**Vergers Report to Nov 2017 Meeting of Draughton Parish Council**

**Acknowledgements**

1. The help of the volunteer team is gratefully appreciated:

William Bell

Jim Allen

Patrick Lang

David Goldie

Simon Plunkett

Rod Fletcher

Richard Patchett

Graham Redman

Graham Snow

Clive Allen

Peter Grimshaw

Robert Clayton

1. We are grateful to the residents who are doing the majority of Low Lane verges and to Peter Grimshaw who is doing the Church, Village Hall and Car Park verges.
2. We are grateful to those who have tackled Donkey Neddy, Muck Gate and The Lane independently, particularly Graham Redman.
3. Some volunteers have only done one cut and others have done many more, but this does not matter – every bit of help is appreciated and some people are much busier than others. We are hoping that all volunteers will continue into next year.

**Capacity**

1. We were never short of a full team of three or four volunteers on any cutting day, but there were frequently no more available, so we are probably utilising our full capacity. This is sufficient to do the top road verges both sides out to the A65 and a bit of strimming down the bottom of West View and up Muck Gate, in about two hours.

**Frequency**

1. The capacity is enough for a team to mow and strim every 2-4 weeks depending on speed of growth.

**Mower and strimmer servicing and repairs**

1. Servicing is expensive, augmented by the delivery and collection charges (£60). However, the mower has run well after the service in the Spring and it is suggested that we see how it runs next March before considering another service in 2018.
2. There are experienced engineers in the village who have offered help, so it is suggested that next year these be authorised to undertake minor repairs such as replacing the mower drive belt. It would save the long delay in getting a spare if we ordered one now and always kept one in stock. They cost about £60+VAT.
3. The strimmer has been quite difficult to start and the auto feed on the cutting wire is a bit spasmodic. It needed major repair mid-summer (new cylinder head gasket) with a lengthy delay waiting for parts. During this time we relied on David Goldie and his own smaller and lighter battery powered unit. It is suggested that the next time the Council strimmer needs attention we consider shelving it and buy a small battery powered unit similar to David’s. We would need two batteries to give 1.5 hours strimming time. The budget price would be £150+VAT. This is expected to be easier to start, more reliable, need no servicing and avoids the need for mixing up two stroke fuel and storing this.

**Safe Operating Instructions and Risk Assessments**

1. These have been discussed with all volunteers and drafts circulated. These now need to be updated, confirmed by the Council and re-issued to all volunteers by the end of February.

**Richard Neale**