

## **Westport Cemetery Gravestone Cleaning, Repairs and Restoration**

### **Public Notice**

The Town of Westport has responsibility for the care and maintenance of the three town-owned cemeteries in the community: Beech Grove on Main Road, Linden Grove and Maple Grove including the Mosher Cemetery, on Reed Road. The Westport Point Cemetery on Main Road is also regarded as a town cemetery. The Town provides maintenance for private cemeteries for which perpetual care funds were purchased in the past. These cemeteries are mainly on independent lots, but some are part of the property of individual private owners. As of February 2022, there are 35 such private cemeteries receiving maintenance services from the town of Westport Cemetery Department.

Beginning in August 2019, training was given to volunteers to clean stones. In May 2021, Town Meeting awarded CPA funds for gravestone restoration at town-owned cemeteries. In July a renowned gravestone repair expert, Jonathan Appell, conducted two two-day intensive training sessions. Six volunteers attended these sessions and have been repairing stones since that time. The Westport Gravestone Cleaning and Restoration Group was formed to do the cleaning and restoration. In addition, private funding was raised under the auspices of the Westport Historical Society to buy equipment and supplies to clean and restore stones in some of the accessible private cemeteries. Ted Kinnari, President of D/2Biological Solutions donates all the D/2 to clean the stones in town and private cemeteries.

It is not the responsibility of the town or property owners to clean or repair broken or leaning stones. However, care and maintenance of private cemeteries is encouraged. Any form of willful vandalism including damage, destruction and removal of gravestone is punishable by law.

Cleaning and restoration of gravestones were authorized by the Town Administrator, Timothy King and notice of intent put on the town website. Owners of property with a private cemetery on their property were given the opportunity to opt out of the cleaning and restoration of stones on their property. There was no objection made by private property owners.

If any proven relative of the interred or owner of a grave in a gravesite in a town-owned cemetery or in private cemeteries does not want stones of the interred cleaned, repaired, restored, or preserved, they should notify the Board of Selectmen secretary at 508-636-1004.