

WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL CEMETERY MATTERS

RABBIT CONTROL MEASURES PROPOSAL

Original report 17th January 2021

Update February 10th 2022

Extracts below from 2021:

The rabbit population at the cemetery has exploded in the last ten years, WMPC should have attended to this previously and I feel somewhat responsible for not having noticed the scale of the problem prior to 2019.

During 2019/2020 some work may have been carried out (unbeknown to the PC) but we do not know the full detail and it appears to have been ineffective.

The proposal by Norse for gassing and burrow blocking will hopefully be more thorough and effective.

Hopefully with the work that Norse now propose and with a regular culling along with control on neighbourhood farmland (Hayward Farms) we can get the population back down to manageable levels.

Update February 2022

Approx. £700 was paid to Hayward Farms for work which had not been effective.

In 2021 WMPC commissioned Norse to undertake treatment of the rabbit burrows, using tablets (Talunex as recommended by DEFRA) in the warren holes, filling in with soil and with paper. Three visits carried out early in 2021. Effectiveness was monitored by Cemetery group members and Norse operatives.

Rabbit activity has declined during 2021 with the burrows less active. This is clear to those working and visiting the cemetery on a regular basis.

Since start of 2022 some fresh holes have appeared in the warren areas. This needs to be dealt with swiftly to avoid costly damaged to trees, headstones, grass and bulb areas.

Further to the Cemetery Group meeting (Cllr Westover, Mike Hawes, Cemetery Clerk Linda Merriam, Ian Webster and Paul Tynan Norse), on 13th January 2022 Norse have provided a quote to continue with rabbit control as soon as possible.

20.01.22 Quotation as requested 13/01/2020 for 2022 season /Wickham Market

Rabbit control

Fully train ground staff that are qualified to treat the rabbits.

Quotation to treat Rabbit by gassing / 2 treatments £400.00 .+ VAT

Cemetery Paddock £ 63.50 + VAT, one off cut /Flail Mower.

Paul Tynan Norse

When considering the cost of effective rabbit control WMPC need to consider that Norse hold the grounds maintenance contract for the cemetery and have operatives working in the cemetery who can monitor the effectiveness of their rabbit control measures. Norse have also carried a lot of additional work this year to clear perimeter and driveway/paddock brambles to help ensure that rabbit cover is reduced. They provide regular support and advice on many aspects of management which is beneficial to the Parish volunteers and Councillors.

Members of the cemetery group regularly visit the cemetery and run work parties, carrying out many tasks and also monitor various aspects of the management of the cemetery.

Also volunteer work amounting to many hours each year helps to keep spending down on regular items.

Winter works 2021/2022 to date:

Hedge pruning

Young-mature tree pruning, three mature beech, yews. Elder removal.

New snowdrop signs erected and nettles cleared in that area

New signs and poster erected to advise people to use new bunker for spoil

New topsoil container erected and signed.

Litter debris collected each work party

Mulch bagged and all younger trees mulched

29th January volunteers helped with dead cherry tree removal in order to keep price low. We used a local tree surgeon know to villagers who charged a mere £100 with back up from volunteers.

5th February 300 snowdrops planted (funded by donations)

Cllr Anne Westover

Parish Environment Group

Wickham Market Cemetery Group February 10th 2022