

# Volunteer Gardening in the Cemetery

With the support of the City Council some dedicated volunteers from the neighbourhood have been working throughout Spring and Summer to tidy unwanted growth in parts of the cemetery – we initially homed in on the south-east corner and are now working in other areas. Of particular importance has been the work to cut back and, where possible, remove self-seeded saplings and shrubs growing around and between headstones. These damage and destabilise the headstones with the possibility that some will eventually topple – many *have* done over the years. The work has also included cutting back branches and ivy obscuring inscriptions with some gravestones (laid flat over a grave) having become completely obscured over the years. Unwanted growth along and within some of the walls has also been cleared to help maintain the stonework.

***South Wall Before/After***



***Detail from Area Before/After***



Volunteers have been guided by the City Council in greenery to be avoided such as where birds might be nesting, prized trees, and mosses growing on headstones and gravestones – examination of the mosses is part of a university research project. We are grateful to the City Council for supplying us with gardening tools (some volunteers prefer to bring their own), providing us with storage space under the catacombs, and removing our compostable rubbish.

As the work has progressed many walkers in the cemetery have remarked favourably on the results but there have been a few who have voiced criticism, citing climate change and wildlife conservation as reasons. The project is seen as a compromise between these issues and preserving the memorials and landscaping that make the cemetery what it is today – a calming environment in which to walk, jog, bathe in the energy of the trees, listen to birdsong and ponder on lives gone by.

Soon, we will be planting bulbs in chosen areas to add more colour and gladden hearts come Springtime. Some, donated by a volunteer, are already in, while the City Council has promised us a supply of daffodils, snowdrops and bluebells in time for autumn planting. There is also a proposal to create a wildflower area near the East Gate and possibly in other parts of the cemetery.



*What a little colour can do – we are aiming for much more of this with some new bulb planting*

Volunteers work at times to suit themselves, alone, in pairs, or small groups. If you are able to help us in any way, do let us know by contacting us at [cemetery@grangeassociation.com](mailto:cemetery@grangeassociation.com).

-----