

**Committee: Open Spaces**

**Date: 6 February 2024**

**Title: Replacement of Handheld Equipment**

**Purpose of Report**

Members to consider replacing handheld petrol equipment with electric equivalents.

**Recommendation:**

Members resolve to agree in principle to replace handheld petrol equipment with electric equivalents when current equipment requires replacement.

**Report:**

1. The grounds team currently use petrol driven strimmers, hedgecutters and leaf blowers. These items are of varying ages and conditions and will need to be replaced over the coming year.
2. In the interests of climate change, it is suggested that the petrol driven equipment is gradually replaced with electric equipment.
3. The reasons for replacing the petrol driven equipment with electric:
  - High CO2 emissions of petrol equipment.
  - The noise levels require staff to wear ear defenders which leads to other issues when working in public spaces. The electric equipment is quiet.
  - The high vibration of petrol driven equipment requires records to be kept of how long each member of staff uses the equipment to avoid 'white finger'.
  - The weight of petrol driven equipment is quite significant and restricts how long grounds staff can work with the equipment in one day. The electric equipment is significantly lighter.
4. The Open Spaces Manager has researched several different machines and noted:
  - Research and evaluation of potential replacement electric equipment
  - Comparison of the features, capabilities, and costs of each one
  - Attended product demonstrations
5. The table below compares the weakness of each piece of equipment.

Weakness of electric equipment	Weakness of petrol equipment
Need to be organised to make sure batteries are charged and ready to use.	Petrol is a hazardous substance with no filter on the equipment. The vibration, noise and pollution of the equipment.

6. The table below compares the strengths of each piece of equipment.

Strengths of electric equipment	Strengths of petrol equipment
No storage or transportation of fuel Very low CO2 emissions Low vibration Low noise when working in residential areas and in the cemetery Lightweight – weight is on the users back so reduces fatigue and increases stability on rough terrain	Cheaper initial costs Cutting strength in difficult places such as ditches

7. It is suggested that two petrol brushcutters are always kept for cutting brambles and other thicker more dense areas such as ditches. The existing backpack blower is very powerful (though too powerful to use at the cemetery) and it is in good condition.
8. The grounds team would therefore recommend replacing handheld petrol equipment with electric equipment as and when the existing equipment starts to fail.
9. Future equipment purchases will be brought to future Open Spaces meetings for approval.
10. Members resolve to agree in principle to replace handheld petrol equipment with electric equivalents when current equipment requires replacement.

**Jason Fontana**  
**Open Spaces Manager**  
**January 2024**