

Initial proposal to create a memorial wood at the cemetery.

1. Background.

- 1.1. The cemetery management plan was approved by the Council in March 2026 (FC25:218).
One aspect of the plan is to create an area for memorial trees to give people the opportunity to have a living memorial to their loved ones. (para 6.3). This report seeks high level agreement to move ahead with this plan with outline costs and considerations.

2. Proposed area to be used.

- 2.1. The area proposed is the back right hand corner behind the last row of old gravestones. (Northwest corner). Marked "1" on the plan.

3. Reasoning

- 3.1. This area can't be reused for graves as it has numerous unmarked graves already there.
- 3.2. Trees do not need to be planted in a deep hole so existing graves will not be disturbed.
- 3.3. The area is currently laid to grass and mowed regularly. This would be an opportunity to manage it for the benefit of wildflowers under an evolving tree canopy.
- 3.4. Trees will need to be planted in such a way that mowing machinery can easily fit between them.
- 3.5. If the scheme is popular, there is scope to extend it forward along the northern boundary up to the newer burial area. Marked "2" on the plan.
- 3.6. This proposal supports the Council's green objectives.

4. Outline costs

- 4.1. Initial costs for the trees may vary depending on the type and variety. It would be good to get specific advice on this from our tree wardens.
- 4.2. Good quality metal parkland style tree protectors will not only look good and provide protection from rabbits and deer but also provide an opportunity to attach a memorial plaque. These are likely to cost over £100 each.
- 4.3. If the current grass is managed for wildflowers the mowing costs should be reduced.

5. Ongoing management

- 5.1. There will need to be ongoing management of the planting in the early years. It would be great if the Cemetery Working Party would be willing to do this, but if not, it will need to be contracted out.
- 5.2. Set up and early year maintenance costs would be managed through a sponsorship scheme with an initial "purchase" of the memorial as a whole. This price is to be carefully considered.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1. This briefing seeks approval from the Council to trial the scheme in the proposed location.
The trial will:
 - 6.1.1. Identify the optimal planting density for a mix of species
 - 6.1.2. Seek funding for equipment and trees.
 - 6.1.3. Agree a maintenance regime.
 - 6.1.4. Identify initial sponsorship contributions.
 - 6.1.5. Manage advertising and promotion of the scheme.
 - 6.1.6. Work with the Cemetery Working Party, Tree Wardens and our grounds maintenance contractor to achieve the best results.

