

# Employing a General Operative

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## General

The Land Management Committee has been looking at the costs, risks, possible benefits and opportunities of employing a General Operative/Handyman.

At the moment litter picking at the Cemetery, Meadow View and Memorial Hall play areas, skate park and tennis court, bus shelters, Church Lane, Church Fen, and Countryside Park is undertaken by a contractor on a 3 year fixed contract along with weekly cleaning of the toilet at the allotments. The current 3 year contract runs out at the end of March 2025.

Any general maintenance on top of this, e.g. cleaning of bus shelters, repair of damaged benches or dog waste bin posts, is either undertaken by a volunteer or needs a quote and approval from the Land Management Committee or full Council.

All the roles currently undertaken by volunteers should also be considered for the future. The Council cannot rely on recruiting and/or replacing the volunteers that do sterling work on our land. Employing a General Operative would complement the volunteer work already undertaken and would enable any gaps to be filled as and when necessary.

The addendum to this document details the regular checks and maintenance tasks undertaken by volunteers. Some of these are not currently being done because of ill health. Employment of a General Operative would ensure that the regular checks and maintenance necessary to ensure the safety of Council property would happen by a properly trained individual.

Land Management have considered whether this is the most cost effective and best use of current staff resources taking into account the projects the Council currently has, wants to undertake, and the expectation of an additional 10 ha of land in the next 5 years. The Committee would like the Council to consider employing a General Operative to undertake the current tasks, various maintenance tasks and expand these to include current contracted out work. The rationale behind this request is that the committee believes it will save the Council time and money, ensure Council assets are regularly checked, that risks and safety aspects are better addressed and resources will be better allocated.

## The role of a General Operative in Brundall

A GO would carry out a range of tasks which would include; litter picking, toilet cleaning, and general maintenance in the Parish, as directed by the Clerks. The specific duties of a GO can be found in a separate job description.

The post holder would work under the direction of the Clerks, and any issues or problems would be referred to the Clerk. A monthly summary of work would be submitted to the Clerk along with the number of hours worked. The summary would include details of any items purchased for use (with VAT information on the receipts where relevant), and these would not be bought without prior authorisation from the Clerk or RFO.

The post holder would be expected to use their own initiative for the carrying out of routine jobs, and those that come up regularly. The post holder would be expected to manage their own timetable of work, ensuring that everything required gets done in a timely manner and gives flexibility to prioritise emergency repairs over regular tasks.

The Parish Council currently contracts Bruce's Property Maintenance to undertake the litter picking and toilet cleaning for 3-4 hours per week. At busy times during the summer additional time is needed to dispose of the extra

waste, and instances of vandalism, damage or fly tipping on PC property, are reported and anything that may cause injury to members of the public is made safe.

In addition he is asked to quote for general maintenance and repairs on Council land and assets. The time taken for him to complete these jobs can be between 1 week and 3 months.

A GO will have weekly, monthly and annual tasks, and can be given ad-hoc additional tasks when required.

## Contractor / Employee Cost Comparison

The Land Management Committee believe 7 ½ hours per week would give enough time to complete the litter picking and cleaning, regular safety checks and maintenance on Parish Council land and assets, and any additional repairs.

The salary chosen will need to be determined by the skill and knowledge the Council requires the GO to have but some indicative costs are shown below:

| Possible rates of pay | Hourly rate | 7.5 hrs/wk | Annual Salary | Er NI <sup>1</sup> | NEST Pension <sup>2</sup> | Mileage c. 10 m/wk <sup>3</sup> | Holiday cover <sup>4</sup> | Total Annual Cost |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Min wage (Apr 25)     | £12.21      | £91.58     | £4,762.16     | zero               | zero                      | £234.00                         | £244.20                    | <b>£5,240.36</b>  |
| SCP11 (Apr 24)        | £14.13      | £105.98    | £5,510.96     | £76.64             | zero                      | £234.00                         | £261.00                    | <b>£6,082.60</b>  |
| SCP15 (Apr 24)        | £15.08      | £113.10    | £5,881.20     | £132.18            | zero                      | £234.00                         | £261.00                    | <b>£6,508.38</b>  |

The current Handyman/Cleaning contract is £572.97 per month or £6,875.64 annually, which is within the 2023/24 budget of £7,000. For this the Council receives a more limited range of work than is being proposed for a new GO.

There will be periods of time where more hours per week are needed, but equally periods of the year when it is difficult to achieve outdoor maintenance when planned. The Clerks currently work flexi-time and this could be offered to a General Operative also.

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<sup>1</sup> It is possible the Parish Council would need to pay Employer NI payroll contributions. The Lower Earnings Limit is currently [£123 per week](#) (£6,396pa, £533pm) below which the council does not pay employer contributions, however this is reducing to £5,000pa (£416.66pm, £96.15/w) from April 25. Employer NI contributions will be 15% on earnings over £5,000 from April 25.

<sup>2</sup> Pension - auto-enrolment into a pension scheme starts when an employee earns over £10,000. They are able to request opting-in to a pension scheme but if an employee earns less than £6,240.00 per year they are an "entitled worker" and employers are not obligated to contribute, but can choose to. A GO does not have to be offered the same pension scheme as the Clerks but could be enrolled in an alternative pension, for example [NEST](#) where 8% of anything over £6,240pa must be put into a pension scheme, with the employer contributing at least 3% of the 8%. For the LGPS the Council's contribution is 24% of all earnings.

<sup>3</sup> The post holder would be expected to use their own vehicle. Mileage would be paid at £0.45 per mile travelling between all the sites from the office and to purchase supplies or equipment. No mileage would be paid for travel to Brundall from home as the office would be the place of work. The calculation used here is for an average of 10 miles per week travelling between sites to undertake litter picking and maintenance work. Claims would be made on actual miles travelled not an allowance.

<sup>4</sup> Assumed litter picking and cleaning cover only therefore 4 hours per week for 5 weeks. No maintenance ability needed therefore rate of pay would be minimum wage or up to SCP6 £13.05/hr

## Benefits

The Land Management Committee believe the following are some of the benefits the Council would gain from employing instead of contracting out the role of a General Operative:

- Ad-hoc repairs and maintenance would cost the council the hourly rate of the GO plus parts, for which the Parish Council can then claim back VAT, saving the Council 20%.  
Recent repairs/handyman jobs have cost the Council:  
Fitting dog waste bins = £75.00  
Bus stop cleaning £40.00 per bus stop  
Cemetery gate repair £80.00
- Employing a dedicated General Operative would free up Clerk and administrative time. The weekly playground and land inspections, SAM2 changes, site visits with contractors, on site projects, and checking issues reported to the Council and other tasks can be given to a General Operative, allowing more time for administration.
- Urgent repairs can be undertaken immediately ensuring Council assets are always safe to use. The employee would be able to prioritise which job is the most important for the day.
- Maintenance tasks will be done in a more timely manner. Sourcing quotes from contractors and then waiting a number of weeks for repairs and maintenance can result in safety issues and complaints. Having a skilled member of staff available to carry out tasks would improve the efficiency of the council's work.
- Proactive checks and maintenance can be carried out on Council assets (e.g. benches, dog bins, grit bins) ensuring no asset gets too worn and fails, and therefore all assets should have a longer useful life.

## Other things to consider

In addition to the above salary costs it would be necessary to purchase equipment specific to the role of the GO. There are some tools and equipment available at Cremer's barn but other items would need to be purchased. A possible list could be:

Tool bag/box £20-£50

Saw from £8

Hammer £10

Steel capped boots £40

Hi-viz vest £12

Spade £35

Stanley knife £25

Portable work bench £55-£175

Tape measure £8

Gloves £15

Portable drill £150

Screw driver set £15

Approximate costs between £400 and £500

Insurance - the post holder will need to have business car insurance, which is a small amount on top of their normal insurance cost.

Training - some initial training may be required.

Policies and risk assessments will need to be checked that they are up to date.

Holiday and sickness cover. The regular maintenance checks could be covered by the Clerks and it would be possible to employ a person to cover the litter picking for holidays (and sickness) only. Also employ a holiday cover person for their cleaner.

## Addendum

These tasks have been detailed following conversations with the Friends of Cremer's Meadow and the Tree Warden. Additional tasks will be identified when all Management Plans have been completed.

### Brundall Parish regular maintenance and safety checks as at Jan 2024

| Person / Group | Area             | Maintenance action                                                                                                     | Duration (in hours per month)  | Regularity         |
|----------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Volunteer(s)   | Countryside Park | Hedging allotment - happens once a year, would like twice a year for a smaller trim (early March) - additional 4 hours | 16 hours (plus 4)              | Once per year      |
| Volunteer(s)   | Countryside Park | Hedge in car park cutting (1 meter high) - makes horizons which need dealing with - would like more regular basis      | 4 hours                        | Once per year      |
| Volunteer(s)   | Countryside Park | Surface issues (particularly Park Run - use sand to cover surface)                                                     |                                |                    |
| Volunteer(s)   | Countryside Park | Countryside park information board - maintenance                                                                       |                                | as required        |
| Volunteer(s)   | Countryside Park | Volunteer in the allotments does the grass cutting at present (John) also does the orchard                             | 4 hours per month when growing | April to September |
| Volunteer(s)   | Countryside Park | Maintenance of toilet, storage shed, social shed - i.e painting.                                                       | 2 x days                       | Once per year      |
| Volunteer(s)   | Countryside Park | Maintenance / weeding of hawthorn bushes in Orchard (cut grass / weed, water in dry months)                            |                                |                    |
| Volunteer(s)   | Countryside Park | Strimming - West side / South side brambles - regular (managed)                                                        | 2 days                         | 3 x times per year |
| Volunteer(s)   | Countryside Park | Wildflower meadow - cutting every Autumn                                                                               |                                | Once per year      |
| Volunteer(s)   | Countryside Park | Screening around bins - checking and maintenance                                                                       |                                | monthly            |
| Volunteer(s)   | Countryside Park | Benches maintenance                                                                                                    |                                | as required        |
| Volunteer(s)   | Cemetery         | Benches maintenance (rub down and stain x 2 hours per bench)                                                           |                                | as required        |

|                     |            |                                                                                           |           |                      |
|---------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| Tree warden network | Cemetery   | Tree survey (log) - summer and winter check                                               |           | 2 x per year         |
| Volunteer(s)        | Cemetery   | Maintenance of lych gate - i.e. painting (staining every year) - looked at and monitored. |           | as required          |
| Volunteer(s)        | Cemetery   | Strimming - Southern edge (trench)                                                        | 1 day     | Once a year          |
| Volunteer(s)        | General    | Direction signage (wooden) maintenance                                                    |           | as required          |
| Volunteer(s)        | General    | Notice boards -maintenance (rub down, painted)                                            |           | as required          |
| Volunteer(s)        | General    | Bus stops (cleaning)                                                                      |           | 2 x per year         |
| Volunteer(s)        | General    | Litter picking (Andy employed for certain areas already)                                  |           | as required          |
| Volunteer(s)        | General    | Dog bins checked and maintained                                                           |           | quarterly            |
| Volunteer(s)        | General    | Benches                                                                                   |           | as required          |
| Volunteer(s)        | Church Fen | Boardwalk checks                                                                          |           | monthly <sup>5</sup> |
| Tree warden network | Church Fen | Tree checking, logging and maintenance                                                    | 2/3 hours | monthly              |
| Volunteer(s)        | Church Fen | Bridge checking, logging and maintenance                                                  | 2/3 hours | monthly              |
| Volunteer(s)        | Church Fen | Check signage                                                                             |           |                      |
| Tree warden network | Church Fen | Himalayan balsam needs managing to stop spreading on boardwalk                            |           | 2 x per year         |
| Tree warden network | Church Fen | Blow leaves in autumn                                                                     | 2 hours   | Once per year        |
| Tree warden network |            | Reed Bed cutting                                                                          |           | Every 3 years        |
| Volunteer(s)        | Church Fen | Path clearance                                                                            |           | 5 times per summer   |
| Volunteer(s)        | Church Fen | Litter pick                                                                               |           | as required          |

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<sup>5</sup> Should be weekly due to condition of board walk

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| Tree warden network       | Cremer's Meadow | Tree checking, logging                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 1 day            | Every two years |
| Judy / Judith Volunteers  | Village general | Maintenance of flower bed outside the Chinese                                                                                                                                                                                      |                  |                 |
| Judy / Judith Volunteers  | Village general | Maintenance of green area outside the Memorial Hall                                                                                                                                                                                |                  |                 |
| Judy / Judith Volunteers  | Village general | Foodbank                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Cut brambles to allow the cutting of bamboo.                                                                                                                                                                                       | 2 hours per week | January         |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Buddleia cut and clear.                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Carry out tree maintenance as required.                                                                                                                                                                                            |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Cut snowberry and bamboo.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Cut and clear day                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Review trees at north east side of pond and determine actions to cut/fell as necessary to let more light in.                                                                                                                       | 2 hours per week | February        |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Cut down ivy on trees as necessary.                                                                                                                                                                                                |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Cut brambles to allow the cutting of bamboo.                                                                                                                                                                                       |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Buddleia – cut and clear                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Carry out tree maintenance as required.                                                                                                                                                                                            |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Remove some small trees at top of pond where overcrowded – small willow stump cuttings/silver birch following the review in January.                                                                                               |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Clear out bird boxes.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Reinstate information board at south of site.                                                                                                                                                                                      | 2 hours per week | March           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Agree and mark areas of riverbank on north and east side. Strim back 1/3 of nettles, grass, other vegetation etc (rotate each year). Strim/scythe bank side, grass and herb vegetation. Cut to 10cm height. Inform Garden Guardian |                  |                 |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Cut back willow and scrub near the pond to prevent it encroaching too far into the fen                                                                                                                                             | 2 hours per week | March           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Remove willows and saplings at south end of site (rubble area). Paint stumps with herbicide.                                                                                                                                       |                  |                 |

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|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Monitor weir and sluice                                                                                                                                                            |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Cut back growth around footpaths                                                                                                                                                   |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Monitor and remove Red-osier Dogwood, Stag's-horn Sumach, Bamboo, Cherry Laurel, Himalayan Balsam (not seen for a few years) and Japanese Knotweed (ongoing work throughout year). |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Bird surveys                                                                                                                                                                       |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Build 1 enclosure for cuttings                                                                                                                                                     |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Renovate Information Centre                                                                                                                                                        |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Cut back growth around footpaths.                                                                                                                                                  | 2 hours per week | April |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Check sluice and remove vegetation as necessary                                                                                                                                    |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Make conservation cuts as required and use cuttings to provide habitats where possible                                                                                             |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Check log edging to areas of site and replace as necessary                                                                                                                         |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Remove fallen wood from pond                                                                                                                                                       |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Bird surveys                                                                                                                                                                       |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Plan for Open Day                                                                                                                                                                  | 2 hours per week | May   |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Renovate Information Centre                                                                                                                                                        |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Treat Japanese Knotweed if observed                                                                                                                                                |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Monitor and remove Red-osier Dogwood, Stag's-horn Sumach, Bamboo, Cherry Laurel, Himalayan Balsam (not seen for a few years) and Japanese Knotweed (ongoing work throughout year). |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Cut back growth around footpaths                                                                                                                                                   |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Dig up or take off heads of docks                                                                                                                                                  |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Water saplings if required.                                                                                                                                                        | 2 hours per week | June  |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Review Risk Assessment for visitors to site                                                                                                                                        |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Dig up or take off heads of docks                                                                                                                                                  |                  |       |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Mark protected plants on site.                                                                                                                                                     | 2 hours per week | June  |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Water saplings if required.                                                                                                                                                        |                  |       |

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|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Varnish notice boards if required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Count orchids                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Monitor and remove Red-osier Dogwood, Stag's-horn Sumach, Bamboo, Cherry Laurel, Himalayan Balsam (not seen for a few years) and Japanese Knotweed (ongoing work throughout year).                                                                                                                                                   | 2 hours per week | July      |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Dig up or take off heads of docks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Water saplings if required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Review all Risk Assessments relating to the site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Cut overgrowing plants by weir.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Scythe and clear the barn and bee orchid areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 2 hours per week | August    |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Cut back growth around footpaths.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Water saplings if required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Scythe and clear the barn and bee orchid areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Scythe the rubble area with Dutch blade.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Clear watercourse as required (minor works).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2 hours per week | September |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Water saplings if required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Carry out tree maintenance as required                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Monitor and remove Red-osier Dogwood, Stag's-horn Sumach, Bamboo, Cherry Laurel, Himalayan Balsam (not seen for a few years) and Japanese Knotweed (ongoing work throughout year).                                                                                                                                                   |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Survey mature trees on the site with Tree Warden. These can be left unmanaged except where they may cause a potential dangers to users of the site or display signs of disease. Light pruning to take place to remove branches that cause obstruction. Prior to remedial or removal work consult a competent tree surgeon for advice |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow | Mow Meadow following the Woodland and Meadow Plan. Clear all the cuttings to areas away from the main water meadow ( Cut and Clear Day)                                                                                                                                                                                              |                  |           |



|                           |                                                          |                                                                     |                  |           |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Buddleia cut and clear                                              | 2 hours per week | October   |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Cut back growth around footpaths                                    |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Carry out tree maintenance as required                              |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Cut overgrowing plants by weir                                      |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Carry out tree maintenance as required                              |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Scythe the Triangle area (semi-improved neutral grassland)          | 2 hours per week | November  |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Remove or cut willows and saplings and paint stumps with herbicide. |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Doctor trees as required.                                           |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Buddleia cut and clear                                              |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Carry out tree maintenance as required                              | 2 hours per week | December  |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Remove or cut willows and saplings and paint stumps with herbicide. |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Doctor trees as required.                                           |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Buddleia cut and clear                                              |                  |           |
| Cremers Meadow Volunteers | Cremer's Meadow                                          | Carry out tree maintenance as required                              |                  |           |
| Clerks                    | Play equipment at Brundall Memorial Hall and Meadow View | inspection of play equipment and completion of relevant forms       | 1 hour           | weekly    |
| Clerks                    | SAM2 speed sensors                                       | Charging batteries and replacing on a regular basis                 | 45 minutes       | Bi-weekly |
| Clerks                    | SAM2 speed sensors                                       | Taking down, downloading data, moving to new location               | 2 hours          | monthly   |