

**Agenda item number: 9**

**Date of meeting: 23 March 2026**

**THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

**Committee / Council**

**Report by:** Kent Purbrick

**Job Title:** Facilities Manager

**Subject:** Kennet Heath Play Park Water Hazard

**1 Purpose of Report**

To seek financial approval to carry out works to remove a water hazard.

**2 Background**

The Wetpour safety surface at Kennet Heath has deteriorated significantly and part of the cause of this deterioration is that the surface water run-off from the surrounding grass is running under the Wetpour.

A ditch was created to alleviate the water run-off and it was a success. However, the ditch would not drain and simply retained the water. Further work was carried out to create soakaway points within the ditch, but this has not worked either. The conclusion is that the ground is either too compacted or is saturated and the result is that we now have a water hazard in immediate proximity to a play park.

This hazard was independently risk assessed following the first phase of works and the conclusion was that the ditch presented a significant hazard.

**3 Details of project**

The proposal is to carry out further work to ensure that the water hazard that has been created is removed. There are several proposals (see attached summary).

**4 Staffing Implications**

N/A

**5 Financial Implications and Funding Source** (consider external funding opportunities)

Funding of up to £18k would be required from EMR monies, which have already been set aside for Kennet Heath issues.

**6 Environmental Impact Assessment**

The surface water run-off would simply be diverted and that there would be no impact upon the environment.

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**7 Risk Management (Strategic, Compliance, Financial, Operational, Environmental, Staffing, Political, Societal)**

Removal of the water hazard will eliminate this risk.

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**8 Reference to Council Strategy**

N/A

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**9 Reference to Environmental Action Plan**

N/A

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**10 Community Engagement Opportunities**

N/A

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**11 Links to West Berkshire Council Strategies [potential partnership opportunities]**  
<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/policies>

N/A

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**12 Legislation**

N/A

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**13 Officers' Recommendation**

To carry out the works as detailed in either option C or option D. This should remove the immediate water hazard entirely whilst still allowing the surface water run-off to drain into the neighbouring pond.

**NB.** Whilst this work will remove the water hazard and should prolong the life of the Wetpour surface, it should be noted that the surface is 15-20 years old. The surface will need to be patched annually or bi-annually and is likely to need replacing entirely in approx. 5 years. The cost of this today would be approx. £170k.

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## **KENNET HEATH PLAY PARK – WATER HAZARD REMOVAL**

### **Options**

- A. Backfill the ditch to its original condition.

Fill the ditch with sub-soil, then topsoil and seed the final 150mm.

Total £6,481

This would resolve the issue of the water hazard but the surface water run-off will penetrate the Wetpour surface.

- B. New outlet pipe.

Install a new outlet pipe (direct to the pond) and re-grade the falls of the ditch, such that the surface water run-off flows in multiple directions. All flows would flow toward the pond.

Total £6,873

Having previously graded the ditch and installed soakaways, neither of which has worked, it is unlikely that this option will work.

- C. Backfill the ditch with rejects.

Fill the ditch with 40mm gravel rejects, then topsoil and seed the final 100mm

Total £7,082

This would resolve the issue of the water hazard and allow the ditch to act as a holding tank. The surface water run-off would find the path of least resistance (along the previously installed pipes) or dissipate into the ground.

- D. Backfill the ditch with larger rejects.

As above but with 40-80mm gravel rejects.

Total £6,475

Larger rejects allow for faster drainage in areas with heavy rainfall and sports fields, but larger rejects are in limited supply.

- E. Backfill the ditch with rejects and pea shingle.

As option C but with a 50mm layer of pea shingle between the gravel rejects and topsoil.

Total £8,087

The pea shingle will improve filtration, reduce clogging and protect the soil. However, it may restrict the flow of water, which is the bigger issue.

- F. Install fencing around the water hazard.

c. 135m of steel, bow-topped, RoSPA-approved fencing at approx. £8-10k plus £6-8k labour.

Total £14-18k

Whilst this protects children from the water hazard, it creates maintenance access issues and is the most expensive option.