

Appendix A

Play Park Grove Gardens South

Email Received from Mrs Rose Mary Ayre
Chair to the Berwick VOL (Victim Offender Location)

Hello, I am writing to you in my capacity as chair to the Berwick VOL (Victim Offender Location) with reference to the Play Park at Grove Gardens South, Tweedmouth.

The VOL group is a multi agency group which includes Social Services, Northumbria Police and Registered Social Landlords (eg 4 Housing) as appropriate. Issues around nuisance and anti social behaviour(ASB) are covered.

Unfortunately, the play park at Grove Gardens South has featured on the agenda recently due to complaint from residents relating to older youths using the park and causing problems due to ASB. It appears that due to its secluded location it is becoming more popular with older groups rather than those it was intended for.

A suggestion has been made that moving the equipment to a more open location on the estate could resolve the problem and make it more popular for younger children as it would be easier to monitor. Prior View has been suggested.

I have agreed to contact your selves and would welcome your thoughts/views on this. If it is easier, please feel free to ring me, number below.

Yours,

Mrs Rose Mary Ayre
Environmental Health Officer
Public Health Protection Unit
Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service HQ

Email response sent from Mr Gareth Davies LI.B
Town Clerk

Dear Rosemary

First of all, thank you for your email which resolved a nagging concern I had that there should be some kind of forum in Berwick to bring together those who have concerns about crime and ASB in Berwick - it turns out there is one but, as the biggest provider of play facilities in Berwick, and the community council, we're not invited to it. Who should I send the concerns our members raise about these issues to?

Obviously, as Town Clerk, I don't make policy, but implement it, and communicate requests and decisions to our elected members. However, I can pass on my views to you, and the advice I will give to elected members.

The park at Grove Gardens South is a long standing facility established in the days of Berwick Borough Council, and was inherited by us from Northumberland County Council. It has recently been refurbished, and the opening event just a couple of weeks ago was well attended by local residents who we believe value the facility.

Had I been invited to your meeting I would have questioned whether better outcomes could be achieved more cost-effectively by conducting targeted operations against the local off-licences where the youths in question get their supplies of alcohol. My view is only anecdotal, but when I visit our play parks and beaches I see enough evidence to persuade me that outdoor drinking, probably by under 18s, is a persistent and regular problem in the town that won't be alleviated by moving one park. That being said, if NCC is offering a land swap for a new site, and to pay the costs of relocation, then of course I will recommend that elected members consider the offer. I would also point out that you maybe want to discuss this issue with your Green Spaces Manager, Mike Jeffrey; if the land at Grove Gardens ceases to be a play park it reverts to NCC, and the issue of controlling and managing it will also revert to NCC. Last time I was there it was clear that there were informal accesses to the area via nearby housing (owned by Four) as well as via the gate; NCC would need to take strong steps, I suspect, to prevent it simply becoming derelict land with an anti social behaviour problem fuelled by alcohol as opposed to a play park with an ASB problem fuelled by alcohol.

We have a purchase order placed with a supplier of CCTV equipment which will cover the park - if you wish I will keep you updated with this work.

Regards

Mr Gareth Davies LI.B
Town Clerk
Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council