out to play in Cornwall

practical advice, creative ideas and places to visit in Cornwall to inspire you in developing your play area

Words: Jo Howard
Design: Stuart Spurring
This book was inspired by the fantastic success of people who have come together to transform their local play areas and encourage children and young people Out to Play again. Our aim is to help anyone hoping to follow their example by showcasing play areas to visit in Cornwall and by passing on local wisdom with a little of the excellent expert advice that is available, such as the Play England Guides.

Children play anywhere if they are allowed but having a safe yet stimulating play space nearby gives parents confidence too and encourages children and young people outdoors. Increasing obesity and high rates of poor mental health in Cornwall and across the UK are being blamed in part on the amount of time children and young people spend isolated and indoors, so the energy and imagination shown by communities, so the energy and imagination shown by communities, the commitment and belief in the future of their young people and the hard work of the young people themselves on their local play areas should be celebrated. Children know what they need: ‘If they are playing, then they are happy, but if they are not allowed, then they become more naughty.’ Play England – Because it’s freedom – What children say.

And communities become closer through play: “Every day now parents and grandparents are bringing their little ones to play there and we often see people sitting talking on the benches.” [See Rosemullion Gardens p 17]

The book passes on ideas for engaging children and young people in designing and developing their own play areas and examples of natural playful features with low installation and low maintenance costs in recognition of the need to make resources stretch further. We have not covered all the good play areas in Cornwall nor have we highlighted those that are sad and neglected, you may know very well where these are. Many groups told us that finding funding to make a vision into reality requires boundless energy and determination but detailed fundraising advice quickly goes out of date so is not included here. For more information we recommend that you look at the many sources listed on page 31.

This book and a number of the play areas featured in it had a grant from Cornwall Council Play Pathfinder and are marked .

Thank you to everyone who has contributed their words and pictures to this book, with special thanks to Janet Mylod.

This vibrant booklet is an illustration of Cornwall’s communities more important than ever. A Play Pathfinder, Cornwall was invited to explore new opportunities to both disabled and non-disabled communities to play. Many of these are represented here, from how to engage children and give them a sense of ownership in their play space, to getting the best out of suppliers. Out to Play in Cornwall is full of good, practical advice, derived from hard-won experience. Infused with the joy and wonder of children at play, beautifully illustrated by great photographs and wonderful quotations, I hope it also inspires.

Adrian Voce OBE
Children need to take risks to learn how to manage risks. This is an essential part of growing up, and play is one of the most important ways in which they develop this vital skill. Riding a bicycle, climbing a scramble net, or pushing a friend on a swing all involve risk. It is essential that we do not try and remove all the risk from play or wrap children in cotton wool. (DCSF: 2008a)

Good play spaces are designed and constructed bearing in mind sustainability but they are not necessarily tidy, and bits of scrub or long grass, fallen leaves and twigs, may all provide additional play opportunities.

“Calculations indicate that risk of injury associated with using playground equipment is quite modest compared with that associated with many popular sports, such as soccer and netball, in which children are encouraged to participate for health reasons. Provision of playgrounds reduces risk to children by getting them away from more risky places. This should act as a caution to any who contemplate reducing provision for whatever reason.”

‘Playgrounds - risks, benefits and choices’
Prepared by Middlesex University for the Health and Safety Executive, report 426/Professor David J Ball
Choose suppliers who you have a good rapport with; building working relationships built on trust, mutual support and humour is essential!

Try and choose local suppliers to support the local economy of Cornwall.

Stay close to suppliers, visiting them on site frequently to make decisions and keep the project on track.

Carry out a tendering process and assess suppliers against pre-agreed criteria.

Let suppliers suggest ideas and improvements and innovate as the project progresses.

Celebrate success with suppliers, inviting them to opening events etc.

Be driven to choose the cheapest supplier, quality is as important.

Let relationships suffer when project is under pressure to deliver, keep a sense of humour!

Leave the supplier to it; they will need guidance and feedback.

In 2005 a campaigning group sought to reclaim the use of Ayr Field as an open green space for the people of St Ives. In 2006, the plan outlining the community consultation was submitted to Cornwall County Council and the proposal was accepted. The group made very effective use of plans and consultations to apply for funding and all these are available to look at on the website (see above). Funds were raised for the field improvements including a Big Lottery Breathing Places Grant to improve the biodiversity of the field and a Cornwall Council Playbuilder Grant for the play area awarded in 2009.

An enormous combined effort went into consulting and involving local children in the design and choice of equipment at the site:

- Over 260 questionnaires completed
- A school consultation
- A den building day with the Eden Project
- Filming
- Help from the Scouts and Children’s Centre
- A group visit to BF Adventure

In May 2010 the new play area was officially opened with a big party. In 2011 the group held its 6th annual Ayr Field Day with stalls, activities and performances by local bands to raise funds and celebrate the success of the campaign and the ongoing improvements.

“I walk my dog through the field every evening and the play area is almost never empty – from toddlers to teens – they are all out there.”

local resident

Managed by Cornwall Council and Ayr Field Community Group

Website www.ayrfield.org.uk

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The recreation park is situated 2 minutes from the town centre, next to a free car park. It is a large sloping site with mining themed equipment, and accessible swings, ranged along the main tarmac path.

Much of the site was revamped with a variety of funding including a grant from Cornwall Council’s Playbuilder and in-kind landscaping work from Groundwork South West. It was officially opened in 2010. Consultation was done to create a Town Plan which looked at open spaces, there was also a children’s art competition which influenced the selection of the play equipment.

The site is now well provided for all ages with a zip wire and skate ramps for older ages as well as younger children’s equipment and picnic tables for families. It also has an excellent example of a very inexpensive but very well used feature – a BMX track created by scooping out and heaping up soil to create humps and bumps.

Top tip – don’t do it!
No seriously the one big thing that has helped is to have a clear master plan of what is required so when you go out to quotation the companies involved are not confusing you with their various interpretations. They never listened properly to the brief they were given and the first question they asked was “what is the budget?”. When you reply you reveal your hand and they price according to what they can get away with.

Do use other organisations to help out, we used Groundwork SW team and we all became winners and got far more than we budgeted for.

Quirky can be good (and cheap) and can feed a child’s imagination. Our themed equipment has been a big hit with children playing on it all hours!!! Lots of adults have said they like the link with the towns heritage.

BMX track... ...simple! ...inexpensive! ...needs space!

Don’t let councillors or any other adults dictate what children like – they get it wrong! Involve as many children and adults as you can in the creation of the master plan.

Callington Town Clerk
Remember: wear and tear is normal. So think about maintenance: some units can be tricky to maintain if you cannot see the substructure to assess its condition. Units where each part can be easily removed and separately replaced as necessary are popular with the maintenance team as they can have a very long life.

Find a company that has a reputation for responding promptly with replacement parts.

Don’t forget: quality really counts with wooden equipment of this type. Use marine ply for panels and stainless steel screws which last.

The maintenance team

Alexandra Park
Alexandra Road, Penzance, TR18

Alexandra Park is one of the best loved play parks in West Cornwall particularly by families with young children. It is in a fantastic seafront position opposite Penzance promenade but the palm trees and other mature bushes on the perimeter provide shelter from the wind. There is limited on road parking next to the site and a car park on the promenade a few hundred yards away in both directions. The facilities are excellent including accessible toilets, benches, picnic tables and a covered shelter. There is an accessible tarmac path to the toilets and around part of the perimeter of the site.

The park surface is sand, ideal for bucket and chain type sand play features. Wind breaks across the site help prevent the sand being blown away but also provide additional play features for small children to hide behind. Boulders in the sand create a beach like feel and tall plants amongst the play equipment bring a natural atmosphere and are ideal for children’s games. Sometimes parents worry about sand in case of cat mess or other nasty surprises but in this location the sand is very popular and is of course well maintained.

The wooden equipment is themed specifically for the site with a boat and a zip-wire wreck feature as well as swings, slides, a seesaw and other more modern pieces.

*Information about EN 1176 Playground Equipment Standard and EN 1177 Impact Absorbing Playground Surfacing can be found on the ROSPA website: www.rospa.com
Royal Cornwall Hospital
Playing for Life Playground
Treliske, Truro, TR1 3LJ
Managed by Royal Cornwall Hospital NHS Trust

Health professionals understand that play is vital for children. Outdoor Play stimulates appetite, aids digestion and circulation and helps promote sleep, develops muscle tone and manipulative skills.

“Besides all the health benefits, playing outside stretches children’s thinking and knowledge and simply enables them to enjoy themselves” Gill Caddy, RCHT Play Specialist

The site was chosen to be within easy reach of the children’s wards and maternity wing, it is also a sunny spot with natural shade from mature trees giving contact with nature. The funds were raised over two years and included local support from Duchy Health Charity, Hospital Friends, WRVS and donations from patients and visitors.

Children visiting and being treated at the hospital were helped to be involved by putting forward ideas through creative workshops. Parents/carers, clinicians and other health care staff who would use the play area were also consulted. Inspiring designs were drawn from these ideas and detailed models made before the site was finally created in 2010.

The project plan also highlighted the following list of beneficial opportunities that flow from a well designed play area: social interaction, respite, recreation, challenge and opportunity, physical and emotional wellbeing, learning through play, contact with nature, nurturing plants.

One of the hospital’s priorities was to make the play area accessible to disabled children.

“My four-year-old son is a full time wheelchair user and he had a fabulous time exploring, making music, using the swing and water pump. It has given my little boy the opportunity to do normal things” - a parent

Inclusive play! kids of different abilities can play and sit together

Natural materials and textures

Ensure you communicate updates about funding achievements as often as you can through local newsletters and posters. You may not realise how many people are following your progress.

Include as much natural planting as possible, it creates a more welcoming environment for everyone.

Forget to risk assess everything, even planting ie some plants are poisonous.

Assume you know how to design a play area, consultation and using professional advice will result in a quality play area. But designers do love to be creative so sometimes you have to play ‘devil’s advocate’ anticipating the children’s behaviour and the implications of having water or sand that needs to be maintained.

Be put off by grumbles regarding noise. Children deserve the right to play and often express themselves by running about and cheerful noise is uplifting to hear. Don’t give up!

Sharon Addinall

Managed by Royal Cornwall Hospital NHS Trust
A well positioned and well loved play area can regenerate over time. On the edge of Coombe Park estate this site serves children from all around. It was first developed over 25 years ago by local residents, with minimal funding, and three out of four families who were originally involved have grandchildren living nearby.

More recently children described the park as “rubbish and old-fashioned” so consultations were held to ask what was needed. The most played on feature was a mound of earth which has now been incorporated into the new design with a slide. There is lots of new equipment, thanks to a Cornwall Council Playbuilder grant. The play area still has a natural feel as trees and grass have been kept. This group are achieving great things and were awarded a Big Lottery grant in 2011 for another phase of development.

Managed by Maker with Rame Parish Council
Contact 01752 823393

Coo flame Park
Cawsand, Torpoint, PL10 1NX

Local community!
all ages, getting hands on!

• Over consult your community. It's a fine line. If people feel very strongly they will let you know.

Kate Holdom, Kingfisher Pre-school and
do

• Consider using a landscape designer in addition to the in house designs play companies come up with as it can bring more innovation and save you money in the long run.

• Consider using services like Groundwork who brought added value.

• Celebrate with the community and make sure young people realise it is because of their involvement that the money was awarded. This demonstrates great citizenship, role modelling and is likely to lead to young people having more faith in their Local authorities and be more inclined to get involved in future community initiatives. BIG SOCIETY!!

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Kate Holdom, Kingfisher Pre-school and

“Amy daughter moved here this year because of the playground, everyone knows where their children are – they congregate here. This winter they were out here until 6 pm because the street lighting is good and they could all meet together. My granddaughter is 10, out here with friends playing instead of on the computer, which is so good because she is an only child. The play area makes a real community. There is a youth centre just over there and the older children meet here too – there is so much for them to do now.” - local grandmother.
Rosemullion Gardens
Tolvaddon, Camborne, TR14 0EY

Managed by Cornwall Council
Contact 0300 1234 100

This open space in Tolvaddon, surrounded by houses, was once a simple rectangle of grass. There was no equipped play area on the whole estate. Now, initiated by Tolvaddon Regeneration Group, Rosemullion Gardens has been landscaped with mounds and hollows, granite boulders and grassy banks, there’s a nest swing and multi-play unit, as well as a junior’s football area and a sensory garden, complete with some edible fruit plants which are all shown here protected with chestnut paling fences until they are well established. Tolvaddon youngsters, local artists and a Cornwall Council landscape architect designed the new play area together including mosaic paving and hand-carved wooden benches.

A year after opening:
“Every day now parents and grandparents are bringing their little ones to play there and we often see people sitting talking on the benches. After school, in this weather, it is like a school playground. The cream would be if the kids used the litter bins more.”

Wendy Perks, Secretary of the Tolvaddon Regeneration group at opening in 2010

St Mawes Recreation Ground
The Square, St Mawes, TR2 5AR

Managed by St Mawes Recreation Ground Trust
Contact 01326 270256

Recently local children and young people said the Rec, run by enthusiastic Trustees since 1966, was what they liked best about living in St Mawes. To achieve this success the Trustees gathered significant funds from a range of sources including the local bingo group which donated takings in recognition of the importance of the site to village life.

A new woodland adventure trail, a bespoke shelter, a family area, a fire pit and new skate ramps have joined the sturdy old traditional play equipment, a zip wire, tennis courts and the grassy games area.

“We ran fun events with climbing walls and llamas and asked the children and young people what they valued about the Rec and what they wanted to change. They wanted to keep the open grass area, they didn’t want more equipment. They wanted the adventure trail and skate ramps and they helped design it all and while the trail was being made they kept running up there to add their ideas. The girls wanted the shelter so they could sit together and keep an eye on what is happening. Now the Rec committee has around 8 young people who have joined.”

Dina Croft, Trustee

The shelter has been a big hit with all ages. There has been no vandalism.

“We had to get used to a different way of working with the team that built the shelter and the trail, they were not like the usual contractors but now we have children dragging mums, dads and grandads up to the woods to see.” Lynda Pridmore, Trustee.

Workshops run by the woodworkers cooperative actively involved the children and young people in learning rural skills. Groundwork supported the project and they brought some young people they were working with to help out. It was all passed as safe by an RPII qualified safety inspector.

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Wendy Perks, Secretary of the Tolvaddon Regeneration group at opening in 2010
Millbrook Tractor Park
South Down Rd, Millbrook, Torpoint, PL10 1EG

The play area at Millbrook is known as the tractor park because of the much loved feature play tractor which was replaced when the site was refurbished in 2010. A Parish survey in 2003 led to a Parish Plan with an action point to develop a skate park. But there were also numerous, repeated requests to improve the play facilities which led to consultation in schools and clubs, more plans, and fundraising.

Many local people got involved eg from Rame Kids Club and Inbetweenies Parent and Toddler group working alongside the Parish Council. Karenza Heald supplied the following list of financial contributors (in alphabetical order) to illustrate the enormous effort that went into fundraising and the way local support compliments national funds: Community Health Around Torpoint (CHAT), Cornwall Council - Play Builder, Cornwall County Playing Fields, Garfield Weston Foundation, Inbetweenies Parent and Toddlers, Ladbrokes In The Community Charitable Trust, Millbrook Parent and Toddler Group, Millbrook Parish Council, Millbrook Scouts, Sita Cornwall Trust, Viridor (Net funding).

Since opening the park has been filled with children and young people after school, teenagers particularly enjoy the basket swing. There is also an unusual climbing stone with fixed hand holds that draws attention and a stone semicircle seating/stepping stone area for toddlers, plus an accessible roundabout.

Community Charitable Trust, Millbrook Parent and Toddler Group, Millbrook Parish Council, Millbrook Scouts, Sita Cornwall Trust, Viridor (Net funding).

St Gennys Play area, above Crackington Haven is a triumph for community spirit. No play area existed until St Genny's Playground Committee were given use of a field by the Crackington Haven Institute supported by the Institute Committee and Parish Council. After many attempts at funding they secured a Cornwall Council Playbuilder grant plus match funding. Now they fundraise regularly says Sue Tilley, “We recently did a pamper evening, lots of tables, rented by Body Shop, Jamie at Home, Phoenix Cards, Beauty Therapist, and local crafts people, a raffle and collected money in a bucket to have a local man have his legs waxed. Just done another auction night, this raised loads!!!… it all goes into a pot for grass cutting, general maintenance and we hope to build onto the existing equipment. We plan a Rock ‘n’ Roll bingo next month in conjunction with our local pub - they will half all profits on the night! So it’s all keeping people interested and making them aware that it does have a running cost.”

At the start a community “rock picking” day got lots of families involved plus a workshop for children to create mosaics that now brighten the fencing. Families chose the equipment to suit children from age 0–18. One play equipment manufacturer undertook the supply and installation with “project management” support from the Committee. The site is filled with a variety of wooden framed swings, suitable for all abilities, slides, climbing nets and much more. A feature tractor faces out over the valley. A Cornish hedge with a stile leading into the field was removed to improve accessibility. One of the most popular items is the zip-wire suitable for all ages. A Cornish hedge with a stile leading into the field was removed to improve accessibility. One of the most popular items is the zip-wire suitable for all ages. The site has made a big difference to the village as a meeting place for children and adults.
Trescobeas Playing Field
Lambs Lane, Falmouth, TR11 2HH

 Managed by Falmouth Town Council

Trescobeas field was a landfill site until 1977 when it was covered in topsoil. It was purchased in 1981 by Falmouth Town Council and designated as a playing field. It is a large green space with river views, overlooked by housing on one side, used as a through route from Lambs Lane and Dracaena Ave by local school children. In 2009 there was one multiunit and an all weather games area suffering subsidence. The lack of a path limited use particularly in winter.

Local designers engaged local schools in creative design workshops centred on ideas inspired by the landfill. The children designed Smartie tubes (made of concrete). Natural planting, mounds, stepping stones and a linking play path were added. A fun day was held once installation was complete so the children could paint the tubes. "Paint in the Park" was a great success and led to annual fun days being held.

Falmouth TC has since opened a new BMX track, further bespoke play elements and more paths.

Grammars Park
Moorland Rd, Launceston, PL15 7DN

Managed by Launceston Town Council

Grammars Park is reached down a footpath opposite St Catherine’s primary school on Moorland Rd or from Meadowside. It sits in a sheltered valley edged by garden fences and allotments. The equipment is dotted among trees up the grassy hillside with a beautifully crafted bespoke wooden shelter/look out platform/climbing feature close by the footpath.

Local families were asking for new equipment so the Town Council held a Play Day in 2007 to find out what was wanted; they visited schools and held an open morning while Councillors asked for local opinion. As a result they received a grant from the Cornwall Council Playbuilder fund plus additional funds and the site was completed in 2010.

"The play area has made a huge difference as it has given the community something to do, there is something for nearly all ages. There are no problems any more with vandalism or graffiti. The play area is along our new allotment garden, and children can see people growing vegetables and raising chickens and it helps them to understand where their food comes from." Andrew Frain, Launceston Senior Groundsman

"We love it here, it is simple, it was nothing before but now it is a really lovely space where younger children and teenagers play. The teens have a great time on the nest swing getting it to swing really high and the shelter is good for older ages too. My granddaughter always visits this tree first but loves the nest swing too. When the primary school closes the children stream in here." Local Grandmother

do
• Think about natural surveillance. The fact that people are working nearby on the allotments probably has a positive impact on behaviour.
• Where ever possible use local suppliers.
• Work closely with partners to deliver on time and on budget.
• Remember quality over quantity every time.

don’t
• Forget that children and young people can get involved in making too. They helped make the benches for the bespoke shelter.
• Be rigid – often matters arise which need flexible thinking.
• Try to save money on design fees – a good design will save money in the long term.
• Be closed minded.

Falmouth Town Council
Hayle Recreation Ground
Lethlean Lane, TR27 5AL
Managed by Cornwall Council
Contact 0300 1234 100

Hayle Rec is a destination playsite with tennis courts, playing field, skate bowl, toilets, and a friendly café. It serves the town and tourists so gets lots of wear and tear. There wasn't enough play equipment for all the children, particularly over 8's, but now a massive net climbing tower dominates the site, plus a nest swing has been added.

The Town got a Playbuilder grant and set about consulting, mainly 8-13’s, using “Playing for Real” techniques. A marquee was put up and publicity included posters, local radio, and police distributing leaflets. As an extra draw refreshments were provided and a Fire Engine attended. Volunteers, fire officers, police and youth workers all got involved. Children were given natural materials, sticks, string, netting, plasticene and a variety of other materials to fire their imaginations and generate ideas about how they would like to play. Image boards of play areas were displayed as well and children selected their favourite pieces. At all stages adults were listening to what the children were saying and the overall result was a clear desire for a BIG climbing structure with ropes, rocks and nets and somewhere to lay about and “hang out”. Six months later designs were presented publicly for final selection.

The café by the skate bowl has a very positive influence: “everyone says how great it is to be able to get a cup of tea while waiting for the kids, even the oldies come down and children behave themselves a bit more if there is someone there” Kate Tyson.

Kate knows many of the children and young people and on rare occasions has even called parents and the police to sort out problems.

Camelford Town Council enthusiastically embraced consulting the youth club, Scouts, Guides, mother and toddlers groups and the schools, to get an outline of the kind of games, play equipment and play area the children and young people wanted at Enfield Park in the heart of Camelford. As a result they were awarded a Cornwall Council Playbuilder grant in 2010, found match funding and made their own contribution. As well as renewing traditional equipment the council saw the value of natural play and made families feel welcome right through this lovely river valley park by improving the path, adding a fishing platform by the pond and creating a safe, easy entry point to a shallow pool area of the river.

To make doubly sure that disabled children could enjoy the park Camelford succeeded in obtaining an Aiming High for Disabled Children grant in 2011 and installed a wheelchair accessible roundabout and a basket swing. Plus, the site has 3 level entrances and an accessible toilet 50m away. Fitness equipment has also been installed.

Enfield Park
Market Place, Camelford, PL32 9PB
Managed by Camelford Town Council
Contact townclerk@camelfordtown.net

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Carharrack Playing Field
Fore Street, Carharrack, Redruth TR16 5QS
Managed by: Cornwall Council
Contact: 0300 1234 100

The redevelopment of Carharrack Playing Field was started by local children who presented a petition to the Parish Council. I.C.E. (Improving Carharrack’s Environment) held a number of meetings with the residents group followed by consultations at village events; the winter Fair and Summer Fair were both used to start developing a design for the park that local people wanted.

I.C.E was supported by a Kerrier DC landscape architect who also undertook project management. In May 2009, I.C.E completed a Playing for Real exercise on the play site with local children. A report (Carharrack Playing for Real) is available on Cornwall Council’s website describing the event and the findings, including lots of pictures. A series of mosaic workshops were held in the village over the summer holidays in 2009 to produce mosaics for the site.

“All parts of the site are well used. The train has been played to death over the years and even the little children love running all the way round the new path with its pictures and mile posts. The football area brings in all ages and has been a way to get to know some of the teenagers. We love bringing our grandson here.” Richard Carter, committee member and former Headteacher.

The site is so well loved groups of childminders bring children from Falmouth for regular trips. There’s no toilet but the local pub and the nearby community rooms can be used when they are open.

Gyllyngdune Gardens natural play area
41 Melvill Rd, Falmouth, TR11 4AR
Managed By: Carrick Leisure

Small but perfectly formed. This play area is part of a major renovation project. A professional story teller and song writer worked with primary school children to develop the legend of Morgawr and the Gyllyngdune Gardens. Inspired by the sea, the gardens and Morgawr the children wrote down their own favourite phrases in edible ink on edible paper, attached to a ginger bread man biscuit and at the end of the day eaten! Before they were consumed into the bellies of their creators the phrases were recorded… “Wind wildly whining at willow trees… The leaves wander through seas of windswept grass …Morgawr’s heart beats like a warriors drum…” The words were carved into stone.

Rather than use catalogue equipment all materials were locally sourced, designed and fabricated.

Trenance play area
off Edgecumbe Ave, Newquay, TR7 2LZ
Managed by: Cornwall Council
Contact: 0300 1234 100

The play area by Newquay zoo was for younger ages but older teens sometimes occupied the equipment after school so an area on the opposite side of the road was dedicated for a teen space. Groundwork consulted with young people and this area now includes “parkour” features and a bespoke climbing boulder. The boulder has climbing routes to suit varied abilities and the top of the boulder makes a good hang out site. The safety surface means that wheelchair users can access the base of the boulder. Cornwall Council maintain the site and have had no problems other than difficulty removing some graffiti from the rough surface.
Heartlands Play and Outdoor Adventure
Dundance Lane, Pool, TR15 3QY
Managed By: Heartlands Trust
The play area will be one of the largest in the South West, free and open access all year round. Set amongst gardens, lakes, fountains nature and cycle trails as part of the £35 million Robinson’s Shaft World Heritage site. The play area is due to open in spring 2012, here the foundations of installed equipment can be seen as it awaits a surface.

Coronation Park
Porthleven Rd, Helston, TR13 8SD
Managed by: Cornwall Council
Contact: 0300 1234 100
Transformed from a donkey field to a swimming and boating lake opened in 1912 to celebrate the coronation of King George V this park has continued to grow and change but remain a very popular place for families to visit and a great place to get play ideas. A beautiful café, play area and skate park exist in place of the old tennis courts and putting green, thanks to a Liveability grant. Playbuilder funding replaced a dilapidated high slide with an exciting new version. Due to different interpretations of safety standards a suspended scramble tube was removed when a qualified RPII inspector gave a second opinion. The lake is now for boating only. It is easy to park and visit this site which has given great attention to quality and detail, such as the little children’s mosaics laced into the walk ways. A new community building is on its way too.

Fairfield
Coach Lane, Redruth, TR15 2TP
Managed by: Cornwall Council
Contact: 0300 1234 100
What was a private, unmanaged field is now a park with space for the Fair plus two play zones for younger and older children. Unique play features: mini wigwams, stepping stones, balance beams and a hammock shelter were inspired by 3D models the children made and sit alongside other bespoke and off-the-peg features such as a play train and aerial runway.

“...” Cllr Graeme Hicks

Poltair Park
Carlyon Rd, St Austell, PL25 4LD
Managed by: Cornwall Council
Contact: 0300 1234 100
Poltair is a great park to visit and try out different types of equipment. It was built and installed by one manufacturer but includes pieces from different companies. Since its opening three years ago it has been a huge success, well used by a wide range of age groups. After sales service has been very good. We have had very few issues regarding problems with the equipment. The tower is unique to any of our play areas and therefore very popular with the children, but poses challenges for our weekly inspection. The large tyre swing is also proving to be a very popular piece of equipment. Contracts officer Cornwall Council
Palemon Best, St Ives

Palemon Best in St Ives is a good example of a ramped skate park. It sits at the top of the town adjacent to the play area. It is popular with a wide age range of skaters, scooters and BMXers. All skateparks have to address the issue of noise for local residents and ramps are generally louder than concrete bowls. The noise from this park is reduced because it is at a distance from housing and surrounded on three sides by maturing trees.

Hendra, Truro

Hendra skatepark in Truro is a fabulous example of a concrete skate plaza which brings skaters of all ages from far and wide. Truro City Council, which manages the site, decided to employ staff due to the incredible numbers attending. The staff, initially employed as wardens, took on the role of youth workers engaging very successfully with local young people and the park has become a very positive focus for all sorts of activities.

A good skate park can appeal to all ages and abilities and non-skating adults are often astonished at the skills displayed and the mature level of cooperation between users. Designing a skate park is a very specialist area.

Involving local skaters and skate groups in the design is a must if you are going to succeed in producing a popular, high quality, well respected site to suit your area.

Every parent knows that children have a love for and curiosity about the natural world. Scientific research also increasingly tells us that children’s interest in the natural world is a deeply instinctive part of human nature and that there are proven benefits for their wellbeing, health and development.

Playing outdoors and raising awareness of and love for nature has long term benefits, as we face the challenges of climate change and protecting the natural environment for future generations.

We have created an interactive map of the best places for children to engage with nature including playgrounds and green spaces across England. This information will help children have better access and opportunities to explore.

Go to www.flickr.com get yourself an account and search Play England for more amazing pictures of places to play.

http://www.playengland.org.uk/natureplay

Natural Play

http://www.playengland.org.uk/natureplay
Where to get help

Association of Play Industries (API)  
www.api-play.org – Represents interests of member manufacturers, designers and distributors of play equipment and highlights the benefits of using an API member.

Children’s Play Information Service  
www.ncb.org.uk/cpis – Useful factsheets and much more. Call for a list of play area designers 020 7843 6303.

Fields in Trust  
www.fieldsintrust.org – Helps communities protect playing fields.

Health and Safety Executive  
www.hse.gov.uk – National watchdog for work-related health and safety. On the website search for “Playgrounds”

Free Play Network  

KIDS  

Play England  
www.playengland.org.uk – For many more play resources including superb guides listed below. The Play England website is now hosted by CPIS. For information call 020 7843 6300

“Design for Play” - www.playengland.org.uk/resources/design-for-play


“Nature play: Maintenance guide” includes a quick guide to features and how much maintenance they require – http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/nature-play


“Get organised!” a guide full of useful information to help you organise an event that children and young people will remember for years – www.playday.org.uk/PDF/Playday-2010-Get-organised-guide.pdf

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)  
www.rospa.com – Search for “play” for safety regulations

Register of Play Inspectors International www.playinspectors.com – to find nearest RPII qualified playsite inspector

Rethinking childhood blog – when did you last go to the edge of your comfort zone?  
www.rethinkingchildhood.com

The Sensory Trust  
www.sensorytrust.org.uk – Creating inclusive environments – based in Cornwall

VolResource  
www.volresource.org.uk – Creating inclusive environments – based in Cornwall

Playful Communities shares ideas – www.playfulcommunities.org.uk/
Sue Palmer, best selling author of Toxic Childhood: ‘This a terrific resource to help communities provide the exciting outdoor play opportunities children need. Wonderful stuff!’

“Out to play in Cornwall” is inspired by playful places in Cornwall that you can visit and playful people who have been involved in improving their local play areas. It covers subjects like:

- natural features,
- getting children involved
- how to choose a supplier
- useful contacts and other sources of information.
- making play areas accessible

88% of parents say that children playing out helps families to get to know each other in the community from Playful Communities

81% of adults believe that children playing outside helps improve community spirit from Playful Communities

“Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.” Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

“Play can be fun or serious. Through play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them. By playing, children learn and develop as individuals, and as members of the community” A widely accepted definition of play

“Don’t be put off by grumbles regarding noise. Children deserve the right to play and often express themselves by running about and cheerful noise is uplifting to hear. Don’t give up!” Sharon Addinall, Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust

“Unless they fall down they will never learn to pick themselves up Children need to mess about together” Sue Palmer

“Play does help your imagination run away.’
‘Cos you need fresh air – if you don’t have fresh air you might die – well I would anyways – it’s important to get air.’
‘It means being able to shout without getting told off!’
‘There might as well be no colour if you can’t play!’
‘Because its freedom - Children’s views on their time to play’ - Play England

produced in partnership by the Sensory Trust and Cornwall Council