

Design Brief – Miles Marling Field

July 2018

Project

Miles Marling Field is a popular informal park on the edge of Nailsworth surrounded by fields with residential properties close by. It's in the Forest Green area of Nailsworth and serves 2/3rds of the town's population.

It has a very limited appeal at the moment and is currently used mainly by teenagers (youth shelter) and dog walkers. The Fields have a history of anti-social behaviour with drinking and suspected drug taking centred around the youth shelter. The park needs to be made more visible to allow more 'passive policing' and to shrug off its poor reputation with a welcoming new image.

This project will design an imaginative, inviting community park with something to attract all ages of residents, not purely focussed on children's play. The project will design a park where families can spend a few hours having a picnic and residents can exercise. A key feature is that the Field becomes accessible for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

There will be a phased approach to carrying out this project as funding becomes available but it is envisaged that the majority of work can be carried out immediately.

Local identity

Miles Marling is on quite a steep slope with extensive views across fields and woodland to Woodchester and Stroud. We want to capture the rural nature of the setting, making the most of the views.

Only the top half of the field is owned by Nailsworth Town Council and the bottom half is currently leased from Stroud District Council. A condition of the lease is that no play equipment is installed on the bottom half of the field. There is a long-term ambition for the Town Council to take over the bottom half of the Field permanently and negotiations have begun to do this.

Play audit

A play audit was carried out in November 2014. The assessment showed that the park scores very low in play affordance, offering very little novelty, focussed activities, poor connectivity between the few features and throughout the field; no access to controlled risk through play; no opportunity to explore identity through play or inspire creativity. There is very little to encourage people into the park, although the landscape features (slopes, views, trees, hedges) could be exploited to make it a stimulating play space with room for children and young people of different ages as well as providing a pleasant place for adults.

Since the 2014 play audit, outdoor gym equipment has been installed which offers something of interest to young people and adults and enhances the field's focussed activity. The challenge will be to develop Miles Marling Field to include enticing journeys between different features for all ages, working with the existing landscape.

Current play provision nearby

Nailsworth Primary School is a short walk from Miles Marling and a floodlit MUGA for 5-a-side football, netball and basketball is being built on the school site for community use. Within walking distance of Miles Marling Field there is a well-equipped play area nearby aimed at 5-11 year olds nearby at Badgers Way, Nortonwood. There is a small equipped play area for 0-6 year olds at Beechwood Close. There is a well-equipped play area for 5-11 year olds, with kickabout area at The Tynings. There is a small MUGA and an equipped play area for 5-11 year olds at Bunting Hill.

Nearby Norton Wood is popular with dog walkers, walkers and children throughout the year.

Consultation

Nailsworth Town Council carried out consultation with local residents in February 2015 and with the Youth Club in Autumn 2015. From this consultation a sketch design was drawn up by one of the residents (attached)

The key message from the consultation was that residents would use the park more if it was developed and since the consultation the Friends of Miles Marling Field has been formed. Their first act was to have a daffodil planting day in November 2015 when they planted bulbs around the Millennium Oak in the field. The Friends of Miles Marling Group have considered this Brief in detail.

Specific changes mentioned by residents at the consultations include:

1. **Move the entrance** into the centre boundary to make it safer and more welcoming. Dustbins (dual bins) need to be placed at the new entrance. The upper entrance will stay with vehicle access for maintenance. The middle entrance will become the main entrance and needs to be accessible for pushchairs and wheelchairs. The new entrance to be inviting, to encourage use.
2. **A 'kickabout area' is required.** An informal kickabout area which doesn't interfere with other users on the new footpaths.
3. **Paths for access and exercise.** A mix of hard surface and grass paths. While the lease for the lower part of the Field is discussed, footpaths must remain grass in the lower half, and meet more hard surface paths in the upper field. The public right of way which comes into the bottom corner of the Field from Nortonwood and leaves into a field, needs to be incorporated into the new footpaths. Suggested footpath surfaces are stone to dust or resin bonded gravel, depending on cost.
4. **Picnic area** To include picnic tables and a possible barbecue area.
5. **Meadow planting/long grass areas** To be located in the bottom part of the Field where development is currently restricted by the Lease. Potential for raised beds for allotments or community gardening.

6. **Youth Shelter replacement** . This should be a shelter for all, not just a 'youth' shelter. It should be visible from the road for 'passive policing', maybe a band-stand or pergola style.
7. This field should make varied provision and amenities for all ages from early years to senior citizens in the play equipment suggested and with areas for picnics and seating.
8. The field should have a natural feeling; additional tree planting throughout and quiet areas.
9. **Dog walking** remains a key use of the field, and forms part of the brief.
10. **A running circuit** with marker posts could be set up around the field, using hard surface and grass paths.
11. **Fencing along the road** should be included in the plans. Fencing to be inside the line of trees. Consideration should be given to the treatment of the boundary with Nortonwood to allow better visibility, prevent children and dogs from running into the road but also provide an inviting view.
12. **Accessibility**. There must be a focus on accessibility for all with though given to resting points and tactile surfaces

Maintenance

Consideration must be given to future maintenance of the fields including any natural features such as mounds, slopes and planting, and ease of grass cutting. Consideration must be given to the maintenance of any new play equipment.

Nailsworth Town Council cannot maintain loose fill safety surfaces such as sand or bark. Grass mat safer surfacing or wet pour are the preferred safer surfacing materials.

Litter and dog bins are to be included in the proposal. The Town Council is open to the idea of recycling bins and 'novelty' bins to encourage their use.

Existing features

The main access to Miles Marling Field is via a kissing gate/metal field gate (for vehicle access) at the south end of the field from Nortonwood. There is also pedestrian access via a gate in the north end and a public right of way which exits half way along the west boundary.

There is one litter bin and one dog bin.

There is an ageing steel framed youth shelter in the south west corner and new outdoor gym equipment (installed 2015) in the south east corner. All of these can be relocated as part of a new design and the youth shelter could be replaced in some form, as detailed in the specific changes mentioned above.

A Millennium Oak tree marks the boundary between NTC land and SDC land.

Funding and timescale

Nailsworth Town Council has secured Section 106 funding together with some of the Town Council's own budget for this project. The Town Council aims to complete work to Miles Marling Field by October 2019.

Selection process

The deadline for proposals is 8th October 2018. Nailsworth Town Council in collaboration with the Friends of Miles Marling will consult on the proposals in October 2018 and decide on a chosen scheme by 21st November 2018.

Your proposal will be presented on a single sheet of A3 paper during the consultation process. Please provide a cost breakdown on a separate sheet. You can make two different proposals but please make sure these are labelled so that members of the public can accurately answer questions such as "what do you like about this proposal?" We will not be using product catalogues during the consultation.

Please submit your proposals by email to:

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Deadline: 4pm, Monday 8th October 2018