

Statutory Biodiversity Duty and the Phasing Out of Plastic Floral Tributes

A Gentle Reminder for Families Visiting North Somercotes Cemetery

This topic was first raised at the **Annual Parish Meeting in April 2023**, in response to the council's Biodiversity Policy, when residents expressed concerns that some families cannot always afford fresh flowers or may struggle to visit the cemetery regularly. We fully understand these worries, and we sympathise deeply with every family who places tributes for their loved ones. Every item left is an act of love, and we recognise how important these gestures are.

Protecting Wildlife and the Cemetery Environment

However, we must also protect the wildlife that moves gently between the headstones — robins nesting in the hedgerows, hedgehogs shuffling through the grass, and other small creatures that share this peaceful resting place. When plastic flowers perish, they crumble, and their bright fragments can be carried by the wind into the cemetery and surrounding fields, where birds and animals may mistake them for food and suffer harm.



Phasing Out Non-Biodegradable Materials

Florist foam (OASIS/SEC), which is made from phenolic foam and is not biodegradable, is now being phased out under the Cemetery Rules and Regulations and will no longer be permitted. Families are warmly encouraged to consider natural alternatives such as bamboo, willow, dried **grasses, or other materials that fade gently back into the earth without causing harm.** Metal frames can be used, as these can then be separated and component parts recycled, as we have been doing for several years.



To help families understand the concerns raised, we have included photographs showing the small pieces of plastic found in and around the cemetery. These fragments come from perishing artificial flowers and florist foam, and can easily be blown into the grass, borders, and surrounding fields. They may appear harmless, but they pose real risks to wildlife who can mistake them for food or become caught in them.

Why This Matters

This is not about limiting how families express their grief or affection — **it is about protecting the peaceful surroundings that make the cemetery such a special**

place for everyone.

Natural flowers return softly to the earth. Plastic ones do not.

A Kind Request

We kindly ask visitors to choose real or biodegradable tributes to help preserve the dignity of the cemetery and safeguard the wildlife that lives among our loved ones' resting place. Your understanding and care truly make a difference.

If you have questions, please contact the clerk@northsomercotes-pc.gov.uk.