HEDGE END TOWN COUNCIL

Operations Manager Report

May 2024

Recreation and Amenities

1. Albert Road Cemetery

- Only one interment of Ashes since last month's R and A.
- Graves are dug throughout the year, sometimes in very challenging conditions. HETC staff always deliver to a high standard. This is an incredible service that HETC provide at the most difficult of times.
- Levelling work continues, this month 4 tonne of top soil have been used to fill sunken plots, areas of subsidence and potholes in the grass.
- At this time of year the grounds team aim to mow and strim the cemetery every 2 weeks.
- The grass area nearest the main entrance is left for wildflowers, it has proved to have a diverse selection of plants including Orchids.

2. Allotments

- Following allotment agreement renewals from 1st April, we are still in a period of transition as we re-let plots that have been given up.
- Due to the gradual encroachment of plots over the many years they have been in service, some of the paths have become quite narrow. From April, we now assess the boundaries of vacated plots and move fences as required to enable better access.

3. Bowling Green

- The new lease for transfer of Hedge End Bowling Club was unfortunately not ready in time for 1st April, however the process should be completed over the coming weeks. In the meantime HETC will continue with management of the green and building services.
- The green requires 2 cuts a week at this time of year, to maintain a grass height of around 5mm. In addition the team carefully cut and remove any broad leaved weeds.

4. Conservation Volunteers

- Aprils Conservation volunteers took place at Home Farm woodland, the group spent their time removing invasive non-native plants including Rhododendron and Laurel species and litter picking.
- If you wish to join a CV session, please ensure you register with the office prior to attending.

5. Cricket

- Cricket was due to start this week but at the time of writing the Outfield is still too wet to play. It is hopeful that the first games can start very soon.
- We aim to cut the square twice weekly to a height of 12-16mm as weather permits, and it is periodically rolled to produce a firm compacted surface.
- Unfortunately due to the wet weather, no top dressing has been added this year.

6. Football

- Berrywood Fields has not yet transferred, but we are hopeful this will be imminent.
- Repairs and remedial work have been completed by EBCs contractors, this included top dressing with over 180 tonnes of sand, aeration work and overseeding.
- Football at Rodaway finishes for the season at the end of the week. Overall the pitches have been underplayed this season due to poor drainage and extremely wet weather.

7. Graffiti and Vandlism

- The brand new gate at Drummond Play area has been damaged already, the most likely cause it excess pressure pushing the gate past its open point, probably from the same group that continually damaged the previous gate. The contractor who installed the gate claims he has been installing this style of gate for 20 years and never had one damaged in this way. We will be installing a stop post to reduce the risk of this happening again.
- Drummond Community Centre – A newly installed flood light has been damaged/ destroyed for the third time at the main door to the building. We are looking at alternative solutions.

- Play equipment at Nelsons Gardens has been graffitied, this was quickly cleared by the team.

- Broken knee rail at Dowds Farm – repaired by HETC.

- Fencing at Mescott pond has been damaged. We have removed the broken items but there are currently no plans to replace it.

- Seat vandalised at Greta Park

- Safety surfacing at Turnpike has been pulled up.

- The wooden bridge in the woodland at Greta Park was vandalised, fortunately a resident managed to take a photo of those responsible and we have passed it on to the Police and secondary school.
- Life buoys have been fished out of Dowds Farm Pond 3 times this month.
- The referee changing room door at Rodaway had an attempted break-in, the lock was damaged and part of the door, we are organising repairs.
- In addition there have been 2 play area bin fires.
- We react quickly to grafitti and clean it off as soon as we can, overall I'm convinced this significantly reduces the overall number of attacks. It is important that we don't let grafitti become normal.

8. Local Nature Reserve

- Following the postponement of last years Bio-blitz, we are hoping to try again this year in September, as before this will take a collabrative approach working with the Friends of Wildern Local Nature Reserve. More details to follow.
- Friends of Wildern Local Nature Reserve continue in their amazing efforts to record flora and fauna within the reserve. Their species count is now in excess of 1500 different species since they began recording in 2018 which is outstanding.
  https://www.facebook.com/groups/2030431683870743

9. Paddling Pool

- The Paddling Pool will reopen in late May. By next R and A we should have begun the preparation work for the new season. This will include cleaning, calibration, chemical procurement, updating health and safety documentation and general maintenance.

10. Play Areas

- The Multi-play unit at Nelsons Gardens Play area is now considered unsafe and will be removed in May, there are currently no plans for a direct replacement pending the Play Area Strategy.
  The play item has been closely monitored as part of our weekly inspections due to its deterioration. The platforms are decaying, there is excessive lateral movement (indicating below ground decay), the fittings are rusty, the slide is damaged and there are significant shakes in the timber.
  We have investigated repair options, however due to the items age it is not economically viable to replace the worn parts.

11. Updates

- Stubbs Drove – topsoil has been used to top dress the area and the grass seed is just beginning to sprout. I'm pleased with the progress and feel this is a real improvement for the area. I will continue to update monthly.

- A bench at Woodhouse Lane open space receives a fresh coat of paint.

- Litter and fishing line have been cleared from Dowds Farm Pond.

- The team have been out mowing all HETC sites, and despite the waterlogged conditions have only got stuck once!
- Following the fly-tipping removal, invasive Poplar saplings and damaged fence removal, the land adjacent Terrier Close and Nelsons Gardens is starting to look good.

If there are any specific items that you would like more information on or would like me to include any other areas, please let me know.

Many thanks
Brett Athow
Operations Manager