General Assets and Operations update September 2026

Play Parks

Remedial actions arising from the RoSPA inspections continue to be progressed. Completed works are being recorded, and outstanding items will remain under review until fully resolved. The following works have been carried out:

- Inspections and servicing of the cableways at Evans Way and New Street Play Parks were completed in July 2026.
- Repairs to the safety surfacing beneath the POD swing at New Street Play Park were completed on 25 August 2026.
- Resurfacing works beneath the frog springer at Evans Way were completed on 21 August 2026.
- Further remedial surfacing works at Evans Way were completed on 24 September 2026.

Extreme Heat – Parks and Outdoor Spaces

The Climate and Ecology Working Group has raised concerns regarding the limited availability of shade within some of the Council's recreation areas and the potential for play equipment, particularly metal and plastic slides, to reach unsafe temperatures during prolonged periods of hot weather. A range of possible mitigation measures was discussed, including:

- additional tree planting to provide natural shade;
- temporary shade structures;
- the provision of stretch tents during the school summer holidays;
- temporary or portable water-play facilities;
- lower-cost alternatives to permanent splash parks; and
- incorporating climate resilience and adequate shade provision into the design of future play areas.

Temporary shade structures could potentially serve more than one purpose, including use at Council events such as Picnic in the Park. Any consideration of water-play facilities would need to take account of the absence of a permanent water supply at the Council's play areas. Further assessment would therefore be required to establish the practicality, cost, water demand, supervision, maintenance and health and safety implications of the available options.

Town Tree Survey

The town-wide tree survey has commenced and is expected to be completed by mid-October 2026.

Millennium Garden

It is proposed that Himalayan birch be planted in the grassy area of Millennium Garden. These species would provide long-term visual interest, would offer shade and enhance the character of the site.

If the committee are happy with the recommendation for the Himalayan Birch to be planted, Cornus sanguinea 'Midwinter Fire' is recommended at the base to provide contrasting winter colour. The following quotes for Betula utilis ‘Snow Queen’ (Himalayan silver birch) have been received:

- Single-stem tree, approximately 2.5 metres in height – £73 each.
- Single-stem tree, approximately 4 metres in height – £185 each.
- Multi-stem tree comprising three stems grown together, approximately 2.5 metres in height – £145 each

Millennium Garden Bench Update

A wooden bench was vandalised and rendered unsafe after timber was removed from the seat. As the remaining timber was split, weakened and weathered, the bench was beyond economical repair and was removed and disposed of.

Middle Row Troughs

The existing summer bedding will be replaced with pansies, violas and primulas to provide colour throughout autumn and winter. Wyatt’s will remove the existing plants and overwinter them at its nursery for replanting next spring, allowing the plants to be retained and reused.

William Fowler Memorial Wood

A significant number of young to semi-mature ash trees within William Fowler Memorial Wood were in severe decline because of ash dieback. A quotation of £1,450 excluding VAT was accepted for their controlled felling, and the works are scheduled for completion on 19 and 20 October 2026.

Grounds Maintenance Contractors

Two contractors were engaged for a short period during August and September 2026. They carried out ground’s maintenance at St Mary’s Closed Churchyard, Worcester Road Cemetery and New Street, completed a final grass cut and weed removal at Glyme Hall, and mowed Cornish Road Play Park in mid-September.

Pool Meadow

Contractors cleared overgrown paths and cut back horsetail at Pool Meadow, improving access for further maintenance. Reinstatement of the streamside footpath commenced on 14 September 2026.

Town Hall Door Repainting

Painting of the Town Hall doors commenced on 22 September 2026.

Climate Resilience and Irrigation

Prolonged hot and dry periods place considerable stress on newly planted trees and shrubs, increasing the risk of poor establishment, decline and loss where regular watering cannot be provided. A water bowser would enable the Grounds Maintenance Operative to irrigate replacement trees, Millennium Garden planting, Town Centre flower beds, Middle Row troughs and seasonal displays. The Logic DMB300 270 deck-mounted bowser has been identified as a suitable option and will fit snugly within the rear load bed of the Goupil G4. Specification: 270-litre bowser skid unit suitable for a trailer or pick-up bed; 1.8 m flexible outlet pipe, 2 inches in diameter, with a quarter-turn on/off tap; and top filling with a vented cap. RRP is £910 plus VAT; a discounted price of £799 plus VAT has been quoted.

Health and Safety Audit Results

Health and safety audits were conducted at all three sites at the end of July and in mid-August 2026. The audits identified a positive overall standard of health and safety management.

Site Assurance Overview

DEPOT - 97.1% VERY GOOD	Significant improvement since the previous visit. One minor administrative action remains.
GLYME HALL - 92.7% SATISFACTORY	Low-risk venue with sound core arrangements. *Several defined compliance and fire-safety actions require completion.
TOWN HALL - 95.9% GENERALLY CONTROLLED	Core controls are in place. **Electrical compliance evidence is the principal priority; lower-level actions should be followed through.

* The Gas Safety Certificate has now been obtained. The Maintenance Operative has been instructed to securely fix the bracket to the wall in the Oak Room, addressing the non-compliance identified during the audit.

* *The 2023 Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) has been reissued with a 'Satisfactory' outcome. The previous 'Unsatisfactory' outcome related to historical Distribution Network Operator (DNO) issues, which our contractor has resolved in liaison with SSE.