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GTM rewards cemetery cleaners with contracts

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After months of knocking on the door of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality (GTM), seven hard-working Nkowankowa residents were finally employed.

This comes after the men volunteered their time to clean the Nkowankowa Cemetery after they realised that it was overgrown with vegetation, and it had become a hiding place for criminals and drug users.

Last year the group told the Herald that they are at the cemetery from Monday to Friday from 07:30 to 16:00.

“Our aim is to keep the gravesites clean and free from criminals,” they stated..

“We have knocked on different doors and have engaged the ward councillors in wards 17, 18, and 19 and even the GTM office in Tzaneen to no avail.

“We need assistance with uniforms, working tools, a stipend to compensate us for our work, and also to be officially introduced as the caretakers,” Bright Mthembi, one of the volunteers, told the Herald.



Volunteers clean the cemetery in Nkowankowa.

They went from door-to-door in Nkowankowa requesting donations of R10 to help them buy tools and put food on their tables.

Their persistence paid off after the GTM finally incorporated them into its Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP).

“The group will now be paid by

the municipality at the EPWP rate and will work five days a week for the next 12 months with the possibility of an extension,” GTM explained on their Facebook page.

The volunteers said they are excited about the opportunity and thanked the Herald for reporting on their story last year.



The Nkowankowa Cemetery cleaners. > Photo: GTM