

To receive a report from the Service Delivery Department and consider any actions and associated expenditure

Report to: Services Committee.

Date of Report: 25.04.26

Officer writing the report: Town Clerk / Assistant Service Delivery Manager

Officer Recommendations:

Members are asked to note the report and consider:

1. Delegating authority to the Town Clerk to ensure that appropriate level of visual health and safety inspections are carried out at the pontoon.
2. Delegating authority to the Town Clerk to grant pontoon access to organisations holding events in the town (such as the Regatta, Cardon Gig Club, and National Waterski Race), while working collaboratively and constructively with the ferry operator to ensure safe operation.

Report Summary

- **Grounds Maintenance and Grass Cutting**

Open spaces:

With longer daylight hours and warmer weather on the rise the grass is growing nicely at a consistent rate. The Service Delivery Department continues to maintain Saltash's public open spaces in line with the established grounds maintenance schedule. This includes all key sites under Town Council ownership or management across the town.

The Kubota ride-on mower plays a vital role in delivering this work efficiently and cost-effectively, ensuring grassed areas are kept neat, well-presented, and professionally maintained throughout the growing season.

The Service Delivery is now actively completing regular pre-planned grounds maintenance and grass cutting works across all Town Council sites and assets.

Recent works include the three Saltash roundabouts at Pillmere, Waitrose, and Latchbrook (delivered under the LMP contract with Cornwall Council), as well as the Town Centre and Waterside, Pillmere Estate, Churchtown Cemetery, St Stephens Churchyard, Town Council play areas, and allotments. Most sites are cut on a weekly or fortnightly basis in line with the scheduled maintenance programme to ensure a consistent, neat, and professional appearance across all locations.

Wildflowers around Saltash:

Wildflowers around Saltash are managed with a strong commitment to biodiversity and environmental best practice by the Service Delivery Department. Designated wildflower areas, along with naturally occurring blooms on Council land, such as the recent displays of wild primroses and daffodils, are left undisturbed during their flowering periods to encourage healthy seasonal growth.

This approach ensures we maintain high presentation standards while fulfilling the Council's environmental responsibilities. It also aligns with wider local authority sustainability objectives and reinforces Saltash Town Council's leadership in environmentally responsible grounds maintenance.

Wildflower sections continue to be created and maintained both by the Council and by local volunteer groups such as Saltash Environmental Action (SEA). We look forward to seeing these areas flourish and bring colour, biodiversity, and community pride to our town.

External Tree Works and Annual Tree Survey 2025.

An Ash tree up at one of our Pillmere sites has been significantly reduced due to base rot and Ash Die-Back disease causing an immediate risk from the Pillmere estate the work was undertaken from one of our approved contractors as this job was advanced operation involving tree climbing and the use of Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs) the work is now complete and the site is compliant and the tree no longer represents a risk.

There are two elm trees within Grassmere Way Play Park that are standing dead and will require removal to ensure compliance and public safety.

In addition, vegetation from the rear boundaries of adjacent houses and garages runs along the fence line between Pillmere and the A38. This land was inherited by Saltash Town Council from Cornwall Council, and as a result the entire fence line now requires ongoing management. Cutting back this vegetation is necessary to prevent potential damage to property and to reduce the risk of a breach to the carriageway caused by deterioration of the fence.

This work does not need to be completed in a single programme. The Tree Surgeon has identified priority areas ("hot spots") where proactive cutting back can be undertaken while vegetation and self-set trees are still small and manageable.

There are also two semi-mature ash trees on site. These will require continued monitoring by the Tree Surgeon, as they may fail to leaf out. Should this occur, removal would be necessary as both trees overhang the public footpath and the bridge adjacent to the stream.

Ash dieback management will be an ongoing requirement over the coming years. This is a nationwide issue affecting all local authorities; however, Saltash Town Council's Tree Surgeon is addressing this proactively on a case-by-case basis within the town.

Members are advised to make appropriate annual budget provision to support ongoing tree works.

Hanging Baskets and Town Bedding Plants

The winter bedding plants have now been removed as they have reached the end of their seasonal display. All evergreen planting remains in situ and continues to look well. The beds have been thoroughly weeded and will be maintained in a tidy condition until the summer planting scheme is installed.

We are currently awaiting confirmation from Tartendown Nurseries regarding the availability of the hanging baskets and bedding plants, after which the installation works can be scheduled accordingly. As part of their service, Tartendown Nurseries also carry out health and safety inspections of all hanging basket chains.

The black planters in Fore Street continue to be regularly deadheaded, and trellis has been installed to support healthy growth. These are expected to provide an attractive display as flowering progresses.

All of the black planters receive routine washing and cleaning to ensure they remain in excellent condition. However, it has been noted that some of the gold lettering is beginning to deteriorate and will require attention.

- **Jubilee Green Public Pontoon.**

The Pontoon Access Control System and Gate and Health and Safety Checks.

Since the system was recently rewired, the access control equipment is currently operating correctly and reliably. The automatic self closing mechanism which is separate from the access control system now requires replacement. It appears that the internal gas pressure within the unit has reduced, resulting in inconsistent reliability and preventing the gate from closing smoothly and securely onto the maglocks at times which may be a security and safety risk.

We are scheduling the replacement of this component over the next month to ensure full functionality and continued safety.

The system used to generate access codes for the pontoon is unstable. This is due to the system being set up to operate via an internet connection, allowing administrative access from the depot to regenerate codes as required. In practice, the system regularly loses connectivity.

Sovereign, the system provider, attended site to review the issues we have been experiencing and confirmed that there is no viable solution to improve the reliability of the current setup. The IT arrangement that enables remote access from the depot is not appropriate for our operational needs; it is effectively a makeshift solution. The most suitable arrangement would be to operate the system on site, removing the reliance on Wi-Fi entirely.

As a result, situations arise where a customer has paid but we are unable to provide a fob or access code to the pontoon. This arrangement is clearly far from ideal and creates avoidable operational and customer service difficulties.

In addition, it is almost impossible to administer the two-hour free access offer. The system does not allow access codes to be time-limited, meaning users are able to access the pontoon for the remainder of the day.

Berth holders 2026-27:

DETAILS TO BE PROVIDED

Saltash Town Council agreed to increase the berthing fees for the year 2026-27 and from that an ongoing berth holder has returned his berth due to:

I am writing to formally notify Saltash Town Council of my intention not to continue with my permanent berthing arrangement on the Saltash Jubilee Green pontoon.

This decision has been made following the recent increase in berthing fees, as published in the minutes of the meeting held on 23/10/2025. Unfortunately, I no longer believe the arrangement represents value for money given the current facilities and conditions.

In particular, my concerns are as follows:

- *There is no mains electricity or water provided to the berth holders*
- *There are no nearby amenities that would be offered by a similarly priced marina e.g shower block, chandlers, bistro etc.*
- *The security of the pontoon itself is poor, and continually trespassed by youngsters who cause damage to and theft from the moored boats.*
- *There is no longer any permanent warden presence in the warden office at the gate to the pontoon.*
- *There is no CCTV coverage in place on any part of the pontoon.*

The pontoon is not adequately protected from damage caused by weather or other boat pilot's navigation incompetence

Berth holders are frequently expected to vacate the pontoon at short notice and often at inconvenient times, for the purpose of hosting public events or repairs due to storm damage or damage caused to the pontoon by other river users.

Given these factors, I do not feel the increased cost is justified.

Currently, the Service Delivery team undertakes visual health and safety checks of the pontoon three times daily, as well as collecting payment from users when required - in practice, it is very rare for a member of the public to be present at the same time these checks are carried out.

The frequency of these inspections appears excessive and necessitates staff cover at weekends. Each set of checks takes approximately 30 minutes, which in total equates to around one full staff day per week. This does not represent an effective use of staff resources, particularly given the apparent lack of necessity. I have been unable to identify any regulatory requirement that specifies checks must be carried out at this frequency.

Agenda item 13 refers to the requirement for visual checks from a marine surveyor.

Pontoon events:

Throughout the year, the Town Council provide free access to the Regatta, National Waterski Race, and Gig Race. Over the years this has caused issues for the ferry to access the pontoon and have been turned away by those using the pontoon. This week, the following email was received by Plymouth Boat Trips:

Thank you both for keeping me updated regarding the event dates when Jubilee Green Pontoon will be in use.

I appreciate the advance notice and understand the importance of hosting events along the waterfront. However, I wanted to let you know that, due to the tides on all three dates (11th, 12th & 26th), our vessels are unable to safely access Saltash Pier throughout the day. This makes it impossible for us to offer reliable ferry service on those dates.

While we fully support your enthusiasm for bringing exciting events to Saltash, these scheduling decisions do have a significant impact on our operations and, ultimately, affect the community's ability to use the ferry service. Could you please advise if there are any additional dates when events have been accepted or are being considered for Jubilee Green Pontoon? Having a complete view of upcoming restrictions will allow us to keep our passengers informed and adjust our services accordingly.

Thank you again for your understanding and support.

The Town Council fully supports the use of the pontoon by the ferry and recognises the importance of maintaining a reliable and predictable service.

The ferry calls four times daily and berths for approximately 15 minutes on each occasion. During these periods, all other pontoon users listed above must cooperate with PBT and operate safely to ensure the ferry's access is not impeded.

Any users who do not do so will be required to leave the pontoon immediately.

If Members see this differently, please let us know immediately.

- **Saltash Town Council Street Lighting and Festoon Light Infrastructure**

- Fore Street Electrical Supply Points

- The annual inspection and testing of the six Fore Street electrical supply points is scheduled for completion by the end of April to early May 2026 in line with last year's EICR recommendation.

- With a small number of C3 (nonurgent recommendations) being raised for ongoing monitoring to ensure continued safety and long-term reliability of the electrical system. This work remains fundamental to delivering the safe and successful Christmas lighting display we depend on.

- Last year's inspections identified and had resolved several urgent safety issues and was key to the smooth, fault free Christmas lights performance that followed. This is not just a compliance duty we have to health and safety, this clearly demonstrated the importance of regular testing and proactive maintenance in preventing failures and safeguarding the infrastructure during peak seasonal demand such as the festive Christmas period.

- Once this year's EICR testing has been completed and any urgent actions arising from this year's inspection undertaken any important and relevant information will be reported in full at the next Services Committee meeting.

- **SERVICE DELIVERY Pre- Planned and ADHOC Project Works.**

Street Furniture (Play Park Bins)

All four of the existing heavy-duty commercial metal street bins inherited when Saltash Town Council took over ownership and responsibility for the three play parks from Cornwall Council back in 2018–2019 (Ashton Way, Grassmere Way and Honeysuckle Close).

The bins were refurbished shortly after the transfer of ownership by the Service Delivery Team and have lasted well. However, being exposed to the elements all year round and subject to heavy use means they require maintenance approximately every 5 years.

To prolong their lifespan, we have decided to raise the bins off the ground on concrete plinth bases. This will keep them clear off any wet ground, improve security and fixing methods, ensure they keep dry and a suitable air cap is maintained.

Hopefully, thus the intervals between pre-planned maintenance work can be extended. Work progress, the concrete bases have now been completed and the refurbishment of the bins themselves is approximately 90% finished. The bins are planned to be fully finished and reinstated in early April 2026.

The refurbishment works included complete removal of old paint and rusted out sections, full rust treatment and undercoating, application of fibre-glass body filler where required, additional rubdown and undercoat, and three coats of smooth black Hammerite oil-based metal paint to finish to a high standard. The silver lettering has been repainted, and new STC litter stickers installed.

Cost effectiveness. Refurbishment over purchasing a like-for-like replacement metal bin costs approximately £1,000, while plastic alternatives cost around £600 but are less robust and more vulnerable to vandalism. This refurbishment project has therefore been cost-effective, environmentally responsible, and fully aligned with our recycling and environmental policy. It has significantly extended the life of an existing Saltash Town Council asset for the town and its residents.

New Bespoke Work Bench And Equipment Storage Racking Custom Made.

The Service Delivery Team have been busy making use of surplus industrial metal railing system components (“Key-Clamp” fittings) left over from a previous project. Additional fittings and lengths of rail were purchased specifically to complete this new installation for the Churchtown Cemetery store/garage.

A new bespoke workbench and wall-mounted racking system have been constructed to securely store and display grounds-maintenance equipment in an organised and efficient manner.

This approach proved to be a cost-effective alternative to purchasing pre-fabricated workshop furniture, while also allowing the bench and racking to be built to exact required dimensions.

Key-Clamp systems are extremely durable and galvanised, ensuring long-lasting dependability in a commercial environment. This makes them an ideal choice for heavy-duty workshop use.

The successful outcome of this project demonstrates that this construction method is both practical and economical. As a result, this approach will be adopted at other Saltash Town Council sites when required, particularly at the Longstone Depot garage and workshop, where existing pre-fabricated furniture is approaching the end of its service life due to environmental wear, damage, and general failure.

End of Report.

Signature of Officer:

Town Clerk / Assistant Service Delivery Manager