

Agenda Item 13 – Cemetery Working Group

The Cemetery Working Group met on Thursday 15th May 2025 at the Cemetery, and the following was discussed.

Moles

No new mole hills were observed. Some older, flattened mole hills were noted, mainly confined to the extension area where there are currently no graves. The handyman is continuing to monitor, flatten mole hills and use repellent. The Clerk has been unable to source a mole catcher to trap the moles. This is due to changing attitudes towards the animals and because the traps would need checking daily for humane reasons. An East Devon mole catcher, who was not prepared to come the distance for the latter reason, advised that he would charge £25 per mole, as an indication of price.

Grass

There have been some concerns raised about the new grass contractor not leaving the area as tidy as it should be, particularly around the ashes area. The Clerk has had a discussion with the contractor and the working group noted that it was much improved on their visit. The Clerk will continue to monitor and any further concerns should be raised with her in the first instance. Initial hiccups with new contracts are to be expected. Council chose the contractor at the November 2024 meeting where they were presented with a table of information, along with the specifications to allow them to make their choice. The handyman and the grass cutting contractor are now two different contractors.

Wildflower Area

The wildflower area has been sown and there was evidence of shoots starting to come through.

Concrete by Entrance

Some splitting to the concrete drive was noted near the Cemetery entrance. The handyman has been asked to fill with silicone to slow any further deterioration, as has been done previously.

Weeding and Tidying Centre Circle Ashes Area

The handyman requested to weed in-between the slabs in the centre circle and tidy up the edges. This has now been completed.

Scattering of Ashes Area

The area is not ready for the scattering of ashes. The new hedge is not yet grown sufficiently to hide the spoil and vegetation behind. Actions and recommendations:

1. The handyman to trim both sides of the new hedge and clear/tidy the overgrown vegetation adjacent to the spoil area. This has been completed.
2. As the hedge will take time to grow it is recommended that a wicker fence of sufficient height is erected to screen the spoil area. Access to the spoil area to be maintained for the grave digger. A quote has been requested.
3. The ground cover for the scattering of ashes to remain as grass and there is to be no demarcation line.

4. As previously discussed at Council two memorial posts to be erected either side of the area. A specification and picture of a rustic post accompanies this paper. Quotes are being sought and will be brought to a future meeting for consideration. A charge for fixing memorial plaques to the posts to be agreed.

The Council's environmental/biodiversity duty

English public authorities, including town and parish councils must have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of decision making, this includes the management of land, including cemeteries. This is a duty under the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006, which was subsequently reinforced under the Environment Act 2021 – see link to SLCC page - [SLCC | New Government Guidance on Biodiversity](#). There are further links within the article to Government and additional SLCC Guidance.

Debbie Bird
Clerk to Willand Parish Council
June 2025