



**REPORTS FOR DECISION BY THE  
CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

Date Issued: 02 June 2011

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# Agenda Item 1

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

#### **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & REGULATORY SERVICES**

Report prepared by:

Tim Jefferson – Environment Facilities Manager

Date: 02 June 2011

#### **1. BEREAVEMENT SERVICES – NEW MEMORIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

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

##### 1.2 Recommendation of the Assistant Director of Environment & Regulatory Services

1.2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Environment:

- i) agrees to the proposed range of new memorials being introduced at the Crematorium and the Cemetery as shown at **Appendix A**;
- ii) agrees to the associated charges and income/expenditure projections for the new memorials being introduced as shown at **Appendix B** and **C**;
- iii) agrees to the proposed development of new pathways and strewing area and the refurbishment of the Woodside walk.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 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.

- 1.3.2 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.
- 1.3.3 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.
- 1.3.4 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.
- 1.3.5 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.
- 1.3.6 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.

#### 1.4 The new memorials

- 1.4.1 Attached at **Appendix A** is 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.
- 1.4.2 The proposed charges for the new memorials are attached at **Appendix B** and **Appendix C** shows 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.

#### 1.5 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.5.1 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.

1.6 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.6.1 Providing new memorial opportunities that represent value for money with high levels of satisfaction will support the outcome for the strategic plan priority for corporate and customer excellence.

1.7 Risk Management

1.7.1 The development of non statutory service provision has to be considered against the cost to the council and the likely return. It is essential that the new memorial opportunities are well marketed in a sensitive manner to ensure that bereaved families are aware of the choices available which should provide a good take up of the memorials. The bereavement services staff will receive appropriate training and support marketing material to deliver this outcome.

1.8 Other Implications

1.8.1

- 1. Financial
- 2. Staffing
- 3. Legal
- 4. Social Inclusion
- 5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
- 6. Community Safety
- 7. Human Rights Act
- 8. Procurement
- 9. Asset Management

X

1.8.2 Financial implications:

It is intended that the cost for the additional individual standard roses and specimen trees; Octagon; woodside Memorial Book; Mushrooms and Sanctums will be covered by treating these items as stock. The charge to the revenue account will be made on each occasion that a

sale is made.

It is intended that the labour cost for the pathway development and creation of the new strewing area etc can be achieved from within the existing grounds maintenance budget for the Crematorium site. There will be one off start up expenditure for the material element of the work totalling £6,790 over the first two years and it is proposed to fund this from the additional income generated.

The introduction of new memorials should stimulate sales opportunities though it is expected that some income streams from existing memorials will decrease. This should be compensated for from the new memorial sales and would therefore balance and eventually improve the revenue budget outcome in future years. The current year's revenue budget included a provision for the potential introduction of new memorials and the impact on income streams. The projections are detailed in **Appendix C** and are summarised as under:

<b>2011/12 BUDGET</b>	<b>CEMETERY</b>	<b>CREMATORIUM</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
New sales items	2,590	24,730
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,590</b>	<b>24,730</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Sales items	410	16,040
Materials – start up costs	150	3,790
<b>Total</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>19,830</b>

Based on the projected sales the estimated net benefit in 2011/12 would total £6,930 and in future years **Appendix C** shows significant net income benefits subject to the anticipated demand.

There is a need to utilise £5,990 from this additional income stream to address a shortfall in the Bereavement Service revenue budget from the loss of rent from the Supervisor's House at the Cemetery due to it becoming unoccupied and currently being considered for disposal, therefore realising a capital gain for the council.

## 1.9 Background Documents

### 1.9.1 Bereavement Services Fees & Charges 2011-12 report

**NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED**

Is this a Key Decision?      Yes            No     

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this an Urgent Key Decision?      Yes            No     

Reason for Urgency

**How to Comment**

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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**BEREAVEMENT SERVICES**

**APPENDIX B**

DESCRIPTION	2011 - 12 Proposed Charge	2011 - 12 Estimate	COMMENTS
<b>CEMETERY</b>			
<b>Individual Standard Rose</b>		1,600	
Individual standard rose (5 years) *	160.00		Cremated remains section
Adoption renewal *	130.00		5 year dedication
Added inscription *	23.75		
<b>Sanctum 2000 - memorial</b>		990	
Sanctum 2000 memorial *	330.00		Plaque/inscription etc at cost + 20%
Plot rental - 10 year dedication	660.00		
Plot rental - 20 year dedication	940.00		
Plot rental - 30 year dedication	1500.00		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2,590</b>	
<b>CREMATORIUM</b>			
<b>Individual Standard Rose</b>		4,800	Various new locations
Individual standard rose (5 years) *	160.00		
Adoption renewal *	130.00		5 year dedication
Added inscription *	23.75		
<b>Specimen Trees</b>		1,632	
Tree *	20.50		
Plot Rental - 10 years	183.50		
<b>Sanctum 2000 - memorial</b>		9,900	
Sanctum 2000 memorial *	330.00		Plaque/inscription etc at cost + 20%
Plot rental - 10 year dedication	660.00		
Plot rental - 20 year dedication	940.00		
Plot rental - 30 year dedication	1500.00		
<b>Granite octagon</b>		4,200	96 planter plaque memorial
Plaques (6" x 3") *	50.00		Plaque inscription etc at cost + 20%
Plot Rental - 10 years	160.00		
<b>Woodside glade granite memorial book</b>		2,400	192 plaque memorial - Woodside glade to be used as the default strewing area
Plaque *	60.00		Plaque inscription etc at cost + 20%
Plot Rental - 10 years	180.00		
<b>Granite memorial mushrooms</b>		1,800	Located adjacent to Woodside glade
Plaque on granite mushroom - shared memorial *	60.00		
Plot Rental - 10 years	140.00		
<b>Pathway memorial markers</b>			Located adjacent to Woodside glade - to be reviewed 2011/12 - sales from 2012/13
Marker - single *	120.00	-	Plaque inscription etc at cost + 20%
Plot Rental - 10 years	560.00	-	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>24,732</b>	

\* Charges incorporate VAT at prevailing rate

**BEREAVEMENT SERVICES - NEW MEMORIAL OPPORTUNITIES**



Individual standard rose  
Cemetery and Crematorium



Sanctum 2000  
Cemetery and Crematorium



Granite Book of Remembrance – Woodside glade area  
Crematorium



Specimen tree  
Crematorium



Granite Octagon – chapel lawn burial area  
Crematorium



Pathway markers – Woodside glade area  
Crematorium (future)



Granite mushrooms – Woodside glade area  
Crematorium

**BEREAVEMENT SERVICES - NEW MEMORIALS - INCOME/EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS**

**APPENDIX C**

	Initial purchase	Income 2011/12	Income 2012/13	Income 2013/14	Income post 2014	Income Total	Expenditure 2011/12	Expenditure post 2012	Expenditure Total
<b>CEMETERY</b>									
Individual Standard Rose	20	1,600	1,600			3,200	120	120	240
Sanctum 2000 - memorial	3	990	1,980			2,970	290	580	870
Associated materials/start up costs		-	-	-	-	-	150	-	150
<b>CEMETERY TOTAL</b>		<b>2,590</b>	<b>3,580</b>			<b>6,170</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>1,260</b>
<b>CREMATORIUM</b>									
Individual Standard Rose	30	4,800				4,800	360	-	360
Specimen Trees	16	1,632	1,632			3,264	580	590	1,170
Sanctum 2000 - memorial	30	9,900	9,900	9,900		29,700	2,850	5,700	8,550
Granite octagon - 96 planter memorial	96	4,200	6,300	8,400	1,260	20,160	4,900	-	4,900
Woodside glade granite memorial book	192	2,400	3,600	4,800	35,280	46,080	6,750	-	6,750
Granite memorial mushrooms - 5 plaques	45	1,800	3,600	3,600		9,000	600	2,100	2,700
Pathway memorial markers									
	Yr 1	0	To be reviewed during 2011/12						
	Yr 2	20	-	6,800	6,800	13,600	-	3,600	3,600
Associated materials/start up costs		-	-	-	-	-	3,790	3,000	6,790
<b>CREMATORIUM TOTAL</b>		<b>24,732</b>	<b>31,832</b>	<b>33,500</b>	<b>36,540</b>	<b>126,604</b>	<b>19,830</b>	<b>14,990</b>	<b>34,820</b>

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

#### **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & REGULATORY SERVICES**

Report prepared by:

Tim Jefferson – Environment Facilities Manager

Date: 02 June 2011

#### **1. MAIDSTONE CEMETERY – THE SUPERVISOR’S HOUSE**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To agree the freehold disposal of The Supervisor’s House and garden (the property), at the Maidstone Cemetery.

##### 1.2 Recommendation of the Assistant Director of Environment & Regulatory Services

1.2.1 It is recommended that:

- i) the property, as shown on the plan attached as **Appendix A**, is declared non operational;
- ii) the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment be authorised to place a public notice pursuant to Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of the disposal of open space and that any objections or representations which might be received in response to the advertisement be considered by the Cabinet Member for Environment;
- iii) the final decision on disposal be made when the property has been advertised as a disposal of open space and any representations have been considered.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The property is located adjacent to the cemetery car park and access is currently via the main entrance gates to the cemetery. The property has an extensive garden and the rear boundary wall backs onto Pheasant Lane with another boundary adjacent to the

cemetery grounds.

- 1.3.2 The property was originally provided as an on site residence for the cemetery supervisor. The supervisor retired approximately ten years ago, but remained in the property fulfilling a gate locking duty. The property is now vacant and the gate locking duties have been absorbed into the general operation and management of the site and there is no specific need identified for an on-site employee.
- 1.3.3 The building is a Hawthorn Leslie steel framed detached house with an integral garage. These buildings were developed in the mid 1960's and are basic in design and in quality of construction. The cemetery house is not in a good condition and it would require considerable funds to bring it up to an acceptable modern condition and this is considered uneconomical.
- 1.3.4 Consequently, as there is no operational requirement for the property it is considered that disposal of the property's freehold by way of a private treaty arrangement would be the best option at the earliest opportunity to avoid any on going maintenance issues , subject to:
- the consideration for any response to a Section 123 (Local Government Act 1972) public notice advertising the intention to dispose of public open space;
  - appropriate consents for the disposal/demolition being obtained;
  - the production of a development brief.
- 1.3.5 It is envisaged that any development brief would include the demolition of the house and consideration for a number of dwellings to be built on the available land and for access to be achieved via Pheasant Lane or by realigning the main entrance to the cemetery.
- 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended
- 1.4.1 The property occupies land that adjoins the cemetery and one alternative for its use would be to demolish the house and integrate the land holding into the cemetery to provide burial space in the future. The potential future demand for grave space at the cemetery has been reviewed and based on the present usage trends and the number of available new grave plots indicates that there is a minimum of fifty years space available. There is also the likelihood that within this time frame burial legislation will change due to the acute shortages experienced, especially in the London boroughs, to allow other ways to extend the use of the current land bank in cemeteries therefore removing

the need for burial authorities to provide more ground for burial in the future. It is not considered necessary, or appropriate, at this time to secure the land for future burial use.

1.4.2 Currently there is a wooden site hut located in the cemetery close to the main entrance and car park. This hut is used as the base for the Maidstone Borough Services ground staff working in the cemetery. The hut provides very basic facilities and does not have any mains drainage. Upgrading this facility, or providing an alternative, would be desirable although this is estimated to cost in excess of £50,000. However, it is not considered that the Supervisor's house would be a suitable alternative due to the problems reported above and the potentially high cost to undertake the necessary upgrading.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The disposal of the Property and the eventual development of new modern properties would support the strategic priority outcome to provide decent affordable housing in the right places across a range of tenures.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 The risks associated with making this decision are:

There could be some objections from the community after seeing the advert to dispose of public open space for housing development rather than retaining the land as open space. However, there are large areas of public open space in close proximity to this area, i.e. South Park, and Mote Park is approximately 1/2 mile away. It would be reasonable therefore to make any objectors aware of all of these areas.

The development of the property would benefit from access being from Pheasant Lane, but there is a risk that the highway authority may not allow this alternative access point. Every effort will be made prior to disposal to satisfy any concerns that might compromise this access being agreed through the production of a development brief.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

- 1. Financial
- 2. Staffing

X

3.	Legal	
4.	Social Inclusion	
5.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6.	Community Safety	
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	
9.	Asset Management	X

1.7.2 Financial implications:

If the property is eventually disposed of then the council will receive a capital sum. It may be appropriate for some consideration to be made to improving the staff facilities on site from the funds received.

Another consideration will be the loss of the rent (£5,990) from the property and this will need to be adjusted for as a growth item in the current and future years' revenue budget. It is envisaged that this shortfall can be covered from the anticipated additional income from new memorial sales within Bereavement Services.

Associated revenue costs for repairs would be saved if the property is disposed of.

1.7.3 Asset management implications:

The freehold disposal of the property will result in a reduction in the council's portfolio of properties.

1.8 Background Documents

1.8.1 Cemetery burial records – held in the Bereavement Services office at the Vinters Park Crematorium.

**NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED**

Is this a Key Decision?      Yes            No     

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this an Urgent Key Decision?      Yes            No     

Reason for Urgency

**How to Comment**

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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Telephone: 01622 686492  
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**MAIDSTONE CEMETERY – SUPERVISOR’S HOUSE  
DISPOSAL OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**