

Chair of Open Spaces Committee: Diane Archer

Report to Annual Parish Council 2024

Allotments

Plot holders have been given a 6-months rent free period from April 2024. The invoicing period has moved to restart yearly with effect from October 2024, in conjunction with a rental increase of 10% from October 2024. This will mean that the Grounds Team will have more time for allotment maintenance in the Autumn schedule of work.

5 new allotment signs have been erected.

Priority for allocating neglected plots has been given to non-plot holders on the waiting list, then existing plot holders providing their existing plots are in good condition.

Protecting the allotment land was investigated, but as the land is rented from Swindon Council additional protection is not feasible.

Tree Policy

A new tree policy was introduced. There is a lot of required tree work outstanding (as identified in a report commissioned in 2022). Urgent work has been done. A tender for the remaining work was issued in March 2024 and it is hoped that the remaining tree work will be carried out in May/June 2024.

Willow Brook Gardens

The paths have been improved with tarmac, and new tarmac hard standing in front of the Millennium Wall has been completed. A bollard will also be installed to prevent vehicles damaging the area.

Wharf Road Hedge

A report from a resident on Wharf Road was made about the condition of the protected hedge along Wharf Road. Work was carried out to bulk out the thinner areas of the hedge. Funding to fill the gaps in the hedge has been obtained from SBC and the hedge will be planted with new hedging plants. These will eventually fill in the gaps and restore the condition of the hedge to its pre -damage condition.

Biodiversity statement

A biodiversity statement has been agreed and published.

Bonds for fairs and circuses

A new bond requirement for commercial fairs and circuses has been introduced to protect the Parish against damage to land. The return of the bond is dependent upon inspections before and after the hire period by the Grounds Team Manager.

Sports pitches

The grounds maintenance contract was re-tendered, and we continue to support Wroughton Wranglers Cricket Club with the costs of maintaining the cricket wicket and the outfield, and a replacement rope, to rope off the wicket.

Moat Pond

We are in the process of obtaining estimates to improve the ground behind the board walk at the Moat Pond and add some information boards on the pond's history/ wildlife.