




Update on Estates Issues

This report sets out progress on a number of estates issues raised by the committee or reported to the clerk. Progress against the work plan agreed at the February meeting (Min. 24.02.8.1, Report WPC.EC.24.02.01 refers) is summarised below:

Current Financial Year (2025 – 26)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work to damaged Memorials where no deed holders found• Upgrades to play areas	Ad hoc February 26
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing accessibility to grave space records for Councillors – work to onboard burial Registers has been completed and purchased grave spaces records have been transcribed ready for onboarding once final checks have been completed.• Replacement posts at Coltsfoot Green• Registration of Cemetery & Six Acres• Replacement Fencing (Bury Road)• Memorial Clock – Service and repair	April Min Ref 23.02.13 Approved Min. Ref 24.09.10 – Report to this meeting July '25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upgrades to Play Areas• Work to parish trees – re-shape to increase light• Cemetery Notice Board	February Work Completed June '25 Work completed April '25 Completed August '25

Six Acres and Recreation Ground

As part of the long term plan to develop the wildlife areas (Report WPC.EO.25.11.02 and Minute EO.25.11.07 refer), the parish council agreed that additional planting in the Wildlife area between the Tennis Courts and Bowling Green would underpin the objectives and community actions set out in the Neighbourhood Plan. The WI, with friends and family held a successful planting day in Mid-November.

Maintenance in Cemetery

Volunteer days in Cemetery started on the first Wednesday in February. A general tidy was carried out, and all three of the Memorial benches have now been rubbed down and re-oiled. The memorial bench in the new wildlife area behind the Chapel of Rest has been moved into the porch, and a new lock fitted to the small noticeboard, which has also been moved into the porch of the Chapel of Rest (with thanks to Cllrs A & K Grimes).

The first parish day is scheduled for Wednesday 4th March and planned activities include:

- Creating a dead hedge to left of compost heap
- Turning over compost heap and if possible using any mulch to fill holes and depressions in cemetery
- Using fallen leaves in old cemetery and along Cemetery Road footpath to mulch Cemetery Road hedging and Cherry Trees.

Play Areas

The January report on play areas has identified a number of low risk issues, reported under WPC.EC.26.02.04).

Chapel of Rest

Thanks go out to Cllrs A and K Grimes for their care of the Chapel of Rest and the Cemetery.

The Electricity contract expired in September 2025 and a new contract to follow on from this has been agreed by the clerk through Love Energy Savings.

WPC.EC.26.02.02 – Estates Issues

Smartest Energy	Electric	Standing Charge (p/day) : 0p
	S038012011012940829020	Day Unit Rate (p/kWh) : 24.96p
	2 year(s) from 25/09/2025	

Based on an annual consumption of 8Kwh, this should cost a total of £1.99 plus VAT per year – a saving against budget in the current financial year of over £80 plus VAT.

Currently there is an issue that Smartest Energy are estimating energy consumption, which has resulted in higher than anticipated bill. Monthly meter readings will help to confirm the low energy consumption and should result in a refund or credit being applied to the account.

There are a number of clauses in the insurance schedule which have a bearing on cover for items stored in the Chapel of Rest. Essentially, there is a requirement that:

1. *The final exit door is secured by:*

- a. *a rim automatic deadlock conforming to or superior to BS3621; or*
- b. *a mortice deadlock conforming to or superior to BS3621; or*
- c. *a key operated multi-point locking system having at least three locking bolts.*

This has been reported to the Estates Committee at each meeting since July. Having established that the matter may simply be dealt with by fitting a further lock (to BS3621) to the existing doors, and noting with thanks Cllr Lavelle's kind offer to fit the lock, the clerk will make arrangements for this work to be completed by a locksmith if need be to ensure that the parish's insurance cover is not impacted. This is particularly important now that additional assets (see below) are being stored in the Chapel.

Powers:

- Local Government Act 1972, s.214(2) - Power to provide and maintain cemeteries in or outside the council's area.
- Local Government Act 1972, s.111 - Power to do anything that will facilitate, be conducive to or incidental to the discharge of its powers and functions.

Revenue Budget:

Cemetery & Churchyard	Adjusted Budget	Actual	Against Budget
NNDR - Cemetery	£ -	£ -	£ -
Cemetery Software	£ 645.00	£ 456.00	£ (189.00)
Cemetery and Churchyard	£ 1,000.00	£ 582.24	£ (417.76)
Cemetery Refurbishment	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ (1,000.00)
Cemetery Extension Project	£ -	£ -	£ -
Total Cemetery & Churchyard	£ 2,645.00	£ 1,038.24	£ (1,606.76)

Safety and Security	£ 250.00	£ 79.95	£ (170.05)
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The clerk has approached the Carnival Committee for a contribution towards the cost of the replacement door, on the basis that storage is made available to the committee free of charge.

Recommendation:

Authorise cost of a replacement lock for Chapel of Rest to BS3621 or superior at not more than £200.00 plus VAT (installed).

Hilary Workman
Clerk & RFO
January 2026

WPC.EC.26.02.02 – Estates Issues

The parish council has made a nominal payment of £1 to take on the assets of Wickhambrook Bowls Club, which has now sadly closed due to falling membership.

The equipment, listed below, will be stored in the Chapel of Rest.

1. Ransomes 51 Marquis cylinder mower. Needs full service plus repair of starter cord.
2. Hayter Harrier 48 rotary mower. In good working order.
3. Sisis aerator complete with spare tines. In good working order.
4. BM 35. Scarifier. In working order
5. Cyclone CB3000 lawn sand spreader.
6. Irrigation system self propelled. Needs servicing.
7. Manual irrigation system
8. Lawn strimmer
9. Bowls scoreboards
10. Six sets of adult bowls

Cllr Lavelle has kindly said that he will look over 1 and 6 to establish whether these may easily be serviced and identify any associated costs which will be reported to the next meeting.

Water usage at Bowling Green

Consumption has levelled out with the cooler autumn weather and the account was in credit (£63.49) at the most recent bill.

All Saints Churchyard

The noticeboard has been re-set on spikes to improve stability as part of the November parish day. The Church warden, Paul Bevan, passed on the thanks of the PCC, noting that:

"...It looks very good and the notice board is very much more sturdy."

He has also advised that the request to have the small metal studs removed from a monument in the churchyard has now been completed.

Village Sign



The village sign, installed in 1998, is now looking very sunbleached and faded. The original installers, The Village Sign People, have indicated that an initial approach would be to arrange for gentle cleaning with soap and water, to remove any accumulated grime. They report that this can make a substantial difference to the sign's appearance. This could be scheduled as an activity for the May Parish Day, allowing for any costs associated with the hire of a tower to be budgeted at the April meeting.

The clerk now has two quotes for the cost of a full refurbishment (attached as Appendix B). There is currently a lead time of eighteen months with the original installers, and once a purchase order is submitted, any price quoted would be honoured.

Hilary Workman
Clerk & RFO
January 2026