



## **Open Spaces Report October 2021**

**Adam Barnett Grounds Manager**

### **Recreation Team Report**

Since my last report in June the summer period has been mainly down to grass cutting for the team. The sun has been out, and the small amount of rain has meant that we have cut the grass every week this year unlike this time last year where we had a couple of weeks without any growth. The playpark has had its final pieces of equipment put in place and last week the rubber safety flooring has been put down.

#### **Work Undertaken**

As I said previously our week is mainly taken up with the grass cutting of all areas within ITC but we have had a number of problems with the tractor and snake breaking down which are all in hand. We have made a start on the hedge cutting along Canal Way and we have had thanks from the public for doing this which is good for team spirit.

Chris Lee has been in and lifted several trees so that the tractor can get around easier when cutting the grass. He has also been up in Herne Hill and cleared dead wood from trees near the footpath. We are still awaiting the tree inspection for Herne Hill as the inspector has been off sick and they are trying to rearrange for another inspector to carry it out.

Nick has finished painting the cemetery fence along New Road and he has also painted the defibrillator box inside and out and he has done a great job.

#### **Future Work**

Now that the team has been split into 2 teams, I will be reporting on the areas that I am looking after, and Jake will do the same for his areas.

My work over the winter period will consist of

- Hedge cutting
- Fence repairs
- Surveying and maintenance of the benches
- The Burma Star Garden ready for Remembrance Day in November
- Helping the Countryside team when needed

We are also starting to look at replacements for the tractor and snake as they are up for renewal next year. It just so happened that after a conversation about this matter with the office that the Hunt Forest rep visited the team at the shed, and we discussed what machines that John Deere could offer. The following week he dropped off a machine that we had for just under a week so that we could test it out around the area. The picture below is the machine we had. A full report will be made up in the future of all the machines that we have in for demos so that all information will be given at the same time.



## **Jake Taylor Countryside Manager**

### **Countryside Team Report**

September's been a month getting used to the new setup and ironing out who will be looking after what, on top of the routine tasks such as cutting the grass up at West Crescent, Winterhay and the church yard; watering the flowers and the bin run, and we have started to chip away at some improvement projects.

#### **Donyatt Gate**

Back in the latter half of August the kissing gate at Donyatt Holt was vandalized. The frame was snapped and left on the floor, although it probably didn't need much help as it was rotten.

We've replaced the frame with two new fence posts and rails that have been recycled from the fence that was removed during the building works at the play park

Taking advantage of the nice weather whilst we still have it, we cut around the field gate and gave it a coat paint to make it far more welcoming and easier to access

Over the coming months we will work to bring all four of the entrances to Herne up to standard that gives a sense of arrival and makes visitors feel the area is well maintained and safe.



#### **Handrail**

We've installed a handrail to the the steep section of the ridge path to help users access the wood during the wet season, this section of path can be very challenging so the handrail will be well used.

As with the repair at Donyatt Gate we wanted to make the most of materials we have available to us so we recycled half rounds that were removed from down on the recreation ground with hazel stakes that we coppiced last season

Having an endless supply of hazel means we can swap out the posts as and when they become loose or rotten.



### **Cemetery railings and noticeboard**

The railings at the cemetery have also been finished, which are looking good and Nick has had many compliments from grateful members of the public.

The noticeboard at the Cemetery was in poor condition. The backing board required replacing which has been done and it has been re-installed ready for use.

### **West Crescent meadow update**

After the late summer cut which we collected and moved to be composted, we have undertaken a second cut just to keep the grasses down

A color change in grass is promising as it shows that nutrients are already reducing which is exactly what we want.

We've liaised with Green Ilminster regarding the seed, which we hope to do in October. We've got an enrichment and restoration seed mix which is a mix specially designed to be used where grass and growth is already present. We've also asked them to order a bag of yellow rattle a parscic seed that keep the grasses at bay and allow wildflowers to flourish.



### **Open Spaces Volunteering**

We've had a lot of interest in volunteering after a number of guided walks up at Herne Hill on Ash Dieback. We have two volunteers who have signed up since and at present we will hold one volunteer day a month being the last Friday of the month between 10-3.

October's task will be removing old tree guards from the wood, especially the ones around the hazel band where we will be coppicing in the coming months.

November's task will be inspecting and cleaning the nesting boxes up at Herne Hill.

### **Guided Walks**

I've hosted three guided walks up and around Herne Hill, in relation to Ash Dieback with the councillors, a walk for the health group and for Green Ilminster all of which were well received and interesting discussions not just on ash dieback but other management aspects were had.

Guided walks are a key interpretive tool and it's something I would like to explore further in the coming months to help promote the work we are doing.

### **Coming up this month (October)**

- Tidy up the bottom of the Cemetery by using the wood and rubble to create a hibernaculum for wintering reptiles in the scrub area at the end of the canal
- Prepare sections of the hedge which is to be laid this year
- Side up sections of hedge we cut and laid last year
- Continue to improve surfaces and install handrails and key points around Herne Hill
- Seed the wildflower meadow up at West Crescent
- Use the IRUS to cut Cleaves Close and the steep slopes up on Herne Hill
- Host our first Volunteering activity