

Dear Residents,

Many thanks to those who have recently contacted Maghull Town Council regarding the condition of our parks & open spaces, plans for investment and current operations. It is good to see that you are actively engaging with us and whilst it is not always nice to receive criticism, it is equally as important as receiving positive feedback as it gives us an opportunity to deploy resources more effectively.

I am sure you appreciate that whilst social media can be an effective way to engage it can create an additional industry for officers – particularly if we are required to reply to every message we receive. I therefore intend to provide a rounded response/summary of our current operations to at least provide an update as to what we are doing.

Much of this information is already in the public domain – council reports are for instance – available on the Maghull Town Council website at www.maghull-tc.gov.uk In addition, our Amenities Committee (which oversees our parks and open spaces operations) met on 23rd September 2020 and resolved a number of areas which directly impact upon our operations – our revised autumn/winter operations is a good example of this. Although council committees are not currently meeting at Maghull Town Hall, meetings are available to view via YouTube and I would therefore encourage residents to observe these meetings to see what is happening within the town.

1. Investment within Parks

In response to our information regarding the refurbishment of Glenn Park, some residents have asked about further refurbishment of parks near them – Hall Lane Park, Moss Park and Moorhey Park to name but a few.

Council, through its Parks Review (which is available on the Maghull Town Council Website) agreed to invest at King George V Playing Field – works have already been completed with investment of £86,000 and Glenn Park – works commence today with investment of circa £40,000.00.

Unfortunately, it is simply not possible to have wholesale refurbishment across the entire estate – and whilst residents may be deflated that there is not a refurbishment “on their doorstep” it cannot be denied that there is and will be a new, modern play area in close proximity to their home.

As an authority, over the last three and a half years, there has been significant investment in the purchasing of new equipment to support our grounds maintenance operations (ride on mowers), the procurement of multi-use bins for parks and open spaces town-wide, the purchase of a tractor, hedge cutter and chipper to support town-wide hedgerow operations and the refurbishment of two play areas with a high footfall. In short, we have put a lot of things right to support town wide operations.

2. Removal of Play Equipment

Some residents have complained about the removal of some pieces of equipment. This has been in response to Maghull Town Council's annual Royal Society for the Prevention of Accident (ROSPA) report, which provides a comprehensive report on the condition of play equipment, fall surfaces and infrastructure at each site.

Maghull Town Council completes its own inspection reports in between our annual inspection by ROSPA to ensure play equipment is safe to use.

Following receipt of our ROSPA report, I have instructed my officers to remove any play equipment or play equipment components which are considered a risk. These will be replaced when sourced from suppliers.

In addition and as mentioned below, my officers have already started the process to maintain play equipment and infrastructure within parks and open spaces. Examples include the painting of goal posts, cleaning of multi-use games areas and painting of park barriers and fences. These works will not only make play equipment/areas more attractive, but will help give them more of a working life.

3. Covid-19 Pandemic and Maghull Town Council Play Areas

At the time of writing, Maghull Town Council has two play areas open to the public – those at King George V Playing Field and Moss Park.

Moss Park has reopened today owing to the refurbishment at Glenn Park which has meant that this play area is now closed for a period of 6 weeks.

Officers are acutely aware of Government guidance around the reopening and continued maintenance of parks – particularly in terms of reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

As per government guidelines, we have undertaken an exercise to cleanse a single play area – which totalled 2 hours. We are committed to cleansing play areas 3 times per week to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission, which results in 12 hours of officer time lost over two play areas.

In short, it is not practical or possible to extend this cleansing regime over all sites and continue our autumn/winter operations.

Some residents have commented that other organisations have opened their play areas to the public and effectively “trust” them to sanitise their hands, not eat or drink within the play area and adhere to the “rule of 6.” Each organisation will vary depending on their own Covid-19 secure risk assessment and “trust” that they place in the community. However, drawing on my own experiences within our play areas – I think a balance needs to be struck between making sure that we as an organisation provide a safe play area and the community taking their own measures to ensure they are safe and reduce the risk of transmission.

As stated above, at the time of writing, only the play areas at King George V Playing Field and Moss Park are officially open to the public with all other play areas remaining closed. Officers will continue to review government guidance in consideration of when and how these parks should open.

4. Current Operations

Members of Amenities Committee recently amended the autumn/winter operations window for my officers and so, up until February 2021 my officers will be completing the following works

1. Repair and repainting of assets
2. Repair and removal of play equipment
3. Grounds maintenance
4. Facilities works
5. Hedge works

In short, we have a lot to do over the coming months but we have an excellent foothold which has been achieved during the spring/summer operations window where we have met or in some instances surpassed pre-lockdown standards. Officers are working hard to actually improve the estate. Work unfortunately is hampered by aspects such as littering, vandalism etc. Where there is a problem we rectify as quickly as possible!

5 Development of Friends of Groups

Maghull Town Council's Community Services Manager and I are in the process of developing "Friends of" groups for parks and open spaces across the town. The purpose of these groups is to help support our operations – whether that be litter picking, painting assets and/or planting areas. The response from the community has been positive – with residents keen to form groups, in the main because they appreciated the hard work of my officers and that they wanted to enhance the park even more.

If therefore you would be keen to get involved, to support our operations, improve your local park/play area and be an active player to improving your town please get in touch on info@maghull-tc.gov.uk or 0151 526 3705.

I hope residents can see and appreciate that things are improving town-wide. From our perspective, this is the first year when we are receiving compliments from the community which shows we are doing something right! With further support from the community, our parks and open spaces offer will only improve.

I hope this helps to give an overview of our operations, our challenges and our ambitions. Our officers are extremely busy and work extremely hard to improve the town wide parks and open spaces offer. If you would like any further information, please get in touch on info@maghull-tc.gov.uk or 0151 526 3705.

Many thanks,

Amenities Manager – Maghull Town Council