

## Maintenance Report

January 2025

### Grass Cutting

The Maintenance Team continued grass cutting until mid-November. Most of the grass cutting machinery has been or is in the process of being serviced in preparation of the commencement of the 2025 season.

### Christmas

The Maintenance Team assisted the supplier with the installation of the Christmas tree by providing traffic and pedestrian control. Sponsorship signage was displayed for the duration of the Christmas period within the wooden barrier fencing and information panels for planned Christmas events placed in locations in the town centre. The tree was removed following the lights switch-off on 7 January, wood chipped and distributed as a weed suppressant to hedge bases.

Public art totem outside the Town Hall was removed over the Christmas period to allow the selfie station to be installed.

The Maintenance Team assisted, by providing operational equipment to the Christmas light contractor and various planned Christmas events including the light switch on 29 November and Carols Around the tree on Christmas Eve.

### Remembrance Sunday & Armistice Day

The War Memorial and grounds at Thame and Moreton were tidied for the Service of Remembrance. The Maintenance Team undertook numerous operational tasks in Thame including road closures, barrier control and operating the PA system on Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day.

### Hedge Cutting, Shrub Bed Maintenance and Tree Work

A programme of hedge cutting and shrub maintenance on Council owned land commenced in December and is due to be completed at the end of January. Low tree branches and basal growth will be removed from trees where required.

### Summer / Winter Planting

The summer bedding was removed in late autumn from all flower beds and winter bedding planted at the town entrance planters, Elms Park and Millennium Circle. 28 winter/spring hanging baskets were installed within the town.

In a move to be more sustainable the two planting beds in North Street have been grass seeded. The plan is to plant pollinator plants such as lavender along the boundary wall of the Cattle Market site. The Maintenance Apprentice is working with volunteers from 21<sup>st</sup> Century to plan the planting scheme.

## Winter Preparation

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) delivered 1 tonne of road salt in November which is now held in stock. The road salt is provided free of charge for use when required by the Council. The quantity held in stock is 5 tonnes. The salt spreader has been serviced and winter tyres fitted to the tractor.

## Cuttle Brook Local Nature Reserve

The weather forecast is monitored and the area checked when flood alerts are issued.



### St Mary's Church

The annual churchyard tidy-up, with which Members of the Maintenance Team assist volunteers took place on 5 December 2024.

Work to pollard the Lime Trees was undertaken by the Maintenance Team (the work takes place every three years).

### Play Areas & Skate Park

The annual RoSPA play area safety inspection reports have been undertaken on all play areas including the skate park. The reports raised no urgent items requiring immediate attention or items the Team were not already aware of. The Operations Manager and Maintenance Supervisor are progressing repairs / replacement where necessary.

### Queen Elizabeth Circle Play Area (QEC)

Two swing seats which were broken have been replaced.

The safety surface under the mobilus piece of play equipment has been replaced and a new gaiter fitted to the equipment.



Play sand has been moved back into the sandpit after large quantities of it were removed by older children and thrown over the slide and other equipment in the toddler play area.

### Southern Road Recreation Ground Play Area

The Maintenance Team removed and replaced steps and handrail to slide. Broken rusted litter bin on the recreation ground has been replaced.

### Churchill Crescent

Replaced broken dog waste bin.

Smoke Free Parks signs (part of the Smoke Free Campaign by OCC) designed by Thame primary school children have been installed in Elms Park, Pickenfield, Pearce Way and Southern Road play areas.



## Town Hall

Christmas decorations and lights were installed within the Information Centre and Council Chamber windows for the festive season.

Servicing of the fire alarm and intruder alarm has been completed.

Timers have been fitted to all water heaters.

Spotlights in the foyer and first floor landing have been replaced by LEDs with motion sensors.

## Tree Planting / Work

The Maintenance Team has undertaken the following work:

- Four Trees along Tythrop Way which were knocked down following a road traffic accident on 26 October have been chopped up and removed. The tree stumps will be removed when work schedules allow. The plan is to plant four new trees within QEC and / or the triangle area (next to Skate Park).
- An Alder tree which 'snapped' during storm Darragh and located nr a footpath in the nature reserve was made safe.
- Branches removed from a resident's fence in Coombe Hill Crescent after a tree in the nature reserve fell during storm Darragh.
- Removed large limb which fell on the boundary fence of Elms Park and John Hampden School after storm Bert.
- Removed fallen tree on footpath between Towersey Road and Pickenfield.
- Removed Willow tree which had fallen across Cuttle Brook (nr Oxford Rd Bridge).



An arboricultural contractor has undertaken the following work:

- Reduction of crown and limbs of trees along a section of boundary between QEC and Hamilton Way.
- Removal of diseased Horse Chestnut tree and crown and limb reduction to another Horse Chestnut tree in Youens Drive
- Removal of overhanging branches from Sycamore tree in Elms Park on the boundary with Park Street.
- Removal of overhanging branches from six trees on the boundary with residential property and the play area in Pickenfield.

## Litter Picking

Weekend litter picking will start again at the end of March / beginning of April.

## Event Support

The Maintenance Team provided assistance with operations for the following events:

- Tuesday Market (extra equipment to allow the Market to operate safely)
- Christmas Lights Switch-on
- Service of Remembrance and Armistice Day
- Senior Citizens Christmas Tea Party - delivered equipment and assisted with setting up of tables and chairs.

- Equipment provided to Christmas light decorators to cone off parking area to aid safe installation / removal of Christmas lights from trees in Upper High Street car park.
- Equipment for Thame Fire Service event on 28 October.
- Equipment for StrEAT food event around Town Hall on 13 September.
- Equipment support for Mayor's monthly stall at Tuesday Market

### **Depot**

Servicing of the fire alarm and intruder alarm has been completed.

### **Health and Safety**

Gas safety inspections have been completed on the boilers at Lupton Road Depot and the Town Hall.

### **Personnel**

The new caretaker, appointed on 1 November 2024 to unlock / lock for hirings at the Town Hall, has settled in well.

The Horticultural apprentice is continuing with his studies, working well with the team and mastering the different pieces of machinery used by the Town Council. He is also working with local volunteers to increase his knowledge of plants, propagation and trees.

A new member of the Maintenance Team was appointed in September replacing a previous member who retired. The new member has fitted in well and brings a new set of skills to the team.

Training – all members of the maintenance team have undertaken or are due to undertake trainings either gaining new qualifications or refresher courses. Including Equality & Diversity, Emergency First Aid at Work, IPAF training, chainsaw, safe handling of pesticides, Fix My Street Super User training and PAT testing. A programme of training and refresher courses will continue in 2025.