



Internal Grass Cutting & Shrub Bed Maintenance Specification (Last Reviewed Jan 2025)

The specification comprises the management and maintenance of Haydon Wick Parish Council maintained open spaces, i.e. grass areas and shrub beds.

Overall Purpose

The purpose of this specification is to generally define the standard to be achieved, and to define the precise method by which the Parks & Open Spaces Team will be required to perform the service.

To provide a clean, tidy, and well-maintained parish that reflects customer need and good horticultural and environmental practice. All work shall consequently be carried out and scheduled regularly to achieve a good standard of maintenance.

The frequency of visits will be determined by the Parks & Open Spaces Managers to meet the required standard for each of the different types of operation.

The required works described in this specification are expected to be executed by the Parks & Open Spaces Team in a manner that enhances the reputation of the Council for the maintenance of its open spaces. In general, what is required is the best grounds maintenance practices to be implemented and the maintenance of rigorous standards of discipline, cleanliness, and tidiness.

Grass Cutting – Ride on Mowers and Scheduling

The quality of finish of the cut will be monitored by the Parks & Open Spaces Managers, who will be expected to maintain, and where practical, enhance the standard. Grass height will be maintained to a minimum of 20mm and a maximum 40mm. At the beginning of the grass cutting season the heights of the decks will be lifted which will slow down the rate of re-growth.

All areas should be cleared of litter before the cut takes place. Where there is excessive litter, this will be reported for the follow up mowing team to attend.

The full area, recognised by residential developments should be fully completed prior to moving on to the next area. The maps provided show the areas to be maintained.

The schedule for mowing will be:

Mower 1	Mower 2
Abbey Meads – 5 days	Haydon End – 5 days
Greenmeadow – 5 days to include Seven Fields	Taw Hill – 5 days
Woodhall Park & Moredon – 5 days to include Mouldon Hill	Oakhurst – 3 days – to include Tadpole Field

The schedule is expected to take place on a strict rotation of a three and a half week period (subject to resources and weather conditions). These time scales will also cover a period of two days contingency, to mitigate against machinery breakdowns, inclement weather, and staff resources. The first cut is dependent upon the weather condition and may call for push mowing in high visibility areas. Third mower. Wet weather.

This schedule will also be followed by the Compact Mini Sweeper at the beginning of the peak season where grass chippings are longer and a Parks & Open Spaces Operative following each mower conducting the strimming. The mower drivers conduct their own back up blowing and assist with the strimming where time permits.

Follow up Mowing/ Strimming

- The Operative will trim or mow garden fence lines, areas around all street furniture, this will include grit bins, road signs, road name plates, trees, shrub beds and any other grass areas that are inaccessible to the grass team operations.
- The Operative with the aid of the compact mini sweeper will sweep or blow off any grass arisings that get deposited on any hard surfaced pedestrian walkway.
- Where possible follow up mowing will be conducted on the same day that the grass has been cut. Any follow up mowing not completed on the day of mowing operations in a specified area will be completed as a matter of priority on the next working day.

Hedge and Shrub Bed Maintenance

The hedge cutting and shrub bed maintenance programme will be conducted by the Tractor & Flail team of three Operatives who will undertake the maintenance and low-level tree works on a full time basis. Spare hand held tools should also be available in case of breakdowns where repairs cannot be carried out with 24 hours of the problem being reported. The hedge cutting and shrub bed maintenance programme will be a continuous 12 month cycle in tranches of two to three designated schedules as displayed on the Council's website and social media messaging.

Hedges will be cut back where required for health and safety reasons. Hedges will have full maintenance applied during the winter hedge cutting season Hedges will receive a health and safety light cut, following strict assessment of the possibility of birds and young animals nesting. Hedges will be cut annually by an external contractor.

The following specification is intended to provide strong healthy and stable shrubs, cleanly cut and of an approved shape and size. All arisings that cannot be mulched on site shall be disposed of at the tip or recycling facility.

- The team shall cut all shrubs to encourage a stable shrub bed. The width at the top of the shrub bed shall be slightly less than at the base (tapered).
- The team shall make all cuts cleanly and remove any ragged edges with hand tools after the tractor and flail has made 80% of the initial cut.
- The team shall cut back the current growth to the point of the previous cut, and the shrubs shall be cut back to the same height, width, and general shape as that which existed at the completion of the last cut but shall not exceed the height specified unless instructed by the Parks & Open Spaces Managers.
- Overall reduction of the shrubs in width from a point of the previous cut to a minimum of 300mm reduction either side on roadside and path side shrubs will take place in the full maintenance applied during the winter hedge cutting season.
- All shrubs shall be cut both sides and top except shrubs that abut private land which shall be cut on one side and top.
- The team shall remove all suckers, self-set trees and brambles which are not part of the shrub bed, to ground level, where access is possible with handheld tools.

- The team shall leave grass borders adjacent to shrub beds neat and tidy at the time of the finished shrub cutting.
- The team will ensure sight lines remain unobstructed including encroachment onto pathways.
- The team shall collect litter from the shrub bed prior to cutting, ensuring that glass and cans are not mixed with any green waste / biodegradable waste generated.
- The team will cut back and trim around street furniture, streetlights, etc for ease of any future maintenance.
- The team will be expected to work on epicormic growth, low level tree maintenance, opening footpaths from overgrown vegetation and risk assessing any hedge cutting deemed urgent in line with the regulations.

Winter Works

The winter work schedule is identified throughout the year by the Head of Parks & Open Spaces which will form an operations list. The winter work schedule will be carried out between end of October – end of March by all divisions of the Parks & Open Spaces Team.

Standard winter work schedule items include:

- Cut back and trim around street furniture, streetlights, etc for ease of any future maintenance.
- Work on epicormic growth, low level tree maintenance, opening footpaths from overgrown vegetation and risk assessing any hedge cutting deemed urgent in line with the regulations.
- Sweeping adjoining footpaths and checking areas are looking well maintained, removing all weed growth around the hedges, trim and tidy edging to both hard surfaces and planted.
- Low level tree works (up to the height of 12ft from the ground level) will be conducted throughout the winter months.
- Weed spraying and moss clearance (follow up from Spring schedule).

Operational Guidelines

The following requirements to be complied with:

- a) Avoid sharp turns and scuffing with vehicles on grass areas
- b) Sites to be kept tidy – cuttings/debris to be removed from adjacent areas (paths, etc.)
- c) Areas to be inspected prior to cutting ensure no wild animals or birds (nests) are present and to remove rubbish, litter, stones etc.
- d) All operatives to wear relevant Person Protective Clothing to ensure a reduction any potential injuries

Note: If inclement weather or site conditions prevent cutting the Parks & Open Spaces Team must regain any programmed frequency of works as soon as practicable.

Working hours

The Parks & Open Spaces Team shall not undertake any work at any area outside of the following times:

7.30am and 4.00 pm Monday to Friday

These hours may be varied in the event of an emergency either by seeking permission from the Council or by request from the Chief Officer. In either case the variation will be confirmed within 24 hours.

Access

- Access to some of the areas to be maintained is restrictive of the size of vehicle/machine that can be used. It is the responsibility of the Parks & Open Spaces Team to acquaint themselves with the access to each area, and any other problems affecting access relating to all areas.
- The Parks & Open Spaces Team shall avoid, where possible, vehicle encroachment onto grass and other areas, except where vehicle encroachment is necessary for effective performance of the contract. In any event, the team shall not encroach onto such areas during excessively wet ground conditions.
- Any damage caused due to encroachment onto grass and other areas by the team plant or vehicles shall be made good.

Workwear & PPE

The Council will provide its Parks & Open Spaces Team with the following minimum safety equipment for use by the operatives.

- Gloves.
- Goggles/eye shield.
- Safety boots (with internal or external steel toecap);
- Ear-defenders.
- First aid kit

The team shall inform the POST Manager immediately of any unsafe feature or any matter or cause for public concern on any area at which they are providing the services required.

Accident report

In event of an accident or a dangerous occurrence the team will prepare a report for the Head of Parks & Open Spaces a copy of all accident reports or reports of dangerous occurrences occurring in relation to this specification shall be sent to the Chief Officer who is responsible for the area at which the incident occurred within 48 hours of the occurrence.

Cleaning roads and footpaths

The team shall take all necessary measures to prevent the deposition of mud, onto both private or public roads and footpaths, and shall keep the approaches to any location clear of mud and debris.

Any cut debris falling on adjacent grass areas, footpath or highway is to be removed before leaving the work area.

The Contractor shall take all reasonable precautions to prevent other materials arising from the work being deposited on existing roads. Loose materials on open vehicles shall be secured with suitable ropes and covers.

Tools and plant

Plant and tools shall be used in the correct manner and for the correct purpose. All plant and tools shall be provided with the correct guarding, interlocking devices etc. The safety devices shall always be used when operating any tools and/or plant. Any plant and tools shall be satisfactorily maintained, and records of maintenance shall be available for inspection.