

## Resident Questions for Housing Area Panel

<b>Department</b>	Environment
<b>Date question raised</b>	30/06/2022
<b>Date of Area Panel</b>	17/08/2022
<b>Area in city</b>	West
<b>Star rating applied by residents</b>	2 star- local area issue
<b>Deadline for officer response</b>	25/07/2022
<b>Name of officer responding</b>	Robert Walker
<b>Officer job title</b>	Head of Operations - Cityparks • City Environment (Cityclean & Cityparks)
<b>Title of Question:</b>	Grass cutting and grounds maintenance
<p><b>Issue:</b> A lack of regular mowing has meant lots of very overgrown grass areas this summer. Grounds maintenance services generally are also poor and infrequent. This is one of the most frequent issues residents raise with their Association representatives. Concerns about grass-cutting and grounds maintenance have been raised frequently over a long period of time, without improvement.</p>	
<p><b>Background:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's decision to reduce mowing has led to areas of overgrown weeds and grasses making green areas unusable and unsightly.</li> <li>• When grass-cutting is done, the work is not done adequately. Edges are often not trimmed back, and the grass is not collected.</li> <li>• There is a mismatch between the statistics the Council needs before it will act, and the on-the-ground experience of Resident Association representatives. For example, following numerous complaints from local residents, Ingram Crescent Resident Association representatives raised the lack of grass-cutting with the Council. This was dismissed because the Council had not received any complaints.</li> <li>• Residents pay for 10 cuts a year in service charges but are not refunded when the work isn't done.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Action requested by residents:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A report to Area Panel on the frequency of grounds maintenance services in the West Area. This should include the number of times the grass was cut; trimming of grass verges; pruning of hedges and shrubbery. This will help residents determine if they are getting value for money.</li> <li>b) West Residents are also asking for action to be taken to resolve the following specific problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ingram Crescent: grass very long, obstructing pathways.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	

- Ingram Crescent & Clarendon and Ellen: lack of grass cutting, edgings left untrimmed
- Chalky Road Park: Following action from the Community Engagement Officer and Resident Association the grass has been cut twice in the park. However grass cuttings are not being cleared and are dangerously slippery.
- Chalky Road Park: grass areas being left deliberately uncut, restricting the amount of useable open space available.
- Stonery Close: the stone steps up the side of Stonery Close (odd numbers) are so overgrown it is not possible to get up them. Photos were sent to Robert Keelan about 4 weeks ago.
- Top of Godwin Road/Martin Road junction: overgrown tree roots and weeds obstruct the pavement and mean people have to walk in the road. This is a problem every year.

**Officer Response:** Robert Walker

<b>Officer contact details:</b>	robert.walker@brighton-hove.gov.uk
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**Response:**

Housing West – We would expect at this time to have completed or at least started 4 to 5 rounds of grass cutting. Although this does vary due to staff shortages in some areas.

We have attained this in all contracted Housing areas unless we have come across obstacles or restrictions.

The frequency & occasions of mowing will vary throughout the city as we have separate maintenance teams for areas and two types of rounds – Ride-on mown & Pedestrian mown. Some areas will be slower than others due to obstacles/access/staffing.

The mowing season is between mid-March & late October depending on the weather it can now with a mild climate go into November.

We have attained 5-6 rounds in Hove Park/Hangleton  
 4-5 rounds in West Hove  
 4-5 rounds in Central Hove  
 Clarendon & Ellen – 3 but commencing 4 imminently.  
 Ingram – 4

Generally depending on the species of plants – Shrubs & hedges are hard pruned over winter and a cut back post nesting season. We do not cut plants that have been planted by residents or that are not in the contract.

Chalky Road Park: Unfortunately, our operatives are unable collect the grass cuttings after mowing. It is too costly to remove and transport grass cuttings on a city-wide basis. We would also need to locate sites within the city to dispose of

them. Given time, the grass clippings on pavements will decompose and shrivel through natural processes. The grass left on verges will act as a fertilizer.

Chalky Road Park: Has been left uncut as this is in line with the Open Spaces Strategy agreed by Councillors & is a citywide approach.

Stonery Close: Unfortunately, this is not within the contract with City Parks, hence why it has not been cut back.

Top of Godwin Road/Martin Road junction: Some tree basal sprouts (tree whiskers) emanating from trees and tree stumps have been reported by residents as weeds but these need to be dealt with by arborists. We are currently under resourced, and we have not been on top of these as we should be as a result, and this has been further exacerbated by our staff and our contractors needing to prioritise work to stop the spread of Elm disease.

We do have a team of contractors working on cutting back tree whiskers prioritising those causing a potential hazard or restricting access.

We have requested for this area to be prioritised by our team.

**Specific Action:**

**Action:** Continue with grass cutting.

**Action:** Have the tree basal sprouts cut back at the top of Godwin Road/Martin Road

**Timeline:**

**Start date:** 21/07/22

**End date:** 31/10/22

