

Annual Play Area Inspection Report 2025

Committee: Leisure & Recreation

Wards Affected: All CSNPC Wards

Priorities: To provide a high standard of services & facilities.

Date: 8th January 2026

Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with a summary of the annual independent play area inspections undertaken across Central Swindon North Parish Council sites in December 2025. The inspections were carried out by The Play Inspection Company Ltd in accordance with BS EN 1176 and relevant associated standards. The report highlights overall risk levels, recurring issues, and recommended actions for consideration.

Scope of Inspections

Annual inspections were completed for the following play and recreation sites:

- Parkside Hub
- Alanbrooke Close
- Alton Close
- Barnum Court
- Churchward Park
- Edinburgh Street
- Inglesham Road
- Mannington Park
- Medlar Close
- Minety Road
- Wilcox Close
- Pinetrees Community Centre
- St Marks Park
- Trowbridge Close

Each inspection assessed the condition of play equipment, surfacing, ancillary items (fencing, gates, seating, signage), and the surrounding active play area. Inspections were non invasive and reflect site conditions at the time of visit.

Overall Findings

Using the consolidated Site Finding Summary (report date 16 December 2025; annual inspections completed in December 2025), 580 individual findings were recorded across 14 sites.

- The highest individual risk score recorded was 20 (Alton Close).
- Five findings were scored 15 or above (higher priority actions) across four sites: Alton Close (2), Inglesham Road (1), Minety Road (1), St Marks Park (1).
- A further 20 findings were scored 12 - 14 (moderate priority actions) across multiple sites.

Most findings are maintenance related (surfacing, minor component wear, fencing/gates, and general site condition) and can be addressed through routine and programmed works.



_Site Finding
Summary Report - Ce

Key Themes and Common Issues Identified

Across the inspected sites, a number of recurring maintenance themes were identified:

1. Surfacing and Ground Conditions

- Low or uneven loose fill surfacing (woodchip, sand) beneath equipment.
- Exposed membranes, subbases, or foundations presenting trip hazards.
- Algae, moss, and silt creating slippery conditions on bound surfaces.
- Localised erosion around entrances, gates, and high use areas.

These issues are common seasonal findings and typically require topping up, cleaning, or minor reinstatement works.

2. Gates and Fencing

- Missing or damaged rubber buffers on self closing gates.
- Gates not closing within recommended timeframes.
- Localised fencing damage and wear to timber components.

These items generally fall within routine maintenance responsibilities.

3. Timber and Metal Wear

- Early stage timber rot on posts, benches, and some play structures.
- Paint breakdown and surface corrosion on metal items such as litter bins and spring toys.

Most findings were assessed as low risk but should be monitored and addressed to prevent further deterioration.

4. Play Equipment Wear

- Worn swing seats and chain wear (notably at St Marks Park).
- Rope and net wear on climbing and rotating equipment.

Where wear has not yet reached intervention thresholds, continued monitoring has been recommended.

Site Specific Matters Requiring Attention

Alton Close (Highest priority defects recorded)

Two higher risk findings relate to a single point swing:

- Missing bushes/suspension connection components (risk 16) – *replace*.
- Wear/defect to the rotating mechanism below the secondary safety (risk 20) – *replace*.

Inglesham Road (Higher priority defect recorded)

- Basket swing surfacing severely damaged (risk 15) – *repair damaged areas of surfacing*.

Minety Road (Higher priority defect recorded)

- Spring bike seat severely damaged (risk 15) – *repair or replace affected part*.

St Marks Park (Moderate risk site with at least one higher priority defect)

- Exposed subbase/rocks within impact area beneath a single point swing (risk 15) – *reinstate surface levels to cover subbase and address low loose fill levels/exposed membranes where present*.

Trowbridge Close (Ongoing risk management)

- Site opens toward a roadway, ongoing risk assessment required.
- Recommendation for improved site signage.

- Presence of a self made rope/tyre swing – consider removal or independent assessment.

Accessibility Observations

- Most sites provide some accessible features, though full accessibility remains limited in places due to surface types and gradients.
- Pinetrees Community Centre was noted as generally accessible.

Accessibility improvements may be considered as part of future enhancement or refurbishment programmes.

Conclusions

- The annual inspections confirm that Central Swindon North Parish Council's play areas remain largely safe and well managed.
- Identified issues are typical of outdoor play provision and are predominantly maintenance related rather than structural failures.
- Moderate risk findings are localised and manageable through planned remedial works.

Recommendations for Members

1. **Note** the contents of the 2025 Annual Play Area Inspection reports.
2. **Approve** officers progressing routine and priority maintenance works in line with inspector recommendations.
3. **Request** a costed programme of remedial works for Moderate Risk items.
4. **Consider** longer term surfacing and equipment replacement planning where repeat issues are identified.