

## **Village party to mark play area opening**

Villagers and supporters behind Hesselts colourful new play equipment are invited to the official opening on Saturday 22nd June.

A midsummer party, complete with drinks, cakes and a ribbon-cutting ceremony will mark the culmination of more than three years' research, planning and fund-raising to revamp the play area on the village green.

Hesselts Parish Council launched the project to replace the sparse and out-dated equipment. A working party including councillors and young mums surveyed the village, and local schools, to discover how many children were likely to use the play area and the type of equipment they would like.

"We had a terrific response to the questionnaire, which showed us there were many young families in the area, or visiting grandchildren, who would benefit from modern play equipment which was both safe and challenging," said Janice Gibson, chairman of the parish council.

Money from Mid Suffolk District Council's S106 fund – the contribution from developers building new homes – together with donations from local county councillor Penny Otton's locality budget, a private donor and a successful application to the National Lottery has bought several pieces of equipment.

To keep costs down, the parish council sold the old equipment on Ebay and villagers have helped prepare the site, replace new fencing and add finishing touches like painting the perimeter fence.

"For a small village, we should be very proud of what we have achieved to provide a fun experience for the children. We don't have a school or a shop, so the play area is also an important place where people can meet," added Mrs Gibson.

Cllr Derrick Haley, Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council, and local councillor for Hesselts will open the play area at 3pm.

The various swings and climbing tower have been bought from Kompan, a specialist designer of robust, outdoor play equipment. The old play area – which had swings and a slide – has been extended and a softer surface installed.

**– ENDS –**

For more information: Janice Gibson, Chairman of Hesselts Parish Council, 01359 271354