

Meeting	Parks & Open Spaces Committee
Date	4 th August 2026
Report Title	Parks & Open Spaces Report
Agenda Reference	11a
Author	Jason Watts, POS & Facility Manager

Officers Recommendation

1. To note the report.
2. To note the cost is £1,371.25 excl VAT to carry out ground works at a property in Voyager Drive to remove shrubs & roots and apply grass seeds.
3. To note the removal of bramble from the front of a property in Oakhurst Way this will coincide with the removal of bramble previously agreed at Garsington Drive.
4. To note an additional support request to water a memorial tree located at the skate park.
5. To approve the request for a memorial bench within the parish.
6. To steer upon waterway issues within the parish.
7. To note a pause in the GMF water harvesting project due to being identified as high risk by the legionella inspection.
8. To note that the planters will be replenished for autumn/spring at a cost of £505.00.

Property in Voyager Drive

The resident has requested that HWPC remove a mixture of brambles and shrubs from the front of the house which is upon HWPC grounds, the works will require plant machinery and soil replacement to ensure that regrowth does not occur, due to this the work is unable to be carried out in-house and therefore a quote has been obtained to give us a guideline of cost involved. Once this has been achieved grass seeds will be applied and the area will become part of the mower schedule going forward. Please confirm if HWPC is to proceed.

Property in Oakhurst Way

The resident has requested that the bramble in front of the property be removed to prevent it from spreading into the front garden. Initial works have been completed within the resident's garden to remove bramble that had already spread. Follow-up work is required during autumn to reduce all brambles to ground level. This will be undertaken in conjunction with an existing similar request from 1 Garsington Drive, as the two properties are side by side.

Memorial bench request

A parish resident has recently experienced the loss of a close family member and wishes to fund the installation of a memorial bench in their memory. The residents initially requested for the bench to be placed at Mouldon Hill; however, they have been unsuccessful in obtaining permission as SBC has advised that it does not offer a Memorial Bench Policy. Officers are working with SBC to explain it is HWPC policy but need SBC agreement for placement.

The resident has therefore asked whether a memorial bench could be installed elsewhere within the parish, at their own cost, under the policy. Sites are being investigated, however, if Members have any suitable location, suggestions please feed these back to the Officers.



Waterway / Ditches / Culvert issues

A resident in **Darius Way** has reported concerns regarding creeping vine entering the property's garden and causing damage to the boundary fence. Inspection confirmed that the vegetation originates from the waterway that runs past the property. Specialist skills, knowledge and equipment would be required to undertake any vegetation clearance within waterways of which HWPC does not currently possess. Many miles of waterways, ditches and culverts are present within the parish, and guidance is being sought on how to proceed and to establish the body responsible for maintenance within these areas.

GMF Water Harvesting

During the legionella inspection, it was identified that an outlet pipe from the GMF external water tanks to an accessible outlet within the adjacent allotment site could present a potential risk, as attachments could be added to the outlet. Due to this identified risk, the outlet was removed immediately. Options are now being investigated to install an additional trough that will be supplied by the GMF water tanks, as this would remove the ability for attachments to be added.

Tidy Up Team Update

The team continues to work hard to complete its daily tasks while responding to incidents of fly-tipping and graffiti across the parish. Unfortunately, litter bin vandalism has recently increased. The Tidy Team responds quickly to resolve these issues; however, this can affect planned daily tasks and create additional costs.

In response to increased litter levels on Dydale Road, an additional litter bin has been installed. The team also continues to focus considerable effort on maintaining known hotspot areas, including Green Meadow shops and Akers Way. Options are being investigated to help reduce ongoing concerns in these locations.

Mini compact sweeper

The operators have successfully carried out duties to schedule and have also completed tasks that have been raised through our POS reporting system. We are currently responding to falling tree seeds that become a bed for roadside weeds.

Weed treatment

Contractors have been instructed to begin weed treatment during July, which will continue until the whole parish has been completed.

Planters / Hanging baskets / Shrub & Tree watering

As the warm weather continues, the team faces the ongoing challenge of keeping the troughs, shrubs and trees sufficiently watered. This year has been particularly challenging due to the addition of five new trees and the new shrubs at the Elstree Way roundabout that is currently being watered daily due to signs of stress. On some occasions, all other plants have required watering twice a week. A small battery-operated water pump has recently been purchased to support this task and improve ergonomics / efficiency for all team members.

Following the success of this year's floral displays, which have been particularly vibrant and well received by residents, officers have obtained quotations for the autumn replenishment of the planters. The same company as trialled in the Spring has been appointed for the Autumn replenishment and Officers would like to work on a planting contract from Spring '27. The costs for a full replenish with spring flowering bulbs is £505.00.

The additional planting would provide enhanced colour and interest during the spring, building on the success of the current displays and extending the seasonal benefit for residents.



Parks & Open Spaces Team – Shrubs & Hedges

The team has worked extensively to tackle nuisance brambles while carrying out maintenance in Abbey Mead, Haydon End and Woodhall Park. They will move on to Greenmeadow shortly before returning to Abbey Mead.

Grass Cutting

During July, the grass team completed round 7 of the 10 scheduled cuts. Due to slow growth, it was then decided to pause grass-cutting activity, and the team has been reassigned to support the POS reporting section. Grass strimming will continue in some areas until the desired appearance has been achieved.

POS Report / Reactive

As expected during the growing months, there has been an increase in reports. The team is prioritising areas such as school crossings and access paths and aims to significantly reduce the total number of POS reports by the start of August.