

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE
15 JANUARY 2025**

Officer: Danny Powell – Operations Manager

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Purpose

To update committee on Grounds Maintenance operations.

Grounds Maintenance Update

Once again, the weather had been the major factor in our changing work programmes. From the dry warm period in early November, when we were still grass mowing and heavy machinery could go on the ground to the first snow of winter when staff moved to indoor work.

During this period numerous staff were involved in the setting up and road closures for Remembrance Sunday, Christmas Lights Switch On and Carols in the Square. Also, the erection of the Christmas trees around town and the new tree in the quarry.

Thanks also go to the Administration staff who have produced the Carols Booklet and carried out the administration work to make these events a success.

Logistics Team

Tractor Hedge cutting finished in Mid-December. Playground inspections and maintenance are ongoing across Town Council sites but on a reduced frequency during the winter months. This has released staff to carry out other work i.e. tidying of footpaths, allotment site maintenance and setting up of barriers for Christmas Lights Switch On and Carols in the Square.

Vehicle and machinery winter servicing is ongoing.

Countryside and Green Space

Work on and around the Beaver Compound continues.

The Team have been carrying out Ash Die Back work and general winter duties across their sites. The Arboriculture team are still working through their programmed work but have been out clearing up after the storms.

Shrub bed maintenance across the town is ongoing.

High usage areas in the Quarry have been mole ploughed at 3 metre intervals to help relieve compaction and remove lying water quicker.

Verge mowing stopped with the first fall of snow; it will restart in the Spring when ground conditions improve.

Amenity Team

All Spring bedding and bulb planting was completed before the first snow. Shrub bed maintenance has been carried out in the Quarry, Shrewsbury Castle, Shrewsbury Library and in other locations within the Town Centre.

The Nursery staff have taken more cuttings from their stock plants to increase the number of plants we have for next summer. The zones in the greenhouse which are now empty of plants have been deep cleaned and power washed.

We have purchased fifty small Christmas trees, twenty-five Picea abies at 75p each and twenty-five Abies Nordmanniana at 65p each. We are going to grow these on to see how long it takes before we can use these in the town centre instead of buying cut trees.

At the same time, we have purchased 5 x 6 feet Christmas trees which are rootballed and are going to be planted in large containers which can then be used at locations we usually put cut trees. This should save an amount of money and is more climate friendly than cutting trees down. I will keep you updated on how this experiment is progressing.

The pupils from Condover College have returned for another year of work placement with us. They are in the greenhouse one day a week with their mentor. I Thanks goes to Town Council staff for their engagement and help with these young people.

Quarry staff are edging the paths in the park and a road sweeper and gulley emptier have been into the park to clean the paths after the flooding.

The new Christmas tree was erected in the Quarry in November and has been well received by the public, we are hoping that this becomes a regular attraction at Christmas.

Recreation and Formal Space

Mowing of fine turf areas is continuing when ground conditions are favourable.

Aeration programme of fine turf is on schedule, but we have stopped aeration of winter sports pitches until the ground conditions improve. The use of heavy aeration equipment on wet ground destroys the soil structure, this then slows the natural drainage of water through the soil.

Hedge cutting, path edging and shrub bed maintenance are ongoing at Recreation grounds across the town.

At All Saints Recreation Ground in Castlefields, a row of Lime trees has been pollarded and other trees on the site pruned to allow more light and wind movement. This will reduce the conditions for disease on the fine turf.

The team have put in a new gate at Greenfields Recreation Ground to replace the gate on to the Wildlife area. The inside of the hedge on the wildlife area has also been cut.

Football fixtures have been cancelled for 3 weeks so far this season. Most teams have played 50% of their league fixtures by the Christmas Break. We have already started to receive bookings for summer 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the contents of the report are noted