HEDGE END TOWN COUNCIL

Operations Manager Report

November 2024

Recreation and Amenities

1. Albert Road Cemetery

- The team have carried out one interment of Ashes since last R and A, with another two interment of Ashes and three Burials booked in for the rest of November.
- 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.
- We are still cutting the grass and strimming around the memorial stone, and this may continue into December if the weather stays fine.
- Most of the cemetery hedges have now been trimmed. Ross, our Team Leader, has developed quite the knack for locating wasp nests—though typically only after unintentionally disturbing them during the cutting process. Seven nests were found within the hedges, which is actually beneficial for biodiversity. As a result, a few sections will need revisiting once the weather cools down and the nests become inactive.
- The memorial stone marking the grave of those reinterred for the construction of the Underhill Centre at St. John the Evangelist Church has been reinstalled due to ground subsidence and has been cleaned. Two tonnes of soil were used to raise the sunken ground.

2. Allotments

- Currently there 0 vacant plots and waiting list of 37.
- The dry and warm weather means we will continue to cut the allotment grass until it become too cold or wet.

3. Conservation Volunteers

- November's session took place within Wildern Moor. As part of our conservation work, we are strimming zones within the moor to ground level to mimic natural grazing.
- Volunteers helped with removing unwanted sapling Oak trees, these have been saved for planting elsewhere (about 50) and raking the grass arisings to the edge of the moor.
- The strimming work helps reduce thatch and competing grasses, and by raking off the arisings we hope it reduces nutrients in the soil, Wildflowers generally prefer a nutrient poor soil.
- Next months session is likely to be in the Moor again, this time concentrating on invasive sapling removal. If the sapling trees do not get removed the area would eventually become wet woodland, diminishing its high value as biodiversity hotspot within Hedge End.
- If you wish to join a CV session, please ensure you register with the office prior to attending.

4. Cricket

- The season resumes in May 2025.
- We continue to maintain the grass areas.

5. Football

- Two months into Hedge End Town Council's (HETC) management of Berrywood Fields; the pitches are in good condition, and the booking processes are operating effectively.
- Hedge End United's U14 team will begin using Berrywood Pitch 3 starting this weekend. This pitch became available following Shirley Tornadoes' withdrawal at the beginning of the season.
- Pitches 1 and 2 remain in use by Hedge End Rangers.
- Parking is an ongoing challenge at Berrywood Fields. We continue to encourage teams to walk, cycle, car share, or arrange drop-offs wherever possible to alleviate congestion.

6. Graffiti and Vandalism

- Unfortunately damage and graffiti continue including:
    - The Turnpike tea room door has been kicked in again, the sink plughole was blocked and the taps left on flooding the room.
    - The mirror has been smashed in the Town Centre public disabled toilet.
    - Knee rails kicked over at Dowds Farm
    - Graffiti on the play equipment at Rodaway.
    - Various graffiti around the Town.

- On a positive note, I am pleased to report that while the quantity of grafitti is not getting any better, the quality has improved a little; we had a couple of instances this month of correct spelling and punctuation, a higher level of detail to some of the drawings and even maths homework at one of the play areas.

- We ensure that ALL graffiti is removed swiftly from HETC property.
- Every significant incident is reported to the Police via their online 101 website.

7. Local Nature Reserve

- Wildern Nature Friends continue in their amazing efforts to record flora and fauna within the reserve. Their species count is now in excess of 1700 different species since they began recording in 2018 which is outstanding. https://www.facebook.com/groups/2030431683870743

8. Paddling Pool

- No issues to report. The pool reopens in May 2025.

9. Play Areas

- No updates.

10. Updates

- The Christmas Tree arrived in the town centre last week. The tree was craned into position and secured by the HETC team. The tree will be dressed over the next week.

- Footpath repairs – Aspen Close Woodland. Repairs have now been carried out by the HETC team to the woodland footpath. The path should now be accessible throughout the year.

- Snows, the local Toyota car dealership, have made a donation to the council this month of £198.80 for purchase of a Beech tree to replace a tree that was vandalised earlier in the year at the Norman Rodaway Pavilion car park. The tree has been purchased and we will be planting it within the next week. It was really refreshing to be approached by Snows with this offer and I hope this new tree survives so that it can be enjoyed for generations.
- We are still waiting for the Salvation Army clothing bin to be removed from Rodaway car park.

- The team are still out cutting the grass, the season used to end towards the end of October/ early November, but it is likely we will still be cutting late November/ early December this year. Leaf clearance, hedge trimming and tree pruning will be the priorities over the next month.
- Richard Sturgess has started as a Grade 5 Grounds Person this month. Although he has only been with the team for just over a week, he is already fitting in well. Richard comes to us from Gosport Council and brings a wealth of experience.

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