

## HIGH WYCOMBE CEMETERY FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW FOR 2016/17

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**Wards affected:** All High Wycombe Town Wards

### PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

That approval be given for the proposed charges as detailed in paragraphs 6 -10 to take effect from 1 April 2016.

#### Corporate Implications

1. The Council, as a burial authority for the purpose of Section 214 of the Local Government Act 1972, is authorised by the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (as amended) to charge such fees as it thinks proper, and in fixing fees may take account of the fact that cost in connection with High Wycombe Town Cemetery are designated Special Expenses.

#### Executive Summary

2. High Wycombe Town Committee is asked to agree the 2016/17 fees and charges for High Wycombe Cemetery to recommend to Cabinet for approval.

#### Sustainable Community Strategy / Council Priorities - Implications

3. This links to the Council's Pounds priority to deliver value for money.

#### Background and Issues

4. This report outlines the 2015/16 charges and the proposed charges for 2016/17. As the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for July 2015 was 0.1% a zero percentage inflation rate has been used.

#### Burial Data

5. The number of burials increased again in 2014/15, as shown in the table below.

Number of burials						
Year	Standard Adult Burial	Concrete Frame	Steel Frame	Ashes	<b>Total</b>	Child/ Snowdrop
2010/11	60	N/A	23	46	<b>129</b>	25
2011/12	75	N/A	20	22	<b>117</b>	20
2012/13	68	N/A	19	35	<b>122</b>	27
2013/14	73	N/A	36	25	<b>134</b>	17
2014/15	80	13	29	33	<b>155</b>	20
Average number	<b>71</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>22</b>

6. It needs to be noted that the number of burials varies year on year, and for the first six months of 2015/16 there have been 20 fewer adult interments and 2 fewer child interments compared to the same period in 2014/15.

### Proposed Prices for 2015/16

7. Burial Rights – The burial rights fee is charged for each grave and provides the owner with an Exclusive Right of Burial (Deed) for 50 years. This is not ownership of the land but the right to be buried in a specific grave, to authorise further burial(s) in the grave or the interment of cremated remains where space allows and to erect or place a memorial on that grave. The proposed increase for 2016/17 is based on 0% inflation.

Burial Rights	2015/16 Charge	Proposed 2016/17 Charges
Adult	£706	£706
Child	£353	£353
Ashes	£412	£412

8. Memorial Permit – The memorial charges were benchmarked with other cemeteries in late 2013. The proposed increase for 2016/17 is based on 0% inflation.

Memorial Permit	2015/16 Charge	Proposed 2016/17 Charges
Adult	£188	£188
Child	£92	£92
Ashes	£92	£92

9. Saturday Fee – There is a fee for interments which occur on a Saturday. This fee is based on the costs of staff from the Council and contractor being on standby and overtime. In the last financial year there were 7 burials on a Saturday. The proposed increase for 2016/17 is based on 0% inflation.

Saturday Fee	2015/16 Charge	Proposed 2016/17 Charges
One off Fee	£120	£120

10. Interment fees for child burials – The current policy is that no interment fees are charged for child burials. It is recommended that this remains the case.
11. Interment fees – The recommendation is to increase the interment fees by inflation (0%) as detailed in the table below:

	2015/16 Charges	Proposed 2016/17 Charges
Interment - Adult	£314	£314
Interment - Child	£0	£0
Interment - Ashes	£166	£166
Interment – Concrete	£1,070	£1,070

### **Options for future fees and charges**

12. At the High Wycombe Town Committee meeting in November 2014, the Committee requested that in 2015/16 a proposal be tabled to allow them to consider setting the prices for a period of longer than one year.
13. Officers have considered this request and recommend this is not pursued at this time for two main reasons. Firstly the inflation rate is zero and it is uncertain what change there might be over the next 12 months, and secondly the current Green Space contract runs to December 2017, with a possible extension to December 2019, and any change in contractor may impact on the costs of different services.

### **Conclusions**

14. The Committee is asked to consider the proposed charges as set out above and agree its recommendations for Cabinet.

### **Next Steps**

15. If approved by Cabinet the charges will take effect from 1 April 2016.

### **Background Papers**

High Wycombe Town Committee Papers November 2014