

Maintenance Report

February 2018

Grass Cutting

The Maintenance Team continued grass cutting until mid-November. All grass cutting machinery is now being serviced in preparation of the commencement of the 2018 grass cutting season in March. OCC have paid the £6,162.06 annual cost associated with the grass cutting contract for 2017.

Seasonal Bedding

The summer bedding was removed late autumn from all flower beds and winter bedding planted at the town entrance planters, Memorial Gardens, Elms Park, North Street, the Millennium Circle and Town Hall planters. Resources this season permitted the installation of 32 winter/spring hanging baskets within the town. 580 pink tulip bulbs have been planted with the assistance of the Mayor in the flower beds in North Street to commemorate the 10th anniversary of charity UCARE (Urology Cancer Research and Education). The bulbs were supplied by the charity and a number of towns and villages around Oxfordshire have taken part in the planting.

Remembrance Sunday

The War Memorial and grounds at Thame and Moreton were tidied for the Remembrance Service. The Maintenance Team undertook numerous operational tasks for the Remembrance Service in Thame including road closures and operating the PA system.

Christmas Event

Numerous operational tasks were undertaken throughout the day including traffic control, road closures, provision of lighting and sound and assisting with the lights switch-on and crowd control.

Christmas Tree

The Maintenance Team assisted the supplier with the installation of the Christmas tree by providing traffic and pedestrian control. Sponsorship banners were hung for the duration of the Christmas period around the wooden barrier fencing. The tree was removed following the lights switch-off and wood chipped and distributed as a weed suppressant to hedge bases at Ham Wood.

Christmas Lights

The Council is within season four of the five year contract with Blachere Illumination for the Christmas Lighting Scheme. The scheme had initial issues following switch-on with problems with timers and infrastructure within lighting columns but these were rectified quickly by the contractor. A number of mounting brackets had also been removed from properties that had undertaken building/decorating works through the year and these were replaced by the contractor. Sadly the lights on the Christmas tree were subject to vandalism prior to switch-on but this was rectified by the contractor with new lights fitted enabling the tree to be the centre of the switch-on event. Further issues with the tree lights occurred prior to New Year Eve and these were resolved by the contractor. All lights have been switched off and the scheme removed to the contractor's storage facility.

Senior Citizens Christmas Tea Party

The Maintenance Team delivered crockery and assisted with setting up and removal of tables and chairs for the event.

Cuttle Brook

The ditches and stream have been cleared of debris and continue to be checked. The weather forecast is monitored and the area is checked when flood alerts are issued.

Hedge Cutting, Shrub Bed Maintenance and Tree Work

The programme of hedge cutting and shrub bed maintenance on Council owned land has commenced and will be completed over the next few months. Low tree branches and basal growth will be removed from trees where required.

Play Areas

The annual RoSPA play area safety inspection reports have been undertaken on all play areas including the skate park. The minor defects listed within the reports have been completed by the Maintenance Team.

Southern Road Recreation Ground

A metal panel on the Bibox multi play unit was vandalised during 8-9 January. Emergency repairs have been undertaken by the Maintenance Team to enable the unit to remain in use. Spare parts have been ordered from Proludic.

Graffiti has been sprayed on Southern Road Changing Rooms on a number of occasions. A specialist contractor will be engaged to remove the latest graffiti from the external brickwork.

These incidents have been reported to the Police.

Repairs have been undertaken at the changing rooms to the water boilers and new termocouplers have been fitted.

An order has been placed for the installation of new lighting to the car park with installation expected within 6-8 weeks.

Town Hall

Christmas decorations and lights were installed within the Information Centre and Council Chamber for the festive season.

During the Christmas close down of the building the ground floor carpets were cleaned and public areas deep cleaned.

A specialist contractor has repaired the fault with the Town Hall clock enabling the clock to chime once again and to function on Armistice Day. The Maintenance Team have cleaned the interior of the clock tower.

Extractor fans have been replaced in the disabled toilet and the gent's toilet.

Pansy plants were removed from the planters and thrown around the locality. Where possible these were replanted and spare polyanthus were also used. This incident was reported to the Police.

Elms Park

The entrance gate area has been replanted with a mixture of shrubs and bulbs.

Street Furniture

Bus shelters around Thame have had graffiti sprayed onto the Perspex panels. A specialist contractor will be engaged to remove the graffiti from the bus shelters.

A bench outside Gatwards was damaged and has been removed. Due to the level and cost of damage caused, the incident has been reported to the Council's insurers and settlement of £704.36 has been received. A replacement bench has been ordered and will be installed once received.

These incidents have been reported to the Police.

Lupton Road Depot

Servicing of the fire alarm and intruder alarm has been completed.

New signs have been installed to the entrance gates requesting access is not blocked by delivery lorries, however to date this has made no effect to the ongoing problem.

St Mary's Churchyard

Grounds maintenance contractors have now completed the grass cutting for this season. The Maintenance Team assisted Church volunteers with the annual winter tidy up on 14 December.

The Council will be entering into a grass cutting and maintenance service agreement with the church for the period 1 February – 31 December 2018, with the Maintenance Team undertaking various works including grass cutting and hedge cutting. This work will include the newly established additional burial ground at Priest End and will provide an improved service provision to the church. The church will be charged £3,500 + VAT for this service.

Health and Safety Reviews

The annual COSHH review on substances and materials used by the Council has been completed. Gas safety inspections have been completed on the boilers at Southern Road Recreation Ground Changing Rooms, Lupton Road Depot and the Town Hall.

Winter Preparation

Following the end of the grass cutting season the salt spreader was serviced and the operational unit fitted within the tractor for winter use. During the snowfall over 11-12 December approx. 4 tonnes of road salt was applied within the town centre and other problem areas including highway school access roads which are not part of the OCC gritting route for Thame. A subcontractor was engaged to clear snow from the Upper High Street car park to enable the Tuesday market to take place. Staff and the subcontractor worked hard to ensure the area was cleared and gritted.

Approximately ten tonnes of road salt is now held in stock. The road salt has been provided free of charge by OCC for use if required by the Council. The quantity held in stock has grown over the past few years due to the mild weather conditions.

The Maintenance Team have taken delivery of a snow plough which will be mounted onto the front of the 50hp Kubota tractor and used with the rear mounted grit spreader. With this new equipment the Council will not need to engage a subcontractor to clear the Upper High Street car park.