

## Therfield Parish Council – Playground Report

**July 2025**

The Parish Council recognises that the village playground is showing increasing signs of deterioration due to the age and general wear of the equipment. The condition of the playground has been a growing concern, and we acknowledge that it has not been fully addressed in recent years.

To ensure the safety of users and to properly assess the state of the equipment, the Council has commissioned a new provider, Broadmead Leisure, to carry out quarterly playground safety and maintenance inspections. These inspections will provide a detailed report categorising issues into low, medium, and high risk, allowing the Council to prioritise and plan repairs accordingly.

### **Findings from the First Inspection Report**

The initial inspection report identified several issues across the playground equipment. Most notably, the aerial runway has been categorised as medium to high risk with necessary repairs estimated to cost £2,885. As of 6th July 2025, Broadmead Leisure has removed the aerial runway to prioritise the safety of all visitors.

In addition to the aerial runway, there are various other items on the site with issues graded between low and medium risk. The total estimated cost of these repairs is £4,620.

The roundabout has also raised concern. An initial investigation costing £75 is needed to determine the specific fault, followed by a £325 repair to the surrounding safety surfacing.

The total cost for all known issues amounts to **£7,905**. Please note, this figure does not include the cost of fixing the roundabout itself, which will be determined once an investigation has been completed.

### **Playground Bin**

The playground bin has been removed due to health and safety concerns.

When councillors and the Clerk met with the Broadmead Leisure team in May 2025 to discuss the playground and initial assessments, Broadmead Leisure advised that members of the public should not be responsible for emptying the bin.

Although well-intentioned, members of the public had been carrying out this task. However, trained waste collection professionals are equipped with specific knowledge and receive annual vaccinations to protect them from health risks associated with handling waste—precautions not available to the general public. For this reason, we were strongly advised that public handling of waste disposal is inappropriate and poses a potential health risk.



Additionally, we are aware that North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) is in the process of decommissioning bins and reducing public waste collections across the district. Given these circumstances, we have taken the decision to remove the bin from use.

We kindly ask all visitors to the playground to take their rubbish home with them and help us keep the area clean and safe for everyone.

### **Funding and Budget Constraints**

The Council recognises that the playground has not been fully factored into recent budgets. Given current financial constraints, the Parish Council does not have the available funding to address all the required repairs at once.

To support potential refurbishment and development, the Parish Clerk is in the process of preparing a detailed lottery grant application. As part of this effort, a questionnaire has been circulated to local families to gather input and demonstrate community support for the application.

### **Leased Land Considerations**

An added complexity is that the playground is located on leased land, and the Council has confirmed via land title review that the lease is due to expire in July 2029. The Parish Council is now beginning to seek legal advice and further information regarding the future of the land and the intentions of the landowners. We are committed to keeping parishioners updated as this situation develops.

### **Commitment to the Community**

The Parish Council fully understands the importance of the playground as a vital and much-loved part of village life, particularly for our young families. While resources are currently limited, we remain committed to doing all we can to maintain and enhance the area within our means and through external funding wherever possible.