

Spratton Pocket Park
(Brixworth Road Cemetery)

The Parish Council was granted Pocket Park status for this site and obtained grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and from Northamptonshire County Council, in order to carry out restoration and improvements. These included replacing the path (within the Pocket Park) and repairing the lychgate as well as installing benches and an interpretation board. It is hoped that the site will be used for a variety of purposes from sitting quietly enjoying the wild flowers, bees, butterflies and birds, to getting involved in detailed ecological studies, helping with maintenance such as painting railings and applying wood preserver, propagating wild flowers and photography. A wide range of interests can be satisfied.

Below is a draft list of the Parish Council's intentions and possible uses for the site. Volunteers are sought to assist with all these aspects, and your views are invited so they can be incorporated into the management plan.

Aims

- To develop the cemetery as an area for quiet reflection, enjoyment and education, for the benefit of relatives of the deceased and members of the community.
- To maintain and further develop the current biodiversity of the site.
- To encourage local residents of all ages to work together to support, care for, and enjoy the area.

Objectives

- To remember the area is a cemetery and respect those buried there and the feelings of their relatives at all times.
- To keep grass lightly trimmed around graves that are still actively visited and permit relatives to maintain those graves.
- To keep the new path reasonably clear of vegetation, with careful use of weed killer if necessary, having regard for the sites wildlife status, so visitors enjoy the experience.
- To be a part of the Northamptonshire County Council Pocket Park scheme so as to source expert advice and assistance.
- To periodically inspect the benches and maintain them as necessary.
- To encourage a wide variety of wild flowers to grow so as to provide interest for visitors and attract insects from early spring until late autumn.
- To prohibit the use of insecticides and herbicides on vegetation (except for the path) so a large insect population can thrive and provide food for wild birds.
- To prohibit the use of herbicides, fungicides and chemical fertiliser so as to allow the existing population of fungus and lichens to thrive.

- To encourage plants, shrubs and trees that will produce seeds and fruits to provide food for birds and small mammals.
- To encourage small mammals such as mice, shrews and voles by avoiding disturbance of the bottom of hedgerows.
- To provide birds with nesting sites by ensuring hedges and trees are not cut from mid-February until late summer.
- To provide bird nesting boxes to encourage breeding on the site.
- To maintain a neat appearance of hedges and trees with winter cutting and pruning.
- To maintain a tidy appearance and reduce soil fertility by cutting grass and removing cuttings from site late in October after plants have seeded.
- To avoid increasing soil fertility and hence the vigorous growth of grass, nettles, thistles and rose-bay willow herb.
- To remove unwanted thistles and brambles and avoid the introduction of controlled weeds such as Ragwort, Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed.
- To reduce the number of seed heads from any species that may become too prolific to the detriment of other species, i.e. Knapweed, Willowherbs, and Hawkweeds.
- To control the growth of stinging nettles so other plants are not crowded out.
- To encourage schools and other organisations concerned with young people to visit the cemetery to enjoy the native wild flowers, insects and birds.
- To encourage the propagation of wild flowers in pots from seed and planting into suitable places where they can grow to maturity. Planting could extend to verges and other areas in the village.
- To inspect the funeral masonry for safety and where necessary take steps to rectify problems while recognising the need to preserve the monuments as far as it practicable.
- To carry out a six monthly clean of the illustrated board in the lychgate and the interpretation board and apply a coat of Sadolin Classic Light Oak wood preservative to the latter.
- To inspect the metal railings fixed to the wall and periodically clean and paint these as necessary to maintain a smart appearance.
- To make known the history of the site and, if possible, research some of the past residents buried there.
- To encourage the study of algae, lichens, moulds and moss that grows on masonry.
- To provide subjects suitable for those interested in wildlife photography.
- To keep the stream clear of debris so the water can flow freely.