

## Warnford Playground application for a grant from the Warnford Parish Meeting of November 2024

This application is for a grant of £500 from the Warnford Parish Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

Please find attached background information on the Playground, our most recent accounts and projected expenditure for 2025/26.

### Warnford Playground, R. P. Chester Memorial Trust Co Ltd

The Charity was set up in 1974 to provide an area of play and open space for Warnford Village residents. It is located off Lippen Lane adjacent to the River Meon in an idyllic setting. The land was donated by the Chester family and is also a memorial to R.P.Chester, who was the first member of the family to live and farm in the village, having purchased the Warnford Estate in the 1930s. He died in 1968. Since its inception, the Playground has been run by a group of unpaid trustees who have traditionally been residents of the village, although an exception has been made for Kate, the granddaughter of R.P.Chester himself, but she still hopes to move back to the village one day.

The current four trustees administer the charity and take on the responsibility for the upkeep of the Playground itself and the equipment that sits on the land. As well as being a registered charity, it is also a limited company.

Apart from Warnford villagers, the Playground is used by outside visitors, particularly in the summer months, when it is a favourite for family picnics. We believe that all would agree that the Playground is a great asset to our village.

### Reasons for the Application

The Playground is a registered charity and has no regular income. It therefore relies on donations and goodwill to keep it running. Annually we receive a 10% share of the Church fete profit, it being held on the Playground, and money from the Tom Coles Charity.

In the past, this small income has been 'topped up' with grants from the Parish Meeting and we ask that this continues. One of the major costs each year is the insurance (around £500) together with the upkeep and running of the machinery. General inflation, although now less than the high levels seen in recent years, has through higher fuel costs, spares and bark etc. added to our annual spending. We also need to complete annual running repairs on the play equipment to adhere to the recommendations from the annual playground safety inspections and the cost of constructional timber continues to rise.

### Special Considerations

The issue of ash die-back disease continues to cause concern. Having felled four affected trees three years ago, we are keeping a very close eye on our remaining trees, which are inspected annually by the tree surgeon who felled the previous batch. All the remaining ash trees have die-back and will almost certainly have to be felled when there is more serious evidence of disease. Thanks to a generous donation received in 2022, we have been able to ring-fence a sum sufficient (we hope) to cover the cost of removal of all remaining trees when this eventually becomes necessary.

### Financial Outlook

Despite the easing of worries over ash die-back in terms of cost, other financial pressures remain. Expenditure in 2024 has included the provision of fresh bark chippings for the play areas at a cost of well over £1000. The next major area for concern is the climbing frame which is deteriorating quite rapidly. It has done well for its age, but it's now well over 20 years old and we anticipate having to replace a significant amount of timber over the next few years.

The Parish Meeting's previous support has been vital in keeping the charity solvent and we therefore ask that serious consideration be given to this application. If granted, the money will largely cover the annual insurance premium, which this year was £450, but a significant increase is expected for 2025.

Thank you.

The Playground Trustees: Stephen Short, Robin Athawes, Phil Chadder and Kate Fismer