

10 NEWS BRIEFING

The Observer 11.06.06 *

Playground fun 'needs more risks'

Britain's leading play safety expert has some simple advice for grown-ups: relax. Let your kids have fun; let them be challenged; let them explore – and let them take risks.

David Yearley, of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, says that years of concentrating solely on safety has led to the spread of 'boring' public play areas. With £124m in lottery cash earmarked for sprucing up playgrounds, he says it's time to shift the focus to 'controlled risk'.

Yearley, keynote speaker at an international conference in Loughborough this week, said: 'We need to provide play environments so that children can experience risk in a controlled and managed way.'

Play can be dangerous: 40,000 British children – from an under-15 population of about 12 million – are injured each year. One child dies every two or three years as a result of a playground accident.

Yearley said that, unless playgrounds provide 'exciting, stimulating' diversion for children, there is a danger that children will not use them, and will play instead on railway lines, by riverbanks or alongside roads.

Old-style climbing frames and seesaws are being replaced by 'more tactile and more interesting' replacements. Sports-orientated equipment, including windsurfing simulators and climbing walls, have also been on the increase. So, too, is the inclusion of water areas in some playgrounds.

Ned Temko

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Climbing frames are too boring, say safety experts.

Getty Images

WELFORD & BRIXWORTH AREA NEWS

Getting their skates on for new youth facilities

NEW facilities for youths in Naseby are being lined up following the success this year of the village's new play area for youngsters.

Naseby Parish Council aims to ensure facilities for an older age group will soon be put in place after aiding youngsters with their own facilities.

A skate park is one of the suggestions, aimed at the 11 to 17

By James Hall

years age bracket, which has been put forward as a possible solution.

Members of the parish council are looking to start on a new project to cater for youths who have difficulty getting out of the village to places with leisure

facilities.

Parish council chairman Roger Hillyer said: "We would really like to make a real go and provide facilities for those in the 11 to 17 years bracket in Naseby.

"We have had a chat with some of them who have suggested a skate park would be a really good addition for the village.

"Many of the people we are aiming the proposed facilities at

often have trouble getting out to towns such as Market Harborough or Northampton where leisure facilities are more freely available.

"It may take some time to get things moving but we have made a start. The play area is well used and we are sure that further facilities will be as well."

The parish council is set to discuss options at its next meeting.



In memory... (centre) Frances Stacey and Ian Elmes with fellow villagers during the tree-planting in memory of Michael Stacey at Welford Pocket Park. (Picture: Andrew Carpenter/000385-3)

Park memorial to stalwart Michael

MEMBERS of Welford Scouts Association, the Pocket Park Group and other villagers attended a tree planting ceremony in memory of former parish council chairman Michael Stacey, who died

earlier this year.

A Joseph Locke rowan tree was planted by Frances Stacey in memory of her husband, who died on March 2.

Mr Stacey had been a member of the village's

scouts association since the 1970s and chairman of the scouts since 1987.

He was also a member of the bowls club and the pocket park.

Villager Phyllis Hayhurst

said: "As a parish councillor he undertook many other duties in the village for the benefit of the community and he will be sadly missed for all his efforts and his willingness to help."

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WELFORD & BRIXWORTH AREA NEWS

Plant a donation – and watch your park grow!

By Adam Hollier

WELFORD's residents are being urged to donate plants to the already successfully established pocket park.

Although the park has only undergone minor work, insects and plants are making their presence felt.

Two connected ponds were dug out recently and water quickly filled them in as did a number of Damsel flies.

The ponds still need to be deepened with shelves dug out from the sides and other

plans include laying a footpath along the ponds which will enable access for wheelchair or push chair users to use the site.

Yellow poppy and wildflower seeds are also establishing themselves over the area.

Villagers are being invited to donate local trees between 45cm and 2 metres high, preferably oak, crab apple, rowan, or chestnut.

Shrubs such as dogwood, guelder rose, wayfaring tree, hazel, spindle and grass and wildflower seeds are also needed.

The organisers are offering the invitation to individuals or groups to sponsor sections of hedge or a part of the wildflower meadow.

A butterfly walk is being set up and residents are invited to donate butterfly-attracting shrubs.

For further details contact Sarah Gorrod on MH 570810.

Relief at last for cluttered road?

PLANS to start work on the congested Spratton Road in Brixworth look set to go ahead.

The main improvements being discussed include a landscaping scheme and more parking facilities.

Cllr Marcus Elms will bring the project to the committee before the end of this financial year, and if agreed, work should take about a year to complete.

He said: "The whole area is a bit restricted now but it will certainly improve, it just depends what budget it comes from."

Going wild in the country

A WILDZONE playscheme is taking place at Brixworth Country Park today (Thursday) and tomorrow.

Among the many activities with an environmental theme will be searching for dragons in the pond, making bug bungalows, flying kites, and building shelters.

