

## WATERBEACH PARISH COUNCIL

### Etesia ride on mower - Report from the Groundsman and the Clerk

Following Council decision 20/56 the groundsman was asked to research a suitable ride on mower for the cemetery. Here is his report.

I have looked at a variety of manufacturers and a brief comparison table is given below:

<b>Manufacturer</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Engine/Power</b>	<b>Cut Width</b>	<b>Dimensions (L, W, H in cm)</b>	<b>Vibration</b>	<b>Coverage per Hour m/2</b>	<b>Bag</b>	<b>Warranty</b>
<b>Cub Cadet</b>	LR2 NR76	Petrol, 8hp	30"	225x86x112	5ms/2 (2 hours)	2500	200ltr (manual)	1 year
<b>Etesia</b>	Hydro 80 Pro 5 (MKHP3)	Petrol, 16hp V-Twin	30"	199.5x82.5x130	2.67ms/2 (7 hours)	7200	240ltr (hydraulic assist)	2 year
<b>Husqvarna</b>	TC238TX	Petrol, 16hp V-Twin	38"	252x102x102	2.96ms/2 (5 hours 40 minutes)	Not available	320ltr	6 months
<b>Iseki</b>	SXG216	Diesel, 13.9hp Twin	40"	248x99x203	15ms/2 (13 minutes!)	Not available	320ltr, optional hydraulic empty	2 year
<b>John Deere</b>	X380	Petrol, 18hp V-Twin	42"	173x104x109	2.5ms/2 (8 hours)	Not available	Optional	2 year

The requirements for the ride on mower are as follows: Small dimensions to reduce hand mowing, collection facility and low vibration for prolonged use. The New Holland previously used at the Cemetery was 48" wide and was too cumbersome for some of the work at the Cemetery. It was felt therefore that any replacement should be considerably smaller to allow for easier access to confined spaces and reduce hand mowing, which should save time.

Looking at the table above most of the machines are 38" or above. Ideally, we would want to try and stay at a maximum of 38" which removes the John Deere and Iseki, both of which also have prices beyond the £6000 budget agreed by the Council. In the Iseki's case the vibration level is too high and would mean the machine would be ineffective. The Husqvarna is a nicely made machine with some good features, but it is sold as a "Landowner" model in Husqvarna's range, which means it has a short warranty for professional use. Husqvarna does offer a professional range, but these are all large OutFront machines that are wider and longer than any of the models in the table above. The Cub cadet model loses out to the Etesia due to higher vibration which shortens its maximum work time, in addition the estimated coverage per hour of the Etesia is more than double that of the Cub Cadet. Finally, the Etesia has a longer warranty.

For these reasons, the Etesia MKHP3 is the machine I would recommend to the Parish Council. It may interest the Council to know that there are additional attachments available for the machine including a snow clearance kit consisting of a snowblade, tyre chains and a trailed salt spreader. This may be of interest for the winter gritting work. A final point, if we want to road register this machine for use in this type of work, you need to tell the dealer at the point of ordering as the road homologation kit (lights, etc) is fitted at the factory. Alternatively given its slow top speed of around 5.5mph we could purchase a set of ramps and move the machine to Cemetery in the trailer to save a little time and reduce inconvenience for road users (and decrease the chances of dangerous overtaking).

## **Report based on Demonstration Experiences**

I arranged a demonstration of the machine at the Cemetery on 8<sup>th</sup> September at Waterbeach cemetery. The machine is very small as can be seen from the photograph and passes through the pedestrian gate at the Cemetery with room either side. It was explained the machine has three cutting modes, mulching, rear discharge, and collection. The impression of driving the machine was favourable. Despite its small size the machine is comfortable, the controls respond well, and the steering is outstanding. Despite having no power assistance, the steering is easily operated with one hand and turns to full lock in around a quarter of a turn. This allows quite fast changes of direction and makes the machine extremely manoeuvrable in the confined spaces around graves. The engine is quiet, and vibration is almost undetectable.

The cutting height adjusts in stages with five positions. Because the grass at the cemetery was quite long, I selected a height of 4 for a first pass which the machine did easily, collecting all the cut material perfectly. I then cut two rows on three and the result again was very good. I then went over a row on setting 2, which compares with the usual height I would mow at with the Hayter mower. The result again was good, no dropped grass or scalping (although given I had reduced the height quite drastically the grass looked a little yellow in places). Emptying the grass-box was very easy with one hand, as the box has a powerful spring to assist tipping.

The overall impression was of a very well-built machine that would withstand years of hard use. Considering the width of cut at 30" the engine power of 16hp is more than sufficient to cut down grass at any height and will do so quicker than the Hayter we used before. The steering was very good with none of the play or looseness that is often found on small mowers. I have included some photos of the machine and the result of the test below.



Given the positive experience when tested on very long grass in our cemetery, I have no hesitation in recommending the machine to the Council. For more information about the machine, please see the Etesia webpages: <https://www.etesia.co.uk/etesia/ride-on-mowers/hydro-80-mkhp-3.html#tab-id-1>

### **Cost**

We have sought three quotes and the cheapest with the flashing beacon rather than the road kit is £5,270. This is within the £6,000 envelope earmarked by Council and we would therefore request Council's permission to proceed with the purchase.

**Senior Groundsman and Clerk**  
**October 2020**