

COXHOE PARISH COUNCIL

**Grounds Maintenance Contract General Specification of
Works for Contracted Services**
Tender Part 2

Specification For Grounds Maintenance

1. Definitions

1.1 In this document save where the context otherwise requires the following expressions shall have meanings assigned to them:

- 1.1.1 "Arisings" means any waste material either animal, vegetable or mineral produced as a result of a task or operation.
- 1.1.2 "Clippings" means the cut grass arising out of carrying out the tasks in providing the Services.
- 1.1.3 "Contract Manager" means the employee of the Contractor employed pursuant to the Conditions of Contract.
- 1.1.4 "Litter" means any item of litter, as defined by the Litter Act 1983, rubbish, refuse or other waste material) including grass cuttings, leaves, weeds, garden refuse, chippings of stone, wood or metal, hypodermic needles and other "sharps", accident debris, animal carcasses, animal and human faeces, and all similar matter or material) which has been dropped, discarded or deposited, whether by accident, intent or natural phenomenon, road dust, soil sand or detritus and any material of a like nature.
- 1.1.5 "Mowing equipment" means the equipment defined in Clause S3.2.
- 1.1.6 "Obstruction" means anything, which restricts the free operation of Mowing Equipment when carrying out the Tasks in providing the Service.
- 1.1.7 "Products" means any Equipment, materials, plant or other resources used by the Contractor in the performance of the Service which are bought, hired or leased from a third party.
- 1.1.8 "Supervisor" means any person who will be directly involved in supervising the Tasks of providing the Service as identified in the Specification.
- 1.1.9 "Site" means any area to be maintained by the Contractor, which is specified in the Schedules attached.
- 1.1.10 "Operative" means any person who will be directly involved in the Tasks of providing the Services as identified in the Specification.
- 1.1.11 "Supplier" means any supplier to the Contractor of Products used in the performance of the Service.
- 1.1.12 "Task" means any part of the Service within the Specification to be undertaken at each Site on any day.
- 1.1.13 "Supervising Officer" means the Clerk to the Council or any person nominated by them to act as liaison between the Contractor and the Council.
- 1.1.14 "Weeds" means any plant growing in an area which is not required or wanted, and for the avoidance of doubt is defined as a weed by the Supervising Officer.

1.2 Any reference to a Clause shall, unless otherwise stated, refer to a Clause of the Specification.

2. Introduction

2.1 Specification. The specification describes the standards to which each task is to be performed, each time it is performed.

2.2 Scheduled Work. Separate schedules detailing the sites to be maintained, the tasks required to be performed and some additional details are found in other parts of the tender documents. Performance of the defined tasks should be spread evenly throughout the specified period.

2.3 Examples of Scheduled and non-Scheduled Work

- a. Checks, maintenance and repairs to benches around the Parish;
- b. Checks, maintenance and repairs to Council owned allotment gates (or replacement if necessary);
- c. Tidying of tree and hedge growth on any of the Council's Open Spaces;
- d. Various weeding, tidying, strimming and cutting back of bushes or other vegetation especially around the areas of the Greens and War Memorial. Side out footways to normal width, as identified by the Council;
- e. General care and maintenance of the bus shelters, including annual cleaning, repainting / re-preserving or varnishing window frames or body of the shelter, repointing and removal of vegetation as appropriate;
- f. Regular mowing of the areas of land known as the Greens;
- g. Repairs to walls owned by the Council, and preventative maintenance where agreed;
- h. Painting / varnishing / maintenance work to Council owned property where necessary;
- i. Litter picking as required;
- j. Cleaning of road signs (excluding illuminated ones) and remove vegetation obstructing signs;
- k. Snow clearance;
- l. Clearing pavements of leaves (seasonal as required);
- m. Clearing leaves and other material from gullies and drains in problem areas of the village;
- n. Planting bulbs or other plants/shrubs/bushes/trees as appropriate;
- o. Rod blocked drains if practical;
- p. Advise landowners and frontages when ditches need cleaning or overhanging vegetation requires attention (in conjunction with Supervising Officer).

Not all the non-routine tasks described in the attached schedules will be performed on each site each year.

2.4 Winter Work. Winter work of a routine nature will be scheduled. Non-routine winter tasks will not be scheduled and will be directed by the Supervising Officer and authorised by way of a variation order.

2.5 Environmental Issues. The Contractor shall carry out all work adopting the most environmentally friendly methods. All chemical, biological agents for weed control, pest control, fungi control, fertilizers, soil conditioners must be used in accordance with suppliers' recommendations and be approved for this application by DEFRA. Except with the prior written approval of the Supervising Officer, waste material will be removed from site; no burning or dumping on site will be permitted. The contractor must make every effort to ensure that all grounds maintenance green waste arisings collected for disposal are deposited at an approved garden waste disposal site.

3.0 Grass Cutting

3.1 Introduction. This Clause sets out the general standards that the Contractor must comply with and defines the terms used in the schedules. The specification does not define the required frequency for grass cutting: historical frequencies are given as a guide only. The contractor must ensure that the grass does not exceed the specified maximum length. Where the specified maximum length of grass is exceeded the Council will require the contractor to undertake remedial grounds maintenance, at their expense, within no more than 3 working days. In all cases when the maximum required length is exceeded the Council requires the contractor to collect the clippings and dispose of them off site at the approved disposal point.

3.2 Programme. The Contractor shall provide the Supervising Officer with a programme before the grass-cutting season commences in accordance with the Conditions of Contract specifying when each area of ground will be cut throughout the cutting period. This programme should reflect Specification requirements and may be amended within the first three months of the commencement date with the written approval of the Supervising Officer. Except with the Tender agreement of the Supervising Officer no allowance should be made for anticipated periods of restricted growth. In exceptionally dry or wet weather / ground conditions, the Supervising Officer may suspend work during the defined period, and extend the period so that work is carried out in more appropriate conditions. This programme of work shall also show when the required grass trimming operations will take place as part of the cutting cycle. No grass cutting is to commence until the Supervising Officer in accordance with the Conditions of Contract has approved the programme in writing. The Shaun Henderson Community Sports Ground should be kept at a reasonable standard for a playing surface. Any improvements or amendments will be discussed with the Contractor.

3.3 Type of Grass Cutting Equipment.

The types of mowing equipment referred to in this specification are:

3.3.1 Cylinder Mower. A machine with the blades fixed so as to form a horizontal rotating cylinder, which cuts grass between these blades and a fixed horizontal bottom blade. The number of blades where specified shall refer to the number of blades contained in the horizontal cylinder.

3.3.2 Rotary Mower. A machine with blades fixed so that they rotate in the horizontal plane. These blades cut because of the sharpness of the blade and the speed of travel. The number of blades is not important providing the grass is cut neatly. The size of the machine such is appropriate to the area being cut.

3.3.3 Rotary Mower - "Hover Flymo" type. The cutting system should be the same as in 3.3.2 above but the machine should be adapted to cutting on steep banks.

3.3.4 Flail Mower. A machine with blades fixed on a horizontal rotating shaft with the blades moving in the vertical plane. These blades cut because of the speed and shape of the blades.

3.3.5 Strimmer. A machine with a flexible cable cutting edge on a rotary cutting head on the horizontal plane. These machines cut grass through the speed of the rotary action.

3.3.6 Hand Operated Shears. A tool with scissor action blades designed to achieve close clipped finish.

3.4 Height of Blades.

This is the distance between ground level and the cutting edge of the blade when the machine is stood in its normal cutting position on a hard, level surface.

3.5 Length of Grass after 24 Hours.

On any cut area, the length of grass measured from the ground level shall not exceed the measurement given for grass in the specification until after 24 hours of the cut taking place. This measurement will apply to the average contours on the site and grass growth in minor depressions will not be measured.

3.6 Clearance around Obstructions.

This is the maximum distance within which grass can be left uncut around any type of obstruction. This applies only to operations undertaken with mowing machines and not to trimming operations as specified later. The type of obstruction that could be encountered will include: lampposts, edging posts, road signs, trees and walls.

3.7 Distribution of Clippings.

The following descriptions will be used in this category:

3.7.1 “Even over ground”. This means the clippings can be left on the site but must be spread evenly over the entire area. The clippings must not be left in “windrows”; neither should there be any large deposits of clippings in one place.

3.7.2 “Collected and dumped off site”. This means that the clippings shall be collected at the time of cutting in a collection device fitted to the mowing equipment. The contractor is required to remove these clippings from site and to dispose of such waste on the same day as the cutting operation. Disposal should be as previously stated at an authorised disposal point.

3.7.3 Notwithstanding the specified description in S3.10, clippings must be collected and dumped off site, or raked up and disposed of on every occasion when grass is over the ‘Maximum Permitted Length’ as prescribed in S3.10.

3.7.4 Clippings should not be left on paths, footways, hard surface areas or planted beds. Clippings deposited on private land, for example on private drive ways, private footpaths or other hard surfaces should be collected, removed and properly disposed of immediately.

3.8 Appearance of the Cut.

Any area of grass shall present an even and uniform appearance after cutting. The grass surface shall be free of any ridges or strips of un-mown grass, there shall be no areas of long grass or grass that has been bent down by the mowing equipment and left uncut. Furthermore, there shall be no areas of grass where the top growth has been scalped by the mower back to bare earth. Before the commencement of any cutting operation the Contractor should clear the site of all litter to prevent the cutting or chopping of any litter present. At the same time any wind-blown litter in perimeter fencing and hedging must also be removed. The surface following mowing shall also be free of any cut or chopped litter including papers, plastic bags, drinks cans or similar debris. The contractor must therefore collect any litter or waste which remains on the site. All litter and waste arising must be disposed of at an approved waste disposal point. The term “shadow line” shall refer to the mark left on the grass when it is cut by a machine fitted with a roller that rolls the grass following the cutting process. These shadow lines shall be straight and free from bends and kinks. When fine turf is cut these lines shall lay in opposite directions with each adjacent cut.

3.9 General Matters.

3.9.1 Following the first cut of each season, all grass cuttings from all sites shall be raked up by the Contractor and disposed of as previously described.

3.9.2 Where the area to be cut is adjacent to any hard surface or memorial or the hard surface crosses the grass, no grass clippings are permitted to remain on such a hard surface. If during the cutting process clippings do fall on the hard surface or memorial, then they shall be removed by the Contractor immediately following cutting and before the mowing staff leave the Site.

3.9.3 Where the Contractor is unable to keep to the Programme because of the effects of inclement weather, they shall immediately notify the Supervising Officer. Where the delay is minimal, the Contractor can make up the lost time on the same cutting cycle; if the Contractor cannot make up the lost time on the same cycle, then, subject to the written approval of the Supervising Officer, the Programme will be amended. The Council will not pay the Contractor for any time lost or work not done because of inclement weather.

3.9.4 On any occasion where any grass cannot be cut because of vehicles parked on grass areas the Contractor will note the location and the registration number of the vehicle and inform the Supervising Officer on the same day. No default notices will be issued by the Council in respect of areas which cannot be cut due to vehicles obstructing the site if the Supervising Officer has been notified as above.

3.9.5 The Contractor must report to the Supervising Officer without delay any abandoned vehicles, domestic or household waste, industrial waste, fly tipping, animal carcasses or any other hazardous materials which have been deposited on or close to the areas maintained under this contract. The Contractor must report any accumulations of sharps (syringes and needles) to the Council's Supervising Officer without delay.

3.9.6 Particular care must be exercised when grass cutting within burial grounds. Vases, other commemorative articles and other containers must not be removed by the Contractor prior to the grass being cut but must be cut around using suitable equipment approved by the Supervising Officer. Any damage, however minor, should be reported to the Supervising Officer immediately. Also, the Contractor should be aware of the dangers of working near memorials and should report any, what they believe to be, unsafe memorials to the Supervising Officer immediately.

3.9.7 On sites where flowering bulbs have been planted, or have become naturalised, the Contractor shall not cut the grass until instructed by the Supervising Officer which shall generally be between mid-April and the first week in June depending upon the location. In such areas the Contractor shall rake off the excess cuttings and dispose of them off site.

3.9.8 Grass cutting shall take place on the full-specified area, up to paths, fencing, walls and other boundaries.

3.10 Specification for Grass Cutting:

Type of machine	Any type
Height of blades	35mm from ground
Length of grass after 24 hours	45mm
Maximum permitted length	100mm
Clearance around obstructions	100mm
Distribution of clippings	even over ground
Appearance of cut	Even, free from ridges and patches of long or short grass
Recommended Frequency	March – October 16 Cuts

3.11 Edging and Clipping of Grass Areas

3.11.1 Edging.

The Contractor shall cut back grass edges to the constructed edge of paths and drives in all areas. This operation shall be carried out using appropriate edging equipment and the finished edges shall be straight and true and form a vertical edge to the grass area. The removal of all debris arising shall be removed from site at the Contractor's expense on the same day as the operation. The Contractor shall dispose of such waste in a proper manner. This work shall be carried out as often as is required to maintain the required standard or at the direction of the Supervising Officer at the rate stated in the Schedule of Maintenance.

3.11.2 Clipping.

The edges of grassed areas which abut planted beds, paths or similar features shall be clipped by the Contractor at each maintenance visit so that the finished edges shall be straight and true and form a vertical edge to the grassed area at all

times. All work, including removal of clippings and debris on the same day of operation, to be done at the Contractor's expense.

3.12 Strimming or Trimming of Grass.

Strimming and trimming of grass shall be undertaken by the Contractor to remove grass around obstructions (referred to in the schedules and referred to under Clause S3.10) and around or adjacent to walls, fences or hedges. Care must be taken to ensure that no strimming is performed within 500 mm of the trunk of any tree or sapling.

Timing of Strimming or Trimming. All strimming or trimming operations shall be carried out at the same frequency as other grass cutting operations on the same site. Each operation shall be timed to coincide with a regular grass cutting operation at the site.

Strimming and Trimming Height. On all types of grass area, the grass shall be strimmed or trimmed to match the height of cut grass applicable to the Site being maintained. This shall apply to both grass around obstructions and grass adjacent to boundaries.

Distribution of clippings. The grass clippings following strimming or trimming operations shall be mulched or chopped into small lengths and distributed evenly over the grass area.

Damage and Obstructions. Some of the obstructions or boundaries, where strimming or trimming works are required, are relatively strong and damage resistant. These include signposts, lamp standards and brick walls. Other obstructions such as trees and plants have surfaces that can easily be damaged by strimming equipment. The Contractor is required to take all proper care to avoid damage. Any damage caused will be rectified without delay at the Contractor's expense to the satisfaction of the Supervising Officer (e.g. by the planting of replacement or additional trees).

3.12.1 Strimming of Uncut Areas (Walls, Fences, Hedges etc.).

The Contractor shall cut down all grass, brambles and other overgrown vegetation, including overhanging branches and litter picked. Larger cuttings and branches shall be collected and disposed of by the contractor. Some mulching will be permitted subject to the production of even sized clippings of not more than 100 mm being evenly distributed along the site, without causing detriment to the appearance of the site.

3.12.2 Strimming Overgrown / Neglected Areas.

The Contractor shall cut down all grass, brambles and other overgrown vegetation, including overhanging branches and litter pick. All larger cuttings and branches, as determined by the Supervising Officer, shall be collected and disposed of by the contractor at their expense. This work to be carried out twice per year in June/July and October or at the request of the Supervising Officer.

4.0 Collection of Litter.

The Contractor shall collect and dispose of litter that has been deposited on Sites or areas of Sites maintained under this Contract. This Clause sets out the standards that the Contractor must comply with in the collection and disposal of litter.

Regular Collection.

The Contractor shall collect and properly dispose of all items of litter on the site before all grass cutting, strimming or clipping operations. It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that the area due to be cut is completely free of litter

before commencing the cutting operation. This action is necessary to prevent the shredding and scattering of paper, plastic, ring cans etc. All areas of the Site shall be cleared of litter whether or not they were to be maintained at that time, e.g. under hedges, fences, walls and other boundaries.

Disposal of Litter, Dog Waste and Arisings.

All litter, dog waste and arisings collected from sites shall be disposed of by the Contractor at their own expense at an authorised waste disposal site. The Contractor is expected to have in place any and all required licences for the transportation and disposal of any waste.

Cleaning of Litter Bins.

The Contractor, if directed by the Supervising Officer, shall thoroughly wash Council litter bins with sufficient approved detergent, disinfectant and where appropriate graffiti remover to remove all traces of road dirt, animal and bird contamination, waste accumulations, graffiti, adhesive notices and posters from internal and external faces of the litter bin liner, support bracket, post or base, and collect and remove litter and waste accumulations in the area of ground immediately beneath and within one metre radius of the litterbin. Only cleaning materials approved in writing by the litter bin manufacturer shall be used and care shall be taken to prevent any damage by these cleaning operations to the area immediately surrounding the litter bins.

Replacement of Litter Bins.

The Contractor shall, if directed by the Supervising Officer, install a new additional or replacement litter bin in an existing or new location within five working days of being notified in writing by the Supervising Officer that the work is required. The Council will supply litter bins of the required design to the Contractor and the Contractor will be required to collect from the Supervising Officer, deliver to site, erect or locate such bins in accordance with the Manufacturer's instructions. This work shall be carried out at the rate specified in the Schedule of Maintenance.

5.0 Inspection and Maintenance

5.1 Inspection of Public Seating (Park benches etc.).

The Contractor shall inspect public seating installed on grounds maintenance areas covered by this contract when the areas are visited for any other routine maintenance task. (These are most likely to be found in leisure areas, the cemetery grounds, and as part of some amenity areas).

At each visit to the Site the Contractor shall visually check the public seating for the following:

Damage to or breakage of the seats, backs, legs or supports whether by wear and tear or vandalism.

Induced hazards including broken glass, nails, razor blades or similar on the seats, backs, legs or supports.

Offensive graffiti on the seats, backs, legs or supports. If the Contractor can make good the seats, backs, legs or supports by removal of the hazard then they shall do so at once. If not, they shall clearly barricade the public seat with hazard tape etc., so that it cannot be used, and notify the Supervising Officer immediately.

6.0 Hedge Cutting (General Specification).

This Clause sets out the standards that the Contractor must comply with in the Cutting of Hedges.

Timing

Hedges are to be trimmed between the beginning of September and the end of October at the instruction of the Supervising Officer, or at such other times as directed by the Supervising Officer.

Training and experience.

Only employees properly trained and experienced in the use of hand or mechanical clippers may be employed.

Equipment.

Flail cutters are specifically prohibited. All cuts should be made cleanly with properly sharpened equipment, and use limited to personnel trained and experienced to an appropriate standard.

Nuisance branches.

In cases where hedges have outgrown their surroundings such that a nuisance is caused to passers-by or nearby residents, then the Supervising Officer will issue an instruction to the Contractor who will cut back the hedges by the amount stated or to a finished size as appropriate at the rate specified in the Schedule of Maintenance.

Standard of Finish.

Side and end faces are to be cut vertically and uniformly straight along the entire face. The top will be cut slightly rounded and should be uniformly straight along the entire length. All cutting trimmings are to be collected, removed from hedge faces and disposed of in accordance with S4 above. The Contractor shall supply any necessary steps, ladders or planks etc. that may be required for the execution of the work. The Contractor is reminded of their responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act with particular regard to men working above ground level. Hedge bottoms should be cleared of litter and all herbaceous vegetation cut down to ground level for a distance of 75cm from all faces adjacent to the open space concerned collected and removed from site for disposal in accordance with S4 above.

All clippings, litter and other arisings shall be collected and removed from site at the end of each working day when the site will be left with a neat and tidy appearance.

6.1 Hedge Cutting (Any species) – Single Sided only

6.1.1 1.2m finished height.

6.1.2 1.5m finished height.

6.1.3 1.8m finished height.

6.1.4 2.1m finished height.

6.1.5 2.4m finished height.

6.2 Hedge Cutting (Any species) Single side and top only.

6.2.1 1.2m finished height.

6.2.2 1.5m finished height.

6.2.3 1.8m finished height.

6.2.4 2.1m finished height.

6.2.5 2.4m finished height.

6.3 Hedge Cutting (Any species) – Both sides and top.

6.3.1 1.2m finished height.

6.3.2 1.5m finished height.

6.3.3 1.8m finished height.

6.3.4 2.1m finished height.

6.3.5 2.4m finished height.

7.0 General Tree Maintenance.

This Clause sets out the standards that the Contractor must comply with in the Maintenance of Trees.

All the maintenance operations will be carried out from ground level without the use of chainsaws, and will be carried out at the direction of the Supervising Officer at the rate specified in the Schedule of Maintenance.

The maintenance of trees is particularly important. The Supervising Officer must be notified in advance of any tree maintenance work due under the schedule.

If the contractor has any doubt regarding the requirements under the specification of the tree maintenance work this must be reported to Supervising Officer without delay.

The Contractor must ensure a competent and experienced operative is used for all tree maintenance work.

7.1 General Tree Maintenance.

The contractor will undertake General Tree Maintenance on a three yearly cycle, one third of the total number of trees to be pruned each of the three years. All pruning work is to be carried out between 1 December and 31 January of the following year for trees identified in the schedule, or as directed by the Supervising Officer. All resultant prunings will be collected and disposed of off-site by the Contractor at their expense.

Maintenance consists of the following actions:

Visual inspection. To look for damage, disease, decay, infestation and fungus, of tree, tree stake or tree tie.

Loosen or remove tree ties as necessary to allow for the growth of the tree, there should be space for a finger to be inserted between tree and stake. Stake should be removed after 24 months.

Carry out pruning as required.

At each Site the Contractor shall visually check each staked or recently planted tree for damage or breakage to the tree, tree stake or tree tie this also includes ornamental trees that have grown beyond staked size. All damage or breakages shall be reported to the Supervising Officer within two working days of the visit.

7.2 Staked Tree Maintenance (Recently Planted/Young Trees).

This section of the specification relates to trees that have been planted for 36 months or less, and are therefore not fully established.

7.2.1 Remove Stake & Tree Tie.

At the end of a period of three years from planting the Contractor shall remove the stake and ties from the tree unless the Supervising Officer has determined that a tree requires re-staking and securing for a longer period and has so advised the Contractor.

7.2.2 Re-Stake Tree.

If so instructed by the Supervising Officer, the Contractor shall re-stake a tree. The Contractor will supply materials that conform to Section 19 of this specification. The stake shall be driven into the ground until the stake is firm. The Contractor shall ensure that the stake is vertical and positioned so that it does not interfere with the crown of the tree. Two tree ties shall be used to secure the tree to the stake, one positioned within 50mm of the top of the stake and the other, half way down the stake. Both ties shall be fitted with spacer blocks between the tree and the stake and adjusted to allow for growth of the tree. The ties shall be nailed securely to the stake using galvanised clout headed nails. The Contractor shall replace any broken or missing tree ties as directed by the Supervising Officer. The scheduled rate is to include the provision of materials necessary to meet the specified standard.

7.2.3 Clear area of weeds 500mm diameter around staked tree.

For a period of three years after planting an area of ground 500mm in diameter, with the stem of the staked tree as the central point, shall be cleared of weed growth and grass. Note that the use of chemicals or strimming equipment is not permitted. All perennial weeds present shall be removed, together with their roots. The grass edge around the cleared area shall be left vertical and true to shape and line.

7.2.4 Prune staked tree.

The Contractor shall prune the staked trees as necessary to promote a healthy crown consistent with the variety of tree. It is the Contractor's responsibility to ensure that the pruning technique used is correct for the particular variety of tree. All pruning shall conform to BS 3998 (or subsequent replacement guidance) for quality and workmanship, and shall be carried out using handsaws and pruning tools to remove the following:

- (a) Sucker growth from base of tree
- (b) Dead, diseased and crossing branches
- (c) Any low branches likely to cause obstruction or interference to pedestrians or vehicles.

7.2.5 Prune large ornamental tree e.g. Flowering Cherry.

The Contractor shall prune the tree as necessary to promote a healthy crown consistent with the variety of tree. It is the Contractor's responsibility to ensure that the pruning technique used is correct for the particular variety of tree. All pruning shall conform to BS 3998 (or subsequent equivalent guidance) for quality and workmanship, and shall be carried out using handsaws and pruning tools to remove the following:

- (a) Sucker growth from base of tree

- (b) Dead, diseased and crossing branches
- (c) Any low branches likely to cause obstruction or interference to pedestrians or vehicles.

7.2.6 The Contractor shall report any dead trees to the Supervising Officer. As directed, the Contractor will remove dead tree and plant and re-stake a replacement tree provided by the Council at the rate shown in the Schedule of Maintenance.

8.0 Renovation of Grass Areas.

This work will be at a rate shown in the Schedule of Maintenance and detailed in a variation order issued by the Supervising Officer when required.

8.1 Area to be Re-seeded.

The Contractor shall time the execution of the work specified below to give optimum results and shall have full regard to the condition of the soil, the season and the weather before commencing operations. The entire area to be re-seeded shall be forked or cultivated by manual or mechanical means to a minimum depth of 150mm. All stones exceeding 25mm gauge and all traces of perennial or pernicious weeds and any un-decayed vegetable matter exposed by cultivation shall be removed from the site and disposed of.

Pre-seeding fertiliser as specified shall be supplied by the Contractor and shall be spread at the manufacturer's recommended rate and raked into the seedbed. Grass seed as specified and supplied by the Contractor shall be broadcast over the entire area at a rate of 50gms/sq. m and the area lightly raked to cover the seed and rolled with a light roller. Any area that fails to germinate within four weeks or where germination is not uniform across there seeded surface shall be re-seeded at the Contractor's own expense until satisfactory sward is established.

8.2 Area to be Re-turfed.

Preparation of the site shall be as for reseeding except that the cultivated depth can be reduced to 100mm. The finished surface of the area shall be level and shall be the thickness of the turf below the level of the surrounding ground. Good quality turfs shall be supplied by the Contractor and laid so as to break bond by half a turf length. The turfs shall be neatly cut to edges and profiled neatly around obstacles, laid firmly against each other and surrounding grass and well firmed down. Immediately after laying, the Contractor shall top dress the turfs with finely sifted soil or sandy loam supplied by the Contractor, brushed well into joints and lightly rolled to ensure a firm and even surface. On sloping sites or gradients on banks wooden pegs driven through the turfs into the bed shall secure turfs. It is the Contractor's responsibility to ensure that all areas of new turf are watered sufficiently to ensure the proper establishment of the grass. Any turfs, which do not become established, must be collected and removed from the site and disposed of by the Contractor and replaced by new turfs if the quality specified above – all at the Contractor's expense.

9.0 Ditching

9.1 Scheduled Work.

- Cleaning of obstructions. A free flow of water must be maintained at all times and any Contractor must remove obstructions by foreign materials including litter.
- All growth on sides and bottom of ditch must be cut and removed.
- All ditches including feeder channels shall be cleaned and properly dug out to the maximum uniform gradients permitted by the general configuration of the ground or to the levels.

- All litter and arisings shall be removed from Site and disposed of.

9.2 Non-Scheduled Work.

All ditches including feeder channels shall be cleaned and properly dug out to the maximum uniform gradients permitted by the general configuration of the ground or to the levels provided by the Supervising Officer.

10.0 Weed Control.

The Contractor shall be sufficiently experienced to be able to readily identify Injurious Weeds, e.g. Common Ragwort, as prescribed in the Weeds Act 1959 and any subsequent legislation. The appearance of any such weeds on areas covered by this Contract, or on adjacent land, should be reported to the Supervising Officer immediately. Any treatment of such weeds requested by the Supervising Officer would be carried out at the rate for applying weed killer as per Schedule of Maintenance Daywork Rates.

Chemicals should only be used in appropriate weather conditions and precautions should be taken to avoid damage by overspray to adjacent shrubs and plants.

- During the growing season, the Contractor shall maintain any further weed control using glyphosate (or other herbicide approved by the Supervising Officer) applied directly to the weed foliage using a knapsack spray or other approved applicator at the manufacturer's recommended rate.
- It is essential that soil surfaces remain undisturbed by cultivation and any weed growth occurring should be removed by hand as necessary.

Note that the Council is reviewing its use of chemicals and this will be discussed with the Contractor.

11.0 Application of Fertiliser.

The Supervising Officer may require the application of fertiliser to specific areas included within the contract during the year. This is over and above any specific requirement to apply fertiliser to for example: - Flowerbeds and shrub beds as referred in this specification.

Materials supplied for the application of fertiliser must be approved by the Supervising Officer before use. The price of the approved fertiliser (paid to the supplier by the Council) and the quantity to be applied will be agreed by the Supervising Officer before the order is placed for the material.

Where the use of named fertilisers is required this shall be supplied by the Contractor in the manufacturer's sealed bags.

All applications of fertiliser must be made strictly in accordance with the manufacturer / supplier's instructions.

12.0 Supply of Materials.

Several of the operations involved with ground maintenance require materials to be supplied by the Contractor. Where this is the case the cost of the materials is to be included in the rate indicated in the Schedule of Maintenance, all costs provided in the tender and in the Contract Pricing Document.

Any material supplied by the Contractor that does not meet these specifications shall be replaced on issue of a Default Notice at the Contractor's own expense within the time limit specified by the Supervising Officer in such a Default Notice using materials that do conform to the Specification.

12.7 Tree Stakes.

All tree stakes shall be 2" by 2" (52mm x 52mm) square sawn soft wood from sustainable supplies and be pressure treated with timber preservative. Each stake shall be 8ft (2.4m) long and pointed at one end. Any stake that in the opinion of the Supervising Officer has a large or an excessive number of knots shall not be used.

12.8 Tree Ties.

Ties shall be made of rubber or soft plastic reinforced with a fabric layer and be of minimum width of 1.5 inches (37mm) and be of sufficient length to secure the tree to the stake. The separator block between the tree and the stake shall be made of rubber or plastic and designed not to cause damage to the bark of the tree. The securing nails shall be 1.25 inches (30mm) galvanised steel nails with a broad clout head.

13.0 The Maintenance of Horticultural Features

13.1.1 This section provides the specification for all operation relating to horticultural operations carried out during the course of the Contract.

13.1.2 The Contractor shall make full provision within the Tendered Rates for all costs that the Council shall incur in maintaining the features to the standards specified for the maintenance of horticultural features and for the periodic tasks that are stipulated therein.

13.1.3 All works undertaken in the maintenance of shrubs, roses, herbaceous plants or similar features shall be carried out in accordance with horticultural practices which are acceptable to the Supervising Officer. The Contractor will need to liaise closely with the Supervising Officer to ensure that the standard of work undertaken is of an acceptable nature, and should work not be of such a standard no payment will be made, and any works required to restore to restore damaged areas will be carried out at the Contractor's expense.

13.1.4 Shrubberies are to be found at a number of sites within the Contract Area, and contain a wide variety of the more common evergreen and deciduous general plus, in a few cases, roses and/or herbaceous plants and/or flowering bulbs. In general terms, the majority of these shrubberies are 'mature' and should therefore require relatively little maintenance, whilst 'immature' shrubberies should be maintained in a manner to encourage rapid ground cover by the shrubs to minimise the maintenance requirement in future years. Thus the work required will vary from site to site and from 'bed' to 'bed' within sites depending upon such factors as the species and state of maturity of shrubs to be found, the type of bed edging, degree of ground cover achieved, etc.

13.1.5 Traditionally the bulk of shrub bed maintenance work has been undertaken in the period September to April, although the Contractor should appreciate that certain species may require pruning outside of this period, and routine maintenance work such as the edging and the hoeing/weeding of beds and litter removal will require to be undertaken during the 'grass cutting season' and they shall therefore make appropriate allowance for this and will be deemed to have done so.

13.1.6 The Contractor will be assumed to have thoroughly familiarised themselves with the requirements at all sites within the Contract Area before having submitted their tender, and their unit rates for the annual maintenance of shrubberies per 10m² of bed, and for shrubs not in beds, per shrub, will include for all the required cyclical work and at the frequencies as described below.

13.1.7 Performance standards for Horticultural Maintenance are given in Table 4.

13.2 Pruning

13.2.1 As a general guide the following maintenance tasks and frequencies for shrubs and shrub beds are required during the course of a year. Shrubs will be pruned if necessary once a year, at the time and in the manner according with sound horticultural practice for the particular species. Shrubs less than two years old will not normally require pruning.

13.2.2 When pruning the Contractor shall endeavour to:

- Encourage new growth, flower and fruit as appropriate.
- Remove all dead, diseased, damaged, misshapen and dying wood, weak growth and suckers, which should be cut back to the source stem or root level.
- Retain natural form and habit.
- Retain/encourage an attractive shape and size consistent with the general characteristics of the site and required visual effect.
- Prevent individual specimens and shrubberies as a whole from becoming untidy in appearance.
- Prevent undesirable encroachment over surrounding/adjacent areas and interference/obstruction particularly in relation to buildings, windows, roads, footpaths, doors, gates, seats, litter bins, signs, light, sightlines and the like.
- In general, and subject to this according with sound horticultural practice and standard guides of the Royal Horticultural Society or similar for particular species, flowering shrubs shall be pruned as follows:
 - Shrubs flowering in Winter: prune in spring.
 - Shrubs flowering in Spring and early Summer: prune immediately after flowering.
 - Shrubs flowering in Summer and early Autumn: cut back to old wood in Winter.
- Pruning shall normally be undertaken using sharp secateurs or in the case of heavy, woody growth using small toothed pruning saws or tree loppers, without damaging or tearing stems and branches, and trimming off any ragged edges of bark or wood with a sharp knife.
- Any roses shall be early Spring pruned to encourage strong basal growth and a balanced, compact habit, removing all dead or diseased material and suckers to leave 3 to 5 buds per stem on single flowered hybrid tea varieties and 6 to 8 buds per stem on multi flowered/floribunda types, and using bypass or parrot secateurs.
- Any climbing plants will additionally require insecure growth to be supported by recognised and approved methods using minor consumable fixing materials provided.

13.3 Tidying of Beds.

13.3.1 Immediately after pruning, all arisings, debris and litter shall be removed from the shrubs, beds and surrounding/adjacent areas by raking, sweeping or hand pickings as appropriate and carted from site for proper disposal.

13.3.2 The Surface of beds, where shrub growth provides less than 100% closed canopy ground cover shall then be lightly forked over to a depth of 50 to 70mm and raked to produce a fine and level tilth, causing minimum disturbance to the roots of the shrubs or any herbaceous plants and bulbs, and all weeds, including their roots, removed and properly disposed of.

13.3.3 The soil level at the edges of beds shall be adjusted if necessary to 50mm below the adjacent hard or grass surface, spreading arisings evenly over the bed. The edges of beds in or abutting onto grassed areas shall be cut back/reformed using a half moon or spade to give a regular and even border to the bed and all arisings shall be removed from site for proper disposal.

13.4 Annual Inspection

At the time of undertaking the maintenance as described, the Contractor shall carry out a thorough inspection of shrubberies recording the details of their inspection on a form produced by the Contractor of a format approved by the Supervising Officer prior to the commencement of the Contract.

13.5 Control of Weeds

13.5.1 The exposed soil surface of beds shall be kept clear of weeds, litter and debris as follows:

13.5.2 By the application of Residual Herbicides, unless directed against this by the Council, once per year during the period February to April, but after completion of the work described above, in accordance with the terms and conditions as set out in the section of this Specification relation to Vegetation Control. This operation is not normally required for shrubberies less than two years old.

13.5.3 By hoeing and hand weeding alternatively at monthly intervals, during the period from June to October inclusive, commencing with a hoeing operation in June. At each of these visits all litter and other debris shall be removed from the beds for proper disposal. Hoeing shall be undertaken to maintain a fine tilth across the exposed surface of the beds.

13.5.4 Hand weeding means removing all weeds, including their roots, by hand, hoeing, digging or forking as necessary, taking care to remove not more than a minimum quantity of soil with the roots and causing minimum disturbance to the established plants. After hand weeding, any footprints shall be erased by light forking or hoeing to leave the surface of beds in a neat, clean and tidy condition.

13.6 Other Maintenance Tasks

13.6.1 The Contractor shall include for the application of Growmore or a similar granular fertiliser, to all beds at a rate of 10 Kg/100m² during the period April to May each year. The fertiliser shall be evenly distributed across the whole area of the beds to be treated.

13.6.2 The Contractor shall include for the grassed edges of beds to be cut with shears or other suitable equipment at the same frequency as the cutting of the surrounding/adjacent grassed area, and if not at the same time then within 3 days of the cutting of the main area. They shall allow for this in their rates and prices for grass cutting.

13.6.3 As a matter of good professional practice, shrubberies should be visually inspected each time a site is visited for the purpose of undertaking any scheduled work, and any requirement for urgent remedial work reported promptly to the Supervising Officer.

13.6.4 There is at present, within the Contract Area, requirement for the Contractor to undertake work associated with the maintenance of Herbaceous Borders, and Annual (Spring and Summer) Bedding Schemes, to the extent that certain plants more usually associated with these types of feature may be found in certain shrubberies. Where this occurs the Contractor should cut back/remove previous seasons growth at an appropriate time of the year and exercise care when applying any herbicide to such beds.

13.7 Planting

13.7.1 From time to time the Supervising Officer may request the Contractor to carry out the planting of shrubs, roses, etc., including the replacement of dead or badly damaged plants, and this shall be done using new plants and other necessary materials provided by the Supervising Officer.

13.7.2 Dead or damaged plants shall be removed from the site for proper disposal and plants replaced with new stock during the period October to March at times when frost is not present in the ground. The Contractor shall be given 48 hours' notice of the delivery of such new stock/materials and shall remove it from the Supervising Officer's depot within one working day of its delivery, either for immediate planting or to a place of safe keeping. Payment for this work shall be in accordance with Schedule of Maintenance prices submitted by the Contractor.

13.8 Disease Control

From time to time the Supervising Officer may instruct the Contractor to treat diseased or pest infected shrubs/roses with chemicals provided by the Supervising Officer. This shall be undertaken within three working days of receipt of instruction from the Supervising Officer and shall be paid for in accordance with Schedule of Maintenance prices submitted by the Contractor.

13.9 Planting (General)

Should the Contractor be instructed to carry out any planting of trees, shrubs, roses, hedging, etc., these 'plants' shall be supplied by the Parish Council at its own expense but the Contractor shall bear the cost of handling, collection, transportation and any temporary storage and should allow for this in their rates and prices. Planting and staking generally shall accord with appropriate standards of the British Standards Institution, Royal Horticultural Society or similar body, or as instructed by the Supervising Officer.

Before taking delivery of any materials for planting the Contractor should assure themselves that these are strong and healthy. Any material not properly planted, or that dies as a result of the manner of planting, shall be replaced, including (re)planting, by the Contractor at their own expense.

13.10 Shrub Beds (Naturalised)

These beds are provided to give a semi-natural/ natural effect, encouraging:

- Wildlife via natural urban habitat; and
- Natural leaf-fall to be retained.
- They should be maintained to provide an aesthetically pleasing and safe environment free from litter, debris, notifiable weeds, and actively managed to encourage desired planting (which may include wild flowers and naturalised bulbs).
- Pruning for security - it may be necessary to prune shrubs out of specification due to police or council request on any public site.