

It is great to see and receive feedback that our recreation grounds in Woolton Hill and Heath End, and the children's playground at Woolton Hill, are valued by many in the community.

Of the Parish Council maintenance budget 90% is spent on these facilities. Much of the money is spent to keep the grass cut and hedges trimmed, but also, as our equipment ages, more money is needed each year to make sure it is kept safe and cover the ever-increasing costs of repair.

As you may imagine, there is a formal annual audit assessment on the state of the equipment, but this is just a small part of the story.

To help us identify any faults throughout the year, it is a requirement that the parish council arrange and pay for all the equipment to be checked weekly. Yes, all of our equipment is checked every week.

This is done by a qualified Basingstoke and Deane council inspector, and our regular assessor is Kevin Hoare, who you may have seen walking around the equipment wearing his orange jacket.

Having trained eyes, Kevin is looking for any issue with the equipment where maybe little fingers could become trapped or covers come loose, and something sharp is then exposed. Also shown in the photo is Kevin checking to make sure bearings on the swings are in correct working order and nothing is becoming loose.

If Kevin finds any issue, including anything he thinks could cause a bigger issue in the future, he records it via a tablet and this information is then uploaded to a portal, which Amy White, our Parish Clerk, assesses and takes to the Amenities committee. As well as logging the issue, Kevin also provides helpful additional information with a priority, which helps the team determine an appropriate action plan.