

CEMETERY ASSET REPORT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the current Argyll and Bute cemetery provision and, highlighting interventions within the asset group since this was last reported to Committee in 2019 and providing a revised list of at risk assets based on current figures and a revised projection model. Overall the number of high risk assets has reduced since 2019

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee are asked to:

- 2.1 Endorse the works done to date to reduce the number of high risk cemetery assets;
- 2.2 Endorse and approve the temporary local arrangement to restrict the pre-sale of lairs to protect the cemetery capacity;
- 2.3 Consider the future capital investment required in this asset group; and
- 2.4 Note that a further report on cemetery assets will be brought forward to the March Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee meeting, which will present options for reviewing the current policy as well as management of cemetery assets in the context of current needs and future demands.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 In December 2019 the Committee gave consideration to a report that presented a summary of the Council's cemetery assets. The report provided information on the condition of the cemeteries including available lair space. At that time 14 sites were identified as high risk e.g. breaching capacity within 5 years. This list showed two entries against different sections of Pennyfuir – on reflection it is better to consider that as a single site, which brings the high risk sites down to 13.
- 3.2 Since then a number of interventions have been made or are identified at various sites including agreed capital extension works and reclaiming lair space/maximising where possible the existing footprint of sites which has improved the position.

- 3.3 As well as physical works, Officers have revised the expectancy projections. Previously expectancy was calculated based on a five year average of lair sales. The new projections are based on last year's lair sale figures only because it better reflects the current climate. The Burial Service and the provision of Lair Spaces in Cemeteries are linked but are two distinct and separate parts of the Bereavement Service provided by the Council as the Burial Authority. The selling of Lair Certificates at point of request, uses up land in burial grounds in advance of the requirement for the Burial team to open a lair for an interment. There are however differing rates of uptake of lairs at each location and hence a variation in the remaining time before all space is sold. This is separate from the number of interments, as lairs can be used multiple times. The timescales vary from 1 year to over 100 years within the portfolio of active cemeteries.
- 3.4 Officers are aware that in particular new cemetery development in Kintyre has been challenging, despite efforts over the past three years we have been unable to progress a suitable site. As such and to protect the capacity of the cemetery for local residents, officers have taken the decision to prevent the pre-sale of lairs unless there has been a death. Although this has not been a policy decision, along with the new counting mechanism introduced, it now means Kilkerran Cemetery has a predicted expectancy which was less than 4 years in 2019 to 10 years. This now allows officers more time to develop plans for a new site.
- 3.5 As a result of this works the number of high risk sites has reduced from 13 to 4. The 2019 'at risk' asset list has been updated to reflect the above and is appended to this report at Appendix 1. A summary of the main highlights of that work, where sites which were previously high risk now have a future capacity of 10+ years is summarised in the table below:

Site	Intervention/change	Outcome
Appin	Extension	90 additional lairs created; 38 years of expectancy.
Lismore	Reclaimed space within existing site	9 additional lairs created; 16 years of expectancy
Kilmorlich	No new lairs sold since 2019	13 years of expectancy
Carrick	Reclaimed space	70 additional lairs created; 72 years of expectancy
Pennyfuir	Developed space with further options within current landholding	230 lairs created; further areas to secure 40-50 years of expectancy
Achnaba	A further extension was available for use	Expectancy now 49 years
Kilchattan	Only 1 lair sold in last 3 years	Expectancy now 28 years

Tobermory	Contract let for extension	Will create 190 lairs; expectancy 95 years
Kilkerran	A local arrangement was put in place to restrict pre-sale, which has slowed the rate of purchase.	10 years expectancy now based on current sales figures

- 3.6 At Appendix 2 there is a revised development programme based on the new projection model and taking account of the interventions since 2019. This shows 5 high risk sites, with 1 new site shown based on the up to date sales figures.
- 3.7 Capital funds will be required in order to either purchase adjacent land and extend current cemeteries, or to provide new cemeteries. There are currently no capital funds allocated to a future cemetery expansion programme. Based on current high level estimates the costs of extending or creating new cemeteries to address the high risk assets is £310,000. To secure the future of all sites on the identified programme at Appendix Two would likely cost £910,000 based on initial high level estimates. Members will note that some sites identified as at risk in the revised programme do not have obvious solutions in terms of new land. It is recommended that Members consider future capital investment required in this asset group as part of the 23/24 budget process.
- 3.8 The Policy and Resources Committee recently agreed to allocate £300,000 from possible future Crown Estate for improvements to cemeteries within their existing footprint e.g levelling sunken lairs, repairs to access tracks, pathway restorations etc. This possible future funding will be split evenly across the four administrative areas. As and when funding is confirmed Officers will bring forward a set of proposals.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This report provides an update on the current Argyll and Bute cemetery provision.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – Potential policy issue re stopping pre-sale of lairs
- 5.2 Financial – Capital funding will be required for the ongoing provision of additional lair capacity
- 5.3 Legal – None known.
- 5.4 HR – None known.
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
- 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – None known.

5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – None known.

5.5.3 Islands – None known.

5.6. Climate Change – None known.

5.7 Risk – None known.

5.8 Customer Service – None known.

**Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services:
Kirsty Flanagan**

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For further information contact:

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 – At Risk Asset List 2019 Updated

Appendix 2 – Cemetery Development Programme