

Child's play for TV gardening star Alan

THE village of Bentley turned out in force for this month's official re-opening of the revamped play area by TV broadcaster and gardening celebrity Alan Titchmarsh.

It was a triumph for the community who, having seen the playground close last September after a safety inspection deemed the equipment too unsafe to be used, pulled together to facilitate its recovery.

Work to raise funds for the £50,000 project began in 2015 when the condition of the play equipment began to be a cause for concern. Bentley Parish Council joined forces with the Bentley Recreation Ground Charity and the big push for a new play area began.

Parish clerk Lorraine Jeffs said: "After numerous meetings, countless playground designs, surveys of children and parents, applications to prospective funders and an enormous effort to raise funds within the village, Bentley now has a playground of which it can be proud."

It was, therefore, a joyous occasion for the whole village when the new play area was opened by Mr Titchmarsh in front of the children and staff of Bentley Primary School and a large crowd of villagers. Mrs Jeffs said: "After the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the event and cutting the ribbon, Alan declared the playground open. He then spent much time speaking with the children and villagers to the clear delight of everyone."

"Thanks have been expressed to the Veolia Environmental Trust, which provided the largest financial contribution to the project, to county and district councillors who provided grants, and to countless residents, including children, who raised money via a range of sponsored events.

Mrs Jeffs concluded: "The hard work and diligence of sales co-ordinator Stuart Evans and project manager Ben Neaves at eibe, the play equipment provider, must also be mentioned along with Jason Ebury, from Premier Grounds and Garden Maintenance, who helped with much advice and guidance



The play equipment was opened officially by celebrity gardener Alan Titchmarsh. Picture no: AD20-25-18

on how to achieve natural play for children, a key requirement of Veolia Environmental Trust."

Thanks also went to the playground project team of Lorraine Jeffs, Richard Davies of the Bentley Recreation Ground Charity, and former parish councillor and villager Sally Dando, who saw the project through to its conclusion.

Young pupils check out the new features for size. Picture order no: AD20-15-18 (altonherald.com)



Alan Titchmarsh is first down the slide, soon to be followed by eager young pupils. Picture order no: AD20-26-18 (altonherald.com)



Bentley Primary School headteacher Katy Pinchess with Alan Titchmarsh and pupils. Picture order no: AD20-18-18 (altonherald.com)



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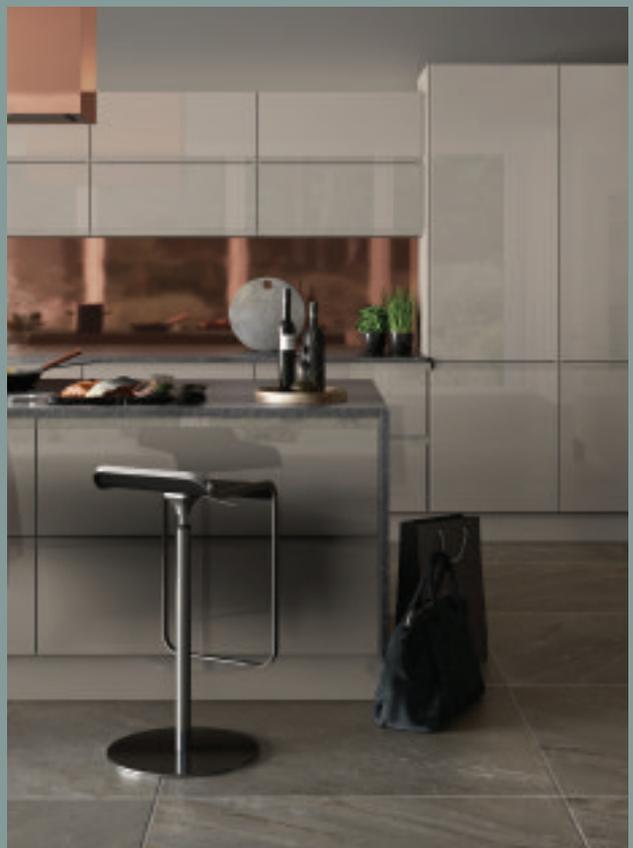
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