

BUILDING SITE: Alexandra Park, Parkstone, with the area where new equipment is to go, across the path from the existing play area
Picture: Hattie Miles ID: 9944009



Residents call for council to play fair

CHILDREN in Parkstone could be deprived of new play equipment after residents blocked its installation.

Work, funded by the government's £1m Playbuilder scheme, was ready to begin on a new zip wire, rebound wall and basket swing at Alexandra Park.

But after residents protested they were not fully consulted, the £60,000 improvements have been put on hold.

The council now faces a race against time to placate the protesters and finish the work before the funding cut-off in March.

By James Morton

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Residents said they were not being killjoys and that the plans had been "railroaded" through to meet a funding deadline.

Scott McCarthy, chairman of the recently reformed Friends of Alexandra Park, said they wanted to maintain the space as "a park, not a playground".

He said: "We have no problem

with upgrading the facilities but they want it to sprawl all over the park.

"The council is trying to push something forward without really informing the locals."

The Playbuilder scheme aims to transform the country's play facilities.

Alexandra Park was chosen in the first wave of Poole play spaces to benefit from the government's Playbuilder wind-fall.

More than 250 eight to 13-year-olds live within 400m of Alexandra Park.

It was selected because of the dearth of other play facilities in the area.

Clare Freeman, the council's greenspace manager, said a "thorough consultation" had taken place over Alexandra Park since June.

She said: "However, it is important for us to consider the views of all park users and we will continue to work with any concerned residents to resolve any issues as a matter of urgency."

'They want it to sprawl all over the park'



CUT THE RIBBON: Mayor of Poole, Cllr Charles Meachin, opens the refurbished play area at Beamish Road, Canford Heath. Entertainment included a flame-thrower (inset)

Meanwhile, lots of fun at play area openings

THE start of half-term was marked with the opening of five fun refurbished play areas across Poole.

Children, parents and residents were involved with the design of each of the play parks, which are among 22 in the borough for eight to 13-year-olds to receive £1.1 million government funding.

Poole Mayor, Cllr Charles Meachin, officially opened the first at Beamish Road, Canford Heath, to set the aerial cableway flying. The next was at nearby Sherborn

Crescent, with three others at Turlin Moor's Pavilion area and Foreland Road and Dawkins Road, Hamworthy.

"Play is such an important part of a child's development and we are delighted we have been able to improve some of Poole's play areas to such high standards and provide such varied play experiences for so many children to enjoy," said Cllr Tony Woodcock, cabinet portfolio holder for children's services and play champion for Poole.