

Friends of Pittville

Pittville Park Play Area / Aviary / Small Animal Enclosures

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

January 2016

Q1. Why do we need a new play area in Pittville Park?

A1. The existing facility, although it has served the community well for many years looks very 'tired', does not meet the needs of a wide age range and is not suitable for children of all abilities.

Q2. Why is the new development costing so much?

A2. The construction and installation of a new, comprehensive, robust and creatively-designed installation for children of all abilities, such as this in Pittville Park, is an expensive operation when viewed as a total investment at the outset. However, spread over the 20-year lifespan of the equipment the cost per child/day/play unit is just pence. Cheltenham Borough Council could have opted for a phased approach to the development but chose instead the more economic option of completing the whole development in one operation.... that's why Friends of Pittville is involved with fund raising over and above the Council's budget so the phased approach can be avoided.

Q3. Where is the money coming from?

A3. The majority of the cost of the new play area, around £400,000, is covered by Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) budget. The remainder of the projected total £540,000 cost will be spent on rejuvenating the aviaries and small animal housing and ensuring the complete redevelopment is completed at one time. Friends of Pittville is doing what it can to help raise the shortfall of £140,000 from grants and public donation. CBC will be responsible for raising money from companies, while the Friends of Pittville will encourage donations from the public and grant-giving charities and organisations.

Q4. What happens if the Council and Friends of Pittville can't pay the total cost before the construction work is completed?

A4. If the full funding has not been raised by this point, the scheme may well be built in phases as funding becomes available.

Q5. Wouldn't the tax payers' money be better spent on an essential item or service?

A5. The health, enjoyment and development of able and disabled children is an important aspect of the Cheltenham Borough Council's plan. The development of the Pittville Park play area is seen as an essential improvement providing a free-to-use facility over the expected 20-year lifespan of the equipment for the benefit of all.

Q6. Why is the chosen play area equipment not British made?

A6. The tender to supply the new play area was open to British and continental manufacturers alike. The successful supplier was Eibe, a Germany-based manufacturer of equipment for the company's UK division based in Guildford. It is one of Europe's leading manufacturers of playground equipment, with 250 employees involved in the development, production and sale of what are seen as high-quality products. In 2015 the UK team accepted two Green Apple Awards on behalf of UK local councils for the third year in a row. Eibe won the tender, which was open to all manufacturers, not just in the UK but across the European Union.

Q7. Where can I take my children to play in Pittville when the play area is under development?

A7. There's a recently refurbished, albeit smaller play area for children in the west of Pittville Park. There is an underpass beneath the Evesham Road and a tarmac footpath to this alternative play area, which has a range of equipment suitable for young children. In that same area of Pittville Park is an adventure playground, a pitch and putt golf course, tennis courts, boating lake, skate park, basketball court, sports pitches, exercise areas, a Parkrun – lots of family fun. Alternative play areas in other parts of the town can be found on Cheltenham Borough Council's website http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/200073/parks_and_open_spaces/211/childrens_play_areas

Q8. How long will the new play area last?

A8. The play area has an expected lifetime of at least 20 years. The Council will maintain it in good condition with expert advice from the manufacturers. Lifetime was just one of the decision-making factors in the tendering process.

Q9. What child safety assurances do you have from the manufacturers?

A9. The design and construction of this play area and its equipment conforms to BS EN1176 Playground equipment standard; BS EN1177 Impact absorbing playground surfacing; Play England publication *Design for play: A guide to creating successful play spaces*; and Play safety publication *Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide*.

Q10. What age of child can use the new play area?

A10. The facilities in the new Pittville Park play area are suitable for children up to 14, with adult or carer supervision as necessary.

Q11. Is the equipment suitable for disabled children?

A11. The new Pittville Park play area has been designed with use by all in mind. During the design development process local, specialist schools for disabled children were consulted and their views taken into account.

Q12. How will you control vandalism?

A12. We have worked with the community to develop this play area to create a sense of ownership. The play area has also been designed so there is natural surveillance across the site. Robust equipment and the inspection and maintenance regimes have been revised to ensure that the play area is kept to a high standard.

Q13. Where are the birds and animals going to be while the work is taking place to update the aviaries and small animal housing?

A13. The animals have been temporarily rehomed to appropriate organisations and will be returned upon completion of the development.

Q14. Who will be operating the café in the play area?

A14. A local company called In The Park has won the tender to run the refreshments kiosk in the new play area as well as the other café facilities in Pittville Park. The management and staff have several years' experience in running the existing facilities, which stay open year-round.

Q15. Will the public toilets be upgraded also?

A15. CBC will ensure that the current toilets are deeply cleaned prior to the re-opening of the play area and are investigating opportunities to improve the facilities in the longer term.

Q16. How can I donate money to the Friends of Pittville play area fund?

A16. There are three ways to donate money to help fund the early completion of the facility: go to <http://www.justgiving.com/fo-pittville>; pay by cheque made out to Friends of Pittville, c/o Hon Secretary, 3 Burston House, Pittville Circus, Cheltenham GL52 2PU; or join our community crowdfunding scheme at <http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/pittville-park-play-area/>.

Q17. What has happened to the existing play equipment now it's been removed?

A17. The Council is intending to utilise the old equipment at other play area sites.

Q18. When will the play area re-open?

A18. It'll be open from June.