

REPORT TO ASSETS WORKING GROUP CREATION OF NEW CREMATION GARDEN

Report Reference A-21-06
Meeting Date 2nd August 2021
Agenda Item 7
Prepared by Town Clerk



1.0 BACKGROUND

Cremation is an increasingly popular choice in place of coffin burials and many people then wish to inter the cremated remains in a cemetery. Currently the council provides three cremation interment options:

- a) Standard Plot – a standard grave can be purchased and utilised for ashes interments only. A plot can accommodate between 4-8 cremated remains interments.
- b) Cremation Kerbs – a series of sandstone kerbs at the entrance to the cemetery, each plot accommodates one interment.
- c) Cremation Wall – a stone wall at the edge of the cemetery where up to two ashes interments can take place at its foot.

This report outlines a proposal to create a fourth option, interment in a new cremation garden.

2.0 OVERVIEW

The proposal is to utilise an area at the centre of section G to create a cremation garden. This area was historically used for unpurchased graves (also known as pauper's graves) which are unmarked. Whilst this area is unusable for further coffin burials it would accommodate cremated remains burials without any requirement to disturb the interments. The use of this area therefore increases overall burial provision in the cemetery.



The open section of section G as picture from the chapel tower (left) and satellite imagery (right)

To create the garden, four large, landscaped flower/shrub beds would be created in the centre of the plot around which would run a path. Interments would take place around the path and a uniform style of memorial would be provided. The garden would include two benches.

To create the paths, a width of turf-reinforcement mesh roll would be rolled over the existing turf and pinned. As the grass grows through the plastic mesh holes, the grass roots interlink with the mesh filaments creating a stable surface that helps to protect grass from wear and enables it to support greater footfall providing a surface over which wheelchairs can more easily be used. This is a simpler and significantly lower cost option than creating tarmac paths and would complement the soft landscaping of the garden.

The planting areas would be filled with a range of predominantly perennial flowers, shrubs and small ornamental trees.



Indicative layout of the cremation garden.

The garden would create approximately 230 single cremation plots. As per the existing cremation kerbs, each plot would accommodate a single ashes interment¹ but two plots could be bought together for a double plot. The fee for a plot would be £250. The fee for the memorial would be recharged at cost from the council's chosen mason plus a £50 administration fee (as per existing memorial applications).

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The direct cost for the creation of the garden would be £3,100. This comprises the following:

- Mesh roll and pins - £550
- Timber boarding - £450
- 2 x benches – £1,100
- Planting - £1,000

¹ Plots could accommodate two ashes interments if ashes are poured rather than the more common interment of an ashes casket.

This would be drawn from the Cemetery Improvements and Horticulture/Materials budgets for the cemetery cost centre.

The increased burial provision by creating the garden will, based on 2021 fees and over the life of the garden, generate an additional income of at least £115k. The planting scheme will be designed to be low maintenance to minimise the additional time required by the Cemetery Groundskeeper in maintaining it. The labour to create the garden will be undertaken by the Cemetery Groundskeeper (supported by the Town Ranger where necessary) over the winter period.

4.0 DIRECTION REQUIRED

Members should provide direction on the creation of the garden.