

# **Middlegate Road, Kirton Estate Works Specification**

**February 2020**

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## 1.0 Introduction

Management Company seeks to provide and maintain a defined level of service for estate maintenance. This will be achieved by:

- estate maintenance specifications
- emphasis on management and audit of works services provided
- visibility on the estates
- communication with residents
- reporting of activity via Management Company residents' company website

The specification covers the maintenance of all areas within the boundary of the scheme, excluding all areas which belong to individual owners. (Areas belonging to individuals are shown bounded by the property red line boundary, usually shown with "T" marks).

The drawings indicate by phases the areas on the development that shall be included within the contract.

## 2.0 Service Visit Schedules

Service visits shall be carried out at the estate weekly during the growing season (approximately the second week of March to the third week in November) and fortnightly at any other time. The scope of service is detailed within section 4.0 of the specification.

All works to be carried out Monday to Friday within the hours of 08:00 – 18:00 unless otherwise agreed with Management Company.

## 3.0 Programming the works

### Programme

Prior to the start of work for each year, a programme of proposed service visits and planned activities will be provided. The programme will be presented on the management company website so that it can be viewed by the estate residents.

### Failure to complete a Service Visit

Where a service visit is delayed, disrupted or abandoned it will be rescheduled as soon as practicable. The Management Company helpdesk will be kept informed so that estate residents can be made aware of the rescheduled visit.

## 4.0 Grounds Maintenance Specification

### Amenity grassland – Short mown amenity public open space

Appropriate machines in size, shape and method for the type of work involved will be used. All litter, stones or other debris will be collected and removed immediately prior to grass cutting operations.

The public open space will be maintained to form a tidy, pleasing appearance, avoiding 'tramlines' and uneven cutting. The sward will be kept substantially free of broad-leaved weeds by the application of a suitable selective herbicide, and will be maintained in a healthy condition and to be suitable for its intended use. During initial establishment the public open space will be mown when it reaches 40mm in

height in the first year. The arisings (cuttings) from this first mow will be removed to encourage grassland establishment.

The amenity managed grassland will be based on a cutting frequency of around 12 cuts during the cutting season with a cut height of 50mm. Arisings (cuttings) shall be distributed evenly over the grassland area and not formed into windrows.

Should weather conditions be such to stimulate grass growth, additional cuts may be required. Similarly, in very wet conditions all grass cutting operations will cease until conditions allow for grass cutting to take place without damaging the surface levels, or creating 'divots' from the machinery. Grass cutting will resume as soon as possible, with a catch up if necessary, to meet the regular cutting regime.

#### Grass Care

- Any arisings from paths, roads and from within 600mm of the edges of paths and roads will be removed. Arisings should not be deposited within shrub beds, or outside designated grassed areas of estate land. As applicable arisings shall be uniformly deposited, i.e. not deposited in 'piles'.
- Grass and vegetation along fences or adjacent to other obstacles etc. shall be hand strimmed during each service visit. Use of herbicide is not permitted.
- Grass and vegetation within 200mm of the bases of trees shall be controlled by the careful use of a suitable non-selective herbicide. The use of any approved herbicides must comply with COSHH legislation.
- Grass edges to paths and hard surfaces shall be cut back using an edging tool twice a year in March and September. Use of herbicide is not permitted.
- In addition, grass edges to paved areas and hard surfaces shall be strimmed at each service visit.
- Areas of naturalised bulbs will be left for a period of 6 weeks after flowering has finished before cutting back to normal height.

#### Drainage Ditches

Regular inspections will occur along any ditches and these will determine any general work that may need to be undertaken. Inspections will be undertaken from March to October to check for blockage/debris/fly tipping along the ditch banks which may affect or impede water levels. Vegetation on banks will be checked for any significant encroachment. Arisings / removed weed growth will be left on the edge of the brook bank in appropriate piles to create hibernacula. Substantial arising/removed vegetation, which if left would cause undue public nuisance or access issues will be removed off site, or in a designated compost area.

The ditch bed will be inspected and the Lead Drainage Authority / Internal Drainage Board / Riparian Owner consulted and where necessary the ditch will be de-silted in phases over a planned cycle.

#### Ponds

Regular inspections will occur in and around the pond and these will determine any general work that may need to be undertaken, inspections will be undertaken from March to October to check for excessive weed growth which will be removed. Desilting of the pond will be undertaken as appropriate.

### Shrub bed, shrub and plant care

#### Regular Maintenance

- Shrub beds and planted areas are to be maintained at each service visit to ensure that they do not become overgrown.
- Any weed infested areas shall initially be brought under control by use of Glyphosate chemical taking care not damage shrub's or other live plants growing within the shrub bed. When chemical control has been established, dead weeds shall be removed by hand.
- Any self-seeding plants shall be removed at each service visit.
- No mulch is to be applied to shrub beds. Instead each shrub bed shall be thoroughly hoed at each service visit to remove weeds and extraneous material.

#### Annual Maintenance

- Shrub beds and plants adjacent to the edges of shrub beds shall be cut back in January to ensure that they are a minimum of 600mm clear of the edges of footpaths, roads or parking areas.
- In addition, all shrubs shall be pruned in accordance with best horticultural practice according to their species to remove unhealthy growth and to stimulate future growth.
- In addition, excess plants within shrub beds are to be removed in January. The numbers and locations of excess plants to be removed shall be agreed with Management Company one month in advance of their removal.
- Grass edges to shrub beds shall be cut back using an edging tool twice a year in March and September. Use of herbicide is not permitted.
- All arisings from shrub bed maintenance shall be removed off site and disposed of.

#### Preparation for new planting

- Where new planting is considered, it will be instructed by Management Company as an addition with the specification being agreed on a case by case basis

### Woodland Areas (Copses, Dense Woodland etc)

Woodland Areas are areas consisting of Deciduous or Coniferous species which are growing in groups, copses or areas of semi-forest planting.

During establishment (the first 2 years after planting) the base of trees, circa 500mm radius, will be kept weed and grass free using a glyphosate-based herbicide such as Roundup or similar. When using Glyphosate based herbicide such as "Roundup" where controlling weed growth near to items which we do not want to damage or contaminate we use a shroud or hood to avoid drift. Suitable rabbit guard fencing, or shelters will be used to protect vegetation from damage. Pruning of dead, diseased or damaged branches will be carried out as appropriate to promote healthy growth and neutral shape, and to favour a single central leading shoot. New planting, will be regularly inspected during the first 5 years following planting to encourage a healthy, vigorous condition. Woodland will be inspected every 5 years to assess extent of encroachment. And where appropriate at year 10, some coppicing will be

carried out on some of the woodland blocks, based on a 5-year coppicing regime. Woodland will be cut back in late summer/early autumn (September/October) to avoid the bird nesting season. Alternatively, trees will be selectively thinned at year 10 and 20 to create variation in structure with thinning to be undertaken in late summer/early autumn (September/October). All established trees to be assessed prior to any work being carried out to evaluate potential impacts on bats.

The boundary of Woodland Areas shall be cut back once annually between October and the end of February to form a neat boundary along the boundary line.

The adherence to the 1981 wildlife and countryside act shall be maintained at all times.

### Trees

#### Individual Trees

New standard tree planting where provided, will be planted as individual specimens or in small tree groups

Trees will be regularly inspected during the first 5 years following planting to encourage healthy, vigorous condition. During establishment, (the first 2 years after planting), the base of trees circa 500mm radius, will be kept weed and grass free using a glyphosate-based herbicide such as Roundup or similar. When using Glyphosate based herbicide such as "Roundup" where controlling weed growth near to items which we do not want to damage or contaminate we use a shroud or hood to avoid drift. All trees will be supported by double short stakes during the establishment period and these can be removed after 2 years, unless there is soil or root movement when the tree is rocked.

Pruning of dead, diseased or damaged branches will be carried out as appropriate to promote healthy growth and natural shape, and to favour a single central leading shoot.

### Hedges

#### Field Hedges

Field Hedges are hedges which form part of an estate boundary and are normally associated with an agricultural use for containing livestock. Normally these will consist of hedge type species of Quickthorn, Holly Hazel, Elm which can be layered if overgrown.

In forming a boundary to an estate where annual growth does not normally cause nuisance to the occupant:

- Cutting to be carried out once between the months of October to February of the following year.
- All hedges are to be pruned to a rectangular shape with the base slightly wider than the top. Hedges must also be impenetrable.
- If a hedge planted within a public area consists of a field type species the hedge will be treated as an ornamental hedge.

#### Ornamental Hedges

- Ornamental hedges shall be pruned twice annually in September and February.
- If a hedge is in a regularly maintained condition only current growth shall be removed rather than old wood. Cutting not to exceed 1 year's growth.
- To comply with the 1981 "Wildlife and Countryside Act", No hedge cutting to take place in the period 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August inclusive during each year
- All hedges are to be pruned to a rectangular shape with the base slightly wider than the top
- In any event hedges shall be maintained to a maximum height of 5ft

#### Hedge Methodology

Hedges will be cut using either sharp secateurs, hand held shears or hand-held reciprocating blade powered hedge cutters. The use of tractor mounted flail type cutters will not be allowed.

All arisings will be collected and disposed of. All arisings including clippings lodged in the hedge, shall be cleared from site at the end of each working day and disposed of offsite. All arisings must be removed from adjacent surfaces.

All staff using powered hedge cutting equipment will hold an N.P.T.C. or similar certificate of competence.

#### Litter and debris collection

- Removal of litter shall be a major priority
- During each service visit and prior to commencing cutting the grass, all litter and debris will be collected from all estate communal areas, including shrub beds, play areas and remove from site.
- Particular emphasis shall be placed on removing hazardous material (e.g. broken glass) from play areas.
- Any fly-tipped material or improperly disposed trade waste shall be notified to the Management Company help desk during office hours, who may instruct its removal

#### Leaf Clearance

- Leaves will be collected from all estate communal areas, including play areas, and removed from site as follows:
  - On three consecutive service visits after 1<sup>st</sup> leaf fall i.e. early November, Mid November and Mid December
  - On one further service visit in January after.

#### Hard surfaces

- Growth along edges to paths and hard surfaces shall be cut back using an edging tool twice a year in March and September. Use of herbicide is not permitted.
- In addition, grass edges to paved areas and hard surfaces shall be strimmed at each service visit.

- A suitable non-selective herbicide will be used to control the growth of weeds and moss on hard surface areas including kerb lines, car parks, gravel areas, hard standings, play areas and footpaths.
- Herbicide will not be applied to grassed or planted areas.
- Herbicide shall be applied twice annually in February and September in addition to any necessary spot treatments required during the season. In addition, weed growth to hard surfaces will be kept clear by strimming or manual removal.
- Any 'overspray' damage to areas of freehold property shall be made good

### Footpaths

Estate land may become overgrown by plants, shrubs etc which belong to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties such as residents. Where this is identified Management Company may instruct that the estate land is cleared, and the arisings are placed back in the 3<sup>rd</sup> party land.

### Other

Fallen fruit shall be removed from communal areas.

Small fallen tree branches and other tree debris shall be removed from estate communal areas.

### Problem Reporting

Any damage, faults or issues on the estate that become apparent during site visits should be reported to the helpdesk. This could include (but not be limited to):

- abandoned vehicles
- flooding/pooling of surface water
- potholes and damage to hard standings
- broken communal fences or signs
- damage to play equipment
- Fly tipping

### Pesticides

Users shall hold a relevant certificate of competence for the correct use of pesticides, fertilisers and weed killers. It shall be a requirement that when requested a certificate must be produced before the commencement of any work on site.

All pesticides must be to the latest relevant British Standard and shall be applied strictly in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. Particular attention will be paid to the safety of children, pets or any other specific hazard identified.

Spraying shall not take place when the weather is unsuitable.

If the weather conditions are suitable for spraying, each user shall be aware of the risk of 'spray drift' and familiarise himself with the areas which will be receiving the application e.g. consider the possibility of the existence of wind funnels on the corner of building lines.

All fertilisers and pesticides not in direct use must be kept in a locked metal or heavy-duty plastic container.



The container must be clearly marked with the words "Danger Poison"

A record must be kept of pesticides and fertilisers being applied, the record must include (as a minimum):

- The person who applied the pesticides and fertilisers
- The area to which the pesticides and fertilisers have been applied
- The date that the application took place
- The signature of the operative responsible.

The record must be kept up to date at all times and be available for inspection.

#### Play Areas

A visual inspection of the play area within the public open space will be carried out on a weekly basis. Any problems identified will be reported to the Management Company helpdesk for resolution.

In addition to the above, play areas will be subject to a formal inspection against the applicable British Standards on an annual basis to ensure that they remain safe and fit for their intended purpose. Any repair and maintenance works identified as being necessary or desirable will be implemented through the service charge budget.

#### Meadow Areas

Wildflower meadow (including pond marginal areas) to follow this maintenance regime on a yearly basis after its first year of establishment.

##### Summer cutting

The main cut each year is the summer "hay cut". This is when the main part of the year's growth is cut back using a scythe, heavy duty strimmer, reciprocating knife or other suitable mower (lawn mowers are generally not up to this task). The growth should be cut back to a height of 40-75mm.

The cut grass should be dried on site, turning it to assist drying and disperse seeds (this also significantly reduces the weight and bulk of material to be removed). The dried 'hay' should be removed within 7 days of cutting.

##### Autumn cutting

Mow with a rotary, flail or other suitable mower to 40-75mm. Ideally cut at least twice from the time the hay is removed to the end of November, aiming to leave the grass short through winter. If any cut produces significant quantities of material this should be removed, otherwise left in habitat piles.

##### Spring cutting

Mow with a rotary, flail or other suitable mower to 40-75mm. For meadow grassland mow around Easter, and no later than the first week in May. If any cut produces significant quantities of material this should be removed and/or left in habitat piles.

##### First year management

Mow to a height of 40-60mm. Ideally collect and remove arisings to avoid leaving behind a damaging mulch of decomposing cut grass. Mow frequently enough it may be possible to disperse the cuttings without leaving a mulch. Mowing can start as soon as there is enough growth of either weeds or sown species to take a cut.

## **5.0 Reporting Requirements**

The Management Company helpdesk sometimes receives calls from residents claiming that grounds maintenance work has not been carried out. Therefore, a vital part of the work is to be able to demonstrate to the residents that the works in the specification have actually been carried out.

#### Recording and Reporting Service Visits

The work carried out during each service visit is to be recorded on a maintenance visit record sheet after each visit. The record sheet is to be signed by the responsible operative to confirm that the works have been completed in accordance with the specification. The required format of the record sheet is included in Appendix 2.

An electronic copy of the completed record sheet is to be loaded onto the Management Company website within 3 working days following the service visit.

A minimum of 10 standard photographs after each service visit shall be taken. These shall be date stamped. The photos shall be loaded onto the Residents Management Company website as .jpg files within 3 working days following the service visit.

#### Recording and Reporting Quality Control Visits

A senior representative shall carry out regular quality control visits to each estate. The frequency of the quality control visits shall be:

March, April, May, June	1 visit per month per estate
Thereafter	1 visit bimonthly per estate.

The work carried out at each estate shall be verified during each quality control visit, and the verification is to be recorded on a Quality Control Check record sheet. The record sheet is to be signed by the representative to confirm that the works have been completed in accordance with the specification. The required format of the record sheet is included in Appendix 2.

An electronic copy of the completed Quality Control Check record sheet is to be loaded onto the residents' management company website within 3 working days following the quality control visit.

#### Letter Drops

A card stating the date, time and duration of the maintenance visit will be left with a single named resident.