

Proposal to facilitate a wildflower meadow at the Cemetery

1. Background and Options

- 1.1. There have been many discussions about what to do with the cemetery extension paddock over the last few years. Different options have been considered including:
 - Grazing sheep
 - Grazing horses
 - Leaving as it is and topping three times per year
 - Creating a wildflower meadow
- 1.2. Grazing was considered not to be an option some time ago by the then E&L Committee and topping it three times per year is probably the least expensive option. However, a better option for the environment and public amenity may be to use this piece of land as a wildflower meadow.

2. Biodiversity

- 2.1. This proposal supports the Climate Action Strategy item 9.
- 2.2. It also supports the draft Biodiversity Action Plan items 2 and 3.
- 2.3. The Cemetery group have in the past supported the idea in principle of removing the fence and creating a wildflower meadow. See Anne Westover's email 1 February 2023 *"Removal of the barbed wire fence is possibly not a high priority but it would be nice to do."*

3. Proposal

- 3.1. Remove the unsightly barbed wire fence to allow general access to the area together with access to the existing boundaries for maintenance purposes.
- 3.2. Cut the grass during early Spring (Which has been done) and then allow to grow to see what existing species are already there.
- 3.3. Manage out invasive species such as Thistles, Ragwort and Nettles.
- 3.4. Plan the introduction of new wildflowers for next season as it is now too late to sow for 2025.

4. Funding Source

- 4.1. Funding for this project was sought from East Suffolk Council (ESC) Community Partnership on 28 January however, no decision has yet been made. It appears that:
 - The decision making panel consists of non-ESC employees and non-elected individuals.
 - On request how the decision is made through a Freedom of Information request, most of the information was redacted as the individuals are not part of the ESC organisation.
 - The ESC process for allocating public money for projects is simply not efficient or transparent.
 - ESC appear not to support the creation of a wildflower meadow. However, there has been no feedback on this either way.
- 4.2. As a result, it is recommended that the WMPC budget allocation created for Tree Planting and free standing planters of £500 to support this project which should be more worthwhile for biodiversity.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1. WMPC accept the quote from ESSL of £400 to remove the barbed wire fence and create the basis of a wildflower meadow using its own maintenance budget for tree planting in the absence of a successful outcome from our grant application to ESC Community Partnership