



# EVESHAM

---

## TOWN COUNCIL

### Item No. 7

#### **Fallow areas in cemeteries**

The committee is asked to consider if it wishes to recommend to council that parts of its cemeteries are left fallow over summer and that grass cutting is not carried out. A single cut will take place in autumn and there are options to plant wildflowers if possible.

This has the following advantages:

- It would encourage biodiversity in these areas, promoting the council's biodiversity policy and plan.
- It would enable the outdoor staff to concentrate on the maintenance of remaining areas of the cemeteries for their summer grass cutting. Summer is a very busy time of year and the team struggle to keep on top of the work if there is frequent rainfall. Despite their best efforts, and employing a part-time summer worker, there has still been some criticism and complaints during high season this year.

The risks are:

- That the plan is not supported by the public. Cemeteries can provoke high emotions and families whose relatives are buried in the fallow sections may take offence and feel that leaving the grass uncut around graves is disrespectful. If this happens it may be possible to modify the boundaries of the areas so that these disputed graves continue to be maintained. However, some people may think it is disrespectful even if they have no connection to the graves in the fallow areas.

The areas would need to be carefully chosen to include only the older sections of the cemetery where graves are not regularly tended. It is recommended that paths be mown through the area so that people can walk through, as this makes more of a 'feature' of the areas and looks more intentional.

Should the committee support the proposal, it is recommended that signs are put up around the areas to explain to the public that it is a deliberate action, and the biodiversity reasons.

If supported, the grass would be left from the start of the next season, spring/ summer of 2025.

Other cemeteries have left fallow areas, for example Fladbury churchyard. Leaving areas uncut is supported by the Church of England who offer advice and guidance on their website – a link is below.

<https://cofe-worcester.org.uk/why-let-the-grass-grow.php>

**The committee members views are requested on this.**