

## Warnford Playground application for a grant from the Warnford Parish Meeting of November 2021

This application is for a grant of £450 from the Warnford Parish Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 for the year ending 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

Please find attached background information on the Playground, our most recent accounts and projected expenditure for 2022/23.

### Warnford Playground, R. P. Chester Memorial Trust Co Ltd

The Charity was set up in 1974 to provide an area of play and open space for Warnford Village residents. It is located off Lippen Lane adjacent to the River Meon in an idyllic setting. The land was donated by the Chester family and is also a memorial to R. P. Chester, who was the first member of the family to live in the village, having purchased the Warnford Estate in the 1930s. He died in 1968. Since its inception, the Playground has been run by a group of unpaid trustees who have traditionally been residents of the village. However, this year we were very pleased to welcome Kate Fismer on to the committee, the granddaughter of R.P.Chester himself. Although she is not a resident of Warnford (yet), we feel the link back to the Chester family more than justifies her participation.

The current four trustees administer the charity and take on the responsibility for the upkeep of the Playground itself and the equipment that sits on the land. As well as being a registered charity, it is also a limited company.

Apart from Warnford villagers, the Playground is used by outside visitors, particularly in the summer months, when it is a favourite for family picnics. We believe that all would agree that the Playground is a great asset to our village.

### Reasons for the Application

The Playground is a registered charity and has no regular income. It therefore relies on donations and goodwill to keep it running. We have limited, but very welcome, financial support from the Church via the village fete, held on the Playground, the Tom Coles Charity and the Christmas Market.

In the past, this small income has been 'topped up' with grants from the Parish Meeting and we ask that this continues. One of the major costs each year is the insurance (around £500) together with the upkeep and running of the machinery, with the cost of fuel, oil and servicing usually amounting to well over £100 per annum. We also need to top up the bark chippings in the play areas and complete running repairs on the play equipment to adhere to the recommendations from the annual playground safety inspections, all of which comes at a cost.

### Special Considerations

The issue of ash die-back disease has been simmering for a while now, but this year we have grasped the nettle and engaged a tree surgeon to remove four of the worst affected trees. This work will have been completed ahead of the Parish Meeting, at a cost of just under £3,500. Needless to say, this is a major hit on our resources but an essential exercise in maintaining the safety of the playground environment. Moreover, in the worst case scenario, five more trees might eventually need felling, the cost of which would significantly exceed that of the current work and totally exhaust our current reserves.

By way of mitigation, we have applied to HCC via Hugh Lumby for a grant of £500 towards this work. We will also try to use some of the chipped branches from the felled trees as an under-layer of 'bark' for the play equipment in order to reduce the amount of the very expensive fresh material that will be needed as make-up later this year.

Furthermore, we understand that in view of our predicament, the Village Hall committee have volunteered to forego their grant of £300 from the Parish Meeting for 2022/23 in favour of the money going to the Playground instead. This is a very welcome offer and we would be pleased to accept, subject to the approval of the Parish Meeting.

In conclusion, the Parish Meeting's previous support has been vital in keeping the charity solvent and we therefore ask that serious consideration be given to this application. If granted, the money will cover the annual insurance premium and general maintenance costs while we strive to recover from this year's hit.

Thank you.

The Playground Trustees: Stephen Short, Robin Athawes, Phil Chadder and Kate Fismer