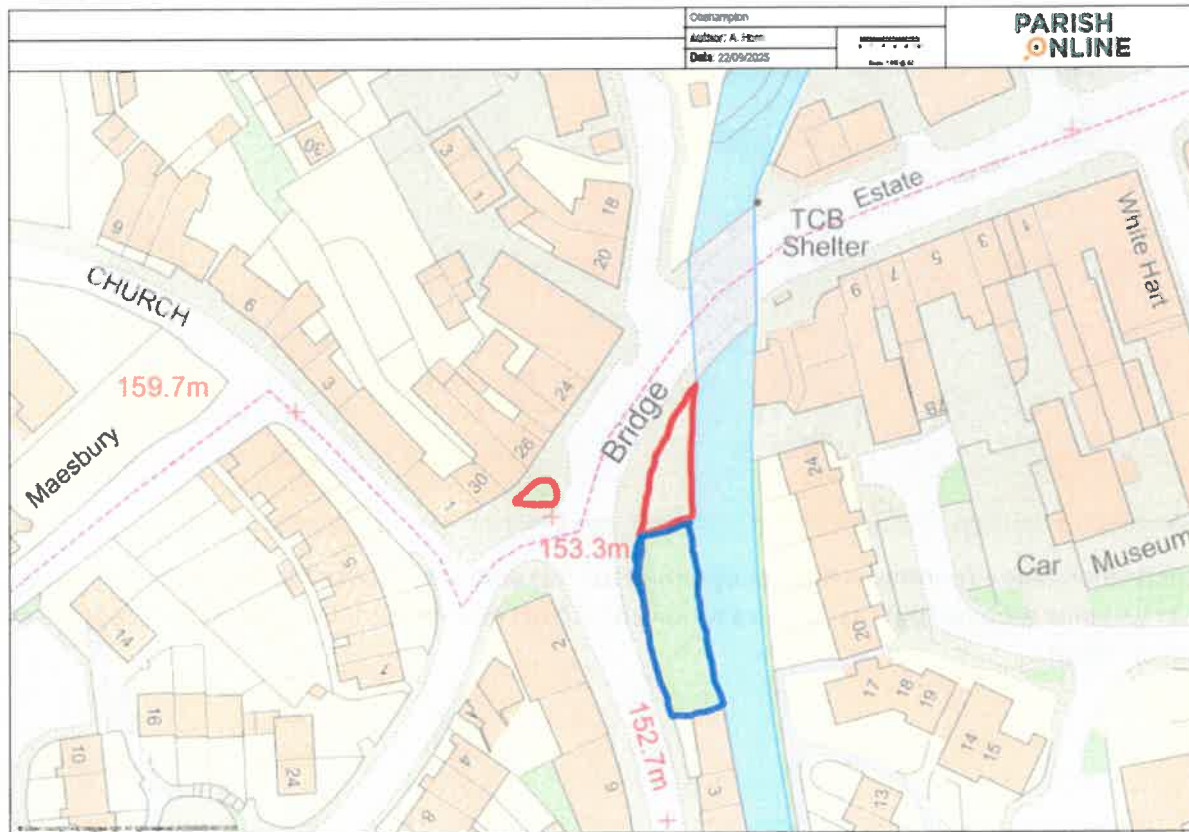


Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee 17th November 2025 Meeting Report

Date:	10 th November 2025
Name:	Abi Horn

Outside Spaces Maintenance

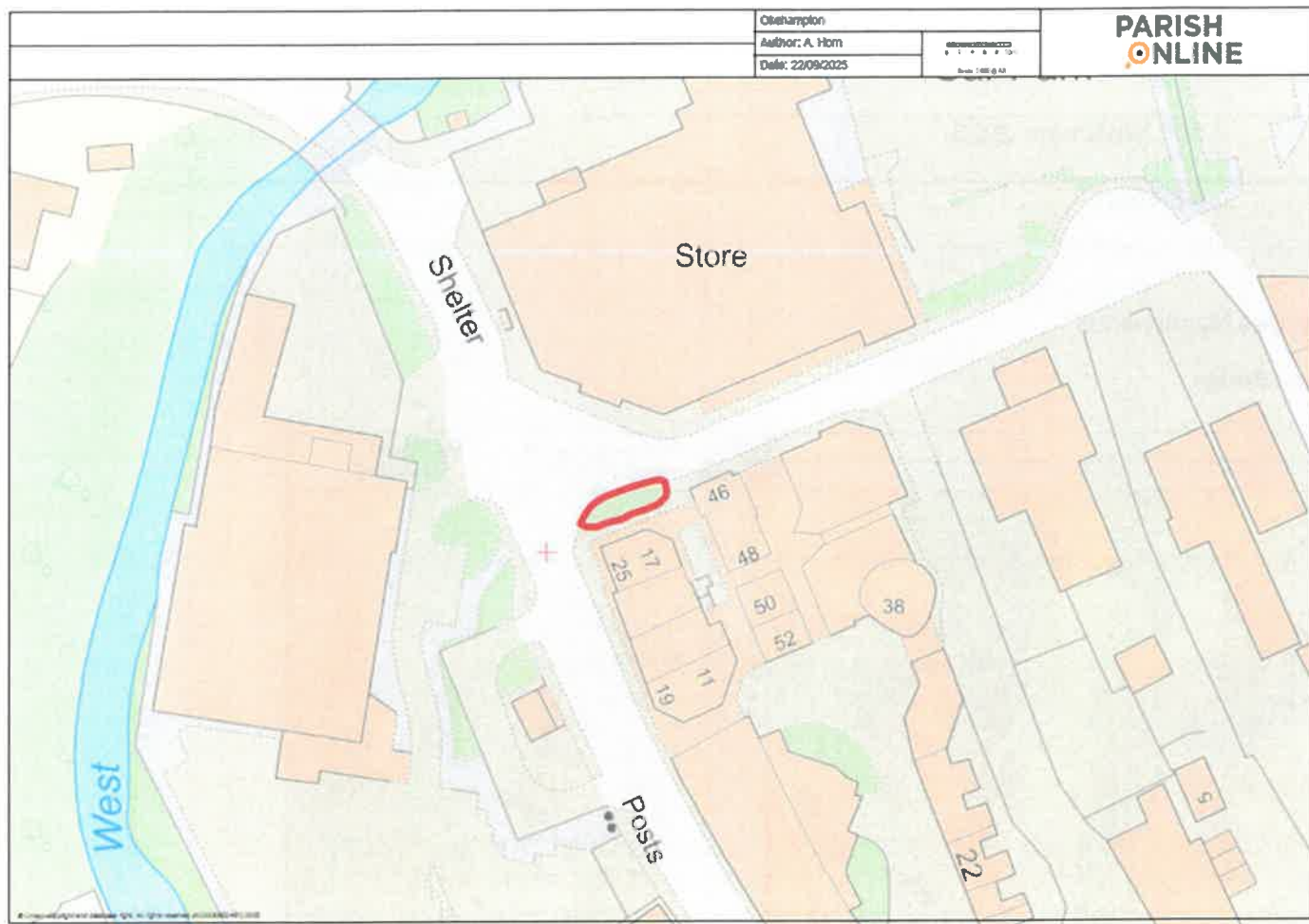
1. West Bridge



Area outlined in red- This area has been soil tested to make sure the flower seeds picked match the soil type and last longer. This area requires a day of rotavating and planting and a day of cutting at the end of the season.

Area outlined in blue- this area is cut fortnightly and the hedge is cut yearly.

2. Waitrose Verge- The Council does not own this area.



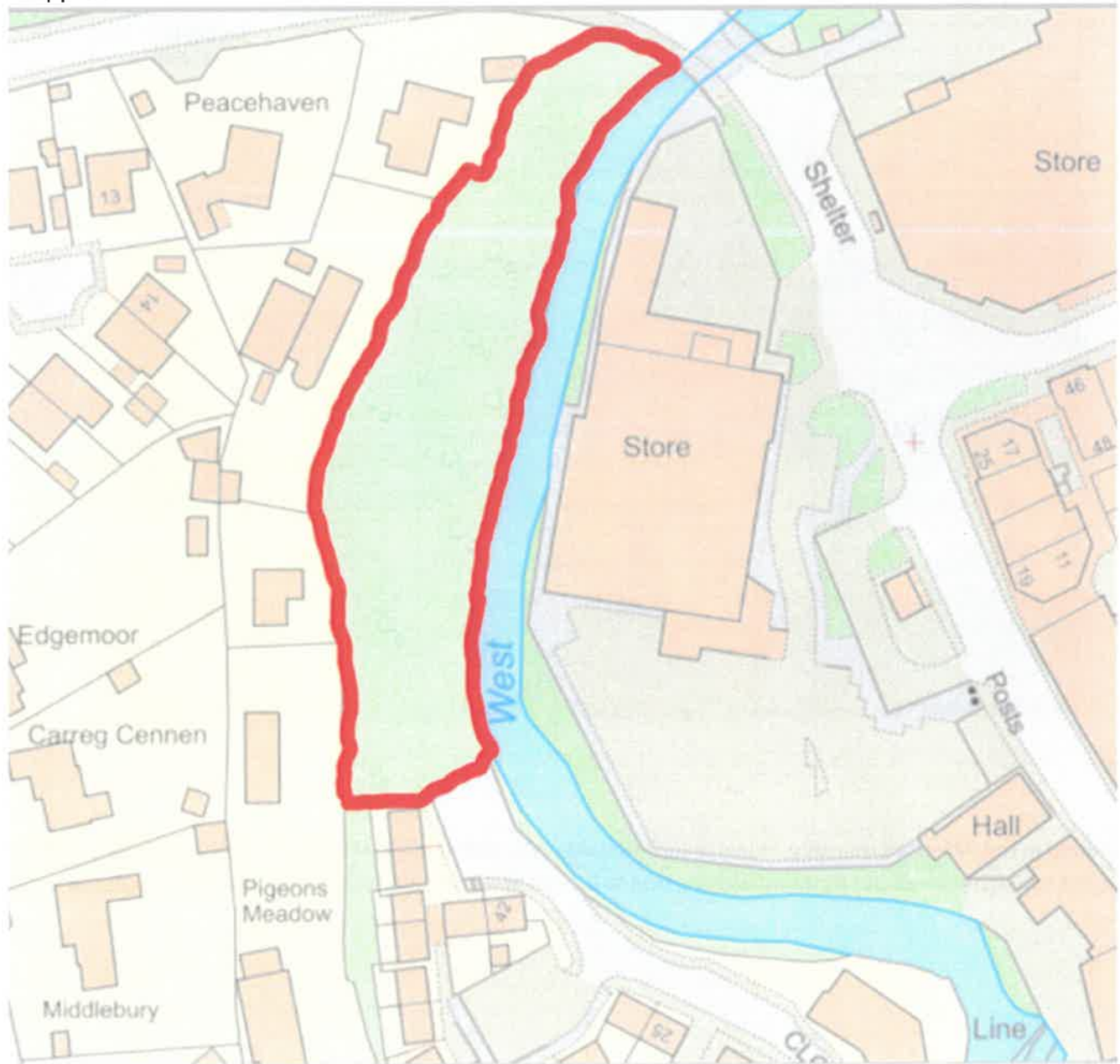
Area outlined in red- Weeded when able – monthly is frequency aimed for. It is woodchipped in February. More planting will help with the amount of weeding required but plants were removed by DCC around the lamppost and not replaced and some heathers have been taken

3. East Street Garden The Council does not own this area.



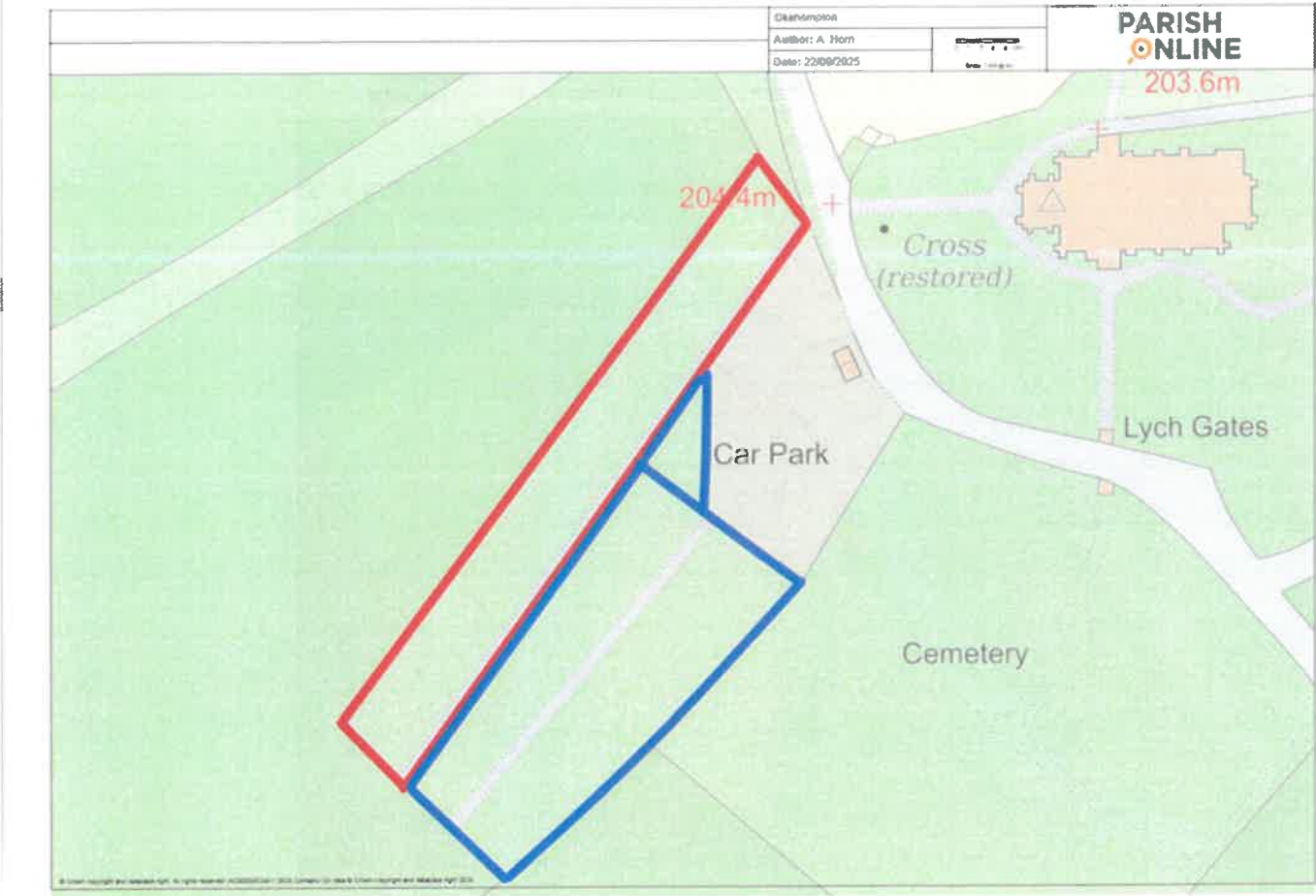
Area outlined in red- Weeded monthly. Hazel is trimmed yearly to manage growth. More planting will help with the amount of weeding required but planting is dying due to lack of soil and climate extremes and some plants are being taken.

4. Clapps Wood



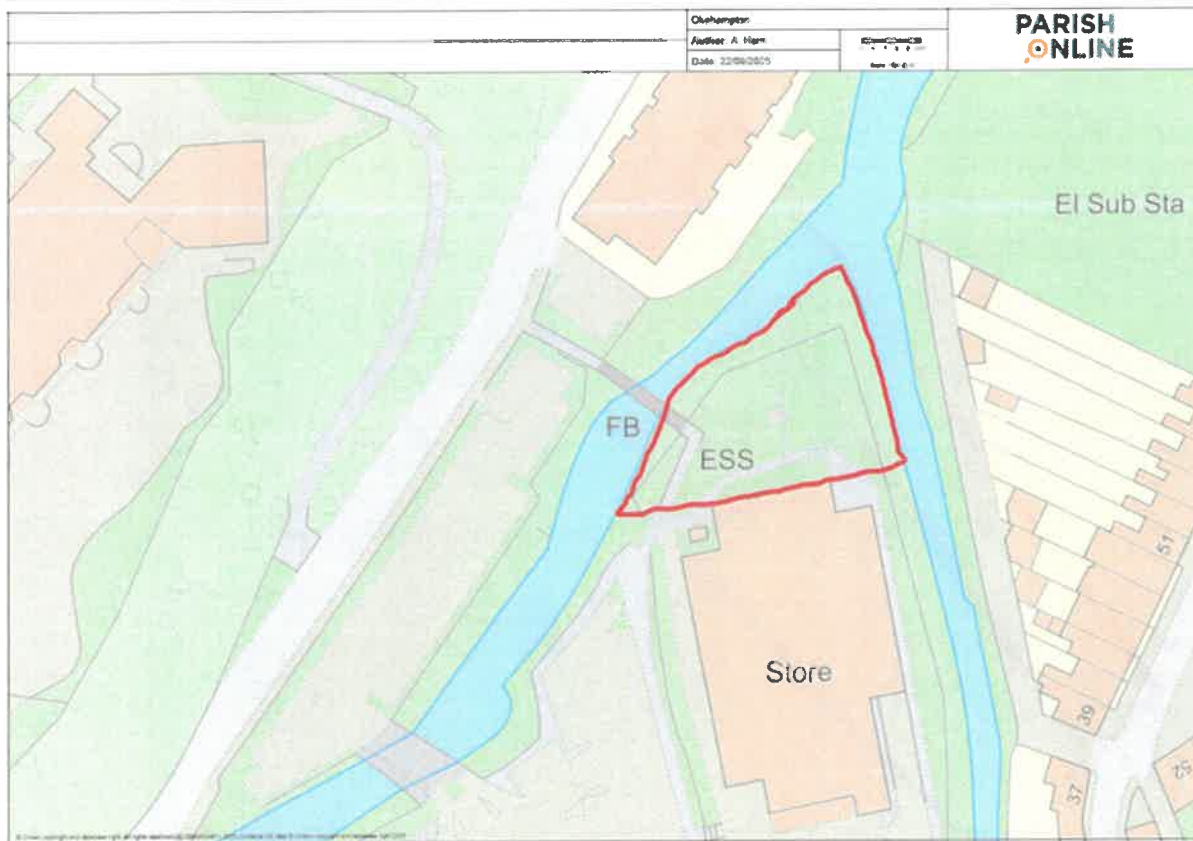
Area outlined in red- Litter picked, leaf blown and path strimmed fortnightly in the Summer. In the Winter brambles are cut to ground level, trees are checked and guards removed if necessary. Fencing is currently being replaced yearly. Trees have an inspection every 18 months for safety. Butterflies have become very abundant in this area since the replanting and opening up of the area.

5. Cemetery and Churchyard



Area outlined in red (owned by Town Council) Area outlined in blue (Church) – This area is cut, mowed and strimmed fortnightly. The clear areas of the carpark and cemetery are cut by tractor. The paths are leaf blown fortnightly all year round. Path is re-edged yearly and bench maintenance is done yearly.

6. Land behind Lidl

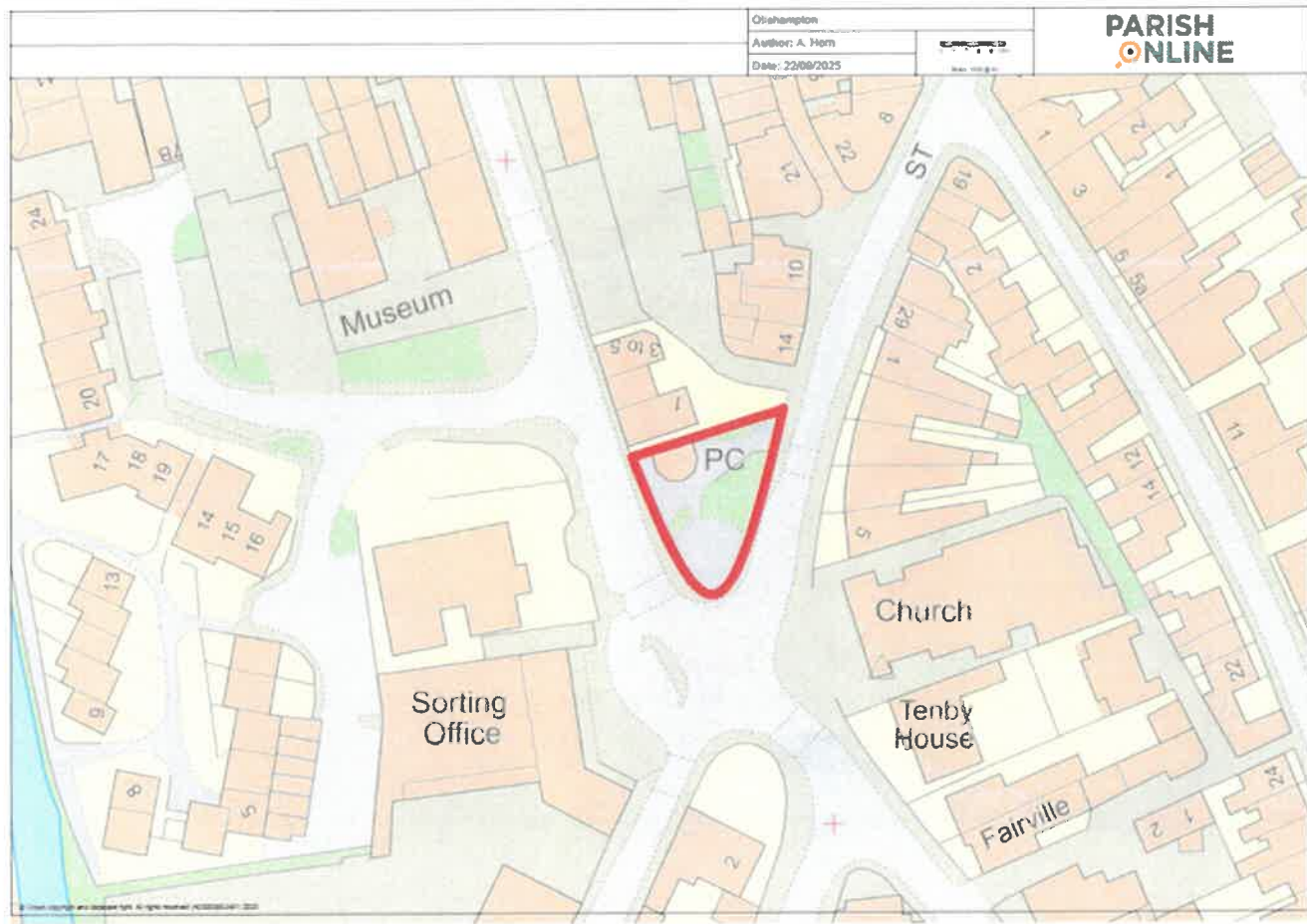


Area outlined in red– This area is cut and strimmed fortnightly. The area is leaf blown fortnightly all year round. Tree maintenance is carried out as and when necessary. Lidl's are responsible for the planting. The picnic bench is cleaned as and when necessary.



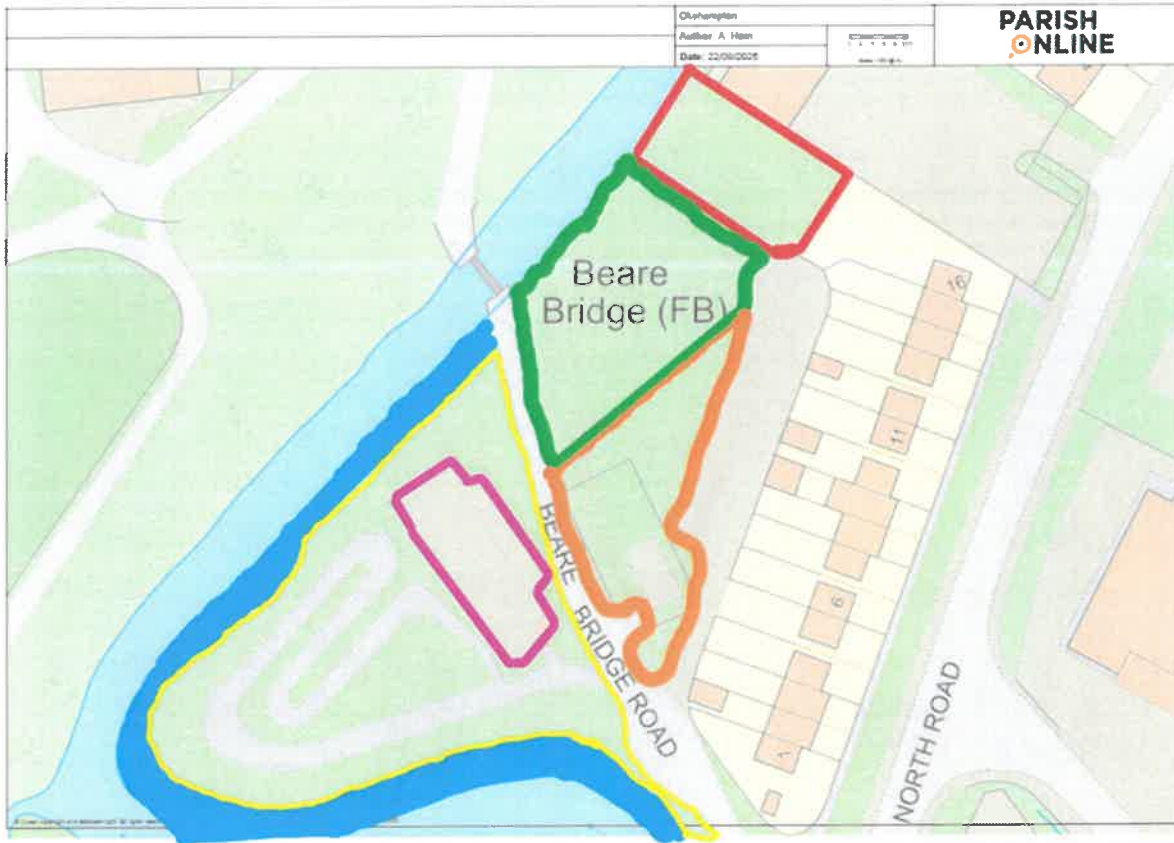
Areas outlined in blue- Area is owned by Town Council

7. Fairplace Garden



Area outlined in red- Monthly weeding – Mares Tail is a problem. Area replanted in Spring, free annuals given to the area and some annuals are purchases. Leaf blown monthly and hedges cut twice a year. The Buddleia gets a yearly trim. Watering has to be carried out daily at dry times and this area has a micro climate that makes getting plants to grow with any speed difficult. The large trees that are in the garden also cause problems for the planting blocking light and their roots take up the limited soil.

8. Skate Park



Trees maintenance as required and inspected every 18 months.

Area outlined in red- No mow area all year round

Area outlined in Green- Cut weekly with the tractor

Area outlined in Yellow- Cut weekly with the tractor. All other areas mowed/ strimmed fortnightly

Area outlined in Purple- Checked weekly as part of the inspection. Leaf blown fortnightly bins emptied weekly.

Area outlined in Orange- This area belongs to the Scouts, but we have been cutting the grass weekly. Does the Council want to continue cutting this area if not Council land?

Area outlined in Blue- Banks around the pump track does the council want them cut or not? Leaving the grass long stops them being used as extra jumps and is another wildlife area.

9. Simmons Park



Trees maintenance as required and inspected every 18 months.

Area outlined in red- Monthly weeding

Area outlined in Green- No Mow May- Mid June

Area outlined in Grey- Cut once a year

Area outlined in turquoise- Tractor mown weekly April - October

Area outlined in Orange- Fortnightly mowed and trimmed

Area outlined in Blue- Weeded every 2 months

10. Town Hall Hanging Baskets

Do the Council want the parks team to continue with hanging baskets? They would have to be watered by the caretakers or office staff.



Site Quality Evaluation (Mystery Shop)

Name of Site	Simmons Park		Managing organisation	Simmons Park Trustees and Okehampton Town Council
Weather Conditions	Autumnal, clear, bright and sunny.			
Date of assessment	9 October 2025		Time (from – to)	11.45am – 1.30pm
Overall Result	Green – Meets the standard with no concerns raised Amber – Meets the standard but with some minor areas of concern Red – Does not meet the requirement with major issues identified			
Result: (✓)	Is the site of Green Flag Award Standard? Green ☒ Amber YES ☐ Red ☐			
Grading		Strengths and Recommendations		
Each question is graded Green, Amber or Red NG (not graded) is used when the question can't be answered or is not applicable – for which an explanation is provided.		Strengths and recommendation are provided to support each grading. Photographs can be included throughout, or at the end of the report to support the feedback from the judge(s) in relation to both strengths and recommendations. Please refer to the Raising the Standard guidance manual here for further information on the criteria.		
A Welcoming Place				
1. Is the site welcoming?	NG	G	A	R
		Y		
The park has inviting views from all entrances, with clear paths and enticing long or wide green views.   Attractive entrances with enticing views into the park				

					A dark green works vehicle drove past me during my visit. It was driving quite slowly but it occurred to me that it should probably have its hazard lights on.
2. Is the site easy to find?	NG	G	A	R	Yes, it is easy for a visitor to find by SatNav and there are several signs from the town centre directing towards the park and sports centre.
		Y			
3. Is signage in good condition?	NG	G	A	R	Yes, the “you are here” location maps were clear and clean with a contact telephone number top left.  A site map As a visitor from out of town I would have benefited from another location map or two around the site as I was a bit disorientated but it is a local park for locals who will be more familiar with the park layout. Some of the other signs are looking worn in comparison and could do with being cleaned or replaced.   Examples of worn looking signage in the park
		Y			

4. Is the site accessible to all users?	NG	G	A	R	Yes, with clear and level hard paths that were mostly in good condition. There are some cracks and uneven surfaces in places and the soft paths are possibly less suitable for wheeled access but overall most users will be able to access the main areas of the site.  Main paths are mostly level and clear
		Y			
Healthy, Safe and Secure					
5. Are facilities on site in good and safe condition?	NG	G	A	R	There appeared to be an electric circuit box open near the pavilion that should probably be sealed shut.  Open circuit box There is an area of wall at the bowling green that has collapsed. The stone is packed neatly but I wondered if it needed to be contained with a barrier as there was a picnic bench very close by.  Stone from collapsed wall at bowling area
6. Did you feel safe during the visit?	NG	G	A	R	Yes I felt very safe. There were some people smoking marijuana in an elevated shelter close to the stream area. They were keeping themselves to themselves and not at all problematic to me. Perhaps I would be less confident walking past them at night but in the daytime I felt very safe.
		Y			
7. Are dogs being controlled and the site free of dog fouling?	NG	G	A	R	Very much so. It is clearly popular with dog walkers but all dogs were under control and I saw no dog mess on my visit. There was an appropriate number of dog waste bins on the site.
		Y			
Well Maintained and Clean					
8. Is litter, waste and recycling managed?	NG	G	A	R	The site was very clean with plenty of emptied bins. I did not see any recycling bins and wonder if it would be possible to install at least one near the café.
		Y			

9. Is there a good standard of horticulture maintenance?	NG	G	A	R	It is late in the season with evidence that ornamental plantings were well maintained and recently tidied up – whilst still retaining their habitat value.   Generally, very well maintained ornamental planting The amenity grass areas are very tidy.  Well-maintained amenity grass areas. The rose garden at the Mill Road entrance is probably due a tidy up.  The rose garden could do with being tidied up
		Y			

					 The rose garden could do with being tidied up
10. Is there a good standard of arboriculture maintenance?	NG	G	A	R	There is extensive and lovely tree cover all around the site.
		Y			   The tree cover is a very special feature of the site
11. Are buildings and infrastructure such as walls, paths, steps and structures in good condition?	NG	G	A	R	Overall the site infrastructure is in very good condition. It was nice to see the fountains in action and the 1911 band stand was lovely to see.
			Y		



Lovely 1911 band stand

A few concerns to note:-

There are broken tiles at the rotary club shelter and it was hard to tell if they are asbestos and perhaps this needs attending to before it gets worse as the shelter itself is charming and in good condition.



Some tiles on the rotary club shelter roof may need attention (sorry, no close up images)

It looked like there is some flooding issue around the pond that should probably be attended too or enclosed in case it becomes a slip hazard.



Boggy area around the ponds

I noticed some damaged Harris fencing adjacent to the football area. This should probably be attended to as it is potentially a security risk.

					 Damaged Harris fencing
12. Is equipment used by the public and staff in good condition?	NG	G	A	R	The playground equipment was in good condition. The area was clear of rubbish.   Well maintained play area The green gym was in good condition  Well maintained green gym
		Y			

					 Well maintained green gym Pitch and putt and bowling club area looked very well-maintained  Immaculate pitch and putt course
Environmental Management					
13. Is there evidence that the site is managed to have a positive impact on the environment?	NG	G	A	R	For all of the activities on site there is an strong sense of it being a natural space with lots of different habitats and it will be inherently environmentally friendly for that. I really liked the wildlife habitat interpretation signs with information about the habitats and species on site to different habitats on site. (These might benefit from and end of season wipe down as some were a bit grubby). If funding was available QR codes could be added for people to look up on their phones to elevate the user experience of biodiversity on site. This could also tie in with local biodiversity objectives and biodiversity records keeping.  One of the habitat and species signs on site

I was curious about the signs warning that Chemicals are used on the Bowling green. I wondered why that was necessary and what the chemicals are and if they are dangerous and if people need to take precautions?



"Chemicals in use on the green" sign at the bowls club.

Bird feeders were all empty at the time of visiting (pond area and rose garden). If birds are fed with feeders it really should be on a regular basis as they use a lot of energy looking for food.



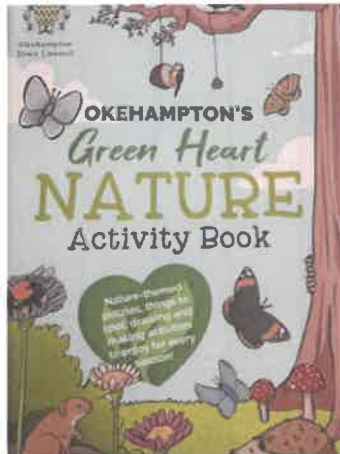
Empty bird feeders

I wonder if the hedgehog boxes at the pond area and rose garden were a little exposed to the public and predators and might be better to be more hidden away?



Exposed hedgehog box at the pond area.

I wondered if there is opportunity to leave some areas of the amenity grass to grow a bit longer? Perhaps where it interfaces with such as shrub or tree plantings or in clearly defined 'islands'? This would add habitat value to the larger areas of amenity grassland without too much loss of amenity value.

					I could see no evidence of peat use on site.
Landscape and Heritage					
14. Are heritage and/or landscape features in good condition?	NG	G	A		Yes. There are some lovely features and buildings previously mentioned such as the Rotary club shelter and 1911 Pavillion that all looked to be well maintained (see note above about broken tiles on the Rotary Club shelter)
		Y			
Community Involvement					
15. Is there evidence of community involvement and engagement?	NG	G	A	R	I liked to see the telephone box close to the car park was repurposed as a book swap and in it were several leaflets about local events and initiatives such as Local Nature Activity book for free.  Freely available activity book Given the variety of free or membership activities on site it is clear that there is ample opportunity for engagement by the local community with a variety of budgets. The café is a lovely hub that sells keenly priced snacks and drinks.
16. Is user feedback positive?	NG	G	A	R	I had a couple of informal chats with visitors on the day. They were all local residents and they all spoke very highly of the park and valued how well it is managed and for having it so close to town.
		Y			
Marketing and Communication					
17. Is there evidence of marketing and promotion, including events? e.g. notice boards, in buildings, website & social media.	NG	G	A	R	There is a community notice board in the café. It had up to date information displayed but it was tucked away and partially covered and I had to be shown where it was located. Maybe this is temporary but, if not, perhaps it could be more prominently positioned so that park users and café visitors could see it more easily?
		Y			

				 Café notice board tucked away out of obvious view		
18. Is the correct year flag flying and certificate on display?	NG	G	A	R	The 2025-2026 flag was flying but I could see no certificate displayed. I looked all around for a parks notice board and asked in the café and the sports centre. There was the notice board in the café as noted above but it did not have a GF certificate. Perhaps I missed it?  2025 – 26 flag flying near to the café area	
Overall Result (✓)	Is the site of Green Flag Award Standard?					
	Green		Amber YES		Red	
Final comments						
Simmons Park is a lovely and very well maintained natural open space with plenty of activities for users and also inherent and interest for biodiversity. I had a very enjoyable visit. I did notice a few areas of mostly minor concern, as noted in the report, but there is no doubt in my mind that the park should retain its Community Green Flag status. Thank you.						

