

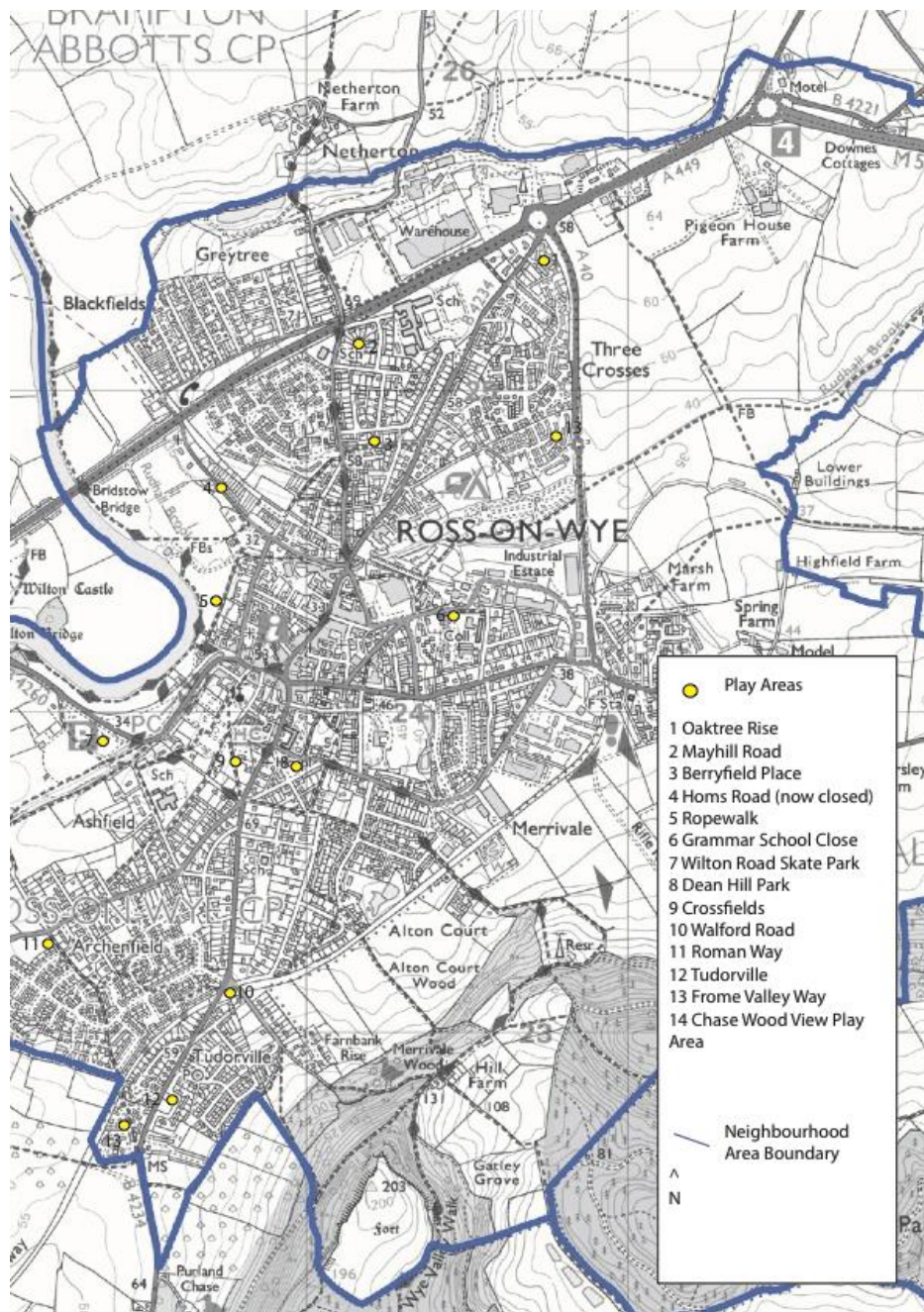
Report on Ross-on-Wye Play Areas

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This report identifies and describes the play areas in Ross-on-Wye, to form part of the evidence of the Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan.

Map 1 below identifies the location of play areas in the neighbourhood area.

Map 1



1. Oak Tree Rise

- 1 toddler slide with canopy and spinning toys
- 2 spring riders

Aimed at 1-3 years. Fully enclosed with majority metal fence and brick wall to rear. Tarmac and tarmac/rubber surface. 1 bench and 1 bin.

Safe, well maintained and tidy.

Didn't look especially well used. Too small with too few items of play equipment. Even young children would get bored after 10 minutes here. Nothing suitable for 4+ years.



2. Mayhill Road

- Slide
- Frame for swings (but no seats)
- Evidence of other equipment (now removed)

1 bin. Large, grassy space, with rubber matting around equipment (or where equipment used to be).

Park is enclosed in the sense that the space is formed by the garden fences and/or trees that back onto it, but there is no actual perimeter fence.

The play equipment is in a very poor state. The slide is the only functional item. The park is safe in the sense that there is no road near it, but this is the only positive point. The tall fences and trees surrounding the park, and lack of 'visibility' of this area to passersby, as well as the neglected feel of the equipment, gives the area a gloomy, oppressive feel. It isn't somewhere that I would be happy for my kids to hang out, nor would I want to spend any time there myself with younger children.



3. Berryfield Place

- Seesaw
- Two frames for swing (but no seats)

1 bin and 1 bench. Grass and rubber matting.

Park is enclosed (by metal fencing at the front and by garden fences/hedges at the sides and rear). Accessed via a public footpath.

Highly neglected park. Grass is very overgrown with weeds and scrub returning to the area.

As with the park situated off Mayhill Road (see no 2, above), this is a good example of where *not* to build a play area. Tucked away behind houses, and accessible only via a narrow, litter-filled and unappealing public footpath, this play area isn't visible from any public areas, other than the footpath, so it's not surprising that it has fallen into such disrepair. I can't imagine that any parent would be happy for their children to play or hang out here. Shame on the planners/developers who felt that this was an appropriate location for a play area.



4. Homs Road (now closed)

I'm not sure if I found the correct spot, but there's an overgrown area surrounded some wooden fencing that looks as though it could once upon a time have housed a play area. Nothing left now. Area is gradually being taken over by scrub.



5. Ropewalk

- 2 spring riders
- 1 activity frame with slide
- Toddler swing (2 seats)
- Frame for larger swing (situated outside enclosed area) - the actual swing has been absent for some years

Aimed at 2-4 years. Grass and tarmac surface. 2 benches and 1 bin.

Fully enclosed with a metal fence. Safe and tidy, but equipment looks tired and is uninspiring. There is nothing suitable for older children (5+ years).

The fenced play area is set within a much larger park which borders the River Wye. Given the size and prominence of the public space that this play area is situated in, the play provision here is poor.



6. Grammar School Close

- 1 multi-use wooden play structure with slide, ladder, bridges and climbing net.

Aimed at 2-5 years. Grass throughout, with rubber matting under equipment. 1 bench and 1 bin.

Fully enclosed by metal fence (and wooden fence panels at the rear). Safe, well maintained and tidy.

Play area didn't look particularly well used. Too small to be of much appeal. Even young kids would be bored after 10 minutes.



7. Wilton Road Skate Park

- Large play space with a selection of ramps of various heights and angles for skateboards, bikes and scooters

Aimed at 5-18 years. One bench and one bin. Surrounded by a low wooden fence.

Well-maintained, but there is litter in the planted areas surrounding the park.

Well used and in a good location. Park is also used by younger children (2-5 years) who scoot and cycle on the smooth flat areas surrounding the ramps. Anecdotally, the older teenagers who used the skate park have complained about the recently introduced parking charge to use the adjacent car park. More bins *might* help the litter problem.

8. Dean Hill Park

Two adjacent fenced off play areas, set within a larger park.

Area 1:

- 1 child swing (2 seats)
- Balance circuit (various structures/beams/chain bridge to test balance)
- Activity structure with slide and climbing tunnel

Area 2:

- 4-seat riding horse
- Seesaw
- Mini-roundabout
- Activity structure with two slides, ladders, bridge,
- Swings (two toddler and two child seats)
- Two spring riders

Aimed at 5-10 years (area 1) and 2-5 years (area 2). Grass throughout, with rubber matting under some pieces of equipment. Distributed between the two play areas are two picnic benches, two benches and three bins. The play park is well used, well-maintained and feels safe. The play areas are well visible from public areas. Situated near a road but protected by the perimeter fence. The park in which the play areas are set is visually attractive and contains a range of trees and shrubs.



9 Crossfields (equipment removed)

Evidence of former play equipment situated between the tennis centre and the weather station. As well as the tennis courts, which are situated within this park, there are also some mini golf holes, raised mounds of earth/grass and a variety of trees and shrubs throughout. There is also an infrequently used outdoor table tennis table. Two bins and three benches.



10. Walford Road

- Child swing (two seats)
- Toddler swing (two seats)
- Slide
- Two spring riders

Aimed at 2-8 years. Grass throughout, with rubber matting under the equipment. One bench and one bin.

Play equipment is set in a medium sized park, which is fully enclosed by a mixture of wooden fencing/wire panels and old stone wall. Park has a variety of trees and shrubs which add to the visual appeal. Better screening (e.g. a hedge) from the busy adjacent Walford Road might make the park more appealing. It also feels as though it could do with an additional item or two of equipment. Speaking anecdotally, my children never asked to go to this park, and didn't spend long here when we did use it.



11. Roman Way

- Slide
- Swings (2 toddler and 2 child seats)
- Pendulum swing with basket seat
- Seesaw (now removed)
- Large rope climbing structure
- Wooden balancing snake
- Roundabout
- Group of large flat rocks (for jumping/imaginative play)
- Football goalposts and pitch

Aimed at 2-14 years. Grass and rubber matting under equipment. One picnic bench, one bench and two bins.

Play area is well used, but is showing some signs of wear and tear and some neglect. Good range of equipment to appeal to children of a variety of ages.

Play area is set in a large park which is open and appealing visually. Park contains a variety of trees and bushes, which are frequently used by children for climbing and hiding. Play area and the park in general is well located and feels safe (is visible from, but not close to, a road; is overlooked by some houses, well-screened from the busier road by a hedge and has plenty of pedestrian passersby, both through the park itself and on the adjacent footpath..

The first four items in the equipment list above used to be surrounded by a wooden fence. A few of the wooden posts came loose in the 2014. Instead of fixing these while it was still a minor job, these were left to gradually fall further into disrepair (being helped along the way by kids, who moved the loose posts elsewhere in the park). In 2016 the fence was removed entirely. I have not heard whether there are any plans to replace it. The park's seesaw was removed in 2015; it's not clear why as it didn't appear to be in any way dangerous or in poor condition. It has not been replaced.

The rubber mats surrounding the play equipment become slippery in damp weather (due to the build up of algae).



12. Tudorville

- Raised mound with two slides and a tunnel
- Spinning post
- Spring rider
- Monkey bar
- Swing frame with one basket seat and two child seats
- Swing frame with two toddler swings
- Spring seesaw
- Basketball posts and pitch

Aimed at 2-12 years. Grass throughout with rubber/tarmac underneath equipment. One picnic bench, one bench and one bin.

Equipment is set out in a medium-sized park which is fully enclosed by tall metal fencing. Good range of equipment which is in reasonable condition. Small amount of litter in the park. The area could be improved by some landscaping, as it feels quite bare and exposed. For example, some trees or shrubs with the park and a hedge to screen the area from the adjacent (busy) Walford Road.



13. Frome Valley Way

- Small bucket roundabout
- Toddler swing (one seat)
- Spring rider

Aimed at 2-4 years. Park is fully enclosed by a painted metal perimeter fence. Tarmac/rubber ground surface. One bench and one bin.

Well maintained and feels safe, but doesn't seem well used.

Park is very small, with uninspiring pieces of equipment. Unlikely to be any great draw to anyone other than those in the immediate houses looking to divert a toddler for 10 minutes.



14. Chase Wood View Play Area

- Climbing wall with curved climbing ladders
- Seesaw
- Mini roundabout
- Wooden activity course with balancing sections

Aimed at 3-12 years. Fully enclosed by painted metal fence. Grass and tarmac/coloured rubber surface. Two benches and two bins.

Area is well-maintained and in good condition (park is fairly new). Play area is in a pleasant setting, set within a larger green space and well away from the busy road. Next to a small stream and a pond (both of which are outside the fenced area).

An above average park, but feels like it needs more equipment - a slide or a set of swings would increase the appeal of the park. In the absence of more diverting play equipment, children's attentions might turn to the nearby pond and stream, which parents might not be altogether pleased with.



Useful research links

Play England: a Guide to Creating Successful Play Spaces

<http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/70684/design-for-play.pdf>

Play England: Children's Play and the Comprehensive Spending Review

www.playengland.org.uk/media/228872/101021%20csr%20briefing.pdf

How to Design a Great Playscape

www.hags-smp.co.uk/news/2016/how-to-design-a-great-playscape/

Community Benefits of Children's Play Areas

[www.api-](http://www.api-play.org/upload/public/documents/webpage/Community%20benefits%20of%20childrens%20play%20areas%20-%20web.pdf)

[play.org/upload/public/documents/webpage/Community%20benefits%20of%20childrens%20play%20areas%20-%20web.pdf](http://www.api-play.org/upload/public/documents/webpage/Community%20benefits%20of%20childrens%20play%20areas%20-%20web.pdf)

Benefits of Play

<http://voiceofplay.org/benefits-of-play/>