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SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
4 November 2026

Officer: Danny Powell – Operations Manager

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Purpose

To report on Town Council grounds maintenance operations.

Introduction

My last update began with how hot the summer months had been and my hope for more normal weather during the autumn months. Well so far that hasn't been the case with most days in September having temperatures around 20 degrees and still little rain. October has been similar but as we get towards November temperatures have dropped and at last, we have rain. These conditions have prolonged grass mowing and delayed leaf fall, shortening the winter window for pruning shrubs and hedges and completing jobs we cannot fit in during summer. By the time you receive this update, we will also know the Heart of England in Bloom results and will have finalised next summer's bedding plans.

Countryside Team

Rural mowing continues, with completion planned by the end of October.

Winter tree work has started but the team drop back on to mowing when required.

Beaver compound checks are ongoing.

Ash dieback tree work has been identified for this period and work will start imminently. Regular litter picks of Countryside sites are ongoing. Formal tree surveys across the Reabrook Valley and other sites have established the extent of tree work needed. A work programme is being prepared. Tree work has been carried out on the Castle Walk Open space which required the hiring of a MEWP.

The team have removed several encampments from Town Council sites across Shrewsbury.

Over the next few weeks winter path cutting, site furniture inspections and those jobs we don't have time for during the summer will start to be carried out.

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Amenity Team

Amy Jones now leads the Amenity Team after Mark Bowen reduced his hours following more than 40 years working in the Quarry and Dingle. Mark now shares his role with another member of staff who also wished to reduce their hours.

All summer bedding and floral structures have now been removed from the town. The summer bedding schemes across the town for summer 2027 have been decided and the plant numbers worked out. We have now sent out for quotes for those plants that are easier to grow from plugs.

The Spring bedding is now finished with just the spring bulbs left to complete. Nursery staff have taken cuttings from many summer bedding plants and lifted and re-potted those suitable for reuse. The nursery team consolidates all cuttings and stock plants in one greenhouse zone, allowing the other two zones to be cleaned and maintained over the winter.

Once spring planting is complete, staff will begin the winter shrub maintenance programme. The plants for Riverside Gardens have been delivered to the Town Council nursery, where they were sorted by variety and arranged in the greenhouse. Now the hard landscaping has been completed at Riverside gardens, staff will undertake the soft landscaping work (shrub planting) to complete this project for Shropshire Council.

Logistics Team

Playground maintenance continues, with general repairs planned for the winter period.

Toilet cleaning and maintenance is on-going.

The regular Vehicle and machinery safety inspections are being carried out along with repairs. Now that grass grow is slowing down winter servicing will start.

The annual hedge-cutting programme began in August but was temporarily paused while the hanging baskets and floral structures were collected in. We plan to complete the hedges we cut for Shropshire Council by the Christmas break.

Recreation and Formal Space Team

Grass verge mowing is continuing but with grass growth slowing down we are reducing the number of staff carrying this out. By the start of November, staff who mow the grass will be reassigned to shrub bed maintenance for the winter.

The tractor mower is still out working but this will reduce as ground conditions change.

Cemetery grounds maintenance is ahead of schedule with the hedge cutting nearly complete and the Old Cemetery grass cutting completed.

Renovation of the fine turf used for bowls, cricket and tennis is complete. Senior and Junior football fixtures are well into their seasons.

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School maintenance contract for this year finishes after the half term holiday, schools then make requests when they require work carrying out.

The winter aeration programme will start shortly now we have had rain to soften the ground. Staff will now begin the autumn tidy-up of the recreation grounds.

Conclusion

Last week we attended the Heart of England in Bloom awards presentation, and we are delighted to report that Shrewsbury won several awards, as you have already been informed. These awards recognised the skill and effort of all staff this summer in making Shrewsbury a great place to live and visit. The awards won were:

- Mike Garwood Memorial Trophy - For Outstanding horticultural achievement for The Dingle
- RHS Gold award
- 'Small City' category winner
- Overall Winner for the Heart of England in Bloom

Shrewsbury will now be competing in the Britain in Bloom UK Finals for 2027.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the update be noted