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Meeting	Parks and Open Spaces Committee
Date	14 May 2024
Report Title	Parks and Open Spaces Maintenance Schedules
Agenda Reference	10A
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Shrub bed summer maintenance report

The tractor and side arm flail are back on hire from 7th May 2024.
The Council has successfully employed two temporary seasonal operatives from May 7th 2024 until August 2nd 2024.

In January, three operatives trained in use of the tractor and sidearm. Two of these will be alternating operation of the tractor through the 3 month tractor hire and overseeing the temporary seasonal operatives.

Grass cutting maintenance

The start of the grass cutting was on 2nd April 2024. Area's that are cut is dependent on weather and ground conditions. Until the areas are under control after the second or third cut progress can be slower than anticipated.

The expectation is to complete 10 rounds, from 2nd April 2024 to the 25th October 2024. Each round will take approximately 3 – 3.5 weeks to complete. Duration is dependent on weather conditions, vehicle breakdowns and staff availability.

The first round was completed on 29th April this equates to 28 working days. 5 of these days no mowing took place due to weather conditions.

Given favourable weather conditions in the summer months, the grass growth can slow allowing the team to progress with mowing and follow up mowing more rapidly. Mowing operations this season will alternative between 4 of the 5 members of staff trained on the Kubota machines.

This season, the machines will be operating from Waterside Depot whilst the Grounds Maintenance Facility is being built, so travel time to and from site will increase.

Follow up mowing

Follow up mowing commenced on the 2nd April. During the first round of the mowing follow up was very infrequent we concentrated on keeping paths and cycle ways clear of grass arisings.

Follow up mowing consists of attending to grass areas that are inaccessible to the Kubota mowers. These areas can be around street furniture, along boundary fences / walls small areas that the Kubota's cannot access, post and rail fencing. Follow up mowing can be carried out using hand tools, consisting of motor mower, strimmer, brush cutter and a handheld blower. The blower operation clears grass from footpaths where grass cuttings are deposited by the Kubota's.

Part of the follow up mowing operations is carried out by the compact mini sweeper. The sweeper will clear footpaths. The summer program of the sweeper is to work alongside the mowing operations. So, the sweeper will shadow the mowing round. This allows for the sweeper to cover all areas within a 3 – 3.5 week rota. The sweeper will then cover different streets in each designated area on each of the 3 – 3.5 week rounds.

Last Season

Last season's internal mowing programme consisted of 140 days. Of the two machines available, one was off the road for 28 days and the other for 25 days, which amounts to 20% per machine down time. There were three causes of down time; inclement weather, mechanical breakdown, and staff availability – as staff were deployed to shrub bed maintenance.

External Contractors - Larger Play Areas

This year the Council is continuing to have 10 large open grass spaces cut by an external contractor. This consists of 13 cuts on a fortnightly basis from April until October. There is contingency for extra cuts if required either side of the season. The external contractor carried out one extra cut W/C 15.4.24 and its regular programme began on 29.4.24.

No Mow May

This May we will be supporting the national No Mow May initiative. Small areas of grass we be left unmown during May to encourage wild plants to grow and flower adding colour and attracting pollinating insects and other wildlife.

The areas to be left un-mown will be small in stature and will not unduly effect dog walkers, children playing or the health and safety of cyclists or road users. The areas will be selected daily by the grass team during their mowing operations. Please note: With the duration of the mowing round some areas could extend to 5-7 weeks without being cut. Communications surrounding No Mow May are available on the website and social media pages.

St John's Church

Previously we have carried out three weekly mowing at St Johns Church.
This contract will be revised with the church in May 2024.

Street sweeper schedule

The sweeper will continue to mirror the mowing machines. This allows for streets and paths in the vicinity of the daily mowing operations to be swept. During successive rounds the sweeper will have capacity to operate on varying streets within the mowing area of that day.

All of the above schedules can be reviewed by visiting the website
https://haydonwick.gov.uk/maintenance-schedule/