

HALLS, CEMETERIES AND ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 9th November 2020
Title: Cemeteries and Closed Church Yards Update
Contact Officer: Operations and estates Officer – John Hickman

Background

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress of improvements and repairs since the last meeting.

Closed Church Yards

T583

Cedar of Lebanon in St Marys Churchyard will have been felled by the time of this meeting weather permitting. Some sections will, it is hoped, have been saved to make benches. St Mary's church are also hopeful that some sections of the tree can also be saved to make furniture for both inside and outside the church.

Entrance Pillars Arch and Wall Repairs.

The diocese has now responded to the faculty application for these works. They have requested additional information to be provided before issuing a faculty for the works. Hopefully this will be resolved soon and the works can be commissioned.

St Marys Boundary Wall Survey

Due to time constraints the Operations and Estates Officer has still to study this report and draw up a works program to deal with the issues raised.

Topple Testing St Marys and Holy Trinity

Officers are still waiting additional information from the contractors for these works and also for a faculty to be provided from the diocese of Oxford.

Tower Hill Cemetery

The works team have now cleared the lower area of section 9 and are levelling and seeding it in preparation for ashes interments in future years.

Topple Testing

The 5 year Topple Testing is now due to be carried on the memorials the Operations and Estates Officer will be requesting quotes in the near future, however consideration is being given to training works staff and Cemeteries Officer to be able to carry these tests out in house.

New Access From Smiths Estate.

Additional access and Footpath from Smiths Estate. The Operations and Estates Officer has been in contact with Sanctuary Housing Association who state the footpath is not theirs and also with Highways, Highways have responded and asked for photos and plans which were provided on the 7th October however no response has been received since, the Operations and Estates Officer has chased this up on 26th Oct however we are still awaiting a response from Highways.

Windrush Cemetery

New Permanent Access

The Current access was only meant to be a temporary, with a new access being constructed when the Cogges link road was put in. However, as the new link road was not constructed and houses are being built around the cemetery the opportunity to install the permanent access to the cemetery has now presented itself. Currently the plans for the new housing do not show any new access to the cemetery.

A report has been prepared for the Planning Committee on 3rd November by the Office Manager, copy attached for information – although as this Committee has responsibility for the Cemeteries, Members should give consideration to the re-siting of access, as explained in the Officer Managers report.

Wildflower Meadow

Wildflower Meadow Area an initial 200sqm area is being seeded with Yellow Rattle on 2nd November, if this is successful further areas will be seeded in future years, hopefully using hay from the initial section seeded to reduce the cost of further seed. Continental Landscapes have carried this work out at no additional cost to WTC.

Ground Water Risk Assessment

The Operation and estates Officer has started studying the ground water risk assessment that was carried out to assess the changes that are required to the current grave digging processes.

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given to training works staff and Cemeteries Officer to be able to carry these tests out in house.

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.

Memorial testing is part of the Council's responsibilities under Health & Safety and has a duty to protect its staff and visitors to its Cemeteries.

Financial Implications

The Council budgets for memorial testing every year and has an earmarked reserve for these works as it can prove costly.

Members will be aware from previous reports that there currently is no budget provision for the access from Smiths Estates- however the necessary permissions are yet to be established.

With regard to the access to Windrush Cemetery, there is only a limited earmarked reserve of £68,853, and it is unlikely that this would cover the costs of the creation of a new access road and internal scheme. The Planning Committee have been asked to consider this and submit a Section 106 request as part of its response on the outline planning application for houses adjacent to the cemetery.

If the Council has to bear the cost of any new access, Members should consider adding to the earmarked reserve – and Officers would suggest that no less than £20,000 per annum is set aside for the next two to five years prior to, or on completion of the development, whichever comes first.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and consider the creation of a new vehicular access into the Windrush Cemetery.