

14 June 2022

## For immediate release

\*Two pictures attached

### **Small grants scheme makes a big impact for SEND families in Wiltshire**

Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities (SEND) groups and organisations have been making use of a Wiltshire Council small grants scheme to buy much needed play equipment and facilities for their communities.

Barford St Martin's community is creating a playground in the village and due to the Small Grants Scheme is purchasing additional SEN equipment, which means children with SEND can play alongside their peers safely. The equipment will be installed in August.

At Springfield Community Campus the scheme means extra play equipment for inclusive play sessions can be purchased for SEND children and their family members, which are held the first Saturday of every month at the campus from 3pm – 5pm in the sports hall.

Ludgershall Parents and Carers SEN Stay and Play has also been given a grant to purchase equipment including, Air Hockey tables, games accessories and toys, alongside sensory lighting. The sessions attract up to 30 children from the ages of three to 16 years.

Barford parent Emma Claydon said: "Having a facility within the village that enables children with additional needs to play alongside their mainstream peers provides a perfect forum for the children to integrate, socialise, learn new skills and have fun. In addition, to offer a space to play and have fun, playground equipment is hugely beneficial to all children, but especially to children with additional needs. Teaching balance, coordination, self-confidence, and improving fine and gross motor skills, alongside learning interpersonal skills such as sharing, turn-taking, team work and role-modelling are just some of the many benefits that a well-equipped playground provides. After the past two years of limited social interaction this is especially important for the younger generation."

Rachael Harris of the Ludgershall group said: "The children love coming to the club to play and just be children with no one judging them and the adults enjoy a cuppa and a

chat with other adults in the same situation. Once again thank you so much for the grant, without your help the children wouldn't have anywhere near as much equipment as they have now."

The small grants scheme, which provides SEN groups with opportunities to fund equipment or activities which best support their local needs, arose from parental feedback on the Wiltshire Council SEND strategy.

The long term plan, which covers up to 2023 was created alongside SEND families and sets out how SEND families will be supported and information on services. When parents were consulted about the funding they asked for it to be via small grants and now groups across the county are benefitting.

Cllr Jane Davies, Cabinet Member for SEND said: "People know their communities best and I'm so pleased to hear this funding is being used in the best possible way for our SEND families across Wiltshire. Parents' and carers' thoughts and ideas are a key thread running through our current SEND strategy. It sets out clear goals for us all to work together to achieve including our commitment to creating sufficient SEND places across Wiltshire and our support for those young people leaving education to be ready for the next step with our Growing Up and Moving on Guide.

"There is also so much more we are achieving or want to do and we will be keeping SEND families up to date as we reflect on the success of the current strategy and look forward to creating a new blueprint for the next three years from 2023."

You can read the current SEND strategy here [SEND Strategy 2020-2023 ONLINE.pdf \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](#)

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### **Notes to editors:**

Pictures show Barford community celebrating the work for the playground and Ludgershall young people enjoying the new facilities

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### **For political comment:**

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