

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Leisure and Amenities Committee

SUBJECT: Mid Warwickshire Crematorium Memorial Garden

FROM: Head of Leisure and Amenities

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform Members on the detailed proposals and costings for the Memorial Garden at Oakley Wood Crematorium.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will be aware that 2.7 hectares of land was purchased on the 24th November 1996 at a cost of £14,500 specifically for the purpose of providing a Garden of Remembrance and there is a covenant which states the land can only be used for this purpose. The purpose of the Memorial Garden is to meet the demands and requests of many members of the public who wish to see this facility in place.

2.2 Approval was given by this committee on 8th June, 1999 to work up details and costings for the Memorial Garden. It is estimated for Phase 1 the cost would be £16,000 this would include site preparation for tarmac footpaths, landscaping and purchasing 20 Sanctum 2000 units, 56 Vase Block and Tablets and 3 Memorial Benches. Each phase thereafter would cost £10,000 for landscaping.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposal is to layout a series of interlinking circular spaces which are 30 metres across as shown on the plan and have a surrounding pathway. These spaces will offer the opportunity for quiet contemplation and meditation providing a strong sense of enclosure to gather one's thoughts. The spaces will be in the form of circles enclosed with trees which will provide areas to scatter and to inter cremated remains in above ground low level vaults. Benches can be placed on the inner / outer circles. A vase block and tablet can be provided so that the bereaved can have a memorial tablet and a place to leave flowers for those scattered in the circle.

3.2 On the outer circle can be fixed, on a low plinth, Sanctum 2000 which can contain two caskets of cremated remains. These would be for those who want to know where their loved one is with the ability to join them when their time comes.

- 3.3** It would be our intention to offer to store the cremated remains for four weeks so that the bereaved know they have time to decide whether to scatter or to place the remains in the Columbaria unit (Sanctum 2000) or to take the remains away from the crematorium altogether. Currently we store for four weeks. Some remains are taken away to be interred into our cemeteries, some are scattered at Oakley Woods in an area which has, unfortunately, been used and re-used causing saturation point to be reached, others are removed and it can be assumed that some of these remains are removed because we currently have no facility for memorials to be placed.
- 3.4** Oakley Wood is already a tranquil place, however, specific areas where the bereaved can visit, bring flowers, if they wish, and sit in peace thinking about their loved one is an essential requirement which meets the needs of the bereaved. The woodland setting is ideal because it is quiet and secluded, is a perfect location as it provides all the elements required being open and supplying a pleasing backcloth of trees.
- 3.5** There is enough space to fit 10 circles and each circle can accommodate 370 memorials initially - at a 10% take up each circle would last approximately 2 years. Therefore, 10 circles would last around 20 years. It is possible to go back to the 1st circle and in-fill the spaces between the columbaria units and a further row behind the vase blocks, doubling the numbers within each circle. We can also locate memorials on each side of the paths. It can be assumed that 10 circles, plus paths would last a minimum of 60 years. The usable time of each circle would be multiplied if each memorial were re-leased after 10 years. There would be no additional purchase cost for memorials. If a 10 year lease period were offered the time scale regarding the usage of each circle would be doubled.
- 3.6** At a later stage it may be considered an option to install columbaria units which are 3 units high and 4 units wide, these have not been considered at this point as they are not so aesthetically pleasing in a woodland setting.
- 3.7** The manufacturer will not make a delivery charge if the numbers mentioned in paragraph 2.2 are ordered. There is an 8 week lead in time for delivery.
- 3.8** Therefore, we are proposing to offer three types of memorial :
1. The Sanctum 2000 is an above ground unit which holds caskets of ashes and has a plaque/tablet large enough for two inscriptions. If ashes are interred above ground it would not be necessary to apply for an exhumation licence from the Home Office to remove remains if the applicant does not wish to re-new the lease after 10 years. Currently Canley offer this facility in a lawn niche for a term of 10 years and charge £495 and £245 to re-new lease for a further 10 years. They charge an additional £32 for an additional interment in the niche.

2. The Vase Block and Inscribed Tablet is a memorial which gives the bereaved a place for a memorial tablet and flowers. It would not be related to a specific slot where the remains are buried but would be placed around the scattering area. Canley do not offer this facility. They do offer a Memorial Kerb Plaque which is similar at a cost of £295, additional inscription £110 and renewal £150. Canley will be increasing their prices from 1st January, 2000.
3. Benches, which we would supply and lease for a period of 10 years with an option to re-new on expiry. We currently have a long waiting list for people wishing to have a bench as they have seen them in the grounds of the crematorium. Canley charge £598 for this facility. There could be an option to have an additional inscription on the bench for the residue of the 10 year lease period (Canley currently charge £150 for this) and they charge £305 to re-new the lease period for a further 10 years.

This will give the bereaved a variety of choice which we believe is essential.

4.0 KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Harmonisation with many of the key issues.

5.0 CONCLUSION

There are continual requests to provide better facilities for the disposal of cremated remains and the proposals shown above are a way to progress this issue with financial projections shown in Appendix 1.

- 5.1 Although the scheme is intended to be self financing, this will only happen after a number of years - the expenditure will be required this year but income will not begin to flow until next year. Accordingly, a request will need to be made to Resources Sub-Committee for the approval of a supplementary estimate (it should be noted that income is a 'blocked' head and cannot normally be used to finance expenditure).

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 Members are requested to approve the fees and charges outlined on the above and are asked if they will approve Phase 1 of this scheme.
- 6.2 Members are requested to support the proposal and request Resources Sub-Committee to approve a supplementary estimate of £16,000 to allow the scheme to proceed.

Nigel Bishop
Parks Cemeteries and Crematorium
Manager

Andrea Barnett
Operations Manager
Cemeteries and Crematorium

Background Papers:

Purchase of land and Committee Items.

Contact Officers:

Nigel Bishop

01926 317853

Andrea Barnett

01926 651841

Areas in the District affected.

All

13 Sep 1999
S:\COMMREP\\$memorial.wpd