

## **Agenda Item 11 - Cemetery Extension**

As agreed at the May Council meeting a short survey was undertaken online covering the following subjects:

- Consecration of the extension;
- The scattering of ashes, including the environment, memorial plaques and charges;
- Proposed small woodland area.

The survey was publicised on the website and on various Willand Facebook pages over four weeks, closing on the 1<sup>st</sup> July. The Chairman also highlighted the survey in his magazine article and asked for views and comments.

22 responses were received, and a breakdown is provided as follows, also see attached summary:

- 27% - 6 respondents feel the extension should be fully consecrated and 18% (4) partly consecrated, giving an overall 45% (10) in favour of some consecration. 23% (5) feel the extension should not be blessed or consecrated, with the remaining 28% (7) selecting full or part blessing. It is close but the majority were not in favour of consecration.
- Environment for the scattering of ashes – 45% (10) favoured wildflower meadow and 36% (8) a small woodland area; only 18% (4) were in favour of rose beds.
- A variety of responses were submitted relating to tree types for the woodland area, birch was the most popular with rowan and flowering trees also favoured. Oak was suggested but given the size and growth inappropriate for this space. One person suggested shrubs due to the area's size constraints.
- An overwhelming 77% (17) think there should be somewhere to erect a memorial for a fee of £25, and 76% (13) feel this should be on a small structure or wall.
- Fee for the scattering of ashes – 45% (10) agreed that £75 was acceptable and 14% (3) were happy with £100. 41% (9) selected other, and this ranged from no fee (3) to £50 (2), some suggested a small admin fee or charge relative to cost.

There is a possibility of acquiring trees under the Woodland Trust's Free Tree Scheme. As it's a small area it would qualify for the Urban Trees option of up to 15 trees, which would be a mix of native crab apple, rowan and hazel. Trees are delivered in March and November each year and applications are currently being taken for the delivery of trees this November, this will close in August or earlier if oversubscribed.

Note re blessing of the extension (provided by Cllr Little) – A blessing would involve the Parish Council inviting an appropriate local person to dedicate the land to be the final resting place of the mortal remains of people of all faiths and none, and a place of comfort and peace for the bereaved. It would also be possible for individual graves to be blessed by a minister of their faith if the family wish it.

**Debbie Bird, Parish Clerk**

**July 2024**