

Cemetery Improvement Plan V7 1/03/26



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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline a rolling 5 year plan for the upkeep, improvement and general maintenance of the Cemetery.

Background information

Whilst the cemetery remains largely presentable, it is a living environment, with growing trees, bushes and ongoing grave works. It therefore requires ongoing maintenance in order not to become overgrown, dilapidated and unsightly.

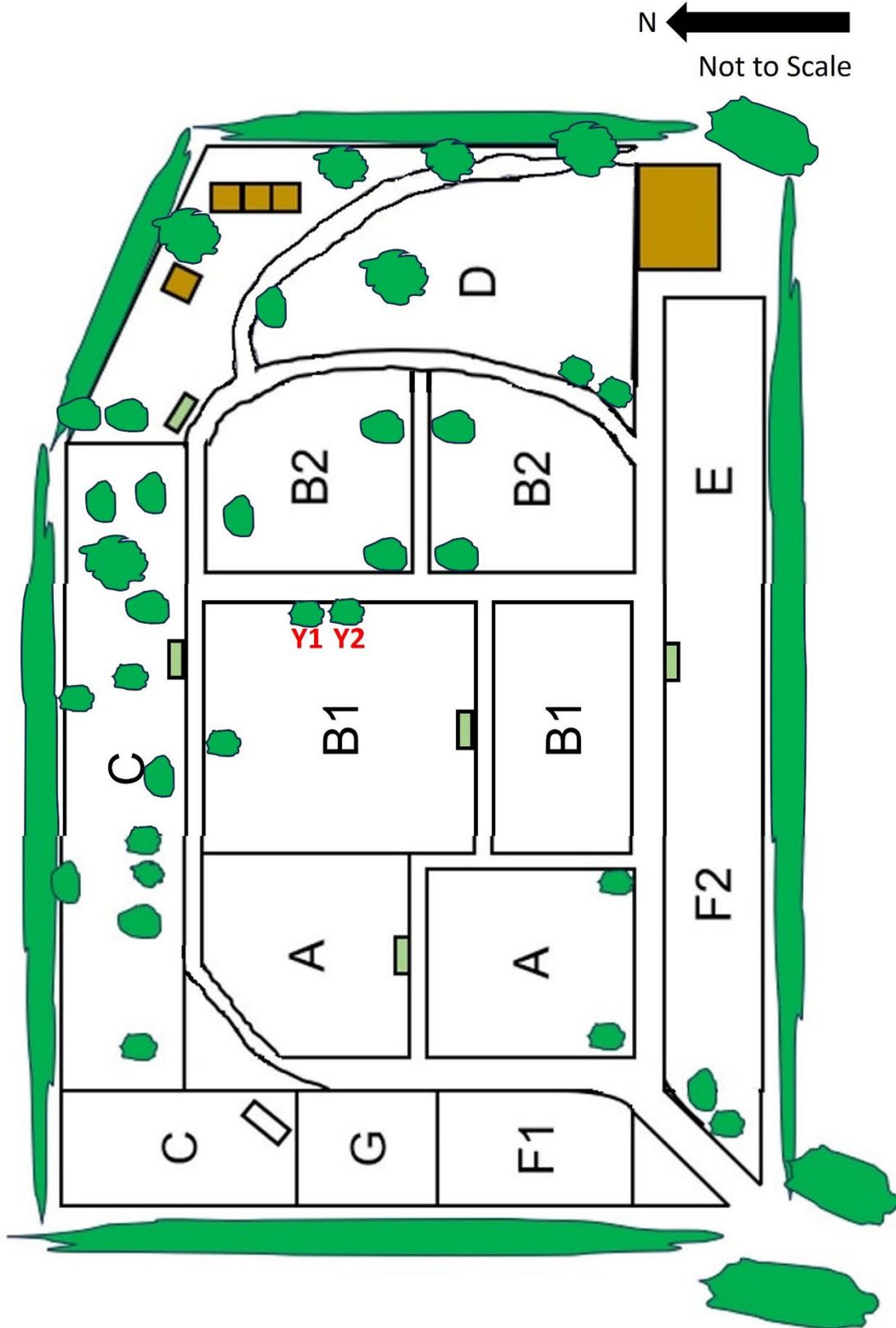
There are areas of the cemetery, which require improvement beyond day to day maintenance and all of this requires resources and funding.

The aim is to develop a cemetery, that the Council and its parishioners can justifiably be proud of, whilst serving the needs of those who choose to be buried in our cemetery, their friends and family.

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Cemetery Map

The map below is used to identify those areas of the Cemetery where improvements need to take place.



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Summary of Key Activities

The list below is an initial (non-exhaustive) list of items identified for improvement.

Completed Activities (Since publication of plan version 1 Feb 2024)

- *Obtain a skip and perform a general tidy up.*
- *Clear all shrubs, bushes and level area next to F2 & E.*
- *Plant new hedge along southern border F2 & E.*
- *Plant new Rowan x2 to replace cut down Irish Yew.*
- *Completion of composting area.*
- *Add bulbs and flowering trees to new grass area along drive. (3 x cherry trees planted)*
- *Revamp cemetery noticeboard.*
- *Replace damaged driveway fencing.*

Outstanding & New Activities

- Re profile bank alongside school boundary area next to C & D.
- Complete full tree survey of Cemetery.
- Remove dead trees and cut back throughout cemetery.
- Remove remaining Irish Yew trees if agreed. (*First two Yew's removed*)
- Add bulbs to grass area along drive.
- Add new cemetery sign at entrance with photo, contact details etc.
- Create storage area next to garage.
- Create formal parking area next to portaloo.
- Repair damage to roadways.

Detailed Activities

Re-profile bank alongside school boundary area next to C & D.

The northern boundary with the school, is a steep bank which has had deposits of soil dumped at various locations over the years.

The intention will be to move the piles of soil and use these to reprofile the bank and to clean up its appearance.

This area between the bank and the path (part of area C & D) could then be tidied up, spring bulbs and flowers added and used as an area where ashes can be scattered.

Bank beside C and F1

Narrow border to the left (west) of the cemetery. Plan to be devised.

Remove dead trees and cut back throughout cemetery.

There is an outstanding action on the Council to have a full tree survey undertaken. This would include the cemetery and will guide what action is required. Some of the trees have died and have already been cut down. Others are in a poor state, one dead tree has already fallen and may need to be removed. A plan for the remaining trees, will be produced once the tree survey has been completed.

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Remove all large fir trees in cemetery.

There are six or seven large Irish Yew trees in the cemetery, which are non-native species. These have grown so large, there are now several grave plots, which can never be used. Some are starting to encroach on existing burial plots.

The intention would be to remove all the fir trees, and over time, once roots have rotted and the ground settled, plant smaller native species that will add to the beauty & atmosphere of the cemetery.

*First yew removed as trial. Cut down by "Payback" team to large stump. Stump removed by tree surgeon. **Completed July 2024.***

*A new Rowan (Mountain Ash) tree has been planted to replace the cut down Irish Yew. **Completed Feb 2025.***

The second yew has been cut down and removed. A new Rowan was planted in its place. **Completed December 2025.**

Next phase, which will require planning and quotes, is to remove two yews "Y1" and "Y2" shown on cemetery map, as these are encroaching on burial plots.

Drive add bulbs and flowering trees to new grass area along drive.

The area along the west side of the drive, would benefit from having spring bulbs planted throughout the lawn area.

Expand car parking.

The area at the top of the drive, next to the toilet, should be cleared, and turned into a formal parking area. This would benefit funeral parties as it would create additional parking.

Add new cemetery sign at entrance with photo, contact details etc.

There is currently no sign advertising the cemetery. A new sign should be commissioned, advertising the cemetery, containing a photograph of the cemetery, along with contact details for anyone wishing to make enquiries.

Create storage area next to garage.

There is always a need from time to time to store materials or the need to have a work area for example when repairing benches.

We will create a work/storage area next to the garage, with hardstanding, screened off by fencing and a gate from the cemetery.

Ongoing management

The new ground's maintenance schedule should be reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of the Cemetery. A schedule of other annual/ seasonal work suitable for the Community Payback team should be drawn up.

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Summary

Anyone who has spent time in the cemetery, particularly on a sunny day, listening to the bird song, the children and the squirrels playing and taking in the serenity of the environment, cannot help but to wonder at the peace and tranquillity.

However, the cemetery is a live environment, which is constantly changing throughout the seasons and the years. It requires a level of maintenance & management commensurate with its importance to, and its role in, the community and equal to the tasks that must be undertaken. This does not come without a cost. Without the correct level of activity & funding, the cemetery will become an unattractive and under used asset.

We are therefore asking for Sturry Parish Council to make a commitment to provide the funds and resources to enable us to offer the best cemetery we can to the community.

The above should be seen as a start, not an end and an ongoing commitment. Funding for each individual element of the plan, will be sought from the Council, as dictated by the Councils finance policy.

Status.

| Issue | Title | Status |
|-------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | SPC_Cemetery_Improvement_Plan_Issue_1 | Formally approved by Sturry Parish Council 15 th Feb 2024 |
| 2 | SPC_Cemetery_Improvement_Plan_Issue_2 | Minor updates April 2024 |
| 3 | SPC_Cemetery_Improvement_Plan_Issue_3 | Minor updates July 2024 |
| 4 | SPC_Cemetery_Improvement_Plan_Issue_4 | Minor updates August 2024 |
| 5 | SPC_Cemetery_Improvement_Plan_Issue_5 | Minor updates January 2025 |
| 6 | SPC_Cemetery_Improvement_Plan_Issue_6 | Minor updates February 2025 |
| 7 | SPC_Cemetery_Improvement_Plan_Issue_7 | Complete revamp March 2026. |
| | | |

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Annexe A

Nesting

There is no law in the UK preventing any one from felling trees or pruning hedges at any time of year.

All birds in the UK are fully protected by law (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - WCA) from intentional harm. Under the same act, any active nest, including nest building or a nest with eggs or chicks in, is also protected from intentional destruction or removal and you cannot block access to any active nest. So, if you see a bird carrying nesting material or food into an area, this indicates that there is an active nest there.

It is safer do any tree work over the winter months when you can see into the tree and the tree itself is dormant. This also avoids the peak season for nesting birds, which is from the beginning of March to the end of August.

However, some birds can nest at any time of year, and the work must be completed at some point.

Recent winters have shown that milder weather can tempt many birds into nesting early. There have been reports of Blackbirds with chicks in January, Robins with chicks in February and Ducks with ducklings in March. ***It does not matter when or where the bird's nest is, it is still protected by the WCA all year round.***

A frequent question is asked about felling conifers; they are normally very big, out of control, difficult to see into to check for nests. Cutting the lower branches off a conifer will allow us to look up into the tree for nests. Old nests and roosting sites are not protected by the WCA. Regardless of the time of year, if we find an active nest, we will leave the tree or hedge until the fledglings have left the nest, then carry out the work.

Sturry Parish Council understands the importance and sensitivity of removing any bushes or trees during the nesting season.

It's all about common sense and timing. Sturry Parish Council and its contractors will do all we can to ensure nests and nesting birds are not disturbed.

Long term, we will be creating an attractive native environment, which we hope will encourage birds and wildlife to make their homes in the Cemetery.

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Annexe B

Provisional Timetable V7 Nov 2025

The attached timetable is draft and will change. Items may require more detailed designs, quotes, and approvals. This as we know can impact the timeframe significantly.

The plan does however offer a realistic view of the breadth, quantity and relationships of the various activities required to implement the plan.

As with the overall plan, this timetable of activities, will need to be kept current and updated at regular intervals.

| CEMETERY IMPROVEMENT PLAN | 2025 | | | 2026 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|----------|----------|------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----|
| | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| Plant 2nd Rowan at entrance to main cemetery area. | | Delivery | Complete | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Re profile bank alongside school boundary area next to C & D. | | | | | | | | Design | | Quotes | | | Approval | Delivery | |
| Complete full tree survey of Cemetery. | | | | | | | Quotes | Delivery | | | | | | | |
| Remove dead trees and cut back throughout cemetery. | | | | | | | | Approval | Delivery | | | | | | |
| Remove remaining Irish Yew trees if agreed. (First two Yew's removed) | | | | | | | | | Reassess | Quotes | Approval | | Delivery | | |
| Add bulbs to grass area along drive. | | | | | | | | | | | | Approval | Delivery | | |
| Add new cemetery sign at entrance with photo, contact details etc. | | | | | | | | Approval | Delivery | | | | | | |
| Create storage area next to garage. | | | | | Design | Approval | Delivery | | | | | | | | |
| Create formal parking area next to portaloo. | | | | | | | | | Approval | Delivery | | | | | |
| Repair damage to roadways. | | | | | | | | | Approval | Delivery | | | | | |

Completed Activities (Since publication of plan version 1 Feb 2024)

- Obtain a skip and perform a general tidy up.
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