

Meeting	Parks and Open Spaces Committee
Date	5 th March 2024
Report Title	Grass Cutting Audit
Agenda Reference	12
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Background

The start of the grass cutting season is programmed for 8th April 2024. This is dependent on weather and ground conditions. If we have a dry spring, then mowing of selective sites could commence in late March 2024.

The expectation is to complete 10 rounds, from 8th April 2024 to the 1st November 2024. Each round will take approximately 3 – 3.5 weeks to complete. Duration is dependent on weather conditions, vehicle breakdowns and staff availability.

Given favorable 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 will increase.

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.

We completed 8 1/2 rounds last season. The intention is with all items working to our benefit to complete 10 rounds this coming season.



Follow Up

Follow up mowing will commence at the same time as the grass cutting season starts.

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.

External Contractors - Larger Play Areas

This year we are continuing to have our 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.

St John's Church

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