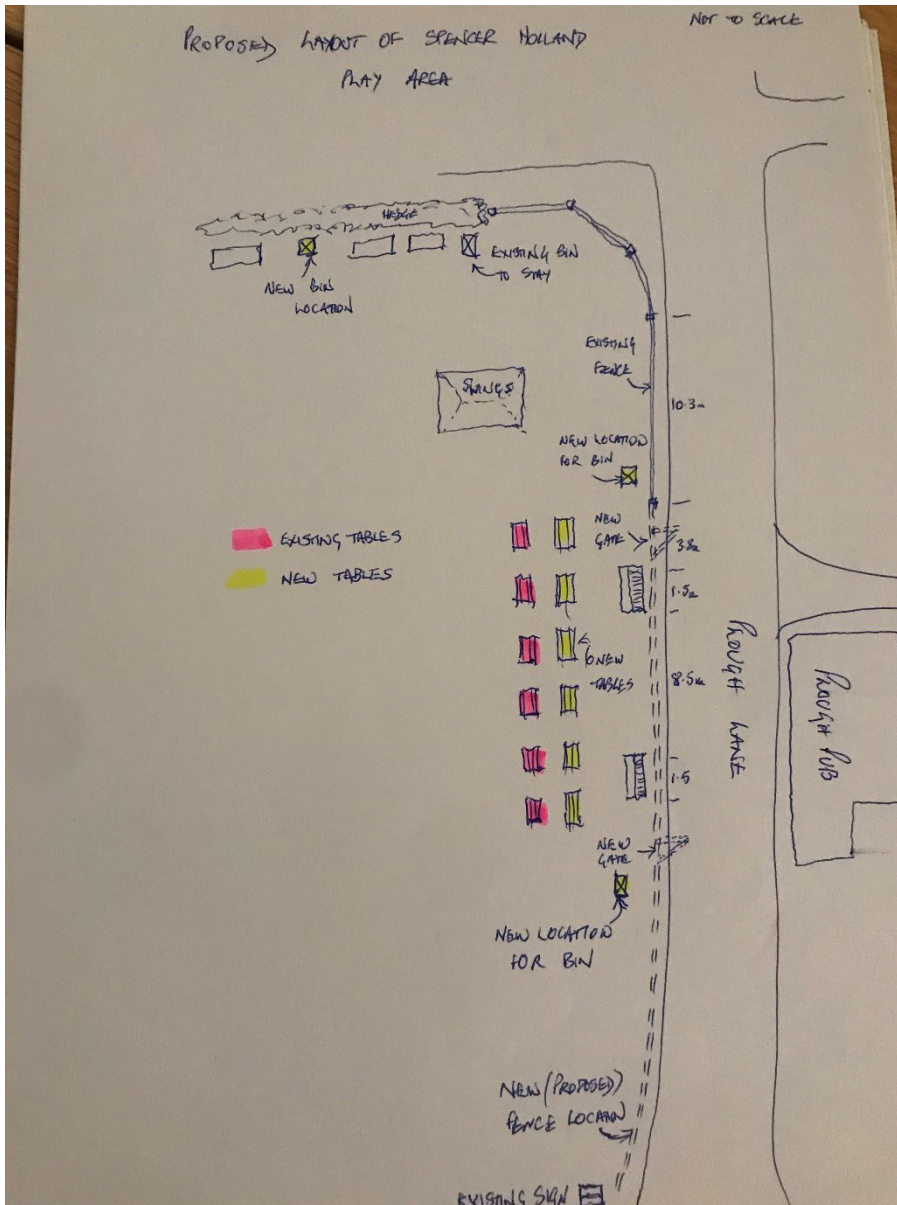


Council meeting:	16 th May 2024	Agenda item:	24/063.a
Agenda item:	Picnic benches for The Plough		

Proposed – that The Plough be allowed to purchase six picnic benches to be gifted to the Parish Council and placed on Spencer Holland Recreation Ground next to the existing benches as indicated on the plan below.



Issues

1. 1930 conveyance

The wording of the conveyance under which the Spencer Holland recreation ground was gifted to the Parish Council is that "the land hereinafter secondly described and coloured blue on the said

plan [ie Spencer Holland as distinct from the sports field which was conveyed under the same agreement] shall not at any time be let to any Club or in any way whatever but shall be used as a children's recreation ground" (my underlining).

The existing benches were agreed during Covid in contravention of the conveyance but for entirely understandable reasons during that exceptional period. They have proved popular both for users of the pub and the play equipment and no-one has questioned that they should be retained.

The request from The Plough for more tables was for capacity to cope with increased demand after the closure of Martins Pond which has nothing to do with children using the recreation ground. In practice they will be used both by families using the play equipment and people using The Plough. To satisfy the terms of the conveyance

- a) The Council needs to be satisfied that in its judgement the usage by families using the play equipment warrants the additional tables.
- b) An agreement needs to be reached with The Plough that it will not prevent families using Spenser Holland as a recreation ground from using the benches.

2. Residents comments

Three comments have been received expressing concern about the proposals because of the impact:

- a) on children playing ball sports on the recreation area
- b) late night noise
- c) on parking both down Plough Lane and Homefield

It seems unlikely that the tables will materially interfere with ball games, particularly as the intention is to locate the new tables closer to the road.

The Plough will be responsible for controlling noise, and should it become a problem the Council will retain the right to remove the tables.

The issues regarding parking are well known and the Council will have to exercise its judgment as to whether it thinks that is of sufficient concern to warrant refusing the request for more tables.

3. Precedent

Granting The Plough the right to place additional tables on Spencer Holland for its business purposes would set a precedent for both The Alford Arms and Martins Pond (were it to re-open) to place more tables on the land owned by the Parish Council opposite those premises. Accepting an offer by the Plough to purchase tables for use by the community reduces the impact of the precedent but wouldn't remove it entirely.

4. Agreement with pubs for use of Council land

This was first agreed in June 2020 and has been renewed on a number of occasions, the last in March 2022, expiring October 2022. A new agreement needs to be put in place for all the pubs.