

Meeting	Parks & Open Spaces Committee
Date	3rd March 2026
Report Title	Parks & Open Spaces Report
Agenda Reference	9a
Author	Jason Watts, POS & Facility Manager

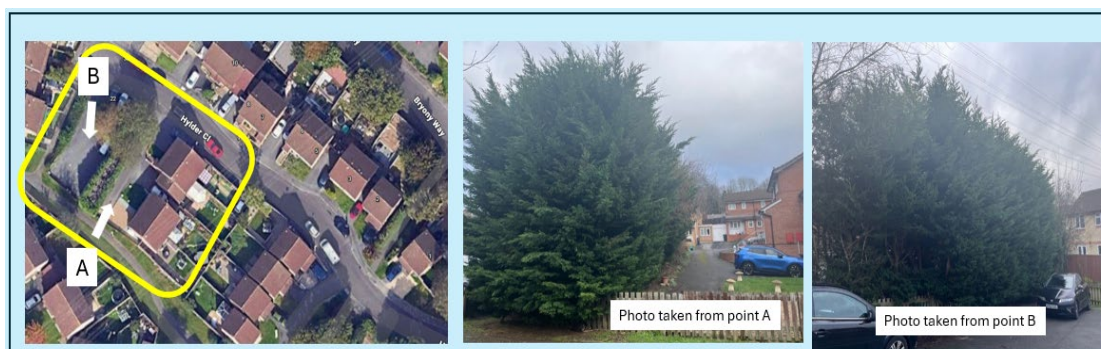
Officers Recommendation

1. To note the report.
2. To note the cost of £1,812.10 per cut for optional outsourced mowing of large, grass areas. As with last year, cutting performance will be monitored daily, and this option will only be used if deemed necessary and pre agreed.
3. To note the cost of £312.00 per cut for the mowing of Tadpole paddock, three cuts are required.
4. To note the cost of £972.00 per cut for the mowing of three wildflower areas, one cut is required.
5. To note the resident request for hedge reduction at Hylder Close and the costs associated.
6. To consider an ongoing trial of CCTV at Rose Walk to monitor the dog mess situation.

Hylder Close

A resident has requested that there is a significant hedge reduction at Hylder Close as the hedges are encroaching into the residential car parking spaces. Originally it was thought that these hedges were the responsibility of the housing development company, but on closer review it is confirmed that these hedges are part of the transfer of services deed with Swindon Borough Council, and the Parish Council should be maintaining them. A consultation was carried out with residents and there was no feedback submitted. Tree surgeons have advised that the hedges are too overgrown and would require complete removal.

The recommendation is to completely remove and replace it with manageable laurel. Removal £1,050.00. Stump removal (if required) £400.00 and replacement Laurel £300.00 which will be easier to maintain in line with the current maintenance schedules. If the hedges are removed and not replaced this will leave the area exposed and change the aesthetic of the area.





CCTV Camera, Rose Walk

To note following physical surveillance of Rose Walk over a period of a couple of weeks in January, following the surveillance, a CCTV camera repurposed from Goodearl site was installed at Rose Walk to encourage dog owners to act responsibly and to promptly remove any mess left by their pets. This location has experienced ongoing issues despite repeated one-to-one engagement with the public, and the camera aims to support improved behaviors and cleaner public spaces. The trial has assisted with the issue, noting a significant decrease, and the Officers are requesting that the trial continues. The CCTV camera is portable, so can be moved to different locations to act as a deterrent. Currently the CCTV Policy states that the cameras act to protect the Council's assets, i.e. play areas and whilst the Parish Council does not have any enforcement powers it can provide details to the relevant authorities and that relevant signage is displayed.

Voyager Drive Play Area Benches

In May 2025 there was a lot of antisocial behaviour being reported at the benches in Voyager Drive Play Area. Council agreed to monitor the decision and has not received any further feedback or reports connected with this case in almost 10 months.

Tidy Up Team Update

All waste-removal and litter-picking activities are progressing as planned. However, fly-tipping continues to be a recurring issue across the parish.

The team is maintaining a strong focus on known litter-picking hotspots and continues to monitor all areas closely. We have also identified several instances of household and business waste being deposited into public litter bins. These incidents place additional pressure on the team's daily operations.

Graffiti levels have increased throughout the parish. Recently wet weather has made solvent-based removal more challenging, so we are currently exploring alternative removal methods. Trials of these new approaches will take place throughout the winter and spring.

Mini Compact Street Sweeper

The team maintains its focus on known hotspot areas each Monday, with particular attention given to underpasses where litter accumulates more heavily. Overall parish coverage continues to progress well. Residents are encouraged to contact us if they notice anything requiring urgent attention. The sweeper experienced frozen pipe issues during a winter cold spell, which lead to filter replacements. Preventative measures have now been implemented to reduce the likelihood of this occurring again.

Grounds Team – Shrubs & Hedges

Despite recent hydraulic issues with the tractor, hedge-cutting has now been completed at Westfield Way, Bryony Way, and Haydonleigh Drive. The team has also responded promptly to resident requests and will now begin work along the A4198 bypass.

Elstree Way Roundabout Remedial Works

Have been completed by Countrywide on 23rd – 24th February. The area has been sown with grass and low-level hedges have been replanted.



Crown Lift / Epicormic Removal

Team members are working across Haydon End and Oakhurst to remove low-level tree limbs and epicormic growth. This programme of work will continue throughout the autumn and winter months.

Purton Road Works

Hedge cutting maintenance took place in Purton Road on 25th February 2026. This is often a difficult stretch because of the traffic management and access.





Other

Planning and preparations are now under way to ensure the team is well-positioned for a strong start to the spring season. This includes reviewing current resources, scheduling upcoming tasks, and coordinating work to make the most of improving weather conditions.

Grass Cutting Season

The mowers are scheduled to arrive on 9 March 2026.

Once the external training certificates have been obtained, in-house training on the rounds will take place during the first two weeks of March. This is to ensure sufficient cover while the Lead Operative is on annual leave in April.

Strimming Schedule

- Strimming will be carried out **5 days per week** until the grass is under control.
- It will then reduce to **3 days per week**, in line with previous years.

Contingency Funding Request

Officers are seeking agreement in principle for contingency funding, so it can be accessed quickly if required.

- Cost per additional cut: **£1,812.10**
- It is anticipated that **two cuts** may be required in May/June as a last resort.
- These will only be used if necessary.

Last year, the additional cuts proved helpful but were not strictly required. This year, Officers propose a revised approach: contingency cuts will only be used if clearly needed.

Pre-Agreed Budgeted Works

- **Tadpole Paddock mowing:** £312.00 per cut × 3 cuts required
- **Three wildflower areas:** £972.00 per cut × 1 cut required

Grounds Maintenance Working Party will be called in April, to discuss operational considerations and a review of the first couple of cuts. By then there should be more steer if the contingency plan needs to be actioned.