

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 17 January 2022

Title: Children's Memorial Garden

Contact Officer: Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

Background

The Project Officer was tasked by the Town Clerk to scope the potential for a Children's Memorial Garden following preliminary enquiries during 2021.

Current Situation

The Project Officer began by considering a possible site for the garden. The most obvious site would be the Windrush Cemetery and she met with the Maintenance and Environment Officer to discuss a possible location. The most suitable location would be at the top area adjacent to the area for scattering ashes at the top of the ashes path (pictures attached for information). However, the cemetery may be subject to some change, partly due to the development of the Cogges Triangle area and partly for the requirement for additional internal roads and further burial plots. Caution should be taken until these decisions are made as the Council would not want to have to remove a memorial garden due to these reasons.

Whilst the cemetery is an obvious choice for a memorial garden, it is not necessarily the only place that it could be sited. The Project Officer has not found any other locations that may be suitable but Councillors may be able to offer suggestions for further investigation.

There are other options for consideration by members: -

- Is the area intended to be a memorial garden or a columbarium as well?
- Is the garden to be a "natural" area with trees and planting or something more formal akin to the new war memorial at The Leys? Options could include a willow arch or dome for a natural area?
- If there are hard landscaped areas, would the Council wish to offer the option to add memorial plaques? If there is to be a hard landscaped style memorial, the Council may need to consider employing the services of an architect or other professional specialising in such areas.
- The installation of a metal memorial tree with leaves that can be personalised? (see attached examples).

- A theme for the area? Popular themes are Forget Me Nots and Peter Pan (there are copyright issues associated with the latter but other gardens have used it successfully as a theme).
- The Project Officer could approach SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society) for advice if the Council so wishes – the charity has been involved in other memorials and has memorials in Banbury, Botley, Headington and Wolvercote Cemeteries.
- Budget for the project

Links to Children's Memorial Gardens

The Project Officer has included some links to examples of Children's Memorial Gardens in the UK which may help members in their considerations.

Guildford: <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/17374/Baby-and-children-s-memorial-garden>

Surrey Sands Gardens: <http://www.surrey-sands.org.uk/garden.htm>

Bramcote: <https://bramcote.bookofremembrance.uk/products/childrens-columbarium/>

West Midlands: <https://www.externalworksindex.co.uk/entry/137583/Harrowden-Turf/Childrens-Memorial-Garden-created-in-just-3-weeks/>

Rushmoor: <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/memorialgarden>

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. There are no current environmental concerns.

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. There is no current risk associated at this stage of the project.

Financial implications

➤ A potential budget of £1,500 has been suggested for this project in the 2022/23 fiscal year.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and consider base options for the memorial garden to start to shape a project brief, if it is to be progressed.