

**Committee: Open Spaces**

**Date: 9 April 2024**

**Title: Purchase of Replacement Equipment**

**Purpose of Report**

Members to consider the quotes to purchase new equipment – strimmer, hedge cutter and blower.

**Recommendation:**

Members resolve to delegate to officers to purchase replacement equipment as per the report and Ilminster Town Council's Financial Regulations.

**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 part of a replacement programme over the coming year.
2. In the interest of climate change and in line with the Town Council's Resolution of the 21 January 2020 Full Council Meeting supporting the Climate Emergency, it is intended that 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 much quieter to operate.
  - 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.' This is not the case for electrically operated tools.
  - 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 a few different machines and considered:
  - Research and evaluation of potential replacement electric machines
  - Comparison of the features, capabilities, and costs of each one
  - Attended product demonstrations of the three contenders

## AGENDA ITEM 9

The table following 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.

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.

5. Current purchase costs of the equipment are:

Electric Equipment	Cost £	Petrol Equipment
Battery, charger & harness x 2	2890	0
Strimmer x 2	890	1600
Hedge cutter x 1	428	852
Blower x 1	279	385
Total	4487	2837

*Quotes from suppliers can be viewed, but up to date prices will be obtained.*

6. It proposed that two petrol brush cutters are 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 is in good condition.
7. The grounds team would therefore recommend purchasing 2 x battery and harness, 2 x trimmers, 1 x long reach hedge cutter and a small blower for use at the cemetery. In the future when funds allow, 1 x pole pruner at a cost of £659.

## **AGENDA ITEM 9**

8. The team are currently evaluating ways in which the workshops can be reorganised to ensure that there are sufficient electrical points available for the recharging of the equipment.
9. The total cost of those items is estimated at £4487 ex VAT which can be funded from the Earmarked Reserves Open Spaces Purchases budget.
10. Members resolve to delegate to officers to purchase replacement equipment as per the report and Ilminster Town Council's Financial Regulations.

**Jason Fontana**  
**Open Spaces Manager**  
**March 2024**