

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

Decision Made: 10 June 2011

Bereavement Services - new memorial opportunities

Issue for Decision

To consider the introduction and associated charges and grounds development for new memorials being provided at the Vinters Park Crematorium and the Maidstone Cemetery.

Decision Made

1. That the proposed range of new memorials being introduced at the Crematorium and the Cemetery as set out at Appendix A to the report of the Assistant Director of Environment and Regulatory Services be agreed.
2. That the associated charges and income/expenditure projections for the new memorials being introduced as set out at Appendices B and C to the report of the Assistant Director of Environment and Regulatory Services be agreed.
3. That the proposed development of new pathways and strewing area and the refurbishment of the Woodside walk be agreed.

Reasons for Decision

The Crematorium site has recently undergone a major upgrading and redecoration/refurbishment programme to the buildings and some landscaping to the grounds that makes it one of the best facilities in the south east. As part of this upgrading work, consideration was also given to improving the customer service and chapel service side of the operation and this has been particularly well received by visitors and local funeral directors.

An area of the service that now needs to be considered in Bereavement Services is the memorial opportunity for both the Crematorium and Cemetery sites.

A review of the demand for the current range of memorials offered at the Crematorium suggests that some are not as popular now as in years gone by.

At the Cemetery the only memorial opportunity offered by the council is confined to dedicated benches though the main focus for families is

usually a headstone which is obtained from a stone mason.

This range of memorials at the Crematorium and Cemetery has been maintained for many years with few additional or different opportunities being introduced. Whilst this situation satisfies the wishes of bereaved families who choose to adopt their personal memorials for a loved one, the industry has developed a number of new memorials that have proved to be very popular at neighbouring crematoria and cemeteries around the country.

In tandem with introducing new memorials at the Crematorium will be the opportunity to develop associated pathways and improve access to the Woodside walk area and also to create a new strewing area as part of the on going work to improve the grounds and their ambiance.

The new memorials

Appendix A to the report of the Assistant Director of Environment and Regulatory Services sets out the range of new memorials that it is proposed are made available at the Crematorium and Cemetery. Many of these memorials will assist in the development of the grounds and create a location for the interment or strewing of cremated remains.

The proposed charges for the new memorials are set out at Appendix B and Appendix C of the report of the Assistant Director of Environment and Regulatory Services, showing the income/expenditure projections. The charges presented have been reviewed against other neighbouring authority charges for similar products and provide a range of prices that will allow families individual choice over the type and period of their preferred adoption.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

An alternative action would be to maintain exactly the same memorial opportunities as at present, but this situation is not recommended as it would result in the further reduction in the adoption of memorials from the current range as they become less popular. Not reviewing and offering new memorial opportunities would deprive and restrict bereaved families from more choice to match their personal preferences.

Background Papers

Bereavement Services Fees & Charges 2011-12 report

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Change and Scrutiny by: 17 June 2011
