

Maintenance Report

February 2022

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 2022 grass cutting season in March.

Christmas

The Maintenance Team assisted the supplier with the installation of the Christmas tree by providing traffic and pedestrian control. A sponsorship banner was hung for the duration of the Christmas period around the wooden barrier fencing and information panels for planned Christmas events placed in six locations in the town centre. The tree was removed following the lights switch-off and wood chipped and distributed as a weed suppressant to hedge bases.

The Council is within season three of the five-year contract for the Christmas Lighting Scheme. Illumination problems related to a small number of motifs were reported to the contractor. All lights were switched off on 6 January 2022 and the scheme removed to the contractor's storage facility. The lights wrapped in trees in the Upper High Street car park have been removed to allow the trees breathe. The stars have also been removed. It is planned to swap the lights and stars over for this season i.e. stars will hang in trees that have previously been wrapped and vice versa.

The Maintenance Team assisted, by providing operational equipment for various planned Christmas events each weekend in December, including Carols Around the Tree and a last minute change which saw the Christingle Service moved from St Mary's Church to an 'open air' service at SRRG.

Remembrance Sunday & Armistice Day

The War Memorial and grounds at Thame and Moreton were tidied for the Service of Remembrance. The Maintenance Team undertook numerous operational tasks in Thame including road closures, barrier control and operating the PA system on Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day.

Hedge Cutting, Shrub Bed Maintenance and Tree Work

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

Summer / Winter Planting

The summer bedding was removed late autumn from all flower beds and winter bedding planted at the town entrance planters, Memorial Gardens, Elms Park, Millennium Circle. 30 winter/spring hanging baskets were installed within the town. The scheme colours for summer 2022 will be red, white and blue to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

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.

Southern Road Recreation Ground (SRRG)

Handrails have been fitted to the pedestrian entrance, nearest the junction of Southern Road and Moreton Lane.

South Oxfordshire District Council's Safety Team ran '#NoLaughingMatter' campaign from 27 October to 14 November to raise awareness of the problem of the misuse of Nitrous Oxide (No.2) or

'laughing gas'. A series of chalk paint stencils and posters were displayed in various locations across South and Vale including Southern Road Recreation Ground, Elms Park and the Skate Park.

St Mary's Church

Members of the Maintenance Team and Asset Manager helped volunteers with the annual churchyard tidy up on 9 December.

The Asset Manager completed the necessary permission forms and submitted to SODC to carry out identified tree work, including pollarding the lime trees, in the churchyard. Permission was obtained and the Maintenance Team pollarded 90 no. Lime Trees in November. Pollarding takes place every three years. A tree surgeon, appointed by St Mary's PCC has carried out phase 1 of identified tree work.

Play Areas & Skate Park

The annual RoSPA play area safety inspection reports have been undertaken on all play areas including the skate park. The reports raised no urgent items requiring attention or items we were not already aware of. The Asset Manager is progressing repairs / replacement where necessary.

The basketball post at Churchill play area has been repaired by an outside contractor.

Town Hall

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

Two planters outside the Town Hall had rotted and have been removed.

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

LEDs fitted in offices and information centre.

Scaffold has been erected in readiness for work to commence to refurbish the panels of the clock tower, replace the roof hatch and a slipped roof tile.

Tree Planting / Works

Members of the Maintenance Team felled a small number of dead trees on Spring Path within Cuttle Brook for safety reasons, logs have been left to form wildlife habitats.

A willow tree on the green open space, opposite Hamilton Drive on Lea Park came down during high winds associated with storm Barra at beginning of December. The Maintenance Team disposed of the tree, chipping smaller branches and chopping larger limbs and the trunk into logs (all distributed to residents who made enquiries about taking the logs).

An arboricultural contractor has undertaken the following tree work:

- Felled two large dead Elm trees on Spring Path and dispose of wood leaving in eco piles in the nature reserve.
- Reduction of overhanging branches to two trees in Queen Elizabeth Circle.

Event Support

The Maintenance Team provided assistance with operations for the following events:

- Tuesday Market (extra equipment to allow the Market to operate safely during pandemic)
- Christmas Light Switch-on and providing equipment for events on weekends leading up to Christmas

- Service of Remembrance and Armistice Day
- Senior Citizens Christmas Tea Party - delivered equipment and assisted with setting up of tables and chairs.
- Equipment provided to Christmas light decorators to cone off parking area to aid safe removal of Christmas lights from trees in Upper High Street car park.

Depot

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

Health and Safety

Gas safety inspections have been completed on the boilers at Lupton Road Depot and the Town Hall.

COVID-19

Working arrangements continue to be regularly reviewed in line with the Town Council's COVID Risk Assessment and Disaster Recovery Plan.

Appropriate signage is displayed in the play areas and skate park and continues to be renewed as guidelines change.