

## Watton Cemetery

Watton Town Council (WTC) has begun to remove what is considered to be 'excessive' adornments from some of the Graves in the Town Cemetery. Although considered by some to be a controversial decision, the Council have made the decision to enforce the rule that has been in place for many years due to complaints that the Cemetery is looking shabby and untidy and is not "a pleasant place to visit lost loved ones".

Councillor Stan Hebborn, Chairman of the WTC Cemetery Working Group, said, "I can confirm that we have commenced work in tidying the Cemetery and preparing the ground for potential future burial plots. We are responding to complaints from a number of people who use the Cemetery and other residents with regard to the litter and debris strewn around the Cemetery that has blown or otherwise come from a grave adornment. The rules have always stated that on each grave, there should only be 2 vases, and although the Council has previously allowed a certain amount of discretion for graves to have excessive floral and other tributes such as toys, football shirts and other items, significant to the memory of the deceased person, until the grave has settled, however this has been inadvertently presumed as a right of entitlement. It is understandable that some people may be upset by us enforcing this decision, but this rule has always been in place and is not a new thing. We have a responsibility to everyone who uses the Cemetery and it would be wrong of us to ignore the concerns raised. The complaints have been from those who are following the rules, and asking why they have to comply and others don't, from those we employ for ground care, whose machines have been fouled by items from 'overadorned' plots causing costly damage to equipment and from those who want the Cemetery to look nice for when people come to visit the grave of their loved ones. We are dealing with this as sensitively as we can and have sent letters and placed notices on some the plots asking for the adornments to be removed before a specified date. Anything that has been left on a plot that is not in-keeping with the rules shall be sensitively removed and placed in a bag or box, labelled and placed in the Councils store for safe-keeping until at least October 31st 2018.

We are also conducting a long-term and in-depth review of everything in relation to the Cemetery, and the issue of adornments may well be considered at that time, meanwhile we have to adhere to the rules and will continue to try and make the Cemetery a peaceful and presentable place for everyone to visit."

Should anyone wish to retrieve any item that has been removed for safe-keeping, please phone the Council Offices on 01953 881007