

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 29 June 2020

Title: Windrush Cemetery Risk Assessments & Capacity

Contact Officer: Operations & Estates Officer-John Hickman

Background

Windrush Cemetery opened in 2004 but has never had an environmental Ground Water, or Pandemic Risk Assessment carried out. WTC had permission to carry out up to 50 burials per annum, within Windrush Cemetery from the environment agency but no risk assessment.

Covid 19 preparations within the cemetery were started early on with two new sections marked out and 3 graves pre dug in late March early April in preparation should they be required. This gave WTC 220 pre marked available graves if required however more could have easily been provided if required.

Current Situation

It looked for a short time as if WTC may receive very high numbers of interments with burials going from less than one per week up to 5 in one week at one point, however numbers have since decline back to a much lower level nearer to normal.

All pre dug graves have been used and at this time it is not planned to pre dig any more unless the interment rate increase again.

Given WTC's limit off 50 graves per annum and the numbers interments being booked indicating we may have more than 100 burials this year, it became essential that WTC gained a risk assessment in order to ensure WTC did not pollute the local ground water. The Operations and Estates Officer commissioned an Environmental Ground Water Risk assessment to be carried out WTC did not currently have one at Windrush. The company providing this CDS also carried out a Pandemic risk assessment free of charge at the same time to see if the site was suitable for Pandemic Burial.

The Ground Water Risk Assessment has now been provided and states that the cemetery can take up to 150 burials per year if it were to be required. It also states the cemetery would be suitable for Pandemic burial should it be required in the future.

There are some areas of WTC's current burial procedures that may require minor change, the Operations and Estates Officer will look at these as soon as he is able to attend work to make any necessary adjustments.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

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.

Financial implications

Ground Water Risk Assessment by CDS £4,200 + VAT.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report.