

Report to the Annual Parish meeting on Tuesday 7th May from Cllr Graham Overbury, Chair of Community Assets Committee

The 2023-2024 year has been busy for the Community Assets Committee.

Maunsell Way Pavilion

We have agreed to lease Maunsell Way pavilion to Swindon Model Railway Club, to try to put the pavilion on a more sustainable footing. Only the toilets are used on an occasional basis by a very small number of local groups. Swindon Model Railway Club need a secure building, so we have agreed to make an external entrance into one set of toilets and block up the internal entrance. This means toilets will continue to be available to the local user groups who currently use the field, including Wroughton Youth Football Club, Wroughton BMX Group and SMASH youth workers.

Wharf Road Toilets

We recently agreed not to renew the lease with Swindon Borough Council to manage and maintain their public toilets on Wharf Road. The cost of managing them was becoming more expensive, Swindon Borough Council would not reimburse any of those costs, and the costs themselves were not commensurate with the number of people who used them. We had also become aware that people preferred using the toilets here in the Ellendune Community Centre. We've put notices on the public toilets advising people they can use the toilets here, and have included a map so everyone can find their way. We've also transferred the cleaning budget towards cleaning the toilets here in the Ellendune Community Centre, in recognition of the fact that the public are using the toilets here instead. The community centre is open for a large number of hours during the week, and is often open Saturdays and Sundays, so hopefully this will be seen as an acceptable compromise.

Road sweeper

On a much more positive note, we also agreed to purchase a road sweeper because Swindon Borough Council advised it would only be sweeping the roads which it grits during winter, these are mainly the bus routes. We know that many (if not most) of the residential roads haven't been swept in years, and weeds are growing out of the pavements and gutters. The road sweeper has a 3rd arm which can also sweep pavements which will be a great advantage. Whilst it can't clear out drains, it should clear the top couple of inches of dirt out of the top, which should help any surface water to dissipate more easily.

Benches

There are approximately 60 benches around our parish. Some of these are owned and maintained by Wroughton Parish Council, and some are owned by Swindon Borough Council. We are in the process of auditing all the benches to understand which need work carrying out, so we can prioritise those which need it most. It will be impossible to get round all of them during the drier weather, so we are looking to put them onto a rolling maintenance programme.

Bus Shelters

During the past year, we have installed 2 new bus shelters, 1 on Wharf Road, and 1 on Perrys Lane, which supports Ridgeway pupils as well as other residents.

Phone Boxes

We have 3 red telephone boxes under Parish ownership. These were refurbished 2 years ago. The Grounds Team have replaced three panes of broken glass in the kiosk on Dunbar Road due to recent vandalism.

Youth Outreach Work

SMASH continue to provide our Youth Outreach Services. During the winter months we offer a Tuesday evening youth club in the library which offered craft activities. From May the service begins outdoor sessions with sports, art and other fun activities planned at the Maunsell Way recreation ground where young people can just turn up and take part. There is also a multi-sports session at Thorney Park on Tuesday 28 May. The activities are free of charge and include free refreshments and snacks. Sessions from January – April 2024 were partially funded by the Wroughton Community Fund but we now have a budget in place to continue summer outdoor and winter indoor provision to April 2025.

Play Area Updates

Following a national tender exercise we appointed Kompan to refurbish our play areas at Badgers Brook and the Weirfield. They were chosen due to the high quality of their hot dipped galvanized equipment which has a lot of play value and last well. Both play areas are now attracting more children and a well attended launch event took place during April 2024 with free ice cream, circus and sign language skills, goodie bags and refreshments. We received excellent feedback about the play area and the launch event.

Grounds Team Workshop (Rich)

2023/2024 has been a busy and challenging time for the grounds team. Despite the poor weather conditions, they continued to achieve their high standards of maintaining the open spaces throughout the Parish.

They have relocated from the pavilion and the containers in Maunsell Way to Wroughton Business Park where they have turned an empty warehouse into a workshop and storage area for the majority of their current equipment. Due to the continuing expansion of the Grounds Team's work, we are trying to future-proof their requirements and looking at the possibility of renting the old unit at St Andrew's, to give the Grounds Team the extra space they will soon need.

In November, the Grounds Team was joined by a new member to help maintain the ever-increasing work which needs to be carried out around the Parish. And since our very recent purchase of a road sweeper, we are now in the process of recruiting an additional person so we have sufficient people to drive it, at the same time as ensuring we have the staff level required to continue to maintain the open spaces, hedges, verges, to a high standard.