

Outline Review of play and sports area off Canal Way, Ilminster

Commissioned by South Somerset District Council

Prepared by  **South Somerset
Disability Forum**

November
2013

PURPOSE

To identify where Ilminster Recreation Ground when developed could offer better facilities for all and to comply with current building regulations. To relate this to BS8300, Part M building regulations and the Equality Act 2010 and the requirements within these. To offer suggestions of improvements required under this legislation

METHOD

South Somerset Disability Forum was asked to meet with Rachel Fenton & Nick Perrett both of Redbay Designs and Mike Rowsell & Stan Shayler of SSDF. This was undertaken at Ilminster Recreational Area at Canal Way, Ilminster at 2.00pm Thursday 7th November. Discussion took place on the site prior to the production of this report

Section 20(4) (9) of The Equality Act 2010 states that avoiding a substantial disadvantage caused by a physical feature includes:

- Removing the physical feature in question
- Altering it or
- Providing a reasonable means of avoiding it

S 149 General Equality Duty:

Parish Council must give due regard to:

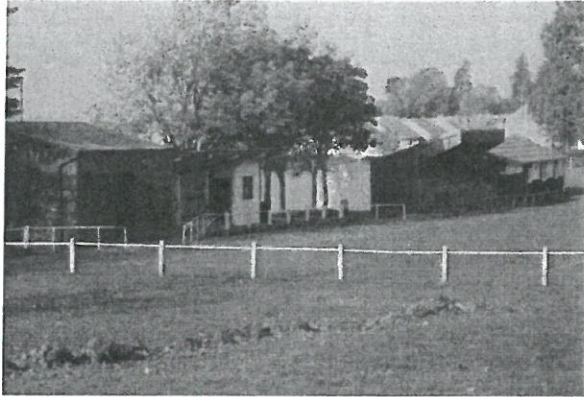
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

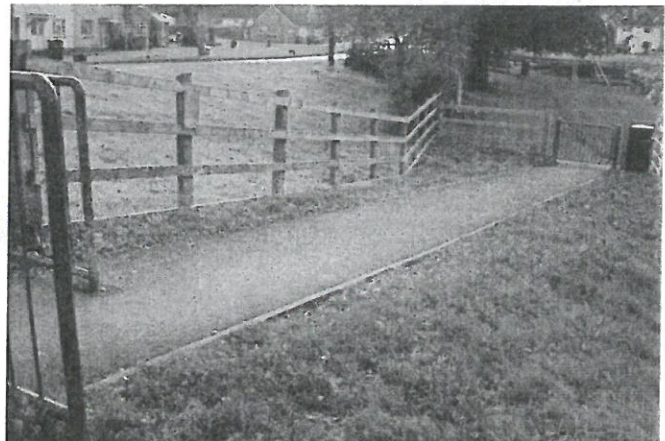
OBSERVATIONS

The site in question is a large area currently used by local sports clubs (football, tennis, hockey and other sports) with a children's play area and skate board park



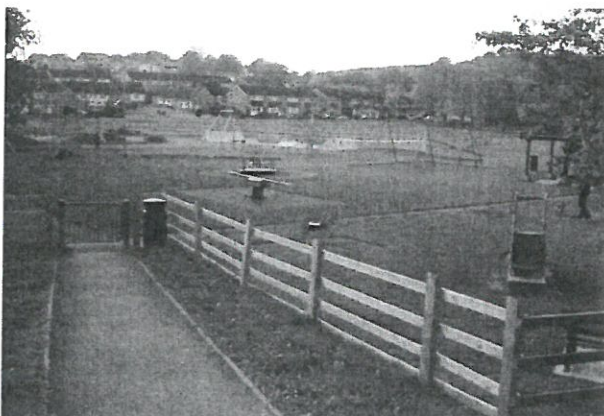
Ilminster Town Council have employed Redbay Designs to produce a comprehensive proposal to upgrade the whole area. It was stated that this will involve a new sports pavilion, new artificial pitches and upgrading of the Children's play area. This was to be submitted for public consultation later that day.

As only an indicative landscape plan had been prepared for consultation, no comments could be made on specific items, however some fundamental problems in the overall area and the existing play area were identified which should be addressed in future designs.



Most of the park is sunk from the road as can be clearly seen in each photograph and approaches are via ramps. These are too steep and dangerous for wheelchair users. At the top of the ramp (shown in the photographs above and to the left) there are staggered

gates and at the bottom a further gate preventing access by wheelchairs. There is also an edge to the path that could cause injury should a disabled person trip or fall. There are no interconnecting surfaced paths from the play area to other parts of sports fields

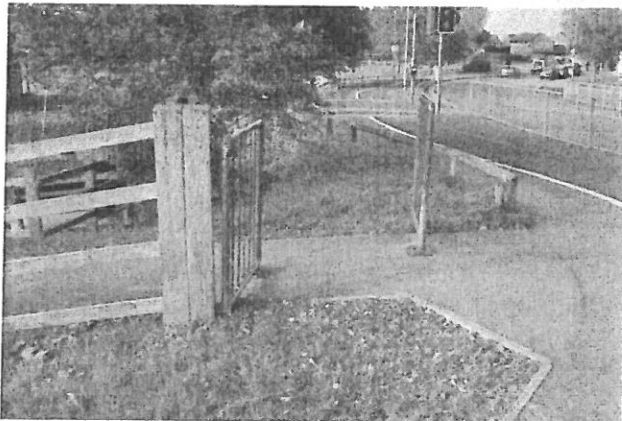


There are ramped paths which allow access from Canal Way

(photos above) and The Mead on the opposite side of the field (shown below). The main access ramp off Canal Way is 1.5 metres wide and 15 metres long with a gradient of 5.9 deg (in excess of the 1:12 permitted). The further entrance ramp was 1.0 metre wide and 15 metres long with a gradient of 5.6 degrees (in



excess of the 1:12 permitted). There are no rest areas or handrails. BS8300 states that no ramp should exceed 10 metres in length without level rest areas and no ramp should exceed 4.7 deg (1 in 12) or exceed 2 metres in length at this gradient. The existing ramps are unsuitable for wheelchair users and children's pushchairs especially when wet or icy. The children's play area of the site is reasonably level and no special ramps or steps are necessary.



Children's Play Area

There is no suitable drop off point or parking nearby except across a busy main road (photo left) and consideration should be given to providing at least two disabled parking spaces on site

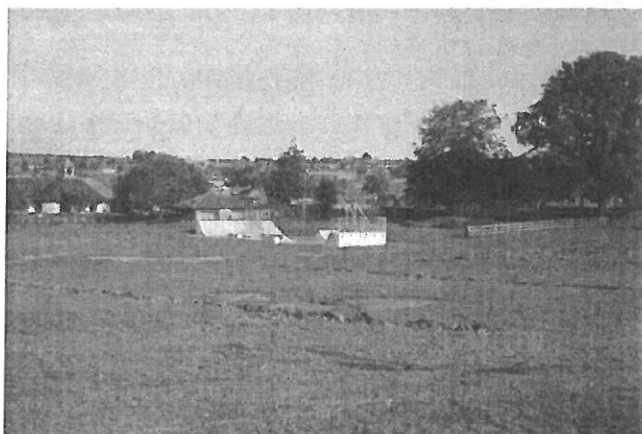
The existing play area has a toilet block with covered seating around the block but no disabled toilet. Future development should include a fully compliant disabled toilet as detailed in BS8300 Part M. It appears feasible to incorporate this within the existing building and this should be 'Radar Key' operated. The play area occupies a large area compared to most parks

The circulation paths within the area are very narrow (less than 1 metre). These paths should be at least 1.5 metres wide. Whilst the individual items of play equipment have 'wetpour'



resilient surfacing around them there are no surfaced paths to access them, all being accessed across grass which is not “user friendly” to those with mobility problems. Paths should have a smooth surface, level with minimum camber and no raised edges. Bonded gravel, sand or bark should be avoided

Two users of the park were spoken to who were accompanied by young children. Both were concerned at the lack of fencing for the young children’s area, both to contain toddlers from wandering off and to exclude dogs so as to prevent contamination from a health and safety point of view



There are many recommendations sharing experiences contained in various reports such as those produced by RoSPA and which are accessible through the internet and SSDF would be glad to comment further when detailed plans are available

With regards to the development of the remainder of the site, the recommendations of BS8300 must be embraced to comply with the Equality Act 2010

S A Shayler November 2013

Photographs and Report M Baker December 2013