

Maintenance Report

February 2016

Grass Cutting

Due to the unseasonable mild weather, the Maintenance Team continued grass cutting into mid-November. All grass cutting machinery is now being serviced in preparation of the commencement of the 2016 grass cutting season in March.

Seasonal Bedding

The summer bedding was removed late autumn from all flower beds and winter bedding planted at the town entrance planters, Elms Park, the Millennium Circle and Town Hall planters. Colour themes for the 2016 summer bedding and hanging baskets will be red, white and blue to celebrate Her Royal Highness, The Queen's 90th birthday. The raised beds within the Memorial Gardens will be planted with carpet bedding in the design of a poppy with the dates "1914 – 1918" and "Lest we forget" within the centre of each poppy.

Street Furniture

Two metal benches have been replaced at Webster Close and Kingsey Road.

Bus Shelters

Two separate instances of graffiti have been reported to the Police on the bus shelters on Oxford Road in October 2015 and January 2016 and also the bus shelters on the Aylesbury Road, also in October 2015. Specialist cleaning materials were used to remove the paint from the panels.

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. Wooden barrier fencing was erected around the base of the tree to prevent vandalism. Sponsorship banners were hung for the duration of the Christmas period. The tree was removed following the lights switch-off and wood chipped and distributed as a weed suppressant to hedge bases at Ham Wood.

Senior Citizens Christmas Tea Party

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

Continental Market

The Maintenance Team removed/replaced litter bins and provided road closure signage and barriers for the operation of the French Market.

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 winter months. Low tree branches and basal growth will be removed from trees where required.

Upper High Street Car Park Trees

In late October 2015 due to ongoing issues with low tree branches affecting the market stalls and the delay in responding to the issue by Oxfordshire County Council, the Maintenance Team lifted the lower tree branches to the eight trees in the Upper High Street car park. Christmas lights are woven onto the tree branches and it was agreed with Oxfordshire County Council's arboricultural contractor that following the lights switch-off and the Christmas lights contractor removing the lights from the trees, that the necessary work could be completed. The tree works were completed on 20 January 2016 and involved lifting all low tree branches over the car park and the highway.

Play Areas

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

Repairs have been completed by a specialist contractor to play equipment at Queen Elizabeth Circle and Churchill Crescent play areas.

Skate Park

Wheelscape completed the refurbishment of the new facility for the opening on 14 November 2015. The Maintenance Team assisted with the opening providing fencing, barriers and a gazebo. Large areas of ground have been fenced off to ensure the users of the facility keep off the ground to allow grass seed to germinate. Additional work is required when the weather conditions improve consisting of the installation of two remembrance benches on new concrete bases and a concrete footpath from the youth shelter to the street area on the facility. Further grading and reseeding of soil areas will also be undertaken in the spring.

Memorial Gardens

A replacement pond pump and section of piping has been installed within the ponds. Professional advice has also been sought regarding the silt build up and quality of water. Silt removal has been recommended to be undertaken in the warmer weather and this will also be an opportunity to resolve the issue with the statue fountain which does not currently operate.

Town Hall

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

Problems with the Upper Chamber wooden floor have been experienced during the mild wet weather. A section of the centre floor area lifted on both occasions. A dehumidifier has been purchased and is operating continuously and presently requires emptying on a daily basis along with the dehumidifier operating in the basement. No room hirings have been cancelled due to these problems.

The kitchen on the first floor has been deep cleaned and redecorated.

The Maintenance Team made a wooden frame for the Causton Town Hall sign to sit in to enable temporary placement over the existing Town Hall sign.

Tree Works

Tree works have been completed by the Council's arboricultural contractor at the following sites:

- Pickenfield – amenity land at rear of number 34 – 1 x Maple tree crown reduced by 25%.
- Hopton Road – amenity land to front of number 9 – 1 x Robinia tree crown reduced by 25%.

St Mary's Churchyard

Grounds maintenance contractors have now completed the grass cutting for this season. With the agreement of the Church, the grass cutting contract will now be let 1st January – 31st December each year. The current contract permits a one year extension with the existing contractor. The Church are happy with the current contractors and have agreed to the contract extension.

Thirteen tonne bags full of green waste were removed following the annual winter tidy up by the Church volunteers in December 2015.

The Maintenance Team have felled one Lime tree that was diseased and re-pollarded ninety Lime trees. This work is undertaken every three years by the Council.

Cricket Club

Essential tree works have been undertaken to two Willows by an arboricultural contractor and a section of the boundary wooden fence adjoining Aylesbury Road will be replaced by a fencing contractor. This work is being funded from the easement payment received by the Council from Thames Water for the site.

Sadly before Christmas the recently re-pollarded mature Willow tree was subject to an arson attack. The incident was reported to the Police by the Cricket Club and the Fire Service attended the call out. The Willow tree will be monitored to establish the effect the fire has had on the health of the tree over the coming months.

Museum

Thames Water undertook a water regulations inspection on the museum on 28 October 2015. A number of contraventions of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 were noted during the inspection. The Council's plumbing and heating engineer undertook all the necessary remedial works required and a re-inspection on the 13 January 2016 by Thames Water confirmed that all contraventions had been completed satisfactorily.

Health and Safety Reviews

Annual fire risk assessment reviews have been undertaken at Lupton Road Depot, Southern Road Recreation Ground Changing Rooms and the Town Hall.

The annual COSHH review on substances and materials used by the Council has been completed.

Green Waste Removal

Approximately 22.5 tonnes of green waste was removed from the amenity land beside the skate park on Tythrop Way in December 2015. The waste containers were loaded by a specialist contractor using a 10 tonne tracked excavator. The area has also been levelled and the Maintenance Team will be grass seeding the area to bring the ground back to a standard to enable regular mowing to be undertaken.

Winter Preparation

The salt spreader has been serviced and the operational unit has been fitted within the tractor for use if required for gritting. Approximately four tonnes of road salt has been provided free of charge by Oxfordshire County Council for use if required.