

# REPORT TO ASSETS AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

## CEMETERY CHAPEL

**Report Reference** A-20-11  
**Meeting Date** 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021  
**Agenda Item** 10  
**Prepared by** Town Clerk

---



### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The refurbishment of the cemetery chapel is almost complete and handover from the contractor is expected imminently.

Whilst a final invoice is awaited, the building works should come just within budget (allowing for full use of the contingency) as where some additional expenditure has been incurred there have been some counter measures to reduce expenditure. Outside the building works there was £1,440 of unplanned expenditure for the bat survey/ecological consultancy and the committee has previously approved an overspend of approx. £1,600 in the furnishings budget to allow for the purchase of the chairs.

Once furnished, the chapel will be advertised for hire and a section on the website developed to promote the facility. It is anticipated that the building will be available for hirer from 1<sup>st</sup> April. Funeral directors will be invited to visit the chapel to view the facility to be able to recommend its use to customers; a promotional leaflet will also be created to help market the facility locally. At the appropriate stage in the roadmap out of lockdown, the chapel will be made available for visitors to the cemetery to visit (this will be at times when the cemetery groundskeeper is on site) and an official reopening by the Town Mayor will be planned.

A hirers guide, including important information on the building for users, will be prepared and kept in the kitchenette. Users will be advised of the building fire measures.

The cemetery working group has discussed two further projects for restoring the cemetery chapel; the reinstallation of the original bell (which the council has in storage) and the repair and reinstallation of the original weathervane. The feasibility and costing for these connected projects will be developed during the year for a future committee decision.

### 2.0 BROADBAND SUPPLY

The chapel does not have a phoneline and it would be impractical to install one for a broadband supply. A number of the mobile network operators now offer a mobile broadband solution on either 4G or 5G networks which provide comparable speeds to a standard broadband supply.

Vodafone's 'GigaCube' offers 5G broadband for £25 per month (with a £84 upfront cost and cap of 100GB data per month; unlimited available for £50 per month).

The committee should consider the provision of broadband within the chapel. It will make it more hireable as WiFi provision is widely expected for meeting venues. It will also be of use for the council staff when on site.

### 3.0 KITCHEN DOOR

The refurbishment included the conversion of the two anterooms into an accessible toilet and kitchenette. The new kitchenette has been installed in the north anteroom. The kitchenette comprises a sink and small worktop space which will be occupied by a kettle and microwave.



*Figure One: Chapel Kitchenette*

It was intended that the back of the kitchenette would be used to store the spare tables and chairs for the chapel when not in use to allow flexibility of the main hall.

The external anteroom doors were not originally planned to be openable. During the works it was agreed to make the toilet door openable to provide a second exit and easier access to the fire alarm panel which was installed in that anteroom. At a site visit in February, the cemetery working group members expressed a desire that the external door to the anteroom be repaired to be openable. The rationale being that it would allow caterers to enter the kitchen without needing to access via the main hall.

To achieve this and accommodate a fridge/freezer, an 11" high plinth would need to be built to sit above the skirting board and old heating pipe which is to the left of the door. This would provide just sufficient space for the fridge (a width of 480mm from the wall to the edge of the door frame). Repairs would also need to be undertaken to the door and threshold.

The Town Clerk has expressed concern at the proposal from an operational perspective. Bringing the door into use would mean there would be no (or very little) room to store any chairs/tables (see figure two) in the back of the kitchenette. There is no other suitable storage location within the site<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> It would not be suitable to use the cemetery garage nor the chapel basement, the former as it is an operational space used by the groundskeeper and gravedigger with insufficient space to safely manoeuvre / ensure furniture is not damaged/sullied; the latter due to it being down a steep flight of stairs.

This would mean the only layout achievable in the main hall would be either to have the room fully set out with all chairs or to have the chairs stacked at the side of the main hall; the former would reduce the flexibility of the space and reduce the latter reduce the attractiveness of the space.



*Figure Two: Rear of Kitchenette; showing the raised fridge (left).  
The red hatched area indicates the lost storage space from having the door openable.*

Whilst if designing a new build function hall a separate access to the kitchen would be desirable the committee must consider pragmatically the operation of the building; reducing the flexibility of the space by compromising storage is ill advised.

The cost for making the door openable and building a plinth for the fridge would be approximately £950.

#### **4.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED**

The committee should consider whether to provide broadband at the chapel.

The committee should consider whether to make the kitchenette door openable, noting the operational considerations raised by the Town Clerk.

The committee should whether there are any further matters related to the cemetery chapel that need to be considered now the renovations are nearing completion.