

## **A Public Park for Stoke Mandeville Parish**

**Purpose: This document seeks to propose that there is a significantly more suitable area available for a public park than the Southern Boundary.**

1. There are two extensive areas of land that are not currently being used, adjacent to, and immediately north of, the Eskdale Road recreation ground. These two areas of land could easily be combined with the present recreation ground to form a decent sized community park.

**The advantages of this proposal are:**

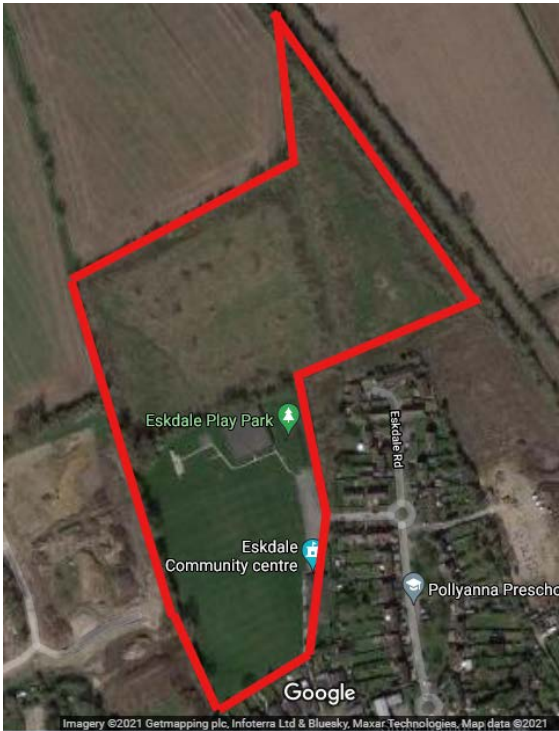
- a) A new children's playground could be created on the new land using Section 106 funding.
- b) The present playground could be converted to extend the current car park.
- c) The new Gardenway will run across this area so making it accessible to many more people on foot or cycle.
- d) The Gardenway will include a bridge over the railway which will be perfect for access to the Park from the eastern developments.
- e) This area is very near to the proposed Parish Centre making it easily accessible on foot and cycle from the park.
- f) It should cost considerably less to purchase and maintain this land as opposed to the Southern Boundary land.
- g) The Community Centre is there already and siting an enlarged public park here would justify the extension of the Community Centre to include better facilities e.g. public toilets.
- h) The site could have multiple access points, none of which would be from a main road, making it much safer for unsupervised children.

**Reasons for not siting the public park in the Southern Boundary are:**

2.
  - a) The Southern Boundary is in the wrong place for a public park. It is on the extreme edge of the residential area and is only accessible from busy main roads. Residents will be tempted to visit the park in their cars because they are a) either too far away or not inclined to walk e.g. from the 3 northern most areas of the parish, or b) they are reluctant to walk down busy main roads to get to the park.
  - b) The Southern Boundary has a railway dividing it. If it was envisaged that all the land was to be used as a park, there would need to be a bridge across the railway that would cost about £2million. The existing foot crossing could not remain given the change of use because it would be very dangerous in a public park.
  - c) The Southern Boundary is a huge piece of land - 810,258 square meters. The cost of purchasing this land will be huge and the annual cost of maintenance of such a massive area would be very high.
  - c) There are no existing access points to the Southern Boundary other than from the very busy main roads.
  - d) There is strong public support from the residents in the vicinity of the Southern Boundary area to retain it as open unspoiled rural farm land.
  - e) Planning permission for development of the Southern Boundary area has been effectively recently been refused three times.
    - > AVDC did not determine the planning application but stated that they would have refused it had they been able to determine it.
    - > An independent planning inspector refused planning permission after a public hearing.
    - > A judicial review supported the planning inspector's refusal of the planning application.

## Maps

The map below outlines the entire area of the extended Eskdale Road proposed park.



The map below shows the relative areas of the Southern Boundary area of 810,258 square meters, as opposed to the Eskdale Road area of 66,242 square meters.

It also shows the Gardenway linking the Eskdale Road Park and the Parish Centre.

