

# REPORT TO ASSETS AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE CREMATION GARDEN, BENCHES AND EROB POLICY



**Report Reference** A-21-07  
**Meeting Date** 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021  
**Agenda Item** 6  
**Prepared by** Town Clerk

---

## 1.0 CREMATION GARDEN

### 1.1 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. The Assets Working Group discussed this at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> August and it was agreed that the Cemetery Working Group review the proposal. The Cemetery Working Group met in August and agreed that it remains the best option for providing a new cremation garden, subject to minor modifications which are included in the detail below.

### 1.2 PROPOSAL

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.

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. Initially interments would take place in the outmost rows with the space around the central beds reserved for future use.

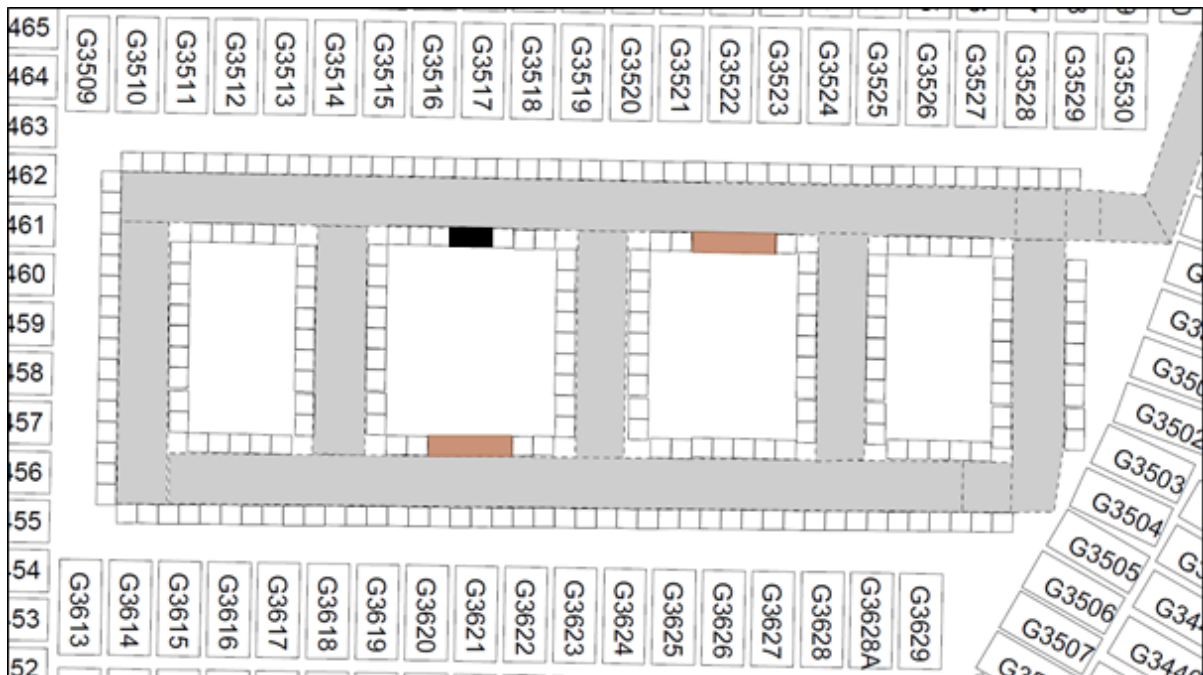
The garden would include two benches and feature a memorial dedicated to those at rest in the cemetery without a memorial. The precise detail of this memorial will be agreed by the Cemetery Working Group.



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

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 interment<sup>1</sup> 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

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

recharged at cost from the council's chosen mason plus a £50 administration fee (as per existing memorial applications).

### **1.3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The direct cost for the creation of the garden would be in the region of £3,600. This comprises the following:

- Mesh roll and pins - £550
- Timber boarding - £450
- 2 x benches – £1,100
- Memorial to the unnamed - £500 (tbc)
- Planting - £1,000

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.

## **2.0 MEMORIAL BENCHES POLICY**

Officers have received queries asking if memorial benches can be purchased at the cemetery. This has been discussed by the Cemetery Working Group and it is recommended that this is provided as an option for families noting that it has the wider benefit of providing additional seating for visitors to the cemetery.

The proposed service is that for a cost of £950<sup>2</sup> (inc VAT) the council will install a 6ft wooden bench within the cemetery. The cost would be inclusive of the provision of a brass memorial plaque. Benches would remain the property of the Town Council which would be responsible for their maintenance; the payment would cover the provision and maintenance of the bench for its natural life and at the point where the bench requires replacement the plaque would not be transferred to an alternative bench but offered back to the family who may choose to fund a replacement bench.

Benches would be a uniform style and the Cemetery Working Group would determine a number of suitable locations for families to choose from. The service would be limited and suspended by the Town Clerk (in consultation with the Cemetery Working Group) at the point it was considered no further benches were required in the cemetery.

## **3.0 EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL EXTENTIONS POLICY**

Officers have received a query from a burial rights holder about the options for extending the term

---

<sup>2</sup> The fee would cover the cost of the purchase, delivery and installation of the bench, the provision of the plaque with a 16% surplus.

of the exclusive right of burial. This has been discussed with the cemetery working group and the following addition to the Cemetery Regulations is proposed:

*Subject to not exceeding the maximum term of 99 years, the term of an exclusive right of burial may be extended in multiples of ten years upon payment of a fee of 10% of the prevailing full-term fee per ten years.*

#### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the committee approves:

- a) The creation of the new cremation garden as outlined
- b) The offer of a memorial benches service
- c) The addition to Cemetery Regulations of policy for the extension of exclusive right of burial terms