
Agenda Item: Windrush Cemetery - Memorial Monolith

Meeting Date: Monday, 16 September 2024

Contact Officer: Operations Manager

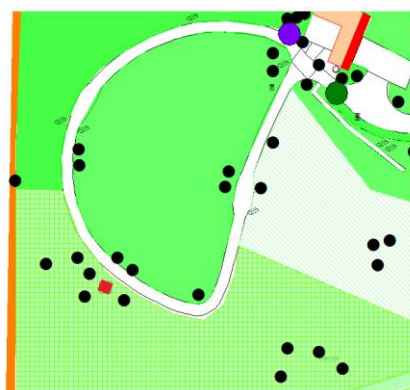
Background

Officers reported to the council on the poor condition of the memorial tree at Windrush Cemetery at the last Halls Cemeteries and Allotments meeting on the 8th of July 2024. The council agreed to relocate the area for fixing plaques to a more suitable location and instructed officers to research the installation of a memorial monolith where plaques could be fixed.

Current Situation

Location

The area selected (see red square marked below) is within a small grove of trees, which would be close to the current paths of the cemetery and avoid some of the worst water logging in the cemetery. As the cemetery develops additional paths are planned close by to this area and it would be left undisturbed by the current cemetery extension plans.



Monolith

Officers have researched into stone, wooden and metal monoliths. A metal monolith would be considerably more expensive than wood or stone so that option has been excluded. A monolith with a height of 1500mm and 900mm width will be installed with around 500mm underground.

Oak

Would be a more modern approach and separate it from other gravestones in the cemetery. A wooden monolith would be easier to adjoin memorial plaques to and remove if they need reengraving. The oak would weather in years and grey however this is a natural characteristic. The oak monolith would be from one seamless piece of oak sanded smooth with safety edges around it.

Stone

To keep the cost comparable to a wooden option officers have sourced the monolith directly from a quarry. The cost for a memorial measuring 2000mm in height from a stone mason was in excess of £5,000.

Stone would be a more traditional appearance for the cemetery however adjoining plaques is tricky and if they need to be removed for re-engraving it can damage the stone. The monolith would be cut from a sandstone rock and the surface honed for a smooth appearance.



Memorial plaque

The new plaques would be stainless steel, and measure 120mm x 50mm. With gaps between installations and a border around the monolith, it would fit approximately 66 plaques. If the council continued with the current memorial plaque charge this would cover the cost of the monolith after approximately 23 plaque installations.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality - None
- b) Biodiversity - None

- c) Crime & Disorder - None
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - There will be minimal distribution to the ground and all trees will be unaffected by the installation.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

As raised in the report to the council on the 8th of July, holders of current plaques installed on the tree guard may complain about the relocation. It would be recommended that all those plaques will be re-ordered and installed at the cost of the council only if requested by applicants

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Financial implications

- Windrush Cemetery Property maintenance budget 302/4036: £2,000. Which could be used for a new memorial fixing solution.
- Windrush Memorial Maintenance budget 302/4355: £2,000, which could also be used to cover the cost of plaques needing to be relocated
- Sandstone monolith 2000mm high x 900mm wide, £885 not incl VAT
- Oak monolith 2000mm high x 900mm wide, £850 not including delivery or VAT
- The current charge for a plaque installation is £60.50 this includes the administration fixing and plaque.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and

1. Approve the installation of a new Memorial Monolith
2. Choose a material option as outlined in the report for the Memorial Monolith, Oak or Sandstone.
3. Consider if a rise in the cost of memorial plaques is required
4. Approve that relocation costs of current plaques installed on the tree guard will be covered by the Witney Town Council if requested by applicants.