

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

Cemetery Working Group Report for March 17th 2025

1. Cemetery work parties take place last Thursday each month

Since last report 11th November the Cemetery Working Party / Green Gym team have completed work parties in Nov, Dec, Jan and February 2025.

Approx 12 hours work carried out each session = 48 hours volunteer time.

Our regular tasks undertaken by volunteers:

Litter and stray faded tributes: flowers (real and artificial), wreaths and damaged receptacles collected.

Three sacks of rubbish often filled.

Some Christmas wreaths collected more to do, March 27th 10am.

Extra native hedge plants added in north boundary, gappy stretch and mulched

Young plants in boundary hedges and young trees tended.

Lower boughs pruned from trees such as beech, lime, holly.

Prunings chopped and stacked tidily to rot down slowly

Self-sown elder pruned out of Irish yew tree avenue

Lime row (on TLT field) pruned, mulched and protected from deer by sycamore stem wigwams.

Twig wigwams also constructed around the tree row bordering the meadow (future burial land) where the wire fence helps to protect from deer, but some damage has been inflicted by deer.

Memorial garden bench replaced by Men's Shed, we cleaned the base and re-set the seat.

New home-grown small leaf lime planted to replace a dead cherry memorial tree.

The ESC bulb scheme supplied 2024 comprised a tricky mix of bulbs, these were planted in the Pightle Green and care home gardens as they were not easy to place in the cemetery:

A 'Bees Mix' of bulbs flowers from February to May and includes crocuses (only a few), chionodoxas, scillas, muscaris and naturalising tulips.

The 'Butterfly Mix' flowers between May & July and include camassias, nectaroscordiums, irises and alliums.

Sonya Exton has continued to upgrade nest boxes on the spread sheet schedule where needed.

Additional snowdrops planted in borders and around trees. Supplied by Clare Bulbs, Suffolk.

We have some lovely drifts of snowdrop and Narcissi Carlton (ESC) bulking up and look forward to meeting with councillors to discuss how to further develop and enhance the wildflowers and tree scape in the burial areas of the cemetery.

Spring bulbs provide visual amenity and increase biodiversity and will not interfere with other management operations to any significant degree. The grass where bulbs grow is not cut whilst the bulbs are flowering early in the year/spring, so the effect creates a pleasing soft look as the bulbs are flowering and whilst the leaves slowly die back and feed the bulbs.

Bulbs previously planted over the last few decades are daffodils (including our British native variety), and snowdrops.

The approach matches that taken in other cemeteries in the area where grassed areas are left longer, to accommodate flowers and increase biodiversity. This approach is also endorsed by ESC.



Taken from ESC letter showing spring flower areas (bluebells) in Woodbridge Cemetery

2. Tasks to be carried out during 2025:

Memorial Garden, we are monitoring the box hedge and some signs of blight/caterpillar.

Thicken up southern boundary hedge/tree belt alongside the meadow and with the adjacent property on Rogues Lane.

Tree works for 2025 Outstanding; there is a need to prune the height and shape up the large box and holly bushes close to Bier House and lift selected lower boughs (too large and high for volunteers) on the wide spreading gorgeous oak nearby.

ESSL have offered to undertake this work without charge. Timing likely to be Autumn season due to delays.

Lower bough pruning on trees will be carried out where volunteers can easily reach, this includes the trees on the southern boundary.

Monitor tree health and condition especially one of the original beech trees.

Shift spring woodchip delivery (free) into bunker next to Bier House.

We will need more chipping for winter 2025 / 2026b mulching.

Apply for grant for composter to compost local supplier and real floral tributes.

Apply for grant for bat surveys and a summer detecting walk.

3. Rabbit control, options for winter 2025 Rabbit control outstanding and there is worrying activity. To be monitored.
4. Cemetery green gym volunteer work parties last Thursday each month but at 10.00am for 2.5 hours maximum.
Next dates **Thursday 27th March and Thursday 24th April 2025**.
All councillors very welcome to come along.
5. The Cemetery Group look forward to working with the WMPC on sensitive cemetery management and alongside the Cemetery clerk to plan future tree planting, discuss cemetery management and planning for extension and next memorial garden when needed.

Cemetery Group Anne Westover, Linda Merriam and Mike Hawes

Anne Westover Parish Tree Warden 7th March 2025

Report for WMPC Full Council for 17th March 2025