

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE
8 May 2024**

Officer: Danny Powell – Acting Operations Manager

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Purpose

To update on Grounds Maintenance operations

Amenity Team

The Team will start to remove our summer bedding displays from the middle of September and replace with spring bedding and bulbs.

We are taking cuttings from a variety of plants, to reduce the number of plug plants we require for next summer's displays. This year we grew over 10,000 plants from cuttings. Staff have started to work on the number of plants we require for next year.

We are carrying out a review of this year's Baskets, Tubs and Planters, to discuss which grew well and which did not. We have found that some plants do not like growing in a peat free compost because of this we have carried out trials with different compost mixes to find a better mix. We have started using a 60/40 mix of peat free compost and soil. This dries out slower and holds nutrients better and longer.

During the summer staff have looked at other Towns and Cities whilst on their holidays to observe what they are planting in their bedding schemes, and this has given us some ideas for next year.

The Spring bedding has been delivered and has been potted up and is growing ready to be planted out from late September.

The new floral structure in the Quarry has been well received and numerous photos of it have appeared on social media. We are looking to place a second one in the Quarry next summer.

The staff that were employed for the Town Centre watering have now left to start their college courses and we thank them for their work looking after the floral displays this summer. Before leaving we discussed whether they would like to return next summer, which at the moment they do.

The Britain in Bloom judging day went well, and we look forward to results day. Planning for next year has already started.

For the first time in several years the Town Council had a display at the Flower Show, this included some of our machinery, the Turf Tank Marker and a Floral Display of Hanging Baskets which we had as spares at the Nursery. The Floral display was the main picture on the front of the Shropshire Star. Staff on the stand fielded a number of questions from the public and gave out literature about the Town Council and the functions we carry out. This year we are supplying Whitchurch Town Council, Pontesbury and Minsterley Parish Councils with their Spring bedding and bulbs.

Recreation and Formal Space Team

We are entering the last month of the summer sports season, cricket and bowls will finish on the 27/28th of September. Once they are finished, we will start our end of season renovation programme.

We have been approached by other organisations and clubs to carry out their end of season renovation work. We have taken on two local ones but have turned the others down as we do not have the capacity to do them.

The Sunday League Football season starts this year on the 1 September and ends on the 25 April 2025. We have four teams playing on our facilities this season.

The Junior football league season starts on the 8 September and ends again on our facilities on the 25 April 2025.

This gives clubs a 32/33-week season and reduces the cross over between winter and summer sports.

The number of junior teams that now use our facilities is larger than ever and we are nearly at capacity. The only locations that are not being used at the present time for football are Kynaston Road, Waincot and Greenfields Recreation Ground. One junior club that uses our facilities this year has over 54 teams.

We have cut the hedges at the schools we maintain and are in the process of putting up Football and Rugby posts and marking out the pitches ready for the start of the new school year.

The new Turf Tank marking system has already saved many hours of work and litres of paint e.g. Springfield recreation pitches were marked out in under one hour by one person, instead of two staff taking a whole morning.

The team along with other staff repaired the Quarry after the Lets Rock weekend. The damaged areas were all levelled and sown with grass seed and this area was grassed over and ready in time for the Flower show.

With the changes to our climate, we will keep the tractor and roller mower out cutting our facilities until the ground conditions stop us.

Town Council Officers met Shropshire Council Officers at the Golf Course for a walk around. Shropshire Council were happy with the quality of maintenance being carried out and the golf course has been busy with players this summer. There were discussions about the bunker maintenance and whether they could be improved so this is being investigated.

Logistics Team

The playgrounds across the Town have been well used this summer. They have been visited by the staff regularly and checks carried out and bins emptied.

Mop up rounds have been cut regularly.

Hedge cutting started at the beginning of August and will continue now until late November.

Mechanics have had a busy summer with machinery break downs and regular machinery servicing, as the mowing season finishes, they will commence their winter maintenance programme.

Mechanics helped put right the damage from Lets Rock and their knowledge of machinery helped us hire in the correct equipment.

Wardens have dealt with numerous issues of rubbish tipping and litter across the town. Wardens have also been out strimming one day a week around street furniture and trees, this has been across the Town.

Wardens tidied around lamp posts, traffic lights etc at the English Bridge gyratory, they also spent a week cleaning weeds off path edges, traffic island splitters and other areas in the Town Centre.

Countryside and Greenspace

Hay making has taken place across our sites.

Ash die back survey continues.

General maintenance has taken place across the Countryside sites.

Volunteer litter picks have also taken place along with the Rea Brook tidy up.

Verge mowing has continued, but with drier weather grass growth has slowed. Mowing will continue into October as long as weather conditions allow.

Staff have been out strimming around street furniture, in Harlescott, Sweet Lake and Bow Brook.

Rural team have been out mowing and carrying out tree work.

There has also been several complex burials at the Cemetery.

Summary

As we come to the end of another summer the amount of work carried out by our staff and the standard, they carry it out to must be congratulated. There is always room for improvement, and we will take this on board, but at this time we would just like to thank them for their efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the contents of the report are noted