

FTC FACILITIES REPORT.

Allotments.

Stonebridge.

The chair at Stonebridge allotment, along with the work party, is doing great work clearing the waterways on site.

Stonebridge had a company in the allotment carrying out drainage work; Vortex was the contractor engaged to undertake the works. During their visit, they struck the right-hand pillar at the gate entrance. The pillar has been fixed.

Work on the main gate to lift one side is pencilled in; the facilities team will be working on this.

Fixing the fence to the feeding area and working on the hedge around the allotment, making the area safe.

Millfield.

All good on site; we have been helping with maintenance work on the summer house and clearing plots.

St Nicolas.

All good on site; no issues have been reported.

North Preston.

All good on site; no issues have been reported.

Fencing work and clearing plots are ongoing at the site; the team is working on a new notice board.

Perry Court.

All good on site; no issues have been reported.

There have been some ongoing concerns raised by a resident regarding the way the grassed areas around the Perry Court allotment site are being mown. This is the same issue that has been raised previously, and the Facilities Team are aware of the concerns. The current mowing schedule is designed to provide a consistent and practical level of maintenance across the site. The grass areas on both sides of the pathways are cut, with the trails being maintained to approximately the width of the mower, which is around 2 metres. The areas around the allotment car park, the orchard and the central square are also cut as part of the regular maintenance programme. These maintained areas also provide an important additional benefit by acting as a fire break, particularly during periods of hot and dry weather when vegetation can become

very dry. Information regarding the mowing regime and the areas being maintained has been shared with the Fire Brigade for their awareness. There is currently no specific prescribed width for the fire break at this location. The way we currently maintain the site provides a practical maintained area while also allowing the Facilities Team to manage the available resources effectively. The current cut of the whole area takes approximately one full working day for the team to complete. Any additional mowing or widening of the maintained areas would therefore have an impact on staff time, fuel, machinery use and the overall cost of the mowing programme. Additional cuts would also have an effect on the team's ability to complete other scheduled grounds maintenance work. A further seasonal cut is planned for September, which will help to bring the site back under control following the summer growing period and maintain the fire-break areas as we move into the autumn. However, any additional mowing requirements would need to be considered against the available budget and the wider maintenance programme. The Facilities Team also require some additional equipment to carry out the work more efficiently, and purchasing the necessary equipment would represent a significant proportion of the remaining budget. Going forward, it would be useful to continue monitoring the site and reviewing the mowing regime, particularly in relation to fire safety, weather conditions and available resources. Any changes to the current mowing arrangements should take into account safety requirements, operational capacity, equipment, staff time and budget implications, ensuring that any additional work is both necessary and sustainable. The aim is to maintain the Perry Court allotment site to a safe and reasonable standard while making the best use of the resources available to the Facilities Team.

Allotment Judging and Awards.

Allotment judging is continuing, with regular visits to assess the plots and recognise the hard work and effort allotment holders are putting in. We hope for another good turnout for the Allotment Awards in December. The awards provide a good opportunity to recognise the commitment of allotment holders and celebrate the time and effort they put into maintaining their plots, growing produce and keeping the allotment sites looking attractive. Alongside the allotment awards, we will also be holding the Pumpkin Growing Competition, which has proved to be a great way of encouraging participation and adding a bit of fun and friendly competition among allotment holders. It would be good to build on the success of both events and encourage even more allotment holders to take part. The awards and competitions help to promote good standards across the allotment sites, encourage community involvement and recognise those who make a real contribution to keeping their plots and the wider allotment areas well maintained. We will continue to monitor the allotments throughout the season and look

forward to celebrating the achievements of our allotment holders at the December awards.

In Bloom.

The Faversham in Bloom meetings are continuing to go very well, with good numbers attending and plenty of positive input and ideas being shared. It is encouraging to see such a good level of interest and enthusiasm from those involved, and the group continues to develop well. We have also had a very positive article included in the latest newsletter, promoting Faversham in Bloom and inviting new volunteers to come along and join the group. The article looks really good and should help raise awareness of the work being carried out and encourage more residents to get involved.

Increasing volunteer involvement is important to the continued success of Faversham in Bloom. New volunteers bring fresh ideas, enthusiasm and additional support for the various projects and activities carried out throughout the town. The Faversham Garden Awards went very well and were a great success. It was pleasing to see the level of interest and effort that residents are putting into their gardens, helping to improve the appearance of the town and encourage pride in our local community. As part of the awards, the winner will be joining us at the Abbey Physic Community Gardens on Saturday 12 September at 2.00 pm. This will provide a good opportunity to recognise the winner's achievement and celebrate the success of the Garden Awards. We should also look at how we can build on the success of the awards in future years, encouraging more residents to take part and potentially expanding the categories or publicity surrounding the event. Overall, Faversham in Bloom continues to move in a positive direction, with good volunteer engagement, increased publicity and successful community activities helping to promote pride in the town and improve its appearance.

Town planters.

Weekly checks are continuing on all town planters to ensure they are being maintained to a good standard and that any issues with planting, watering or general condition are identified and addressed promptly. The three-tier planters located around the town are now well into their regular watering programme. These planters require a considerable amount of water and staff time to keep them looking healthy, particularly during periods of hot and dry weather. The work is physically demanding and becomes increasingly challenging as temperatures rise. Year after year, we are seeing hotter and drier summer conditions, which means that the demand for watering is increasing. We therefore need to look at a more efficient and sustainable way of carrying out this work. We have been looking at the cost of a trailer-mounted IBC water tank and pump system. This would provide the Facilities Team with a much more efficient method of transporting and distributing water around the town. A suitable system would reduce the amount of

manual handling involved, improve watering times and allow staff to cover a larger number of planters more quickly. The equipment could also have wider uses across the town, including watering newly planted trees, flower beds and other areas of seasonal planting. It would therefore be a useful long-term investment rather than equipment solely for the three-tier planters. The 13 planters around the toilets in the Central Car Park continue to present a particular challenge. Despite regular attention, they have again struggled this year and are not performing to the same standard as other planting areas. We should consider whether the current planting scheme and/or planter design is suitable for the increasingly warm conditions. As part of future planning, it may be worth considering more drought-tolerant and heat-resistant planting, improved growing media and better water-retention measures. This could reduce the amount of watering required while still maintaining an attractive appearance throughout the summer. The Facilities Team will continue to monitor the planters and watering requirements, but investment in better watering equipment and consideration of more suitable planting would help us manage the increasing demands placed on the team while improving the appearance and sustainability of the town's floral displays.

Other.

A poultry register has now been completed for the allotment site, ensuring that all poultry currently kept on the allotments have been recorded and registered. This provides a clear and up-to-date record of the poultry kept on site and helps ensure that we remain compliant with the relevant registration requirements. All allotment holders keeping poultry have been reminded of their responsibilities and the importance of keeping the register accurate and up to date. The register will also provide a useful record for the Facilities Team when carrying out routine allotment inspections and will help us to identify any changes in poultry numbers or ownership. Going forward, the register will be maintained and updated as required, particularly when poultry is added, removed or transferred between allotment plots. This will help ensure that our records remain accurate and that we continue to meet our responsibilities regarding the keeping of poultry on council-managed allotments. This is a positive step in improving the overall management of the allotments and ensuring that appropriate records, compliance and good husbandry standards are maintained.

The Facilities Team have been carrying out ongoing work to clear and tidy the alleyway areas, many of which are affected by foliage and overhanging branches from adjoining private gardens. Where necessary, we report issues relating to overhanging vegetation to Kent County Council (KCC). However, we are also finding it increasingly difficult to manage and dispose of the large volume of foliage and branches generated through our own clearance work. At present, the disposal of this material is both time-consuming and difficult, particularly when dealing with larger branches and substantial amounts of green waste. Having access to more suitable equipment would significantly improve our

ability to carry out this work efficiently and safely. A larger, high-capacity wood chipper would be a particularly valuable addition to our equipment. It would allow the team to process branches and foliage on site, reducing the amount of green waste that needs to be transported and disposed of. This would save staff time, reduce the number of trips required for disposal and make the overall clearance operation much more efficient. The chipper would also have wider benefits across our grounds maintenance work. For example, we could use it around the allotments and other areas where trees require regular pruning and maintenance. The resulting wood chippings could potentially be reused as mulch around trees, shrubs and suitable areas, helping to improve soil condition and reduce the need to purchase or dispose of additional materials. Having the right equipment would also enable the Facilities Team to respond more quickly to overgrown areas, fallen branches and routine tree and vegetation maintenance, rather than relying on manual processing of large quantities of material. We would therefore recommend considering the purchase of a larger professional-grade wood chipper, together with any necessary safety equipment and staff training. This would provide a practical long-term solution to the increasing amount of foliage and woody waste generated through our maintenance and clearance activities. Overall, investment in suitable equipment would help the Facilities Team work more efficiently, safely and sustainably, while reducing waste, disposal costs and the amount of staff time currently required to process vegetation manually. The no-fishing signs have gone up along the front of the pond for the 2nd time now by SBC; no signs in the feeding area about fishing and camping.

At the last meeting, I prepared a new management agreement and a tenancy agreement for all the allotment sites and sent a copy to the Town Clerk for review. I also sent both to the NAS and was informed that a 12-month notice would need to be given and also found out that allotments with committees set out the own tenancy agreement, NAS said when the management agreements are up for renewal this is when we could implement it into the new management agreements which we can then put in the rules of pesticides use.

Good practise would be to give 12 months' notice, which must be issued outside of the growing season (which runs 6th April-29th September) for any significant changes to the tenancy agreement for tenants on statutory sites or where the agreement applies allotment legislation. This is from the NAS.

The management agreements in date are St Nicolas, started 5th September 2023.

Out of date are Stonebridge and Millfield, so we could use the new Management agreement if you would like to look over both of them before making a decision,

The war memorial garden.

The weekly maintenance work in the War Memorial Garden is continuing to go well. The Facilities Team are carrying out regular weeding, clearing and general tidying to ensure the garden remains clean, presentable and well maintained. Work has also included cleaning and maintaining the stones and memorial areas, along with planting and seasonal improvements to keep the garden looking attractive throughout the year. The War Memorial Garden is an important and well-used area within the town, and maintaining it to a high standard is particularly important because of its significance to the community and those who visit to remember and pay their respects. Regular maintenance also helps prevent the area from becoming overgrown and reduces the amount of work required at a later date. The team will continue with the weekly programme, including weeding, clearing, planting and general upkeep, while keeping an eye on areas that may require additional attention. We will also continue to consider seasonal planting and improvements that can enhance the appearance of the garden while ensuring that the planting remains practical and manageable within the resources available. Overall, the garden is looking well, and the continued weekly maintenance is helping to keep it in a respectful, clean and welcoming condition.

Stacey Woolf

Facilities Manager

July - Aug 2026