

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

*Further to the Policy Development Panel (PDP) meeting with external partners held on the 14 January 2014 (see appendix 1b), the Policy Development Panel obtained positive feedback and comment on all of the issues previously highlighted during the course of the PDP site visits to cemeteries and Falkirk Crematorium.*

*As an outcome of the discussions with the external partners and deliberations with Bereavement Services officers, the PDP would ask that the following recommendations are taken forward.*

*All the recommendations and changes to existing regulations etc are numbered within this report, as follows;*

### **2. REVIEW OF CEMETERY RULES & REGULATIONS**

*On the basis of the issues seen and raised during the PDP meetings and visits to the various cemeteries, there is an apparent need to review Cemetery Rules and Regulations which was last undertaken in 1996. This will include updating the existing Rules and Regulations but also adding new items to address the ongoing issues seen at first hand by the PDP and discussed with our external partners on the 14 January 2014. They include the following items;*

#### **Headstone Size**

- 2.1** Restricting the size of new headstones to a maximum dimension of height 4ft (1219mm), width 3ft 8ins (1117mm) and depth (thickness, excluding base stone) 5ins (125mm). *Single headstones will only be permitted on each lair. One continuous headstone will not be permitted to straddle two or more full lairs.*
- 2.2** Headstones shall only be constructed of approved granite, stone or terrazzo materials.
- 2.3** That details of headstone size and content would be required to be submitted in advance of its installation and approval would ultimately be at the discretion of the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services.

#### **Memorial Headstone Foundations**

- 2.4** In all new cemetery extensions or sections, concrete raft foundations should be installed within the headstone borders, in order to provide a sound and

consistent foundation for headstones to be erected, where ground conditions permit.

- 2.5 Charges for the foundation would only be sought at the point of receiving a request to have a memorial headstone erected and not before. This ensures bereaved families are not charged in advance for an item they may opt not to use.
- 2.6 To implement a Memorial Registration Scheme which provides effective controls and to ensure the highest quality of workmanship and competence are applied within Falkirk Council burial grounds.

### **Tree and Shrub Planting within Headstone Borders**

- 2.7 To propose that no trees, shrubs or plants be planted directly into the soil within a headstone border.

### **Suggested interim measures:**

If an existing lair is being re-opened and an existing tree/shrub has been identified as causing a potential problem, contact will be made with the lair owner advising of impact/problem and the proposed action to be taken by Estates Management staff. Reasons will be and given for this action.

### ***Tributes and Inscriptions***

*This issue was the most debated issue and one that gave the PDP and its external partners the most difficulty in trying to address, due to the sensitive nature of tributes placed at the graveside. However due to the ongoing grounds maintenance issues encountered by Estates Services and the potential conflict encountered by neighbouring lair owners and cemetery users, a general consensus of opinion was obtained for the following;*

- 2.8 That flowers, tributes and soft toys would initially be permitted on the burial space (Lair) for two weeks after the burial date, and thereafter removed to allow unhindered cemetery maintenance operations to recommence
- 2.9 That Christmas season holly wreaths will be permitted to remain in situ no later than 31 January in each year before being removed and disposed of.
- 2.10 That the number of raised wrought iron flower vases to display floral tributes be restricted to a maximum of 2 at each lair and must be professionally installed by a memorial mason within the concrete raft foundation.
- 2.11 There will be no limit on the number of flower vases which can be placed at the space provided at the head of each lair (i.e. the crown head or the base of the memorial). No glass or pottery containers will be allowed.

- 2.12** That no audible tributes should be permitted at the graveside e.g. wind chimes.
- 2.13** To permit the placement of seasonal bulbs/flowers, all plants should require to be contained within a pot. The pot can be accommodated on the headstone foundation/concrete raft foundation, but is not permitted to plant within the headstone border area or on the area of the lair.
- 2.14** That the size of images on monuments be restricted to a maximum size of 100mm x 100mm and not likely to cause offence due to it being construed as sectarian, racist, sexist or any other inflammatory image which could potentially cause legitimate offence to another user of cemeteries. Approval of images would ultimately be at the discretion of the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services

### ***Memorial Benches and Trees***

*To compliment the recommendation above in regard to no permitted tree and shrub planting within headstone borders. The PDP have considered the following as an alternative provision for family members wishing to commemorate their lost loved ones.*

- 2.15** To pursue and develop a memorial tree planting and memorial bench scheme, that allows members of the public the opportunity to purchase a tree and/or bench via the Council to be located, where a predetermined cemetery layout plan permits.

### **Other Considerations**

- 2.16** Due to limited availability of space within certain burial grounds, that further work be undertaken to explore additional areas for siting of memorial benches and planting of memorial trees within all of the Councils parks and open spaces.
- 2.17** Explore options in relation to woodland burial sites.
- 2.18** Explore the possibility of the Criminal Justice Service (community payback) supplying standardised memorial benches.
- 2.19** Explore the possibility of the erection, feasibility and cost of a memorial wall at Falkirk Crematorium.
- 2.20** Bereavement Services officers will liaise with SANDS on the benefits and feasibility of having an additional baby memorial within one of the Council's other burial ground(s).
- 2.21** Revised Cemetery Rules & Regulations are to be drafted based upon the recommendations above and submitted to the Executive for final approval prior to implementation.

- 2.22** Once the new Cemetery Rules & Regulations have been approved, the Panel suggests that the Rules & Regulations are displayed at the entrance to each burial ground and incorporated within all new lair title deeds issued to lair owners

### **3. CEMETERY PROVISION/SPACE/ADVANCE LAIR PURCHASE**

*Following consideration of the space constraints within a number of the cemeteries, an examination of the potential solutions to those, views of external organisations, the Panel recommends:*

- 3.1** To continue the cessation of advance lair purchases at all Falkirk Council burial sites, with exception for persons who have been diagnosed as terminally ill, and to note that the panel obtained supportive comments from stakeholders on this recommendation.
- 3.2** To monitor the provision of the existing Muslim faith burial ground within Hills of Dunipace Cemetery, to ensure future use/need.
- 3.3** To only consider any future requests for separate burial ground provision where existing cemetery layout and orientation does not meet a particular faiths' physical needs in regard to lair orientation.

### **4. POLICY PRINCIPLES FOR CREMATION AT FALKIRK CREMATORIUM**

- 4.1** To support, in principle the Council's continued compliance via the CAMEO scheme for mercury abatement.
- 4.2** To look at options on ways to facilitate a selection of service times to cater for both shorter and longer services.
- 4.3** To explore the creation of a privacy corridor, subject to funding becoming available.
- 4.5** To look at alternative options to help alleviate the traffic flow and parking issues at Falkirk Crematorium.
- 4.6** To explore and identify different funding options which could help with the cost of sound proofing the waiting room doors, renewing hymn books, installation of a digital music library, introduction of webcasting services etc – including establishing external donations etc.
- 4.7** To pursue the option of utilising excess heat generated by the new cremators to heat the crematorium building.
- 4.8** Noting the need to avoid implementing Sunday cremations.

- 4.9** To note that the linking of cremations and interments costs to encourage preservation of burial space was not supported by the stakeholders.

#### **Other Considerations**

- 4.10** To explore the possibility of having an “open day” for Falkirk Crematorium for those interested members of the public and stakeholders.
- 4.11** To explore the potential to reduce the time allocated for the internment of ashes.
- 4.12** It was confirmed that the number of ground maintenance staff assigned for a committal is appropriate for the duties to be undertaken with the minimum being 2 grave diggers being present at the graveside.
- 4.13** Creation of a Bereavement Forum to meet on an annual basis and to engage with the services customers and appropriate stakeholders.