

## 8. Closed Churchyard Report

- a) There are three specific items for councillors to consider at November's meeting. These are separately listed on the meeting's agenda. Prior to considering each, there are two further points for information/approval:
- i) The new gate-posts to replace those at the south-end of the closed churchyard are being seasoned and will be installed later in the year when the ground is softer. This will require effort by councillors and volunteers within the community.
  - ii) It is accepted that this year's cut of the wildflower area should have been conducted in a more professional manner. In part this was due to mis-communication with a new contractor. The cut should have been re-raked – this was due to take place during the week starting 28<sup>th</sup> October. An additional charge of £100 has been requested, which council should pay, if the re-raking is deemed acceptable. In future years, the clerk will issue written instructions to the contractor at the beginning of the season to avoid any misunderstanding.
- b) Repairs to the Churchyard Wall
- i) It is accepted that the churchyard wall requires remedial repairs as a minimum. To the layman's eye there are several areas, especially at the foot of the wall that need attention. It is likely that last winter's severe wet weather and the increase in the number of HGVs on the B1078 have been major contributors to the deterioration of the wall.
  - ii) It is recommended that council seek expert opinion on what is best done, though approaching one or more of: Historic England, the conservation officer at MSDC, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and Suffolk Preservation Society. The cost of any repairs is unknown at this stage but could be material and, in addition, safe working traffic management will be required which would be an additional cost.
- c) Tree Survey of the Churchyard from Tree Services
- i) Eastwood Tree Services has provided a quotation for undertaking a survey of the trees in the closed churchyard. As the closed churchyard is the only green space for which council has responsibility which hasn't been surveyed, council is asked to approve a spend of £300, so this gap is closed. This will support the future tree works budget/schedule and underpin our insurance.
- d) Closed churchyard shed roof repairs
- i) The roof has rotted and there is water ingress.
  - ii) One of the Gardemau trusts has agreed a £100 initial contribution to pay for the repairs, as it is acknowledged by the PCC that it is a grey area as to whether it is the PCC's or parish council's responsibility to maintain the shed which holds equipment to maintain the churchyard.
  - iii) The recommendation is that the roof is replaced in its entirety, to avoid repairs having to be repeated in a few years' time. Materials will cost approximately £300 and the PCC/Gardemau will be asked to pay at least 66% of the cost, provided councillors and volunteers they organise undertake the work. Council is asked to support this recommendation, which might mean that council has to contribute up to £100, which will come from the general reserve.