

## **Amenities & Leisure Report**

### **Councillor Richard Hailstone, Chair of Amenities & Leisure**

The committee has had a busy year initiating new projects and overseeing the continuing assimilation of grounds maintenance transferred from the Borough Council.

March saw the start of grass cutting using our own work force for the first time. Unfortunately, the weather was not kind and we had two snow episodes during the month which delayed the start and made it difficult to catch up. A decision was made at the end of June to employ contractors to cut the larger open spaces as our own smaller machines were finding it difficult to keep to the planned schedule. This decision coincided with the start of a prolonged dry spell – such is the vagaries of the British weather!

The wet spring and warm summer produced rampant growth of hedgerows and brambles so we had to fund an emergency cut ahead of the hard autumn cutback. Unfortunately, the maps that were given to us by the Borough Council did not identify all the hedges but most of the smaller areas have now been identified and added to the list.

May saw the official opening of the newly refurbished Heaton Close playground by local celebrity, Maisie Sly. This fun event was attended by children and their parents from Catherine Wayte School. The Wick Farm orchard play ground was also overhauled and the orchard has been replanted with apple and pear trees – which seem to have survived the dry summer thanks to regular watering by the Parks and Open Spaces Team.

Part of this year's playground budget has been spent on overhauling the Heaton Close MUGA which, being over 20 years old, was dilapidated and listing

a lot to patch up! We had intended to spend the money on updating Haydonleigh Skate Park but this project was put back due to delays in transfer of the land and the erection of a fence between the MUGA (to be retained by Haydonleigh School) and the Skate Park. This upgrade will be our own major project for 2019/20. We also have places for an outdoor gym in Priory Vale and we will be consulting on this in the near future.

Leisure gardens continue to be popular and we have improved the car park at Ventnor Close and planted apple trees on a spare plot which we hope to develop for local charities, this will be named "Apple Tree Allotment".

The Parks and Open Spaces Team have recently uncovered "Haydon Henge" as part of the winter shrub clearance at Purton Road.