

**REPORT FROM: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OPERATIONAL SERVICES**

**TO: EXECUTIVE**

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## **UPDATE ON CEMETERY SITES EXTENSIONS**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide an update on the outcome of the investigative work completed at the existing cemetery sites and to secure Members support to complete further investigative work at the proposed Ghyll cemetery extension site.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) Progress on all sites noted.
- (2) Members agree to additional funding of £30,000 being set provided in order to complete required investigations at the Ghyll cemetery site in order to confirm suitability for development as a burial site.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) To ensure sufficient burial space is available for our future needs.
- (2) To ensure Members are aware of the additional work and costs required at Ghyll Cemetery before further investigations are made.

### **ISSUE**

- 1) 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 had impacted on the availability of burial spaces across the Borough 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
- 2) The Assistant Director presented a report to the Council's Executive in June 2023 which advised that Colne Cemetery had 100 plots available providing 4 years of use, Barrowford had 62 plots available providing space for 3 years use, Ghyll cemetery had 21 plots available providing 3 years of space, Earby cemetery had 9 years of space left and

Salterforth cemetery was reported to have in excess of 40 years of space left at the recorded burial rates at the time.

- 3) The current position for the cemeteries is as follows Colne Cemetery has 120 plots available providing 5 years of use, Barrowford has 62 plots available providing space for 5 years use, Ghyll cemetery has 50 plots available providing 8 years of space, Earby cemetery has 112 plots providing 17 years of space left and Salterforth cemetery has in excess of 40+ years of space left at the current recorded burial rates.
- 4) The increase in burial spaces over the previous year has been generated by the service taking steps to recover and develop areas within the cemeteries which were previously thought to be unusable due to rock or foliage cover. This step has eased the concern on space temporarily in some cemeteries.
- 5) Initial trial pit tests were conducted in Colne, Earby and Ghyll cemeteries during October and November 2023. The test of the potential site at Barrowford has been delayed to allow a burst water pipe to be found and repaired so the lands natural drainage can be surveyed.
- 6) Initial reports for Colne and Earby were positive confirming both sites could be suitable for further investigation leading to development of the plots and their becoming extensions to the existing facilities.
- 7) Further work at Colne and Earby will be arranged once investigations have been completed on the extension sites for Ghyll and Barrowford as these were recorded as having the shortest life span in the report we submitted in July 2023.

## **GHYLL CEMETERY**

- 8) The initial report for Ghyll wasn't as positive with the report advising that the site did not look to be feasible due to only one of the five trial pits showing there was potential for burials to be carried out. The report advised that shallow groundwater was found in two of the trial pit sites and rock was encountered in three of the sites.
- 9) The site plan provided as part of the trial pit report showed an area of 0.38 acres could be considered for burial use. The site if developed could create approximately 304 burial plots if all the land around the trial pit proved favorable for development.
- 10) The remaining sections of the site that were deemed unsuitable for burials could be used for planting memorial trees and the creation of memorial walls for the internment of ashes.
- 11) To investigate the possibility of the site being used for burials beyond the initial tests carried out further investigation would be required. The costs to cover these works is in the region of £30,000
- 12) The Council as part of its capital programme has already set aside £79,000 for Ghyll cemetery. The additional work could be paid for by using the existing budget however learning from our experience at Nelson we are mindful that further investigation work could be requested by the Environment Agency to support the final planning submission.
- 13) Should additional works be required the remaining £52,000 would be reduced to the point where it would be unable to cover the cost of the remaining surveys that we know could be required in order to get the site to a planning application submission.

- 14) Similarly, as it stands even without unidentified surveys being requested the remaining £52,000 may not be sufficient to carry out all the surveys that we know could be needed prior to a planning application being submitted.
- 15) If Members choose to pursue the development of the site we feel an income of around £544,860 could be achieved over the extended life of the cemetery based on the forecasted number of burial and internment plots that would be created for the site
- 16) Further surveying is due to be completed within Colne cemetery but beyond this no further work has been ordered on the two plots adjacent to Colne or Earby cemeteries as Ghyll and Barrowford Memorial cemetery were forecasted to be the two sites we would need to extend first.

## **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 for the Ghyll cemetery site to cover detailed designs, planning management fees and further surveying. Potential income of over £544,860 could be achieved over the life of the cemetery based on 304 burial plots being created. Figures do not include income from the internment of ashes or memorial trees.

Based on the average recorded burial rates and 2024 charges over the extended 50 year life span of Ghyll cemetery income is forecasted to be in the region of £10,900.00 per annum creating a total of £544,860.00 income during the lifespan of the extended element of the cemetery

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 and the creation of the new cemetery in Nelson will ensure key community provision for people into the coming decades.

**Health and Safety:** None arising directly from the report.

**Sustainability:** Development of all proposed extensions 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.

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Tier 2 groundwater Risk assessment report for land adjacent to Ghyll cemetery.