

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL
Report from Environment and Leisure Working Group

Cemetery Memorial Garden: proposal to accept the lowest quote for replacing the infected and dead box hedge with a new hedge

1. Introduction and background

The Memorial Garden is one of two located within WM Cemetery. It is laid with gravel over a matting and contains the memorial tablets laid out in four quarters and is enclosed with a box hedge on four sides with openings. In 2023 the first signs of box-tree moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*), and the caterpillar damage, started to appear. Currently the hedge has died back completely.

At the parish council meeting on 15 September 2025, the council considered a report into options and it was agreed in principle that the dead box hedge be replaced with another hedge and the E&L Working Group would do more work to refine the costs and seek external funding.

In winter 2025 the E&L Working Group agreed a specification for the works and sought 3 quotations. It also agreed to replace the box hedge with *Lonicera nitida* (box honeysuckle) which is widely used as a low hedging plant and forms a dense, evergreen, shiny small leaved hedge. The Working Group also applied to ESC's Nature First Grant scheme for funding of the plants.

2. Current position

The grant application for the new plants was successful. WM Partnership received the grant and have paid for new plants that are being stored in a local nursery, awaiting planting.

The specification for the works includes the removal and disposal of the existing hedge and its roots, adding soil improver, replacing edging boards, planting bare root *Lonicera nitida* plants provided by the client, tidy up the gravel once inserted the boarding and hedging and lay a porous irrigation pipe around the outside of the hedge with connectors.

An earlier, partial quote, in the sum of £750 (non-VAT company) allowed for removal of the dead hedge and grinding of the stumps. However, the E&L specification requires the roots to be fully removed to ensure all remnants of the box hedge moth are removed.

The 3 quotations for works to the E&L specification are shown below:

Contractor	Compliance with Specification	Quotation value excluding VAT £
East Suffolk Services Ltd	yes	1044.00
Quote 2	yes	1419.00
Quote 3	yes	3275.50

Ongoing costs would include the pruning of the hedge, 2 or 3 times each year, estimated at £60 per pruning if a contractor is employed, but at no cost if carried out by volunteers or councillors.

3. Programme for works

Prior to commencing works the parish council will meet the appointed contractor on site to confirm his method of working, means of access and agree the lines of the new hedge. E&L have recommended the centre line of the new hedge to be slightly outwards from the current hedge centre line to provide clearance to the memorial tablets, but without compromising the space around to adjacent headstones for grass cutting and maintenance.

WMPC's 2025/26 budget has made an allowance of £2000 for this work.

4. Compliance with Parish Council Climate Action Strategy

The Strategy action No. 1 states that Councillors should refer to the Climate Action Strategy (CAS) when making decisions and minute that consideration has been given to environmental factors. The Strategy states that the parish council would like to ensure that its climate and nature restoration goals are at the forefront of any decisions made by the Parish Council with residents' support. The WMPC also needs to consider the requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain and compliance with the WMPC draft biodiversity action plan as reported in February 2024.

The new hedge of *Lonicera nitida* can contribute to biodiversity by providing food and shelter for wildlife. The flowers attract pollinators, the berries are a food source for birds, and the small leaves/dense foliage offers nesting potential for robins and wrens who tend to nest low down in thickets and hedges.

Replacement with a new hedge would retain the enclosure and align with local climate and biodiversity objectives, creating and renewing greenery and hedge habitat. A new hedge is therefore considered to comply with the councils Climate Action Strategy.

5. Recommendation

The recommendation is to:

Accept the quotation from East Suffolk Services Ltd at £1044, commission them and meet them on site to agree a method of working.

Environment and Leisure Working Group
January 2026