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# Curry Mallet Outdoor Play Equipment

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## Issues & Options Report

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Presented by Curry Mallet  
Parish Council's Outdoor  
Play Area Working Group  
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## 1.0 Background

**1.1** In 2006, thanks to tremendous efforts by people living and working in Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe, the Parish Plan was published. The plan presents a vision for the two communities and included a number of proposals. One proposal was to investigate funding for play equipment at the village hall. The Plan noted:-

*"...At the moment, the only facility for children in the two villages is the playing field down at the school. It was felt that this was solely used by the older age group and only if there was a large enough group. The open area at the Village Hall was thought to be a much better venue for some sort of play equipment by the younger age group."*

*"Our Priorities*

- *Look into the possibility of funding and maintaining equipment near the village hall"*

**1.2** Shortly after the plan was published, two local residents contacted Curry Mallet Parish Council (CMPC) and Curry Mallet & Beercrocombe Village Hall Committee (CMBVHC) to discuss the possibility of developing plans for an outdoor play area.

At the time, various issues were raised by both CMPC and CMBVHC but principally concerned:-

1. Who would be responsible for maintaining and managing any future play area?; and
2. Identifying a suitable site.

**1.3** Although by 2009, following advice from South Somerset District Council's Parks and Greenspace Team and the offer of part funding from Somerset County Council, CMBVHC had agreed in principle that play equipment could be installed on a 100sqm site to the west of the village hall, the issue of future maintenance and management remained unresolved. As a result, despite the best efforts of all those involved to find a way forward, the plans were, unfortunately, shelved.

**1.4** This Issues and Options Report aims to explore and address some of the issues raised back in 2009 and more recently by CMPC and CMBVHC regarding the provision of play equipment within Curry Mallet, and assess the suitability of various sites.

## 2.0 Need/Demand for Play Equipment

### 2.1 Parish Plan

**2.1.1** As part of the initial Parish Plan process, a questionnaire was delivered in 2005 to every household in Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe (189 homes). 83% of households responded.

**2.1.2** At that time, the results noted that the community was vibrant and had experienced an influx of new residents including families with children. 94% of those that returned the questionnaire stated that they would like to see more facilities for younger people, particularly the 11-19 age group.

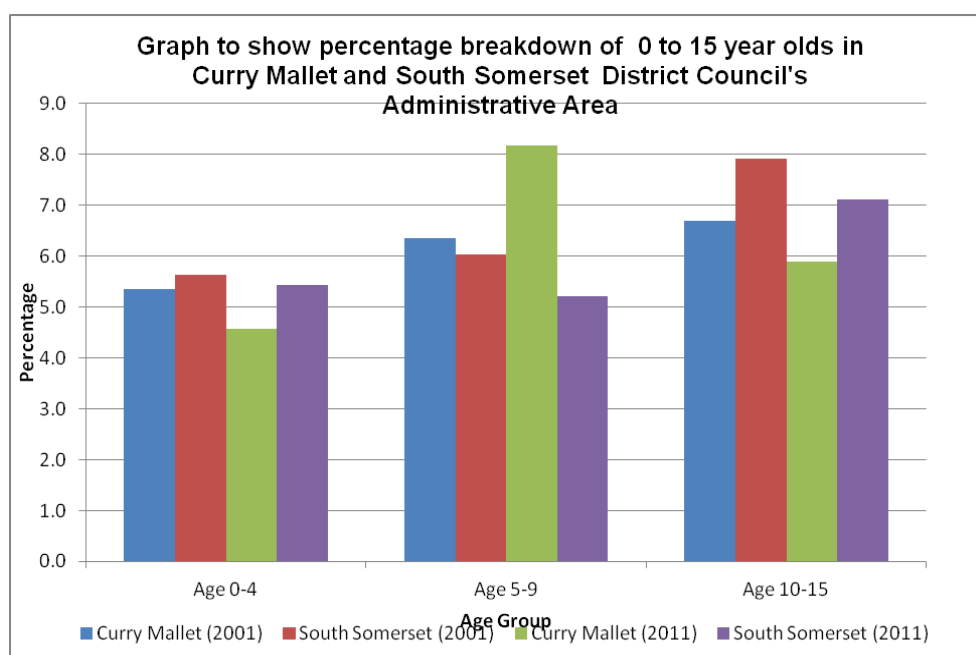
## 2.2 The UK Census

**2.2.1** Putting to one side for a moment the number of children on Curry Mallet School roll (66), it has been suggested that there aren't enough children living in or regularly visiting Curry Mallet to justify the installation of outdoor play equipment in the village.

**2.2.2** To examine this in more detail, 2001 and 2011 Census data has been obtained, specifically data relating to the under 16 age groups. This data has been compared with South Somerset District Council's administrative area and is presented in the tables and graphs below.

Age Group	Curry Mallet (2001)		South Somerset (2001)		Curry Mallet (2011)		South Somerset (2011)	
	Total	% of population	Total	% of population	Total	% of population	Total	% of population
0 - 4	16	5.4	8501	5.6	14	4.6	8771	5.4
5 - 9	19	6.4	9113	6.0	25	8.2	8389	5.2
10 -15	20	6.7	11955	7.9	18	5.9	11458	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>29569</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>28618</b>	<b>17.7</b>

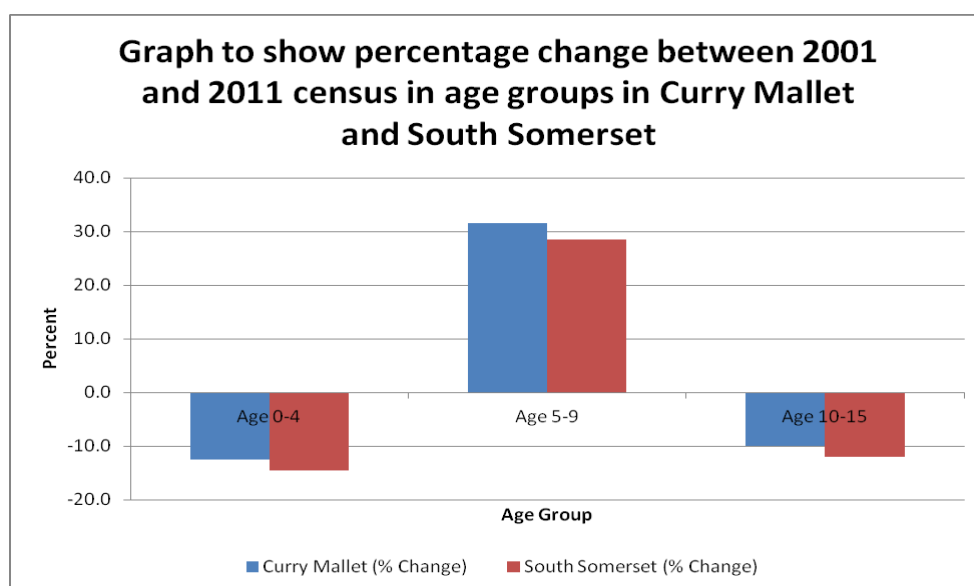
Produced by the Partnership Intelligence Unit, Somerset County Council 2011 Census statistics from Office for National Statistics



**2.2.3** The above graph shows that in general terms, the local population of children and young people between 0-15 years of age living in Curry Mallet (as a percentage of population) is in line with South Somerset as a whole. In fact, looking at the census data for 2011, the number of 5-9 year olds living in Curry Mallet (as a percentage of population) exceeded that for South Somerset.

**2.2.4** The next table compares the percentage change in younger age groups (as a percentage of population) between 2001 and 2011.

Age Group	Curry Mallet (% Change)	South Somerset (% Change)
0-4	-12.5	-14.5
5-9	+31.6	+28.6
10-15	-10.0	-12.1



**2.2.5** The graph above indicates that the percentage change of Curry Mallet's younger population between 2001 and 2011 is broadly in line with that for South Somerset. In fact, the decrease experienced by the 0-4 and 10-15 age groups was less than experienced in South Somerset as whole. For the 5-9 age group, the population increase (as a percentage of population) exceeded that of South Somerset by 3 percentage points.

**2.2.6** It is fair to highlight that Curry Mallet has experienced limited house building since 2001 and the turnover of housing stock is lower than the national average. However, the fact that as a small community we benefit from an "Outstanding" Ofsted rated school, shop and Post Office, pub, church and a well used village hall means the village is a tremendous draw for families.

**2.2.7** The Census data reveals that compared with South Somerset, the number of children and young people living in the village (as a percentage of population) remains healthy and, in fact, grew. However, it should be remembered that local populations naturally fluctuate and in time the number of children and young people in the village may decrease. The Working Group has no reason to believe, based on the evidence above, that Curry Mallet will experience a dramatic decrease in the short to medium term.

## **2.3 South Somerset District Council Guidance**

**2.3.1** The principal objective of South Somerset District Council's adopted Play Policy is to:-

“Increase the quantity and enhance the quality of children’s play opportunities.”

and:-

“Ensure that all children and young people have reasonable access to a range of play opportunities within a practical journey from their home...”

**2.3.2** The document goes on to explain why South Somerset District Council considered it important to develop and adopt play policies. Those relevant to Curry Mallet include:-

1. **Consistency of principles:** A play policy identifies an agreed set of principles and definitions about play and its value for children’s well being and development.
2. **Focus on Children and Young People:** A play policy provides the context in which the focus can be shifted from existing institutions and practice to the needs of children, creating the possibility of change, innovation and long term development.
3. **Transparency:** A play policy clarifies the purposes of provision for providers, service users, funders and regulators.
4. **Local Commitment:** The Process of creating a policy unlocks local interest and energy and creates commitment to services, children, parents, and local communities getting involved.
5. **A Foundation for Risk Mitigation:** A Play Policy will assist in determining what appropriate risk mitigation is and in demonstrating that providers have acted properly where negligence becomes an issue.

**2.3.3** Having formally adopted this policy, the District Council carried out a review of play equipment across the whole District and identified Curry Mallet, as well as other rural settlements, as lacking an equipped outdoor play area.

**2.3.4** Respondents to the Survey (please refer to section 3.4 of this report) have highlighted that surrounding villages including Hatch Beauchamp, Fivehead and North Curry all have equipped outdoor play areas and have questioned the need for equipment in Curry Mallet. This was put to South Somerset District Council’s Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer, Rob Parr.

**2.3.5** He highlighted that the overriding aim of South Somerset District Council’s policy is “*to increase the quantity of play opportunities*”. The fact that a neighbouring community has outdoor play equipment is not a reason in itself to limit play opportunities elsewhere. He went on to note that younger members of our community have to travel outside the village to access play equipment which in most cases necessitates a travel by car or, if walking or cycling, a journey along narrow country lanes. This may be perceived as less than ideal by parents/carers because of the distances involved and consequently reduces children’s and young people’s access to outdoor play equipment.

**2.3.6** Some survey respondents wondered if play equipment is necessary when children can explore and play in the countryside around them (please refer to Section 3.4 of this report). In response, South Somerset District Council’s Senior

Play and Youth Facilities Officer explained that increasing the range of play opportunities for children and young people is very important. Outdoor play equipment in Curry Mallet would extend choice and the control our younger residents and visitors have over their own play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.

## **2.4 Section 106 (Planning) Funding**

**2.4.1** The fact that our community lacks any outdoor play equipment was recognised when planning permission was granted for the conversion of Lyddons Barns into dwellings in 2012. As a result, through a legal obligation, the developers agreed to pay the sum of £4,177 (to be held for a period of five years expiring in July 2016) solely for the provision of outdoor play equipment and a £2,374 commuted sum towards its future maintenance.

## **2.5 Anecdotal Evidence**

**2.5.1** During October 2014 school parents offered their comments and suggestions regarding outdoor play equipment via Facebook. At least 15 families responded and comments included:-

- A play area is a great idea and I suggest the village hall. It would be a great benefit to our family (Curry Mallet resident);
- I think play equipment should be at the village hall (Hatch Beauchamp resident, child attends Curry Mallet School);
- The village hall seems the perfect place for a play area (Fivehead resident, child attends Curry Mallet School);
- Curry Mallet definitely needs a play area for the kids. Village Hall would be the perfect location (Curry Mallet Resident);
- The hall is definitely the best place for a play area. We support the local pub and when we are there the kids go to the hall but there's nothing much for them to do there. A play area would be fab (Fivehead resident, child attends Curry Mallet School);
- Yes to play equipment at the village hall (Hatch Beauchamp resident and children attend Curry Mallet School);
- Play equipment at the village hall sounds like a fantastic idea (Curry Mallet resident);
- I'm totally behind a play area at the village hall (Curry Mallet resident);
- I think a play area would be a welcome addition to the village and give parents and children a safe place to meet and play. It would be a great benefit to the community and make good use of a little used space. I think the village hall would be the best place as that area is the hub of the village with the shop and pub. It would mean the centre of the village would become a space for all ages (Fivehead resident. Children attend Curry Mallet School);
- Village hall is most obvious site and central (Curry Mallet resident); and
- The site needs to have good visibility (Curry Mallet resident).

## **3.0 Public Consultation and Survey**

**3.1** Encouraged by the Parish Plan's survey findings, Census data, local government guidance and more recent anecdotal evidence, CMPC's Outdoor Play Equipment Working Group decided to consult local residents and carried out a survey. The

questions included in the survey were shaped by comments made by members of CMPC and CMBVHC.

**3.2** From 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014, 144 copies were distributed throughout Curry Mallet (one to every household). A questionnaire was also sent home with every child at Curry Mallet School in their book bags (66 Pupils on the School roll).

**3.3** Respondents were given until 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014 to return their surveys to Curry Mallet Post Office and Stores. To encourage a good response, the survey was publicised on Curry Mallet's village website ([www.currymallet.org](http://www.currymallet.org)) and posted online ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)).

### **3.4 Survey Results**

**3.4.1** 74 completed surveys were returned. This equates to a 35% response rate. However, to avoid double counting, if the number of surveys distributed to school parents that live in Curry Mallet are discounted (in total 24) the response rate rises to 40%.

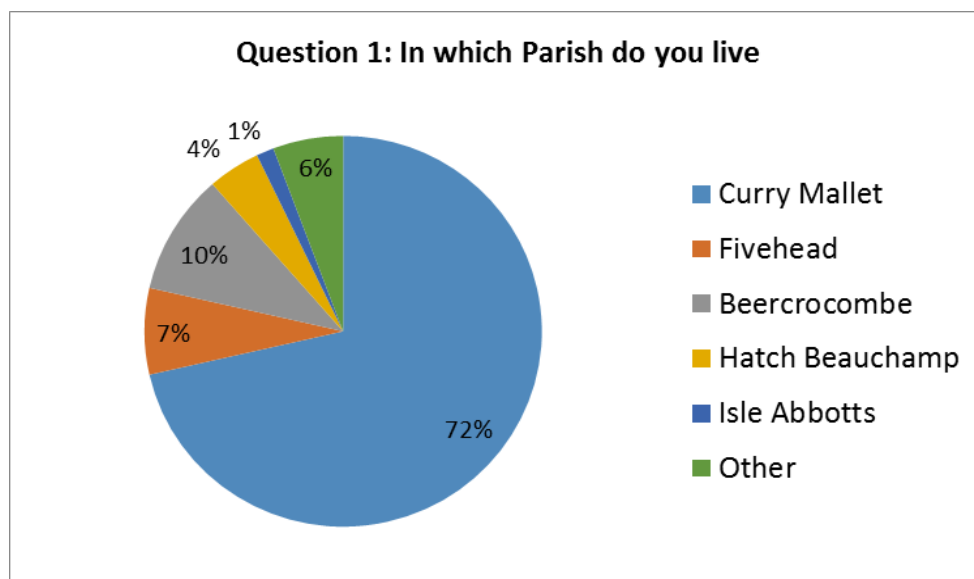
#### **Q1. In which Parish do you live?**

##### **Analysis**

The results of the first question are shown in the table below and have been summarised in the accompanying graph. 72% of the surveys were completed by Curry Mallet residents with the remaining 28% being completed by people living in nearby parishes.

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Total No. of Respondents</b>
Curry Mallet	54
Fivehead	5
Beercrocombe	7
Hatch Beauchamp	3
Isle Abbots	1
Other	4





## Q2. Would you like to see outdoor play equipment installed in Curry Mallet?

### Analysis

It's clear from the table below that 91% of respondents residing in Curry Mallet support the idea of outdoor play equipment being installed in the village. It is also notable that the idea is strongly supported by respondents living in nearby parishes.

Parish	Yes		No	
	Total No. of Respondents	%	Total No. of Respondents	%
Curry Mallet	42	91%	4	9%
Beercrocombe	7	100%	0	0%
Fivehead	5	100%	0	0%
Hatch Beauchamp	3	100%	0	0%
Isle Abbotts	1	100%	0	0%
Other	5	100%	0	0%

Respondents were also asked to briefly explain why they thought outdoor play equipment should be installed in Curry Mallet. The following comments were received:-

Comments Received from Respondents that Answered Yes	
Parish	Comment
Curry Mallet	The children of the village need a safe, fun place to play and socialise with their friends other than school. I don't know any area that doesn't have a park other than here.
Curry Mallet	To have somewhere the children can play whilst going for a walk and see other children

Curry Mallet	We have four children under the age of 14 and feel it would be hugely beneficial to both their development and social needs
Curry Mallet	Add to village facilities
Curry Mallet	I think it would be a nice focal point for the children of the village to meet and play
Curry Mallet	There have been many new families joining our community and we could do with more facilities for them.
Curry Mallet	There is nowhere to play safely in walking distance, plus it would be fun for the whole family.
Curry Mallet	It would be a significant facility for young families.
Curry Mallet	Our children deserve it
Curry Mallet	As a social area for the village. Not every house in the village has large gardens, this would be a destination after walking to the shop.
Curry Mallet	Good for children to have somewhere safe to blow off steam and play with friends.
Curry Mallet	Our grandchildren would love it.
Curry Mallet	We need somewhere for the children to meet and play safely.
Curry Mallet	Would give youngsters a place to call their own. Save having to travel along busy roads to either Fivehead or Hatch.
Curry Mallet	For use by my grandchildren
Curry Mallet	The addition of play equipment to the village will provide a valuable asset to the community now and in the future. Whilst at present there are facilities in both Hatch Beauchamp and Fivehead, these are not Curry Mallet's community facilities. Having a play area located centrally in the village can only help to benefit the other facilities e.g. pub and shop.
Curry Mallet	Great amenity for village.
Curry Mallet	A playground for children can only add value to the village - a destination within the village where children can play safely and which can only add to our village economy.
Curry Mallet	With the growing risk to our children's safety, as there out and about. A safe secure place for them to play is essential.
Curry Mallet	Definitely, it is long overdue. We have a thriving village with lots of children as residents and a primary school. A village like this should have a play park in line with those parks at Fivehead and North Curry.
Curry Mallet	It's an excellent idea to allow safe play locally
Curry Mallet	My grandchildren live in Curry Mallet and it would be nice to have somewhere to take them within walking distance of their home where they can play in safety, and is close to the shop.
Curry Mallet	We have lived in the village for 4 years. I feel my kids would benefit from being able to ride their bikes or walk to the park, instead of having to go in the car.
Curry Mallet	I have 2 Children and a 3rd on the way, it is long overdue
Curry Mallet	I personally have 4 children & there are lots more children in the

	village that would benefit from a safe & fun place to play.
Curry Mallet	With a thriving community school and social hubs such as the shop and pub in our village, it seems that there is a need for something for our children to use and somewhere they can safely gather. We're fortunate to have the local amenities that we have, but I feel that our children and young people could be better accommodated.
Curry Mallet	There are many families in the village for which this equipment would be a bonus. Older children will not have to face the dangerous lanes cycling or walking to HB or Fivehead.
Curry Mallet	It will provide healthy outdoor exercise in our community. Children need a space to play as it is essential to their learning and social skills.
Curry Mallet	So few facilities for children, it is essential
Curry Mallet	It would be a great asset to have a place in our own village to take the children to play and for them to meet up with their friends, rather than having to drive to neighbouring villages.
Curry Mallet	Are community includes families with young children many of whom will make use of any play equipment. It will also be good not to have to travel to other places in the car to play.
Beercrocombe	We get a lot of use out of the Fivehead play area and it would be good to have facilities within walking distance for children.
Beercrocombe	There is nothing for young people to play on. No facilities for the young
Beercrocombe	Keep him occupied
Beercrocombe	I am a grandmother and often in Curry Mallet shop. It is walking distance and would be a definite advantage.
Beercrocombe	We seem to be lagging behind many other local villages, why?
Fivehead	Yes because there is currently nowhere for the children to play
Fivehead	Would be great after school and weekends.
Fivehead	I have small children and they would love somewhere to play in the village where they go to school. I think it would make the village a place for all ages.
Hatch Beauchamp	It's well overdue!
Hatch Beauchamp	My children both go to Curry Mallet school and would love to see a play area that we can visit afterschool and at weekends. We use the post office pub and village hall regularly and a play area at the hall would be invaluable.
Other	I visit Beercrocombe weekly. My three grandchildren would benefit if it was installed.
Other	Always good to have new facilities.
Other	I have grandchildren in Curry Mallet and know how much they will enjoy it.

Those respondents that thought play equipment should not be installed in Curry Mallet or were unsure commented as follows:-

<b>Comments Received from Respondents that Answered No or unsure</b>	
Curry Mallet	More than adequate provision in surrounding villages.
Curry Mallet	Deep concerns depending on proposed sites, regarding loss of spaces in village for essential fundraising use e.g. annual fete to pay for rising costs of V.Hall.
Curry Mallet	Curry Mallet is still a rural village with many opportunities for children in the outside environment. There are three traditional play areas within 2 3/4 miles (Fivehead, North Curry, Hatch Beauchamp) and many families also have play equipment in their gardens.
Curry Mallet	No enough children resident in Curry Mallet to support the upkeep and usage of play equipment. Play areas with equipment are within easy reach at Fivehead and Hatch Beauchamp.
Curry Mallet	I am neutral on the subject - I would not make use of it but would not oppose it providing the following were true! (a) proven need (b) sure that it won't detract from other facilities or cause nuisance (c) ongoing maintenance plan.

### Q3. How many children live or regularly visit and stay with you?

#### Analysis

The majority of families in Curry Mallet and surrounding parishes include two children. However, 15 respondents residing in Curry Mallet indicated that more than 3 children either live with or regularly visit and stay with them.

The survey results indicate that at least 95 children live in or regularly visit Curry Mallet. On this basis, it is reasonable to suggest that the survey appears to support South Somerset District Council's evidence that there is a demand for outdoor play equipment in Curry Mallet - even more so when you include the number of children from nearby parishes that regularly visit Curry Mallet.

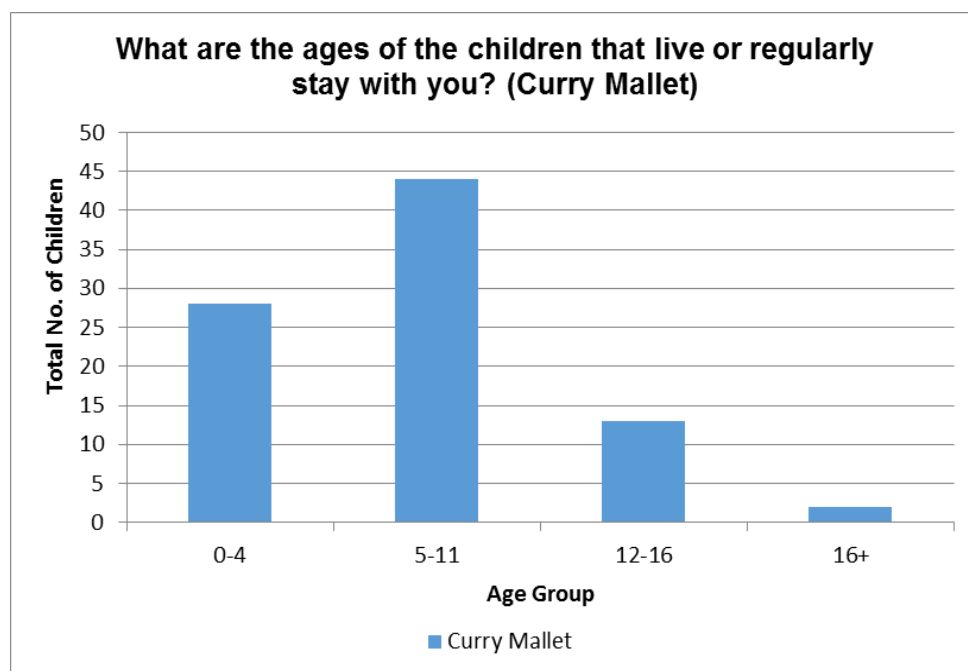
Parish	Number of children that live with or regularly visit and stay with you								Total No. of Children by Parish
	1		2		3		4		
	Total No. of Respondents	Total No. of Children	No. of Respondents	Total No. of Children	Total No. of Respondents	Total No. of Children	Total No. of Respondents	Total No. of Children	
Curry Mallet	2	2	20	40	7	21	8	32	95
Beercrocombe	1	1	4	8	2	6	0	0	15
Fivehead	0	0	2	4	2	6	0	0	10
Hatch Beauchamp	0		3	6	0	0	0	0	9
Isle Abbots	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	1	1	2	1	3	0	0	6

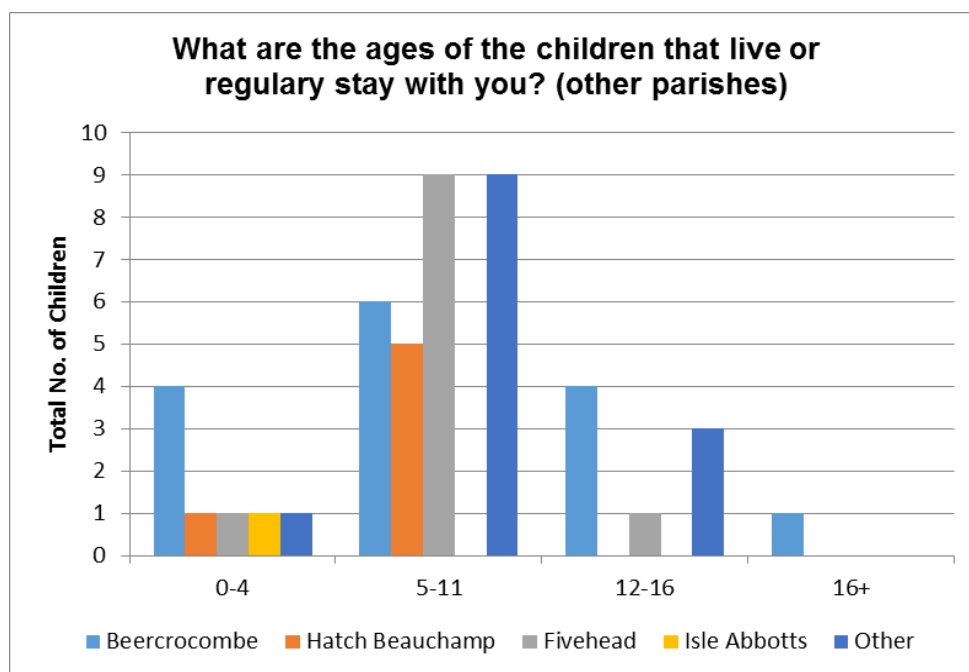
#### Q4. What are the ages of the children that live or regularly visit and stay with you?

##### Analysis

The results to this question are shown in the table and summarised in the graphs below. The data in the table reflects and supports the data from the 2011 census that the largest age group of children living in Curry Mallet are between 5 and 11 years of age.

	<b>Total No. of Children by Age Range</b>			
<b>Parish</b>	<b>0-4yrs</b>	<b>5-11yrs</b>	<b>12-16yrs</b>	<b>16+yrs</b>
Curry Mallet	28	44	13	2
Beercrocombe	4	6	4	1
Hatch Beauchamp	1	5	0	0
Fivehead	1	9	1	0
Isle Abbotts	1	0	0	0
Other	1	9	3	0





**Q5. If you've answered yes to question 2, where would you prefer outdoor play equipment to be located in Curry Mallet?**

**Analysis**

The results from those responding to question 5 are shown by parish in the table below. 88% of Curry Mallet's respondents would prefer outdoor play equipment to be installed at CM&BC Village Hall. Residents living outside the parish were of a similar view except for the sole respondent from Isle Abbots, they indicated Curry Mallet Playing Field as their preferred option.

Parish	Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe Village Hall		Curry Mallet Playing field (Adj. to CM School)	
	Total No. of Respondents	%	Total No. of Respondents	%
Curry Mallet	37	88%	5	12%
Beercrocombe	6	86%	1	14%
Fivehead	5	100%	0	0%
Hatch Beauchamp	3	100%	0	0%
Isle Abbots	0	0%	1	100%
Other	5	100%	0	0%

Those respondents that stated they would prefer outdoor play equipment to be located at Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe Village Hall briefly explained their reasons why:-

<b>Comments Received from Respondents that Stated they Would Prefer Outdoor Play Equipment to be Located at Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe Village Hall</b>	
<b>Parish</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Curry Mallet	Very central location close to the shop and pub. Also benefits from being visible from the road.
Curry Mallet	It's central, easy to get to, got parking, at the 'core' of the village with other community facilities. The playing field is part of the school and so surely wouldn't be available at all times. It's rather out of the way too. I am not aware of any other available, suitable sites, although I thought the idea of using the field at the back of the village hall for play space was a good one.
Curry Mallet	The playing field is difficult to park near and would take space away from the school. The most central place in the village near the shop, pub, village hall seems very logical.
Curry Mallet	I think the village hall is the best place as it is used by groups that may also want to use the equipment. This position would also mean that should there be an incident it would be easier to get assistance.
Curry Mallet	Most central to relevant housing and other facilities - also off-road parking available
Curry Mallet	Near to the pub and shop, so that it would hopefully bring additional business to them.
Curry Mallet	It's at the centre of the village, with the post office close by- ideal for getting drinks or treats for children after playing at the park
Curry Mallet	It's closer to the village shop. It is also less likely to flood, so we can still use it in the wet weather
Curry Mallet	Close to village amenities.
Curry Mallet	This will be in the centre of the village near the village shop and pub which means more people may support these facilities.
Curry Mallet	It is close to the shop and pub.
Curry Mallet	It is central to the village, close to existing amenities and within walking distance of most properties.
Curry Mallet	logical location
Curry Mallet	Close to village centre. Since the revival of the shop and pub this has created an ideally centre to the village which was missing before. Play ground would increase this.
Curry Mallet	It needs to be a central accessible position where it will be well used without conflicting with other uses.
Curry Mallet	It is nearer to the shop where parents can meet and help the new owners to meet residents and perhaps help their trade.
Curry Mallet	Very close to our house. Pub nearby and shop.
Curry Mallet	Its near the pub, which has limited space for children to play in.
Curry Mallet	The hall is a central location and a community facility.
Curry Mallet	Central location with car parking close to the shop and pub!
Curry Mallet	Proximity

Curry Mallet	This facility would greatly improve the at present redundant grass area. It would also be a big draw at the village fete and would encourage families to attend and stay longer. It would be lovely to hear the growing population and younger generations enjoying themselves in the relative safety of the Village Hall.
Curry Mallet	Center of the village with access to the shop and post office and hall users can make use of it
Curry Mallet	Because it is so central to the community, there is a degree of safety in this location. It is the hub of the village where the community comes together, it would make sense to be able to take the children to the park whilst supporting our local pub, shop on route. This will be beneficial to the village facilities
Beercrocombe	To the best of my knowledge the access and parking at the village hall are more sufficient.
Fivehead	The shop is close by so it would be a great place to stop for a play on the way to and from here. It is the centre of the village and a great place to meet up with friends and use the play area.
Fivehead	Easy parking, safe location would be nice near hall for children parties and can walk easily to it at hall from school anyway.
Hatch Beauchamp	As above we use all the local facilities and a play area at the hall would add so much to the village
Hatch Beauchamp	Central location within the village. Near to local shop. Makes great use of space that is otherwise unused. May attract people from outside the area to stop, use local facilities (shop/pub/hall).
Hatch Beauchamp	We are often at the Hall, pub or P/O and a play area for the children would be invaluable
Other	This is where the beavers, cubs and scouts meet weekly.
Other	The school is not central to the village and becomes a long walk for small children and those with disabilities (like myself). There is also no parking facilities close by the playing field.
Other	Enhances the centre of the village - the shop and hall and pub are quite a hub now.
Other	I could buy a coffee from the PO. I would be supporting the PO or the pub by doing so.

Those respondents that were of the view that outdoor play equipment should be installed at Curry Mallet Playing Field gave the following reasons why:-

<b>Comments received from Respondents that stated they would prefer Outdoor Play Equipment to be located at Curry Mallet Playing Field.</b>	
<b>Parish</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Curry Mallet	Closer to my house.
Curry Mallet	It would benefit the village, but more importantly make the school a more attractive proposition for prospective parents. There may also be an opportunity to furnish the school with additional sporting equipment to complement the playing field.



Curry Mallet	To benefit the community at large and ensure maximum use of equipment it should be sited near to the school.
Curry Mallet	Closer to where we live but if it was not possible the village hall would be OK.

Other comments included:-

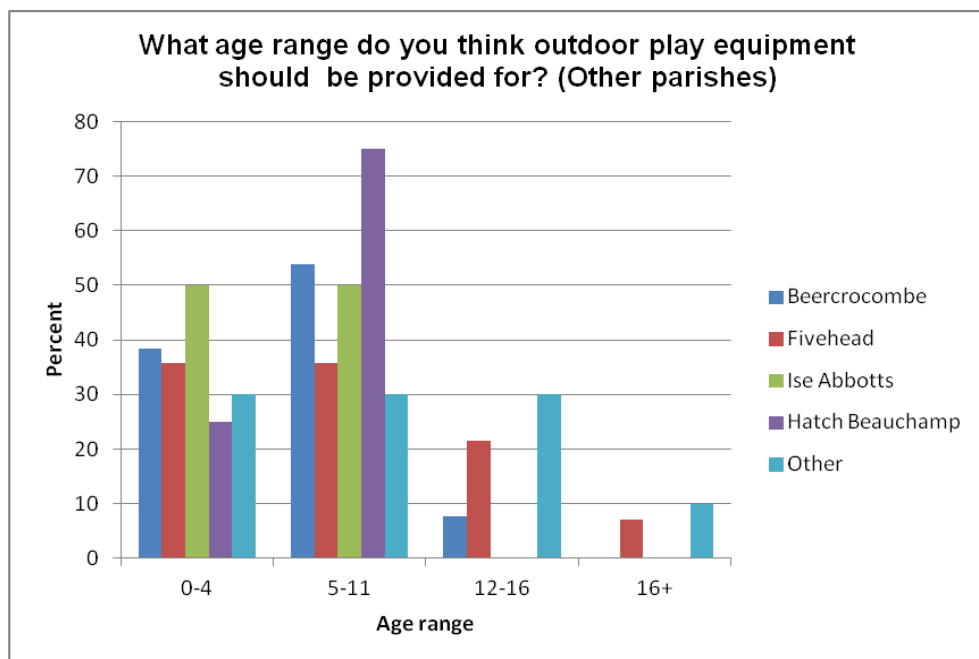
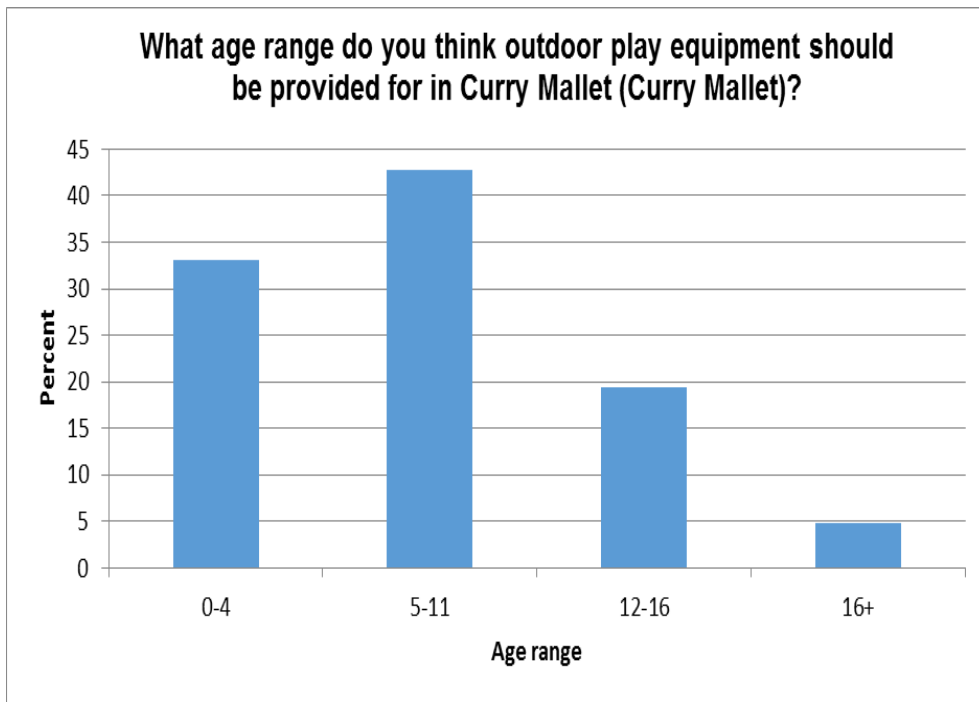
Other Comments	
Parish	Comment
Curry Mallet	Depends on likely use and ages of children using it. If money is to be spent then the Parish Council must be sure that the potential users would visit the chosen site, that it is safe (e.g. in relation to traffic) and won't cause nuisance
Curry Mallet	Needs to be in an area that is visible and safe from traffic.
Curry Mallet	Any appropriate open and safe site.

#### **Q6. Which age range do you think outdoor play equipment should be provided for in Curry Mallet?**

##### **Analysis**

The results of those who responded to question 6 are provided in the table and graphs below. Overwhelmingly, 76% of Curry Mallet's respondents suggested that outdoor play equipment should be provided for children aged between 0 and 11 years of age. This mirrored the opinions of respondents living in nearby parishes where 79% were of the same view.

Parish	Total No. of respondents			
	0-4	5-11	12-16	16+
Curry Mallet	34	44	20	5
Beercrocombe	5	7	1	0
Fivehead	5	5	3	1
Isle Abbotts	1	1	0	0
Hatch Beauchamp	1	3	0	0
Other	3	3	3	1



**Q7. Would you be willing to help Curry Mallet's Outdoor Play Equipment Working Group with any of the following?**

**Analysis**

The results of those that responded to question 7 are shown in the table by parish. The results indicate that over half of Curry Mallet respondents would be willing to be involved and assist the Working Group with fundraising and 30% would be willing to help any future Outdoor Play Area Sub Committee by being trained to carry out safety inspections on a rota basis. Understandably few people from outside the

parish answered this question but those that did expressed a willingness to help with fundraising.

<b>Would you be willing to help Curry Mallet's Outdoor Play Equipment Working Group with any of the following?</b>						
	<b>Being trained to inspect outdoor play equipment on a rota basis to ensure it remains safe to use</b>		<b>Planning and design</b>		<b>Fundraising</b>	
<b>Parish</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>% of all respondents by Parish</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>% of all respondents by Parish</b>	<b>Total No. of Respondents</b>	<b>% of all respondents by parish</b>
<b>Curry Mallet</b>	15	30%	13	26%	26	52%
<b>Beercrocombe</b>	0	0	0	0	1	14%
<b>Fivehead</b>	1	20%	0	0%	2	40%
<b>Hatch Beauchamp</b>	0	0%	0	0%	1	33%
<b>Isle Abbotts</b>	1	100%	1	100%	1	100%
<b>Other</b>	1	25%	1	25%	1	25%

**Q8. Do you have any other comments (in support or raising concerns) regarding the possibility of outdoor play equipment being installed in Curry Mallet?**

Comments received supporting the possibility of outdoor play equipment being installed in Curry Mallet included:-

<b>Comments Received in Support</b>	
<b>Parish</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Curry Mallet	Our children need somewhere safe and fun to play and socialise. If you don't drive then it's not much fun around here for the kids. It's a lovely village, the two things that let it down are that there is no park or nursery.
Curry Mallet	There are no facilities for young children within the village. Adults have various activities on offer to them such as the pub, village hall etc which also holds a youth club but the younger generation of our village are sadly left out.
Curry Mallet	The villages need activities for the young they are too focused on retired people
Curry Mallet	I think it is important to have somewhere for young children to play

	safely in the village.
Curry Mallet	I think it would be a nice focal point for the children of the village to meet and play.
Curry Mallet	It would be an asset to the village.
Curry Mallet	We are very lucky in this area in having a primary school, a hall, a shop, a pub and two churches. A playground would enhance those facilities and can only add to the village's desirability as a place to live - one that caters for all residents.
Curry Mallet	Before my oldest child went to school I knew no other parents in the village. A play area would of helped me to make friends for myself and children.
Curry Mallet	Maybe a good idea if possible to have a highway sign warning drivers of children crossing/play area.
Curry Mallet	I have been involved in many play space designs, I can recommend looking at "Design for Play" and "Managing Risk in Play Provision". These provide an excellent start point for considering location and layout as well as risk/benefits. They also look at creating a space usable and attractive to whole community.
Curry Mallet	It is long overdue. Our children deserve a safe place to play. Myself and other parents I have spoken to are all willing to help in any way we can. I fail to understand why we are having to fight for a play area?
Curry Mallet	As a grandmother I appreciate local amenities, especially those that give children the opportunity to play safely and within walking distance of their home. As a regular visitor to the village, it would be lovely to have somewhere I can take the children without worrying about passing cars or other dangers. Plus, I cannot think of anything more lovely than walking them down to a playground, having a picnic and then off to the shop for an ice cream! As idealistic as that may sound!
Curry Mallet	I feel a play area would be a great asset to our village. It will create a safe place for the children of our village play together. It will also help the shop and pub.
Curry Mallet	I would be happy to help out in any way I can to support the Play Ground.
Curry Mallet	I think it would be an amazing improvement to the village for the children, at the moment if you don't drive then there is nowhere as such for your kids to play and socialise with other children other than when they are at school.
Curry Mallet	I think it's a great idea and something that should most certainly be pursued.
Curry Mallet	This is well over due
Curry Mallet	I wondered if this could also be an opportunity to install adult exercise equipment to benefit a wider proportion of the community? I know that some villagers feel that a playground could cause anti social behaviour problems. I do not think this will be a problem.
Curry Mallet	It would be great to see this happen soon. Good that the parish council have got some funding and are all behind the idea.

Curry Mallet	It's a great idea and it would be a shame if existing funding were lost.
Beercrocombe	It would be good to have equipment for the older age range as we are all able to travel to N.C or H.B. for our younger children. It would be good if the young adults could meet and use safe equipment - perhaps skate/bike park or climbing trail.
Beercrocombe	I think this is a great idea for our local area and I hope all families agree. We are pensioners and thinking of our grand children and visiting relatives.
Fivehead	The question should be 'why not'. A play area for children - a safe place for them to play, socialise and learn about their home and the surrounding environment. Having the facility in the hub of the village (i.e. at the village hall), adjacent to parking, away from the road, near the shop/post office and the pub, next to the village hall, will not only encourage visitors to Curry Mallet which can only be beneficial to our village.

Comments received from respondents raising concerns about outdoor play equipment being installed in Curry Mallet included:-

<b>Comments Received Raising Concerns</b>	
Curry Mallet	When the matter was previously proposed it was deemed to be not financially feasible and would become an unsupportable financial burden on the village. There is no reason to believe differently now.
Curry Mallet	Young children would need responsible; supervision. Fivehead, North Curry and Hatch Beauchamp have very adequate and accessible play areas. Maintenance - Not only the cost of this to be raised from and by the community but the dependence on volunteers is all of concern. Judging by problems in neighbouring villages of lack of volunteers after the initial enthusiasm, we feel that as children "grow up" and families move on volunteers will be hard to come by. Certainly on one nearby parish, the play area was threatened with closure for this reason.
Curry Mallet	Very concerned about a play area at the hall becoming treated as "Beer Garden" for the Bell Inn. Particularly worries about pedestrian traffic crossing the road. This matter has already been a concern even with existing traffic.
Curry Mallet	If the car park for the village hall were located to the left of the village hall the play equipment could be placed in front of the hall. This would minimise the chance of older children hanging about on the equipment and misusing it due to being in view of passing people or people using the pub.
Beercrocombe	As this is a Curry Mallet Survey "for the benefit of our younger residents" I'm not quite sure why other parishes are included!! 16 and over are not likely to need outdoor play equipment unless this is for football goal posts, tennis court or skate park. £7000 is a drop in the ocean, therefore the majority of householders whose children have not grown up in and since left CM without the need for play

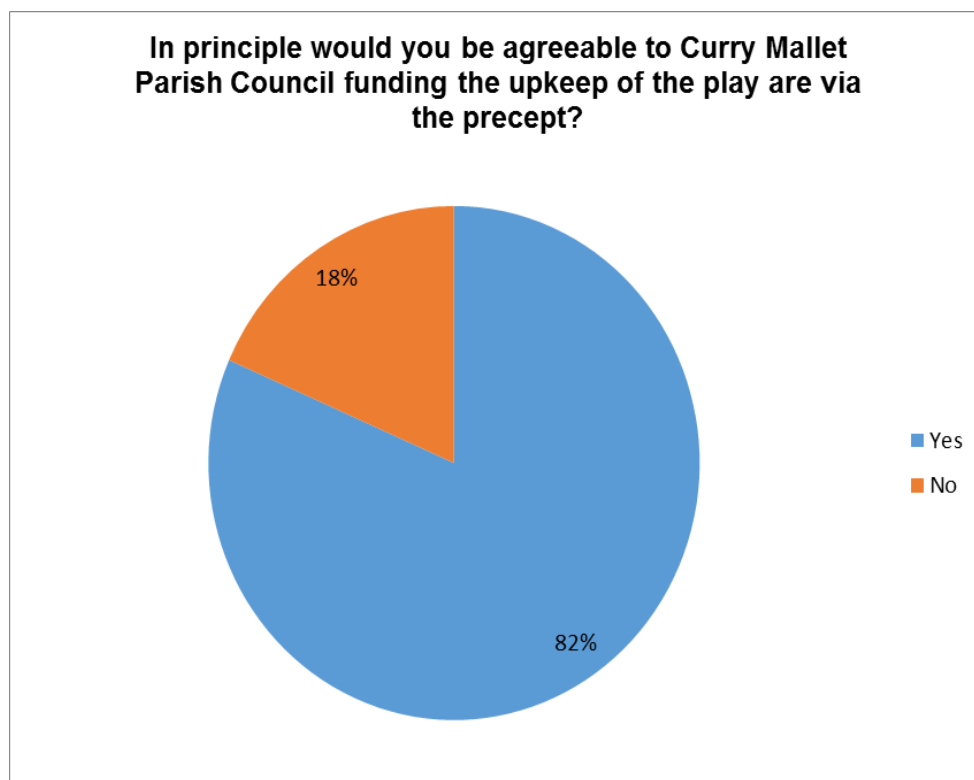
	equipment will be left to subsidise the minority
Beercrocombe	My Concern is that this is being proposed without a clear idea of need - what sort of play area and for who. Parts of this questionnaire may provide answers and allow a more detailed proposal to be drawn up and clearly justified. We could then comment with all the details and costs in front of us.
Hatch Beauchamp	Hopefully this survey will determine whether there is a genuine need and ongoing support for maintenance. There is no point in spending money on equipment if it just sits there and deteriorates.
Isle Abbotts	Total cost vs the amount already known.

**Q9. It is hoped that the cost of installing any outdoor play equipment would be secured through local fundraising and external grants. Future maintenance and general upkeep would also be paid for through local fundraising but some money may have to be raised locally through the Local Precept charged on every household in the village by Curry Mallet Parish Council. This is collected every year via your Council Tax payments. In principle, would you be agreeable to the Parish Council raising money to purchase and maintain any play equipment this way? (Please note, the Local Precept is agreed every year by the Parish Council when it sets its budget and this process is open to scrutiny by residents at a public meeting)**

#### **Analysis**

The results to those responding to question 9 from Curry Mallet are shown in the table and graph below. The overwhelming response to the question was that 82% of those responding would be agreeable to the funding of any play equipment via the precept.

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Total No. of Respondents</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Curry Mallet	39	9



#### **4.0 Assessment of Potential Sites**

**4.1** Following discussions with CMPC and CMBVHC, the survey identified two possible sites that could accommodate play equipment in the village, namely the Village Hall and Curry Mallet Primary School. Using their local knowledge, survey respondents were also asked to identify any sites they considered the Working Group should consider.

#### **4.2 Curry Mallet Primary School/Curry Mallet Playing Field**

**4.2.1** Curry Mallet Parish Council rent an area of land immediately to the west of Curry Mallet VC Primary School from the landowner (Duchy of Cornwall). Measuring approximately 16000sqm and accessed directly from the school grounds or via a field gate located approx 200m from where public footpath L8/24 joins Lower Street, this land is known as Curry Mallet Playing Field.

**4.2.2** 11% of those that answered the question "where would you prefer outdoor play equipment to be located in Curry Mallet?" were of the view that any play equipment should be installed on Curry Mallet Playing Field.

**4.2.3** Bearing in mind the Playing Field is shared with the school for curricular and extracurricular sports and activities, the Headteacher, Mrs Devereux, was consulted. In an email, Mrs Devereux replied:-

*"Many thanks for the email regarding the play area for the village of Curry Mallet. I believe one of the sites that has been identified as a possibility is the current field that the school uses. There are a number of comments that I would like to put forward from myself and the school staff."*

1. *It is my belief that there is an agreement with the Parish Council that we have sole use of the field during term time-this would be compromised if the play area were situated on the school field.*
2. *Families would have access to the play area during the school day which could present a security issue for the school as well as being a distraction problem for the children. Parking could also be an issue.*
3. *There would be an increase in people around the site which could cause a potential safeguarding issue. At present we are aware of who is in the immediate vicinity of the school and we do question any people we do not recognise.*
4. *If the school field were to be used then the area we would have as a green space would be compromised. At present according to the DfE we do not have adequate play space for the amount of children in the school. This also has a potential impact on pre-school coming on site. New legislation is being passed at the moment to prevent green spaces on school sites being developed. We have been told that we can only get pre-school on site if we get the use of more land!*
5. *Lessening the school field would impact on the amount of sporting activities we could take part in, especially inter school football and cricket.*
6. *We also feel that when we are not in school the play area would be very isolated. There are very few houses in close proximity and if there were to be an accident or safeguarding issue there would be no support for either adults or children-especially as mobile phone signal is very poor and intermittent.*

**4.2.4** South Somerset District Council's Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer also visited the site and opined that when compared with the Village Hall, the site is remote from existing local facilities and suffers from little natural surveillance.

**4.2.5** Bearing in mind the comments of both the Headteacher and South Somerset District Council's Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer, and the apparent lack of local support for installing outdoor play equipment at the school, regrettably, the Working Group are of the view that there is little merit pursuing this potential site for the time being.

### **4.3 Other sites**

**4.3.1** Although no other sites were identified by survey respondents, the Working Group was made aware of Curry Mallet School's preliminary investigations into possibly enlarging their site to accommodate a pre-school. The Working Group therefore approached the landowner (The Duchy of Cornwall) to find out more information and assess whether any future proposal could accommodate the provision of outdoor play equipment. A response is awaited.

### **4.4 Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe Village Hall**

**4.4.1** 88% of those that answered the question "where would you prefer outdoor play equipment to be located in Curry Mallet" were of the view that any play equipment



should be located within the village hall grounds. The reasons why respondents thought this to be the most appropriate site have been outlined previously in this report during the presentation and analysis of the survey results in Section 3.4.

#### **4.5 Consultation Responses**

**4.5.1** As the village hall has been identified as a potential site for the installation of outdoor play equipment, regular village hall hirers were consulted. Comments received included:-

##### **4.5.2 Badminton Club**

**Respondent 1** - *"My own view is that we have too small a site to accommodate this so close to the hall and we will lose this ground for the Fete and any other future use. It is also too close to the car park which will mean that it will need to be fenced off. Other village halls that have play areas have much larger sites which means that they are much further away than the proposed area at Curry Mallet.*

*"From a user point of view disturbance/noise from such a close site could be distracting for people using the hall and adults/children could be in and out of the hall to use toilets once they realise that it is open."*

**Respondent 2** - *"I think my only comments would be that I can see no reason that this would adversely affect us unless the proposal limited car parking space, or meant that we had children running in and out of the hall whilst we were playing badminton.*

*"I think it's for the village hall committee to make the arguments about the ground for the fete, fencing off, other sites etc"*

**Respondent 3** - *"I thought the original suggestion was to have a play area in the field adjacent to the village hall area, but I assume this is no longer an option. I can see that it would definitely cramp activities such as the village fete as the space is limited when compared to the likes of North Curry or Hatch Beauchamp.*

*"I don't see that it would have a major effect on the use of the hall itself, unless you had children running in and out disrupting activities. Given the limited use of the grounds (as far as I am aware) and the potential use for young families, I would imagine the play area to be the stronger contender for making best use of the available space.*

*"I must stress that my knowledge of activities within the grounds of the village hall is limited so if my assumption is not correct, my comments are irrelevant."*

##### **4.5.3 Scouts/Cubs/Beavers**

**Beaver Leader** - *"A play area at the village hall would be an excellent idea and the beavers would definitely use it.*

*"I am a regular weekly user of the village hall. I use the hall for West Hatch Beaver scout meetings, we have 24 young people between the ages of 6-8 years. There are 36 of cub age too that meet weekly. We would definitely use play equipment as part of our programme to promote the outdoors and health and fitness.*

*Good luck”*

#### **4.5.4 Bridge Club**

Back in 2008 when the possibility of installing play equipment at the Village Hall was being discussed, the then Chairperson of the Bridge Club commented:-

*“Bridge is a game that requires a great deal of concentration and quiet is observed in the hall at all times whilst playing takes place. At the moment there are no outside noises but if a play area were situated near the hall, this might not be the case and the hall might not then be an appropriate place for us to meet. We are affected by outside noise because of the quiet that is maintained within the hall...”*

No further comments have been received.

#### **4.5.5 Pilates**

**Pilates Class Instructor** - During a telephone conversation, the Class Instructor explained that she has no issue with outdoor play equipment being installed within the village hall grounds as she didn't think it would impact on her classes. She thought it was a good idea and would be similar to Fivehead where play equipment has been installed next to the village hall.

#### **4.5.6 Youth Club**

**Youth Club Leader** – *“As Youth leader of the Curry and Beer Youth Club, and a user of Curry Mallet Village Hall facility, I am of the opinion that the Village Hall would be an ideal site for a play area. Somewhere so central to the village 'hub' for the local young children and youths to meet and play would be a great asset to Curry Mallet. During the spring and summer months I can guarantee the Youth Club would take full advantage of such a facility.”*

#### **4.5.7 Isle Abbots Playgroup**

Although Isle Abbots playgroup were not approached directly, the Chairman of the Committee wrote to the Working Group expressing support for a play area in Curry Mallet.

*“A playground/play area in Curry Mallet would be highly beneficial to not just the residents of Curry Mallet, but that of all the surrounding villages. Also I believe it will increase passing trade to the Village shop, also the pub.*

*“Isle Abbots Playgroup is the feeder playgroup for Curry Mallet School, we take children from all the local villages including Curry Mallet, Beercrocombe, Fivehead, Isle Abbots, Isle Brewers and Hambridge. We currently run 4 mornings a week from 9:15 till 1.*

*“A Playground would prove very valuable to the Playgroup. We would be able to use it for outings and Picnics. Playground Equipment is VERY helpful apparatus to help children learn and grow, you may not be aware how much this can help development in children in such areas as motor skills and hand eye co-ordination, on top of pure old fashion fun and glorious country air. If Curry Mallet had a play area as a playgroup rest assured it would be a valuable asset to us.”*

#### **4.6 Potential Impact of Outdoor Play Equipment on Future Village Hall Revenues**

**4.6.1** Concerns have been expressed by respondents that the physical space required to provide an equipped play space could reduce the CMBVHC's ability to raise the revenue required to ensure the village hall remains a community facility. Volunteers on the Committee work tirelessly to maintain the village hall for the benefit of both communities and hall users. The annual village fete is an important social event and fund raiser with activities inside and outside the hall. Could an equipped play area reduce the amount of space available for stalls and, as a consequence, demonstrably reduce potential monies raised?

**4.6.2** In 2009 the Village Hall Committee agreed, in principle, that play equipment could be installed on a 100sqm site to the west of the Village Hall. Plans were drawn up on that basis. It is worth noting that the hall stands within grounds (excluding the car parking area and Village Hall itself) that extend to approx 1440sqm. In purely percentage terms, the site agreed in principle previously would cover 7% of the existing grounds. If the car park is included, the area allocated for equipped play would reduce to 4.5%.

**4.6.3** As well as the Village Fete, CMBCVHC organise a diary of events throughout the year. Discussions have been had about extending the events diary and the possibility of hiring the hall for larger events such as weddings etc and extending the fete onto the road (subject to appropriate permissions and licences). Undoubtedly these measures could counter balance any potential financial loss as a result of a play area being provided within the grounds.

**4.6.4** Concern have also been expressed that play equipment could make the hire of the hall for private parties and events less attractive. This is on the basis that local children would be potentially free to use any play equipment while the hall is occupied by a private hirer. A South Somerset District Council Officer has explained that in their experience conflicts between local children and private hall hirers are unlikely, especially somewhere like Curry Mallet where the likelihood of play equipment being engulfed by local children and young people when the hall is being privately hired is small. They went on to explain that on the whole, outdoor play equipment can help to improve the marketability of a village hall to private hirers and, therefore, indirectly increase potential revenue through hire fees. Indeed that has been reinforced by the fact that two existing village hall hirers have stated that they would make use of any outdoor play equipment.

#### **4.7 Potential Noise and Other Nuisance.**

**4.7.1** Concerns have been raised in the past that an equipped play area could disturb hall users or near neighbours.

**4.7.2** The Working Group is mindful of the fact that residents live close by and activities at the hall can sometimes cause disturbance. A judgement therefore has to be made as to whether any noise generated by children enjoying outdoor play equipment would demonstrably harm residential amenity whilst at the same time acknowledging:-

1. The hall is located close to an existing shop and pub where a certain amount of noise will be generated and expected. Would the sound of children playing during daylight hours cause a nuisance?
2. Children are able to use and play within the grounds now. There's no history of noise nuisance in this regard.

**4.7.3** Examples of other nuisance have been drawn to the attention of the Working Group including litter, camping, copulation and vandalism. Adrian Moore (South Somerset District Council Play & Youth Facilities Officer) has explained that in his experience, where play equipment has been installed, local children take "ownership" of it and take great pride looking after it. Unfortunately, nothing can combat mindless vandalism and poor behaviour. However, bearing in mind Adrian Moore's comments, the fact the Village Hall grounds benefits from natural surveillance/overlooking, the responsible ethos of our local children, and any future outdoor play area will be routinely inspected on a regular basis, previous incidents of nuisance are unlikely to be exacerbated. There are arguments that the opposite could be true if a play area were installed and anti-social behaviour could, in fact, decrease as a result of a more regular presence in the area.

#### **4.8 Health and Safety**

**4.8.1** During the consultation period a local resident emailed the Working Group seeking the following assurances:-

*"ALL aspects of safety of any Play Area are being realistically addressed AND costed by the Working Group as part of the project (current and ongoing). For example:*

*"(a) the possibility of accidents involving users of the play area and users of the car park (I think Adrian Moore recommended that a bund be constructed to ensure car park traffic was segregated from any play area when he was consulted with in 2009).*

*"(b) the risk that young people could in their enthusiasm run across to the Bell Inn (to meet up with parents, for example) by way of the steep foot path exit. The Parish Council already having identified potential hazard here.*

*"(c) the risk of accidents should youngsters exit the vehicular steep slope/exit on bicycles/skate boards. I can imagine the area becoming an area for general activity by older kids once it was seen as a bone fide play site.*

*"(d) possible damage to vehicles park in good faith in the car park.*

*"Even with adequate safety provisions being incorporated , it is my real concern that this site has a very high risk factor with regard to vehicular activity and closeness to the road with its many blind spots."*

**4.8.2** The Working Group replied:-

*"...completely agree with you that in drawing up any future scheme the Working Group will need to consider how best to identify and manage risks.*

*"Working on the principle that play involves a degree of risk, Play England has published a fair amount of advice in this regard. If a play area is provided in the village and it happens to be somewhere within the village hall grounds then children, parents, the Play Area Working Group and Village Hall Committee will all need to work together to ensure risks to safety are carefully managed including those you've highlighted."*

**4.8.3** The Working Group is aware that if outdoor play equipment were to be installed a suitable Risk Assessment would need to be carried out and, if necessary, any unacceptable risks managed appropriately. If the Risk Assessment determines, for example, that physical safety measures such as barriers and/or signage need to be installed, they will be costed and included in any scheme.

**4.8.4** It should be remembered that in any activity there is an element of risk and case law helps to identify the factors that help determine whether or not the level of risk is acceptable or tolerable, namely:-

1. The likelihood of coming to harm;
2. The severity of that harm; and
3. The benefits, rewards or outcomes of the activity.

With this in mind, the national Play Safety Forum has reasoned:-

*"...Any environment contains hazards or sources of harm. In many cases the existence of hazards can be justified, perhaps because they are impossible to remove or perhaps because their removal would have undesirable consequences or be too costly. Where the existence of a hazard can be justified, measures should be in place to manage it. In a controlled environment such as a playground, those responsible are required by law to identify and make informed judgements about the hazards to which people are exposed. They must take steps to ensure that the risks are managed and controlled so far as is reasonably practicable while allowing the potential benefits (of the playground) to be delivered."*

**4.8.5** If play equipment were installed at the village Hall, the Sub Committee responsible for its day-to-day management would seek independent advice that any Risk Assessment it has carried out is adequate, robust and able to stand up to scrutiny should an accident occur.

## **5.0 Conclusion & Recommendation**

**5.1** The Working Group is grateful for the help and guidance offered by both CMPC and CMBVHC and all those that took time to complete the survey.

**5.2** The Working Group has taken all the steps it can reasonably take to ask the local community and those that use our facilities the following questions:-

1. Is there is a need or demand for outdoor play equipment in the village?;

2. Where people think any outdoor play equipment should be installed?;
3. Which age group outdoor play equipment should be provided for?;
4. Would members of our community be willing to help provide play equipment by, for example, helping to raise funds and/or being trained to carry out safety inspections?; and
5. Would the local community be willing to financially support the installation and future up keep of any play equipment through the local Precept?

**5.3 The answers appear unequivocal:-**

- 1. Yes there is a demand for play equipment in Curry Mallet. This has been demonstrated by:-**
  - a) Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe's Adopted Parish Plan.**
  - b) The fact that South Somerset District Council has awarded S106 funding through the planning system for the installation of play equipment in the village and their policies aim to increase the amount of play equipment available for young people throughout the District;**
  - c) Comparing 2001 with 2011 Census data reveals that compared with South Somerset, the number of children and young people living in Curry Mallet (as a percentage of population) remains healthy and, in fact, grew; and**
  - d) The fact the survey has revealed that judging by solely responses received from those residing in Curry Mallet, at least 95 children live in or regularly visit our village.**
- 2. 88% of Curry Mallet respondents stated Play Equipment should be installed at Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe Village Hall.**
- 3. Play equipment should primarily be provided for children aged between 0-11 years.**
- 4. Over half of Curry Mallet respondents would be willing to be involved and assist the working group with fundraising and 30% would be willing to help any future Outdoor Play Area Sub Committee by being trained to carry out safety inspections on a rota basis.**
- 5. 82% of Curry Mallet's respondents would be willing, in principle, to financially support the installation and future upkeep of any play equipment through the local Precept.**

5.4 Bearing in mind the survey results the Working Group would welcome the opportunity to liaise with CMBVHC and develop plans for the installation of suitable

outdoor play equipment within the village hall grounds.

## **6.0 The Next Steps**

**6.1** Whilst developing these plans, the following issues will need to be explored and resolved.

### **6.2 Capital Costs and Future Financial Sustainability**

**6.2.1** In developing plans for an equipped play area, two funding streams have been identified:-

1. Capital funding to secure the installation of outdoor play equipment in Curry Mallet; and
2. A fund managed by a Sub Committee of Curry Mallet Parish Council to cover the costs of general maintenance, repairs and, if necessary, replacement equipment.

**6.2.2** Representatives of the Working Group have spoken with and met Officers from South Somerset District Council. Based on their comments, an outdoor play area incorporating formal manufactured play equipment combined with natural play/landscape features suitable for the needs of local children and young people will cost in the region of £12,000 (inc VAT) to install with annual £500 maintenance costs thereafter (at today's prices).

**6.2.3** At the time of writing this report capital funding amounting to approximately £4877 (S106 monies plus funds raised as part of Curry Mallet's 2012 Jubilee celebrations) is available leaving a £7123 shortfall). South Somerset District Council's Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer has suggested that the shortfall could be eliminated through grants from external funders possibly including:-

- The National Lottery;
- The Clarks Foundation;
- South Somerset District Council's Area North Community Budget;
- Somerset County Council;
- Somerset Community Council;
- Duchy of Cornwall

**6.2.4** On this basis, it has been assumed that the need to raise capital funding through the local Precept may not be necessary. However, a small amount of local fundraising may be required to boost the £700 raised during the Jubilee celebrations specifically for outdoor play equipment by £300 (this money is currently ring-fenced in a CMPC bank account).

**6.2.5** It is proposed that a Sub-Committee of Curry Mallet Parish Council will be directly responsible for the day-to-day management of any play area. It would also manage a fund for repairs, insurance and regular safety inspections. In addition, South Somerset District Council's Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer has explained that under normal circumstances formal play equipment, provided it is well maintained, will not normally need replacing for at least 15 years (some play

equipment providers suggest 20 years). On this basis, a suitable replacement budget should ideally be available after the equipment has been in situ for between 15 years to 20 years. This is normally a condition of any future award from an external funder.

**6.2.6** Assuming the installation of formal equipment amounts to approximately £8K of the overall £12K one-off installation costs, and the need to provide an annual maintenance budget of £500, the following tables demonstrate options for how a suitable budget could be funded over a twenty year period.

**6.2.7** Table 1 below assumes that funds would be raised through Curry Mallet's Parish Precept to cover annual maintenance costs and future costs to replace formal equipment initially costing £8K. No funding would be sought from elsewhere.

**Table 1**

	Revenue			Cost		
	Available Budget at year start (£)	Precept (£) (note 2)	Annual Fundraising (£)	Annual Maintenance (£) (assuming inflation of 2.85% p/a)	Available Budget at year end (£)	Cost of Replacement (£) (assuming inflation of 2.85% p/a)
<b>Year 1</b>	2374 (note 1)	1233	0	500	3107	£8000
<b>Year 2</b>	3107	1233	0	514	3826	8228
<b>Year 3</b>	3826	1233	0	528	4531	8462
<b>Year 4</b>	4531	1233	0	543	5221	8703
<b>Year 5</b>	5221	1233	0	559	5895	8951
<b>Year 6</b>	5895	1233	0	575	6553	9206
<b>Year 7</b>	6553	1233	0	591	7195	9469
<b>Year 8</b>	7195	1233	0	608	7820	9739
<b>Year 9</b>	7820	1233	0	626	8427	1001
<b>Year 10</b>	8427	1233	0	643	9017	10302
<b>Year 11</b>	9017	1233	0	662	9588	10595
<b>Year 12</b>	9588	1233	0	681	10140	10897
<b>Year 13</b>	10140	1233	0	720	10653	11208
<b>Year 14</b>	10653	1233	0	741	11145	11527
<b>Year 15</b>	11145	1233	0	762	11616	11855
<b>Year 16</b>	11616	1233	0	784	12065	12192
<b>Year 17</b>	12065	1233	0	806	12492	12540
<b>Year 18</b>	12492	1233	0	829	12896	12897
<b>Year 19</b>	12896	1233	0	852	13277	13264
<b>Year 20</b>	13277	1242	0	877	13642	13642
<b>Totals</b>		<b>24669</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13401</b>		

**Note 1** - £2,374 has already been awarded to Curry Mallet for future maintenance.

**Note 2** - Any monies raised through the precept would need to be formally agreed by Curry Mallet PC at a public meeting.



**6.2.8** Based on Curry Mallet's 2014/2015 Precept (£3550 in total), Table 1 above reveals that every "Band D" council tax household in the parish would contribute approximately an extra £10.10p/a towards the parish precept (at the moment "Band D" households contribute £29.00p/a). This equates to 84p per month per "Band D" property (it should be noted that householders below "Band D" will pay slightly less while those above "Band D" will pay more).

**6.2.9** Table 2 below assumes the Sub-Committee would commit to raising £500 through fundraising. Consequently funding secured from the Precept has been reduced from £1242 p/a to £733 p/a.

**Table 2**

	Revenue			Cost		
	Available Budget at year start (£)	Precept (£) (note 2)	Local Annual Fundraising (£)	Annual Maintenance (£) (assuming inflation of 2.85% p/a)	Available Budget at year end (£)	Cost of Replacement (£) (assuming inflation of 2.85% p/a)
<b>Year 1</b>	2374 (note 1)	733 (note 3)	500	500	3107	£8000
<b>Year 2</b>	3107	733	500	514	3826	8228
<b>Year 3</b>	3826	733	500	528	4531	8462
<b>Year 4</b>	4531	733	500	543	5221	8703
<b>Year 5</b>	5221	733	500	559	5895	8951
<b>Year 6</b>	5895	733	500	575	6553	9206
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<b>Year 8</b>	7195	733	500	608	7820	9739
<b>Year 9</b>	7820	733	500	626	8427	1001
<b>Year 10</b>	8427	733	500	643	9017	10302
<b>Year 11</b>	9017	733	500	662	9588	10595
<b>Year 12</b>	9588	733	500	681	10140	10897
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<b>Year 16</b>	11616	733	500	784	12065	12192
<b>Year 17</b>	12065	733	500	806	12492	12540
<b>Year 18</b>	12492	733	500	829	12896	12897
<b>Year 19</b>	12896	733	500	852	13277	13264
<b>Year 20</b>	13277	742	500	877	13642	13642
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>14669</b>	<b>10000</b>	<b>13401</b>		

**Note 1** - £2,374 has already been awarded to Curry Mallet for future maintenance.

**Note 2** - Any monies raised through the precept would need to be formally agreed by Curry Mallet PC at a public meeting.

**6.2.10** Based on Curry Mallet's 2014/2015 Precept (£3550), Table 2 above reveals that every "Band D" council tax household in the parish would contribute approximately an extra £5.99p/a towards the parish precept (at the moment "Band D" households contribute £29.00p/a). This equates to 50p per month per "Band D" property (it should be noted that householders below "Band D" will pay slightly less while those above "Band D" will pay more).

**6.2.11** The figures shown in the tables above illustrate how funding for annual maintenance **and** the financing of a "War Chest" for replacement equipment could be raised locally.

**6.2.12** The Working Group did investigate if this financial commitment could be reduced further by instead providing funds to cover future maintenance only. Having discussed the matter with South Somerset District Council's Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer, he explained that that South Somerset District Council "...encourage and sometimes condition as a grant that the applicant has a sinking fund for future replacement costs. This is good management and our council would probably not look as favourably on a grant request to replace something we granted before, particularly if the applicant has let it to fall into disrepair."

### **6.3 Play Equipment Maintenance and Management**

**6.3.1** In September 2014, CMPC agreed, in principle, to fund, maintain and manage an equipped play area (it was at this meeting CMPC established the Play Equipment Working Group).

**6.3.2** The minutes from that meeting state:-

*"Mr Turner provided a background to previous parish council and Village Hall Committee deliberations relating both to provision of a community play facility and also to use of the field at the rear of the main hall area; both matters now warranted a Council perspective for presentation at the Hall Committee meeting in September 2014.*

*"It was noted that the Council had been allocated £5,000 for provision of play facilities by SSDC, from its Section 106 Agreement re planning approval for the Lyddons re-development. This grant expired in July 2016 if no implementation of the Play Area project had been commenced by that date. Additional amounts had been raised from the 2012 Jubilee Celebrations and from other sources. A majority of the Council members endorsed Mr Turner's proposal that a sub-committee be constituted for evaluating the feasibility of providing a Play Area (scope, capital & running costs, sinking fund, preferred location and routine administration) and Mr Allard and Mr McKeown offered to join Mr Turner in progressing the project.*

*"The Council also considered the Village Hall Committee Chairman's several suggestions for use of its field, for which community views had been sought in the current issue of the parish newsletter; after much discussion and with some reluctance, there was broad agreement that it would fall to the Council to administer and manage whatever community use was chosen for this field. This acceptance of responsibility reflected the Council's statutory role for collection of monies (via the*

*council tax precept) with which to provide and manage facilities for public and community use”.*

(Approved Min. 1093 September 2014)

**6.3.3** At their 2014 November meeting, further discussion took place. The draft Minutes state:-

*“Mr McKeown and Mr Turner set out the Sub-Committee’s present thinking, together with feedback from their discussion at the Village Hall Committee’s meeting of October 29<sup>th</sup>, at which the Sub-Committee’s Briefing Paper had been reviewed:*

- A questionnaire had been drawn up to determine the level of interest among parishioners and parents (both of Curry Mallet and of other children utilising this community’s facilities eg. the school), regarding the need for a Play Area within the parish, and where best it might be sited. The Council endorsed the concept of the questionnaire and gave approval for re-imburement of £30.00 photo-copying costs for preparing the questionnaire.*
- The Sub-Committee would be assessing all practicable locations and the overall area of ground needed for equipment and their surroundings. Also, the Sub-Committee would determine the likely frequency and parameters for safety inspections of whatever equipment ultimately was to be purchased.*
- The Sub-Committee emphasised that the purpose of the questionnaire and the other preliminary work envisaged was to ensure that a fully-defined proposition could be presented for approval by the Council and to potential providers of grants. At present, the feasibility study did not have sufficient information from which to derive finalised costings for either the capital equipment or the routine maintenance.*

*“The Village Hall Committee’s concerns regarding a Play Area on their leased land, in respect both of adverse impact on bookings and also of potential financial liability, were noted; Mr Turner advised that SSDC Area North (Charlotte Jones) could provide a pro-forma legal contract such that the agreed responsibilities of each party (VHC & Parish Council’s Sub-Committee) were formally set down. The parish council’s obligation in this regard had already been acknowledged (see min. 1093 September 2014). In apposition to the Hall Committee’s concerns, it was observed that any play equipment on the hall site could be vulnerable to misuse by any visitor to the pub or person attending a private function at the hall.*

*“The Council agreed (6 in favour, 1 abstention) to the Sub-Committee progressing its feasibility study along the lines as set out. Insofar that the Council’s representative on the VHC was equivocal in his support for this Play Area initiative, it was recommended that the Sub-Committee seek to make personal representation at the next VHC meeting in the hope of assuaging their concerns and updating them as to progress.*

*“Mr Yeomans noted that a local authority grant of £1,500 had been awarded that day to High Ham parish council for play equipment.”*

(Draft Min 1103/1193 November 2015)

**6.3.4** Members of CMBVHC have expressed concerns that notwithstanding CMPC's Minutes, ultimately they and not CMPC would be responsible for any incidents or accidents at any play area within the Village Hall grounds and possibly future maintenance costs.

**6.3.5** Charlotte Jones (South Somerset District Council's Area North Community Development Manager) has advised that In Compton Dundon, with help from the Somerset Playing Fields Association and/or Somerset Community Council, the PC and VHC entered into a legally binding agreement that absolved the VHC from all responsibilities regarding the outdoor play area. This approach could be adopted in Curry Mallet and Charlotte Jones has offered to investigate if South Somerset District Council would be willing any cover any costs associated with drawing up any future agreement.

**6.3.6** South Somerset District Council's Solicitor (Ian Clarke) offered similar advice back in 2009 when the possibility of play equipment being installed at CMBCVH last arose.

**6.3.7** The then Clerk to CMPC emailed the Council's solicitor explaining:-

*"The VHC having identified the piece of land they are happy for the Play Area to placed on have stated that they do not wish to have anything to do with management of the area (e.g. insurance, etc) and have stated that they are happy to relinquish the land and hand it back to the PC. Because the Lease appears to state that the PC is the Lessee, is the land the Village Hall's to hand to the PC. It is further complicated by the fact that the rent is paid direct to the Duchy by the Village Hall Committee. Both the insurance companies for the PC and VHC are happy to insure the Play Area ground (subject to some conditions) but until the "ownership" of the land is clarified we can't see the way forward."*

**6.3.8** The Clerk asked:-

*"...can the Village Hall Committee abdicate its responsibility for the Play Area?"*

In an email dated 13 August 2009 South Somerset District Council's Solicitor offered the following view:-

*"...If the play area is accepted as being a good idea and if the PC are keen to see it happen then the trustees (i.e. Village Hall Committee) could enter into a management agreement with the PC which will allow the PC to establish and maintain and manage the play area on the trustee's behalf...If the PC is to manage the facility then a management agreement needs to be completed but no land transfer document is required."*

## **6.4 Preparing a Play Area Design Brief, Consultation, External Funding and Installation.**

**6.4.1** South Somerset District Council's Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer has offered to help our community in any way possible in order to prepare and design a scheme of outdoor play equipment suitable for 0-11 year olds. He has suggested

that any scheme, in order to appear attractive to external funders, should include an element of "traditional" play equipment mixed with natural/environmental/landscaped play features. A Curry Mallet school parent with play area design experience has also offered to help the Working Group in any way she can.

**6.4.2** Bearing in mind the time constraints attached to the existing S106 funding that's been allocated to Curry Mallet residents by South Somerset District Council for outdoor play equipment, the Working Group will need to prepare a design brief quickly. Once the design brief has been prepared, the comments of future users will need to be sought while applications for external funding are completed and preferred contractors appointed. All this must be achieved and the equipment installed by July 2016 at the very latest. Although tight, assuming a site is agreed, there is no reason to believe outdoor play equipment cannot be installed in the village within this time scale.

**CMPC Play Area Working Group - January 2015.**

Richard Allard	Member of Curry Mallet Parish Council
Grant Turner	Member of Curry Mallet Parish Council
Selina Jervis	Beercrocombe resident

CMPC Play Area Working Group would like to thank Peter McKeown (Curry Mallet Resident) and for all his help and support with this report.