HEDGE END TOWN COUNCIL
Operations Manager Report
November 2025
Recreation and Amenities

1. Albert Road Cemetery
- The team have carried out seven interments of Ashes since the September Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting.
- October recorded the joint second highest number of Ashes interments since the Town Council took over grave digging at the cemetery in 2015.
- In the 10 years of HETC grave digging, the team have completed 247 burials, including 110 interments of Ashes and 137 full burials.
- The mild and damp weather means that the grass continues to grow and cutting will continue throughout November.
- Our staff continue to work diligently year-round, often in challenging conditions, to uphold high standards and deliver an essential service during difficult times.

2. Allotments
- There are currently three vacant plots, with 59 applicants on the waiting list.
- Maintenance at this time of year includes grass cutting and hedge trimming.

3. Conservation Volunteers
- There was no Conservation Volunteer session in October.
- Anyone wishing to participate in a Conservation Volunteers session must register with the office in advance.

Cricket
- The new season is scheduled to begin in May 2026.
- Maintenance of the cricket square will continue as ground conditions allow.
- The outfield is be maintained throughout autumn with regular cutting, raking, rolling, and aeration; all weather permitting.

4. Football
- The football season is now well under way, and the pitches are looking good for the time of year, despite the long dry summer limiting renovation works.
- The pitches are cut and marked on a weekly basis as weather permits.
- Autumn/ winter feed was put down in late September. This is vital on the Berrywood Fields sand pitches as they hold no nutrients.
- No matches have been cancelled so far due to rain.
- Berrywood Fields pitch hire is significantly below expectation for this time of year.

5. Graffiti, ASB and Vandalism
- Unfortunately, we've had significant issues since last R and A.

- **Break-in** - Turnpike Pavilion tearoom and toilet doors have been forced open, and the kitchen and toilet areas ransacked in a frenzied attack. The Police/ forensics attended site, and the case is still under investigation. We'd like to extend our thanks to a member of the public who reported the initial break-in, and then stayed to help our staff clear up the mess.

- Fencing has been damaged at Greta Park Play Area. We are not quite sure how it happened, but it looks like someone has driven a vehicle into it. Repairs will be required to straighten panels and concrete in the corner post.

- Another door at Greta Park Pavilion has been kicked in. The doorway has been boarded up by HETC staff.

- Repeated instances of graffiti on the Public Toilets doors.

- A bin was knocked over at Rodaway. This has been repaired by HETC Grounds Team.

- There are still ongoing issues with litter at all sites.
- All instances of graffiti are removed as soon as possible. Every significant incident is reported to the Police via their online 101 website.

6. Local Nature Reserve

- Wildern Nature Friends continue in their amazing efforts to record flora and fauna within the reserve. The current list is over 2000 different species since they began recording in 2018 which is outstanding. https://www.facebook.com/groups/2030431683870743

7. Paddling Pool

- The paddling pool season has now finished for 2025, and the pool will open again in summer 2026.

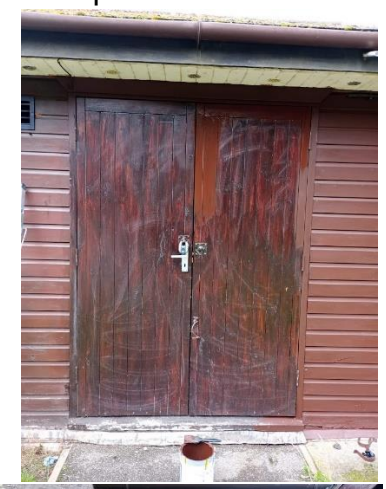
8. Play Areas

- Three new picnic benches have now been installed at Locke Road Play Area. The installation was carried out by HETCs Grounds Team.

9. Updates

- **Christmas tree –** The tree is now in place and waiting decoration. This will be completed overnight by a specialist contractor.

- **Bowling Pavilion –** Our maintenance team have completed painting of the outside of the building. Before and after photos below:



- **St. Johns Church -** A recent inspection of the memorial stones in the closed burial ground of the church highlighted seven that were considered unsafe. The council worked with the church

to make the stones safe. The Town Council took over responsibility for the maintenance of a churchyard under Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972 in 2011, which includes responsibility for the safety of memorial stones within the churchyard.

- **Dowds Farm Pond –** The brick culvert wall has been repaired. The top layer of bricks had fallen off due to a mix of damage from frost and damage from local youths.

- Alex, Martin, and I attended a two-day course to learn the traditional craft of hedge laying. This age-old technique helps rejuvenate and strengthen hedges, and we're looking forward to putting our new skills to use across HETC sites in the coming years.

- **Grounds Team -** The mild weather has meant grass cutting is still ongoing and will probably continue into December. The team are focusing on pitch maintenance, leaf clearance, and hedge cutting.

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