

Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

Date: 2nd December 2019

Title: Expand memorial services available at Town Council run cemeteries

Purpose of the Report: To provide Members with an update and introduction to the possible increased memorialisation offered by the Town Council.

Contact Officer: Ian Haynes, Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

Corporate Objective/s		LLTC Three Year Plan – Aim 3. Objective #31
Implications:		
Financial	√	Earmarked Reserve Cemetery 9007/950 has £63,597 of available funds
Human Resources		
Operational/Service delivery	√	
Procedural/Legal	√	
Risk/Health and Safety		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Should members be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 To note the report.
- 1.2 To Endorse the purchase, supply and installation of 1 x Mulberry Memorial Tree for £11,500
- 1.3 To Endorse the purchase, supply and installation of 28 x single Sanctum 2000's £14,220 to create phase 1 the outer circle.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The provision and management of cemeteries is an important service the council provides that is utilised by the community at a time of great emotional stress, amongst which is the growing evidence of new and diverse forms of memorialisation as people mark the passing of those to whom they felt a close association in life - colleagues, friends as well as family members.
- 2.2 This evidence, much of it anecdotal and in the popular media, raises new questions concerning the content, meanings and purposes of memorials and the process of memorialisation. As traditional forms are replaced or supplemented by personalised, customised responses, it appears that these lay bare the fundamental human urge to memorialise but with little to guide mourners, or those professionals and community representatives supporting them, in developing forms which will meet those deepest needs.
- 2.3 Officers have comprehensively re-visited memorialisation practices in the UK, in order to inform understanding of the significance of memorials and memorialising processes and appreciate the purposes and meanings which they need to fulfil, their forms and representations, past and present, and how and these may be changing in contemporary society.
- 2.4 The Town Council believes that the bereavement needs of the whole community are met by ensuring the provision of facilities for the disposal and commemoration of the dead which take into account the requirements of different faiths and cultures as well as those without faith.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Bereaved people commemorate their loved ones in a range of ways and whilst it is essential for the council to regulate the type and size of memorials within its cemeteries it is important to allow as much freedom as possible.
- 3.2 Memorials and headstones can only be placed on graves where the exclusive rights of burial have been purchased and the permission has been obtained to place the memorial.
- 3.3 There is also considerable divergence in other aspects of remembrance. Traditional churchyards have very strict rules on the memorials that are allowed and the mementoes that can be placed on a grave. Some Councils have followed this lead restricting memorials to single headstones or even flat tablets as these aid grounds maintenance. It is becoming an increasing feature particularly but not exclusively with children's graves for them to be personalised and decorated with mementoes and personalised items with new contemporary headstone designs, kerb sets, coloured stones, with graves being decorated with solar lights and all sorts of mementoes. . Research has shown that this is an important part of the grieving process.
- 3.4 Some cultures have different requirements as to the nature of the grave. This might include brick, concrete or timber lined graves, above ground mausoleum, family plots etc. The provision of these does require areas to be provided in the

cemetery for this purpose.

- 3.5 In addition to the placing of memorials on graves, many members of the public express a desire to commemorate the dead in other ways, either in addition to a memorial on the grave in the Council's cemeteries or because the person in question is buried in a different town, or there is no burial place at all.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 People and mourners alike continue to look for new and innovative ways to memorialise their loved ones who have passed. At a time when cremated remains can be out inside a vinyl record or even sent for a trip into space, the Council will only continue to see an increase in the demand for alternative memorials.
- 4.2 Memorial Tree – 1 x Mulberry memorial tree which includes 240 blank heart shaped leaves. Engraved leaves could be sold on a timed lease. For £11,500 ex VAT
- 4.3 Sanctum Vaults – 28 x Single Sanctum 2000's, which can accommodate 2 x standard sized caskets or polytainers of cremated remains. Niches could be sold on a timed lease. For £14,220 Ex VAT
- 4.5 Due to the costs it is only proposed that these are installed in Vandyke Road Cemetery, with consideration for similar installation in Old Linslade Cemetery at a later date.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Increased memorialisation is a combination of historical and contemporary focus. Whilst there is a sound business model for investing in increased moralisation, the offerings available are considered tasteful in helping and supporting the bereaved in the grieving process.
- 5.2 It is officer's opinion that the preferred items will increase our memorisation offering to the public.