

**Committee: Open Spaces**

**Date: 3rd October 2023**

**Title: Open Spaces Report**

**Purpose of Report**

To inform Members of activities that have been undertaken by the Open Spaces team since the last report.

**Recommendation:**

Members to note the report.

**Report:**

**1. The Recreation Ground**

It has been a busy summer down on the recreation ground with lots of kids enjoying the various events taking place including Party on the Park and the ever-popular Play Days. Some amazing work by the team has ensured the grounds are looking amazing as always.

The Recreation Manager and Grounds worker made a start on some of the repairs to the skate ramps which is looking fantastic. This has been on the list for a while and now the kids are back to school, it meant we had the time to get the job done. The hedge along Canal Way, which is forever a subject being reported to the office, has been trimmed back and sided. This will be laid over the winter, which will make the entire hedge line far more manageable.

The Recreation Manager has given all the entrances to the recreation ground a bit of a facelift, which included a touch up of paint work on the old gate by the cricket club entrance, which has really made the area feel far more welcoming.

A fence has been constructed on the northern end of the canal because of a reported incident, further action included adding of signage and leaving a buffer strip along the top of the canal bank has also been created to try and stop children running straight down the bank into the water.



### 2. Herne Hill

Since the last meeting, progress has been made on both the map, signage and leaflet and hopefully by the next meeting we will have hard copies and photos of the new items in place.

I recently undertook a hedgerow survey to identify what works are required to bring the hedgerows back into an effective management cycle and this will feed into the management plan from year 2 onwards.

It is usually this time of year that we start to look at hiring the Iruv for a week or so to cut Cleaves Close, the criss-cross paths and various sections of the hill, however, with our forward planning we have been able to achieve the required works before the weather took a turn for the worse. This was also achievable using the new Ferris.



### 3. Church

The paths at the church will be power washed in the coming weeks to scrub up the slippery lichen which causes the path to become very slippery in the winter months. Permission for works on the tree to the southern side of The Minster will be sought to raise the branches as they are starting to make it very difficult to cut. Having a TPO, it will require planning consent and I will update Members on the decision as and when it progresses.

### 4. Cemetery

I would like to give a special mention to Nick our Grounds Worker. He has worked tremendously hard at the cemetery, not just cutting grass and strimming, but has also tidied up many of the graves that have been covered in ivy and been overgrown with brambles. He really has taken onboard the Cemetery Maintenance Plan and implemented it with a lot of effort.

We are seeing a lot more flowers on graves and many members of the public we see, while we are working up there, are sharing their gratitude on how nice we have been keeping it.

**5. West Crescent Meadow**

Again, this year we have had a fair bit of yellow rattle pop up, but the overall abundance of wildflowers has been a little sparse, though there has been an increase in different species of grasses which have their own biodiversity value.

Green Ilminster have continued to survey the meadow quarterly and though the biodiversity is increasing, we are not seeing our targeted species coming through. My initial thoughts are that this is due to the cutting regime and the extent of the removal of grass clippings.

In the next season, we will be a lot more focussed on getting the correct cut height and ensuring all arisings are removed.



**6. Winterhay**

The Winterhay Play Park development is underway and hopefully the new play equipment will bring a lot of joy to the kids in the area.

The two large sycamore trees, whose ownership has eluded us for some time, has now been identified as ours. An initial look at the trees did not identify any visible issues at the time of the survey and therefore the works in reducing the trees will be added onto our general tree maintenance work.

**7. Recycling**

Our Recreation Manager had informed us of how his team in a previous role used to separate the recycling when doing a morning litter pick. This would involve having an extra bag for plastic and other recyclables. Whilst doing this the plastic and cans on the top of bins would also be removed.

We put this into practice throughout August as a trial, and the results, as seen in the pictures below, were an eye-opener.

Though this added a little extra time onto the litter pick (10 to 15 minutes), it reduced the number of times we had to empty the bins.

We believe that this is the way forward, and where we have the powers to do so, we should implement it. The Deputy Town Clerk is putting a report together for this and the costs associated with the change.

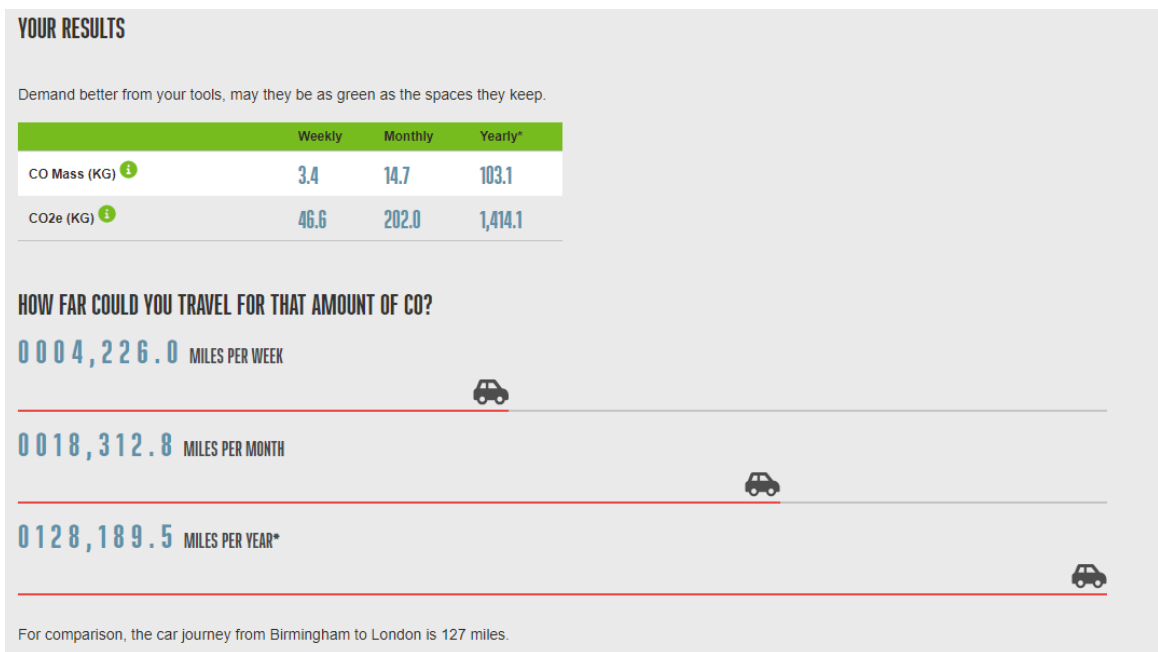


**8. Trialling Electric Equipment**

Throughout August we have been trialling several brands of electric equipment, all of which we were super impressed by.

In the past, this sort of equipment has been limited by battery life and power. However, all the kit trialled, matched the performance when compared like for like with the added benefits of lower emissions and reduced noise.

An online calculator highlights the inefficiencies in handheld petrol equipment based on a quiet week of strimming, the results below were calculated assuming that the blower was running for 2 hours, and a line strimmer was running for 8 hours:



Though the accessories for battery powered equipment such as a blower and strimmer are comparable to the price of petrol equivalents, it is the battery pack that comes at a cost, with the average price among brands being in the region of £2,000 for the battery and charging kits.

For the next meeting, a full report on how the Open Spaces team can reduce our carbon footprint will be brought before Members.

Action	Assigned to	Priority	Status	Start date	End date	Notes
1. Clean out guttering and replace broken bits						
Repair and reattach guttering around toilet block		Medium				
2. Seek permission to install blue town direction signs						
Create parish online map with locations	JT	Medium				
Find a list of pole owners		Medium				
Seek permission for installation		Medium				
Install signs		Medium				
3. Cemetery works						
Carry out repairs to steps morgue						
Repair path by main gates						
Clean paths with jet wash						
4. Grass seed patches where required cemetery						
Fill in any areas where it is required		medium				
5. West Crescent Wildflower Meadow						
Cut meadow to 7.5cm	JT	High	Complete	02/09/23	02/09/23	
Rake up and dispose of arisings	JT	High	Complete	08/09/23	08/09/23	
6. Recreation ground maintenance jobs						
Order paint	JT					
Replace fence posts						
Paint fence line	Volunteers					
Repair skate ramp	JF			29/06/23		
Remove graffiti teen shelter						
Add wood inner section of boat						
Add wood exterior section of boat						
Cut hedge Canal way						
Lay hedge canal way						

7. Recreation ground/ Britten's Field etc reduce grass cutting						
Week 32	JF		Complete	5/06/23	08/06/23	
Week 33	JF		Complete	12/06/23	14/06/23	
Week 34						
Week 35			Complete	26/08/23	26/06/23	
Week 36			Complete	03/09/23	03/07/23	
Week 37			Complete	10/09/23	10/07/23	
Week 38			Complete	18/09/23	18/07/23	
8. Cut the grass Cemetery						
Week 32 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT		Complete	06/08/23	06/06/23	
Week 33 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT/NB		Complete	13/08/23	13/06/23	
Week 34 Cut between 25- 40mm			Not Done			
Week 35 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT		Complete	26/08/23	26/06/23	
Week 36 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT/NB		Complete	03/09/23	03/07/23	
Week 37 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT/NB		Complete	10/09/23	10/07/23	
Week 38 Cut between 25- 40mm			Complete	18/09/23	18/07/23	
9. Cut Winterhay						
Week 32 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT		Complete	06/06/23	06/06/23	
Week 33 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT/NB		Complete	13/06/23	13/06/23	
Week 34 Cut between 25- 40mm						
Week 35 Cut between 25- 40mm			Complete	27/08/23	27/06/23	
Week 36 Cut between 25- 40mm			Complete	04/09/23	04/07/23	
Week 37 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT/NB		Complete	11/09/23	11/07/23	
Week 38 Cut between 25- 40mm	JF		Complete	19/09/23	19/07/23	
10. Cut Church						
Week 32 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT/NB		Complete	05/08/23	05/06/23	
Week 33 Cut between 25- 40mm	NB		Complete	12/08/23	13/06/23	
Week 34 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT		Not done			
Week 35 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT/NB		Complete	27/08/23	27/06/23	
Week 36 Cut between 25- 40mm			Complete	04/09/23	04/07/23	

Week 37 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT/NB		Complete	11/09/23	11/07/23	
Week 38 Cut between 25- 40mm	JT/NB		Complete	19/9/23	19/07/23	
11. Cut paths herne hill						
Week 32	JT		Complete	06/08/23	14/06/23	
Week 33			Complete	13/08/23	14/06/23	
Week 34			Not Done			
Week 35			Complete	28/08/23	28/06/23	
Week 36			Complete	04/09/23	04/07/23	
Week 37			Complete	12/09/23	12/07/23	
Week 38			Complete	20/09/23	20/07/23	
12. Town flowers						
Bring in Minster bed and borders						
Pull down hanging baskets	JT/JF		Complete	16/09/23	16/09/23	
Bring in town entrance signs						
Pull in troughs						
Water flowers Week 32 Monday			Complete	26/06/23	26/06/23	
Water Flowers week 32 Wednesday			Complete	28/06/23	28/06/23	
Water flowers Week 32 Friday			Not done			
Water flowers Week 33 Monday			Complete	23/06/23	23/06/23	
Water Flowers week 33 Wednesday			Complete	26/06/23	26/06/23	
Water flowers Week 33 Friday			Complete	28/06/23	28/06/23	
Water flowers Week 34 Monday			Complete	30/06/23	30/06/23	
Water Flowers week 34 Wednesday			Complete	03/07/23	03/07/23	
Water flowers Week 34 Friday			Complete	28/06/23	28/06/23	
Water flowers Week 35 Monday			Complete	01/07/23	01/07/23	
Water Flowers week 35 Wednesday			Complete	03/07/23	03/07/23	
Water flowers Week 35 Friday			Complete	05/07/23	05/07/23	
Water flowers Week 36 Monday			Complete	08/07/23	08/07/23	
Water Flowers week 36 Wednesday			Complete	10/07/23	10/07/23	
Water flowers Week 36 Friday			Complete	12/07/23	12/07/23	



Water flowers Week 37 Monday			Complete	15/07/23	15/07/23	
Water Flowers week 37 Wednesday			Complete	17/07/23	17/07/23	
Water flowers Week 37 Friday			Complete	19/07/23	19/07/23	
13. Misc						
Drill and replace notice board locks on board inside the Market House						