

Maintenance Report

February 2024

Grass Cutting

The Maintenance Team continued grass cutting until mid-November. Most of the grass cutting machinery has been serviced in preparation of the commencement of the 2024 grass cutting season. The remainder will be serviced by mid-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 locations in the town centre. The tree was removed following the lights switch-off on 6 January, wood chipped and distributed as a weed suppressant to hedge bases.

The Maintenance Team assisted, by providing operational equipment for various planned Christmas events including the lights switch on and Carols Around the tree.

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) carried out emergency tree work to a tree in the Upper High Street car park after an HGV hit a large limb that was overhanging the highway. A set of Christmas Tree lights in the tree were damaged. The Christmas Light Contractor has been informed.

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.

Hedge Cutting, Shrub Bed Maintenance and Tree Work

The programme of hedge cutting and shrub maintenance on Council owned land commenced in December and was completed at the end of January. Low tree branches and basal growth will be removed from trees where required.

Summer / Winter Planting

The summer bedding was removed in late autumn from all flower beds and winter bedding planted at the town entrance planters, Memorial Gardens, Elms Park, Millennium Circle. 28 winter/spring hanging baskets were installed within the town. Bright reds, yellows and oranges will form the scheme colours for summer 2024 planting.

Winter Preparation

In December, OCC delivered 1 tonne of road salt which is now held in stock. The road salt has been provided free of charge for use if required by the Council. The quantity held in stock is 4 tonnes.

Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve

The weather forecast is monitored and the area checked when flood alerts are issued. A verbal update on flood related issues which have taken place during the winter will be reported under agenda item 9.

The Maintenance Team cut back trees which had fallen from the Reserve into the car park at Southern Road following storm Henk. A black poplar which fell across a path during storm Jocelyne was cut into logs and left to form natural habitats.

A large willow has fallen across the Cuttle Brook near Oxford Road bridge onto the fence of a neighbouring field. A tree surgeon has inspected the tree and work to remove it from the fence and Cuttle Brook will take place as soon as the field has dried out sufficiently to safely allow vehicles to access the area.

Ham Wood

A group of volunteers led by John Morris and supported by the Maintenance Team undertook coppicing work to Hazel trees in Ham Wood in January. This is the beginning of a programme of maintenance work to support and encourage the woodland.

St Mary's Church

The annual churchyard tidy-up, with which Members of the Maintenance Team assist volunteers took place on 14 December 2023.

Play Areas & Skate Park

The annual RoSPA play area safety inspection reports have been undertaken on all play areas including the skate park. The report for Southern Road Recreation Ground raised two urgent issues which were dealt with immediately. The remaining reports raised no urgent items requiring immediate attention or items the Team were not already aware of. The Operations Manager and Maintenance Supervisor are progressing repairs / replacement where necessary.

Town Hall

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

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

A Building Condition Survey took place on Wednesday 7 February 2024. The written report, once received, will be presented to a future Policy & Resources Committee meeting.

A new cistern has been fitted in the gent's toilet following the discovery of a leak and two U-bends to the urinals have been replaced.

Youth Memorial

Three loose fencing posts were replaced by a contractor in October.

Tree Planting / Works

Members of the Maintenance Team cleared and cut up a tree which had fallen over the path in Aylesbury Road during storm Isha. The tree is on OCC owned land, the Highways Team have been informed and are making arrangements to remove the cut branches.

An arboricultural contractor has undertaken the following tree work:

- A tree on Skippon Way has been reduced back from resident's sheds and rear pedestrian access.

Litter Picking / Dog Waste Bins

Weekend litter picking will start again on Saturday 30 March 2024 (Easter weekend).

Two new dog bins have been installed; one at the Rugby Club providing additional capacity to the one already in situ and another at the entrance to Hackett's Lane (off Sycamore Drive).

Event Support

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

- Tuesday Market (extra equipment to allow the Market to operate safely)
- Christmas Lights Switch-on
- Service of Remembrance
- 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 installation / removal of Christmas lights from trees in Upper High Street car park.

Depot

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

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Health and Safety

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