

Stanwick Parish Council Grounds Maintenance Tender 2023 Specification

Introduction to the specification

Overall Purpose

The purpose of this Specification is to generally define the Standard to be achieved, rather than define the precise method by which the Contractor will be required to perform the Service. In some situations however a more detailed specification is provided. All Specification items are to be read in conjunction with the Summary of Key Points, the terms of which shall apply where appropriate.

The overall purpose is to provide a clean, tidy and well-maintained Management Area that reflects customer need and good horticultural and environmental practice. All work shall consequently be carried out and timed in such a way as to leave the whole of each site in a well maintained and tidy condition at all times.

In some cases the frequency of visits will be determined by the Contractor in order to meet the required standard for each of the different types of operation. The exception to this will be when works are ordered by means of Schedules of Rates. In this case the required timing, within reason, of these works shall be set out in the order.

Site Plans

The locations are shown the enclosed pack of Site Schedule and Maps.

Scope of the Specification

The Specification sets out what is required and when these works are to be undertaken in order to guide the Contractor in the production of detailed Method Statements that will become a contractual obligation.

The Specification comprises the management and maintenance of most Council owned green spaces and associated facilities in the parish of Stanwick, including the following categories of land and functions:

- Leisure areas including parks, public open spaces, natural sites, events, children's play areas, allotments.
- Cemetery
- Closed church yard
- Highway areas (verges)
- Linked footpaths

The Grounds Maintenance Service comprises of the following Works:-

Core Tasks

- Grass Cutting
- Grass Edging
- Shrub/Herbaceous Bed Maintenance
- Flower Bed Maintenance
- Hedge Maintenance
- Young Tree Maintenance
- Cleaning of Grounds
- Burials / Gravedigging

These Tasks are more fully defined in this document

Core Tasks are those tasks that are required to be carried out at each Scheme in accordance with the Specification and in respect of which the Provider has tendered his annual sum.

Optional Tasks are those tasks that may be required to be carried out any scheme on the specific instruction of the Authorised Officer and in respect of which payment will be made in accordance with the Schedule of Rates or as may be agreed. The Schedule of Rates as tendered by the Provider shall apply to a scheme irrespective of location, scheme size and extent of work so required

The Provider will be responsible for carrying out all the functions detailed in the Contract documents together with all other services ancillary thereto which are consistent with the Provider being responsible for maintaining Contract standards in respect of Grounds Maintenance.

The Specification describes the tasks the Provider is required to perform together with the minimum standards to which the Provider must perform these tasks.

Access to some of the Schemes can be restrictive as to the size of vehicle/machine that can be used and to some areas, access is only via locked gates. Operations may also be restricted due to the presence of fences, railings, walls, street furniture and other obstacles. It is the responsibility of the Provider to acquaint himself with the access and means of operation to each location and any other problems affecting access relating to all locations.

The Provider shall avoid, where possible, vehicle encroachment onto grass and other areas, except where vehicle encroachment is necessary for effective performance on the Contract. In any event, the Provider shall not encroach onto such areas during excessively wet ground conditions. Any damage caused due to encroachment onto grass and other areas by the Provider's plant or vehicles shall be made good at the Provider's expense and within the Response Period specified by the Authorised Officer.

Prevention of pollution

The Provider shall take all reasonable precautions to prevent the pollution of the atmosphere, waterways, urban areas etc., by the discharge or deposit of liquids, solids or gases and will be held responsible for any damage caused by such discharge or deposit. The cost of rendering harmless or removing the discharge or deposit will be borne by the Provider

The Provider shall particularly note the requirement to seek HSE (Health and Safety Executive) approval of any pesticide that could be applied to an area, e.g., drainage channels or hard surface areas and potentially lead to run-off to a watercourse.

Method Statements

The Council is keen to receive tenders from organisations who can deliver a high quality grounds maintenance service. Accordingly tenderers are required to submit comprehensive Method Statements, as set out below, to support their tender.

Method Statement 1 - Service Delivery

The Council wishes to know how the Tenderer intends to deliver a quality grounds maintenance service that is efficient, effective and continuously improving. For this Method Statement the Council is seeking comprehensive statements regarding all grounds maintenance operations within the Grounds Maintenance Specification the removal of arisings from hard surfaces including roads needs to be addressed in the statements.

The Provider shall plan to separate all waste matter into distinct types and arrange for its disposal as detailed below and pay all costs and fees in connection with such disposal. The Provider shall comply with all legal requirements for transport and disposal of waste. No burning, burying, or composting of waste is permitted at any Scheme or location.

The Provider shall take all reasonable precautions to prevent any arisings of whatsoever nature from the Contract being dumped on any area other than licensed tipping/disposal areas.

All waste that is neither Green Waste or Hazardous Waste shall be deemed General Waste and shall be taken only to a recognised, licensed, and approved disposal point and the Provider shall include in his rates and charges for all fees and costs in connection herewith. The provider must produce all waste transfer documentation that relates to the provision of the services.

Method Statement 2 - Environmental Sustainability

The Council wishes to know how the Tenderer intends to provide a grounds maintenance service that is delivered in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner through innovative and progressive environmental sustainable practices.

Method Statement 3 - Staffing

The Council wishes to know how the Tenderer intends to provide a grounds maintenance team of the right size, well resourced:-

Method Statement 4 – Health and Safety and Risk Assessments

The Council wishes to know how the Tenderer intends to provide a grounds maintenance service that is operated in accordance with the appropriate statutory and regulatory health and safety guidelines and best practice for community safety.

Communication and Meetings

Good communication between the Supervising Officer and the Contractor is vital for the effective operation of the Contract.

Preliminaries

Litter – ‘Litter’ shall, for the purpose of this Specification, mean the removal of litter, debris, dog faeces, accident debris, cans, cartons, paper, boxes, timber, metals, plastics, glass, tins, fallen branches, dead animals (removed and disposed of in an appropriate manner), hazardous waste (including Asbestos) and other deposits, which can be removed without sweeping on all sites at all times.

Weeds – All sites will be kept free of notifiable and injurious weeds at all times. Where possible these shall be hand pulled, removed from the contract area and incinerated and not used for recycling. Where notifiable weeds have been removed from a site then the Supervising Officer must be informed within 1 week of their removal. Weeds species included are identified in The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Part II Schedule 9 and the Weeds Act 1959.

Damage – The Contractor shall protect buildings, fences, gates, walls, landform, vegetation and other site features that are to remain in position during the performance of the Service. Any damage caused to existing features through the Contractor’s negligence will be reinstated at the Contractor’s expense. Any damage shall be reported to the Supervising Officer as soon as the Contractor is made aware of it. Any item found to be in a dangerous condition shall be immediately made safe or removed to a store provided by the Contractor as soon as the defect is noticed.

Application of Pesticides – The Council is keen to reduce the use of pesticides by the Contractor and move to more cultural methods. Therefore, as a matter of preference biological controls and naturally occurring pesticides and fungicides are to be used, unless their use proves ineffective; then inorganic chemical alternatives will be allowed subject to the prior approval of the Supervising Officer. The use of residual herbicides will not be permitted.

Where pesticide use is necessary, the Contractor shall apply and store them in accordance with all relevant legislation and shall inform the Supervising Officer in advance of when they are to be applied detailing types

of pesticide, the method of application and where they are to be applied. The Contractor shall make arrangements for his own supply of water.

Pests and Diseases – Only chemicals approved under Official Controls (Plant Protection Products) Regulations 2020 (including amendments) shall be used by the Provider. Pesticides shall be used only for those purposes as stated on the label.

All plants and young trees shall be maintained in a healthy condition, free from pests and diseases by recognised cultural methods. In the case of an outbreak of canker of any disease, this shall be reported to the Council within 48 hours so that a course of action may be agreed.

MAINTENANCE OF GRASS AREAS

Grass Cutting All routine grass cutting operations shall be performed in accordance with instructions contained within the Performance Table in Appendix 1.

The Contractor shall provide the frequency and timings of Urban Highway Grass cutting.

Tenderers are required to set out in detail their approach to the Maintenance of Grass in their Method Statement entitled Service Delivery. The height of first cut of the spring season shall be set in order that the grass is “tipped”. (i.e. in two stages)

The contractor is expected to avoid damaging wooden structures (e.g. benches) and trees with grass cutting equipment. Tenderers are required to set out in detail their approach to the Maintenance of Grass in their Method Statement entitled Service Delivery.

The Contractor is expected to provide sufficient manpower, and machinery, to catch up if there is a substantial amount of mowing time lost through bad weather.

The Contractor will specify how they will accomplish this in their method statement entitled Service Delivery.

In conditions of drought the Contractor will not commence mowing operations without first discussing the situation with Supervising Officer on the height of cut to be used. During period of prolonged dry weather condition or extreme wet weather where the ground conditions are such that the ground could be damaged or safety compromised the routine grass cut may be suspended.

In the event that a suspension of routine cut is required the supervising officer will give a written instruction to the Contractor.

Where areas are mown and collected, arisings shall be removed before the Contractor leaves the site. At locations where collection of grass is not stipulated, clippings shall be distributed evenly over the full width of the machine swath and may be left where they lie, except for paths, gully's and hard surfaces which shall be kept free of cuttings at all time.

The Contractor shall remove grass and debris from all hard surfaces within one hour of the grass being cut.

The Contractor shall inspect all grass areas prior to each maintenance operation and shall remove all stones, litter, molehills and other deleterious material to an authorised disposal facility.

The Contractor shall allow for the cutting off of all seed heads of grasses and bents and weeds during each cut.

From time to time it may not be possible to meet the agreed standards.

The contractor is to set out in their method statement entitled Service Delivery, how they will manage such situation.

Examples of these are:

- After the first cut at the start of the annual cutting programme.
- Following a cessation of cutting due to weather conditions.
- Where grass has been allowed to fall outside of the specification.
- Following a break in service due to the Contractor not completing the previous cut to timetable or omitting a cut
- During periods of heavy growth.
- Due to the Contractor not meeting specified standards of work.

Grass areas in which flowering bulbs have been planted or have become naturalised shall not be cut until 6 weeks after flowering, at which time the Contractor shall cut back the bulb foliage in order to return the area to the same standard as the surrounding grass areas. This operation shall be staged over a period of two cuts, with the first cut removing only half of the sward height.

Arisings on both cuts shall be collected and removed to an authorised disposal or recycling facility.

Where an undefined edge forms part of a hedge base or shrub bed all vegetation will cut back up to hedge base, shrub canopy, fence and boundary lines. Arisings shall be left on the grass or removed from bed surfaces.

With the exception of highway areas the Contractor will maintain the grass edges of beds, hedge bases, hard surfaces and channels to their original and defined shape and dimensions.

Once every year bed edges, tree pits and hedge bases shall be cut vertically to a depth of 100mm in relation to the surrounding surface, using a half-moon edging tool or an approved machine, retaining the original shape and dimensions. Edges shall be reformed to form clean straight lines or smooth flowing curves.

Urban Highway Grass

The grass verges, as identified as STA 07 in the accompanying documentation, within the urban environment will be cut on a performance basis. The Contractor's attention is drawn to the Performance Table in Appendix 1 regarding the height of cut. The choice of machinery should reflect the height of cut to be achieved.

Once a year, winter siding out should take place on the highway verges to remove any overgrowth from the verge onto the pavements. This shall be cut to a straight edge and all arisings removed

Weed Control

The Contractor shall keep all 'linked paths', as identified as STA 08 in the accompanying documentation, clear of unwanted grass, weeds and moss on each occasion. This includes the removal of both growing and dead vegetation, and will normally require the use of pesticides.

SHRUB BEDS

The Specification is intended to achieve strong healthy and stable shrubs, cleanly pruned to good horticultural practice and of an appropriate shape and size for their location and to keep all areas weed and litter free at all times.

Tenderers are required to set out in detail their approach to the maintenance of Shrub Beds in their Method Statement entitled Service Delivery.

Shrubs and climbing plants shall not be permitted to encroach over footpaths, roadways, sight lines, notice boards, signs, furniture and grass areas.

Pruning will take place in accordance with sound horticultural practice.

All arising are to be disposed of at the Contractor's tip or recycling facility.

The Contractor shall remove any self-set tree or shrub including roots. Where the roots cannot be removed, stump killer shall be applied to the stump.

At the commencement of the contract existing self sets shall be removed during the first four months of the contract.

Shrub beds shall be kept free of litter at all times and shall be inspected in October of each year by the Contractor and the Council shall be notified, in writing, of the presence of dead diseased or damaged plants that require replacement, with their location and variety where known.

ROSE BEDS

The council has two flower beds at the East Street junction where flower carpet roses are planted in addition to bedding plants.

The Contractor shall ensure that all roses are healthy, vigorous, pest and disease free, within the period of the Contract. Tenderers are required to set out in detail their approach to the maintenance of Rose Beds in their Method Statement entitled Service Delivery.

All arisings are to be disposed of at the Contractor's tip or recycling facility.

Roses shall not be permitted to encroach over footpaths and roads.

All types of roses shall be pruned in November in accordance with good horticultural practice and suckers shall be removed at the junction with the root whenever they appear.

Rose beds shall be inspected in October of each year and the Council shall be notified, in writing, of the presence of dead diseased or damaged plants that require replacement, with their location and variety where known.

HEDGE MAINTENANCE

General: The following specification is intended to provide strong healthy and stable hedges, cleanly cut and of an approved shape and size.

All arisings shall be disposed of at the Contractor's tip or recycling facility.

Tenderers are required to set out in detail their approach to the maintenance of Hedges in their Method Statement entitled Service Delivery.

The Contractor shall trim and prune all hedges to encourage a stable hedge.

The width at the top of the hedge shall be slightly less than at the base. All woody weeds shall be removed and stumps killed with an appropriate product.

Where hedges obstruct road paths, the Contractor will cut back the nuisance growth at each site maintenance visit.

The Contractor shall cause minimum disturbance to nesting birds and wildlife in compliance with the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1985.

The Contractor shall make all cuts cleanly and remove any ragged edges using a sharp blade except where flails are used.

Unless otherwise agreed with the Supervising Officer, each hedge shall be the same size at the end of the Contract as they were at the beginning.

The Contractor shall cut back the current growth to the point of the previous cut, and the hedge shall be trimmed, pruned back to the same height, width and general shape as that which existed at the completion of the last trim, but shall not exceed the height specified unless instructed by the Supervising Officer.

All hedges shall be cut both sides and top except hedges that abut private land which shall be cut on one side and top. The Contractor shall remove all suckers, self-set trees or shrubs, brambles and ivy which are not part of the hedge, to ground level and treat with an appropriate stump killer.

The Contractor shall leave grass edges adjacent to hedges neat, vertical, tidy and weed free at the time of cutting. The Contractor shall ensure sight lines remain unobstructed including encroachment onto pathways.

The Contractor shall ensure that at the bases are weed free after each visit to hedges. The Contractor's attention is drawn to the Operations Table in Appendix 1 regarding the timing of hedge works.

FLOWER BED MAINTENANCE

The Council has two flower beds

Key Considerations will need to be made on the following:-

- Sourcing, purchasing and planting of winter & summer bedding plants
- Watering, water as necessary to ensure survival thereafter.
- Remove weeds when they are visible – details of the Contractors method for weed removal shall be provided in their Method Statement entitled Service Delivery

LITTER AND DEBRIS CLEARANCE

All hard surfaces including paths, paved areas and play surfaces will require the removal of all deleterious and adhered materials using appropriate methods when necessary. This includes leaf fall on the hard surfaces at the recreation ground.

Tenderers are required to set out in detail their approach to Litter and Debris Clearance in their Method Statement entitled Service Delivery.

Leaf collection shall be carried out on one occasion in November and one occasion in December. Outside this period leaf collection shall form part of the normal maintenance of sites.

The Contractor will not carry out leaf clearance operations under adverse weather conditions such as high winds, snow, ice or other weather conditions.

Tenderers are required to set out in detail their approach to leaf collections in their Method Statement entitled Service Delivery and Development.

HARD SURFACES

This includes the car park at recreation ground, the gravel path at cemetery, paths in the church yard and linked paths (various), and the safer surfacing at recreation ground. This also includes are STA 10 as identified in the accompanying documentation

The maintenance and cleansing of hard surfaces will be carried out to non-cultivated areas in defined areas

Weeds include moss, algae or any other vegetation growing on the surfaces.

The Contractor shall spray all weeds on hard surfaces with an approved translocated herbicide. Within 14 days the Contractor will visit the sprayed areas and confirm the efficacy of application. Should the application have been unsuccessful the Contractor will re-treat the weeds at his expense.

The application of herbicide should be limited to the affected area rather than a total area coverage.

The Contractor shall treat all moss on hard surfaces, with an approved moss killer. The Contractor shall perform the operation in accordance with the pesticide and fertiliser application general specification. Within 14 days the Contractor will visit the treated areas and confirm the efficacy of application. Should the application have been unsuccessful the Contractor will retreat the moss at his expense Alternatively the Contractor may wish to mechanically remove moss by scraping or wire brushing without first applying moss killer.

Tenderers are required to set out in detail their approach to the management of Hard Surface in their Method Statement titled Service Delivery

ALLOTMENTS

There is 1 allotment site in the parish and it has a water supply. Tenderers are required to set out in detail their approach to the Maintenance of Allotments in their Method Statement entitled Service Delivery to cover the scope of:

Grass Cutting

Grass paths and the Social Area in allotments shall be mown by the Contractor and maintained at a height of between 20mm and 50mm at all times.

CEMETERY GRAVE DIGGING AND DUTIES

The works will usually be carried out during normal working hours, although work outside normal hours may occasionally be necessary to complete the filling and tidying up of graves and surrounding areas.

Tenderers are required to set out in detail their approach to providing Cemetery Services in their Method Statements entitled Service Delivery and Customer Service and Communication.

The mechanical excavator must be suitable for the prevailing ground conditions. Any damage caused to grass areas and edges by the contractor must be reinstated at the Contractors expense.

The written instruction to dig graves will be issued no less than 2 working days to the interment.

All graves are to be fully dug to the correct dimensions 24 hours before the cortège is due to arrive.

All graves are to be fully dressed and prepared for the burial service no later than 45 minutes before the cortège are due to arrive. Occasionally Saturday morning burials / cremated remains may take place, for which contractor cover if necessary. Contractors will set out the costs of providing this service in the Schedule of Rates

For the avoidance of doubt it is an essential part of this Specification that the Contractor shall carry out the works without fail and complete each order within the specified time whatever adverse weather or other circumstances arise.

Excavation of Graves

All graves are to be excavated following the ICCM Code of Safe Working Practice for Cemeteries, by staff qualified through the Cemetery Operatives Training Scheme.

The Supervising officer will meet with the contractor to mark each grave to be excavated.

Before carrying out any excavation the Contractor shall examine adjacent memorials to ensure that they are in a safe condition.

In the event of any memorial being unsafe the Contractor shall immediately inform the Supervising Officer.

Having first checked the documentation and confirmed the correct position of the grave, the Contractor shall excavate the grave to the dimensions specified by the Supervising Officer, making allowance for the shoring.

In carrying out this work the Contractor shall take steps to ensure that no adjoining or underlying remains are disturbed, and during the excavation the Contractor shall ensure that the grave is adequately shored using tools, equipment and materials supplied by the Contractor.

Having completed the excavation the grave should be shaped to provide a regular and uniform opening.

Throughout excavations of graves the Contractor shall ensure that for safety reasons at least two staff are in attendance. Any damage or spoiling of memorials as a result of these operations will be made good by the Contractor at his own expense.

All excavated graves must be shored for safety.

In the event that an excavation cannot be completed for any reason, than the partly dug grave must be covered to ensure that it does not constitute a safety hazard.

Large amounts of excess spoil must be disposed of at an agreed tip.

Pre-interment

The following key tasks shall be undertaken, the grave being fully prepared no less than 30 minutes prior to the arrival of the cortège.

The grave shall be emptied of any water to be disposed over in accordance with Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2016 (EPR 2016).

The grave surround shall be fitted with a timber platform two timbers wide, or the purpose made polypropylene grave surround, to give a firm footing for the bearers. The platform and the grave sides and ends shall be draped neatly and tidily with grass matting, ensuring the surround is covered to an area extending 60 cm beyond the edge of the grave with a sheet for the mourners to stand on, pegged down as required.

Any soil mound or spoil container adjacent to the grave shall now be completely covered with the grass matting. The area around the grave shall be cleared of any debris or litter, leaving the site in a tidy and presentable condition.

Lowering ropes and putlogs shall be placed in position, normally two over the grave and two in line with the grave, one spare lowering rope in view.

During the burial the Contractor shall ensure that at least one member of staff is present within sight to provide any assistance that may be required.

Any tools and equipment on site shall be out of sight of the funeral party if possible.

Backfilling the Grave

Immediately after the cortège has left the site, but waiting until they are out of sight and earshot, the grave shall be back filled. The earth is to be consolidated by punning whilst back filling. Soil is then to be banked up to 30cm above the surrounding ground and left neat and tidy. Surplus excavated material shall be disposed of at the Contractors expense. It is to be distinctly understood by the Contractor that on no account whatsoever may graves be left unfilled after an interment has taken place.

After mounding, floral tributes shall be carried from the laying out area and placed on the grave in a careful and attractive manner.

On some occasions the family may wish to back fill the grave themselves. On these occasions the Contractor shall make available sufficient tools for the job and provide two members of staff to be on hand and remove shoring equipment, mats and boards or render any other assistance that may be required.

Any memorial that has been soiled during excavation or backfilling of the grave should be thoroughly cleaned.

All ropes, grass matting and other equipment should be cleaned and removed by the contractor as there is no where to store these on site.

The temporary wooden marker provided by the funeral director will be placed at the head end of the grave.

General maintenance of graves

The Contractor shall maintain the graves, by making good settlement as necessary for a period of 12 months.

Old floral tributes are to be removed.

The Contractor shall level the grave by adding or removing the soil as required and grass seeding after 6-12 months as dictated by the ground conditions. See Topping up of graves below.

Exhumations

From time to time the Contractor may be required to carry out an exhumation. The Contractor will carry out cremated remains exhumations as part of the Contract.

Full body exhumations shall be priced in the SOR function of the Contract.

Removal of remains should take place in accordance with conditions of the licence issued by the Ministry of Justice and the ICCM Exhumation Handbook.

Burial of Cremated Remains

The Supervising officer will meet with the contractor to mark each grave to be excavated.

Having first checked the documentation and identified and confirmed the correct position for the plot, if there is a plaque or vase upon the plot, the Contractor shall carefully remove and place to one side. The plot must be fully prepared 30 minutes prior to the appointment time.

The contractor shall excavate a hole no larger than 35cm square and 40cm in depth, the hole to be both square and with vertical sides, and with a flat and level base, having removed the turf. Where two sets of ashes are to be interred at the same time in the same grave the dimensions will be increased.

In the event of water collecting in the hole, this should be removed.

Having completed the excavation the site should be left clean and tidy. The sides and surrounds of the excavation should be covered with grass matting.

Immediately after the mourners have left the site, the grave should be backfilled and firmed to the level of the surrounding surface.

Any plaque or vase or turf should be replaced and any floral tributes placed on the grave in a respectful manner.

Any memorial that has been soiled during the excavation or back filling of the grave should now be thoroughly cleaned.

Topping up of Sunken Graves

The Contractor shall allow for the reinstatement of up to 10 sunken graves per annum. The Contractor will allow in his price for the importation of sufficient topsoil to top up the graves prior to seeding once the grave has finished settling.

Memorials/Headstones

If any memorials/headstones are damaged, the Supervising Officer must be informed and the Contractor shall be responsible for paying for the repair.

If a dangerous memorial/headstone is noted or any other Health and Safety concern, this must be brought to the attention of the Supervising Officer.

Appendix 1 Performance items

Task	Site Ref	Contract area	Height		Collect
			Min	Max	
Amenity grass cut	STA1	Needham Rd Recreation Ground	20	65	
Amenity grass cut	STA2	The Avenue/The Hollow	20	65	
Amenity grass cut	STA3	Spencer Parade	20	65	
Amenity grass cut	STA4	East Street Triangle junction	20	65	
Amenity grass cut	STA5	Churchyard, Church St	20	65	
Amenity grass cut	STA6	Cemetery, Chelveston Rd	20	65	
Amenity grass cut	STA7	County verges- various	20	150	
Amenity grass cut	STA8	Link Footpaths	20	150	
Amenity grass cut	STA9	Mallows Grange public open space	20	65	
Amenity grass cut	STA11	Allotment paths & social area	20	150	