Statement issued by Woodland Parish Council regarding CCTV covering Woodland Play Park

Councillors are aware of recent comments that have been made regarding the proposed installation of CCTV covering the play park, following a decision made by the Council at the annual meeting to investigate the matter.

Having spent over £50k on new equipment at Woodland Playground for the benefit of local children, the Parish Council is of the opinion that whilst it is insured, it is important to protect this asset and investment in the Community as far as possible. As residents may be aware, shortly after the new equipment was installed, there was an issue with bolt/nuts which had become undone with one nut having been fully removed and taken, causing a potential safety issue for any child using it. We have been assured by the installers that when it was signed off as fit for use, all bolts/nuts were securely fastened, so whether the problem has been caused through a manufacturing/installation issue or wilful damage is uncertain. There have also been other incidents where minor damage has been done to pieces of equipment in the park.

Councillors are also mindful of targeted vandalism at playparks in Darlington recently, as well as some playparks being used for drug taking, and the consideration of installing a CCTV camera is purely a decision based on these factors as a deterrent against wilful damage within the playground, and to assist the police in the event of any issues of damage and anti-social behaviour.

We are also mindful that, much as the issue is distasteful, there could be – even in a rural village such as Woodland – individuals who might try to take photographs or even attempt to approach and interfere with children using the park.  A CCTV system would act as a strong deterrent / safeguard against this possibility, as well as to protect innocent individuals who may be wrongfully accused of actions.

The Parish Council is investigating all legal requirements before proceeding with CCTV, so that as and when a camera is installed, it will be fully compliant with all legislation, and any Councillor who has access to it will have had an enhanced DBS check. It will also put notices on the website and Parish Council Facebook page, as well as any public notices that are required.

The matter will be fully discussed again at the next Parish Council meeting, and anyone who wishes to make their views known is invited to attend. Details of the date/time will be published on the Parish Council website and also on their Facebook page in due course.