

Full Council – 22nd November 2023

Agenda Item 10. CEMETERY EXTENSION - UPDATE

As councillors are aware, the cemetery working group (Cllrs A Bradley, G Littler, A Long, T Maher and S Matthews plus Cllr N Brock, the Town Clerk and the Operations Manager) have been meeting regularly to agree the final site plan for the cemetery extension at Mays Lane.

Creating new burial ground is a complex matter and the group has considered a multitude of factors, including, among others:

- Geological studies
- Ground penetrating radar surveys
- Cemetery legislation
- Custom and practice
- Historical usage and future trends
- Location & parking requirements

We have worked with CDS (a cemetery development specialist company) to draw up a site plan suitable for use when we go out to tender for the grounds works. CDS will handle this tender process as it is very technical and requires specialist knowledge.

An A3 copy of the site plan will be provided at the Council meeting but points to note include:

- The provision of 528 new consecrated burial plots (approximately 22 years supply)
- The provision of 136 new Muslim burial plots (approximately 17 years supply)
- The provision of 1,654 new cremated remains plots (approximately 68 years supply)
- Actual burial figures have been used to determine an 80/20 split between consecrated burial land and Muslim burial land
- The cremated remains section uses land where the burial of bodies is not permitted, hence the large number of plots being created
- Design features an access road, vehicle turning head plus 8 parking bays
- Landscaping will be in keeping with current cemetery area, ie sections delineated by hedging and trees retained wherever possible.

Next steps

The diocese requires that the land used for Muslim burials is removed of its consecration (Muslim burials follow a different tradition to consecrated burials and are of a different orientation to the east-west used at consecrated burial grounds). We have therefore contacted the diocese requesting that this be done and have provided them with a site plan. We are awaiting a response.

Provided the diocese approves our request, we can then go out to tender for the grounds works. This will be a huge project where the site will be dug and sifted to varying levels, according to its intended use, the soil replaced and compacted, and new soil added where necessary. The access road and parking area will also be constructed.

Jo Friend
Town Clerk