

Maintenance Report

October 2018

Grass Cutting

This summer has seen a prolonged period of dry hot weather and as such the grass has not needed regular cutting until late August. The Maintenance Team have taken this opportunity to undertake other works as detailed in this report. The Maintenance Team cut approximately 102,924m² of grass within the parish boundary. Approx. 49,898m² grass is cut under contract for Oxfordshire County Council.

Cuttle Brook and Ham Wood

Footpaths are cut regularly through the nature reserve and woodland.

Within Cuttle Brook the ditches and stream continue to be checked and cleared of debris following any flood alerts that are issued by the Environment Agency. The meadow areas were cut for hay during September by a specialist agricultural contractor.

Two mature willows have recently collapsed across paths requiring emergency works and the trees subsequently being pollarded by the Council's arboricultural contractor with assistance by the Maintenance Team in removing the wood to form habitat piles in nearby copse areas.

The Maintenance Team have cleared vegetation through Cuttle Brook in accordance with the training that was received from the Environment Agency in 2016. This also involved clearing a large amount of debris from Cuttle Brook adjacent to Oxford House.

An updated Cuttle Brook leaflet has been produced by the volunteers and approx. 1,000 leaflets have been printed and will be available at events attended by the volunteers and within the Information Centre and Library. An updated leaflet is also now available to download from the Council's website.

Litter Picking

During the summer months litter picking has been undertaken seven days per week at Southern Road Recreation Ground, Elms Park, Queen Elizabeth Circle, Skate Park and the Memorial Gardens. Weekend litter picking will cease at the end of October at these sites.

Summer Planting

With the prolonged hot weather during the summer months the Maintenance Team have focused on watering and maintaining the 48 town centre hanging baskets and the summer bedding planted at the Memorial Gardens, The Millennium Circle, the entrance planters and the flowerbeds in North Street, Pickenfield and Pearce Way. Watering has been undertaken by the Team early in the morning and has included weekend watering when necessary. For the third season the bedding plant supplier provided self-watering hanging baskets as part of the contract. This has proven to be essential with this year's weather to maintain the plants and proved very successful with the hanging baskets abundantly flowering.

The summer bedding and hanging baskets have now been removed in preparation for the winter bedding and baskets. The installation of the winter baskets has been delayed this year until after the removal of the TAL festival banners from the floral standards.

Thame War Memorial

The cleaning of the War Memorial by a specialist contractor was undertaken once the September Fair had departed.

Hedge Cutting

The Maintenance Team have undertaken a summer cut on hedges at Queen Elizabeth Circle and Skate Park.

Southern Road Recreation Ground

The Maintenance Team have redecorated the changing rooms and disabled toilet. The football goal posts have not yet been installed as there are currently no bookings. Last year's team have disbanded.

A specialist contractor has undertaken a tank clean and system disinfection of the cold water system at the changing rooms.

Graffiti has been removed from play equipment, notice boards and buildings. Specialist contractors will be engaged to remove the graffiti from the brick work on the changing rooms.

The Maintenance Team have treated all the wooden bollards with wood preservative.

Elms Park

The MiTP and Friends of Elms Park bench has been removed by the Maintenance Team following continued vandalism consisting of offensive graffiti and broken back slates. The bench is being stored at the Maintenance Depot until it can be repaired. Both groups are now considering whether a sturdier bench could be installed as a replacement.

Play Areas and Skate Park

The annual RoSPA play area and skate park safety inspections have been ordered and will be completed during October.

The Maintenance Team have repaired the multi climb roof which had been inverted, replaced a damaged swing seat and undertaken repairs to the entrance gate into the toddlers play area at Queen Elizabeth Circle Play Area.

St Mary's Church

The Maintenance Team have worked closely with the Church Office over the summer months to ensure the Churchyard has been kept tidy and this has also involved reducing the privet hedges between the Barns Centre and the new burial area.

Trees

Arboricultural consultants have undertaken a detailed hazard assessment on the mature (declining) oak tree adjacent to the play area in Elms Park and provided a report with their findings, considerations and recommendations for future management. The consultants have also carried out a full survey of the trees at The Moats and prepared a tree management report including estimated life expectancy, observations, tree work recommendations for health/safety and long term preservation interests together with advice on future planting for tree succession. Following the site visit to undertake the survey at The Moats the Consultant formally advised that a mature ash tree should be felled as a matter of urgency as it is a hazard to the public. The tree was felled on 4 October.

Dog Bins

Two replacement dog bins will soon be installed by the Maintenance Team at Priest End (damaged by vehicle) and Queen Elizabeth Circle Play Area (rotten bin base).

Town Hall

Routine servicing has been undertaken by a specialist contractor on the emergency lighting and fire alarm systems. Following problems with the intruder alarm system a new intruder alarm panel was fitted on 6 August and all issues have now been rectified.

The gents toilet seat had been damaged and was replaced by the Maintenance Team on 10 September.

September Fair

Each year the Maintenance Team have to complete a number of operational tasks for the September Fair. As with previous years, all the car park signage, floral standards and traffic island bollards are removed. Road closure signage and cones were put out in a timely manner to warn residents and visitors about vehicle restrictions and additional refuse bins were placed within the Upper and Lower High Street to cater for the increase in litter during this period. Equipment was also supplied to the Lions for the public car parking at Southern Road Recreation Ground.

Event Support

The Maintenance Team provided assistance with operations for the following events by providing cones, signage and fencing:

- 12-13 October - Charter Fair.
- 26-27 October – French Market.

Christmas Lights

The OCC licence for this seasons festive decorations has been approved and received. Under the Highways Act 1980 section 178, licence information is required to be submitted to OCC detailing locations of lights, insurance details and installation contractor details. The unmetered supply agreement with UK Power Networks for the use of the electricity has been received.

The 28ft Christmas tree has been ordered. Due to the exceptional weather conditions this summer the grower has substituted the tree variety with a Nordmann Fir at no additional cost.

The Moats – Drainage

During continued levels of rainfall the private car park on Chalgrove Road and adjacent public footpaths would become flooded and this issue had been ongoing for a number of years. The Lea Park (V) South Ltd. management company arranged clearance of the drain and pipeline. It had been established that a blockage existed under land on The Moats. Scheduled Monument Consent had been received from Historic England for possible excavation works on The Moats. Excavation works on The Moats has not been required as the Lea Park (V) South Ltd. management company engaged a drainage contractor to install a new soakaway on the private grass area of the flats and this work was completed on 27 September 2018.

Health and Safety

Fire Risk Assessments Reviews and Fire Inspections have been completed on the Town Hall, Southern Road Recreation Ground Changing Rooms and Lupton Road Depot.