

Meeting	Community Development Committee
Date	27 th July 2022
Report Title	Connie the Covid Snake
Agenda Reference	18
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Officers' Recommendations

1. To recommend to Full Council to approve the location of Haydonleigh Skate Park as the home for the Connie the Covid Snake
2. To note that as this will be a Youth Engagement event
3. To approve the cost of installation £470.00 to be met from Youth Engagement EMR (339).

Background

During the first national lockdown due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, from March 2020 – July 2020, the children within the parish painted pebbles and placed them outside of Heaton Close Play Area in the shape of a snake. The snake was named Connie the Covid Snake and grew to around 100 pebbles long.

Sadly, there was vandalism to the snake and the pebbles were thrown at the play area in August 2020. For safety reasons and to protect the play area, the pebbles were collected and stored at the Council Offices. The Council asked Swindon Borough Council if the stones could be repositioned and cemented into the ground on a small footpath/ concrete strip outside of the play area fencing but was told this wouldn't be granted as could be a trip hazard. The Council also acknowledged that keeping the pebbles away from the play area would result in less vandalism risk and the insurance company advised the same.

In July 2021, the children were asked to attend a series of youth sessions to repaint the stones as some had worn and had not been varnished. The idea was 'pop in and paint', these sessions were very popular and at full capacity in the early stages of the youth development programme. 'Rocks of Swindon' the ambassador for the idea has helped the Council greatly with promoting and repainting the pebbles. A joint press release was written following the vandalism.

The project has been delayed but is important that if the Council agrees to progress with this idea, that Connie the Covid Snake is positioned as soon as possible whilst Covid is still relevant.

Proposal

The pebbles have been kept safe and the proposal is to mount these on to a concrete plinth within the Haydonleigh Skate Park. Reasons for choosing this location:

- The skate park is secure and so the snake would be protected from vandalism
- There is CCTV in the area



- The skate park also opened during the pandemic so would be a nice addition to the area
- This will still be visible from Westfield Way (through the fence) as it will be positioned behind the bus stop
- The skate park is already concrete based, so this would be in keeping with the existing scene

See map (red marked area) for proposed positioning.



Youth Engagement

Children from across the parish will be invited along to place a pebble in the cement to help build a permanent Connie the Covid-19 Snake. It is hoped that children may be able to identify their original pebble but will also be welcome to bring their own new pebbles along – guidance of being varnished prior to installation will be given. The pebbles could be placed during sessions of 25 so that they have time to cement into the ground and be dry/ secure the same day.

This could be done during the daytime in the summer holidays when children are at home or out enjoying the skate park.

Financial Impact

Materials:	£390.00 for cement, timber, gravel.
Labour:	This can be done within work time. - two operatives overseeing the project and the Youth & Community Co Ordinator (£350.10).
Equipment:	Hire of cement mixer £60.00 vehicle fuel.
Maintenance:	£20.00 varnish yearly.

TOTAL: £470.00