

Nature and Environment Report, November 2023

Cllr Elli Bate

Cemetery Fence

The wooden fence bounding the top of Freshford cemetery has become wobbly again, and further repairs are not expected to be long-lasting or, therefore, cost-effective.

A year ago, the PC got quotes (likely now a bit out of date) for two replacement options:

- 1) Like-for-like wooden fence c.£1,900
- 2) Metal estate fencing c.£5,000

It has also been suggested that the fence could be removed entirely given that the top triangle will eventually be consecrated and become part of the cemetery when more space is needed. However there is concern that dogs and children may walk on the memorial stones which are nearest to the path.

I am in the middle of seeking opinions from the Cemetery Advisory Group, one member of which has suggested a fourth option, of using willow hoops or similar as shown below.

I will report back to the PC once I've had feedback from more members of the group, however I believe we will need to weigh the following considerations when making a decision:

- Residents' opinions (likely very mixed)
- Cost
- Longevity and maintenance requirements
- Environmental impact (both carbon and biodiversity)



Living willow arches



Willow hoops

Tree planting

Earlier this year the PC had to have a considerable number of trees felled along the edge of the Tynning due to Ash die-back. As our policy for tree applications is to recommend the replacement of all felled trees with one or more newly planted trees, I thought it would be good if we can plant some trees to replace those felled on our land.

I have contacted the Friends of Freshford to ask if they would consider funding some saplings, and am in discussion with them regarding what type of trees would be appropriate. Will report back at the next meeting.

Dark skies policy - update

Having been asked to draft a policy for the PC I have been doing some research but am unsure of exactly what we are aiming for – policy-writing is not my forte!

From reading the Dark Skies policies of other PCs, it seems that we could aim to set out:

- Why does light pollution matter (who / what is affected)?
- Why does it matter in Freshford?
- How can light pollution be minimised?

As I understand it, this policy can then be used as a benchmark when the PC considers planning applications in future.

I would be grateful for any feedback on this proposed content, or if there's a councillor who would like to help write the policy alongside me.