

NEWS ITEM

Date: 25 May 2011

VICTORIA PARK UPDATE

SKATEPARK

Work is progressing on the new Skatepark, although it's taking a little longer than originally estimated. There have been several delays in the supply of the special ready mixed concrete due to large demand nationally. Additional requirements from the West Berkshire Council tree officer also caused delays. Contractors, Maverick Industries, estimate the Skatepark will be completed by 17 June 2011, subject to weather conditions and approval following an industry standard safety inspection. The Mayor will be carrying out the official grand opening of the Skatepark on 3 July 2011. It is hoped that top skateboarders and BMXers will attend and give demonstrations of their skills. Maverick Industries will also be in attendance and plan to hold skateboard and BMX competitions.

PLAYGROUND

Work is nearing completion on the new play area. The impressive large Megga Tower, children's swings and cantilever basket swing will be opened to the public from late Friday afternoon (27 May 2011), in time for the Bank Holiday weekend. The opening of the more junior play area, which has been constructed on the cleared site of the old playground, will be open later (around 17 June 2011) as the grass seed has struggled to germinate due to the prolonged spell of dry weather. We have been watering the new play area and adjacent open space daily to try and encourage the grass seed to germinate and grow, but it has only just started to show signs of growth and the area needs to be fully established before we can open it up to the public. The playground development too has suffered delays through additional tree officer requirements and further re-siting of specific pieces. If / when new funding becomes available it is planned that additional play equipment will be installed in further phases.

HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND BID (HLF)

We plan to present a bid to the HLF by August 2011 to provide funds for selected improvements to the Park. A list of projects are currently being considered by the Victoria Park Working Group for inclusion in the bid, ranging from realignment and enhancement of the main entrance gates, refurbishment of the bandstand, removal of the fir trees surrounding the bowls club, repairs to the bowling green, replacing the tennis courts with a multi use games area (MUGA), conversion of the existing toilet block into a sports changing room facility, refurbishment of pathways, relocation of Victoria and Her Lions adjacent to the park main entrance, reworking of flower and shrub beds and planting additional trees.

VICTORIA PARK HYDROGEOLOGICAL SURVEY

We are currently discussing a final draft the long awaited Hydrogeology report with our legal advisors, as it is imperative that the correct legal steps are taken to ensure the best outcome for all the residents of Newbury. Results of the survey can only be published, probably by press release, once those initial legal processes have taken place.

OTHER PARK NEWS

Ground water levels have returned to normal levels throughout the park. The surface of the football pitch appears to have settled down, although the surface is still well below the height of the culvert. The cracks in the Park Way wall and park pathways appear to have stabilised, but there is no sign of the cracks reducing. The right hand side of the Bowling Green is still unplayable.

A temporary pathway parallel to Park Way will be installed within the park while Parkway related highways works are undertaken.

We are currently trialing a product called Viresco Aqua in the pond. The product should help break down the sediment and hopefully prevent blanket weed from growing.