

## **Moles at the Recreation Field**

Despite exhaustive work to manage the situation or find alternatives, we cannot allow the damage caused to the Recreation Field facilities by moles to continue, and we cannot continue indefinitely to attempt to fix it on a daily basis. Therefore, we are arranging for a professional to remedy the issue (please note no poison will be used due to this being a public facility).

This note is intended to explain the decision that the Recreation Field Committee has taken and reassure you all we have not taken this decision lightly. We have a huge respect for wildlife and do all we can to support and encourage it, including planting trees and hedges and creating wildflower meadows.

The Committee own the Recreation Field and Coronation Park on a long lease, making us responsible for providing a safe place for sport, leisure and play. The committee have a Duty of Care and moral obligation to protect users of the facilities from injury and we take this responsibility very seriously. We have recently had a mandated annual inspection of the facilities which raised the issue of the molehills and stated that the issue must be addressed.

Our insurers state that the safety inspection which recorded the issue increases our liability if someone gets hurt and we haven't taken reasonable steps to fix it. They also stated that it is our responsibility to make the facility as safe as we reasonably can. Just putting up signs is not enough, especially if there's a known risk that can be managed.

We have tried to deal with the issues with the following actions:

- Flattening the hills, however this still leaves dips and requires someone to go and do this every morning to attempt to make the area safe, which is not sustainable. Also it does not prevent the tunnels collapsing which is a major issue.
- We have bought a trailer full of topsoil and filled the grooves left by the collapsed tunnels on the football field, but again this is not sustainable due to the cost and effort (please remember the small committee are all unpaid volunteers).
- We have sought advice and tried to encourage the moles to go elsewhere, (eg by using natural smelly products such as vinegar). This has not worked.

We have considered other suggestions received from villagers including:

- Use grass mats. These do not solve the problem as the moles just lift these with their hills creating even more of a hazard.
- Use of deep underground fencing. Moles can burrow up to 20ft down and therefore this will not solve the problem.
- Trap the moles and release elsewhere. We have been advised this is ineffective as the relocated moles will be killed by resident moles.
- Education and awareness (use of signs). This does not result in improving the safety and preventing injuries.
- Wet Pour Rubber Surfacing. Several play areas (particularly in urban areas) use large rubber mats. Again this is prohibitively expensive for an area of our size and is not in keeping with the style of our play area.

If anyone wishes to further discuss this matter with the Committee please contact either Vicki Trundle ([vicki.trundle@btopenworld.com](mailto:vicki.trundle@btopenworld.com)) or Martin Carter ([2martin.carter@gmail.com](mailto:2martin.carter@gmail.com))