



CHERISHING SIDMOUTH CEMETERIES

MANAGED BUT NOT MANICURED

The Cherishing Sidmouth Cemetery Volunteers have been working at the cemetery for nearly 2 years. It has proved to be an interesting, rewarding and challenging experience.

We are a small group of 10 volunteers and attendance fluctuates according to other commitments and the weather.

The Volunteers appreciate the Councillors making site visits this year, to learn more about what we do and the issues we face. However, the lack of engagement, extremely poor and sometimes non-existent communication by some East Devon Council Managers, has left us disillusioned and frustrated at times.

Dog signage to reflect the updated 2024 Cemetery Regulations were eventually installed but it shouldn't have taken numerous requests from the Volunteers to get this actioned.

Despite being aware a member of the public has been intimidating and verbally abusive to volunteers on different occasions East Devon Council failed to take any action. We are extremely grateful to the local police officers who supported us to resolve the issue.

Sadly we have to report plants, signage and even a wildlife pile of logs have been stolen along with fly tipping, evidence of drug use and weed killer being applied in one area.

However, the positives this year have been numerous. The Council Horticultural Officer has provided tools, dumpy bags and plants and the Streetscene team have provided a store and continued to remove the many bags we fill.

Members of the public continue to thank us for what we are doing including donations of money and wildflower seeds. The First Sid Vale Explorer Scouts recently did a fantastic job clearing and bagging brambles and raking grass.

The East Devon Tree Team have put up bat and bird boxes. Wildlife observation by the volunteers has seen the following. 28 species of bird, 15 species of butterfly, frogs, slow worms and numerous invertebrates. Also evidence of badgers, foxes and bats. A plant survey has identified 112 herbaceous plants. With the numerous plants and various fungi, lichens and mosses it goes to show how important a site it is especially if it gets a sympathetic helping hand.

The Volunteers have continued to find out more about the history of the cemetery and the people buried there. This has resulted in one volunteer writing an article on the history for East Devon Talking Newspapers and the Sid Vale Association. The Council now has a burial search facility on its website, although as yet incomplete. Two of the Council Officers from the Burial's team have accepted our invitation to meet with us to exchange information of mutual benefit.

The most positive aspect is how rewarding it is to see the difference we have made. We are a friendly bunch with a good sense of humour. We would love more volunteers to join us and there is a diverse range of tasks and roles that need to be undertaken. If you are interested please come along on a Tuesday morning to find out more.

Finally without the support of Jeremy, Mary and Roger and the existence of the VGS none of this would happen so a big thank you from the CSC Volunteers.

Steering Group

Cherishing Sidmouth Cemeteries

21 November 2025