

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE
6 November 2024**

Officer: Danny Powell – Acting Operations Manager

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Purpose

To update on Grounds Maintenance operations

Grounds Maintenance Update

Since the last update in September, the weather for part of the time has been very wet with unprecedented rainfall. This has impacted on operations with some being put back and others stopped. Over the last 3 week period the weather and ground conditions have improved, and the staff have caught up.

On the 23 October one of our longest serving members of staff, Steve Watkins retired after 34 years. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

Logistics Team

Two wardens have carried out hedge cutting and general maintenance work. Playground visits and inspections are continuing. Wardens have helped with floor cleaning in the Market Hall.

Staff have been tidying up playgrounds in the Reabrook Valley after the highest ever flood, this has included the power washing of the MUGA in Meole Estate.

All the summer floral structures and hanging baskets have been removed from the Town Centre.

Hedge cutting will recommence in the next week.

Winter maintenance of grass cutting machinery has commenced.

Countryside and Green Space

Arboriculture team started their winter tree maintenance programme on the 1 October. Several of them have been on training courses to update their knowledge and skills.

The countryside staff have been carrying out tree work and their normal autumn duties.

After the highest ever flood of the Reabrook on the 16 October, they have been repairing fences, paths and tidying up the damage. In some places, paths have been washed away and new paths put in.

Shrub bed maintenance has started.

Two members of staff spent two weeks edging and tidying the Cycle path/ footpath from Longden Road Island to Shelton traffic Lights.

When weather and ground conditions have allowed, we have been cutting grass verges on the main routes around Town. We will continue this operation till ground conditions stop us.

Beaver compound work continues.

Cemetery staff have dealt with two complex traveller funerals.

Town Council have purchased soil to make up graves in the Cemetery, which at the present time Shropshire Council cannot afford.

Amenity Team

The removal of summer bedding displays is complete.

Spring bedding planting is nearly complete, with a small number of spring bulbs still to finish.

Traffic Island beds are complete and mowing of the Islands will take place when required.

These staff will also now start there winter bed maintenance programme.

In the Nursery, we have taken cuttings from several plants to reduce our need to buy plug plants for next year.

The staff have potted up the perennials we grew from seed this year and these will be grown on ready to be used next year.

Many plants which have been removed from this summer's displays. Have been returned to the Nursery and been potted up, ready to be reused next summer.

The plant requirements for next summer have been finalised and a tender sent out for plugs and seed.

Several of the square wooden planters which Shropshire Council bought have been brought in from the town centre to be cleaned and replanted. They will go back out in the New Year.

We have supplied Whitchurch Town Council, Minsterley and Pontesbury Parish Councils with their Spring Bedding plants.

From next summer the Town Council will supply Ellesmere Town Council with their hanging baskets and floral pole tops.

We have won the tender to supply Wem Town Council with their summer bedding plants.

The Town Council will be, suppling seven other areas with Bedding plants next summer.

Since the 1 October we have had a work placement apprentice from Reaseheath College working in the Quarry on a Monday.

At the same time, we have employed the young man who we took on placement from Enable as an apprentice.

Recreation and Formal Space

Large area mowing continues, whilst ground conditions allow.

Maintenance of School contract is ongoing till mid-November or longer if a school requests more work.

End of season renovation is complete on bowls, croquet and cricket squares.

Team renovated Bayston Hill bowling green for Bayston Hill Parish Council.

An Aeration programme of sports surfaces has begun.

Recreation Grounds are still being mown; grass growth will start to slow as day light hours reduce.

Winter maintenance work has started but is slowed by the need to still cut grass.

Senior and Junior football fixtures continue. One weekend has been lost to the weather, but after speaking with the Senior League secretary, he informs me that they are in front on fixtures. There will be no fixtures on the 22 December and 5 January.

Golf Course was closed for four days after the Reabrook flooded.

The overgrown area at Greenfields has been cut down using a Robocut-forester which was hired in by the Town Council and operated by Recreation Team Manager Mark Preece.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the contents of the report are noted