

REPORT FROM: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OPERATIONAL SERVICES

TO: EXECUTIVE

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Report Author: David Walker
Tel. No: 01282 661746
E-mail: david.walker@pendle.gov.uk

CEMETERY SITES, PROVISION FOR BURIALS AND CREMATORIUM PROPOSAL

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To provide an update on the current level of burial plots available and the work to be undertaken to progress plans to extend the life of existing facilities within Pendle.
- To provide a proposal for Members to consider the development of crematorium facilities within Pendle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To extend the life of existing cemeteries Members agree to suspend pre purchasing of burial plots until the additional space within Colne, Barnoldswick, Barrowford and Earby cemeteries is developed and the new cemetery opens in Nelson.
2. Members agree to the investigation into the use of Pendle Borough Council owned land linked to the Ghyll Cemetery site in Barnoldswick for burials.
3. Members agree to the Officers approaching Earby Town Council to seek comments and support for the investigation into the use of transferred land linked to the Earby Cemetery site in Earby for burials.
4. Members agree to the investigation into the use of Pendle Borough Council owned land linked to the Memorial Cemetery site in Barrowford for burials.
5. Members agree to the investigation into the possibility of extending Colne Cemetery through the use of the lower fields within the current footprint of the site for burials.
6. Members agree to the investigation into the development of crematorium facilities across the existing cemetery sites.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure sufficient burial space is available for our current needs.

To ensure the Borough of Pendle has adequate facilities in place to continue to deliver burials and internments into the future.

Introduction

Further to the ongoing work to create additional facilities for burials within Nelson, Officers conscious that the higher rate of burials through the pandemic and the pre purchasing of burial plots was impacting on the availability of burial spaces across the Borough have revisited arrangements at Earby, Salterforth, Ghyll Meadows, Barrowford and Colne cemeteries in order to ensure sufficient burial spaces remains available at all sites for our needs.

Officers advise that Colne Cemetery which is located off Keighley Road in Colne currently has 100 plots available. At the pre pandemic burial rate this is enough room for the next 4 years with additional allocated space already identified for a future extension.

Barrowford Cemetery located off Colne Road above the Barrowford Park currently has 12 plots available which at the pre pandemic rate of burials is enough room for the next 3 years. Additional allocated space has already been identified for a future extension.

Earby Cemetery located off Cemetery Road in Earby at the pre pandemic rate has enough room for the next 9 years. The additional space that was planned for an extension is the current allotment site adjoining Earby Cemetery.

Ghyll Cemetery located off Ghyll Lane, Barnoldswick currently has 21 plots available which at the pre pandemic rate of burials is enough room for the next 3 years. Additional allocated space has already been identified for a future extension.

Salterforth Cemetery located off Salterforth Lane at the pre pandemic rate has room for the next 40+ years.

The cemeteries are all currently owned by Pendle Borough Council.

Bereavement Services staff have reported that through 2021/22 the Service has seen an increase in requests to pre-purchase burial plots and through the period we have sold 34 plots with 12 remaining unused.

The pre purchasing of the plots guarantees families can be buried near to loved ones at the time of their passing, however the sale of such plots has started to reduce the number of available spaces at each of the cemeteries.

The following table shows the number of plots purchased, used and pre purchased for future use.

Cemetery	Purchased	Used	Unused
Colne	23	15	8
Barrowford	4	1	3
Ghyll	7	6	1

Officers are recommending that we suspend the ability to pre-purchase burial plots in order to extend the life of the existing cemeteries.

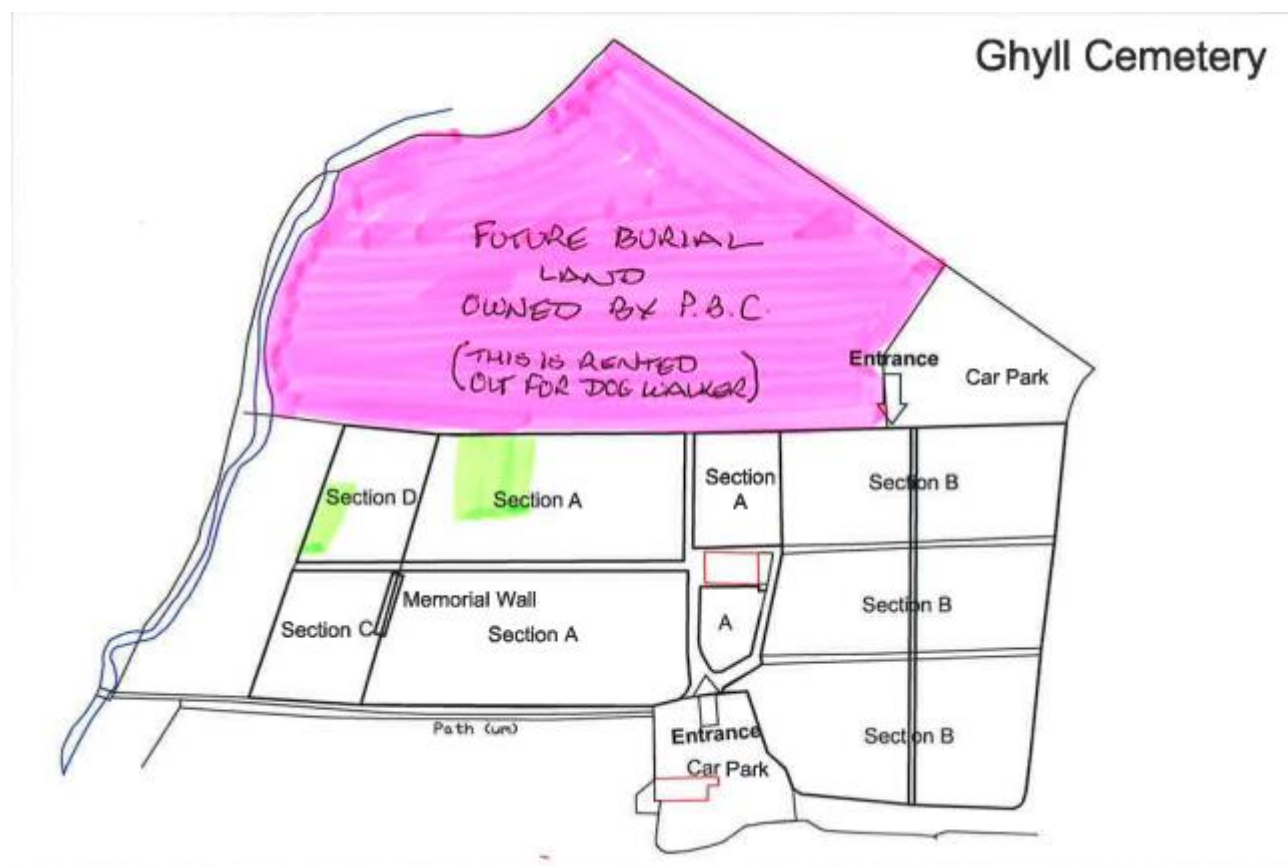
The opportunity to pre purchase burial plots is not offered for Muslim Vaults due to the vault becoming landlocked and therefore inaccessible for use after purchase. The suspension of pre-purchasing plots for non-Muslim burials will align both groups.

To extend the life of the existing cemeteries we would additionally like to explore the possibility of extending each cemetery in order to ensure we have sufficient burial space for the future across the Borough of Pendle allowing all residents to have freedom of choice about where they wish to be buried.

Of the four sites recommended for investigation Colne would be the less contentious and least expensive site to develop because we already have land within the footprint of the cemetery to develop. After investigation however based on the potential existing lifespan of each site Officers would advise investigations are carried out in the order of Ghyll, Barrowford, Colne and finally Earby.

The plans below show images of the existing cemetery facilities and, in pink, the potential extensions.

Area identified at Ghyll cemetery = 7,202m²



Colne cemetery

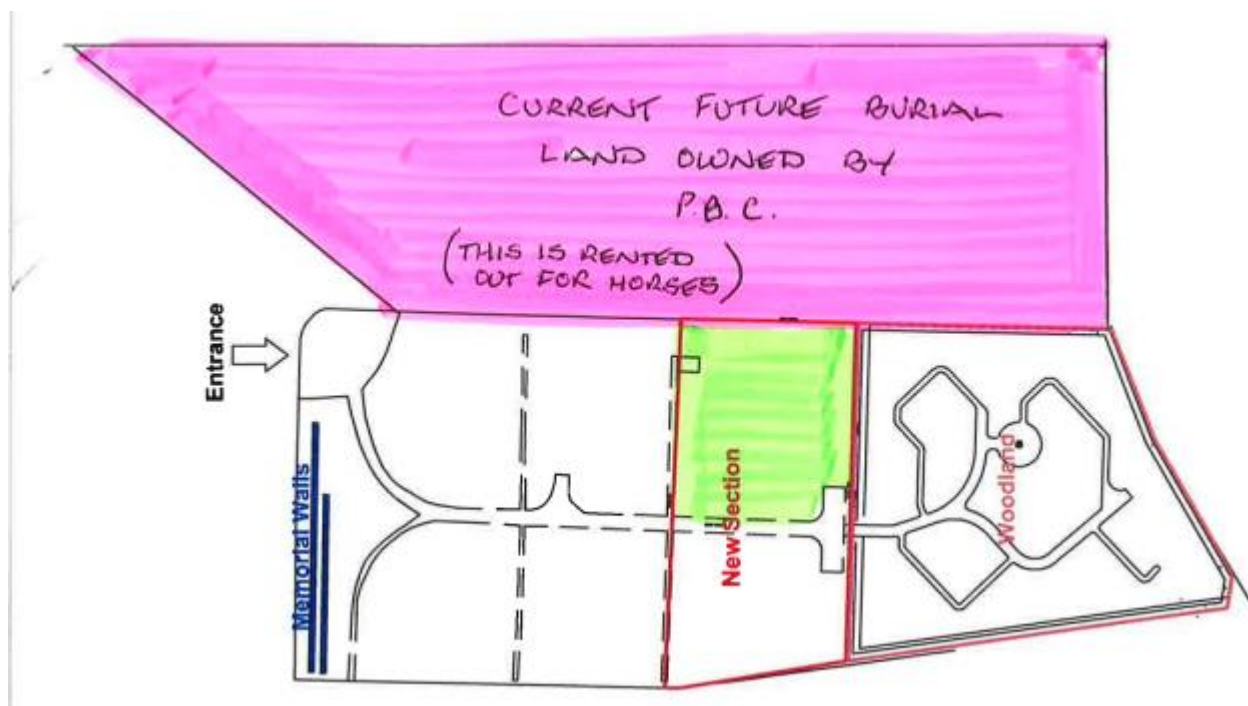
Area marked in blue shows potential land for development within the cemetery footprint

Area in pink = 13,169m²



Barrowford

Area in pink 9,070m²



Earby

Chevroned area shows land previously marked for the cemetery extension.

Chevroned area = 2,203m²



Crematorium facilities.

It is recognised that the creation of additional burial plots through the extension of the existing cemeteries and the development of the new cemetery in Nelson will enable the Borough of Pendle to provide sufficient burial space for its resident for several decades.

Looking further forward however even with the extension of the existing cemeteries and the suspension of pre purchasing burial plots there will be a time when we are faced with identifying new locations to use for burials.

From recent experience we recognise there is limited opportunity within Pendle's boundary and as a result it is possible that in future years burial plots may not exist for our resident's use.

The investigation into the possibility of creating crematorium facilities would identify whether existing sites are suitable for development.

Initial investigation could be completed by Cemetery Design Services within 3 months of requesting at a cost of £1000 per site. The investigation would include.

- Capacity review of local crematoria to indicate the need generally.
- Drive-time analysis of individual sites to provide likely numbers of cremations at each site.
- Review of the sites in terms of their development potential and legislation
- Review of the area in general for cremations

Should opportunity arise to develop crematorium facilities within Pendle then residents and their families would be given alternative options to burial or out of Borough cremations which may result in more residents choosing to be cremated resulting in the lifespan of the existing cemeteries being extended further.

Our records show that we have an increasing demand for the internment of ashes. In 2020 we held 45 services, in 2021 this increased to 71 services and in 2022 the number of services increased to 102.

At the time of writing this report we have held 23 services for the internment of ashes so far this year.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: Links to priority 1 within the Corporate plan. Development of new cemetery site to enable key community provision for people into the coming decades

Financial: Additional Funding in the region of £30,000 could be required per site to cover detailed designs, planning management fees and further surveying of the chosen sites for extension. Similar funding may be required to cover investigation, planning management and design of crematorium facilities however initial scoping exercises per site would be in the region of £1000.00 The Service Area may be able to provide funding for initial scoping works but does not have sufficient funding for the other work and would be seeking funding from Council reserves. Unknown additional funding may be required in the future to support the development of each site.

The Purchase of Halifax Road and the future development has effectively tied up a large amount of capital resources available to the Council and restricts what the Council can do across other Cemetery sites unless it generates additional resources to fund these developments.

Legal: None arising directly from this report.

Risk Management: Extending additional facilities would ensure key community provision for people into the coming decades. Failing to extend the cemeteries and not investigating development of crematorium creates a high risk of our being unable to provide facilities and plots in the future impacting on service deliver, the reputation of the Council and a significant loss of income.

Health and Safety: None arising directly from the report.

Sustainability: Development of crematorium facilities would enable the Borough to provide bereavement services beyond the life expectancy of the existing cemeteries.

Community Safety: None arising directly from the report.

Equality and Diversity: Providing extended facilities across the Borough of Pendle would allow all communities to have freedom of choice about where they wish to be buried.

APPENDICES

None

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None