for a short period and when the novelty wears off they are left to decline and become areas for nefarious activities. The area is surrounded very closely on two sides by residential properties which would suffer the noise and inconvenience. There are few older children in Masham who are likely to use a pump track. I am concerned that it would attract cyclists from other areas. Parking nearby is very restricted and already causes congestion problems. One other thing. There is a gate at one end of the park but not the other. I think there should be a similar gate or at least a staggered structure at the other end. This part of the path is on a slope which children cycle, scooter and skateboard down straight on to the road. The road is a turning point for vehicles on Brewer's Way. It is a busy area, particularly not only by cars but also many delivery drivers who have very little sight when they are reversing. It is an accident waiting to happen. I have voiced my concerns to the council before but nothing has been done about it.
The play area currently looks neglected. General environment isn't welcoming. Fencing, surfacing and mix match equipment doesn't invite you in. Noticed the grass area adjacent is substantially more popular.

Suggest an assessment of all the play areas is done in Masham to ensure there is a good mix of equipment across the town.
Area widely used by young children with pastor grandparents needs attention to rubber floors and would benefit from a modern climbing slide/ tunnel activity, the field is used by older children mainly playing ball games football etc and would benefit from a fixed goal post, sometimes the path is use for scooters or boards But mainly football
Bike track for older kids, football goal
Equipment that is not made from wood as it gets slippy in poor weather and breaks easily
It would be nice to see a lot more kids playing in the park rather than playing on the roads and potentially causing an accident
Litter bins recycle and non -recycle items. Interaction puzzles. A fresh new look. A few picnic tables
A friends son hurt himself extremely badly on one of the areas in the playground. A huge bolt went through his leg. He needed hospital treatment. There needs to be more regular checks in the children's playgrounds.
The park at the recreation ground is where the sign was, not the oaks park. We mainly use the recreation ground park.
This area is used daily by children from all the surrounding estates, the majority are boys and the average age is 8-13 years. The current play equipment is rarely used as it is viewed as too young. The children play mostly on the field opposite the park, and they enjoy climbing (trees as there isn't any climbing equipment). They play football and would love some goals with nets to stop their ball going into the neighbouring gardens and fields. The children have mentioned that they would like an in ground trampoline and monkey bars.
Football goals, monkey bars
Trampolines Adult fitness area so can exercise with little ones there Zip line Climbing frame with slide
To be kept to a standard of been able to be used . Grass cut regularly
Extended assault course
Equipment needs updating and surfaces made more suitable for purpose. More climbing equipment required.
There are a lot of newcomers who don't like children's play areas because they claim that children are noisy. I'd much rather have see happy, noisy children enjoying themselves and having a grand time than listen to boring old grotesques complaining about noise.
The ground surface needs replacing. The chain stepper is not used at all. A proper climbing frame would be good along with outdoor gym equipment which all ages could use.
Good surface to play sports on. An area similar to the one next to the tennis courts in Masham
Area needs to be regularly maintained particularly in summertime.