

Report to: Assets and Operations Committee

Report Ref: A1918
Meeting Date: 16th December 2019
Agenda Item: 7
Prepared By: Town Clerk



Subject: Cemetery Transfer

1.0 BACKGROUND

The management of Knutsford Cemetery returns to the Town Council on 1st January 2020. The committee has previously approved the Cemetery Regulations which govern the council's administration of the cemetery.

On the conclusion of the staffing review being undertaken by the Personnel Committee (expected to be concluded by the end of the year) the council will begin recruitment for the Cemetery Groundskeeper and the office staff involved in the cemetery management. It is anticipated that all staff will be in post by Spring 2020 and in the meantime the Town Ranger will tend to maintenance issues and the current staff will ensure the effective administration of any burials.

This report outlines recommendations on a number of aspects required as part of the change in management.

2.0 WASTE DISPOSAL

The current waste disposal arrangement for the cemetery is two commercial general waste bins, located at the entrance to the cemetery and behind the chapel. These are both unsightly and challenging to use for some due to the weight of the lids and their height. The majority of the waste generated onsite is flowers and this is currently disposed of in general waste bins.

Following transfer, an area will be created for the onsite composting of green waste. This will reduce waste disposal costs and maximise the environmental sustainability of the cemetery operation; the compost will be used on site in flower beds. An area in the north-west of the cemetery has been identified for this.

It is recommended that eight litter bins are installed in pairs, one labelled for general waste and one for green waste. The cost of the bins will be £1,700.

The general waste will then be disposed of via a commercial collection. It is recommended that a bin store is constructed to hide the commercial collection bins and preserve the character of the cemetery, the cost for this is anticipated to be in the region of £350.

3.0 SIGNAGE



There are currently three information signs within the cemetery. One on the outside fence which details the basic regulations and opening times, a second which has details of one regulation and a third featuring a map of the cemetery, basic information and contact information. All signage is in a poor condition.

It is suggested that the main sign at the entrance of the cemetery is replaced with a town council branded sign, featuring a map, contact information and the key regulations. The cost for this is £230.

The company that the town council has used for correcting gravestones in the cemetery over the past five years has offered to provide an engraved granite sign free of charge. This would feature the name of the mason (Whitby Memorials) and would replace the sign on the outside railing.

4.0 WATERING CAN STATION

There is an outdoor tap at the side of the chapel and a number of watering cans which are used by visitors. This area is often unsightly. The cemetery working group recommends that a freestanding wooden shelving unit be installed in this location to provide a tidy storage space for watering cans. The cost for this is anticipated to be in the region of £200.

5.0 CEMETERY RECORDS AND MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Cheshire East Council will be handing the council the official cemetery records, a series of handwritten books dating from the early 1900s; these are the definitive records for the cemetery and Cheshire East Council has had the main book rebound to ensure it is handed over in good condition. Cheshire East Council will also be providing digital records from its burials database.

The council has PT Mapper Pro for mapping the town. Pear Mapping have provided a quote of £1,250 to create a digital map of the cemetery. The map would be drawn from the existing paper maps and enable the council to more easily manage the cemetery through linking the maps to the cemetery database.

It is recommended that the Pear Burial Database is procured at a cost of £500 (plus £85 p.a. support). The data will be transcribed either from the books or the digital records into the database. A budget of £1,200 has been allowed for this.

6.0 MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT

It will be necessary to procure a number of tools for the routine maintenance of the cemetery. These will be stored at the garage on site. The groundskeeper will have their own strimmer, but, at least initially, will share the existing hedge trimmer, pressure washer and leaf blower with the Town Ranger. A budget of £750 has been allowed for the purchase of tools and equipment.

The Town Ranger has discussed the maintenance requirements with existing grounds staff and subsequently the Town Clerk. The most appropriate lawnmower to manage the cemetery is a Hustler Raptor zero turn mower. This is a ride-on lawnmower with a narrow deck and no turning circle enabling it to fit around gravestones. The cost of this is £3,250.



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY GOLD

7.0 CEMETERY IMPROVEMENTS BUDGET 2020/21

In reviewing the amalgamated budget submissions, the Finance Committee resolved to remove the cemetery improvements budget for 2020/21. The Assets and Operations Committee had submitted a budget request for £3,000 for this budget line.

The Cemetery Working Group would like to see the budget reinstated. It is felt that during the first year of operation there will be a number of minor improvements that it wishes to undertake.

Some of the improvements discussed by the working group include:

- a) Creation of a cremation garden area
- b) Installation of cycle parking
- c) Re-standing of additional gravestones
- d) Installation of additional benches
- e) Installing moveable planters in place of old gravestone roadblocks
- f) Carving the dead tree in the corner of the cemetery into a feature

8.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

It is recommended that the committee approves the expenditure outlined in the report, totalling £9,520 (budget available, £9,500).

It is recommended that the committee resolves to request the reinstatement of the Cemetery Improvements budget in the 2020/21 budget.

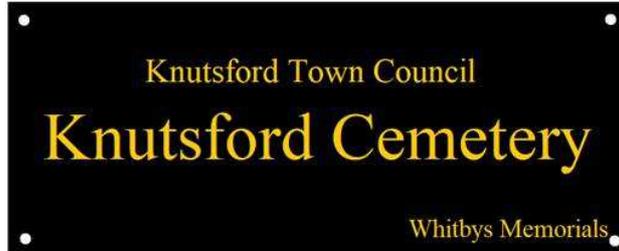


LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY GOLD

APPENDIX A: ILLUSTRATIONS



Draft information sign



Draft gate nameplate



Recommended Litterbin



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY GOLD



Unightly watering can area, also currently used as a bin store



Current welcome to the cemetery



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY GOLD