

PROPERTIES WORKING PARTY REPORT.

Harbury is fortunate to have a number of open spaces-village greens and an extensive recreation ground and it also owns the Cemetery. All these areas require considerable maintenance and the bulk of this work is done by our contractor, Mr Hall.

The playground equipment has frequent professional inspections and we aim to act quickly if problems are identified. Last summer, the skateboard ramp was severely damaged by fire and required major repairs. The insurance company asked us to look at security and the Council decided to have the scrub area adjacent cut back to improve visibility of the area. The aerial runway had to be taken out of action as it was unsafe and we are investigating getting it repaired at reasonable cost so this popular equipment can be used again. Moles have become a problem and we now have a contract with a pest control firm to deal with them. The paved area between the playground and the village hall has deteriorated and will be repaired shortly as will the picnic table by the tennis courts. In the long term, we are looking at purchasing new equipment for the small children's playground and replacing the bark pits with energy absorbing safety surfaces.

The tennis court fence has been partially renewed and agreement reached with the Tennis Club to increase contributions to the Sinking Fund which pays for the maintenance of the courts.

The garden in Chapel Street had become unsightly with a vandalised seat and neglected shrubbery. The garden has been replanted, and a new bench and litter bin installed and the area looks much better. The cost of this was partially offset by a grant of £730 from Warwickshire County Council. The memorial plaque on the original bench has deteriorated and a replacement is being ordered to fix to the new bench.

We were advised that we had to ensure the memorials in the Cemetery were safe and had them inspected by a specialist company. Before doing this, considerable effort was made to publicise the process. Nevertheless, a number of people were upset when 67 memorials, found to be dangerous were staked. Efforts are continuing to trace relatives so these graves can be repaired. The Health and Safety Executive have now issued new advice on memorial safety and we will not be taking further action until we know what this contains.

The allotments are flourishing and there is a waiting list. At the request of the holders an additional tap has been provided on the Pineham Farm side.

I would like to thank my fellow working party members, Keith Thompson, Alan Knowles, Janet Thornley and Rob Darlison for their work over the past year. Special thanks are due to the Parish Clerk, Nicola Thompson who manages contracts and deals with numerous problems day by day.

Sharon Hancock