

Love Lane Cemetery Extension

The Town Council is currently burying in row 25 and there is estimated to be 1.5 rows left in the current area set aside for burials. The land to be extended into has had the allotments removed from it and has been cleared and seeded ready for burial

Available Grave space

The new area to be extended is approx. 41m long x 28m wide. Using the existing areas as a guide with the inclusion of a new path, the extension area should allow for an additional 13 rows of graves. Currently there are approximately 19 graves per row, therefore based on these estimates there is space for an additional 247 new graves in this area – this is subject to the entire area being suitable for burial. Based on a burial rate of 20 new graves per year this will provide approximately 12 years worth of additional grave space.

However the Town Council's aspiration is still to include an area for cremated remains this may result in the loss of at least 3 rows as a path would need to be installed which would reduce the available space for new graves by 3 years. Currently there are very few locations in the town where cremated remains can be interred and for those wishing to inter ashes in Love Lane they are required to purchase a full grave plot which can be a very expensive option for families.

Design quotes

The Town Council's previous aspiration has been to include an area for cremated remains within the new extension. It is the Town Clerk's opinion that if this is the case it is important that the whole extension area is professionally designed. From experience cremated remains areas can be difficult to manage as they can look untidy very quickly. Location is also an important consideration as graves should not be in areas where it may be difficult to carry out full body interments e.g against fences, hedges etc. It is anticipated that some of the issues around the maintenance of a cremated remain section can be dealt with at the design stage.

There are few companies nationally that specialise in designing burial grounds and two companies have been approached.

One stated that they were not able to look at the project for at least 6 months and a quote has been submitted by a specialist cemetery design company who have worked with Ellesmere and Newport Cemeteries and come recommended.

The quote of £3500 includes a fee to undertake a topographical survey of the extension area. When the need for this was queried, the following response was received

The topographical survey is quite critical to the design process, it will provide us with exact dimensions of the site, which will inform burial numbers. It will also provide us with existing road and footpath layouts.

For concept design we could probably work without it, however for detailed design and going out to tender, we would definitely need the topographical survey.

It should be noted that there will be additional design fees as this quote is for a concept design only so the cost could be excessive for what is essentially a small area of land. If this quote is to be considered Council will need to suspend financial regulations.

Alternative Option

A cheaper option would be to not undertake a formal design and subject to what the Council agrees relating to the addition of a cremated remains section, a simple design as in Hengoed Cemetery could be used for the interment of cremated remains at a significantly less cost if designed by a local company.

Cremated remain sections examples

Below are pictures of cremated remains sections designed in the last few years in cemeteries in Shropshire. Hengoed is a lawned cemetery like Love Lane. Newport is larger and has a wider mix of types of graves



(Fig 1) Hengoed Cemetery



(Fig 2) Newport Cemetery

Budget

There is currently £6640 in earmarked reserves for the extension design and infrastructure works (pathway and fencing) which will be insufficient for design and infrastructure works.

However due to the unprecedented amount of burials recently, additional budget could be allocated from income received in this financial year for the completion of this project.

Project Management

Regardless of the decision around the inclusion of a cremated remains section it would be a suggestion to establish a working group with the remit to consider plans and costing for the extension and make recommendations to the Council

The future

With possibly less than 10 years of burial space in the cemetery it is important that the Town Council starts to think about the provision of additional burial land for the town.

One option could be to use one section of the current allotments and relocate some of the allotments to a different site elsewhere in the town. Legally this is not a straightforward process as the consent of the Secretary of State (in England) is required for the disposal by a local authority of allotment land for other purposes (section 8, Allotments Act 1925). Before giving consent, the Secretary of State or the Assembly must be satisfied that adequate provision is made for existing allotment holders displaced by the disposal or that such provision is unnecessary or not reasonably practicable. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local

Government has published *Allotments disposal guidance: safeguards and alternatives*, which can be viewed at www.gov.uk. Also the land would need to be reallocated as burial land and subject to tests to see if it is suitable for burial.

Recommendation

To establish a working party to consider the extension plans in more detail along with the feasibility of incorporating an area for cremated remains and report back to the July meeting.