

Subject: Headstone Inspection Report

Purpose: To consider options with regard to memorials that were categorised priority 1 (immediate attention) during the 2023 memorial inspection.

Recommendation:

That the Council decide which option to undertake

1. Background

In September 2023 an inspection was undertaken of all headstones by the Town Clerk and Groundsman as per the memorial Inspection Policy.

11 memorials were placed into priority 1 and these memorials had 2 stakes erected behind them to mitigate a risk of injury from the stone falling. The owners listed in the grave ownership records were then contacted to request that they repair the memorial.

To date 4 memorials have not been repaired, despite attempts to contact the owners. Reasons for this could be that the grave owner is deceased or has moved with no forwarding address.

As over 6 months has passed since the inspection the Town Council now needs to decide about how to deal with the 4 memorials that have been deemed to be unsafe.

The options are:

- Lay these memorial flat - this would not cost the Council anything but would cause issues with grass cutting as well as generating a trip hazard. Laying flat would also detract from the cemetery. If this course of action is to be taken a notice should be posted on the grave informing them of the decision in a final attempt to reach the grave owners.
- Undertake the repair themselves as has been done previously – a quote has been sought for this work which will be presented at the meeting. If the Council were to follow this route it should be aware that a precedent may be set and in the future families may refuse to repair memorials if they know the Council will fund it eventually.
- Another option to be determined by The Council.