

**STRATEGIC CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM
DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of Meeting of 5th October 2016

Members Present: The High Sheriff, Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson)
Alderman Sandford and
Councillors McCabe and O'Neill.

In Attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director;
Mrs. C. Sullivan, Policy and Business Development
Officer and;
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Appointment of Chairperson

Moved by Alderman Sandford,
Seconded by Councillor O'Neil,

Resolved – That the High Sheriff, Alderman Rodgers be elected as
Chairperson of the Working Group for the period ending in May, 2019.

Alderman Rodgers took the Chair and thanked the Members for his appointment.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Kyle

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 2nd August were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest were reported

Terms of Reference

At the request of the Chairman, the Working Group requested that a report be brought back to its meeting in November outlining its terms of reference, including the specific areas of work, relevant to the Council, it should be consulted on directly.

Noted.

Opening Arrangements for Christmas and New Year

The Working Group noted the opening arrangements for Christmas, including the New Year, Public and Extra Statutory Holidays in respect of burials and crematorium central services, including site offices. A copy of the aforementioned arrangements is set out hereunder:

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Wednesday, 5th October, 2016**

DATE	OPENING HOURS
Monday 26th December 2016	CLOSED
Tuesday 27th December 2016	8.30 am – 12.30 pm
Friday 30th December 2016	8.30 am – 12.30 pm
Monday 2nd January 2017	CLOSED

DATE	CREMATORIUM OPERATING HOURS	CEMETERY BURIALS
Monday 26th December 2016	CLOSED	CLOSED
Tuesday 27th December 2016	8.30 am, 9.00 am, 9.30 am, 10.00 am, 10.30 am and 11.00 am	9.30 am, 10.00 am, 10.30 am and 11.00 am
Friday 30th December 2016	8.30 am, 9.00 am, 9.30 am, 10.00 am, 10.30 am and 11.00 am	9.30 am, 10.00 am, 10.30 am and 11.00 am
Monday 2nd January 2017	CLOSED	CLOSED

November to February	8.00 am – 4.00 pm Sundays 10.00 am – 4.00 pm
March and October	8.00 am – 6.00 pm Sundays 10.00 am – 6.00 pm
April to September	8.00 am – 6.00 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays 8.00 am – 8.00 pm Sundays 10.00 am – 6.00 pm

Update on the use of Shoring at Roselawn Cemetery

The Assistant Director provided an update on the introduction of the trial use of shoring which had commenced in May, 2016, to minimise the risk of subsidence at Roselawn Cemetery. She reported that the opening of graves in section Y of the cemetery was being monitored continually to identify any new subsidence issues, and that to date, no issues of subsidence had been observed in any of the three allocated burial areas. She stated further, that the situation would continue to be monitored closely.

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The Members received an overview of individual cases where shoring had been implemented and were advised of the costs to the Council associated with its operation. It was reported also, that the trial use of shoring would continue until the end of November, 2016, at which time, a report would be brought back to a future meeting of the Working Group, highlighting the findings associated with undertaking the trial shoring process.

The Assistant Director reported that the cost of the shoring process was being met from within existing budgets and stated that should any additional cost be incurred associated with future shoring requirements, a report in the matter would be brought back to a future meeting of the Working Group.

Noted.

Update on The Council's Memorial Management Policy

The Assistant Director provided the Working Group with an update on the introduction of the Council's Memorial Management Policy which had been operative since April, 2016. She outlined the background to its implementation, including the unauthorised erection of memorials, citing potential health and safety issues around memorials which were found to be unstable and/or inappropriate.

She pointed to the success of the policy which had resulted in a 262% increase in memorial applications made during the period, April-July 2016 as compared to the corresponding period in 2015.

As part of the policy, the Assistant Director referred to an audit of headstones which had taken place recently at Roselawn Cemetery. The audit had been undertaken to check for policy compliance in terms of applications being received by the Council in respect thereof.

It was reported that a proposed review of the Memorial Management Policy would be taking place in November, 2016 to monitor its success. This would involve consultation with interested parties, including funeral directors and memorial sculptors, to ascertain their views on the success of the policy implementation programme. The Assistant Director highlighted the fact that income in respect of the payment of fees had increased through an increase in submitted applications and in so doing, all headstones were being monitored to ensure compliance with Council policy and associated health and safety standards.

Noted.

Customer Survey of Users of the City Of Belfast Crematorium

The Policy and Business Development Officer provided the Members with an update on a customer survey, sent to users of the crematorium, and which included questions around a nomination process for recycled metals in respect of the cremation process. She referred to a Bereavement Board which had been established to ensure that the Council was delivering a high quality and fit for purpose bereavement service. She highlighted the fact that in an attempt to maintain its high standards, the Council had undertaken a benchmarking exercise with other Councils and followed best practice from the Institute of Crematorium and Cemetery Management (I.C.C.M.).

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She referred to the care which had been taken by the Council in dealing with this sensitive and emotive issue, stating that the survey would be undertaken in June and November each year, and would be targeted at those individuals who had used the crematorium at least six months previously. It was reported that the results of the survey would be collated and brought back to the Working Group for its consideration.

She highlighted also that a question asking for a nomination of which charity receives the revenue from recycled metals would be included within the survey and that the timing of the survey would coincide with the Council's submission date in respect of nominations to the I.C.C.M.

Members noted the contents of the report, and agreed that the customer survey should include the question around the nomination process for recycled metals.

Update on Crime/Anti-Social Behaviour at Cemetery Sites

The Director provided the Members with an overview of the recorded incidents of crime/anti-social behaviour in respect of Council owned cemetery sites. He highlighted the fact that the majority of incidents reported had occurred at the City Cemetery. A total of 16 incidents had occurred in the City Cemetery during the period January – July, 2016. He stated that this figure was a reduction from the 38 incidents which had occurred in the same period in the previous year. He referred to a range of preventive measures which had been put in place as a means to address the problem. This had included a number of security and surveillance measures in addition to a local youth engagement programme, in association with Whiterock Leisure Centre.

It was reported that the level of crime/anti-social behaviour incidents at the remainder of the Council cemetery sites was minimal and that joint operational measures between the Council, PSNI and the various statutory and community based organisations would continue as a means to address the problem.

Noted.

Update on Loughview Park Cemetery Planning Application

The Members were given an update on the Loughview Park cemetery planning application. The Director reminded the Working Group that a planning application had been submitted in respect of a proposed cemetery in the Dundrod area. It was reported that the Council had been made aware of this site in 2010 by virtue of an expression of interest exercise. He reported that tests had uncovered several issues which had given cause for concern over the future use of the site for burial purposes.

The Working Group was reminded that since that time, the Council had revised its burial policy, and consequently was revisiting its original list of potential burial sites in line with its new policy. He stated further, that the application in respect of Loughview Park cemetery, made by Strategic Planning, was in respect of a proposed site of approximately 95 acres, with a potential to accommodate 31,072 burial plots.

He stated further that the application in respect of the proposed cemetery was out for consultation currently until 9th September, 2016 and that to date, a number of

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objections to the proposal had been submitted. The Members were advised that the Council would continue to monitor the progress of the application and update the Working Group in relation to its progress.

Update on Future Crematorium Facilities at Roselawn

In response to a question from the Chairman in regard to the progress which had been made in progressing the Economic Appraisal around the provision of future cremation facilities, the Director of Finance and Resources stated that a number of issues, including the financing of the project, needed to be addressed. He stated further that the project was currently with the Oversight Board and that a report in the matter would be brought back to the Working Group at its next meeting, scheduled to be held in November, 2016.

Noted.

Chairperson