

## HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday, 8 November 2021

**Title:** Burial Times

**Contact Officer:** Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer - Angus Whitburn

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### Background

The current cemetery burial times are as follows:

- Tower Hill 10:00 – 15:00
- Windrush Cemetary 11:00 – 15:00

These times are in place throughout the year regardless of light levels and associated weather.

### Current Situation

There are 2 issues with the current times. The first is the available time to backfill on a Friday. The second is reduced light levels and weather condition's from November through to March.

Full interments at 3 pm on a Friday are difficult to manage due to the time it requires to backfill. The maintenance team are not in a position to hurry a service along if it is overrunning and are always conscious of the mourners. This usually means the maintenance team are left with under an hour to re-setup all their equipment and start the backfill process. In this same time frame, they have to set down all their equipment and if unfinished make an open grave safe. The decision is usually made to put the legal level of soil over the grave and leave it half-finished. Monday – Thursday this can be accepted as the first thing the following morning the job would be completed. However, on a Friday, the grave has to be left open over the weekend.

There is currently no adjustment in our burials times with daylight saving and the hour lost in the afternoons means the working hours in the cemetery are equally lost. To help the booking process and management of the works team it would help with adjusted time slots from November through to the end of March.

### 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.

Leaving graves open over the weekend doesn't present a good service level and leave's the council open to complaints. Additionally, this is not an efficient working practice and loses valuable working hours as the team are required to set up and down equipment an additional time.

Low levels of light present a heightened health & safety risk. If an incident was to occur during this period then the council would be culpable. Additional it is just not the safety of the works team but members of the public due to the heightened risk of moving plant equipment in an open cemetery.

## **Financial implications**

There are no financial implications from the recommendation below.

## **Recommendations**

Member are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. The inclusion of the below burial times in the new cemetery Terms & Conditions

**November to March:**

11:00 – 14:00

**April to October:**

Monday – Thursday: 11:00 am – 15:00, Friday: 11:00 – 14:00