

## **1. UPDATE ON CEMETERY SECURITY**

Officer contact: Elaine Jewell; [elaine.jewell@wycombe.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.jewell@wycombe.gov.uk); ext:3900

Wards affected: Town Wards

### ***RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET***

To consider which, if any, additional security measures to implement. To recommend to Cabinet the release of funds, if required, to fund additional security measures.

### ***Reason for Decision***

There has been resident concern about suspected incidents of vandalism at the Cemetery. Only a few incidents have been reported to WDC and the Police and two residents, whose children are buried in the Cemetery, have written to the Bucks Free Press about their concerns. One of these residents presented a recent petition to the Council seeking 24/7 CCTV coverage.

### **Corporate Implications**

The report includes items, which, if all required, would cost an estimated £32,000. There are sufficient funds available in The Special Expenses Reserve if all items are supported by the Committee.

Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything, including incurring expenditure, which is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions; as a burial authority under Section 214, the Council already has power to provide and maintain cemeteries in our outside its area. In addition, Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 ("general power of competence") provides power to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to the provisions of Ss 2-4. These powers enable the Council, if it wishes, to implement all or any of the measures outlined in this report.

### **Executive Summary**

Five potential security measures are suggested, with approximate costings, which could provide reassurance to the bereaved that the site is monitored and reasonably secure. As a public Cemetery crossed by public footpaths the site can never be completely secure and the measures ensure unfettered public access in daylight hours while increasing security at weaker points and monitoring visitors at the main entry points.

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

People – the report suggests additional security measures, which could reassure bereaved relatives about the safety of the service.

## Background and Issues

The petition for 24 Hr CCTV was referred to the Committee by Cabinet for consideration earlier this year. Given the large volume of space to be covered this was not supported at the time as it was an expensive option that would fundamentally affect the Cemetery in negative ways, as the majority of trees would need to be removed to aid visibility; night time lighting would also be needed.

Officers agreed to look at a range of alternative measures to improve the security of the Cemetery. Signs have already been installed alerting people to report any incidents. The Cemetery Officer is now taking photos of removed items when he tidies and has a form to record incidents on.

A site visit has been undertaken. The boundary on the Benjamin Road and Priory Road side is satisfactory. A large part of the northern boundary was secured a few years ago by additional fencing. There is a lower stretch towards Priory Road, which is low enough for a determined person to scale.



The remainder of the eastern and southern boundaries are largely protected by dense shrubs. However there are some gaps that could be replanted to provide a complete barrier.



The two gateways have been described as weak points. The gates are of average size but could be increased in height. In both cases there are buildings adjacent, the

Office and the Lodge. CCTV cameras could be attached to each building with recorders placed securely inside to monitor the access gates.



The Snowdrop Garden is a particular concern as it is well screened from the rest of the Cemetery and adjacent housing and roadway and provides a welcoming, secluded environment for street drinkers. It is possible to lock the gates and route visitors through the main Cemetery, which will mean that almost all visitors can be monitored by CCTV.

In summary therefore the potential actions, with estimated costs, are as follows.

1. Additional fencing on the northern footpath side - £20,000
2. Additional planting along the eastern and southern edges – existing maintenance budget as minimal cost
3. Installation of locally recorded CCTV at the two main gateways and on the rear entrance to the Snowdrop Garden - £3,000
4. Installation of higher gates at the Lodge, Office and Snowdrop entrances - £9,000
5. Permanent closure of the Hampden Road/Snowdrop entrance – no cost if combined with 4.

## **Options**

The Committee can choose some, all or no measures from the list above. Costs will vary as a consequence.

## **Conclusions**

The Committee is asked to decide which, if any, of the above measures, should be recommended to Cabinet for implementation.

## **Next Steps**

These are dependent on the discussion at Committee but may include the ordering of works.

## **Background Papers**

Petition to Council on CCTV at the Cemetery and previous Committee reports.