

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

Cemetery Group Report

Full Council July 15th 2024

1. Cemetery work parties taken place last Thursday each month.

June and July were and will be cancelled due to timing and other volunteer commitments.

This report covers the period since the last February E&L committee report.

Tree work undertaken by Mr Bray AB Trees

Volunteer tasks continue to be undertaken:

ESC narcissi bulbs flowered beautifully, and we have applied for another pack this winter 2024/25.

500 Galanthus / snowdrop bulbs purchased and planted in March.

Litter and stray faded tributes collected and placed in bins.

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

Trees mulched and stakes/guard renewed.

Log beetle stack built (second one) from logs available at a property on the High Street. Thanks to Mr Pearce for use of trailer and lifting plus a team of volunteers.

Box hedge being monitored for both blight and box moth. The latter has not caused much damage (yet). But blight has affected a stretch of hedge which will need removing and replacing if it does not recover.

Other updates:

Grass cutting by ESS started in earnest in May with some areas collected too.

This ensures survival of some shorter wildflowers such as bugle, self-heal, black medick, short sorrel, clovers and fine grasses.

The bulbs Narcissi and Galanthus were also given plenty of time to self-seed and die back.

Hayward family would like to donate a bench for their father. Cemetery Clerk and Anne marked out with posts the wild / native daffodil area to ensure the next bench misses this section out.

Outstanding matters to progress with Full Council at the appropriate time:

2. Further detail given to Clerk by Dick/Anne regarding wildlife margins and the need for habitat retention in management contracts. Happy to advise further.
3. Signage: Anne has sent Alison Renshaw the wording for a possible permanent notice (to replace the faded notice) on the main board to highlight the presence of the bunker (southwest corner of the meadow) for spoil.
4. Carried over from September: Rabbit control, options for winter 2023/2024 To be covered by Cllr Jenkinson and J Hopps. No control took place over last winter/spring season or 2024/25. Rabbit activity is increasing and there has been winter damage to trees and bulbs.

5. Artificial tributes We have discussed the possible banning of artificial flowers by the WMPC. Whilst none of us like artificial this could have serious implications for people visiting less frequently and also with Christmas wreaths. We would welcome discussion on this topic and how to introduce sensitively. Ideally there would be encouragement for people to reduce usage of artificial tributes in the first instance.

A total ban would be problematical. One item we need to address is the removal of spent flowers and tributes.

6. 'Older' Garden of Remembrance Seat Men's Shed group have this seat under repair, will complete now that their new electrics have been sorted.
7. Enabling grant from ESC was awarded to WMPC/ Cllr Fowler and Tree Wardens in January 2024.
Total grant: £629 for trees, tools, bird boxes and hedgehog homes.

8. Final Note

At E&L working group the lack of handy person/groundsman role was noted, discussed and minuted. It was not clear whether the current post holder would resume tasks previously undertaken and if not why the role had changed.

For the Cemetery regular tasks needing to be undertaken are as follows:

Cemetery: Litter, tidy ups, gravel weeding in memorial garden, hedge pruning especially box, tidy graves, levels to refine (soil add, soil flatten), help with tree protection from rabbits and deer.

Cemetery Working Group (AW, IW, MH & Cemetery Clerk) meeting with ESS to be scheduled in August/early September.

A Westover Tree Warden

14th July 2024